

Negotiating religious moderation in digital narratives: A digital netnography of the Cidahu shelter house conflict on YouTube

Akrima Hilda^{1*}, Septiana Putri², Dwi Maidatus Salwa³, Della Rinjani⁴, Zahra Prasasti Abasiyah⁵, Rosita Fitri Andini⁶, Nawang Wulan⁷, Arditya Prayogi⁸

^{1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8} Universitas Islam Negeri K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid, Pekalongan, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: arditya.prayogi@uingusdur.ac.id

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Abstract

Religious conflicts on social media have increasingly evolved into contests of digital narratives, yet studies mapping the four pillars of religious moderation through a *digital netnography* approach remain limited. This study aims to analyze the manifestations of national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation to local culture in digital narratives surrounding the Cidahu shelter house conflict in Sukabumi. A qualitative approach employing *digital netnography* was applied to 228 YouTube comments collected from two news videos published by Kompas TV and analyzed using *thematic analysis*. The findings reveal that national commitment was primarily reflected in discussions on legality, government authority, and law enforcement, whereas tolerance emerged as the most challenged pillar due to the dominance of *hate speech*, stereotypes, and polarization (33.3%). Meanwhile, anti-violence and dialogue-oriented narratives appeared less frequently. This study contributes to the literature by providing an empirical mapping of digital narratives based on the four pillars of religious moderation and highlighting the need to reorient Islamic education toward *digital literacy* and *dialogic communication*.

Keywords: *Digital netnography*; Digital narratives; Islamic education; Religious moderation; YouTube comments

Abstrak

Konflik keagamaan di media sosial terus berkembang menjadi kontestasi narasi digital, namun kajian yang memetakan manifestasi empat pilar moderasi beragama melalui pendekatan *digital netnography* masih terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis manifestasi komitmen kebangsaan, toleransi, anti-kekerasan, dan akomodatif terhadap budaya lokal dalam narasi digital mengenai konflik rumah singgah di Cidahu, Sukabumi. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode *digital netnography* terhadap 228 komentar YouTube yang diperoleh dari dua video berita Kompas TV dan dianalisis menggunakan *thematic analysis*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komitmen kebangsaan termanifestasi melalui narasi legalitas, pemerintah, dan penegakan hukum, sedangkan toleransi menjadi indikator yang paling menghadapi tantangan akibat dominasi *hate speech*, stereotip, dan polarisasi (33,3%). Sementara itu, narasi anti-kekerasan dan dialog muncul dalam proporsi yang lebih kecil. Penelitian ini berkontribusi memperluas kajian moderasi beragama melalui pemetaan empiris narasi digital berdasarkan empat pilar moderasi beragama serta menegaskan urgensi reorientasi Pendidikan Islam yang mengintegrasikan *digital literacy* dan *dialogic communication*.

Kata Kunci: Moderasi beragama; Pendidikan Islam; Narasi digital; Netnografi digital; Komentar YouTube

Introduction

Religious conflicts in the digital era no longer end when physical incidents cease; instead, they continue through the contestation of digital narratives on social media (Abdel-Fadil, 2019). Once a conflict attracts public attention, it rapidly evolves into an open forum where diverse actors construct interpretations, express judgments, and reinforce their respective group identities (Yarchi et al., 2021). In this context, social media functions not only as a channel for disseminating information but also as a space for shaping public opinion that can either intensify or mitigate conflict (Wahlström & Törnberg, 2021). This phenomenon indicates that the dynamics of religious conflict can no longer be understood solely through events occurring in the physical sphere but must also be examined through the narratives produced and exchanged in digital spaces. Therefore, understanding patterns of digital conversations has become increasingly important for explaining how society interprets conflict and constructs attitudes toward religious diversity.

The expansion of the digital sphere presents new challenges for strengthening religious moderation in Indonesia. On the one hand, social media offers broad opportunities to promote the values of tolerance, dialogue, and peaceful coexistence within a pluralistic society (Klinkhammer, 2020). On the other hand, the same platforms have become fertile ground for the spread of *hate speech*, stereotypes, polarization, and unverified information (Udanor & Anyanwu, 2019). Consequently, religious conflicts are debated not only on the basis of factual events but are also shaped by users' perceptions, identities, and ideological preferences (Grigoropoulou, 2020). As a result, the formation of public opinion is often driven more by emotional reactions than by efforts to understand the substance of the issues involved. This situation demonstrates that religious moderation is no longer tested solely within direct social interactions but also through public communication practices in the digital sphere.

