

## Organization of Islamic Education Curriculum to Prevent Radicalism Among Students in Indonesian Universities

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose** – The purpose of this study is to examine strategies for preventing radicalism infiltration among students at state universities by strengthening Compulsory Curriculum Courses Islamic Religious Education learning at Universitas Gajah Mada Yogyakarta and Universitas Syiah Kuala (USK) Aceh.

**Design/methods/approach** – This research is field research with a qualitative approach. Data collection techniques include interviews, observation, open questionnaires, and documentation. Data analysis uses Miles et al theory, which includes three activities: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing (verification).

**Findings** – The results of the study show, first, that Islamic Religious Education as a compulsory subject in the Universitas Gajah Mada curriculum emphasizes themes that are often debated and cause differences in religious practice within society, so that students who take this course will develop tolerant, moderate attitudes and compassion for all. Meanwhile, The Islamic Religious Education as compulsory subject at Universitas Syiah Kuala places greater emphasis on the fundamentals of Islam and strengthening the character of true muslims by understanding the challenges faced by the muslim community and countering deviant ideologies. Second, the strategies employed by UGM and USK to prevent the infiltration of radicalism among students through the strengthening of Islamic Religious Education emphasize: (1) a counter-narrative approach to extremism, public lectures featuring former terrorists, teaching assistance and monitoring, in-depth discussions with a multi-perspective approach, instilling tolerance, and promoting religious moderation.

**Research implications/limitations** – The implication of this study is the importance of Islamis Religious Education learning in higher education that emphasizes the values of tolerance, moderation, and strengthening of multi-perspective religious insights as well as the experiences of radical actors

**Originality/value** – The findings of this study contribute to strengthening Islamic education in higher education as a strategy to counter radicalism among students.

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## Introduction

In Indonesia, several universities are considered places of metamorphosis that have the potential to foster understanding and radicalism among students (Suhendi et al., 2020). In fact, some have created campus mosques as places for spreading radical Islamic ideology (Muhammad Syarif Hidayatulloh, 2019). Deradicalization policies are implemented to prevent the infiltration of radical Islamic ideologies or transnational Islam, which aim to formalize Islam within the legal frameworks of various nations, including Indonesia (Adiwilaga, 2017). Transnational Islam is a movement that transcends national borders. This movement has various objectives and lines of struggle, such as Pan-Islamism, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, *Hizbut Tahrir* in Lebanon, *Jama'ah Tabligh* in India, and others (Khamdan, 2016) (Arifin & Rohmah, 2019).

A research report from the Institute Research and Community Service Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Indonesia (LPPM UNUSIA) Jakarta in 2019 found that eight state universities had been infiltrated by transnational Islamic ideology, namely: Universitas Sebelas Maret (UNS) Surakarta, Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Raden Mas Said Surakarta, Universitas Diponegoro (UNDIP) Semarang, Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES) Semarang, Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) Yogyakarta, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (UNY) Yogyakarta, Universitas Jenderal Soedirman (UNSOED) Purwokerto, and Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Saifudin Zuhri Purwokerto. Institute for Research and Community Service UNUSIA categorized three groups of Islam among students, namely: *Salafi*, KAMMI (affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood), and *Gema Pembebasan* (affiliated with *Hizbut Tahrir* Indonesia (HTI)) (LPPM UNUSIA, 2019). The HTI movement itself is affiliated with *Hizbut Tahrir* (HT), which was initiated by Taqiyudin an-Nabhani in Baitul Maqdis, Palestine, in 1953 (Anonymous, 2013) (Osman, 2010). HT entered Indonesia in the 1980s through campus *da'wah* institutions (Musyafiq, 2012).

In a study by Institute Research and Community Service UNUSIA, it was stated that the student movement *Gema Pembebasan* (affiliated with HTI) positioned the state and its ideology as *thaghut* that must be opposed. This group believes that the solution to all problems is the establishment of a caliphate (LPPM UNUSIA, 2019). The caliphate, as the main doctrine of HTI, poses a threat to the sovereign in Indonesia because it does not recognize nationalism, the principles of *pancasila*, and democracy. For HTI, the concept of democracy is incompatible with Islam because sovereignty belongs to the sharia, not the people (an-Nabhani, 2012). HTI was officially banned by the Indonesian government based on Minister of Law and Human Rights Decree No. AHU-30.AH.01.08 of 2017 (Widodo, 2019).

