

IDEOLOGICAL DYNAMICS OF ISLAM *RAHMATAN LIL 'ALAMIN* AMONG GEN Z

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Abstract: This study explores students' understanding of the concept of *Islam Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin* in the context of religious moderation. Using qualitative methods, in-depth interviews with five students revealed that (40%) demonstrated a very good understanding, (40%) a good understanding, (20%) a fair understanding, and (0%) a poor understanding. The majority of students apply the values of tolerance, justice, and compassion in their daily lives, although some face obstacles such as limited access to moderate literature (40%), social pressures (50%), and challenges in academic discussions and religious activities (60%). In conclusion, this study recommends that higher education institutions play a more active role in deepening students' understanding through curriculum enhancement, training, and interfaith dialogue to foster an inclusive and tolerant campus environment.

INTRODUCTION

Islam, as a representation of moderation or *wasathiyah*, is reflected in the concept of *Islam Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin*. This concept portrays Islam as a religion that promotes peace, balance, and benefits for all people, regardless of their background (Arif, 2021; Ibrahim, 2023; Syakhrani & Yudistira, 2022). However, in the modern era—marked by challenges such as radicalization, intolerance, and issues of diversity—this understanding tends to become blurred, particularly among younger generations (Awalita, 2023; Jamaluddin, 2021; Zainab, 2020). This study aims to analyze how university students comprehend the concept of *Islam Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin*, which plays a critical role in promoting religious moderation (Susanto, 2021; Tamrin, 2019). The concept emphasizes love, empathy for all beings, and a dedication to peace and justice within society (Qosiimah et al., 2024). Within the context of higher education (Setiawan,

2024), understanding this principle helps shape students who are not only academically competent but also socially responsible (Herman, 2019).

As the next generation, students hold a strategic role in applying the values of religious moderation. They are expected to become agents of change capable of addressing extremism and intolerance (Karyanto, 2017; Parjiman et al., 2023). This study explores how students understand and implement the principles of *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin* in their daily lives, as well as the challenges they encounter during this process (Sanusi & Yusof, 2018; Suhaimi et al., 2022). The findings are expected to contribute to developing a more inclusive and tolerant Islamic education system. Literature supports the significance of this research by highlighting how the application of *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin* values can reduce potential conflicts between religious communities (Adawiyah, 2019; Taufikurrahman et al., 2022). For instance, Muhammad Nur Jamaluddin's study emphasizes that *Islam Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin* should be practiced in daily life to create a harmonious and peaceful society (Safiq et al., 2024). Similarly, Sayekti (2021) found that applying these principles in academic publications enhances academic integrity and community contributions.

In light of increasing interfaith tensions and complex social issues, a deep understanding of *Islam Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin* could be key to fostering a harmonious society (Arif, 2021; Karyanto, 2017; Sanusi & Yusof, 2018; Setiaji et al., 2022). By analyzing how students understand and implement these values, the study can identify factors that influence their attitudes and behaviors toward diversity. This research holds the potential to provide new insights into how religious education can be adapted to meet contemporary challenges (Syahansyah, 2018) and how students can actively promote tolerance and mutual understanding in society. For example, through community service programs grounded in *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin* values, students can strengthen social cohesion and reduce conflict potential.

As change agents and intellectuals, students are expected to play a significant role in fostering social harmony (Fatah et al., 2023). Therefore, this study aims to examine the extent of students' understanding of *Islam Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin* and the impact of this teaching on their perspectives toward diversity issues (Susanti et al., 2024). The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for programs promoting religious moderation within society. Consequently, this research is not only academically relevant but also has practical implications. Its results can serve as recommendations for educational institutions in designing a more responsive religious education curriculum that encourages students to develop cognitive, moral, and ethical integrity.

