Palita: Journal of Social Religion Research
October-2026, Vol.11, No.2, page.169-188
ISSN(P): 2527-3744; ISSN(E):2527-3752
ejournal.iainpalopo.ac.id/index.php/palita
DOI: https://doi.org/10.24256/pal.v11i2.12187

The Representation of Religious Moderation Discourse in NU Online's Menjadi Indonesia Program on YouTube

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Article History
Submitted 2026-08-05, Revised 2026-09-21, Accepted 2026-10-28

Abstract

The rapid development of digital media has transformed the patterns of disseminating religious discourse, positioning YouTube as a strategic platform for promoting the values of religious moderation in Indonesia. This study aims to analyze how NU Online constructs the discourse of religious moderation through the Menjadi Indonesia program on YouTube by employing Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework. The research adopts a qualitative approach. Data were collected through observation and documentation of episodes of the Menjadi Indonesia program and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman. The findings reveal that NU Online represents religious moderation through four key indicators: national commitment, tolerance, anti violence, and accommodation of local culture. National commitment is constructed through discourses of transformation, service (khidmah), and constitutional jurisprudence (fiqh al-dustūr). Tolerance is represented through perspectives of openness and Humanitarian Islam, while anti violence discourse is articulated through critiques of conflict roots, reinforcement of political reform, and the decentering approach in Islamic studies. Meanwhile, local culture is positioned as an effective medium for conveying Islamic values. Overall, NU Online constructs an inclusive, contextual discourse of religious moderation oriented toward strengthening national values, while simultaneously contributing to the development of critical discourse analysis and digital Islamic media studies.

Keywords: *Religious Moderation; NU Online; Menjadi Indonesia Program; Critical Discourse Analysis; Teun A. van Dijk; YouTube*

Abstrak

Perkembangan media digital telah mengubah pola penyebaran wacana keagamaan, menjadikan YouTube sebagai salah satu medium strategis dalam diseminasi nilai-nilai moderasi beragama di Indonesia. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis representasi wacana moderasi beragama yang dikonstruksi oleh NU Online melalui program Menjadi Indonesia di YouTube pada level struktur teks menggunakan perspektif Analisis Wacana Kritis Teun A. van Dijk. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan analisis wacana kritis. Data diperoleh melalui observasi dan dokumentasi terhadap episode-episode program Menjadi Indonesia, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman dengan menitikberatkan pada dimensi teks yang meliputi struktur makro, superstruktur, dan struktur mikro. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa NU Online merepresentasikan moderasi beragama melalui empat indikator utama, yaitu komitmen kebangsaan, toleransi, anti kekerasan, dan akomodatif terhadap budaya lokal. Komitmen kebangsaan dikonstruksi melalui wacana

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perubahan dan pembaruan, khidmah, serta fikih ketatanegaraan. Toleransi direpresentasikan melalui perspektif keterbukaan dan humanitarian Islam. Wacana anti kekerasan dibangun melalui kritik terhadap akar historis konflik, penguatan reformasi politik, serta pengembangan pendekatan decentering studi Islam. Sementara itu, sikap akomodatif terhadap budaya lokal direpresentasikan dengan memosisikan tradisi dan kebudayaan sebagai media penyampaian nilai-nilai Islam. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa NU Online membangun wacana moderasi beragama yang inklusif, kontekstual, dan berorientasi pada penguatan nilai-nilai kebangsaan melalui strategi komunikasi digital. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pengembangan kajian analisis wacana kritis pada media dakwah digital sekaligus memperkaya kajian mengenai representasi moderasi beragama di ruang digital.

***Kata Kunci**: Moderasi beragama; NU Online; Program Menjadi Indonesia; analisis wacana kritis; Teun A. van Dijk; YouTube.*

Introduction

Indonesia is a country characterized by a high degree of diversity, comprising 1,331 ethnic groups, 633 major ethnic groups, and 652 regional languages.(Kementerian Agama RI, 2019, pp. 2-3) This diversity constitutes a national strength but also has the potential to generate conflict if not properly managed. In religious life, the challenges include the growing prevalence of exclusivist attitudes, intolerance, violence in the name of religion, and views that contradict national values. In response to these challenges, the Indonesian government has adopted religious moderation as one of its national strategies, as stipulated in the 2020-2024 National Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMN) under Presidential Regulation No. 18 of 2020. Religious moderation is promoted through strengthening national commitment, tolerance, non violence, and an accommodative attitude toward local cultures as efforts to maintain social harmony and safeguard the unity and integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

The dissemination of religious moderation values in the digital era increasingly relies on social media. Data from We Are Social in 2025 indicate that Indonesia has 212 million internet users and 143 million social media users, representing 50.2% of the total population, with YouTube being one of the most widely used platforms, particularly among millennials (23.8%) and Generation Z (18.3%). This makes YouTube a strategic medium, while also making it vulnerable to being exploited to disseminate hate speech, intolerance, and radicalism. Therefore, NU Online, through its YouTube channel, particularly the *Menjadi Indonesia* program, seeks to disseminate narratives of moderate Islam and national identity as counter narratives to negative content. This study employs Teun A. van Dijk's critical discourse analysis, including contextual analysis, as this approach examines not only the content of texts but also explains the relationship between discourse and the social conditions underlying its emergence. Accordingly, this study

demonstrates how NU Online constructs and disseminates religious moderation discourse in ways that correspond to the realities of Indonesian society.