Muhammad Ridho Agung found that the marketing of *Wahhabi* transnational ideology at UGM uses the synergy of two channels, namely the structural student organization and the non-structural organization through *halaqah* and non-formal Islamic educational institutions established by the Al Atsari Muslim Education Foundation (YPIA) (Ridho Agung, 2018). Meanwhile, Rahmad Nursyahidin found that the strategy for marketing HTI ideology among UGM students involved using known individuals to build networks with existing organizations at UGM. Cadre development began with general

*halaqah*, *darisin*, and culminated in *hizbiyyin* through collective cadre training, religious training, and ideological discussions (Nursyahidin, 2017).

Students, as the younger generation, are one of the social classes most deeply involved in movements leading to violence. To date, several studies on the phenomenon of violent conflict have shown that the younger generation is highly vulnerable to becoming both targets and primary perpetrators. Various studies on student perspectives at various universities also indicate that this generation is often associated with the development of radical youth movements. Research results from the Jakarta Institute for Islamic Studies and Peace in 2010-2011 on Islamic Religious Education teachers and students (junior high and high school) in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok Tangerang, Bekasi showed that 49% of students agreed with radical actions for the sake of religion (Rokhmad, 2012).

Research by Toto Suharto and Ja'far Assagaf explains that in order to stem the tide of radical Islamic ideology among State Islamic Universities students, a moderate Islamic curriculum design is needed. The State Islamic Universities curriculum includes concepts of Islamic mercy, tolerance, inclusiveness, humanism, pluralism, and multiculturalism, and must avoid ideological-political overtones (Suharto & Assagaf, 2014). According to Karwadi, deradicalization efforts can be carried out through a shift in mindset from exclusive-particularistic thinking toward rational-imperative thinking, from exclusivism toward inclusivism, from formalism toward perennialism, and from monoculturalism toward multiculturalism (Karwadi, 2014).

Deradicalization of radical Islamic ideology can be achieved through inclusive and moderate education that prioritizes tolerant attitudes, mutual respect for differences, and compassion among religious communities. Islamic education courses serve as a preventive measure against radicalism and anticipate the emergence of spiritual crises (Nurhayati; Abdul Hamid, 2020). In addition, multicultural-based Islamic education can be used as a foundation in managing conflicts that occur in society to provide education that is tolerant, intelligent in attitude, and accepting of differences and diversity (Takunas et al., 2024). Moderate Islamic education is also important for students to strengthen their sense of nationalism and protect themselves from negative behaviors and paradigms in society (Jamilah, 2021). An inclusive and open mindset in understanding Islamic teachings is necessary to broaden religious horizons and foster tolerance toward religious differences.

Based on the above issues, this article attempts to examine the curriculum organization of the Compulsory Islamic Education Course Islamic Religious Education at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) Yogyakarta and Universitas Syiah Kuala (USK) Aceh and how the two campuses strategize to prevent radicalism infiltration among students through strengthening Compulsory Curriculum Courses Islamic Religious Education learning.

## Methods

This study took place at two state universities, namely Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in Yogyakarta and Universitas Syiah Kuala (USK) in Aceh. This study used a qualitative approach based on natural settings, descriptive, through processes, using

inductive data and searching for meaning (Sugiyono, 2010). Qualitative data collection was conducted through documentation, observation, in-depth interviews, and open-ended questionnaires. The selection of data sources was based on specific considerations (purposive sampling), namely individuals deemed most knowledgeable about the social object/situation under study.

In this study, the researcher analyzed the curriculum documents (materials) of the Compulsory Curriculum Courses Islamic Religious Education and conducted interviews with lecturers and students at UGM and USK, both through direct interviews and open-ended questionnaires at the end of the course. Field observations were conducted when the researcher served as a lecturer for the Compulsory Curriculum Courses Islamic Religious Education at UGM and through direct field observations at USK from August 8–12, 2022. Field data at UGM was obtained by distributing open-ended questionnaires to students who had taken the Compulsory Curriculum Courses Islamic Religious Education in the second semester of 2021/2022. These open-ended questionnaires were distributed to students in classes PAI-5 and PAI-20 on June 15, 2022.

This study employed Miles et al data analysis techniques, namely data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing (verification). Data condensation is defined as the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and/or transforming data that appears in the complete corpus (body) of field notes that have been written, interview transcripts, documents, and other empirical materials (Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, 2014). After data condensation, data display and conclusion drawing are conducted to answer the research questions.

