ISLAMIC COMMUNICATION IN RELIGIOUS MODERATION EDUCATION AND TRAINING AS RELIGIOUS CONFLICT MITIGATION

KOMUNIKASI ISLAMI DALAM PENDIDIKAN DAN PELATIHAN MODERASI BERAGAMA SEBAGAI MITIGASI KONFLIK SOSIAL KEAGAMAAN

SUHESTI WIRA DHARMA, SYUKUR KHOLIL, AND RUBINO

Suhesti Wira Dharma
Universitas Islam Negeri
Sumatera Utara Medan, Indonesia
e-mail:
suhestiwira4004213004@uinsu.ac.
id

Syukur Kholil
Universitas Islam Negeri
Sumatera Utara Medan, Indonesia
e-mail: syukurkholil@uinsu.ac.id

Rubino
Universitas Islam Negeri
Sumatera Utara Medan, Indonesia
e-mail: rubino@uinsu.ac.id

Abstract

The diversity of North Sumatran society makes it vulnerable to socio-religious conflict. The government has made numerous efforts to mitigate these conflicts, one of which is through early detection policies of religious social conflicts based on religious moderation and the development of communication patterns taught in education and training by the Medan Religious Training Center. It is thought necessary to study and analyze communication patterns for conflict resolution in depth so that they can be employed in line with the community's conditions and characteristics. This study took a descriptive qualitative method, with data collected through interviews, participant observation, and document analysis using data triangulation techniques. The findings revealed that, first, efforts to address religious social conflicts must be carried out through religious education and training (improving the quality of human resources), digital transformation of early warning systems (applications Early Warning System), and measurement of the index of religious behavior (Religiosity Index). Second, mechanisms for dealing with religious social conflicts in the society must be established, particularly in terms of more effective communication patterns and transparent transmission of the concept of religious moderation.

Keywords: *Islamic communication, religious moderation, socio-religious conflict*

Abstra*k*

Heterogenitas masyarakat Sumatera Utara dipandang rentan akan konflik sosial keagamaan. Upaya mitigasi konflik tersebut telah banyak dilakukan oleh pemerintah, salah satunya melalui kebijakan deteksi dini konflik sosial keagamaan berbasis moderasi beragama dan pengembangan pola komunikasi yang diajarkan dalam pendidikan dan pelatihan oleh Balai Diklat Keagamaan Medan. Kebutuhan akan pola komunikasi penanganan konflik dipandang perlu untuk dikaji dan dianalisis secara mendalam sehingga dapat digunakan sesuai dengan kondisi dan karakteristik masyarakat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, dengan tehnik pengumpulan data menggunakan triangulasi data yang diperoleh melalui *interview*, *participant observation*, dan analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa: *pertama*, upaya penanganan konflik sosial keagamaan perlu dilakukan melalui pendidikan dan pelatihan penguatan moderasi beragama (peningkatan kualitas sumber daya manusia), transformasi digital sistem peringatan dini (aplikasi *Early Warning System*), dan pengukuran indeks religiusitas perilaku keagamaan (*Religiosity Index*). *Kedua*, strategi komunikasi Islami berbasis moderasi beragama dapat menjadi pola penanganan konflik sosial keagamaan di masyarakat yang efektif dan transparan.

Kata Kunci: komunikasi Islami, moderasi beragama, konflik sosial keagamaan

INTRODUCTION

The issues surrounding religious harmony in Medan are concerning. According to data from the Setara Institute, which released a list of the most tolerant cities in Indonesia in the Tolerance City Index (IKT) 2022 report (6/4/2023), Medan is among the top 10 of intolerant cities. Medan, North Sumatra, is ranked 7th with a score of 4.420, following Banda Aceh with a score of 4.393 (Setara Institute, 2023). Furthermore, cities in northern Sumatra are indeed experiencing theological turmoil (Serambi News, 2023).

In general, inter-religious conflicts are happening in Indonesia. Due to the existing problems, the government initiated a religious moderation program through the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia. This attempt is made to lessen issues associated with intolerance and establish a peaceful social environment.

