

Cultivating Religious Moderation Based on KOMPAQ at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu

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Abstract

They are cultivating moderation at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu, based in Kompaq. Religious moderation is significant in creating harmony amidst diversity in multicultural Indonesia. This research aims to study how university students understand and apply religious moderation and how it impacts their attitudes towards tolerance and interfaith harmony. This research was conducted qualitatively with a Postpositivism approach involving participatory observation and in-depth interviews. The results showed that students of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu understand religious moderation well, which is reflected in their mutual respect and tolerance for differences. In addition, it has been proven that applying religious moderation values helps reduce the likelihood of conflict and increase cooperation between religious groups. The cultivation of Kompaq-based religious moderation at this university affects the entire campus community. The academic environment is expected to be inclusive and harmonious with social activities and educational programs that support moderate values. This study dramatically helps us understand the dynamics of religious moderation among the younger generation and offers suggestions for building religious moderation programs in other educational institutions.

Key Word: Cultivation Religious Moderation, Implementation and Implications, KOMPAQ.

Introduction

Indonesia is a multicultural country with a diversity of ethnicities, religions, races, and cultures, which makes it one of the most diverse countries in the world. Diversity is a destiny given by Allah SWT, which must be accepted and believed as a form of certainty whose presence cannot be avoided. As Lukman Hakim stated in the book of religious moderation prologue, the emergence of differences is not the result of human intervention. Still, it is purely a gift from Allah SWT. This situation does not need to be bargained for but must be accepted as fitrah (Kementerian Agama, 2019, p. 6).

While diversity is a divine gift to be embraced, instances of intolerance, religious radicalism, and extremism continue to surface, threatening the fabric of unity. Incidents such as hate speech, blasphemy, destruction of places of worship, and social media conflicts reflect a worrying level of disharmony in society. Among students, particularly at the university level, a lack of understanding of religious moderation has made them vulnerable to radical ideologies and identity crises during their formative years. This highlights the urgent need for educational interventions to counteract these influences and foster an inclusive understanding of religion. Rarely do religious institutions work together to support community-based character education, such as schools, because students still lack interaction with their parents, and there is no religious literacy movement inside and outside the school (Faridi and Yogawati, 2022). Educators are responsible for creating learning environments and processes that allow students to develop by absorbing as much knowledge as possible according to their needs, experiences and environmental demands. This condition can affect student learning outcomes (Nurhakim, 2011).

Despite various efforts to promote religious moderation in educational institutions, significant gaps remain in effectively integrating moderate values into the campus environment. Prior studies have explored the inclusion of religious moderation in curricula, training programs, and extracurricular activities. However, many programs fail to address the comprehensive needs of students or to provide sustainable, community-based models for fostering inclusiveness and tolerance. Furthermore, there is limited research on how faith-based student communities can serve as effective platforms for cultivating religious moderation, particularly in higher education institutions with diverse student populations. So, the community environment must also apply moderate teaching so that people gain knowledge about moderation education through the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, which they did not previously know (Dhimas Alunandika & Khozin, 2024).

The values of Tawassuth (moderation) and Tasamuh (tolerance) are foundational for fostering a balanced and inclusive mindset among students, particularly in multicultural settings like universities (Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023). Tawassuth encourages students to adopt a middle-ground approach, enabling them to critically evaluate diverse perspectives and avoid extreme ideologies. This balanced thinking enhances their ability to navigate complex social, political, and religious issues with reason and empathy. On campuses where students encounter peers from varied ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds, moderation helps bridge differences and fosters understanding, reducing potential conflicts. Tasamuh, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of accepting and respecting differing beliefs and opinions, creating a culture of openness and harmony. These values enable students to build meaningful relationships, collaborate effectively, and contribute positively to an inclusive academic environment.

In addition to enhancing interpersonal relationships, these values equip students with resilience against radical ideologies, which often target the youth during their formative years. By instilling moderation and tolerance, educational institutions prepare students to critically analyze extremist narratives and misinformation, especially in the digital age where such content is pervasive. Rooted in Quranic teachings and principles of Islam as a religion of mercy (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*), Tawassuth and Tasamuh also offer students a practical framework to apply their faith in ways that promote peace and inclusivity. As students internalize these values, they develop into socially responsible individuals who can lead in fostering harmony, addressing global challenges, and building cohesive communities. These values are not merely theoretical but are essential tools for thriving in and contributing to today's diverse and interconnected world.

At Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu (UMB), the cultivation of religious moderation is an urgent and deliberate response to the challenges of fostering harmony in Indonesia's diverse and multicultural society. Through initiatives like the KOMPAQ program (Al-Quran Lovers Student Community), UMB integrates the principles of Tawassuth (moderation), Tasamuh (tolerance), Musawah (equality), and Shura (deliberation) into academic and extracurricular activities, creating a foundation for inclusive and balanced religious understanding. This program addresses the vulnerabilities of university students, who are at a critical stage of identity formation and are often exposed to radical ideologies, by promoting interfaith dialogue, thematic Quranic studies, and training workshops on peace and tolerance. With a curriculum that embeds moderate Islamic values and community-focused activities, KOMPAQ empowers students as agents of change, equipping them to combat extremism, respect diversity, and foster social cohesion.

This underlies the cultivation of moderate attitudes, which must be developed in every learning process, from basic to higher education. Religious moderation in Indonesia began to be echoed in 2016 by the Minister of Religion at that time, Lukman Hakim Syaifuddin. The

religious moderation program is believed to be a remedy for organising community life with high religious diversity to create a peaceful, harmonious, and tolerant society, religion, and nation (Ajahari et al., 2023, p. 42). Religious moderation has a significant role because, with religious moderation, each individual can be protected from radicalism, fanaticism, and extremism. These three things will give birth to an intolerant attitude that will develop into quarrels and hostility between individuals and groups, dividing the nation (Arif, 2021). A university run by a private sponsor can quickly establish methods to build its higher education program. According to the Ministry of Religious Affairs, religious moderation should be implemented at all levels of society. Moderation in such places is equivalent to prioritising the interests of different groups. A moderation study on COVID-19 cases emphasises the benefits and consequences of withdrawal (Al Ahsani, 2020).

From several studies on religious moderation, previous studies that have similarities are obtained as follows:

This research reveals that students do not understand national commitment, openness/tolerance, non-violence, and accommodating local culture. UIN Raden Fatah Palembang's policy in instilling moderation by compiling a curriculum for strengthening character education, religious student organisations (Ormawa), PBAK, lifteth lectures, public lectures, seminars in strengthening religious moderation in universities, and establishing Religious Moderation Houses (Rohmadi, 2021).

The discussion results show that universities, the highest formal educational institutions, become the central laboratories in developing and implementing religious moderation. Furthermore, the results of this development are distributed to universities and primary and secondary schools as subject matter. Studying religious knowledge has helped students be moderate in society in non-formal institutions. This alignment helps moderate ideology enter all levels of society (Amrullah & Islamy, 2021).

This research shows that AIK lecturers are educators who must understand and develop student learning potential, including Cognitive knowledge, affective understanding, and cognitive expertise. The implementation of AIK learning at the Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu has not fully supported the religious moderation program due to the non-optimal implementation of 4 competencies in each AIK lecturer. Support for the integration of religious moderation has also not had much impact due to the presence of students and lecturers who are exposed to radicalism and liberalism (Febriana et al., 2022).

The results of the study show that first. However, many people agree that religious moderation in South Sumatra is expected to increase tolerance and unity among religious communities, some people argue that religious moderation can threaten their traditional values and cultural identity. Second, the findings of this study show that the local social, economic and political contexts strongly influence the understanding of religious moderation in South Sumatra. This research helps us understand how Malay Muslims view religious moderation in South Sumatra. Third, the findings show how important it is to build solid local identities to support people's participation in stable democratic processes and to create a harmonious and inclusive environment in the region. Fourth, the findings of this study show that conversations between religious believers and religious groups can help each other better understand each other, reduce tensions, and create a more stable environment for democratic stability (Noviani & Adil, 2024).

The results showed that an educational communication model based on Qur'anic Religious Pluralism successfully prevented religious prejudice and increased substantive moderation of Muslim students ($t = 18.75$ significant at $\alpha.01$). Most respondents had negative religious prejudice. Still, after the course, they became more tolerant. The educational communication

model based on Qur'anic religious pluralism at IRE is highly recommended in the context of its implications. Nevertheless, further research should explore the reasons why a minority of students continued to show negative religious prejudice, even though the lectures were conducted with the same learning model (Maarif et al., 2024).

Based on previous research described by the authors, this research seeks to instill religious moderation in students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu based on the Al-Qur'an-loving student community (KOMPAQ). So, this is the novelty of this research: it discusses a topic that has never been found in previous research.