## Result

### 1. Policies and regulations governing Compulsory Curriculum Courses Islamic Religious Education learning at UGM and USK

Curriculum Courses Islamic Religious Education at UGM was established in 2015 under the direct coordination of the deans. Following the issuance of the UGM Rectors Decree regulating the organizational structure in 2015, the Compulsory Curriculum Courses Islamic Religious Education implementation unit was definitively managed by the faculty of philosophy. Since then, the Compulsory Curriculum Courses unit has been managed by the faculty of philosophy, which includes three courses: pancasila, citizenship, and religious education, one of which is Islamic Religious Education. There are seven themes promoted by Compulsory Curriculum Courses Islamic Religious Education namely: radicalism, corruption, moral decadence, the environment, national defense, drugs, and tax awareness (Hariyanto, 2021).

The centralization of Compulsory Curriculum Courses within the faculty of philosophy is crucial to prevent radical Islamic ideologies among students, as the faculty of philosophy oversees the selection and control of course materials and instructors. The Compulsory Curriculum Courses lecturers are selected from internal lecturers at the faculty of philosophy at UGM as well as from several universities around UGM who have expertise in their respective fields. The Compulsory Curriculum Courses Islamic Religious Education

at UGM has shown optimal results in preventing radicalism among students. The urgency of Compulsory Curriculum Courses learning at UGM to prevent radicalism among students can be addressed through several activities: a) religious education for students in higher education through mandatory curriculum courses consisting of religious education, pancasila education, and citizenship education (Melinda Meirini, Nayla Indra Nazhyra, & Shela Dwi Yanti, UGM 2022), b) monitoring and supervising student activities conducted by student organizations and imposing strict penalties on students who violate campus regulations, such as engaging in activities that constitute radicalism (Fausta Fika Elvaretta, UGM 2022), c) prohibiting all forms of student activities that contradict religion and the values of the pancasila ideology (Shela Dwi Yanti & Rafida Rusdiana, UGM 2022).

The Islamic Religious Education learning policy at USK is regulated by USK Rector Decree No. 043 of 2001 concerning the Improvement and Enhancement of the Islamic education learning process at USK, whereby the PPAI (UP3AI) as a companion program to Islamic studies courses is an integral part of Islamic education. With the issuance of this decree, the program, which was previously non-binding, has become mandatory for all students at USK. Under this decree, the program is a prerequisite for students wishing to take Islamic education courses, particularly for muslim students under the general education courses, which are mandatory university courses.

The unit for the development of the companion program for Islamic studies courses (UP3AI) is a companion program for Islamic studies courses conducted over two semesters and is mandatory for all USK students as a prerequisite for taking Islamic education courses as regulated by the Rectors decision. The UP3AI program consists of three packages: the IQRA program, the *Praktek Ibadah* (PI) program, and the *Mentoring* program. If any one of these programs is not completed, the student in question will not graduate.

UP3AI has a vision to cultivate USK students as a generation of muslims with Quranic values and character. Its mission is: (1) to maximize the role of the Islamic education course companion program (PPAI) in shaping student character, (2) to optimize the management of PPAI as a companion to the Islamic Religious Education course, (3) to socialize and reinforce the urgency of Islamic Religious Education to decision-makers, particularly the directorate, (4) to provide input to relevant parties, particularly the Rectorate, the Islamic *Sharia* Department, MPU, and others, and (5) to establish relationships between UP3AI administrators and the rectorate, deans, USK religious lecturers, and USK students.

## 2. Curriculum Organization of Compulsory Curriculum Courses Islamic Religious Education UGM and Up3AI USK

The curriculum in this study focuses more on the materials taught in Islamic Religious Education at both UGM and USK. The aim is to identify the differences in the materials that are studied and discussed by students. From these materials, it is also possible to conclude the learning outcomes of the Islamic Religious Education course at both campuses.



**Table 1.** Compulsory Curriculum Courses Islamic Religious Education Materials, Faculty of Philosophy, UGM (Field documents cited in 2022)