The current religious heterogeneity in Indonesia poses challenges and conflicts (Dewi et al., 2023). Differences in beliefs often become sources of disputes and tensions within society. Religious conflicts have occurred throughout history, both on a small and large scale and sometimes even triggered armed conflicts. Another challenge that may arise is discrimination and intolerance towards religious minorities, which can threaten human rights and religious freedom.

As a multicultural country, Indonesia needs to provide a framework of equality to strengthen identity elements through religion, which poses a challenge and implementing revitalized religious moderation. This aims to make Islam, as the majority religion, remain inclusive in fostering peace with minorities and followers of other religions (Jati, 2023).

The above issues indicate that implementing religious moderation is crucial for Indonesia. A series of problems related to intolerance in Indonesia often stem from shallow religious thinking. However, all existing religions in Indonesia have the concept of religious moderation, aiming to unite society by upholding humanistic values.

This is mainly because religious moderation tends to be challenged by groups that seek to promote the purity of religion by placing Islam as the main narrative in policies and social norms. This condition can deepen intolerance if religious moderation is not mainstream in the public sphere. Besides the potential for intolerance, another essential aspect to consider in the expression of religious narcissism is the strengthening of polarization, especially in the Muslim-non-Muslim identity.

However, this program has not resulted in significant changes since the beginning. There have been a lot of upheavals among religious communities in Medan. For example, the ritual dismissal by the local community of the Bethel Indonesia Church (GBI) congregation of Griya Martubung Filadelfia (2019) and many others.

In responding to the problem of intolerance, several experts argue that in a heterogeneous society, it is normal to have subjective social frictions (Taufani, 2018). Prevention of intolerance that has not been significant is also strongly suspected because of personal messages. Messages of moderation in religion should not be separated from the social context. However, some community leaders shared messages of moderation using certain religious arguments.

The problem that the author described above has become a new segmentation in the public space. This is because problems related to religious diversity are cases that can destroy social life's order. Society and government must synergize in maintaining social space within the country in order to be able to create a conducive situation.

The discussion on the issue of religious heterogeneity is intriguing to explore, especially since Indonesia has several institutions and organizations serving as pillars for societal regulation. In this context, the author is interested in analyzing the role of the religious training center in Medan in early detecting religious, social conflicts within the North Sumatra community.

As part of the initial observation, the author's team has gathered approximately 1,000 previous studies related to this research theme. The author has compiled writings using the keywords 'religious moderation' and 'education' for more

relevant analysis. The author will employ network and density analysis using the VosViewer application to facilitate the analysis. The results are as follows:
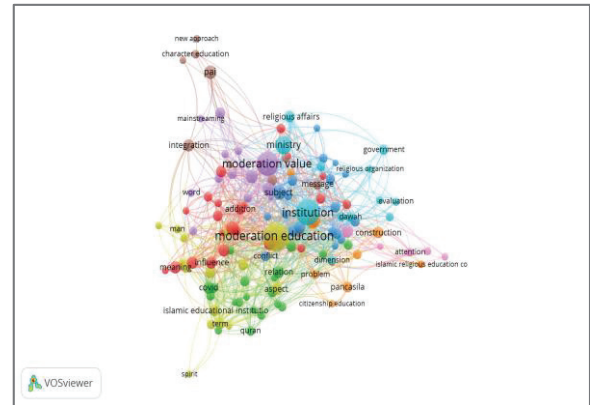

Figure 1. Network Analysis of 1,000 Previous Studies

The above figure illustrates a variety of colors and interconnected lines between words. This indicates that research on religious moderation covers many aspects of discussion according to academic disciplines and societal needs.

The urgency of this research is highlighted considering the prevalence of issues related to intolerance that currently undermine moral values in the nation's life. The authors hope that through this research, a relevant novelty can be formulated in the context of reducing the problems of intolerance in North Sumatra. Therefore, the researchers consider it important to analyze the role of the religious training center in Medan as the Education and Training Center of the Ministry of Religion for leaders and civil servants to mitigate religious conflicts in North Sumatra.