The central issue examined in this study is how the textual structure of NU Online's religious moderation discourse is presented through the *Menjadi Indonesia* program on YouTube. This study aims to analyze the textual structure of the religious moderation discourse represented by NU Online through the *Menjadi Indonesia* program, thereby providing a scholarly reference for academics and practitioners seeking to enhance their understanding and research of religious moderation discourse in new media, particularly on YouTube.

This study is essentially a continuation of several relevant previous studies. In addition to examining their relevance, this study also explores the novelty and aspects that have not yet been adequately addressed. Several previous studies have been identified as relevant to the present research. First, Muhammad Solihin (2023), entitled *Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Beragama: Analisis Wacana Van Dijk dalam Podcast Program Journey of Religion di YouTube TheLeonardo's*. Second, Indah Aulia Chaerunnisa (2025), entitled *Nilai-Nilai Moral dalam Animasi Nussa Rara (Analisis Wacana Kritis menurut Teun A. Van Dijk)*. Third, Siti Nurfadilah (2024), entitled *Dakwah Digital Moderasi Beragama Habib Husein Ja'far al-Hadar Pada Konten YouTube Log In (Analisis Resepsi Pemuda Muslim dan NonMuslim di Kabupaten Bondowoso)*. Fourth, Aceng Zakaria (2024), entitled *Dialektika Moderasi Beragama di Era Pluralitas Agama dan Budaya Perspektif Al-Qur'an*. Fifth, Mimi Sugiarti (2022), with her work entitled *Peran Tokoh Agama dalam Pendidikan Moderasi Beragama bagi Generasi Milenial melalui Media YouTube (Studi Tokoh Habib Husein Ja'far al-Hadar)*. Sixth, Hayuningtyas Permata Asri (2024), entitled *Analisis Wacana Kritis Pidato Capres RI 2024 dalam Youtube Mata Najwa "Bicara Gagasan"*. Seventh, Ahmad Fajri (2024), entitled *Analisis Wacana Kritis atas Pemaknaan Lafaz Auliya' dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya Edisi 2019 Kemenag RI*.

Each of the seven studies has its own distinctive characteristics. Solihin's study demonstrates relevance in terms of its approach, namely Teun A. van Dijk's critical discourse analysis, and its research object, namely religious moderation discourse. However, the subject of the present study is the *Menjadi Indonesia* program on NU Online's YouTube channel. Meanwhile, the studies by Chaerunnisa, Asri, and Fajri are also relevant in terms of their use of Teun A. van Dijk's critical discourse analysis approach; however, the present study specifically focuses on the discourse of religious moderation presented in the *Menjadi Indonesia* program on NU Online's YouTube channel. In contrast, the

studies by Nurfadilah, Zakaria, and Sugiarti are relevant primarily in terms of their focus on religious moderation. The present study, however, focuses on how religious moderation discourse emerges in the digital space, particularly as represented through the *Menjadi Indonesia* program on NU Online's YouTube channel, based on the four indicators of religious moderation established by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs: national commitment, tolerance, non violence, and acceptance of local traditions or culture.

In general, discourse analysis is an effort to explain a text and the linguistic structures underlying it (Salamet, 2020). Beyond merely explaining texts and linguistic structures, Yule, as cited in Ratnaningsih (2019), states that the study and investigation of discourse analysis encompass a broader scope concerning the functions and forms of what is conveyed through both spoken and written language. Discourse analysis is based on a pragmatic approach to analyzing the process of language use. According to Kartomihardjo, discourse analysis is a branch of linguistics developed with the aim of analyzing language units that are larger than sentences. The method involves interpreting utterances by relating them to the context in which they occur, the individuals involved in the interaction, general knowledge, customs, and traditions prevailing in the particular setting (Ratnaningsih, 2019).

Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is grounded in the fundamental concept that language is not merely a neutral means of communication, but also a means of reinforcing or challenging power relations (Jikhan et al., 2025). Critical discourse analysis seeks to uncover the power embedded in every linguistic process, including the boundaries of what is permitted to become discourse, the perspectives that should be adopted, and the topics that are selected for discussion (Marzuki, 2023, p. 8).