No	Material	Description of Learning Outcomes
1	Lecture Introduction	Learning Contract and lecture introduction
2	The Concept of God in Islam	Material about the concept of God in Islam which is sourced from the Quran and His attributes.
3	Three Dimensions of Religion	Material about the three dimensions of religion, namely Islam, <i>Iman</i> , and <i>Ihsan</i> and the integration of Islam- <i>Iman</i> with <i>Ihsan</i> .
4	Human Perspective from the Quran	Material about human concepts in the Quran such as <i>al-Bayar</i> , <i>al-Insan</i> , <i>An-Nas</i> , <i>al-Ins</i> , and <i>Bani Adam</i> .
5	Islamic Law and Madhhabs	Material about Islamic law and madhhab such as the difference between <i>fiqh</i> and <i>sharia</i> , as well as several madhhabs in Islam
6	Human Rights and Democracy from an Islamic Perspective	Material about human rights and democracy contained in the Quran and Hadith and the practice of democracy in Indonesia.
7	Ethics, Morals, and Morals from an Islamic Perspective	Material about ethics, morals, and morals as well as the tradition of Islamic sufism as a moral practice in Islam
8	Culture from an Islamic Perspective	Material about culture and culture in an Islamic perspective and how Islam views local culture
9	Science and Technology from an Islamic Perspective	Material about science and technology in Islam which includes the division of knowledge in Islam, the relationship between Islam and science and how Islam views art.
10	Politics and Nationalism from an Islamic Perspective	Material about politics and nationalism in Islamic perspective and how it is practiced in Indonesia.
11	Radicalism and Religious Moderation	Material on radicalism and religious moderation as a counter narrative of extremism among youth.
12	Civil Society	Material about civil society from an Islamic perspective and its differences with civil society
13	Islamic Economics and Philanthropy	Material about economics and philanthropy in Islam which includes how Islam views economic practices, banking (bank interest), and various kinds of philanthropy in Islam
14	<i>Islam Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin</i>	Material about Islam as a mercy for all nature and the Prophet Muhammad as a figure full of grace.

**Table 2.** UP3AI material at USK (Field document cited in 2022)

No	Material	Description of Learning Outcomes
1	The Practice of <i>Thaharah</i>	Material on the practice of <i>thaharah</i>
2	Prayer Practice	Practical material on the five daily prayers
3	Religious Practices	Material about religious practices
4	<i>Tajhiz Mayit</i>	Material on caring for the deceased, including bathing, shrouding, praying, and burying.
5	<i>Allah Ghayatuna</i>	Material about God as the purpose of human life in this world
6	<i>Rasulullah Qudwatuna</i>	Material about the Prophet Muhammad as a role model in everyday life
7	Islam Way of Life	Material about Islam as a guide for human life in the world

8	Back to Quran	Material about returning to the Quran by reading, studying, and practicing it in daily life.
9	Social Interaction Among Youth in Islam	Material on understanding youth social interaction according to Islam
10	<i>Ghazwul Fikri</i>	Material on the war of ideas with deviant sects
11	Problems of the Ummah	Material on the problems facing the muslim community and how to solve them
12	<i>Tarbiyah Islamiyah</i>	Materials on Islamic Education

Tables 1 and 2 show that the materials taught at UGM are broader than those taught at USK. The Islamic Religious Education materials taught at UGM emphasize crucial issues that are often debated and cause differences within society. The Islamic Religious Education materials at UGM also emphasize the ultimate goal of Islamic Religious Education learning, which is to produce students who have a *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (a blessing for the universe) understanding of Islam. Therefore, the material on religious moderation is emphasized to filter out radical ideas that are developing on state campuses.

That is why Islamic Religious Education learning at UGM is centered in the Faculty of Philosophy at UGM. This is to avoid radical Islamic ideologies being taught by lecturers suspected of following radical movements or influenced by religious activities associated with alumni or individuals outside UGM. The faculty of philosophy at UGM conducts selection processes for Islamic Religious Education instructors and determines Islamic Religious Education curriculum materials as part of efforts to prevent the infiltration of radical Islamic ideologies among students.

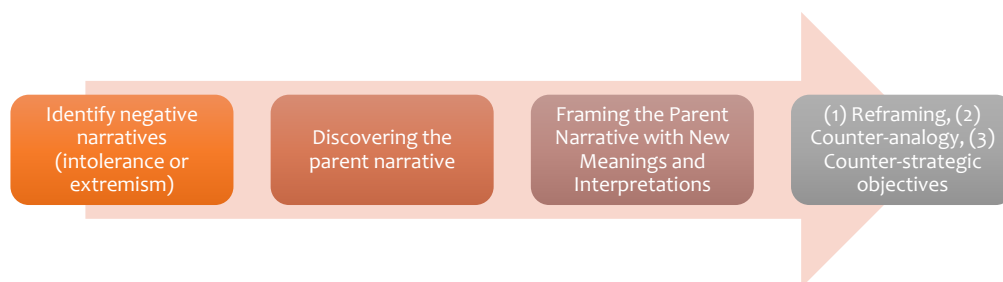
## Discussion

UGM and USK strategies in preventing radicalism infiltration through strengthening Compulsory Curriculum Courses Islamic Religious Education learning among students:

### 1. Counter-Narrative Approach

Counter-narratives are strategically constructed storylines that are projected and maintained through strategic communication activities (or messages) with the aim of undermining the narrative appeal of violent extremist groups, either directly or indirectly (Jan-Jaap van Eerten, Bertjan Doosje, Elly Konjin, 2017). The purpose of counter-narratives is to prevent audiences from accepting extremist ideological calls to engage in acts of hostility, violence, destruction, and terror, as these can disrupt social harmony and endanger the safety and security of the general public (Irfan Abubakar, 2018).