Literature Review

The paper is based on the context of communication of religious development by reviewing the role of the Religious Education and Training Center *(BDK)* in conflict mitigation in North Sumatra. The previous literature reviewed by the authors was done to gain affirmation of research differences, resulting in new findings. Some reviews were done as follows: First, a study of the Bogor City government's role in strengthening religious tolerance (Sazali et al., 2015). The gap lies in the research subject. The current subject of this research is the role 'of the Religious Education and Training Center in strengthening religious tolerance. Then, this article focuses on religious moderation training in conflict mitigation in a heterogeneous society.

The second piece of literature is research on religious moderation campaigns in the new media era using Agenda Setting theory (Hardiyanto et al., 2023). The gap lies in the object of the research. This article examines the role of 'of the Religious Education and Training Center as a counselling forum on religious moderation. The theory used in this study is a diffusion of innovation in the concept of development communication.

Furthermore, research related to religious development in the campus environment showed that building the concept of religious moderation is essential (Al-Mujtahid et al., 2022). At this stage, this

research was conducted at the provincial level.

Some literature examines several cases of intolerance in the Christian religion. The results of this study illustrated that cases of intolerance of churches and congregations are among the highest in Indonesia. Ironically, the church's attitude has been This passivity results in the continued violence (Samosir et al., 2022). The results of this study have differences with previous literature, this study looks at efforts in overcoming religious conflicts through a religious moderation training model.

Furthermore, the literature discusses Religious Moderation for the Middle-Class Muslims in Indonesia: Challenges and Solutions. This research found that there is still a stigmatizing dichotomy between Muslims and non-Muslims, making the challenges of religious moderation as a separate issue. Another problem is the internal relations among Muslims, especially intra-doctrinal contestation. As a result, this leads to a fractured Muslim condition. They compete for leadership in shaping religious discourse in the public sphere. Both of these conditions are related to the strengthening of religion as a societal preference during social interactions. Ultimately, what happens is a kind of labeling and social differentiation within society (Jati, 2023).

Other literature is related to the importance of researching religious moderation in an article entitled The Role Of Religious Moderation On Life Satisfaction Of

Generation Z Muslims, which analyzes that The terminology of religious moderation is one of the topics getting so much attention in social life of society in Indonesia today since it is perceived to have a significant role in realizing peace and security for individuals and groups. In addition, with its existence, appreciation for the guarantee of religious differences and teachings adhered to by individuals can be attained (Ramdani et al., 2022).

The literature presented above consists of several previous studies contributing to the framework of thought in writing this article. The author focuses on the efforts of the Religious Training Center in Medan through Religious Moderation Training to mitigate religious conflicts in North Sumatra. Therefore, this article is based on the Communication Model of the Religious Training Center in Medan in conveying the concept of Religious Moderation to the community.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research conducted a descriptive qualitative research method. It explicitly discusses strengthening religious moderation to mitigate social-religious conflicts in society. In line with Denzin & Lincoln (1994), qualitative research involves interpreting a phenomenon and engaging various available methods. Qualitative research seeks to find and narratively describe the activities performed and the impacts of these actions on people's lives (Fadli, 2021).

Therefore, qualitative research aims to gain a deep understanding of human and social issues rather than describing the surface aspects of reality as quantitative research does with its positivism.

At this stage, the researchers interpret how subjects derive meaning from their environment and how that meaning influences their behavior. There are several research approaches in qualitative research, including phenomenology, ethnography, hermeneutics, grounded theory, narrative/historical, and case studies. (1) Phenomenology: This approach seeks to reveal, study, and understand phenomena and their unique and universally experienced contexts, from individual experiences to the belief systems of those individuals.

Martin Heidegger developed this approach to understand or study human life experiences, to seek the essence or essence of experience, and its goal is to understand experience as it is consciously realized. Data collection in qualitative research needs attention because the quality of research depends heavily on the quality and completeness of the obtained data. Questions always considered in data collection include what, where, when, and how. Qualitative research usually relies on data triangulation from interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. (Creswell, 2014).