The CDA analytical process views discourse as not existing independently but as being closely connected to the social context underlying the production of texts, whether written, spoken, or visual (Jikhan et al., 2025). Critical discourse analysis regards discourse as a form of social practice, in which the producers of discourse have particular purposes and intentions (Ratnaningsih, 2019). The critical dimension of critical discourse analysis refers to the process of examining in depth the possibility of hidden relationships among language, power, and ideology.

The paradigm or approach of critical discourse analysis is grounded in an orientation toward addressing social problems. The foundations of CDA can be identified in three aspects. First, every approach should be oriented toward social problems. Second, it should demystify ideology and power through the use of language and visual artistic forms of semiotic data, including written

texts, speech, and images. Finally, it should be reflexive throughout the research process. The first and second foundations provide the basic argument that "humans will always have problems, as they will always be victims of particular ideologies and forms of power" (Marzuki, 2023).

CDA essentially originates from discourse analysis; however, it does not view discourse merely as a linguistic structure but rather positions discourse as a form of social practice. The characteristics of CDA can be identified in several aspects. First, discourse is understood as a form of action and interaction. Second, CDA takes into consideration the context of discourse, including its background, situation, events, and conditions. Third, discourse is situated within a particular historical context. Fourth, CDA considers the element of power in its analysis. Every discourse that emerges in the form of text, conversation, or any other form constitutes a struggle for power. Finally, CDA regards ideology as a central concept (Marzuki, 2023).

In van Dijk's view, the textual aspect as a product of a particular practice cannot be adequately examined solely from the perspective of textual analysis. From the moment a text is created or produced, it is necessary to examine what it seeks to convey and how the producer's academic background and social environment have shaped their way of thinking, thereby influencing the production of discourse with particular characteristics (Kristina et al., 2020).

Method

This study employs a qualitative research approach that provides a clear and in depth description of written texts, spoken utterances, or actions, which can be analyzed in relation to individuals, communities, organizations, or particular groups within specific contexts and examined from a comprehensive and holistic perspective (Sujarweni, 2014, p. 19). The study adopts a qualitative approach based on Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to investigate, analyze, and uncover the discourse of religious moderation underlying the dialogue scenes in the *Menjadi Indonesia* program on NU Online's YouTube channel. The discourse of religious moderation is analyzed and revealed through both textual and contextual dimensions, as conceptualized in van Dijk's discourse framework. To strengthen the analysis at the levels of social cognition and social context, this study integrates sociological and social psychological approaches as supporting analytical perspectives.

Result and Discussion

NU Online is the official digital media platform of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), originating from an initiative proposed at the 30th NU Congress in Lirboyo in 1999 in response to the development of information technology and the need for faster information dissemination. The NU Online website was officially launched on July 11, 2003, with the vision of disseminating information that upholds the values of moderate Islam, tolerance, and justice, while also serving as a digital communication and educational medium for NU members and the wider community (Aziz & Fahruddin, n.d., p. 106). The period from 2010 to 2018 marked an important phase in the transformation of NU Online through management modernization, the utilization of social media, and the development of multimedia content, including the launch of its YouTube channel in 2017 (Setia & Iqbal, 2021, p. 369) as part of a digital da'wah strategy that adapted to technological developments.

Since its launch in 2017, NU Online's YouTube channel has experienced significant growth in both quantity and quality. According to TubeRanker (n.d.), the channel has approximately 1.54 million subscribers and 7,539 videos, with an average of 4.1 uploads per day, approximately 6,601 views, 170 likes, and 14 comments per video. In terms of content quality, NU Online maintains the relevance of its content by offering a variety of programs that address the intellectual and spiritual needs of its audience, including Islamic studies, worship tutorials, *dhikr*, short films, *shalawat*, podcasts (Rohman et al., n.d., p. 69), and the *Menjadi Indonesia* program. The podcast program, which premiered on August 15, 2024, consistently features discussions on national issues with competent speakers (NU Online, 2024), with a total of 42 episodes as of April 30, 2026. The programs selected as the focus of this study are presented in the following table.

Table 1. Episodes of the *Menjadi Indonesia* Program

No.	Episode Title	Guest Speaker	Release Date
1	*Sejarah Indonesia & memori kolektif bangsa kita dipenuhi kekerasan*	Anhar Gonggong	September 12, 2024
2	*Menelusuri posisi NU & Indonesia di tengah Peradaban Global*	KH. Yahya Staquf	September 27, 2024
3	*Kristen Muhammadiyah, Humor dan Pancasila*	Abdul Mu'ti	October 24, 2024
4	*Hubungan Islam Katolik, kemanusiaan dan sosiologi Pancasila*	KH. Yahya Staquf	October 31, 2024