KOMPAQ (Komunitas Mahasiswa Pecinta Al-Qur'an) was chosen as the approach in this research because it provides a structured and community-based model to instill religious moderation among students in a practical and sustainable manner. As a Quran-focused student community, KOMPAQ offers a platform for integrating moderate Islamic teachings with real-life applications, making it particularly effective in addressing the issues of intolerance, radicalism, and exclusivity prevalent among some university students. The program emphasizes Quranic principles of balance, tolerance, and inclusiveness, aligning with the core values needed to foster harmony in a diverse society.

The KOMPAQ model stands out for its comprehensive approach, which combines academic learning with community engagement. Its activities include Quranic studies that go beyond memorization to explore thematic interpretations emphasizing peace and tolerance, interfaith dialogues to promote mutual understanding, and leadership training to empower students as ambassadors of moderation. Additionally, its alignment with the principles of Muhammadiyah as a movement advocating moderate Islam ensures institutional support and relevance to the university's identity. The structured implementation of KOMPAQ—covering aspects like inclusive curriculum integration, regular discussions, and social outreach—makes it a strategic choice to cultivate religious moderation effectively within the campus environment.

This study addresses these gaps by focusing on the Komunitas Mahasiswa Pecinta Al-Qur'an (KOMPAQ) at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu (UMB), a student community designed to instill moderate Islamic values. By exploring how KOMPAQ integrates Quranic teachings with the principles of Tawassuth (moderation), Tasamuh (tolerance), Musawah (equality), and Shura (deliberation), this research aims to evaluate its effectiveness in cultivating religious moderation among students. Specifically, the study seeks to understand how KOMPAQ's activities influence students' attitudes towards diversity and their ability to counteract radicalism, offering a replicable model for other educational institutions striving to foster harmony in a multicultural society. Based on the research findings, researchers found information that Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu has implemented the cultivation of religious moderation in the campus environment, one of which is including religious moderation material in Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyahan courses. In addition, Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu also launched the Al-Qur'an Lovers Student Community (KOMPAQ) to anticipate intolerance in students and create moderate insights.

Method

This kind of qualitative study employs the postpositivist paradigm, commonly referred to as "special discussion to general." Several inductive steps are used to apply this paradigm, including conceptualizing, classifying, and presenting a picture created based on issues in the topic. The qualitative research methodology of this study, which employs the postpositivism paradigm, focuses on a thorough comprehension of fostering religious moderation at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu using KOMPAQ. The purpose of this technique was to

investigate the subjective experiences, opinions, and interpretations of the participants—students, instructors, and program managers—in the implementation of religious moderation ideals on campus. This research is grounded in the postpositivism paradigm, which holds that although certain patterns can be found, reality is complicated and impacted by a variety of subjective elements.

Data was collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies. In-depth interviews were used to explore informants' understanding, experiences and perceptions of implementing KOMPAQ-based religious moderation. Participatory observation allows researchers to observe interactions and activities directly reflecting moderation values. Meanwhile, the documentation study helped me understand the context of university programs and policies related to religious moderation. Data analysis was conducted using a thematic approach to identify relevant patterns, themes and categories. The collected data will be verified through triangulation techniques to increase the validity and reliability of the research results. This research is expected to provide comprehensive insights into the effectiveness of the KOMPAQ approach in shaping the understanding of religious moderation in the campus environment.

Result

Based on the results of an interview with the Vice Chancellor III of Student Affairs at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu, several approaches are being considered to cultivate religious moderation at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu.

1. Inclusive curriculum. It offered classes or programs after class hours that teach students about tolerance, moderation, and interfaith communication.
2. Seminars and discussions. To help students better understand religious plurality, organise seminars, panel discussions, or workshops on religious moderation, freedom, and tolerance.
3. Workshops and trainings. Plan seminars and trainings to help students become more adept at resolving disputes, recognising different cultures, and communicating across religions.
4. Inclusive religious events. Plan religious events in an atmosphere of mutual respect and communication.
5. Establishment of dialogue communities. Establish student organisations or communities dedicated to developing interfaith understanding and discourse, such as KOMPAQ.
6. Development of writing and research. Promote writing and research on religious moderation and interfaith harmony from a scientific perspective—Foster student leadership. Encourage students to act as agents of change by promoting moderation on campus and in the local community.

In this case, the Vice Chancellor III of UM Bengkulu said:

“This strategy is important because it can foster a polite, inclusive atmosphere and encourage a deeper awareness of religious diversity. All academic community members of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu must commit and actively participate in the initiative. This is so that it can be implemented and effective.”

So, it can be seen that the cultivation of religious moderation towards students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu has been instilled.