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Duties and functions 'of the Religious Education and Training Center

The Medan Religious Training Center, as the executor of the tasks and functions of the research and development agency and the education and training center of the Ministry of Religious Affairs the Republic of Indonesia, carries out training for Civil Servants in the Ministry of Religious Affairs as a strategy to enhance human resources and as an agent of information on internal government policies.

From several existing literature reviews, the following are some of the main functions of Religious Education and Training in Indonesia: First, organizing religious training and education for prospective State Civil Apparatus. Through this training and education, ASN will gain a deeper understanding of theology, religious teachings, and religious ethics and values (Musyaddad, 2022).

Second, the Development of Practical Skills: in the theoretical aspects, the Religious Education and Training Center also provides practical skills training for prospective religious ministers. This includes training in rituals of worship, communication skills, counselling, social services, and management of religious organizations (Setiawati, 2021).

Third, Organizing Seminars and Workshops: Religious Education and Training Centers often hold seminars, workshops, or conferences to deepen understanding of religious issues, enrich insights about religion, and discuss challenges and the role of religion in Indonesian society (Azmi, 2022).

Fourth, Increasing the Capacity of Religious Teachers: Religious Education and Training Centers play an important role in improving the quality of religious teachers in schools or other formal educational institutions. Religious teachers are trained to convey religious teaching material appropriately, interestingly following the espoused religious values (Prawira & Nugraha, 2021).

Fifth, Development of Religious Learning Materials: Religious Training Centers can be involved in preparing religious learning materials relevant to the times' needs and developments. This aims to convey religious teachings more adaptively and make it easier for students to understand (Basuki, 2021).

Sixth. Religious Research: Several Religious Training Centers are also involved in research activities on various aspects of religion, including the history of religion, religious philosophy, and social issues related to religion in Indonesia.

Seventh, Improving the Quality of Religious Services: The Religious Education and Training Center strives to improve the quality of religious services to the community. This includes developing social services, spiritual counselling, family counselling, and

community empowerment through religious values (Chafshof & Anwar, 2022).

In addition to some of the main tasks above, the task of the religious training hall is to mitigate symptoms of social religious conflicts in the community early. Some of the R&D agency's programs in religious conflict mitigation include:

Table 1.
Religious Conflict Mitigation Strategy

No	Strategi	Activity Theme
1.	Religious Moderation Training	Improving Human Resources through Training on Strengthening Religious Moderation
2.	Digital Transformation	Program early warning system (Sistem Deteksi Dini)
3.	*Religiosity Index*	*Forming a Team Religiosity Index.*

The table above shows the Research and Development Agency's strategy to mitigate socio-religious conflicts in the Sumatra area through religious training centres. Overall, these programs are core in efforts to mitigate socio-religious conflicts. The Religious Training Center conducted routine training on the early detection of social conflicts, which was attended by 400 participants from various religions (Balitbang Diklat Kemenag, 2023d). The urgency of mitigating socio-religious conflicts is to detect early the potential for socio-religious conflicts in society (Balitbang Diklat Kemenag, 2023e).

For conflict mitigation, these three schemes need to be used to monitor symptoms of socio-religious conflict in society (Balitbang Diklat Kemenag, 2023b). The concept of religious moderation is important to convey to the community, as an effort to minimize

socio-religious conflicts in society (Balitbang Diklat Kemenag, 2023c).

The task of the 'of the Religious Education and Training Center is to be at the forefront of ensuring religious security. Through the Ministry of Religion 'of the Religious Education and Training Center Must be active and responsive to issues that are struggling in the community (Balitbang Diklat Kemenag, 2023a, 2023e). Cumulatively, 'of the Religious Education and Training Center has an essential role in conflict mitigation. All of the programs described above are also internalized as programs 'of the Religious Education and Training Center Medan in order to mitigate religious conflicts.

Ideally, the Religious Education and Training Center is only tasked with educating and improving the quality of human resources. At this level, Balai Diklat Keagamaan is responsible for educating civil servants, teachers and other teaching staff to become moderate individuals. This task is indeed fundamental, but it must be understood that creating a moderate society must begin with qualified human resources. In retrospect, it is impossible to achieve religious moderation without qualified human resources.

