Construction of Public Opinion about Religious Moderation on NU Online Instagram Accounts (@nuonline_id)

Serin Himatus Soraya1*, Wahyu Tri Wibowo1
1Faculty of Da’wa and Communication, Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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Abstract
This study tries to describe how NU Online constructs the content of religious moderation in influencing public opinion. Starting from the development of social media in the digital era, which plays a significant role in building public opinion and culture, NU Online uses Instagram (@nuonline_id) to spread the concept of moderation. The spread of the moderation message aims to maintain the country’s integrity and prevent radicalism or extremism in religion. This research is descriptive qualitative research. The study conducts by online observations of the @nuonline_id Instagram page to detect religious moderation content. This study succeeded in finding the construction of religious moderation on the @nuonline_id account using text analysis (images and text). The study results explain that NU Online carries out the structure of religious moderation in six aspects of life: (a) Aspects of inter-religious relations. In this aspect, NU Online invites Muslims to maintain harmony with people of different religions. (b) Aspects of social life by suggesting the Indonesian people live in harmony with each other as Indonesian citizens. (c) Political factors and state management by asking the government to develop moderation in carrying out their duties. (d) The education aspect is by the inculcation of the moderation concept in the curriculum. (e) Legal aspects and understanding of religious texts encourage Islamic scholars to consider the religious context in establishing laws. (f) Economic factors, taking into economic equity.

Keywords: Instagram, @nuonline_id, public opinion, religious moderation

Introduction
Humans in the globalization era have a high dependency on digital media. Various fields of life currently utilize globalization products, namely the Internet and social media (Yahya & Farhan, 2019). With social media, we can break through new space-time that is timeless and distanceless, meeting almost all forms of communication media such as convergence, making it called multimedia (Tomi Hendra, 2020).

In the last decade, we have made it easier to reach news and information. Quoting from the APJII Survey (Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers), for 2019-2020, Internet users in Indonesia reached 73.7% or 196.7 million people out of 266 million people all over Indonesia have owned Internet services. This data means that more than half of the population in Indonesia has experienced Internet services. The survey also found that social media platforms are the...
most popular in Internet services, and social media is the leading actor in the development of communication media nowadays.

In Indonesia, one of the most popular social media is Instagram. As a popular social media, Instagram use by millennial preachers in spreading their da'wah messages (A. Z. A. Aziz, 2020). (Instagram was chosen as a contemporary propaganda tool because fellow users can freely access Instagram content. In addition, 59% of active Instagram users are between 18-29 years old. This number shows that current Instagram social media users are young to productive (Sakti & Yulianto, 2013). The high number of young users makes Instagram an effective propaganda medium for the millennial generation.

Everything went too fast because of the media's role. Cyberspace has grown an essential part of shaping public opinion. Both in the form of thoughts, behavior, actions, and the basic needs of today's human lifestyle (Ghifari, 2017). The spread of information with poor solid knowledge and understanding will produce a negative impact. As a result, the younger generation can quickly erode by misled ideas. The current threat of religious terrorism and radicalism spread widely in various media, especially social media (Widyaningsih, 2019).

The media has a role as a channel for developing community culture such as fashion, lifestyle, and norms (Habibie, 2018). Apart from the various roles played by the media, the main task of the media is to convey the message. The final result of the message delivery process is personal opinion, public opinion, and majority opinion (Alkhotob, 2019).

In the public communication process, a leader will be considered a source of opinion (opinion leader) in disseminating messages as a manifestation of an agreement called public opinion. The formation of public opinion is currently starting to penetrate and be influenced by social media. Social media uses to represent a specific character than conventional media. Social media choice base on its strength. Social media conceive of having no restrictions, no control, fast and easily accessible to the public (Qadri, 2020). Elements of moderation content up to the last three decades are also followed by a list of moderation content nowadays (Hartmann, 2020). To achieve spiritual goals, religious institutions encourage building a life with a religious character applied in religious rituals and participating in religious communities (Rosmarin et al., 2016).

Religion is a product of evolutionary and biological processes. Some religious behaviors are expressions of genetic and psychological predispositions when religious beliefs and practices can discourage stronger, self-focused motives. Such religious behavior and habits could clash with cooperation and social cohesion (Sasaki & Kim, 2021).

The Internet or social media is chosen by some people as a space for online hate speech, thus triggering cyberhate or cyberbullying. An example is a use of violent, aggressive, or offensive language, which is shown to a specific group of people (religion, race, ethnicity, gender, or political affiliation) through repeated use of the Internet or social media, systematically and even offensive to ideology (Castaño-Pulgarín et al., 2021; Kuntarto et al., 2021).