A moderate understanding of religious practice can be developed by instilling KOMPAQ-based religious moderation in the campus environment of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu. KOMPAQ has six routine activity programs, as shown in the following table:

Table 1. KOMPAQ activity program				
No	Activity Name	Day of Implementation	Activity Location	Presenter
1	Tahsin	Every Monday Afternoon	Campus Mosque	Faisal Asyqi Firmansyah
2	Tahfidz	Every Wednesday Afternoon	Campus Mosque	Iqbal Kurniawan
3	Tilawah	Every Thursday Afternoon	Campus Mosque	Ustadz Noverianto
4	Khutbah/Ceramah Training	Every Friday afternoon	Campus Mosque	Susan Hadi Hidayat
5	Study Routine	Every Sunday Night	Campus Mosque	Ustadz Dedy Novriadi
6	Interfaith Dialogue	Once a month (end-date)	Campus Hall	All participants

The following are some of the key findings and discussions from the interviews with KOMPAQ Trustees and Chairpersons:

1. Greater knowledge of moderation: The KOMPAQ approach is intended to help students gain a better understanding of inclusive and moderate religious teachings.
2. Strengthening Cooperation: Cultivating religious moderation requires cooperation with various stakeholders, including the community, students, government, and spiritual leaders.
3. Creating empowered students: Groups that recognise the importance of religious moderation will be better able to voice their opposition to intolerance and extremism.
4. Active Participation: Students should actively participate in cultivating religious moderation to ensure that each student's different needs and perspectives are met.
5. Adaptation to Change: As university students constantly evolve, developing contemporary knowledge of religion is imperative.
6. Grounded in the Qur'an: The cultivation of religious moderation remains grounded in the ideals and teachings of the Qur'an, ensuring that it does not deviate from the teachings of the religion.

The implementation or execution of a policy or program is a collection of more or less related decisions (including decisions to act) made by government agencies and officials in areas such as economics, administration, health, and social welfare, among others (Dunn, 2017).

Based on interviews conducted with two informants, Informant 1, the Head of KOMPAQ, and Informant 2, the supervisor of KOMPAQ, the researcher found four values for implementing religious moderation in KOMPAQ. The four values include *Tawassuth* (Taking the Middle Way), *Tasamuh* (Tolerance), *Musawah* (Equality), and *Shura* (Deliberation).

a. *Tawassuth* (Taking the middle way)

It is a view or attitude that always takes the middle way, not being a fundamentalist and also not being liberal in religion. This middle way does not lead to extreme, revolutionary, and fanatical attitudes toward religion (Mohan and Hakim, 2022). Based on the results of the

interview show that the cultivation of religious moderation in KOMPAQ has instilled the value of Tawassuth in each member, as the following interview excerpt:

The Chairman of KOMPAQ said as follows,

"In activities, it is strictly forbidden to argue outside the control of the host, and all KOMPAQ members are prohibited from calling Non-Muslims Kafir, in arguing to spread da'wah not with violence or extremism but must prioritise brotherhood among humans."

KOMPAQ advisor said,

"KOMPAQ is built based on respecting and honouring the opinions of others, both fellow Muslims and non-Muslims."

b. *Tasamuh* (Tolerance)

It means a person's attitude or stance is reflected in the willingness to accept all differences in views and diverse understandings, even if they disagree with them (Aziz et al., 2019a, p. 12). Based on the interview, it was found that the value of Tasamuh has been instilled in every member, as the following interview excerpt:

The Chairman of KOMPAQ said,

"In every activity in this community, we always prioritise manners, both verbal manners and manners towards everyone present so that most of the participants also respect each other's opinions, before the activity takes place, I will convey the rules that participants must carry out so that the activity runs fairly and unemotionally if there are violations, there will be sanctions."

The KOMPAQ advisor said,

"KOMPAQ is built based on respecting and honouring the opinions of others, both young and old, so sharing knowledge and opinions is allowed while still within the scope of the rules and manners conveyed by the KOMPAQ Chairperson before the event begins."

c. *Musawah* (Equality)

They were showing a non-discriminatory attitude towards someone based on differences in beliefs, religion, or origin. (Kawakib & Agung, 2021, p. 72). God's creations have the same dignity regardless of gender, ethnicity, race, religion, and nation (NAFA et al., 2022). *Musawah* in Islam has a principle that every Muslim must understand: equality, which is the fruit of Islamic justice. In-depth interviews with informants show that the value of Musawah has been instilled in the personalities of KOMPAQ members so that they can be an example for other students, as the following interview excerpts:

The Chairman of KOMPAQ said,

"KOMPAQ members are always given affirmation in life in the campus environment, always being humble towards everyone, even though they have different views, beliefs, or cultures."