5	*Usul Fiqh, relasi Islam Negara, & politik Indonesia*	KH. Afifuddin Muhajir	February 27, 2025
6	*Keindahan syair dan agama sebagai pengalaman estetika*	Kiai Zulfa Mustofa	June 19, 2025
7	*Runtuhnya Rezim Orde Baru, Laskar Jihad, dan Studi Islam*	Noorhaidi Hasan	November 7, 2025
8	*Dunia Kiai dan pergulatannya dengan rakyat*	KH. Abdullah Shodaqoh	November 21, 2025

Sumber : Authors' analysis, 2026

In addition to illustrating the quantity of viewership and the thematic content, NU Online through the Menjadi Indonesia program also serves as evidence of NU Online's efforts to actualize its vision of being part of the digital media landscape, as reflected in one of its stated aims: 'to provide information that upholds the values of peace, tolerance, moderation, and justice.' The representation of religious moderation values in the Menjadi Indonesia program is measured based on the four indicators of religious moderation established by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.

1. National Commitment

National commitment can be observed in Episode 4 (*KH Yahya Staquf: Tracing NU & Indonesia's Position Amid Global Civilization*), Episode 15 (*Usul Fiqh, Islam State Relations, & Indonesian Politics KH Afifuddin Muhajir*), and Episode 32 (*The World of Kiai and Their Struggles with the People KH Ubaidullah Shodaqoh*). Generally, these three episodes represent the religious moderation values of the *Menjadi Indonesia* (Becoming Indonesia) Program. Based on the featured topics, these three episodes demonstrate the value of national commitment, as all three themes share a strong continuity and alignment with it. The *Menjadi Indonesia* Program builds its discourse on religious moderation within the aspect of national commitment by highlighting NU scholars (*kiai*) as key figures in religious, civic, and state life.

The value of national commitment in Episode 4 is demonstrated through themes covering essential aspects of state, national, and Islamic life. Episode 15 reflects national commitment through NU's jurisprudence (*fiqh*) within the discourse on Islam and the state. Meanwhile, Episode 32 depicts this value through the theme of *kiai* acting as intermediaries and bridges for the people's aspirations. Based on these three episodes, the pattern of religious moderation regarding national commitment is represented through three core discourses: change and renewal; *khidmah* (selfless service); and constitutional/state jurisprudence (*fiqh ketatanegaraan*).

The figure of the *kiai* plays a crucial and vital role in the dynamics of religious, civic, and state life. This is due to their role as teachers for the Indonesian community (NU Online, 2024, 24:41). In fulfilling this role as teachers for the people, the *kiai* established Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), which also serves as the manifestation of their responsibility in carrying out a civilization mandate (NU Online, 2024, 51:48). The *kiai*'s role as teachers and their efforts to respond to change by establishing NU were none other than a manifestation of their commitment to building the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). Through NU, the *kiai* play a pivotal role in the dynamics of religious, national, and state life. One clear manifestation of their contribution to building NKRI is their active participation in Indonesian politics (NU Online, 2024, 1:23:37).

In practical politics, the *kiai* have also made major contributions by establishing political parties. They play an active role in consolidating efforts to uphold unity amidst the dynamics and challenges of national and state life. This effort to maintain unity represents one of the significant contributions of the *kiai* in building and safeguarding the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) (NU Online, 2024, 1:27:26). One of their key struggles in building NKRI is by consistently maintaining consolidation with the government (NU Online, 2024, 1:31:51).

Furthermore, regarding the discourse of the *Menjadi Indonesia* Program, it is evident that NU Online constructs its discourse on religious moderation within the aspect of national commitment by representing the power and authority of the *kiai* in their role within religious, civic, and state life. The political track record of the *kiai* is visible through two distinct maneuvers: *kiai* strengthen various consolidations when choosing to be part of the government, while in different periods, they choose not to align with the government (acting as opposition). The existence of this dichotomy in the political role of the *kiai* demonstrates that within the *Menjadi Indonesia* Program, religious moderation in the context of national commitment is constructed around the idea that the *kiai* in their role within society and in building the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) act not merely out of political considerations, but are fundamentally driven by motives of change and renewal.

Efforts to realize this change and renewal are, in principle, aligned with the values embedded in national commitment. In the context of the *kiai*'s role and function in society, the meaning of change and renewal conforms with the mandate of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia namely, that the government of the State of Indonesia was formed to "protect the whole Indonesian people, promote public welfare, educate the life of the nation, and

participate toward the establishment of a world order based on freedom, perpetual peace, and social justice," rather than for the purpose of personal or group interests, or merely out of political motivations (Pelu & Saifullah, 2019, p. 23).

Tracing and analyzing more deeply the updates and changes carried out by the *kiai* within the context of religious moderation principles reveals that they align with the principle of *ishlah* (reform or reconciliation). The reformative value of the *ishlah* principle accords with the meaning of renewal and change pursued by the *kiai*, as articulated in the *Menjadi Indonesia* Program. In this sense, *ishlah* refers to efforts directed toward achieving a better state of being responding to the changes and advances of the times grounded in the common good (*maslahah*) (Zakiah & Nursikin, 2021, p. 197).

