



Digital Da'wah Exposure and Religious Moderation among Indonesian Islamic University Students

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ABSTRACT

Digital technology has transformed how Indonesian students access religious information. This study examines the relationship between exposure to digital da'wah and students' understanding of religious moderation. Employing a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, data were gathered from 108 students at UIN Mataram (mean age = 20.3; 62% female) through surveys and in-depth interviews with four informants. Measurement validity was ensured using the Rasch Model (exposure: item reliability = 0.92, separation index = 3.41; moderation: reliability = 0.87, separation index = 2.61). Quantitative analysis using Spearman's rho indicated a moderate positive correlation between social media exposure and religious moderation ($\rho = 0.499$, 95% CI [0.35, 0.62], $p < .001$). Qualitative findings revealed that exposure to inclusive and tolerant da'wah content fostered openness, tolerance, and non-violence, while limited or entertainment-focused exposure weakened these values. This study highlights the implications of digital da'wah for higher education, particularly the need to integrate moderation literacy into curricula and encourage strategic use of digital platforms to promote tolerance. Limitations include the single-site sample and the influence of algorithmic bias on content exposure. Future research should adopt multi-site and longitudinal designs to better capture dynamic shifts in digital consumption and its impact on students' religious perspectives.

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ABSTRAK

Teknologi digital mengubah cara mahasiswa Indonesia mengakses informasi keagamaan. Penelitian ini menelaah hubungan antara paparan dakwah digital dan pemahaman moderasi beragama mahasiswa. Dengan pendekatan mixed methods desain sequential explanatory, data dikumpulkan dari 108 mahasiswa UIN Mataram (rerata usia 20,3 tahun; 62% perempuan) melalui survei dan wawancara semi-terstruktur terhadap empat informan. Instrumen diuji menggunakan Model Rasch (reliabilitas item = 0,92; indeks pemisahan = 3,41 untuk paparan; reliabilitas = 0,87; indeks pemisahan = 2,61 untuk moderasi), sehingga menghasilkan alat ukur yang valid dan reliabel. Analisis kuantitatif dengan korelasi Spearman menunjukkan adanya hubungan positif sedang dan signifikan ($\rho = 0,499$; 95% CI [0,35, 0,62]; $p < 0,001$) antara paparan media sosial dengan pemahaman moderasi beragama. Temuan kualitatif menegaskan bahwa paparan konten dakwah inklusif dan toleran menumbuhkan keterbukaan, sikap anti-kekerasan, dan penghargaan terhadap keberagaman, sementara paparan terbatas atau hiburan justru melemahkan nilai tersebut. Keterbatasan penelitian ini terletak pada lokasi tunggal dan bias algoritma media. Implikasi penelitian ini menekankan perlunya inovasi kurikulum dan strategi dakwah digital untuk memperkuat literasi moderasi beragama di perguruan tinggi. Penelitian lanjutan disarankan mencakup multi-site dan longitudinal untuk menangkap perubahan secara lebih dinamis.

KATA KUNCI
Moderasi
beragama, dakwah
digital, media
sosial, mahasiswa

Introduction

In Indonesia's digital era, technological transformation has reshaped nearly every aspect of society, particularly among young people. A survey by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (2024) reported that internet penetration has reached 79.5% of the population (221 million users), while social media users number 191 million, of whom 167 million are active. YouTube (139 million users), Instagram (122 million), Facebook (118 million), WhatsApp (116 million), and TikTok (89 million) dominate usage, with most users aged 18–34 spending over three hours daily online. The Digital 2024 Report notes that Indonesians rank fifth globally in daily internet use, averaging 7 hours 42 minutes (Social & Meltwater, 2024). In West Nusa Tenggara, the Indonesian Digital Society Index (IMDI) even exceeds the national average (Provincial Government NTB, 2024). These figures indicate that digital media, particularly TikTok and YouTube, has become central to how university students access religious knowledge.

This digital transformation also significantly affects Islamic education. Research at three Islamic universities in Mataram shows that lecturers integrate moderate narratives into curricula supported by digital programs (Syahri et al., 2024). Similarly, Shofiyuddin et al. (2024) found that moderation fosters tolerance and inclusivity, while Khasanah et al. (2023) emphasized its necessity in preventing radicalism. However, students' academic works often reflect ambiguities in articulating moderation (Gaffar et al., 2022; Jamaludin, 2022). Digital religious literacy adds another dimension: students prefer practical da'wah content from digital preachers (Sahlan et al., 2022), though risks of hoaxes, radicalization, and polarization persist (Santosa, 2024).