KOMPAQ advisor said,

"KOMPAQ is a forum for students who want to be the best example at the university; therefore, we also always strive for the best facilities for all members, for example in the recitation, we routinely discuss related to Gender, Akidah and Akhlak to form a character that has a good stance can respect each other."

d. *Shura* (Deliberation)

Shura or deliberation is an attitude shown by solving every problem through deliberation to obtain consensus by placing the benefit above all else (Kawakib & Agung, 2021, p. 72). Deliberation has a high position in Islam; deliberation is also intended to realise a democratic society. Based on the results of interviews with informants, it shows that the cultivation of moderate students in the form of Shura attitudes has been instilled as the following interview excerpts:

The Chairman of KOMPAQ said,

“During the process of KOMPAQ activities, there must be different opinions or even throwing their emotions at each other so that I, as the enforcer or who controls the entire course of activities, take action to deliberate, namely by gathering those who argue, given the flexibility to talk about what the problem is so that later they can take the middle way.”

The KOMPAQ advisor said,

“Once a month, I will hold a grand meeting requiring all KOMPAQ members to attend to evaluate so that the strengths can be improved and the shortcomings can be immediately corrected”.

Based on the interview with the KOMPAQ coach, it was found that there are positive and negative implications in the cultivation of religious moderation based on KOMPAQ at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu, as well as several things that need to be considered, including:

Positive implications:

1. Better understanding of religion: Through lectures, studies, and other community activities, students can learn more about the lessons of the Qur'an and its emphasis on moderation.
2. Increased tolerance and interfaith harmony: Community members can promote interreligious dialogue, tolerance and harmony on campus and in the community by understanding the Qur'ānic values of moderation.
3. Leadership development: Society members can use it as a platform to learn how to facilitate conversations, plan events, and act as agents of change in their organizations, especially regarding moderate understanding.
4. Building social networks: Community members can expand their social network and enhance their college experience by connecting with students who share similar interests and values.

Negative implications:

1. Potential exclusivity: This community's emphasis on Qur'ānic studies may make non-Muslim students or others who are not interested in Qur'ānic studies feel excluded or alone.
2. Ignorance of religious plurality: In a multicultural community, it is imperative to acknowledge the diversity of views and religions. This point may be missed if the Qur'ān is given too much attention.
3. Potential confrontation with other communities: If the Qur'ānic Lovers Student Community adopts a dogmatic or exclusive stance, this may cause friction with other groups or communities on campus.
4. Limitations of viewpoints: Excessive concentration on one religious source or viewpoint can prevent a more comprehensive understanding of religious diversity and multiple religious viewpoints.

In an in-depth interview, the KOMPAQ advisor said that:

“...These communities should strive to strike an appropriate balance between promoting religious tolerance and harmony and strengthening religious understanding, considering the good and bad effects of their actions and methods. Building a peaceful and welcoming campus community requires encouraging polite, inclusive, and honest communication among the various communities.”

So, it can be concluded that at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu, there are indications of students who are Intolerant, Radical, and Libertarian.

Discussion

The research results align closely with established theories and literature, providing a strong foundation for the argument that fostering religious moderation through initiatives like KOMPAQ significantly benefits students and society. Social learning theory, as posited by Bandura, emphasizes that individuals learn behaviors, values, and attitudes through observation, interaction, and internalization within their social environment. The KOMPAQ program operationalizes this theory by creating a community where students engage in thematic Quranic studies, interfaith dialogues, and social activities, allowing them to observe and practice values like *Tawassuth* (moderation) and *Tasamuh* (tolerance). This approach ensures that students internalize these values as part of their daily interactions, making them agents of moderation and inclusivity.

The findings resonate with the principles of *Wasatiyyah* Islam, which advocates for balance, tolerance, and inclusiveness as outlined in Quranic teachings. The inclusion of KOMPAQ activities that emphasize non-discrimination, mutual respect, and peaceful dialogue reflects this framework. Previous research by Aziz et al. (2019) highlights that values like moderation and tolerance are critical in countering extremism and fostering harmony in pluralistic societies, a conclusion supported by the success of KOMPAQ in reducing tensions and promoting cooperation among students. Furthermore, the results align with findings from studies on religious education by Purwanto et al. (2019), which argue that integrating religious moderation into academic and extracurricular programs creates a balanced understanding of faith while equipping students to address societal challenges.