Human resources involved in religious moderation need to have a deep and accurate understanding of religion. They must have extensive knowledge of religious teachings, ethics, and universal values. A proper understanding of religion will help

them teach and practice the values of religious moderation properly (Lorenza et al., 2022).

Then, human resources involved in religious moderation must be able to build and spread the values of tolerance, acceptance, and mutual respect among religious people. They must be able to overcome differences and conflicts between religions peacefully and constructively (Maemunah, 2019).

Furthermore, human resources who adhere to religious moderation play an important role in religious extremism and intolerance. They can set a good example in promoting inclusiveness and respect for human rights for all individuals regardless of religion or belief (Aini et al., 2022).

Human resources involved in religious moderation have the function of educating people about the importance of moderation and how to apply it in everyday life. They can convey messages of religious moderation in various ways, such as teaching, lectures, publications, and other social activities.

In addition, human resources who adhere to religious moderation can act as a liaison between various religious and cultural groups. They can help build bridges of communication and understanding between people of different religions, thus creating a harmonious religious life.

On the other hand, human resources involved in religious moderation can encourage interreligious dialogue, which aims to seek common understanding, find similarities, and respect differences. This dialogue can reduce tensions and conflicts between religions (Sihombing, 2021).

Then, human resources who adhere to religious moderation tend to value diversity and religious pluralism. They do not see religious differences as a source of conflict, but as cultural and spiritual wealth that must be respected and fought for together.

By involving human resources who practice and promote religious moderation, society can create a more inclusive, respectful and peaceful environment amidst differences in religion and belief. Religious moderation is important in the effort to build a harmonious and sustainable society side by side.

Communication in Islam and the Concept of Religious Moderation

The Quran is Muslims' primary source of teachings and guidance. One of the central themes discussed in the Quran is religious moderation, reflecting the importance of practicing religion with balance, tolerance, and deep understanding. Religious moderation is highly emphasized in the Quran, providing a strong foundation for religious practices aligned with these values. (Hati et al., 2023).

In the Quran, religious moderation is expressed through various verses emphasizing the importance of avoiding extremism, fanaticism, and violence in practicing religious teachings. The Quran

emphasizes Muslims to practice their religion with full understanding and wisdom, maintaining a balance in various aspects of life and avoiding practices that are excessive or deviate from the original teachings of Islam.

The Quran also stresses the values of tolerance and peace in interacting with individuals from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. Messages such as "There is no compulsion in religion" (Al-Baqarah: 256) and "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another" (Al-Hujurat: 13) emphasize the importance of respecting religious freedom and cultural diversity in the spirit of dialogue and harmony.

The term "religious moderation" in Islam is contained in verses related to the word "wasath" (moderation). In the Quran, the word "wasath" and its variations appear in three verses: Surah Al-Baqarah (2:143, 238) and Surah Al-Qalam (68:48) (Baqi, 2009). Additionally, the practice of religious moderation in accordance with guidance is found in Surah Al-Kafirun.

Verses that tend to address religious moderation include Surah Al-Baqarah (2:143), which states:

> *"We did not make the qiblah which you used to face except that We might make evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels. And indeed, it is difficult except for those Allah has guided."*

The verse explains that the Muslim community is moderate and should act justly as the chosen people (As-Suyuthi & Al-Mahally, 2015). Furthermore, the chosen community referred to the Muslim community as being convinced of the message of Prophet Muhammad, and Prophet Muhammad convinced his community. (Al-Qarni, 2008).

The Quran gives Muslims with clear rules for practicing their religion in moderation, balance, and tolerance. These messages are pertinent in addressing current concerns of intolerance, radicalism, and interfaith conflict. In accordance with the teachings of the Quran, religious moderation supports ideals that foster peace, collaboration, and respect for all humanity (Dalimunthe et al., 2023).