This dual nature of digital religion reveals a persistent gap between reality and the ideal. While social media provides inclusive narratives, it also spreads contradictory or entertainment-driven messages that can weaken moderation values (Faesol, 2023; Bachtiar & Hidayat, 2024; Hadiyanto et al., 2025). Theoretically, this study applies Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which explains how individuals acquire values through observation, reinforcement, and self-regulation (Liu et al., 2024; Yildirim & Öztürk, 2023). This aligns with the Ministry of Religious Affairs' (2019) four indicators of religious moderation: national commitment, tolerance, rejection of violence, and acceptance of local culture (Musyahid & Kolis, 2023). Repeated exposure to tolerant content can strengthen students' understanding of moderation, while limited or algorithm-driven exposure may undermine it.

From the literature, two major research gaps emerge. First, empirical analyses of how algorithm-driven exposure on TikTok and YouTube shapes students' internalization of moderation remain scarce. Second, few studies have employed robust psychometric tools such as the Rasch Model, limiting measurement validity. To address these gaps, this study adopts a sequential mixed-methods design combining validated surveys with in-depth interviews. It aims to analyze the relationship between exposure to digital da'wah content and students' understanding of moderation, while exploring contextual and motivational factors behind content consumption. The findings are expected to inform both digital da'wah strategies and educational policies, offering insights for strengthening religious literacy and moderation in the digital age.

Methods

This study employed a mixed-methods design with a Sequential Explanatory strategy (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). The research consisted of two stages. The first stage involved an online quantitative survey to map students' exposure to TikTok-YouTube da'wah content and examine its relationship with their understanding of religious moderation. The second stage consisted of semi-structured interviews designed to deepen the quantitative findings, particularly regarding students' motivations for accessing and interpreting such content. Integration of both stages was carried out through a connection strategy (informant selection based on survey results) and joint display in the results and discussion sections.

The research was conducted at the State Islamic University (UIN) Mataram, a PTKIN institution with a strategic mandate in strengthening religious moderation. The study population comprised active students enrolled in the 2023/2024 academic year. Inclusion criteria were: (1) active student status, (2) ownership of a TikTok and/or YouTube account, and (3) willingness to participate with informed consent. Exclusion criteria were inactive social media use (≤ 1 time/week) and incomplete questionnaires. Quantitative sampling employed convenience sampling (Nurlatifah et al., 2023). Based on Cohen's (1988) guidelines for a medium effect size ($r = 0.30$), with $\alpha = 0.05$ and power = 0.80, the minimum required sample was 84 (Faul et al., 2007; Sheets, 2022). A total of 108 valid responses were obtained, exceeding the adequacy criteria

(Brysbaert, 2019). For the qualitative phase, purposive sampling was used to select four informants, ensuring variation in media exposure and levels of moderation understanding. Ethical protocols were strictly followed. The study used anonymous online surveys and interviews with adult participants who provided voluntary electronic consent after reading an information sheet explaining objectives, procedures, confidentiality, and withdrawal rights. Interview approval was recorded prior to each session. No sensitive identity data were collected; all responses were anonymized and coded (R1–R108; M1–M4). Raw data and transcripts were securely stored in encrypted folders accessible only to the research team, while published quotes are presented without identifying details.

Research instruments were developed from digital da'wah exposure indicators (based on Bandura's Social Learning Theory) and the four indicators of religious moderation outlined by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (2019). The media exposure variable (dichotomous) was analyzed using the Rasch 1-PL Model, which ensures consistent logit calibration while testing category quality. The moderation understanding variable (Likert scale) was analyzed using the Rating Scale Model (RSM) to verify ordered response categories (Villalonga-Olives et al., 2021). Data analysis was conducted with Ministep 3.75.0 (Linacre, 2012).

SUMMARY OF CATEGORY STRUCTURE. Model="R"

CATEGORY	OBSERVED	OBSVD	SAMPLE	INFINIT	OUTFIT	COHERENCE	ESTIM
LABEL	SCORE	COUNT	%	AVRGE	EXPECT	MNSQ	MNSQ
0	0	586	36	-0.27	-0.27	.98	1.03
1	1	1033	64	1.81	1.81	1.01	1.20
MISSING	1	0	1.21				

OBSERVED AVERAGE is mean of measures in category. It is not a parameter estimate.
M->C = Does Measure imply Category?
C->M = Does Category imply Measure?