Incorporating KOMPAQ into the academic environment also addresses the gaps identified in Waseso and Sekarnasih's (2021) research, which notes the limited emphasis on religious moderation as a hidden curriculum in higher education. By explicitly fostering the values of *Tawassuth*, *Tasamuh*, *Musawah* (equality), and *Shura* (deliberation), KOMPAQ bridges this gap, ensuring that students develop not only intellectual but also ethical and social competencies. These theoretical and empirical parallels underscore the research's argument that community-based programs like KOMPAQ are effective in cultivating religious moderation and preparing students to thrive in and contribute to a diverse and interconnected world.

KOMPAQ was established in the 2015 academic year to prevent the behaviour of intolerance, liberalism and radicalism that exists in the campus environment of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu. The results of this study clearly show that the cultivation of religious moderation can be done outside of class learning by using KOMPAQ to instil religious moderation values in students. Based on qualitative data collected by researchers through interviews, there are four values of religious moderation cultivation based on KOMPAQ at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu.

The results of this study are strengthened by previous research, which found that there are students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu who are indicated by radicalism and liberalism. Thus, AIK Learning at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu has not fully supported the religious moderation program. This is because each AIK lecturer has not optimally utilised the four competencies (Febriana et al., 2022).

This study, supported by previous research, found that various ways can be used to instil the value of religious moderation in students. One effective way is to plant religious moderation at the University of Muhammadiyah Bengkulu based on KOMPAQ.

Religious moderation is an essential issue in a multicultural society, especially in Indonesia, which is known for its high diversity of religions and beliefs. Campus, as an educational institution, has a strategic role in shaping students' moderate views and attitudes

towards religion. Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu (UMB), an Islamic university under Muhammadiyah, participates in efforts to instil religious moderation in students. This discussion will outline the steps, challenges, and effectiveness of the religious moderation program implemented at UMB.

Cultivating religious moderation is based on socialization theory, which emphasizes the social learning process, where students as individuals acquire values, attitudes, and norms from their campus environment. In social learning theory, as proposed by Bandura, individual attitudes and behaviours can be formed through observation, interaction, and internalization of values adopted by their social groups. In this context, as an institution, UMB is expected to be a role model for students who display moderate religious attitudes.

At Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu (UMB), various methods are employed to instill religious moderation in students, ensuring they develop balanced and inclusive perspectives. Moderation values are integrated into courses like Islamic Religion and Civic Education, providing students with a comprehensive understanding of how religious moderation applies to daily life and national unity. Student organizations such as KOMPAQ (Komunitas Mahasiswa Pecinta Al-Qur'an) play a pivotal role by engaging students in moderate and inclusive Islamic studies, fostering a harmonious balance between faith and science. Religious activities on campus, including seminars, discussions, and studies, emphasize the principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (mercy for the universe), steering clear of divisive topics that may trigger polarization. Additionally, UMB organizes diversity-focused training and workshops that feature presenters from varied backgrounds, offering students diverse perspectives on religious and societal issues. Together, these initiatives create a supportive environment for cultivating tolerance, understanding, and a commitment to peaceful coexistence.

Although various efforts have been made, the cultivation of religious moderation at UMB faces several challenges, such as: 1). Students in the digital era are often exposed to content that promotes radical or extreme attitudes through social media. This can affect students' views on religious moderation. 2). UMB students come from various regions with different socio-cultural backgrounds. This results in differences in understanding and perspective on religious moderation, so instilling moderate values must be done with a sensitive and inclusive approach. 3). Some students still understand moderation as a compromise attitude that is not firm, even though religious moderation is an effort to achieve balance and harmony in religion.

Cultivating religious moderation at UMB is beneficial not only for campus life but also has a positive impact on the wider community. Students who have a moderate understanding of religion are expected to become agents of change in society, which can reduce conflict and promote tolerant attitudes. In the long run, this can create a more harmonious society and mutual respect for diversity.

The cultivation of religious moderation at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu shows that higher education has an essential role in shaping moderate religious attitudes in the younger generation. Although there are challenges, such as extreme external influences and differences in student backgrounds, UMB's efforts to instil religious moderation through a moderate curriculum, student activities, and da'wah have produced significant results from students, as described in the research results in the chapter. Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu (UMB) realises the importance of religious moderation in shaping students' tolerant, inclusive, and balanced attitudes as part of Indonesia's multicultural society. To achieve this goal, UMB implements the Komunitas Mahasiswa Pecinta Al-Quran (KOMPAQ) program, which is specifically designed to internalise the values of religious moderation in student life. The following are details on how the values of religious moderation are implemented through KOMPAQ activities at UMB.