The Theory of Islamic Communication is a conceptual framework that integrates communication principles with Islamic values. Within this framework, communication is to be practiced in accordance with prophetic values as outlined in the content of the Qur'an. This theory underscores the significance of honesty, respect for diversity, and politeness in communication. Additionally, prophetic communication concepts are integral to this theory, positioning communication as a tool to reinforce societal values (Faridah et al., 2023).

The Theory of Islamic Communication is a concept employed to comprehend and analyze communication aspects within the

context of Islam's cultural, religious, and values. It is a rapidly evolving field within the discipline of communication studies, addressing how Islam influences communication and vice versa. (Khiabany, 2021).

Further, it identifies unique elements in communication within the Muslim world, as well as the role of religion in shaping messages and social interactions. Understanding this theory is crucial in globalization and cultural diversification, enabling us to respond more effectively to cross-cultural communication challenges.

Allah provides clear indications regarding religious moderation in the verses presented by the author. This is evident in the frequent success of Prophet Muhammad in unifying heterogeneous societies through various efforts such as the Constitution of Medina, the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, the Treaty of Najran, and several other agreements. This attitude serves as a blueprint for Muslims to unite heterogeneity within the framework of humanity.

In line with the abovementioned verses, the Quran implies that Islam does not permit coercion in embracing religion (Q.S. Al-Baqarah verse 256). Coercion in religious conversion renders one's religious commitment insincere and can lead to conflicts. (Hamka, 2012). If it should be done, the results will not be optimal. (Al-Thabary, 2000).

The teachings of a religion undoubtedly contain evidence to convince humans that its doctrines align with life principles. Therefore, the teachings of each religious scripture undoubtedly invite human reason to think under logical demands. If the teachings of a religion are consistently linked to human reasoning, it is inappropriate to impose those teachings on others. Hence, in matters of religion, one must not overlook the objects that need to be understood to prevent coercion.

One of the key concepts in the Theory of Islamic Communication is the concept of akhlak or communication ethics. Islam emphasizes the importance of communicating in a manner that is honest, fair, and courteous. Communication ethics is integral to everyday Islamic practices in interpersonal interactions and mass media. (Istiani & Islamy, 2020). This encompasses honesty, respect for others, and mutual understanding. In Islamic culture, effective communication is considered a manifestation of worship and an effort to achieve peace and harmony among individuals and communities.

The Theory of Islamic Communication also explores the role of the Quran and Hadith in communication. The Quran serves as the primary source of guidance in the lives of Muslims, and many teachings of the Islamic religion are conveyed through this text. The Quran provides fundamental principles for communicating wisely and avoiding unethical actions. The Hadith, containing quotes and actions of Prophet Muhammad,

is also used as a guide for proper communication in daily life (Robot, 2023).

Furthermore, the Theory of Islamic Communication highlights the importance of understanding the cultural context in communication. Islam is a global religion with many subcultures and cultural differences. Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend how communication practices may vary across the Muslim world. This involves considering Islamic societies' language, cultural norms, and communication traditions.

The Theory of Islamic Communication also encompasses the role of modern technology in disseminating religious messages. The Internet and social media have become crucial platforms for spreading religious messages and facilitating interfaith communication. However, these technologies also pose challenges in the form of spreading misinformation or online radicalization. Therefore, the Theory of Islamic Communication also seeks to explain how Islam can adapt to the digital world and address these issues.

Overall, the Theory of Islamic Communication is vital for understanding how communication occurs within Islam's cultural and religious context. It helps us communicate with appropriate ethics, integrate religious values into our messages, and respect the cultural diversity within the Muslim world. In the era of globalization and modern technology, a better understanding of this theory is

essential for promoting intercultural dialogue and peace worldwide (Sufah et al., 2023).

Religious moderation in Islamic communication is a crucial principle emphasizing the importance of using balanced language and communication and avoiding extremism when discussing religion (Tanjung, 2022). This means that when communicating about Islam, individuals must ensure that religious messages are conveyed in a manner that appreciates diversity, avoids exclusive or patronizing rhetoric, and promotes constructive dialogue. Religious moderation also entails steering clear of rhetoric that incites interreligious conflict and playing a role in educating the public about the principles of moderation in Islam. By applying religious moderation in Islamic communication, the aim is to create an environment that supports peace, tolerance, and respect for differences within society.

