

Islamic education, depression, religiosity, and the effects of religion moderation of Muslim students



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The need for religious moderation in North Sumatra province arises as a result of burning worship [*Vihara and Klenteng*], exploding bombs and stabbing attempts at churches during worship. This study examines the effect of Islamic education, depression and religiosity on religious moderation in students at state Islamic universities. This study used a cross-sectional design in North Sumatra province with 1125 Muslim students over a period from February 2023 to May 2023. This study used a closed questionnaire involving Islamic education, depression, religiosity and religious moderation using linear regression with 95% CI using JASP version 19. With regard to the notions of depression, religious ideology, religious experiences and religious studies, this research demonstrates that students who have received education in Muslim schools affect religious moderation in students of state Islamic universities. Religious moderation among Islamic students will be improved by providing increased information on religious studies that contain religious moderation.

Contribution: This article will provide new information about religious moderation carried out by Muslim students in Islamic universities that are often associated with intolerance, terrorism, fanaticism and religion-based violence.

Keywords: education; depression; religion moderation; religious; students.

Introduction

Humans face conflict because of political, cultural, ethnic, racial and religious divisions, including the occurrence of violence between Muslims and Ahmadiyya and Shias who were declared as being non-Islamic, church bombings, the prohibition of Christians from performing religious services in churches, and the destruction of Viharas and temples (Rogers 2018; Syarif 2019; Yazdani 2020). Islam instructs us to pursue peace by maximising similarities and minimising inequality (Frydenlund 2015). Religious leaders are one of the most important components in increasing peace and reducing wars and even acts of terrorism in various countries worldwide, including Indonesia (Glazier 2018; Singh 2018; Wani 2015).

Religious moderation aims to moderate extremism by prioritising self-control, responsibility, a balanced approach, and contextual interpretation of biblical texts (Cholil 2022). Moderation in Islam can result in a moderate Muslim millennial identity (Al-Farisi 2018; Asfar 2020). Five characteristics of moderation in Indonesian Islam include: the absence of violent ideology, the adoption of a modern lifestyle, rational thought, a contextual approach and *ijtihad*. Tolerance, harmony and cooperation among religious groups can be added to this list (Arif 2020; Hilmy 2013). A study of Sufistic interpretation [*tafsir isyari*] conducted by shari'a specialists is crucial for comprehending the meaning of Quranic verses (Anshori 2021).

Despite being a Muslim-majority country, Indonesia has people from various other religions, cultures and tribes who are vulnerable to inter-religious and inter-tribal conflicts that can cause disunity among the community (Astuti 2019; Sumadi 2019). The concept of *wasathiyah* [fairness] inspired moderate Islam to become one of its unifying forces (Nakaya 2018; Arifinsyah 2020). *Wasathiyah* [fairness] emphasises the three Islamic pillars of *tawasuth* [moderate attitude], *ta'adul* [fairness] and *tawazun* [a balanced attitude]. Regarding problem-solving, religious moderation requires positioning oneself between the extreme right and left viewpoints. Negative attitudes can manifest in various ways, including caustic and excessive speech, limited perspectives and extreme actions.

Note: Historical Thought and Source Interpretation.

One of the important aspects of religious moderation is non-violence. Terrorism is one of the indicators of non-moderation. Terrorism-related acts occurred 49 times in Indonesia between 2018 and 2022, according to the National Counterterrorism Agency. The maximum terror attacks – 30 cases – occurred in 2018 and 2019. According to the Global Terrorism Index released in 2023 by the Institute for Economics and Peace, Indonesia ranks 24th among the countries most affected by terrorism globally. Indonesia recorded the lowest number of attacks since 2014, with seven terror attacks. This number is 56% lower than in 2021, which recorded 24 terror attacks (Cholil 2022).

This common understanding of moderation is also related to inter-religious tolerance. The tolerance awareness of students in three major cities in West Java, namely Bandung, Depok and Bogor, still needs improvement. Religious education, in this case, Islam, and moderation in religion influence tolerance between religious communities. The better a student's Islamic religious education level, the better the chance of having inter-religious tolerance. In addition, the better the level of moderation in a student's religion, the better the inter-religious tolerance as well (Al Adawiyah 2020; Nurhayati 2022).