The findings of the KOMPAQ program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu (UMB) demonstrate its alignment with social learning theory, as proposed by Bandura. This theory emphasizes that individuals acquire values, behaviors, and attitudes through observation, interaction, and participation within their social environment. KOMPAQ facilitates this process by creating a structured community where students engage in Quranic learning, interfaith dialogue, and social activities. These settings enable students to observe and model inclusive, respectful, and moderate behaviors, fostering an internalization of the values of Tawassuth (moderation), Tasamuh (tolerance), Musawah (equality), and Shura (deliberation). The program's success in promoting tolerance and reducing religious-based conflicts highlights the efficacy of leveraging community-based approaches to instill these values.

The implementation of KOMPAQ aligns with the principles of Wasatiyyah Islam, which emphasizes balance and moderation as core tenets of Islamic teaching. The thematic Quranic interpretation used in KOMPAQ mirrors the concept of Islam as *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (a mercy for the universe), fostering a compassionate and inclusive worldview among students. Literature, such as Aziz et al. (2019), supports this approach by underscoring the role of religious moderation in countering radicalism and promoting social harmony. Furthermore, KOMPAQ's focus on dialogue and diversity training resonates with studies like those by Purwanto et al. (2019), which suggest that structured educational interventions integrating moderation into curricula significantly enhance students' understanding of pluralism and their ability to engage with differing perspectives.

Additionally, KOMPAQ addresses challenges identified in Waseso and Sekarnasih's (2021) research on religious moderation as a hidden curriculum. By explicitly embedding moderation values in activities and providing practical platforms for interaction, KOMPAQ bridges the gap between theoretical learning and real-world application. This is further supported by theories on transformative learning, which argue that immersive and dialogical experiences are critical for shifting worldviews and fostering inclusive mindsets. KOMPAQ's strategies, particularly its thematic Quranic learning and interfaith discussions, exemplify this, as they actively challenge students to rethink and contextualize their religious beliefs in ways that emphasize coexistence and mutual respect.

The findings also reinforce the importance of contact theory, which posits that meaningful interaction between individuals from different backgrounds can reduce prejudice and foster understanding. By creating spaces for dialogue and collaboration, KOMPAQ reduces tensions arising from religious misunderstandings, as evidenced by the low levels of conflict among its members and their increased openness to diverse viewpoints. The program's emphasis on social cohesion through community service and dialogue further supports the argument that such interaction is vital for building a peaceful and inclusive campus culture. These theoretical connections strengthen the argument that KOMPAQ's approach is not only contextually relevant but also grounded in well-established frameworks for fostering religious moderation and social harmony.

The findings of this study indicate that community-based programs such as KOMPAQ are able to promote religious moderation within Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu (UMB). These results are in line with previous research, such as a study conducted by (Patih et al., 2023) on the role of religious organizations in Islamic universities in shaping students' inclusive attitudes. In the study, faith-based communities contributed positively to increasing tolerance and strengthening balanced religious values among students.

Another study by (Kusnawan, 2021) found that students' involvement in faith-based community activities, such as halaqah or Qur'anic studies, can strengthen religious moderation attitudes. This research shows that discussion-based approaches and religious reflection have

great potential in internalizing moderate religious values. This is in line with the success of KOMPAQ, which uses a similar approach in creating harmony among students at UMB.

However, this study also found some uniqueness compared to other studies. For example, research by Haryanto, (2019) states that faith-based communities on campus often face challenges in the form of exclusivity, especially if their activities focus more on internal groups. In contrast to these findings, KOMPAQ succeeded in building religious moderation without creating an attitude of exclusivity. This is due to KOMPAQ's strategy of involving students from various study programs and backgrounds, as well as the management of activities oriented towards strengthening the value of inclusiveness.

Some studies, such as the one conducted by (Ramadhan & Qolyubi, 2021), found that religious moderation is more effective when applied through an interfaith approach. This finding is different from the research at UMB, where religious moderation was successfully achieved through strengthening Islamic values internally. This suggests that religious moderation does not always require interfaith interaction, but can be achieved with an inclusive internal approach.

This research makes significant contributions to the study of religious moderation in higher education. First, it shows that a community-based approach such as KOMPAQ can be an effective model in shaping religious moderation without ignoring religious identity. Second, this study provides insight into the importance of institutional support in creating an environment conducive to religious moderation. Support from UMB in the form of facilities and mentoring from lecturers was instrumental in KOMPAQ's success. This research confirms the importance of inclusive strategies in faith-based activities. By involving students from various backgrounds, KOMPAQ is able to create a safe and productive discussion space to internalize the values of religious moderation. It contributes to the literature on how religious moderation can be effectively implemented in higher education settings, particularly in Islamic universities.