By integrating elements of religious moderation into the curriculum (Mufid, 2023; Rahmatan & Alamin, 2018; Zainab, 2020), students will gain not only theoretical knowledge but also practical skills to navigate the complexities of a diverse society. For example, courses on cross-cultural communication and conflict management could be included in the study plan to better equip students for real-world challenges. Collaboration between universities and civil society organizations in hosting seminars, workshops, or social activities can also deepen students' understanding of the importance of religious moderation. Through such strategies, the younger generation is expected to excel academically while upholding humanitarian and peace values in their everyday lives.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach (Creswell, 2014), which emphasizes conducting research in natural settings. In this research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument for data collection. The data were gathered through interviews with five individuals, specifically university students whose experiences are relevant to the research topic. Data analysis was conducted inductively, focusing on a deep understanding of the phenomenon being studied rather than generalizing the results. This type of research falls under the category of exploratory research (Arsyam & Tahir, 2021; Ulva et al., 2021), aiming to understand and explain issues that were previously only understood in general terms. Through interviews with the five students, the researcher seeks to delve deeply into issues that have not been extensively studied before. Exploratory research is designed to identify and uncover problems that require further investigation. The interviews with the informants—five university students in this case—are critical to obtaining direct and in-depth insights into the issues under examination. Using this approach, the researcher aims to gain a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the topic being investigated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Understanding of the Concept of Islam *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin*

The majority of students have a good understanding of the concept of Islam *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin*. They view this concept as an essential foundation emphasizing values of tolerance, justice, and compassion for all beings (Anwar et al., 2023). This understanding reflects students' awareness of the importance of universal principles in Islamic teachings, which extend beyond religious practices and contribute to fostering harmonious relationships

among people of different faiths (Rasyid, 2016; Rahmatika & Khoirullina, 2020). This indicates that education and outreach efforts about Islam *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin* have had a positive impact in shaping students' perspectives on religious values (Zainab, 2020).

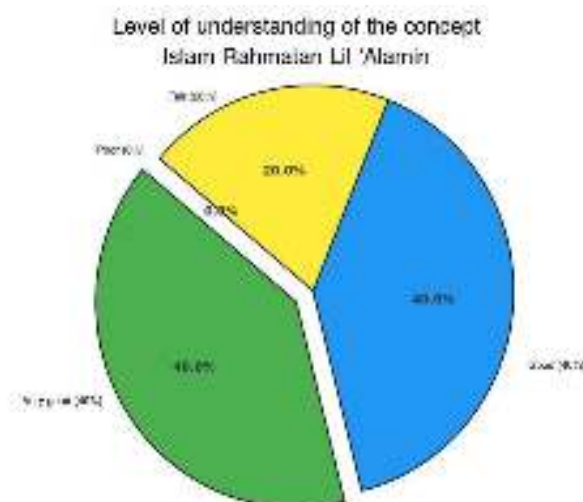


Chart 1.1 Illustrates the percentage of students' levels of understanding (Very Good, Good, Fair, and Poor).

The results are categorized into four levels: very good, good, fair, and poor. The very good category represents an almost perfect level of achievement, demonstrating excellence in all aspects of understanding *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin* (Adawiyah, 2019; Arif, 2021). The good category indicates adequate achievement that meets standards, although there are minor gaps in certain explanations (Awalita, 2023). Meanwhile, the fair category signifies results at the minimum acceptable threshold, requiring significant effort to improve comprehension of *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin* (Ibrahim & Abdul, 2023). Conversely, the poor category reveals substantial deficiencies, necessitating attention and improvement in understanding the values of *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin* (Sayekti, 2021; Setiaji et al., 2022).

A small number of students still have a limited understanding of the concept, as they tend to confine it to the context of worship or the Muslim community alone (Akhmadi, 2022). Several factors influence this understanding, including educational background, social environment, and access to literature on moderate Islam. An inadequate educational background can hinder a broader understanding of Islam's inclusive values (Mufid, 2023). Furthermore, a lack of supportive social environments and limited access to credible sources of information also pose challenges for some students in deeply understanding Islam *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin*.