Seeing this reality, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), as the most prominent religious organization
in Indonesia in its activities, has played a role as a national civil society (Ekawati, 2016). The Nahdlatul Ulama organization has a crucial role in constructing public understanding. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) invites to re-understand the concept of *washatiyah* in Islam.

The concept of *washatiyah* is the resources to build *uKhawah wathaniyah*. However, seeing the context of diversity in Indonesia apart from being a country’s wealth can also trigger the disintegration of the Republic of Indonesia’s unity. During the COVID-19 pandemic situation, harmony and moderation are essential to maintain *maqashid sharia* (sharia goals). Moderation of Islam becomes an Islamic religious understanding that represents the crucial teachings of Islam. Teachings concerned with good relations to God and no less critical are good relations with all humans. Not only among members of a religion but also among inter-member religions (Akhmadi, 2019). Judging from Indonesia’s diversity, maintaining Indonesian religious moderation is a crucial step. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is an organization that has a significant role in promoting religious moderation in every step of its da’wah.

Several studies related to the use of social media in spreading the notion of moderation discuss in previous studies. For example, the research conducted by Wibowo with the title "*Religious Moderation Campaign on Facebook: Message Forms and Strategies.*" This study focuses on discussing models and methods to spread the message of moderation (Wibowo, 2019). Kosasih conducted another research in an article entitled "*Social Media Literacy in Popularize Religious Moderation Attitudes.*" The results of this study discuss the steps in media literacy regarding moderation to help the public sort out the correct information (Kosasih, 2019). In comparison, the research conducted by the author in this article focuses on describing how NU Online constructs public opinion about religious moderation on Instagram.

NU tries to create public opinion about religious moderation through the NU Online website by social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, and Websites. Through social media, the message conveyed by NU expects to be able to encourage public opinion based on information that is in line with the values of moderation and Islamic teachings sourced from the Qur’an and Hadith. In addition, it hopes that it will reduce the space for ideological-based media that is contrary to religious moderation or *tawasuth*.

**Method**

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with online observation methods. The researcher observed directly at the Instagram @nuonline_id page to find data about publications related to the religious moderation theme. The form of the content is images or videos uploaded by the @nuonline_id account. Based on observations, the Instagram account @nuonline_id massively produces content with religious moderation in various forms.

Qualitative descriptive research aims to provide an overview of how the @nuonline_id account displays issues of religious moderation in its Instagram posts. This research also explains how the @nuonline_id Instagram media account shows information closely related to the media in determining public opinion. The study was conducted by
analyzing the text in the form of images, scripts, and captions. After the data is collected, the writer interprets the text or content in several aspects. These aspects categorize into:

1. Religious moderation in the aspect of inter-religious relations;
2. Religious moderation in aspects of social life;
3. Religious moderation in political aspects and state management;
4. Religious moderation in the education aspect;
5. Religious moderation in legal aspects & understanding of religious texts;

This analysis explores media content’s discourse and central ideas and understands the construction and display of religious moderation content in the @nuonline_id Instagram account.

**Result and Discussion**

NU Online is the official online media site for Nahdlatul Ulama which functions as a medium for contemporary da’wah and can access through social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, and Instagram. In the Instagram account, NU Online has the name @nuonline_id with 785,000 followers, and as of February 16, it has 6,787 posts. All Instagram posts @nuonline_id are integrated and sourced directly from the www.nu.or.id website.

Based on the exploration, the posts on the @nuonline_id Instagram page construct the principle of moderation in various aspects of human life. This post's content follows the Ahlusunnah Waljama’ah principle, which prioritizes moderation and rejects all forms of extreme actions and thoughts (Almu’tasim, 2017).

Moderation is an attitude or view that always tries to take the middle side (Faiqah & Pransiska, 2018). Therefore, moderation can answer problems in society related to various aspects (Fahri & Zainuri, 2019). Interpreting religious moderation will be relevant if it contextualizes, not textual. As in the @nuonline_id account, religious moderation is framed and constructed based on aspects of social life, including:

1. **Moderation Construction in Aspects of Inter-religious Relations**

   Islamic teachings support harmony between fellow human beings or *ukhuwah*. The form of *ukhuwah* in Islamic thought does not select a person based on his religion. In this case, it means that Islam recommends having good relations with people of other religions. The @nuonline_id account discusses inter-religious relations with framing, as shown in the image below.