Figure 1. Validity of Scale/Andrich thresholds
Variable X (Tiktok and Yotube Views)

SUMMARY OF CATEGORY STRUCTURE. Model="R"

CATEGORY	OBSERVED	OBSVD	SAMPLE	INFINIT	OUTFIT	ANDRICH	CATEGORY
LABEL	SCORE	COUNT	%	AVRGE	EXPECT	MNSQ	MNSQ
1	1	12	1	-1.85	-2.88	2.00	2.09
2	2	105	8	-1.21	-1.21	1.07	1.07
3	3	354	27	.60	.69	.96	.99
4	4	532	41	2.76	2.75	.80	.79
5	5	293	23	4.29	4.24	1.00	1.00

OBSERVED AVERAGE is mean of measures in category. It is not a parameter estimate.

Figure 2. Validity of Scale/Andrich thresholds
Variable Y (Understanding of Religious Moderation)

Figure 1 shows Andrich thresholds ordered from 0 to 1, while **Figure 2** ranges from -5.29 to 5.44 without reversals, indicating proper category functioning under the Rasch Model (Bambang Sumintono, 2015).

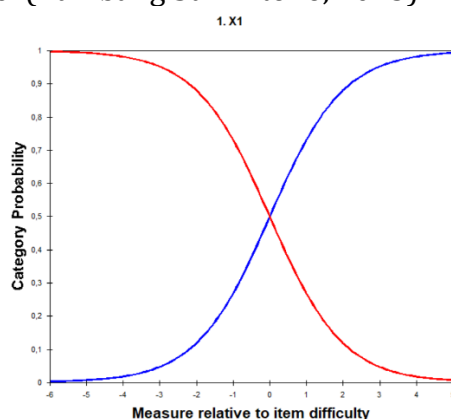


Figure 3. Category Probability Curve (CPC) variable X (TikTok & YouTube Views)

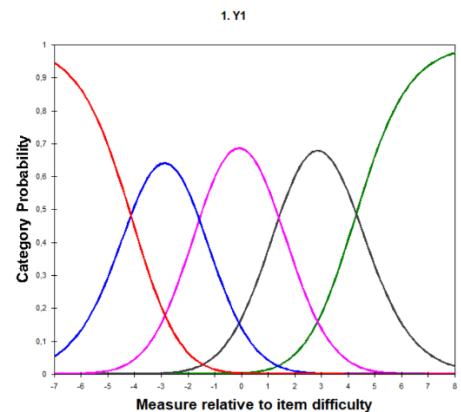


Figure 4. Category Probability Curve (CPC) variable Y (Understanding of Religious Moderation)

Figures 3 and Figure 4 present Category Probability Curves (CPC) with well-ordered Andrich thresholds, indicating valid category functioning (Sandjaja, 2020). Variable X shows two categories intersecting at logit 0, while Variable Y displays five sequential categories (-5 to +7), confirming the instrument's ability to consistently distinguish levels of exposure and understanding of religious moderation.

Table 1. Validity and Reliability & Separation: Person and Item

Aspects	X (TikTok & YouTube Views)	Y (Understanding Moderation)
Item Fit (Infit MNSQ)	0.92 – 1.27	0.65 – 1.26
Person Fit (Infit MNSQ)	1.49 – 1.73	0.80 – 1.96
Item Reliability	0.92	0.86

Person Reliability	0.62	0.62
Item Separation	3.33	2.47
Person Separation	1.28	1.28

Table 1 shows that most items and respondents fall within the recommended fit range (Infit MNSQ 0.5–1.5; ZSTD –2 to +2; PMC 0.40–0.85), meeting Sumintono & Widhiarso (2015) standards. Item reliability is high ($X = 0.92$; $Y = 0.86$), with separation indices of 3.33 and 2.47, indicating strong discrimination among items. Person reliability is moderate at 0.62 for both variables. These results confirm the instrument's stability and ability to differentiate respondent abilities (Hakam et al., 2024).

Table 2. Unidimensionality

Variable	% Variance Explained by Measures	PCA or Residuals (1st Contrast)
X (15 items, Guttman)	37.1%	1.9 (8.1%)
Y (12 items, Likert)	60.7%	2.4 (7.7%)

Furthermore, the unidimensionality test (**Table 2**) shows that the variance is explained by a measure of 37.1% for variable X and 60.7% for variable Y, with PCA *Residuals* < 3, so that the instrument is declared valid in measuring one construct (Irmayanti et al., 2023).