One of the best methods that can be used to increase religious moderation is to increase religious moderation on various campuses through the university curriculum. Islamic universities must teach religious moderation following the teachings of the Quran (Abdullah 2021). Religious moderation on campus can assist students in acquiring academic skills and improve relations between different movements in Indonesia (Roqib 2021). Universities can promote religious moderation by promoting the study of Sufi commentators (Bustomi 2020; Marpaung 2022b).

Adjustments to the Islamic religious education curriculum in the digital age are essential for the development of Muslim intellectuals (Marpaung 2022a). Additionally, religious values standards must be included in the curriculum; this can be obtained through the diverse perspectives of Muslim scholars. According to literature, Islamic religious education has reached its zenith because of the contributions of Muslim scholars (ulemas) from around the world.

The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs' Book of religious moderation offers four metrics for gauging the country's level of religious moderation: national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence and accommodating local culture (Kementerian Agama RI 2019; Nasution 2022). These indicators can be used to identify and adopt measures to strengthen religious moderation (Abdullah 2021). North Sumatra province has several problems with religious moderation, namely terrorism in the form of bombings, arson of houses of worship, and violence when people worship. A woman's request to a priest to turn down the sound of the mosque speakers on 29 July 2016, resulted in the burning of houses of worship, specifically Vihara and Klenteng, in Tanjung Balai City. Despite attempts to disrupt the worship

of Christians at St. Yosep Catholic Church in Medan, the congregation of St. Yosep Catholic Church in Medan prevented the attempt of a man who tried to attack the priest during mass at the church. The perpetrator was suspected of carrying explosives and had an Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) flag in his hand.

The lack of religious moderation in the form of terrorism occurred in Sibolga City on 12 March 2019 during a bomb explosion. Ulema Zainun Sinaga then tried to persuade the bomber's family by saying, 'Please give up; remember your child. Do not sacrifice your child. Talk nicely if there is a problem. Because there is no religion that teaches things like that. Let's surrender', through the mosque's loudspeaker. A bombing occurred in Medan City and was conducted by students at the Medan Police Station on 13 November 2019, this terrorist bombing even caused the death of a policeman.

Radical ideas are growing in society, ranging from groups that blame religious understanding outside their group to acts of terrorism in the name of religion. This phenomenon can be witnessed in the emergence of radical religious groups that do not tolerate other religious understandings that are different from their own. Only the group's religious understanding is believed to be correct; all else is infidel and heretical (Al Adawiyah 2020).

Dimension of religious moderation

The dimensions of religious moderation proposed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs include four aspects: national commitment, tolerance, non-violence and accommodation to local culture (Ministry of Religious Affairs 2019). National commitment is a very important indicator to see the extent to which a person's religious views, attitudes and practices have an impact on loyalty to the basic national consensus, especially related to the acceptance of Pancasila as the state ideology, his attitude towards ideological challenges that are opposite to Pancasila, and nationalism. Part of the national commitment is the acceptance of the nation's principles as set out in the Indonesian Constitution (UUD 1945) and its regulations. Azyumardi Azra's *Wasathiyah* Islamic thought as a way of religious moderation is to actualise the values of moderation that already exist in the Qur'an, achieve peace, and contribute to civilisation and progress (Putra 2021).

Rejection of violence includes the attitude and behaviours rejecting all forms of violence in the name of religion. The term radicalism or violence in the context of religious moderation can be understood as an ideology and understanding that wants to make changes to social and political systems by using violent or extreme methods in the name of religion, including verbal, physical and mental violence. The essence of radicalism is the attitude and actions of a person or group that use violent means to bring about the desired change.

Religious practices and behaviours that accommodate local culture can be used to see the willingness to accept religious

practices that accommodate local culture and traditions because religion does not exist in an empty space but tends to be contextual to space and time. Moderate people tend to be more friendly in accepting local traditions and culture in their religious behaviour, as long as it is not in conflict with the main teachings of religion.