The concept of religious moderation carries values instrumental in realizing Indonesia's well-being. A moderate, fair, balanced mindset is key to managing diverse societal interpretations. Effective communication is required to convey the concept of moderation to the public so that the message of religious moderation can be disseminated to the entire community through the Civil Service Apparatus. Training in religious moderation in this context should emphasize effective and

inclusive communication methods, thus building a deeper understanding of religious teachings and fostering cooperation among religious communities. Through proper communication, trainees are invited to understand that Islam is a religion that teaches mercy to the entire universe and respects human rights and diversity of beliefs. (Budiono, 2021).

Then, in religious moderation training, communication also emphasizes the importance of dialogue with various religious groups. Trainees are taught to listen to and appreciate people from different religious backgrounds' views, beliefs, and life experiences. Open communication and respect for differences are important in creating awareness of equal rights and dignity among religious communities (Mukzizatin, 2019).

Next, the participants are trained to use inclusive language and avoid using words or sentences that may cause conflict or controversy. In addition, persuasive communication helps train participants to persuade others to accept the views and values of proportionate religious moderation(Al-Mujtahid et al., 2022).

In religious moderation training, it is necessary to emphasize how to communicate well so that the message of religious moderation can be conveyed to the community through training participants in strengthening religious moderation. Trainees are taught to cooperate with adherents of other faiths in various

initiatives and activities to promote peace, prosperity and social justice. Good communication plays an essential role in building respectful and trusting relationships between religious communities.

Communication strategies in religious moderation training also emphasize the positive use of social media and information technology. Trainees are taught about cyberspace's ethics, including the importance of sharing accurate information and promoting messages of peace and tolerance. Responsible communication on social media can help reduce the spread of false or provocative information that can lead to religious conflict (Agung & Maulana, 2021).

Communication in religious moderation training plays an important role in conveying the concept of religious moderation. Through effective, inclusive and persuasive communication, trainees can understand religious teachings correctly, dialogue with various religious groups, and work together to achieve common goals. Good communication also helps reduce tensions and conflicts between religious believers and create a harmonious and tolerant environment. By integrating the values of religious moderation in Islamic communication, we can build a more inclusive, respectful and peaceful society amidst a diversity of beliefs.

Discussion

Religion has been an integral part of human civilization for thousands of years. However, amidst the diversity of beliefs, religious conflicts pose a serious threat to peace and societal stability. Thus, it is essential to understand and apply Islamic Communication as a fundamental discipline in comprehending and disseminating the messages of Islam. Fundamentally, Islam upholds principles of religious moderation, tolerance, and dialogue as integral parts of its teachings.

The communication of values related to religious moderation through training and education, commonly known as Religious Moderation Strengthening Training, is inherently linked to effective communication. This ensures that the concept of religious moderation is accepted and understood by society. In this study, researchers discuss why religious moderation training is crucial in reducing religious conflicts. Firstly, religious moderation training can foster a profound understanding of religious teachings. One source of religious conflict is narrow or misconstrued interpretations of specific religious doctrines.

Therefore, religious moderation training serves as a valuable tool in providing individuals with a comprehensive understanding of their faith. This, in turn, promotes a more inclusive and tolerant perspective, mitigating the potential for religious conflicts rooted in

misinterpretation. Additionally, such training emphasizes the principles of moderation, tolerance, and dialogue embedded in Islamic teachings. By cultivating these values, individuals are better equipped to engage in constructive discussions and contribute to the harmonious coexistence of diverse religious beliefs within society.

In conclusion, the importance of religious moderation training lies in its ability to deepen understanding, promote tolerance, and mitigate the risk of conflicts arising from misinterpretation or narrow views of religious teachings. Through effective communication and education, the principles of religious moderation can be embraced and internalized, fostering a climate of peace and understanding in diverse religious societies (Nurdin, 2021).