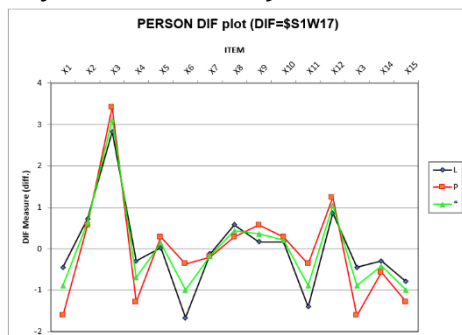


Figure 5. DIF Variable X

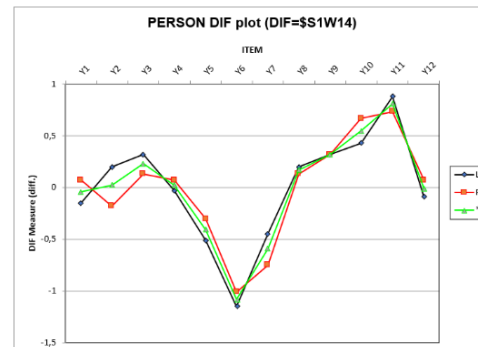


Figure 6. DIF Variable Y

Figure 5 and **Figure 6** DIF analysis showed that in variable X there were three items that showed gender bias, namely X2, X3, and X11 which tended to favor women, while in variable Y all items were declared free of DIF. Thus, it can be concluded that this research instrument is valid, reliable, and feasible to be used to measure the constructs being studied.

Qualitative data was obtained through semi-structured interviews with 4 students as a result of quantitative selection. Interviews are recorded, transcribed, and then analyzed with *Thematic Analysis* (Ahmed et al., 2025). Validity is maintained by triangulation of time and *member checking*. The coding process was carried out systematically using the codes M (informant), W (interview session), P (questions), and J (answers). Saturation was achieved after the data of the four informants was analyzed. The results are presented in *Joint Display* to reinforce quantitative findings (Naeem et al., 2023). The normality test is carried out by *Shapiro–Wilk*. Due to abnormal data distribution, it is used *Spearman's rho* (ρ) as a nonparametric correlation test suitable for ordinal/interval data and resistant to outliers (Yu & Hutson, 2024). Correlation values are reported with a 95% Confidence

Interval (CI) to ensure the accuracy of the estimate. The analysis was performed with JASP 0.17 software.

Results and Discussion

A. Result

a. Data Description

The following are the results of descriptive statistics of the variables of Exposure to Tiktik and Youtube and the variables of Understanding Religious Moderation.

Table 3. Statistical Description of Variables X and Y

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Median	IQR
X_Total (TikTok + YouTube views)	108	9.58	4.77	10.00	6.25
Y_Total (Understanding Moderation)	108	45.16	8.72	47.00	10.75

Table 3 descriptive results show that the average (*Mean*) the exposure score of digital da'wah media (X_Total) is 9.58 with a standard deviation (SD) of 4.77, *median* 10.00, and IQR 6.25. This means that the majority of students have a moderate level of exposure to digital da'wah content, with a fairly wide variation between respondents. Similarly, the average religious moderation comprehension (Y_Total) score of 45.16 (SD = 8.72), median 47.00, and IQR of 10.75 indicate that the level of comprehension is generally above the midpoint of the scale, with a relatively even spread (Dahlan et al., 2025).

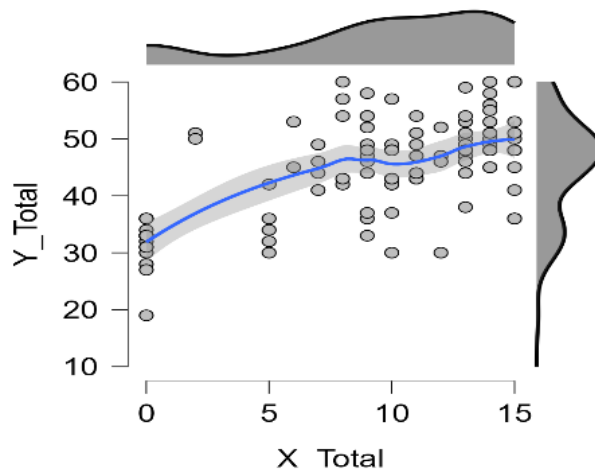


Figure 7. Scatter Plot

Scatter plot **Figure 7** illustrates that the score distributions for social media exposure (X_Total) and religious moderation understanding (Y_Total) are relatively symmetrical, justifying the use of measures like mean and median. The points form a positive linear pattern, reinforcing the significant Spearman correlation. Beyond confirming association strength, the scatter plot aids in detecting potential outliers, aligning with findings that such visualizations are essential for assessing relationship direction, shape, and strength (Strain et al., 2023).