In addition to the mentioned factors, media and information technology play a significant role in shaping students' understanding of *Islam Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin*. In the digital age, easy access to information through various platforms such as social media, blogs, and educational videos has become increasingly prominent (Tamrin, 2019; Taufikurrahman et al., 2022). However, it is important to note that the quality of information available online varies widely, with some sources lacking credibility. Students who actively seek knowledge through digital media are more likely to embrace diverse perspectives but are also vulnerable to biased or extreme information. For this reason, educational institutions play a crucial role in equipping students with digital literacy skills to critically evaluate information (Mazrur et al., 2022; Karyanto, 2017). With improved digital literacy, students can not only deepen their understanding of *Islam Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin* but also contribute to advancing more constructive interfaith dialogue within society (Zuhdi, 2011).

The Implementation of Religious Moderation Among University Students

The majority of students practice moderation in their daily religious activities, especially when interacting with friends of various faiths. They demonstrate a willingness to respect differences and uphold shared values. This behavior reflects their understanding of the importance of tolerance and interfaith harmony, which forms the foundation of a harmonious campus environment (Arif, 2021; Fatah et al., 2023). Students with a moderate attitude tend to engage in interfaith dialogues and participate in joint activities, fostering stronger social relationships among them (Setiaji et al., 2022).

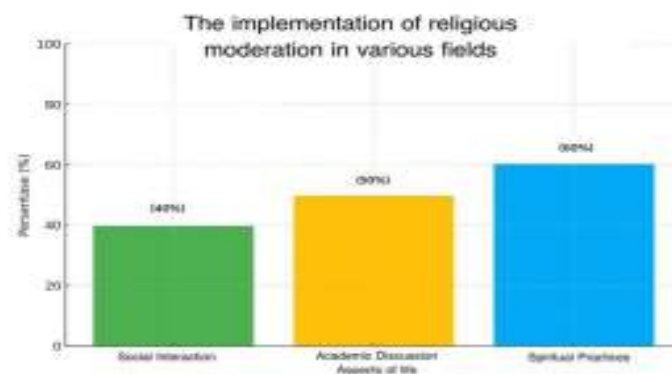


Chart 1.2 Illustrates the frequency of moderate behavior among students in different aspects of life, including social interactions, academic discussions, and religious activities.

However, despite many students exhibiting moderate attitudes, they face various challenges in implementing religious moderation in practice (Suhaimi et al., 2022). Peer pressure from groups around them often pushes them toward adopting extreme or intolerant views. Furthermore, misleading information circulating on social media can influence their perspectives on other religions and exacerbate intolerance (Safiq et al., 2024). A lack of moderation mentors on campus also poses a barrier, as students may not receive sufficient guidance on managing differences and fostering inclusivity (Awalita, 2023; Mufid, 2023). Therefore, additional efforts are needed to provide adequate support and education to help students consistently develop moderate attitudes in their religious practices (Karyanto, 2017). It is also important to note that the success of implementing moderation does not rely solely on individual students but also on the policies of higher education institutions. As centers of learning, universities must proactively create programs that facilitate interfaith dialogue and train students in tolerance (Setiaji et al., 2022; Susanti et al., 2024). Through seminars, workshops, and interfaith activities, students can be given opportunities to share experiences and diverse perspectives (Tamrin, 2019; Ulva et al., 2021). In this way, campuses can become more inclusive and support the development of moderate attitudes among students, fostering a generation that is sensitive to diversity and capable of making positive contributions to a multicultural society (Surawan & Sobari, 2022).