Irfan Abubakar et al outline five steps for analyzing extremist narratives: (1) identify the conflict events that underlie the emergence of the narrative, (2) identify the framing of the conflict, (3) identify the “parent narrative” as an analogy tool, (4) identify the strategic objectives, and (5) identify the rhetorical tools used (Irfan Abubakar, 2018). Ahmad Khadafi and Kalis Mardiasih provide an example of four steps to create a counter-narrative, namely: identification, finding the parent narrative, and framing with a new interpretation. In the final step (framing with a new interpretation), this can be done through three methods: reframing, counter-analogy, and counter-strategic objectives (Ahmad Khadafi and Kalis Mardiasih, 2021).



**Figure 1.** Steps in Creating a Counter Narrative

The following are examples of reframing, counter-analogy, and counter-strategic objectives in the Compulsory Curriculum Courses Islamic Religious Education class:

**Table 3.** Reframing

Narrative	Main Narrative	Counter Narrative
The majority of Indonesians are Muslim, and therefore have special rights as the majority religion that is most entitled to lead the country, such as becoming president, governor, or regent.	Muslims are most entitled to be leaders in Indonesia	<b>Reframing:</b> All citizens (regardless of religion, ethnicity, or race) have the right to become leaders in Indonesia. In the context of state life in Indonesia, it must be understood that every citizen is constitutionally entitled to become a leader, whether it be president, vice president, governor, regent, village head, or neighborhood association chairperson. This is explained in the 1945 constitution, chapter X, article 27, which states that “all citizens are equal before the law and government and are obliged to uphold the law and government without exception” and the fifth principle of pancasila, namely “social justice for all Indonesian people”.

**Table 4.** Contra Analogy

Narrative	Main Narrative	Counter Narrative
Muslims must choose to use laws based on the Quran and Hadith, not laws or regulations made by humans or the state, such as the constitution and pancasila.	Muslims derive their laws solely from the Quran and Sunnah.	<b>Contra Analogy:</b> The Quran and Hadith are the sources of Islamic law for the implementation of <i>sharia</i> , while the constitution and pancasila are the rules of statehood. As long as these two sources do not conflict with the values contained in the Quran and Hadith, they can be followed and obeyed as good citizens.

**Table 5.** Counter-Narrative: Countering Strategic Objectives

Narrative	Main Narrative	Counter Narrative
During Ramadan, all shops and stalls must	Everyone must respect those who are fasting.	<b>Counter-strategic objectives:</b> fasting is a private act of worship between a person and their God.



close as a sign of respect  
for those who are fasting.

Therefore, people who fast do not need the respect of others. Closing shops or stalls has a negative impact on non-muslims, as it suggests that the worship practiced by muslims disrupts social activities. In addition, many people do not fast for various reasons related to *sharia* law, such as traveling, menstruation for women, and so on.

## 2. Public Lecture Inviting terrorism convicts

UGM's unique strategy in preventing radical Islamic ideology among students is to invite former terrorism convicts to campus to serve as guest speakers for the Compulsory Curriculum Courses Islamic Religious Education lecture series. This lecture is mandatory for all students enrolled in the Compulsory Curriculum Courses Islamic Religious Education course and is part of the course curriculum. After attending the lecture, students are required to write a summary and submit it to the Compulsory Curriculum Courses Islamic Religious Education instructor as part of the course requirements.

The strategy of inviting terrorism convicts as guest speakers in public lectures is quite effective in providing students with an empirical picture of how a terrorist lives, their strategies in carrying out terrorist acts, and how they recruit new members through “brainwashing.” The aim of this strategy is for students to be able to directly ask questions and understand the motives that drive someone to become a terrorist, as well as tips on how to avoid the “seduction” of terrorists in recruiting new members.

This activity is one of the efforts to prevent radicalism among students. Students can play an active role in preventing radicalism among their peers by actively reporting acts of radicalism that occur both on campus and in the community, supporting and promoting peace initiatives, disseminating anti-radicalism movements, showing respect for one another, equipping themselves with religious knowledge, having the resolve to practice the values of *pancasila* as a form of love for the nation, being cautious in accepting incoming information and culture, and engaging in meaningful activities rather than participating in radicalism (Araya Pangastuti, UGM 2022).