b. Correlation of TikTok and YouTube Use and Understanding of Religious Moderation

The following is a table of correlation results between the use of TikTok and YouTube and the understanding of religious moderation among UIN Mataram students

Table 4. Correlation Between TikTok and YouTube Users with an Understanding of Religious Moderation

Variable	X_Total	
Y_Total	N	108
	Spearman's rho	0.499***
	p-value	<.001
	95% CI	[0.32, 0.64]

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Assumption checks

Shapiro-Wilk Test for Multivariate Normality

Shapiro-Wilk	p
0.958	0.002

Test normality (**Tabel 4**) with *Shapiro-Wilk* shows the distribution of both abnormal variables (X_Total: $W = 0.958$, $p = 0.002$; Y_Total: $W = 0.964$, $p = 0.005$). Therefore, correlation analysis was performed with Spearman's rho. The results of the analysis showed that there was a fairly strong positive relationship between exposure to religious content on TikTok/YouTube and understanding of religious moderation ($\rho = 0.499$, 95% CI [0.32, 0.64], $p < .001$, $N = 108$). According to Dancey & Reidy's interpretation criteria (2007), the correlation coefficient with a value between 0.40 to 0.69 is categorized as a medium relationship, so that the value of 0.499 in this study can be interpreted to be in the medium relationship range (Akoglu, 2018).

b. Categorization of TikTok & YouTube's Exposure to Digital Da'wah Content

Here is a categorization chart in the use of TikTok and YouTube:

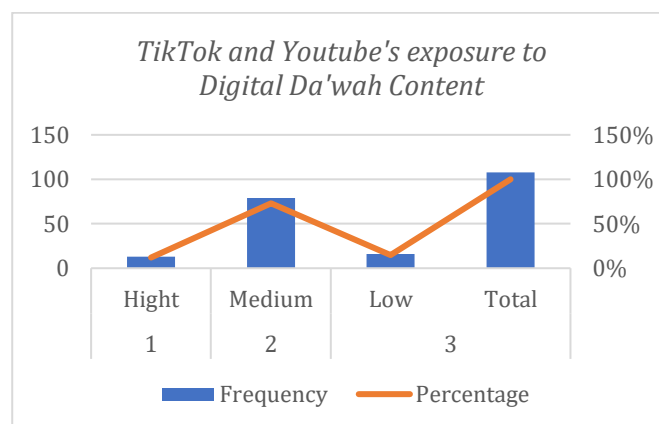


Figure 8. Categorization of TikTok and Youtube's Exposure to Digital Da'wah Content

Based on **Figure 8**. The results of the categorization of social media exposure on TikTok and YouTube showed that the majority of UIN Mataram students were in the middle category at 73% ($n=79$), while the high category was only 12% ($n=13$), and the low category was 15% ($n=16$). These findings show that students

generally access social media moderately, both for entertainment and for religious information needs.

c. Categorization of Students' Religious Moderation Levels

Below is a categorization chart of the level of understanding of religious moderation:

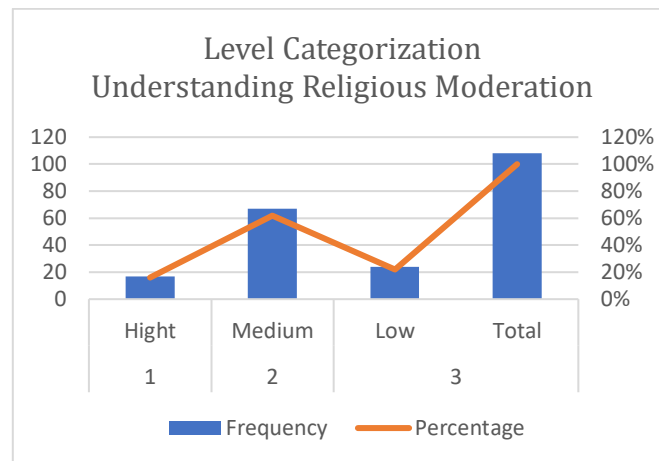


Figure 9. Categorization of the Level of Understanding of Religious Moderation

Based on the results of the categorization of the variables of religious moderation understanding in **Figure 9**. It was found that most of UIN Mataram students were in the medium category of 62% (n=67), followed by the low category of 22% (n=24), and the high category of 16% (n=17). These findings show that students' understanding of the values of religious moderation is still at a level that needs to be strengthened, especially in deeper aspects such as interreligious tolerance, non-violence in da'wah, and acceptance of local cultures.

d. Joint Display (Quantitative–Qualitative Integration)

The integration of quantitative and qualitative results is presented in **Table 5**.