The Role of Education and Universities in Supporting Islam *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin*

Higher education plays a vital role in strengthening the understanding of Islam *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin* through various effective strategies. One example is the role of lecturers and courses focused on religious moderation (Tamrin, 2019). By presenting relevant materials and using interactive teaching methods, lecturers can instill the values of Islam *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin* among students (Sayekti, 2021). These courses are not only designed to transmit knowledge but also to build inclusive and tolerant student character. Additionally, student activities such as interfaith dialogues and national seminars contribute to raising awareness about religious moderation (Awalita, 2023; Fatah et al., 2023; Zainab, 2020). Interfaith dialogues encourage active participation from students of various religious backgrounds in constructive discussions, allowing them to understand diverse perspectives. Meanwhile, national seminars equip students with an understanding of how Islamic values integrate with national cultural aspects, motivating them to apply religious moderation within their local communities (Parjiman et al., 2023).

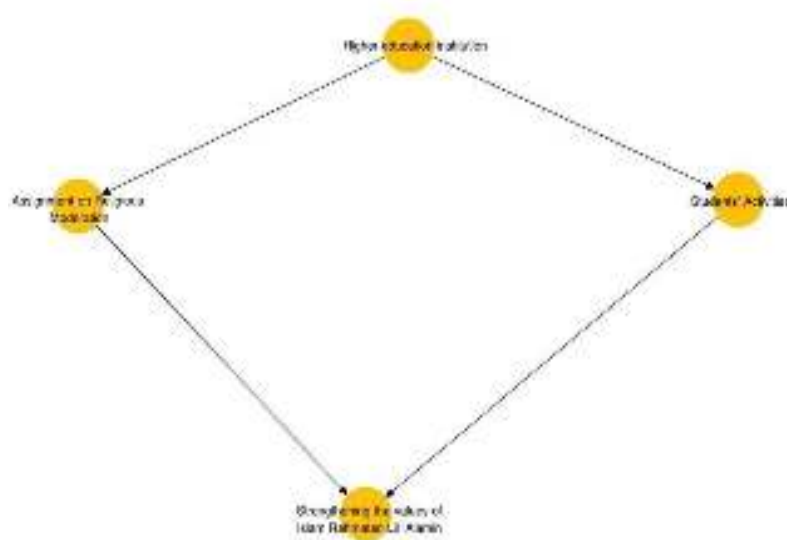


Chart 1.3 Illustrates the relationship between education, campus activities, and the reinforcement of Islam *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin* values.

To enhance higher education's contribution to fostering an understanding of Islam *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin*, it is recommended to increase training sessions and inclusive forums for students (Herman, 2019; Ibrahim & Abdul, 2023). Such training helps lecturers and academic staff understand effective strategies for teaching religious moderation, enabling them to provide optimal support. Meanwhile, through inclusive forums, students can discuss and share experiences on implementing religious moderation in daily life. This creates a campus environment that promotes the development of moderate and inclusive attitudes among students.

Furthermore, it is crucial to involve various stakeholders, including alumni and community leaders, in strengthening religious moderation education on campus. By engaging them as sources of knowledge or mentors, students can gain practical understanding and motivation through firsthand experiences in applying the principles of Islam *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin* in daily life (Fatah et al., 2023; Karyanto, 2017; Setiawan, 2023). This involvement not only enriches students' perspectives but also fosters a close social network between the younger generation and community figures (Syahansyah, 2018; Syakhrani & Yudistira, 2022). Through this approach, higher education institutions become not just spaces for learning theoretical concepts but also social laboratories that nurture individuals capable of making a positive impact in diverse and harmonious societies (Zuhdi, 2011).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

This study concludes that the majority of students understand and implement the concept of Islam *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin*, particularly in values of tolerance and interfaith harmony. However, there are significant challenges that need to be addressed, such as the influence of the environment and the lack of reliable literature. Higher education plays a key role by integrating values of moderation into the curriculum and campus activities. This effort is crucial in shaping students who are not only academically intelligent but also morally responsible, enabling them to navigate the dynamics of diversity in society. The main recommendation is to enhance training, inclusive forums, and mentoring to support the development of moderate attitudes among students. For future research, it is recommended to explore a broader and more diverse sample of students across different universities and regions to gain a more comprehensive understanding of their perspectives on Islam *Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin*.

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