In linguistic terms, radicalism is referred to as “*al-tatarruf*,” which means standing at an extreme position far from the middle ground or exceeding reasonable limits. In classical terminology, religious texts refer to radicalism as “*al-ghuluw*,” “*altasyaddud*,” and “*al-tanaththu*.” Allah states, “Say: O People of the Book, do not exceed the limits of your religion in an improper manner” (QS. 5:77). The Prophet Muhammad said, “Avoid excessive behavior. Indeed, the destruction of previous nations was caused by excessive behavior in religion” (Masduqi, 2013).

Irwan Masdhuqi explains six characteristics of radical Islam, namely (1) claiming sole truth and misguiding other communities (groups) with different opinions, (2) considering Hadith worship as obligatory, (3) being excessive in religion, (4) behaving harshly and

aggressively in preaching, (5) being suspicious of those outside their group, and (6) easily declaring others as infidels (Masduqi, 2013). Religious radicalism is not always characterized by violent actions. Some radical Islamic groups are limited to ideology and do not use violent methods or justify all means, such as anarchism or terrorism (Muqoyyidin, 1970). The same point is made by Muhammad Ali (in Abu Rokhmad), who explains that radical ideology (thought) is the initial capital of terrorists, but not all adherents of radicalism resort to violent means (Rokhmad, 2012).

### 3. Teaching Assistance and Mentoring

This assistance strategy aims to provide intensive guidance for students in learning Islamic Religious Education and its practice. This strategy also serves as a means for students to receive Islamic Religious Education from lecturers and tutors who have been selected based on their non-deviant or radical ideology. In the assistance program, lecturers and tutors accompany students in learning religion and practicing it correctly.

At USK, the assistance strategy is implemented by appointing senior students (tutors) who have been selected by the university to accompany new students in learning religion and practicing it. The tutors have been trained and selected to ensure that what they convey does not deviate. They are also provided with a handbook or materials that must be taught to new students.

This assistance strategy is quite effective in filtering out deviant and radical ideologies among students. However, this is contingent upon the tutors being selected and trained in moderate Islamic ideology that does not deviate (radical). The infiltration of radical Islamic ideologies into campuses often stems from unmonitored campus religious activities, whether in terms of the speakers (clerics) or the content of the materials. Based on this, the assistance strategy can reduce the infiltration of radical Islamic ideologies among students.

Religious mentoring activities (David Rofiudin Arizky, UGM, 2022) and socialization or guidance (Elma Rossa Maharani, UGM, 2022) can directly equip students to choose non-radical Islamic organizations and prevent radical behavior. Mentoring serves as a specialized program to monitor all student activities and raise awareness among students to avoid various activities that lead to radical ideologies (M. Akbarrul Fikry Chamdani, UGM, 2022). Additionally, mentoring grounded in spiritual aspects consistently acts as a shield for mental health (Calaguas, 2025) while also countering radical ideologies.

### 4. In-depth Discussion with a Multi-Perspective Approach

According to Abdul Hamid et al., Islamic Religious Education lecturers can develop direct, contextual, problem-based, and cooperative Islamic Religious Education learning models to prevent radicalism among students (Hamid et al., 2023). In this study, a multi-perspective approach in discussing Islamic Religious Education materials is crucial in broadening students religious horizons, enabling them to be more tolerant and respectful of differing opinions.

This in-depth discussion strategy is carried out in the form of students creating papers or presentation slides on predetermined themes, which are then presented in class. During the discussion, students can ask questions related to the theme. The presenters answer, and at the end of the lecture, the lecturer provides clarification or further explanation of the discussed material. After that, students can ask for clarification and follow-up questions based on the lecturers explanation.

In-depth discussions in class provide students with the opportunity to explore the topics discussed in greater depth. Faculty members provide answers from various perspectives to broaden students horizons regarding the issues raised. A multi-perspective approach in discussions is crucial to help students become accustomed to differing opinions among scholars. A mono-perspective view often leads students to believe that a particular opinion is final, and any differing views are wrong or even heretical.

In society, it is common to see many religious teachers presenting their studies using only the approach they believe in. Questions from the congregation are answered according to their beliefs, their school of thought, their religious tradition, and rarely do they present opinions outside of their school of thought, tradition, or religious community. This leads to religious beliefs among the community becoming fanatical toward a single school of thought, a single movement, a single opinion, or even a single religious leader they follow. This fosters fanaticism and the belief that anything outside their group is wrong, misguided, or even heretical.