Table 5. Quantitative–Qualitative Display Joint

Statistical Findings	Key Results	Student Qualitative Quotes
Spearman correlation $\rho = 0.499$; 95% CI [0.32, 0.64]; $p < 0.001$; $N = 108$	High views are associated with better moderation understanding	"Now I'm more open about religion, more respectful of others, and not easy to judge differences." (M4)
73% views in the middle category	The majority of students access digital da'wah content moderately	"I love it when there's content that brings that diversity together and invites discussion." (M1)
62% understanding of moderation in the middle category	Understanding of moderation is diverse, some are still limited	"It's very rare... if it appears in the TikTok FYP, I skip it. I prefer entertainment content." (M3)

There is a variation in understanding local culture	Some students are skeptical of religious-cultural integration	"I think that culture sometimes even destroys religion. So I'm a bit skeptical of the local culture." (M3)
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Table 5. shows consistency between statistical findings and interviews. The positive correlation found was quantitatively confirmed in the experience of students who actively accessed inclusive da'wah content (M1, M4). Meanwhile, the medium and low exposure and comprehension categories were also in line with the interviews of students who were more exposed to entertainment content or showed a skeptical attitude (M2, M3).

B. Discussion

TikTok and Youtube's Exposure Level to Digital Da'wah Content

The results indicate that most students had moderate exposure to digital da'wah content, while high and low exposure groups were relatively small. This suggests that social media use among students is balanced, making it important to assess the quality of their engagement. Interviews support this finding; for instance, M1 and M4 reported actively consuming da'wah content on TikTok and YouTube from figures such as Habib Ja'far and interfaith preachers promoting Islam *rahmatan lil 'alamin* openly and inclusively. The subject of M1 stated: *"I also like to seek out information about religion, especially about diversity... I love it when there's content that brings that diversity together and invites discussion."* (M1). These insights show that students not only consume religious content but also seek narratives fostering inclusivity.

Such patterns align with Pratiwi et al., (2025) who found that students favor tolerant da'wah styles adapted to contemporary contexts. Similarly, Ardhia (2024) highlights Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube as effective platforms for religious messages, provided content resonates with the audience. However, challenges persist: Ali et al. (2023) warn that excessive TikTok use can undermine religious obligations. In UIN Mataram's case, Munawaroh (2021) revealed high social media engagement for da'wah but noted superficial understanding of Islamic values among students. These findings underscore that social media's effectiveness as a da'wah tool hinges on content quality, delivery consistency, and audience engagement. Exposure, however, varies greatly, influenced by personal interest, algorithms, and prior values (Mutmainah et al., 2023). For example, M3 subjects admitted that they rarely watch moderation content, and are more interested in entertainment content. It is said: *"It's very rare... At least if it appears on TikTok's FYP, but I skipped it. I prefer motivational or entertainment content."* (W1, P1, M3). Bandura's Social Learning Theory helps explain these dynamics: individuals adopt behaviors modeled by credible and relatable figures (Khozin et al., 2024). These findings also reinforce the results of Elia & Ningsih (2024) which found that students tend to gain religious insights through the social media they access every day, and content relevant to their lives tends to be more absorbed and used as a reference in attitude formation.

Thus, the level of students' exposure to TikTok and YouTube as digital da'wah media is at a moderate level, and has great potential in influencing religious mindsets and understanding, especially if directed to inclusive, peaceful, and diversity-based content.

Students' Religious Moderation Understanding Level

The findings in the previous section show that the majority of students have a level of exposure to digital da'wah content on TikTok and YouTube in the middle category, and this is in line with their level of understanding which is also dominated by the middle category. This means that social media consumption patterns that are not too intensive or too minimal reflect an understanding that is at a moderate level. However, students with a higher intensity of exposure showed a tendency to have a more mature understanding of moderation, while those who were rarely exposed showed limited understanding. These results are reinforced by qualitative findings. Subjects M1 and M4 showed a relatively high understanding of the values of moderation. They emphasized that the da'wah content they consume on social media provides a new perspective that makes them more open, respectful of differences, and reject violence. M4 states: *"Now I'm more open about religion, more respectful of others, and not easy to judge differences."* (W1, P3, M4). In addition, he also stated that the value of tolerance grows with the understanding that Islam is a religion of peace and glorifies diversity: *"I learned a lot about the importance of tolerance and avoiding social media blind fanaticism."* (W1, P2, M4). This statement shows that social media plays an important role in shaping the understanding of religious moderation among students. These findings are in line with research by Rahmawanti et al., (2024) which states that social media can be an effective means to spread the values of religious moderation among students. They found that platforms such as Instagram and TikTok are used by college students to discuss and understand the concept of religious moderation in more depth.