![Figure 1: Content of @nuonline_id Account](image)

**Figure 1: Content of @nuonline_id Account**

Upload on December 18, 2020

The headline in figure 1 put "6 PRINCIPLES OF RELATIONSHIP AMONG ISLAM WITH OTHER RELIGIONS" as the title. Based on the headline, @nuonline_id proposes to raise a critical attitude in dealing with people of other religions. In addition,
the figure headlines highlight Muslims as the main actors. This social media posting content shows that good relations among Muslims with people of other religions are essential values.

Figure 1 also shows the required attitudes of Muslims when socializing with different religious members. The points written in the image show that @nuonline_id is trying to build people's awareness about pluralism. Taufik said that pluralism defines the existence of diversity and the need for tolerance to other religions' adherents, and an attitude of understanding the belief of each other (Taufik, 2014).

In this case, @nuonline_id encourages us to think inclusively or recognize the rights of other religions. Inclusiveness intends to justify adherents of other faiths to practice their respective religious principles because Islam prohibits religious coercion (Abidin, 2013).

Moderation in inter-religious relations intends to help and respect each other. In this case, religious moderation does not mean accepting other religions' opinions, teachings, or beliefs but acknowledging their existence and living side by side in peace.

Religion never excludes horizontal social relations nor solely focuses on theological or vertical relationships. Religion balances these two aspects. Both are more familiarly known as hablumminallah (theological relationship) and hablumminnass (social relations) in Islam. So, as religious people, Muslims demand to think and act moderately or uphold tolerance when dealing with fellow human beings.

The way NU Online media frames moderation by taking aspects of inter-religious relations judges according to the requirements and urgency for the Indonesian nation. Indonesia is a multicultural country with various tribes, ethnicities, and religions. Even religious practices in Indonesia are very diverse and adhere to the culture of each region. For example, the practice of Islam in Java is different from the practice of Islam in other areas. This practice is due to the existence of varying community cultures that affect their religious practices. The @nuonline_id framing in the image above raises awareness that every religion, in essence, teaches peace and humanity.

Data from 113 countries from 1996 to 2012 with treatments for endogeneity found a significant direct effect of religious affiliation on innovative activities. The influence of Islam on innovation is mainly insignificant, indicating that the direction of the impact is relatively unchanged in countries with different levels of democracy, income, and religious regulation (Wang & Wang, 2021). Based on these results, mutual respect and tolerance among people of a religion or spiritual community are crucial for a highly diverse country like Indonesia. With this principle, all forms of intolerance and violence that occur in inter-religious relations can prevent.

2. Construction of Moderation in Aspects of Social Life

One aspect of moderation constructed on the @nuonline_id account is moderation in social life aspects. According to Shihab, moderation in aspects of social life means balancing the rights possessed by individuals and the rights that society should obtain (Shihab, 2020). The following post image shows the construction of religious moderation in aspects of social life on the @nuonline_id account.
The image contains the headline "IMPLEMENTATION OF CITIZENS TOLERANCE." The headline refers to the creation of public opinion to maintain the integrity of the country. *Ukhuwah wathaniyah* or brotherhood among every citizen will create the integrity of the nation. *Ukhuwah wathaniyah* will work with the assumption of harmony principle among citizens.

NU Online's attempts to maintain *ukhuwah wathaniyah* through religious moderation are motivated by their responsibility to the nation and religion (Ismail, 2020). The establishment of public opinion carried out by NU Online through the @nuonline_id Instagram account manifests the Nahdlatul Ulama struggle, which drives by national responsibility and awareness. Meanwhile, the teachings of NU Online always guides by the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. The NU Online principles are religious guidelines for every citizen, especially Muslims, described in figure 2. This point shows that in social life, citizens are encouraged to disregard others' religions. In other words, every citizen has the equivalent and egalitarian status regardless of their religion.

NU Online frames tolerance between citizens by seeing harmony as an issue. The fulfillment of individual rights will result in harmony in society. As well as the attitude of mutual respect and concern for fellow human beings, especially in meeting the needs of life.

The construction of citizen tolerance implementation by the @nuonline_id Instagram account follows the teachings of the Prophet SAW. The principles of tolerance displayed by the media are in line with the contents of the Medina Charter. Gusnanda said that the Medina Charter had become a model for the ideal life of tolerance among citizens (Gusnanda & Nuraini, 2020).

Through the Medina Charter, all the people of Medina agreed and were willing to defend the city of Medina from enemy attacks. Society is required to merge into one which includes rights and obligations as citizens. In the principles of the Medina Charter, every citizen is considered equal in obtaining rights without any differences in tribes, ethnicity, or religion.

Indonesia has constitutionally implemented regulations as exemplified by the Prophet SAW. However, in practice, many Indonesian citizens have low awareness of tolerance, especially in viewing pluralism. Therefore, NU Online massively raises issues of religious moderation to build public awareness through social media.