The impact of teaching religion from multiple perspectives is to foster respect for differing opinions in the practice of religion. Students also have differing opinions regarding diversity within society. Differences in the practice of religion are common or ordinary occurrences within society (Fatin Alifa Muzailin, UGM, 2022), and as long as these differences do not deviate significantly from the true teachings of Islam in accordance with the commands of Allah SWT and the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, then such differences become a source of comparison and complementarity (Marsya Annisa Ardianta, UGM, 2022).

Differences of opinion are common because every human being is endowed with different intellectual abilities. The main thing to note is the implementation of religious teachings in daily life, such as having a mature and wise attitude (avoiding insults, humiliation, and belittling one another) when dealing with differences of opinion, because a persons level of religious knowledge can be seen from their attitude when facing problems. Additionally, the attitude we should adopt when facing differences of opinion (*khilafiyah*) in the practice of religion within society is to respect and value the differing opinions (*khilafiyah*) in the religious practices followed by others, follow the opinions of scholars deemed authoritative after thoroughly understanding and studying their evidence, not judging someone based on the perspective of the school of thought we follow, but rather based on the perspective of the school of thought others follow, recognizing that Allah created men and women and made them into nations and tribes to get to know one another, not to hate one another, as stated in QS. Al-Hujurat verse 13, and

avoiding selfish attitudes and feeling that one is always right (Araya Pangastuti, UGM, 2022).

### 5. Instilling tolerance

The cultivation of tolerance is emphasized in islamic education classes at both UGM and USK. Differences of opinion in the area of *fiqh*, not *Sharia*, are normal, so students are encouraged to be tolerant of differences in religious experiences in the area of *fiqh*, not *Sharia*, such as differences in determining the start of fasting, differences in determining holidays, differences in understanding the boundaries of modesty for men and women, differences regarding whether bank interest is usury or not, and so on.

The cultivation of a tolerant attitude can be achieved if students can (1) understand the dimensions of *Sharia* and *fiqh*, (2) be accustomed to thinking from multiple perspectives in understanding religious issues, (3) have a deep understanding of religion so that they understand the context of differences of opinion in religious matters, (4) understand religion contextually and not get caught up in literal meanings, (5) and are willing to continue learning to understand religion well, so that they are aware that what they understand is not absolute truth.

A tolerant attitude and respect for students in dealing with differences of opinion on religious issues by mutually respecting each others opinions and not becoming a divisive force within the muslim community (Hastaginasih Wikanestri, UGM, 2022). Every muslim has their own beliefs in practicing religious teachings, which should be respected as long as they do not deviate from the teachings of the Quran and Hadith. No muslim should impose their will on other muslims, as this will only lead to radicalism (Yusuf Saifullah, Fahmi Ihsanuddin Jauhari, UGM, 2022). The causes of differing opinions stem from variations in human intellect or reasoning when interpreting textual evidence, methods of deriving legal rulings from religious evidence, the ability to discern the underlying principles behind religious laws, and understanding the legal rationale behind religious rulings. The practice of tolerance can be carried out by mutually respecting and honoring each others beliefs (Jannatul Qolbi Ash Shiddiqi, UGM, 2022).

This is slightly different from Islamic Religious Education learning at USK, which places more emphasis on the fundamentals of Islam and strengthening character as true muslims by understanding the problems faced by muslims and countering deviant ideologies. The concept of deviant ideologies (sects) here also depends on the perspective of Islamic Religious Education lecturers, who are influenced by the strong Islamic tradition of Aceh, which follows the *Shafii* school of thought (Zulkarnain, 2015). Religious beliefs in Aceh are greatly influenced by the Islamic educational traditions of the *Dayah*. The *Tengku* (teachers) of the *Dayah* serve as the primary reference for religious practices in Aceh and act as gatekeepers against the entry of deviant ideologies into Acehnese society (Syarifuddin, 2020).

Tolerance in Islam does not mean exchanging beliefs between different religious groups. Tolerance here refers to social interaction in which each party (religious adherents) must exercise self-control and allow space for mutual respect for each others uniqueness

without feeling threatened by their beliefs or rights (Yusuf Ismail, Rudi Muhamad Barnansyah, 2023). This tolerant attitude is a characteristic of moderate muslims (Cohen, 2005). Moderate muslims also prioritize thinking and dialogue (Muhsin et al., 2019) and promote the dimensions of flexibility, politeness, and civility in Islam. Islam as *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (Syukur, 2017) The values of tolerance, inclusivity, flexibility, and objectivity in understanding religious texts can empower students as agents of religious moderation (Zaenal Mustakim, Fachri Ali, 2021).