Based on these considerations, the Head of the Research and Development Agency of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Suyitno, articulates a three-fold strategy for mitigating religious social conflicts: Human Resource Preparation through Religious Moderation Strengthening Training. This involves training sessions focused on enhancing religious moderation among leaders and their subordinates.

Second, Digital Transformation:** This entails the preparation of an early warning system program for the timely detection of potential conflicts. The implementation of a policy is facilitated by having a system or

application that streamlines the execution of a strategy.

Third, the religiosity Index. This index aims to measure the religious index, encompassing religious behaviors in Indonesia over the past year.

Education and training in strengthening religious moderation are deemed crucial in the efforts to mitigate religious conflicts, grounded in the following rationales:

Firstly, through moderation-strengthening training, participants are instructed to embrace diversity, respect local cultures, and appreciate and understand the beliefs of others. This creates an inclusive environment, halting the cycles of hatred and discrimination.

Through this training, participants are anticipated to comprehend the concept of religious moderation, becoming advocates and drivers of moderation within their respective environments and communities. Frequently, religious conflicts arise due to a lack of understanding and respect for the diversity of beliefs (Subchi et al., 2022).

Secondly, religious moderation training serves as a tool to combat extremism and religious intolerance. One of the fundamental elements of religious conflict is extremism, which undermines the image of religion as a source of peace and compassion. This training equips participants to identify and address extremism with wisdom and non-

discriminatory approaches. This involves initiating dialogues and attempting to understand the backgrounds and motivations of those adhering to extremist views (Abror, 2020).

Thirdly, religious moderation training can foster interfaith dialogue and cooperation among religious communities. In the pursuit of mitigating religious conflicts, effective communication is paramount for the involved parties (Hakim, 2018). This training imparts effective communication and empathy skills, facilitating constructive dialogue and fostering mutual understanding. Consequently, it aids in resolving misunderstandings, alleviating tensions, and establishing respectful relationships between religious communities. Moreover, new innovations may emerge through this training, and their dissemination can be understood through the lens of innovation diffusion theory (Rogers, 1962).

Fourthly, religious moderation training can potentially cultivate inspirational religious leaders who serve as peacemakers. Recognizing the significant influence wielded by religious leaders within their communities, their role in mitigating religious conflict is paramount. This training instils in religious leaders the qualities of being exemplary models in practicing moderation, embracing diversity, and actively advocating for peace and unity (Hasan, 2021).

At this level, religious moderation training has a significant role in mitigating religious conflicts. Like the prophet Muhammad, there must be socialization and training in implementing religious moderation. He gave an evidentiary example of formulating religious moderation with superior human resources in the Medina charter. This should be an example because the prophet Muhammad succeeded in advancing the state of Medina and forming a strong social structure (Al-Mujtahid & Sazali, 2023).

Furthermore, digital transformation is a crucially warranted strategy due to the current advancements in communication technology. This is substantiated by establishing an early warning system program in response to these technological developments. The implementation of policies becomes more streamlined when supported by a system or application to facilitate the execution of a strategy.

A third imperative is the preparation of a Religiosity Index, intended to measure the religiosity index, encompassing religious behaviors in Indonesia over the past year. As an innovative approach, Religious Moderation Strengthening Training can shape individuals who genuinely understand religion, appreciate diversity, and demonstrate commitment to national unity, non-violence, and respect for local cultures. Engaging religious leaders and communities in this process can foster a

more harmonious, inclusive, and peaceful society amidst diverse beliefs. In this context, religious moderation training is key to achieving sustained peace within human civilization.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the government, specifically the Research and Development Agency of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Religious Education and Training Center in Medan, is working to mitigate social-religious conflicts. These efforts include Religious Moderation Strengthening Training, digital transformation through implementing an early warning system program, and the measurement of the Religiosity Index, encompassing religious behaviors in Indonesia. These three strategies are employed to detect social-religious conflicts in society early. The execution of these strategies is intricately linked to effective communication processes with the public, ensuring the transparent transmission of the concept of religious moderation to the community.

Through this article, the researcher hopes to provide valuable insights for future researchers focusing on Islamic communication and religious moderation.

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