Religious moderation in Islam

The ulemas of every generation from the time of the Prophet Muhammad until the end of time have unanimously agreed that the Qur'an is the primary and supreme source of Islamic doctrine, sharia law and scientific knowledge (*Ijma'*). The Qur'an has explained fundamentally, accurately and relevantly the nature of the direction of *washathiyah* thinking in the life of Muslims in many verses in the Qur'an, giving rise to views, concepts, and manhaj of Islamic moderation in every aspect of people's lives. Then, how is the understanding and nature of *washathiyah* according to the Qur'an (Arif 2020)?

The verses of the Qur'an talk about moderation using many terminologies, including *al-'adl* [the Most Justice] no less than 28 times in the Qur'an, *al-muqtashid* [obeying God] 5 times, *al-Wazn* 28 times, *al-Qist* [justice] 25 times, and the word *wasath* [moderation] 5 times. The latter term is often used to refer to religious moderation:

We have made you [*Muslims*] a moderate people so that you may be witnesses to the people and so that the Messenger [*Prophet Muhammad*] may be witness to you. We have not fixed the Qiblah to which you used to turn, except that we may know [*in reality*] who follows the Messenger and who turns back. Certainly, the shifting of the Qiblah is very hard, except for those to whom Allah has guided. Allah will not waste your faith. Verily, Allah is indeed the Most Compassionate and the Most Merciful to mankind. (Al-Baqarah 143)

Another verse that invites Muslims to get to know each other is contained in the word of Allah Qs. Al-Hujurat verse 13: People, We have created you from a male and a female. Then, We made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Certainly the noblest among you in the sight of Allah SWT are the most pious. Surely Allah is the All-Knowing, the All-Absorbing (Al-Hujurat 13).

Abu Said Al-Khudri reported that the Prophet Muhammad explained the meaning of *ummatan wasathan* in this verse as 'justice' (HR Tirmidhi, Sahih). At-Tabari also explains that 'wasathan' can mean 'the best and highest position'. At-Tabari quotes Ibn Abbas ra, Mujahid, and Atha' while interpreting verse 143, saying: '*ummatan washathan*' is 'justice', so the meaning of this verse is 'Allah made the Muslims the most just people'.

Al-Qurthubi said, '*Wasathan* is justice because the best thing is the fairest'. Ibn Kathir said, '*Wasathan* in this verse means the best and most qualified'. Other commentators, such as Abdurrahman As-Sa'diy and Rashid Ridha, interpreted the meaning of *wasathan* in this verse as justice and goodness'.

Religious worshippers, in understanding religious texts, experience a tendency to polarise into two poles. One pole studies the text without regard to the ability of reason, which the author calls the conservative group, and the other pole is called the liberal, which studies the text by emphasising the mind so that it ignores the text itself. The concept of religious moderation is expected to avoid an inclusive attitude that recognises the plurality of society (Al Adawiyah 2020).

Indonesian Islamic moderation is seen in the attitudes of Muslims who are *tawasuth* [middle attitude], *tawazun* [balanced], *ta'adul* [appropriate] and *tasamuh* [tolerant]. The opposite of *wasathiyah* is *tatharruf* [extremism], which is seen as behaviour that exceeds the limits of shari'a provisions, deviates from the values of moderation, deviates from the views of the majority of the people [*ra'y al-jama'ah*], and takes actions that are excessive and strange when viewed in the usual practise of Muslims (Putra 2021).

Research methods and design

Study design and administration

This study aims to determine the effect of Islamic education, depression and religiosity on religious moderation in students at state Islamic universities.

Participants

This study used a cross-sectional design to select participants who wanted to participate. This study was conducted in February 2023–May 2023 in North Sumatra province.

Measure

In this study, Islamic education, depression and religiosity are all considered to be independent variables. In this study, religious moderation is the dependent variable. Islamic education will be seen based on the education the participant has gone through, starting from senior high school, madrasah aliyah (Islamic senior high school), or pesantren (Islamic boarding school).

The research instrument uses a standardised questionnaire that the Ministry of Religion has used regarding religious moderation. The depression variable is also measured using a standardised questionnaire from depression, anxiety and stress, so there is no need to test the validity and reliability of the question items.