From the perspective of national commitment, the *Menjadi Indonesia* Program constructs its discourse on the role and function of the *kiai* in religious, civic, and state life not only from a top down approach as previously described. NU Online also depicts the power and authority of the *kiai* from a grassroots perspective specifically framing the *kiai* as intermediaries and conduits for the people's aspirations. This effort is driven by the position of the *kiai* as leaders among middle to lower class communities, where they are described in NU Online's discourse as "fathers" to the people (NU Online, 2025, 33:02). Portraying the figure of the *kiai* as a father figure builds a narrative showing that the *kiai* are constantly present to accompany (*ngonconi*) the community in all circumstances (NU Online, 2025, 14:17). The emotional coherence between the *kiai* and the people emphasizes that the *kiai* as a father figure does not represent a relationship of paternalistic power over children, but rather symbolizes the *kiai*'s *khidmah* (selfless service) to the community. The discourse in Episode 32 highlights the principle of *khidmah* that accompanies the *kiai*'s struggle as intermediaries and conduits for the people's aspirations (NU Online, 2025, 30:58). Fundamentally, the value of *khidmah* lies in the physical and spiritual presence of the *kiai* within the community (*ngonconi*).

The presence of the *kiai* as a practice of *khidmah* (selfless service) represents them as an embodiment of the relevance between text and context (NU Online, 2025, 53:59). Immersing oneself in both the world of text and the world of context is the true essence of the *kiai*'s struggle and sacrifice in serving (*khidmah*) and accompanying (*ngonconi*) the community and the people. From the perspective of character building, *khidmah* fundamentally embodies values of independence and resilience (Mustofa & Aimah, 2026, p. 7). The *khidmah* of the *kiai* as a manifestation of their role as intermediaries and conduits for the people's aspirations aligns directly with the values of

national commitment. One of the primary values embedded in national commitment is the willingness to make sacrifices for the nation and state to strengthen national resilience. This reinforces a form of national resilience grounded in national development and the full potential of the nation state (Pelu & Saifullah, 2019, pp. 32–33).

Another point that needs to be emphasized is that *khidmah* (selfless service) within the principles of religious moderation stems from the spirit of *qudwah* (role modeling). The principle of *qudwah* embodies the value of exemplary leadership, just as the Prophet Muhammad serves as the finest example. The *khidmah* of the *kiai* in NU Online's discourse is portrayed as the practical relevance between text and context. This aligns with the Prophet Muhammad's exemplary character as described in Surah al-Aḥzāb, verse 21. A central aspect of the Prophet's role modeling in this verse is the maturity of faith and knowledge (text), combined with its manifestation in action (context). The balanced maturity in applying both text and context allows the *kiai* to function not merely as callers to faith, but as active practitioners of what they believe and preach (Huda & Afrina, 2020, p. 84). Furthermore, the *khidmah* of the *kiai* for religion, the nation, and the state rests upon a clear foundation and understanding, with Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) serving as a guiding framework in fulfilling their duties among the people (NU Online, 2025, 1:01:55).

By simultaneously serving as religious figures, statesmen, and community members, the *kiai* fundamentally utilize Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) as an outward structure (*tatanan zahir*) in addressing various religious and state issues. Jurisprudence that aligns with the values of national commitment plays a vital role in the discourse on Islam and the state a concept termed constitutional or civic jurisprudence (*fiqh ketatanegaraan*) (NU Online, 2025, 7:47). Constitutional jurisprudence geared toward public interest (*maslahah*) represents an effort to find common ground between religion and the state. The consideration of public interest inherent in constitutional jurisprudence shares the same objective as national commitment—namely, achieving unity and cohesion based on six fundamental human dimensions: 1) protecting human dignity and honor as creations of God; 2) building a free, united, and sovereign national life founded on strong resolve; 3) nationalism; 4) popular sovereignty and democracy; 5) social solidarity; and 6) a just and prosperous foundation for society (Pelu & Saifullah, 2019, p. 14).

Undeniably, considerations of the public good (*maslahah*) based on fundamental human needs also accompany the various roles of the *kiai* within

society and the nation, both in terms of reform and renewal as well as in the aspect of *khidmah* (selfless service). Therefore, behind the discourse on Islam and the state viewed through the lens of public interest, these two elements share an intrinsic correlation or interconnectedness what NU Online describes as a mutually dependent relationship (NU Online, 2025, 48:47).