Conversely, students like M2 and M3 demonstrated limited understanding and even skepticism toward moderation values. For instance, M3 questioned the integration of Islam and local culture, stating, *"I think that culture sometimes even destroys religion. So, I was a bit skeptical of the local culture that was brought into the religion."* (W1, P4, M3). This highlights that comprehension is strongly influenced by exposure to inclusive, contextual Islamic narratives. The Ministry of Religious Affairs' moderation framework identifies four indicators: national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and cultural acceptance. Findings reveal that students' grasp of these indicators varies, shaped by digital da'wah consumption and socio-religious background. Suri et al. (2024) showed social media's role in shaping moderate attitudes, stressing inclusive content as a key driver. Similarly, China, et al. (2024) linked strong moderation values to better digital literacy and reduced internet addiction, suggesting moderation fosters critical engagement with technology. However, risks persist. Putri et al. (2024) warn that social media can also amplify extremist narratives, potentially undermining moderation effort. This underscores the need for robust digital literacy to help students critically evaluate content (Achmad & Jannah, 2022).

In this context, digital da'wah is an important means of increasing the understanding of religious moderation among youth. Rumata et al., (2021) Emphasizing that digital da'wah delivered in an interesting and relevant way can help the younger generation understand and practice the values of religious moderation in daily life. Thus, this study shows that social media is not only a means of entertainment, but also an effective educational da'wah space, especially if the narrative is built in line with the values of religious moderation developed by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia.

Correlation of TikTok and YouTube Use and Understanding of Religious Moderation

The Spearman correlation coefficient shows a significant positive relationship between exposure to religious content on TikTok and YouTube and understanding of religious moderation ($p = 0.499$). The p value of 0.499 is in the range of 0.40–0.69 which

according to Dancey & Reidy (2004) is interpreted as a relationship with a medium force. In other words, exposure to digital da'wah media has a significant contribution in increasing the understanding of religious moderation, even though this relationship is not a causal relationship but a correlational one. In the context of religious education, this moderate effect can be interpreted as an indication that social media is able to have a real influence on the formation of students' moderate attitudes, although there are still other factors that play a role, such as formal learning experiences and social environment. Students using social media for religious learning exhibit greater openness and tolerance, especially when supported by formal education (Lisyawati et al., 2023). Similarly, Suprpto (2020) stresses that embedding moderation values in Islamic education curricula strengthens students' attitudes. This indicates a complementary relationship: curricula provide conceptual foundations, while social media offers contextual examples aligned with students' daily lives.

The findings confirm a consistent pattern: greater exposure to digital da'wah correlates with stronger understanding of religious moderation. This supports the hypothesis that frequent access to such content enhances students' grasp of moderation values. Interview data reinforce this link; students with high exposure, such as M1 and M4, demonstrated strong comprehension. M4 explicitly stated: *"In fact, I learned a lot about the importance of tolerance and avoiding the blind fanaticism of social media"* (W1, P2, M4), underscoring the role of digital da'wah in shaping attitudes. Various literature has shown a relatively consistent pattern that finds that the intensity of social media exposure is associated with increased knowledge and attitudes of religious moderation (Latif et al., 2023; Priliyanti & Al-Fath, 2024; Yuliawati & Asri, 2024). Budiarti et al. (2023) and Febriani & Ritonga (2022) He also added that social media plays a significant role in instilling moderate Islamic values, so that it functions as a non-formal learning space that complements religious education on campus. The consistency of these findings strengthens the results of the study that exposure to digital da'wah contributes to increasing students' understanding of moderation. Theoretically, these results strengthen Bandura's observational learning theory in Khozin et al., (2024), where new behaviors are learned through the observation of models that are considered credible.

However, other literature also points to contradictory findings. Chusjairi & Sudarmanti (2024) reported a negative correlation between social media use and religiosity, which shows the potential for weakening of religious commitment when media consumption is more superficial or algorithmically biased. This difference in results indicates that the relationship between social media and religious moderation is not something that is automatically positive, but is strongly influenced by certain conditions. Factors such as early digital literacy, the quality of content curation, and the ability of students to sort through information are proven to determine the direction of the relationship. Abdurrohman & Fitriana (2023) emphasized that good digital literacy allows students to identify credible and moderate content, thereby strengthening the attitude of moderation. On the other hand, students like M3 in this study who were inconsistently exposed to moderate da'wah content tended to be passive and skeptical, showing how weak literacy and curation can reduce the positive impact of social media. Thus, this relationship is conditional: it strengthens when digital literacy and content curation are good, but weakens when exposure is more dominated by intolerant narratives.