Depression in this study will be measured using the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS) instrument. The DASS instrument will provide 21 questions with a score of 0 = never experienced, 1 = sometimes experienced, 2 = often experienced and 3 = very often experienced. The DASS instrument will have a minimum score of 0 and a maximum score of 67. Participants are declared normal if they have a total score of 0–9 and have a low depression category of 10–13 or severe depression with a category of > 28.

Religious topics consist of closed questions in the questionnaire with a minimum score of 0 which is never; a score of 1, which is sometimes; and a score of 2, which is often. The number of religious topic questions is three, namely the participant's daily life following Islamic topics or issues through radio, television, the internet, newspapers or books in the last 30 days. Religious ideology consists of closed-ended questions in the questionnaire with a minimum value of 0, which is a lack of belief; a value of 1, which is belief; and a value of 2, which is very believable. The ideology-related questionnaire will contain questions regarding the participant's view that Allah exists, the existence of life after death in Islam, and the infinite greatness of Allah.

Religious worship consists of closed questions in a questionnaire with a minimum value of 0, namely never, and a maximum value of 1, namely ever. The number of religious worship questions is six, namely the participant's daily life in attending religious studies such as recitation, almsgiving or sharing with others, praying in congregation at the mosque, and fasting sunnah. Religious experiences consist of closed questions in the questionnaire with a minimum value of 0, namely never; value 1, namely sometimes; and value 2, namely always. The questionnaire related to religious experiences will contain questions regarding the participant's views regarding communication with Allah [God], conducting various activities because of Allah [God], and including Allah [God] in every activity. Religious studies questions consist of closed questions in a questionnaire with a minimum score of 0 (which is never), 1 (which is sometimes), and 2 (which is always), see Table 1. The questionnaire is related to the participant's activities in attending religious studies.

Religious moderation consists of closed questions in a questionnaire containing anti-violence, tolerance, national commitment and accepting local wisdom. Each item will be given a question with the answers very much agree, agree, disagree and very much disagree.

Data analysis

This study will analyse the independent variables (Islamic religious education, depression and religiosity) and the dependent variable (religious moderation) using univariate,

TABLE 1: Distribution of Islamic schools, depression, religion topics, religion ideology, religious worship, religious experiences, religious studies, and religious moderation among students of the Islamic Religious University.

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Received education in Islamic schools	0	3	1.34
Depression	0	6	12.90
Religious topics	0	6	4.39
Religious ideology	0	6	5.70
Religious worship	0	12	7.10
Religious experiences	1	6	5.41
Religious studies	0	10	4.99
Religious moderation	34	102	78.02

Note: This table shows that students have an average depression score of 12.9, religion topics have an average score of 4.39, religious ideology has an average score of 5.7, religious worship has an average score of 7.1, religious experiences have an average score of 5.41, and religious studies have an average score of 4.99. Religious moderation has an average score of 78.02.

bivariate and multivariate analysis. The univariate analysis will present the frequency distribution and percentage between Islamic religious education, depression, religiosity and religious moderation. Multivariate analysis is conducted to determine the factors that influence religious moderation among Muslim students at Islamic universities. This study will analyse data up to multivariate using linear regression analysis and a 95% confidence index using JASP software version 19 (Table 2).

Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance to conduct this study was obtained from the Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara (081/EC/KEP. UINSU/V/2023).

Discussion

Spiritual well-being is the basis for a person's building an attitude of tolerance towards others. Tolerance is related to spiritual maturity; the more mature a person's spiritual life is, the better his tolerance attitude (Tumanggor 2022). Depression affects religious moderation in students of state Islamic universities ($p = 0.024$; $B = 0.057$). People with a high amount of tolerance have good emotional intelligence, as they have the ability to understand, live and realise their values. They are also able to use their emotions wisely and not force others to follow their beliefs. Emotional intelligence, prejudice and friendship quality have a positive and negative effect on students' tolerance attitudes in religion-based schools (Ghorbal 2021).

Emotional intelligence is important in life, especially in a plural society where there are differences in ethnicity, language, ethnicity and religion. Individual assessments of others can be more objective when people have good emotions. This is important for tolerance of differences (Ghufron 2016).