3. Moderation Construction in Political Aspects and State Management

The understanding of moderation in politics and state management concerns the involvement of religion in politics and the relation between religion and the state. Shihab said that most political practices nowadays rely on attempting to gain power by justifying...
all procedures, including fraud and deception (Shihab, 2020). For this reason, moderation in politics and state management includes NU Online’s agenda in influencing the public. Figure 3 is an example of the @nuonline_id account upload about moderation in political and state governance.

Based on Figure 3, NU Online emphasizes the attitude that state leaders or state officials must maintain. Every State official should implement the elaboration of this attitude to fulfill the obligations of their responsibilities. NU Online’s statement in the framing above is supported by Fahri’s opinion, saying that a State or Government Leader must possess a strong attitude and trustworthy behavior. As part of the government in a country with an Islamic majority and high diversity, state leaders and officials must realize that a moderate attitude is required (Fahri & Zainuri, 2019). The moderation knowledge and attitude are essential to managing the administration of the state properly.

The moderation framing shown by the @nuonline_id account above raises the issue that government should create harmonious relations between citizens. The government has a role in controlling and maintaining the harmonious atmosphere of a country. Leaders in setting policies must be regarding people's justice and considering moderation.

4. Moderation Construction in Educational Aspect

Education is one of the main aspects of NU Online’s agenda in constructing public opinion about religious moderation. Knowledge of moderation is developed through educational institutions to provide the next generation to behave and support the nation. Transfusing moderation within education aims to make Indonesian students open-minded to future challenges and balance how to deal with them. One of the shreds of evidence NU is carrying out a religious moderation campaign in the education field, as shown in figure 4.

Based on Figure 4, Nahdlatul Ulama embedded moderation knowledge to students from elementary to higher education levels. The embedded moderation principle applies in the curriculum and education materials used in the learning process. This step aims to spread a proper understanding of religious moderation conceptually and in practice for students.

Education is a tool for Nahdlatul Ulama in developing an attitude of religious moderation because education goals consider
in line with moderation goals. Jalaluddin (in Karim, 2019) formulate education aims to foster and develop human potential based on Islamic law to create an ideal life. Nahdlatul Ulama's strategy in targeting education to develop moderation opinions is on the right track.

The policy to spread the notion of religious moderation in education applies to the curriculum of all kinds of education organizations, such as madrasas, Islamic boarding schools, and public schools. Moderation values are usually found in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning and character-building education. Winata mentions that PAI subjects are a strategic tool for schools in developing students’ character and personality regarding moderation (Winata et al., 2020).

The method used is by internalizing the values of moderation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) subjects. In PAI subjects, consist of moderating values such as tawasuth (impartial attitude), tawazun (balanced), i'tidal (straight and firm), tasamuh (tolerance), musawah (equality and togetherness), shura (deliberation), Islah (reconciling), awlawiyah (prioritize essential things), and tahaddhur (upholding morality) (Karim, 2019). These values need to be taught to every student to reduce the extremism and radicalism that can trigger disintegration.

When referring to the education field, it cannot separates from the role of a teacher. The teacher’s role is broader than educating students with general knowledge. Teachers should be developing the better character of their students simultaneously. As role models for students, teachers are encouraged to have good morals (akhlakul karimah). To strengthen the development of students’ moderation attitudes, teachers must have the proper knowledge of moderation.

Based on the @nuonline_id Instagram account framing the concept of moderation taught to students should consist of a homogeneous perspective amidst all regions. This concept means that adopting moderated content in the curriculum and teaching materials is carried out by considering the common point of view conceptually and practically. So that students have a parallel understanding of religious moderation.

5. Moderation Construction in Legal Aspects & Understanding of Religious Texts

Most radical actions are often based on the verses of the Qur’an and Hadith. Islam teaches moderate values such as tolerance, justice, compassion, and wisdom. However, recently religious texts, both the Qur’an and Hadith, have been used as legitimacy in extreme and radical acts. This misleading suspect is the failure of a person or group to understand religious texts (Widyaningsih et al., 2017, 2020).

@nuonline_id frames the issue of moderation in understanding religious texts by highlighting religious figures such as fiqh experts. Religious figures consider as experts in law and religious texts, as seen in figure 5.

[Figure 5: Content of @nuonline_id Account Upload on January 21, 2021]
Framing in figure 5 shows that *fiqh* scholars should understand history because it must adapt to the context and situation in establishing law. @nuonline presents the frame by quoting the terms of a famous figure, specifically Rais Syuriah PCNU Australia and New Zealand, Gus Nadiisyah Hosen. These words explicitly invite moderate thought in understanding religious texts. When referring to the *fiqh* concept, it contains an understanding of worship, both *mahdhah* worship, and *gairu mahdhah* worship. Furthermore, the law of worship regulates religious texts (al-Qur'an and Hadith).