Conceptually, the findings of this research can be understood through a framework *Social Learning Theory* Bandura emphasized that individuals acquire new behaviors by observing figures that are considered credible and relevant. Social media provides such a

space for observation, where students interact symbolically with public figures who display a narrative of peaceful Islam. Figures such as Habib Ja'far or Gus Miftah are not only positioned as messengers, but also as models of behavior that can be imitated and internalized by students through information retention mechanisms, social strengthening, and self-regulation (Sabililhaq et al., 2024). This explains why exposure to moderation-oriented digital da'wah content tends to be consistently related to inclusive religious attitudes, as reflected in the findings of various studies that confirm the link between digital da'wah literacy and the growth of moderate attitudes among students (Hadiyanto et al., 2025; Nyanasuryanadi et al., 2023; Rochmatillah et al., 2024; Supriyadi et al., 2024). Digital media is no longer merely a non-formal learning tool but has become an integral component of religious education. Hasan & Juhannis (2024), as well as Mukhibat et al. (2024) emphasize the role of digital platforms as curricular instruments for instilling the values of moderation, shifting their function toward a pedagogical domain. These findings align with the literature that positions social media as a formal learning space, reinforcing Bandura's social-cognitive theory, in which the internalization of values occurs through processes of observation and reinforcement (Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023).

Exposure to digital da'wah serves as a complementary, not substitute, channel to formal education in internalizing moderation values. Digital media shapes daily habits, while higher education provides a systematic framework. Haris et al. (2024) highlight universities' strategic role through curriculum and academic exemplars, while Nasrulloh et al. (2024) show students internalizing moderation via formal education, rejecting violence and embracing diversity. These findings stress the need for integrative efforts combining formal curricula with inclusive digital da'wah exposure.

The practical implications of these findings are important for Islamic campuses and educational institutions. First, the digital religious literacy curriculum can be integrated into learning to equip students with critical skills for online da'wah content. Second, training for lecturers and educators needs to be strengthened so that they are able to direct students in accessing and analyzing moderate da'wah content. Third, collaboration with moderate da'wah creators is also relevant to ensure the sustainability of content that is friendly, inclusive, and according to the needs of the younger generation.

While these findings are strong, there are limitations to the study that need to be noted. First, data is obtained from one location (UIN Mataram), so generalizations are still limited. Second, there is a possibility of self-report bias, because data is obtained through questionnaires and interviews so that it depends on the honesty of respondents. Third, confounding variables such as family background or experience of religious organizations are not fully controlled. Therefore, future research may use longitudinal or experimental designs to test the causal relationship between exposure to digital da'wah media and a more in-depth understanding of religious moderation.

Conclusion

This study concludes that digital da'wah exposure through TikTok and YouTube plays a significant role in shaping students' understanding of religious moderation at UIN Mataram. Students who consistently engage with inclusive and tolerant da'wah content tend to internalize values of openness, respect for diversity, rejection of violence, and acceptance of local cultural traditions. Conversely, when exposure is minimal or dominated by entertainment-oriented content, these values are less reinforced. The findings affirm that social media is not only a medium of entertainment but also an influential arena for transmitting religious knowledge and cultivating moderation values.

The study's implications highlight both academic and practical dimensions. Academically, it enriches the discourse on Islamic education in the digital era by showing how learning processes are mediated through online platforms. Practically, it emphasizes the responsibility of Islamic universities to integrate digital religious literacy into their curricula, strengthen students' critical capacity in evaluating da'wah content, and collaborate with digital preachers who promote inclusive narratives. In this way, higher education can equip students to filter online information, avoid polarizing discourses, and foster moderation values in line with national religious education frameworks.

However, this study has certain limitations. The single-site focus and reliance on self-reported data restrict the generalizability of the findings, while algorithmic bias in social media platforms may influence which content is most frequently accessed by students. Future research should therefore expand to multiple campuses, adopt longitudinal and experimental approaches, and examine how algorithm-driven exposure shapes religious attitudes. Such efforts will provide more comprehensive insights for educational policy, curriculum development, and the strategic use of digital platforms to promote religious moderation.

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