TABLE 2: Impact of Islamic education, depression, religion topics, religion ideology, religious worship, religious experiences, religious studies on religious moderation among students of Islamic Religious University.

Variable	B	t	Sig.	95.0% CI for B	
				Lower	Upper
(Constant)	65.930	30.392	< 0.001	61.674	70.187
Islamic education	-0.683	-3.336	0.001	-1.085	-0.281
Depression	0.057	2.264	0.024	0.008	0.107
Religious topics	0.133	0.693	0.489	-0.244	0.511
Religious ideology	1.609	5.446	< 0.001	1.029	2.188
Religious worship	0.028	0.224	0.823	-0.221	0.278
Religious experiences	0.604	2.407	0.016	0.112	1.096
Religious studies	-0.191	-1.693	0.091	-0.412	0.030

Sig., significance.

Note: This research table shows that students who have Islamic education affect religious moderation in students of state Islamic universities ($p = 0.001$; $B = -0.683$). Depression affects religious moderation in students of state Islamic universities ($p = 0.024$; $B = 0.057$). Religion ideology affects religious moderation in students of state Islamic universities ($p = 0.001$; $B = 1.609$). Religious experiences affect religious moderation in students of state Islamic universities ($p = 0.016$; $B = 0.604$). Religious studies affect religious moderation in state Islamic university students ($p = 0.091$; $B = -0.191$).

The multiple linear regression equation of religious moderation is shown as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_n X_n + \epsilon_t$$

$$Y = 65.930 - 0.683X_1 + 0.057X_2 + 0.133X_3 + 1.609X_4 + 0.028X_5 + 0.604X_6 - 0.191X_7$$

$$Y = 65.930 - 0.683 \text{ Islamic Education} + 0.057 \text{ Depression} + 0.133 \text{ Religious Topics} + 1.609 \text{ Religious Ideology} + 0.028 \text{ Religious worship} + 0.604 \text{ Religious Experiences} - 0.191 \text{ Religious Studies}$$

Diversity in Indonesia is a blessing from God and a source of prosperity. Recent acts of terrorism are evidence of the erosion of values of tolerance and the growth of radicalism in society. The May 2018 detonation in Surabaya was a novel phenomenon, with minors participating in terrorist activities by carrying out suicide attacks (Amirudin 2021).

The Qur'an and Hadith emphasise the importance of virtue, harmony and equilibrium in human existence. However, a small number of individuals have used the text as justification for their actions, such as prohibiting the wearing of headscarves in public spaces. This will enrage a group of individuals who feel subjugated by religious symbols (Abdullah 2021).

The Qur'an explains verses about religious tolerance in several surahs, namely Q.S. Al-Baqarah verse 256: There is no coercion in adhering to the religion of Islam. Indeed, the right way is different from the wrong way. Whoever denies taghut and believes in Allah has held fast to a strong rope that will not break. Allah is hearing and knowing (Al-Baqarah 256). The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia interprets that Allah only forbids you, the believers, to make them, the disbelievers who are not willing to coexist with you peacefully, namely those who fight you because of religion; there is no religious freedom and tolerance; expel you from your homes because of racial, ethnic and religious cleansing and territorial control; and help others to expel you because of systemic and planned cooperation; as your close friends physically and mentally. Those who take them as friends because of economic, political and security interests are wrongdoers against the cause of Islam and the Muslims:

Had your Lord so willed, all the people of the earth would have believed. Will you [Prophet Muhammad] force people until they become believers? (Yunus 99)

According to the interpretation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, the verse means that after explaining the benefits of faith, it is then explained that believing or not believing is a choice for everyone because if your Lord wishes, all the people on earth will believe. Nevertheless, do you, the Prophet Muhammad, want to force people to become believers while they close their hearts to accept the truth?

Religious ideology affects religious moderation in students of state Islamic universities ($p = 0.001$; $B = 1.609$). Religious experiences affect religious moderation in students of state Islamic universities ($p = 0.016$; $B = 0.604$). The Qur'an and Hadith instruct us to behave well towards other people, with the Qur'an stating that there is no recompense for anything but doing good. An article clarifies that Islam does not distinguish moral principles in their life activities, as they are part of obedience to God (Abdullah 2021; Halstead 2007; Nasution 2022). Islam acknowledges that other entities may appear distinct, but this does not prevent them from worshipping and even protects them. The Qur'an makes it

abundantly clear that diverse nations and communities were responsible for the creation of man (Islam 2020).