Furthermore, the relationship between religion and the state is constructed not only as a mutually dependent relationship, but also as one characterized by aligned objectives (NU Online, 2025, 1:04:17). In the Indonesian context, the starting point for this alignment of objectives between religion (Islam) and the state is Pancasila (NU Online, 2025, 59:00). The discourse constructed by NU Online claiming that *Pancasila hiyā al-syarī'atu bi'ainihā* (Pancasila is Islamic law itself) is fundamentally rooted in the considerations of public interest (*maslahah*) embedded within Pancasila (NU Online, 2025, 54:00). Ideally, Pancasila as the nation's unifying force represents the very essence of public interest. The *maslahah* value of Pancasila fundamentally lies in the "complete" content of its principles, which NU Online frames as an extraordinary blend (NU Online, 2025, 56:24). Pancasila as an embodiment of public interest values from the perspective of constitutional jurisprudence (*fiqh ketatanegaraan*) aligns directly with national commitment itself. Religious moderation within the framework of national commitment centers on the acceptance of Indonesia's national pillars: Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution (UUD 1945), *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

2. Tolerance

Based on an examination of Episode 6 (*Abdul Mu'ti: Kristen Muhammadiyah, Humor, and Pancasila*) and Episode 7 (*Gus Yahya: Islam Catholic Relations, Humanity, and the Sociology of Pancasila*) of the *Menjadi Indonesia* Program on NU Online's channel, the discourse on tolerance is constructed through two main perspectives. Conceptually, these two perspectives reflect the distinct traditions of thought regarding tolerance that have developed within Indonesia's two largest Islamic organizations, Muhammadiyah and NU. Accordingly, NU Online seeks to present a synthesis of these two concepts to produce a more comprehensive narrative on tolerance. This effort demonstrates that tolerance is not positioned as the exclusive identity of a single organization, but rather as a shared value that strengthens both Islamic and national life within Indonesia's pluralistic society.

The first perspective on tolerance is evident in Episode 6, which emphasizes the concept of openness. Within this framework, openness is

represented across two dimensions: interfaith tolerance and intra faith tolerance among Muslims. On the interfaith dimension, NU Online highlights harmonious religious life in regions such as Putussibau, Waropen, and Ende (NU Online, 2024, 6:20) as evidence that respect for citizens' rights can be realized without compromising their respective religious identities. The fulfillment of civil rights is positioned as an integral part of implementing Islamic values that are *raḥmatan lil-ʿālamīn* (a mercy to all creation), thus understanding Islamic proselytization (*da'wah*) not as exclusive, but as a catalyst for respecting diversity (NU Online, 2024, 6:48). Based on this reasoning, the author posits that the perspective of openness provides a solid foundation for constructing interfaith tolerance by strengthening human values, respecting citizens' rights, and promoting an inclusive approach to Islamic *da'wah*.

Meanwhile, within the intra faith context, the perspective of openness is represented through how NU Online interprets the relationship between Muhammadiyah, often associated as a modernist group, and NU as a traditionalist group. The discourse constructed does not depict these differences as a source of conflict, but rather as a natural form of contestation within the dynamics of Islamic thought (NU Online, 2024, 37:50). Consequently, openness is understood as a willingness to embrace diverse perspectives and transform differences into a space for productive dialogue rather than contention. This construction of discourse aligns with the principle of *tasamuh* (tolerance) in religious moderation namely, an attitude of mutual respect, appreciation, cooperation, avoiding mutual suspicion among fellow Muslims, and respecting the rights of followers of other religions in social life. Therefore, the aspect of tolerance constructed by NU Online is oriented not only toward interfaith relations, but also toward strengthening internal harmony among Muslims as part of efforts to build an inclusive national life (Syahri, 2021, p. 151).

The second perspective on the discourse of tolerance in the *Menjadi Indonesia* Program is constructed through the concept of Humanitarian Islam, which places humanity as its central framework. Although it shares similarities with Western humanitarianism regarding concern for human issues, the two differ in their philosophical foundations (NU Online, 2024, 10:52). Western humanitarianism has faced criticism for tending to dictate who is fully recognized as human and who is marginalized. Conversely, Humanitarian Islam as represented by NU Online is rooted in universal and inclusive Islamic values. Humanitarian Islam is grounded in the principle of *raḥmatan lil-ʿālamīn* (a mercy to all creation), which is understood as the foundation of human relations based on compassion, respect, and peace. This

principle serves as the meeting point between human values and tolerance, as it fosters harmony amidst ethnic, religious, cultural, and national diversity. Beyond being rooted in the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah* tradition, this perspective is also synthesized with Indonesian values, which are historically recognized for a strong culture of tolerance (Alhasbi et al., 2024, p. 117).