Within this context, the four pillars of religious moderation—national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation to local culture—provide a relevant analytical framework for examining the dynamics of digital narratives (Saifuddin, 2019). These four indicators function not only as normative measures of religious attitudes but also as analytical tools for identifying how people respond to conflicts involving religious issues in digital public spaces (Arifin et al., 2025). By examining the narratives that emerge from public discussions, it becomes possible to determine whether online conversations contribute to strengthening social cohesion or, conversely, intensify polarization. Accordingly, the framework of religious moderation offers a more comprehensive perspective for understanding the relationship between digital communication, identity construction, and the

management of religious conflicts in an increasingly open and participatory digital environment.

The shelter house conflict in Tangkil Village, Cidahu District, Sukabumi Regency represents a compelling example of how a local conflict can evolve into a national public discourse through social media (Fasya & Fikri, 2025). The incident generated not only debates over the alleged conversion of a shelter house into a place of worship but also diverse narratives concerning legality, tolerance, law enforcement, and interreligious relations. More importantly, public attention gradually shifted beyond the chronology of the incident toward evaluating the roles of the government, law enforcement agencies, and various actors perceived to be involved in the conflict. This shift illustrates that social media actively shapes how society understands religious conflict rather than merely reproducing information about it. Consequently, the Cidahu shelter house conflict provides an important context for examining how the values of religious moderation are manifested within digital narratives circulating among the public.

Studies on religious moderation and digital media have been conducted from various perspectives. Zaid et al. (2022) demonstrated that social media plays a strategic role in strengthening the dissemination of religious moderation values through more open and participatory communication. Octavianne et al. (2024) found that digital spaces accelerate identity polarization, *hate speech*, and the dissemination of intolerant narratives that undermine social cohesion. Similarly, Ashraf (2022) argued that religious conflicts on social media tend to escalate more rapidly than their resolution due to platform algorithms and the high level of user participation. Nevertheless, most previous studies have focused primarily on sentiment analysis, public perceptions of religious moderation, or strategies for promoting religious moderation through education and public policy. Studies that specifically map digital narratives of religious conflict through the framework of the four pillars of religious moderation using a *digital netnography* approach remain relatively scarce.

Against this backdrop, the present study aims to analyze the manifestations of the four pillars of religious moderation in digital narratives surrounding the Cidahu shelter house conflict through a *digital netnography* analysis of YouTube comments. This study is significant because it not only identifies the dominant themes emerging in public conversations but also explains how national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation to local culture are represented in public responses within digital spaces. From a theoretical perspective, this study extends the literature on religious moderation by introducing *digital netnography* as an analytical approach for examining the dynamics of religious conflict on social media. Practically, the findings are expected to serve as a foundation for developing strategies to strengthen religious moderation, particularly through reorienting Islamic education to become more

responsive to the challenges of digital communication and the growing polarization of religious narratives.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using *digital netnography* to examine the manifestations of religious moderation in public narratives circulating on social media (Gambetti, 2020). *Digital netnography* was selected because it enables researchers to investigate patterns of interaction, meaning construction, and conversational dynamics that emerge naturally within online communities without intervening in participants' activities. The data consisted of YouTube comments posted on two news videos concerning the shelter house conflict in Tangkil Village, Cidahu District, Sukabumi Regency, uploaded by the Kompas TV YouTube channel in 2025: *Rumah singgah di Sukabumi digerus warga karena diduga tak berizin, Dedi Mulyadi beri bantuan* (2025b) and *Kasus rumah retret di Cidahu Sukabumi, salah paham atau intoleransi? | sini gue kasih tau* (2025)a. A total of 235 comments were initially collected. A *data cleaning* process was subsequently conducted by removing comments irrelevant to the research focus, spam, duplicate comments, and texts lacking analytical meaning, resulting in a final corpus of 228 comments. The two videos were selected based on the relevance of their content, the high level of user engagement, and their ability to capture diverse public responses to the Cidahu shelter house conflict.