## 6. Instilling Religious Moderation in the Curriculum and Islamic Religious Education Learning

The cultivation of religious moderation is important in order to provide a moderate understanding of Islam. The cultivation of religious moderation among students has an impact on the cultivation of values of religious moderation among students because Compulsory Curriculum Courses Islamic Religious Education in higher education provides a foundation for the development of students personalities so that they become intellectuals who are faithful and devoted to God almighty, have noble character, think philosophically, act rationally and dynamically, have a broad perspective, and participate in interfaith cooperation for the development and utilization of science, technology, and art for national interests (Shabina Atma Zenitha, UGM, 2022). The Compulsory Curriculum Courses Islamic Religious Education course has a significant impact on instilling values of religious moderation. Especially when the course is complemented by practical exercises and discussions (Alifia Rova Melita Zahra, UGM, 2022).

The opinions of the students above are consistent with the results of several studies that explain that a moderate religious curriculum can prevent radical Islamic ideology. Ma'arif et al explain that educational strategies to prevent radicalism should prioritize moderate Islamic values and *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (Ma'arif et al., 2022). Universities should regularly strive to disseminate religious teachings in an open environment, emphasizing moderation and curbing radical movements (Achmad et al., 2566). Preventing radicalism can be achieved through moderate religious policies in the curriculum (Burhanuddin & Khairuddin, 2022).

Islam itself is the middle path in all matters, whether in concepts, beliefs, worship, behavior, relationships with fellow humans, or in legislation (Qardhawi, 2017). The term moderate Islam (*wasathiyyah*) refers to Islam that is between fundamentalist and liberal interpretations. In QS. *Al-Baqarah* [2]: 143, it is explained that muslims are referred to as the "middle nation" (*ummatan wasathan*), who have moderate, fair, and proportional attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors (Imron, 2018).

Moderation (*washatiyyah*) is a method of thinking, interacting, and behaving in a balanced manner in terms of faith, worship, and morals (Suharto, 2014). Abou el-Fadl identified the foundation of religious moderation in the Quran, which encourages muslims to be moderate, and in the Hadith, which portrays the Prophet Muhammad as a model of moderation, such as when faced with two extreme choices, he always chose the middle path (Wahyudi, 2011). Examples of moderate Islam in Indonesia are Muhammadiyah and



*Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU). NU, known for its slogan “*Islam Nusantara*,” has five characteristics in its religious practice: moderation, balance (*tawazun*), tolerance (*tasamuh*), prioritizing dialogue (*shura*), and justice (*i’tidal*) (Mutawali, 2016). In Malaysia, the concept of moderate Islam has fostered tolerance and harmony between muslims and non-muslims of different ethnicities (Khambali@Hambali et al., 2017).

## Conclusion

The results of this study can be summarized to answer two research questions. First, the Compulsory Curriculum Courses Islamic Religious Education UGM curriculum organization emphasizes themes that are often debated and differ in religious practice within society, so that students are expected to develop tolerant, moderate, and compassionate attitudes toward the universe. Meanwhile, Islamic Religious Education learning at USK emphasizes the fundamentals of Islam and character building as true muslims by understanding the problems faced by muslims and countering deviant ideologies. Second, the strategies of UGM and USK in preventing the infiltration of radicalism among students through strengthening Islamic Religious Education learning emphasize: (1) a counter-narrative approach to extremism, public lectures by inviting ex-terrorists, teaching assistance and monitoring, in-depth discussions with a multi-perspective approach, instilling tolerance, and promoting religious moderation. This study is still limited to examining strategies in Compulsory Curriculum Courses Islamic Religious Education learning at universities (UGM and USK) as part of the strategy to prevent the infiltration of radical ideologies among students. Based on this, the researcher suggests that future research should also examine student activities in participating in religious organizations on campus, including the backgrounds of religious leaders and the themes studied.

## Declarations

Praise and thanks be to Allah SWT, for His blessings and mercy, which enabled the researchers to complete the study entitled “Strategies for Preventing Radicalism Infiltration Among Students Through Strengthening Islamic Religious Education at UGM and USK Aceh.” We would like to express our gratitude to all parties (who cannot be mentioned here one by one) for their assistance and motivation in the preparation and composition of this scientific work. The researchers sincerely emphasize that there is no personal conflict of interest whatsoever that has influenced the research results. Therefore, this research is purely the dedication of the researchers to the advancement of knowledge.

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