Ibn 'Athiyah maintains that Allah SWT allows for human freedom and that a person must be just and honest. The teaching of religious moderation includes maintaining brotherly human relationships, appreciating differences, demonstrating tolerance and looking ahead (Al-Ishaqi 2009). Kiai Asrori (Ulemas) strives to balance social and spiritual existence. Respect is given to elders for their wisdom, obedience and participation in Sunnah (Ghorbani 2019).

One of the greatest maqashid ulemas in Islam is Imam As-Syathibiy. He explained that *wasathiyah*, or *manhaj* moderation, is the main character of Islamic Sharia. In Islamic Sharia, there are no teachings and values that do not contain moderate principles and goals. As moderation is the Sharia standard, every ijihad and fatwa related to Sharia must reflect moderation. In his book 'Al-Muwafaqaat', As-Syatibi said:

The content of the shari'a walks on the fairest middle path, is in a balanced position between two contradictory poles, without tending to one of them & Lufaei. (As-Syatibi 2003)

Religious studies affect religious moderation in state Islamic university students ($p = 0.091$; $B = -0.191$). Religious moderation can foster harmonious relationships between instructors, students, society and the environment (Haryani 2020; Marbun 2017). Teaching religious moderation is a spiritual renewal that bridges religious communities (Janarbekovna 2021; Sutrisno 2019).

Ulemas (muslim scholars) have studied the lexical and textual meanings of the term '*wasatiyyah*' in Arabic and orthodox documents. Moderate Islam emphasises liberal social norms, pluralism, democracy and state legitimacy (Ali 2020).

Syarif's study aimed to determine what Sufi commentators thought about religious moderation (Syarif 2021). Religious moderation promotes a moderate religious viewpoint, justice, kindness, balance and impartiality in society. However, for it to support the principle of justice, kindness must also be present (Fahri 2019). The Prophet's thoughts can be used to teach about religious moderation through a Sufistic approach, providing a deeper understanding of the implicit meaning of a verse in the Quran (Asfar 2020).

'The content of the Shari'a is on the fairest middle path, balanced between two contradictory poles without tending to one or the other'. It is easy and trivial for the servant. However, the Shari'a is on the side of imposing obligations on the believer in a balanced and fair manner, such as prayer, zakat, hajj, jihad, etc. Even Imam As-Syatibi said:

If there is a tendency for the rulings of shari'ah to deviate from the moderate manhaj to one of the two opposing poles, namely the extreme right and extreme left poles, then the ruling or fatwa immediately returns to its character or moderate manhaj. (As-Syatibi 2003:348)

Ulemas are special in their understanding of Sufistic interpretation, which is a direct gift from Allah SWT because of piety, *iqamah* and good morals. Islamic colleges should understand the meaning of Quranic verses to promote religious moderation (Syarif 2021).

Religious moderation can facilitate the growth of Islamic skills. The Islamic Faculty teaches religious moderation, such as *ushuludin*, *shariah* and *dakwah*, through critical and creative thinking, leadership, emotional intelligence, and adapting cognitive functions to new events and environments in society. This can foster academically promising attitudes and behaviours. This research table shows that students who have received education in Muslim schools affect religious moderation in students of state Islamic universities ($p = 0.001$; $B = -0.683$). A teenager with a good understanding of religion has a common understanding of religious moderation. The more conservative the attitude of teenagers, the more they tend to be inclusive, which closes pluralism in a plural society (Al Adawiyah 2020).

Religious moderation's importance in averting fundamentalist Islamic currents' growth and development is widely acknowledged (Naim 2022). Integrating education studies at Islamic universities transforms religious knowledge for actively learning students and plays a strategic role in the propagation of religious moderation. With systematic and structured efforts, religious moderation can become knowledge and awareness (Manshur 2020). Intra-curricular and extra-curricular curriculums are used to promote Islamic moderation. Regular and systematic promotion of religious moderation should be included (Thoriquttyas 2020).