NU Online also represents Indonesia as a concrete example of tolerance in practice, capable of maintaining social stability within a pluralistic society. This deep rooted culture of tolerance and the recognition by various religious figures of Indonesia's success in nurturing diversity are positioned as evidence that Humanitarian Islam contributes to the reinforcement of human values at a global level. Consequently, Indonesian Islam as represented by NU is understood not only as relevant within the national context, but also as offering a universal humanitarian paradigm (Hasibuan et al., 2024, p. 269).

Based on these two perspectives namely openness and Humanitarian Islam both share the same orientation: placing tolerance and humanity within the framework of *raḥmatan lil-ʿālamīn* (a mercy to all creation). Furthermore, NU Online constructs Pancasila as the meeting point that connects these two perspectives. In this context, Pancasila is positioned as a national consensus and a shared home that strengthens unity amidst diversity, while simultaneously representing the value of tolerance as understood within religious moderation that is, respect for differences in both interfaith and intra faith relationships.

3. Anti Violence

The analysis of the anti violence indicator is notably presented in Episode 3 (*Anhar Gonggong: Indonesian History & Our Collective Memory Is Filled with Violence*) and Episode 31 (*Noorhaidi Hasan: The Fall of the New Order Regime, Laskar Jihad, and Islamic Studies*). This discourse is constructed within the framework of religious moderation. In this perspective, violence is not narrowly understood merely as physical action, but encompasses verbal, symbolic, and ideological violence that attempts to force changes upon the social, political, and religious systems. Building upon this understanding, NU Online constructs an anti violence narrative through a critique of various socio religious conflicts throughout Indonesian history. Utilizing history as a foundational reference demonstrates that violence is positioned not as an isolated phenomenon, but as a result of evolving social, political, and ideological dynamics in the nation's journey (NU Online, 2024, 15:51). Consequently, the representation of anti violence in the *Menjadi Indonesia* Program invites society not only to remember the past, but also encourages critical learning so that similar forms of conflict do not recur.

Furthermore, it is represented that the emergence of violence is influenced by various interconnected factors, particularly political ideological factors and social ethnic structures (NU Online, 2024, 1:29:35). This is demonstrated through the depiction of various historical events, such as the Darul Islam movement led by Kartosoewirjo as well as conflicts in South Sulawesi, which illustrate how the concept of an Islamic state combined with ethnic dynamics and power struggles to spark rebellions. In addition, NU Online raises the reality of the Laskar Jihad movement as an example that violence does not arise solely from religious doctrine, but is also influenced by repressive political conditions and the restricted space for participation available to certain groups (NU Online, 2025, 8:40). From this perspective, ideology is understood not as the sole cause of violence, but often as a medium that connects various social issues such as injustice, marginalization, frustration, and identity crises which are subsequently expressed through radical actions or rebellions (NU Online, 2024, 1:58:32).

This analysis demonstrates that NU Online constructs a critique against views that oversimplify radicalism as a purely religious ideological issue. Instead, the constructed discourse reveals that violence is the result of a complex interaction among ideological factors, national political dynamics, geopolitical influences, social structures, and power struggles. In other words, various conflicts operating under the banner of religion are, in many instances, inseparable from political issues, power relations, and political opportunities that are either available or deliberately restricted. Consequently, NU Online presents a comprehensive perspective by framing radicalism as a multidimensional phenomenon that requires simultaneous historical, social, and political analysis. Such an approach simultaneously prevents society from adopting simplistic frameworks in understanding the root causes of violence committed in the name of religion.

In addition to critiquing the causes of violence, various preventive measures are proposed to break the cycle of radicalism and conflict in Indonesia. First, reform is required at the level of political policy through the strengthening of democracy, the enforcement of justice, respect for citizens' rights, and a firm commitment to national aspirations as enshrined in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution. This step demonstrates that conflict resolution cannot be achieved through a security approach alone, but also requires structural improvements to the political system to prevent the recurrence of perceived injustice that triggers radical movements (Syahri, 2021, p. 106). Second, NU Online constructs the importance of decentering Islamic studies namely, an effort to open spaces for a more critical, contextual, and multidisciplinary reading of Islamic intellectual heritage (Quthb, 2003, p.

159). This approach aims to prevent the Muslim community from adopting textualist, rigid, and exclusive interpretations, while simultaneously strengthening an Islamic intellectual tradition capable of engaging in dialogue with Indonesian social reality.

Based on this entire construction, the author asserts that the representation of anti violence discourse in the *Menjadi Indonesia* Program demonstrates strong relevance to the principles of religious moderation. Efforts toward political policy reform reflect the principle of *iṣlāḥ al-siyāsah* (political reform), which entails governing national life based on justice, honesty, and a commitment to the common good (*maslahah*). Meanwhile, the concept of decentering Islamic studies aligns with the principle of *tawassuṭ* (balance and moderation) within the realm of thought namely, developing a moderate understanding of Islam that remains open to scientific advancement while steadfastly adhering to Islamic legal values (*sharia*) (Syahri, 2021, p. 106). Consequently, these efforts do not merely construct an anti violence discourse as a critique of historical conflict and radicalism, but also present conflict prevention solutions through political renewal and religious intellectual reform. This overall framework demonstrates that the approach constructed closely mirrors the conflict resolution paradigm, addressing the root causes of conflict while cultivating conditions that foster sustainable peace and a more inclusive society.