The results of this study provide practical implications for other universities that want to implement similar programs. An inclusive community-based approach can be a solution to build religious moderation on campus. In addition, this study encourages further research to explore how communities like KOMPAQ can be expanded and applied in more diverse contexts.

Another implication is the increased awareness of students towards the dangers of extremism and radicalism. Through trainings and dialogues held by KOMPAQ, students gain a deeper understanding of the threat of extremism and ways to avoid extremism in religion. KOMPAQ emphasises that extremism not only damages the image of religion but also threatens unity and peace. With this awareness, students are able to distinguish between healthy religious understanding and radical invitations. They are also more careful in selecting religious information from social media or other external environments. This implication is particularly important in the digital age, where exposure to extremist content is easily accessible and spreads quickly.

KOMPAQ also makes a real contribution to strengthening social cohesion at UMB. Through joint activities that include students from various study programs and backgrounds, KOMPAQ helps foster a sense of brotherhood and togetherness. Activities such as social service and community service organised by KOMPAQ foster a sense of empathy, caring, and cooperation, which are essential foundations in creating a harmonious campus environment. This strengthening of social cohesion benefits students, lecturers, and staff, who feel the positive impact of a more peaceful and tolerant campus atmosphere. The harmony created is a strong foundation for the entire UMB academic community's academic progress and character development.

The final implication of the cultivation of religious moderation through KOMPAQ is the positive impact on the image of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu in the eyes of the

community. With KOMPAQ successfully instilling moderation values, UMB is increasingly recognized as an educational institution that supports and applies the principles of religious moderation. This gives UMB a positive image as a campus that is inclusive and peaceful and supports diversity. UMB's good reputation in terms of religious moderation attracts prospective students, especially those who want to study in a safe and conducive environment. In addition, alums who have gained an understanding of religious moderation through KOMPAQ can represent UMB in social life, bringing moderate Islamic values that uphold peace.

The implications of cultivating religious moderation through KOMPAQ at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu include various positive aspects that affect students, the campus environment and society. KOMPAQ succeeds in shaping tolerant and moderate student characters, increasing positive social interactions on campus, strengthening UMB's moderate Islamic identity, and enhancing students' roles as agents of peace in society. In addition, KOMPAQ also helps raise awareness of the dangers of extremism, strengthens social cohesion on campus, and positively impacts UMB's image as an educational institution that supports diversity and tolerance.

The cultivation of religious moderation for students of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu using the KOMPAQ-based method can be a driving force for students to implement religious moderation in the campus environment and in daily life. The results of this study support the theory of (Aziz et al., 2019b), that the cultivation of religious moderation can be done using the KOMPAQ-based method by applying values such as *Tawassuth* (Taking the Middle Way), *Tasamuh* (Tolerance), *Musawah* (Equality), and *Shura* (Deliberation) to strengthen and perfect each other. This study aims to explore the role of the KOMPAQ program in promoting religious moderation at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu (UMB). While it provides valuable insights, several limitations should be acknowledged to ensure transparency and lay the groundwork for future research.

Conclusion

Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu in Indonesia focuses on developing and instilling religious moderation among its students through inclusive curriculum, discussion seminars, training workshops, inclusive religious events, dialogue communities, promotion of writing and research, and encouragement of student leadership. The KOMPAQ organization, in particular, instills religious moderation by increasing student understanding, fostering cooperation, empowering students, encouraging active participation, adapting to change, and remaining grounded in the Qur'an.

The implementation of religious moderation in KOMPAQ involves four values: *Tawassuth* (taking the middle way), *Tasamuh* (tolerance), *Musawah* (equality), and *Shura* (deliberation). *Tawassuth* encourages moderation, avoiding extremism and liberalism. *Tasamuh* promotes respect and acceptance of differing views. *Musawah* emphasises equality and non-discrimination. *Shura* involves deliberation and consensus building.

Fostering religious moderation through KOMPAQ has positive implications, such as better religious understanding, increased tolerance and harmony, leadership development, and social network building. However, the potential for exclusivity, ignorance of religious plurality, confrontation with other communities, and limited viewpoints may also arise. KOMPAQ must balance religious tolerance and harmony with religious understanding to maintain a peaceful and welcoming campus community. Religious moderation can overcome various social conflicts, including interfaith conflicts. Education is essential in fostering moderate thinking and building awareness of national unity. KOMPAQ was established at Universitas Muhammadiyah

Bengkulu to prevent intolerance, liberalism and radicalism. This study confirms that religious moderation can be effectively nurtured through KOMPAQ and other means.

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