Human life is growing time by time. New problems require solutions and proper sharia law. In addition, the wider area causes differences in the community's geographical, social, and cultural conditions. *Ijtihad* of the scholars is needed to formulate answers to problems that are growing in the community.

According to Sanusi, increasingly complex social problems have become essential for contextual thinking in legal construction. The presentation of this reason base on the evidence that legal construction that has existed several centuries ago cannot be applied with the current historical and setting background (Sanusi, 2015). Thus, the way NU Online invites people to think moderately in understanding religious texts by highlighting *fiqh* scholars has been right on target. Although in @nuonline_id's framing, more priority gives to *fiqh* scholars, Muslims --in general-- are also expected to understand religious texts moderately so that radical ideas do not easily provoke them.

Fahri also explained that the moderation of Islamic teachings aligns with the principle of *Rahmatallil'alamin*. So, an anti-violent attitude is needed, accepting all forms of differences in society, interpreting verses contextually, establishing laws with istinbath, and using scientific and technological approaches to examine the dynamics of current problems. Muslims must understand that differences in social life are part of civil society. A moderate attitude is needed to maintain and restore the image of Islam brought by the Prophet Muhammad (Fahri & Zainuri, 2019).

The approaches of history, sociology, and anthropology are needed to understand the verses of the Qur'an contextually. The historical method use to trace *asbabun nuzul* and *asbabul wurud* as the reasons behind the revelation of verses or hadiths. The sociological approach use to understand the relationship between verses or hadiths among social conditions and community situations. At the same time, the anthropological approach is carried out to regard the developing religious practices, traditions, and culture when the verse or Hadith was revealed (Nafisa, 2019). It expects that *fiqh* scholars in establishing a law can implement it moderately if regarding these approaches.

6. Moderation Construction in Economic Aspect

The economic aspect has also become a concern for NU Online in developing religious moderation. Economics is an essential part of human life that cannot separate from people's daily lives. Thus, moderation in the economic aspect needs to be applied in society, especially in Indonesia. An example is a case regarding dinars and dirhams as a medium of a trading exchange, as shown in figure 6.

The framing of content produced by the @nuonline_id Instagram account exposes a problem regarding the legal practice of...
dinars and dirhams as a medium of trading exchange in Indonesia. Responding to this problem, Syamsudin said that the use of dinars and dirhams in Indonesia is contrary to Law Number 7 of 2011 concerning currency (Syamsudin, 2020).

Thus, the use of dinars in trading transactions is irrelevant with moderate behavior. A moderate attitude in the economic aspect should be shown by supporting the country’s development. Proudly using the rupiah currency in trade transactions is support for the country.

Dinars and dirhams made of gold and silver are not suitable for trading in Indonesia. The rare materials of dinars and dirhams will cause difficulties for the Indonesian people, especially for the lower middle class. The use of dinars and dirhams contradicts moderation in the economic field, aiming to equalize the people’s economy. Moderation in the economic area must be guided by maqashid al sharia to achieve the welfare of the people. The medium of exchange used in trading transactions should not trigger problems for the people. The attitude of aligning technology and information in religion must be supported by science and adaptive to society’s social environment developments. Religious arrogance can be minimized so that people can acquire religious thought with open arms (F. A. Aziz, 2019).

Conclusion

The Instagram account @nuonline_id has constructed an understanding of religious moderation by framing its media content focusing on aspects of people’s lives. Based on the discussion above, the construction of religious moderation on the @nuonline_id Instagram account groups into six aspects: (a) Aspects of inter-religious relations. In this aspect, NU Online invites Muslims to maintain harmony with people regardless of their religions. (b) Aspects of social life engage the Indonesian people to live in harmony with each other as citizens. (c) Political aspects and state management by inviting government officials to develop moderation in carrying out their duties. (d) The education aspect is through the inculcation of the concept of moderation in the curriculum. (e) Legal aspects and understanding of religious texts by inviting scholars to regard the establishment of laws considering the context. (f) Economic aspects, taking into account economic equity.

This research also contributes to the development of da’wah communication.
This study examines the construction related to da’wah messages about religious moderation carried out by NU Online as an application to build mad’u opinions. However, this research is only limited to examining the framing of information submitted by @nuonline_id and does not involve responses from followers, so it is necessary to conduct in-depth research related to this study.

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