4. Accommodation of Local Culture

This indicator of religious moderation is particularly evident in Episode 21 (*Kiai Zulfa Mustofa: The Beauty of Poetry and Religion as an Aesthetic Experience*). Acceptance of local tradition serves as a key indicator of religious moderation according to the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia a concept also known as being accommodative of culture. This indicator aims to prevent religious behavior from becoming rigid within a pluralistic society, encouraging the acceptance and accommodation of religious practices based not solely on normative considerations, but also on cultural accommodation aimed at the public good (*maslahah*), provided they do not contradict Islamic law (*sharia*) or core religious principles (Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019, p. 46).

The indicator of acceptance of tradition basically aims to demonstrate a close correlation between religion and culture/tradition a relationship forged between two distinct entities that can foster harmonization and prevent conflict (Haidar et al., 2023). The creation of a harmonious relationship between religion and culture can be examined through the discourse constructed by NU Online (NU Online, 2025, 24:26). A correlation exists

between religion, as represented by the Qur'an, and culture, as represented by poetry (*syair*) as a narrative medium to convey the contents of the Qur'an itself. Poetry constitutes an integral part of Arab social reality, recognized as an intellectual tradition imbued with high aesthetic and literary value (Nurhamim, 2020, p. 115). Therefore, accommodating the poetic tradition specifically the aesthetic elements contained within it as a vehicle for conveying Qur'anic values fundamentally serves a clear purpose.

The poetic tradition (*syair*) is accommodated as a medium for communicating Qur'anic values to manifest the dimension of beauty (*al-jamāl*) in Islamic proselytization (*da'wah*), ensuring that Islamic teachings are understood not merely as a compilation of truths and laws, but also experienced as an aesthetic endeavor that touches the heart. Through linguistic beauty, rhythm, and poetic expression, *syair* helps convey the messages of the Qur'an in a manner that is more persuasive, humanistic, and accessible, thereby fostering a deep love for Allah and His teachings. This aligns with the perspective that the essence of religion encompasses three core elements: truth, goodness, and beauty. The Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad teaches: "Indeed, Allah is Beautiful and He loves beauty." Consequently, the use of poetry aims to present a face of Islam enriched with mercy, wisdom, justice, and public good (*maslahah*), allowing Qur'anic values to be internalized more profoundly by society (NU Online, 2025, 31:55).

It is portrayed that the core essence of the indicator regarding acceptance of tradition lies not in culture or tradition as an end in itself, but rather in how the culture and traditions evolving within society serve as a *wasīlah* (medium/means) of Islamic proselytization (*da'wah*) to convey divine justice, mercy (*raḥmah*), and public interest (*maslahah*) through aesthetic values. Delivering *da'wah* through cultural means demonstrates the welcoming nature of Islam and eliminates fear. This constitutes the main pillar of the religious moderation principle known as *iʿtibār al-ʿurf* (cultural accommodation). The correlation between Islam and culture exists with the objective of guiding culture itself accommodating culture toward progressive, beneficial, and positive values as an effort to elevate human dignity (Aziz & Anam, 2021, p. 64). In essence, the discourse on acceptance of tradition at the textual level is represented in NU Online's narrative construction through the frame of *wasīlah da'wah*.

Conclusion

The representation of NU Online's religious moderation discourse in the *Menjadi Indonesia* YouTube program at the textual level corresponds

directly with the four indicators of religious moderation. National commitment is represented through three core elements: change and reform (*iṣlāḥ*), selfless service (*khidmah*), and constitutional jurisprudence (*fiqh ketatanegaraan*). The tolerance indicator is represented through two distinct perspectives: openness and Humanitarian Islam. Furthermore, the anti violence indicator is represented through two preventive measures: the decentering of Islamic studies and political policy reform. Finally, the indicator of accommodation toward local tradition is represented through the perspective of culture as a medium for Islamic proselytization (*wasīlah da'wah*).

Declaration

Conflicts of Interest : The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Generative AI Statement : During the preparation of this work the authors used ChatGPT by OpenAI to assist with language refinement. After using this tool/service, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

Funding Statement : This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not for profit sectors.

Author Contributions : **Ahmad Kamil Malik**: Writing original draft, Methodology, Data curation, Writing review & editing, Resources, Formal analysis, Visualization, Investigation, Conceptualization. **Abdul Pirol**: Formal analysis, Writing review & editing, Investigation. **Efendi P**: Writing review & editing, Investigation.

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