Religious education, in this case, Islam, significantly influences religious moderation, showing that the importance of moderation as character education goes beyond understanding the religious text. Religious texts can be learned literally without regard to reason, which causes adherents to be unable to understand pluralism as a reality. Students who study in Islamic schools will learn religious texts conservatively and without a critical attitude, which will trigger radicalism and lead to intolerance in the long run (Al Adawiyah 2020).

Indonesia's Islamic religious university has a lengthy history and is crucial to the development of Islam and Indonesia. It has served three primary purposes: as an academic institution, as a centre for the study and advancement of science, as a protector of morality, and as a source of Islamic enlightenment (Buitendag 2020). If these three functions are effectively executed, the Islamic university will become a source of Islamic enlightenment, as its influence on the development of Islamic thought, and the lives of Muslims is substantial (Kafid 2018). Religion-based tertiary institutions demonstrate their true competence in this area (Naim 2022).

Universities must promote religious moderation through moderate Islamic education to ensure graduates are tolerant of human diversity and live peaceful lives. Diversity in

higher education can contribute to extremism, particularly in the context of higher education (Budiharsoa 2020). Islamic colleges have adopted moderate Islamic education to reduce the occurrence of radical movements (Arifianto 2019; Arifinsyah 2020; El Ishaq 2021; Jamilah 2021; Syatar 2020). Moderate religious values emphasising morality and spirituality improve students' academic and social abilities (Ali 2018). Islamic universities must provide knowledge and critical education about religious moderation and faith (Abdullah 2021; Janarbekovna 2021; Mahrus 2020).

This study indicates that religious moderation will increase by 1% and religious ideology will increase by 1.609, assuming other independent variables are constant. An increase in religious moderation will increase by 1%, while religious studies will decrease by 0.191, assuming other independent variables are constant. Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara should promote religious moderation through moderate Islamic education to have a high tolerance attitude and good emotional intelligence. They can also use their emotions wisely and not force others to follow their beliefs. Thus, moderate Islamic education is needed to ensure that graduates tolerate human diversity and live a peaceful life. Diversity in higher education can contribute to extremism, especially in the context of higher education.

Conclusion

Religious moderation among Islamic students in Islamic universities has a low score of 78.02 out of 102, so religious moderation in Islamic universities should be a serious concern, especially related factors such as religious education, depression, religious ideology, religious experience and experience following religious studies. The provision of Islamic religious education must be made well, especially religious education accompanied by religious moderation education in Islamic schools, so that students do not make mistakes in interpreting the knowledge of running life in Islam, which is oriented towards *rahmatan lil alamin* [mercy for all nature].

Students at Islamic university have an average level of depression in the low depression category. Students who have problems related to depression will be unable to analyse the information obtained properly, which will increase the risk of violence, intolerance, low national commitment and not accommodating local culture.

The religious moderation will increase by 1% and religious ideology will increase by 1.609, assuming other independent variables are constant. An increase in religious moderation will increase by 1%, while religious studies will decrease by 0.191, assuming other independent variables are constant.

Religiosity is a significant influence on the religious moderation of students in Islamic universities. A good religious ideology will give students good religious knowledge, especially knowledge about religious moderation and blessings for all nature in Islam, so that they will have a moderate attitude in the form of non-violent actions, high

tolerance, high commitment to the nation, and being accommodating to local culture.

In the aspect of religious methods, students at Islamic universities still tend to be moderate in addressing various religious issues that prioritise upholding moral values, character and Islamic identity [*rahmatan lil alamin*] rather than using violence in solving problems that affect both fellow Muslims and people of other religions. Islamic students at Islamic universities must be more selective and wise in absorbing the information they obtain, especially information related to religious issues in the digital era.

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Authors' contributions

W.M., N.A. and P.A.S. contributed to the design and implementation of the research, the analysis of the results, and the writing up to the publishing of the article. All authors W.M., N.A., and P.A.S. have contributed in writing of manuscripts ranging from conceptual article, methodology, visualisation, data analysis, and editing article later.

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Disclaimer

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