Data were collected through *digital documentation*, which involved identifying, compiling, and archiving all comments posted on the two videos as the primary data source (Creswell, 2014). The data were then analyzed using *thematic analysis* through several stages: repeatedly reading the entire corpus (*familiarization*), conducting *open coding* for each comment, grouping the codes into themes representing digital narratives, and mapping these themes onto the four pillars of religious moderation, namely national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation to local culture. The coding process was conducted iteratively until *thematic saturation* was achieved. Each theme was subsequently interpreted using a descriptive-analytical approach by relating the empirical findings to previous studies and the framework of religious moderation. Through this approach, the study not only identified the dominant themes emerging in digital conversations but also explained how the values of religious moderation were manifested, contested, and negotiated by the public in responding to the shelter house conflict within the digital sphere.

Results and Discussion

Competing narratives in the digital sphere following the Cidahu shelter house conflict

The Cidahu shelter house conflict did not end with the cessation of the vandalism; instead, it evolved into a contest of narratives within the digital sphere. Rather than serving as a platform for exchanging ideas on conflict resolution, the YouTube

comment section developed into a battleground of meanings where users constructed, defended, and even expanded competing interpretations of the same incident. Interestingly, public discussions shifted beyond the act of vandalism captured in the videos toward broader issues, including religious identity, the legal status of the shelter house, the legitimacy of collective actions, and the roles of the government and law enforcement agencies. This shift demonstrates that social media does not merely reproduce information but actively shapes public discourse surrounding religious conflict. Following the data reduction process, 228 comments were retained and categorized into eleven major themes, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of public conversation topics regarding the Cidahu shelter house conflict

No.	Conversation Topic	Number of Comments	Percentage
1	<i>Hate speech</i> , stereotypes, and interreligious polarization	76	33.3%
2	The role of the government (West Java Governor Dedi Mulyadi)	22	9.6%
3	Legality and permits for the shelter house	21	9.2%
4	The role of law enforcement agencies (Police/Military)	20	8.8%
5	Alleged involvement of local officials	19	8.3%
6	Narratives and accusations of intolerance	17	7.5%
7	Calls for legal action against the perpetrators	16	7.0%
8	Freedom of religion and factual clarification	12	5.3%
9	Rejection of violent actions	11	4.8%
10	Criticism of the media	8	3.5%
11	Calls for tolerance, dialogue, and unity	6	2.6%
Total		228	100%

Source: Processed by the authors (2026).

The most striking finding from the corpus is the dominance of *hate speech*, stereotypes, and interreligious polarization, accounting for 33.3% of all comments. This predominance indicates that public conversations were directed more toward constructing opposing identities than toward understanding the substance of the conflict itself. One user wrote, "*Gerombolan perusak NKRI*" ("A gang of destroyers of the Republic of Indonesia"), while another commented, "*Negara ini hancur karna golongan ini lo*" ("This country is being destroyed because of this group"). Rather than addressing the individuals involved in the vandalism shown in the videos, these comments generalized the actions of a few individuals to an entire social or religious group. In other words, the actions of several actors were transformed into characteristics attributed to a collective identity. This shift demonstrates that the

comment section no longer functioned as a space for evaluating the incident but instead became a site for reproducing social stigma, thereby expanding the conflict from individual actions to collective identities.

Beyond identity polarization, debates concerning the legal status of the shelter house emerged as one of the most prominent issues. Notably, most comments did not approach legality as an administrative matter requiring clarification but rather as a justification for defending particular positions. A comment such as "*Cuma di Indonesia aja mau ibadah di rumah harus ijin...*" ("Only in Indonesia do people need permission to worship in their own house...") emphasized the right to religious practice, whereas another comment, "*Rumah singgah bukan rumah ibadah*" ("A shelter house is not a place of worship"), attempted to redirect the discussion toward the legal status of the building as explained in the video. These contrasting perspectives illustrate how identical information generated two competing narratives: one framing the conflict as a restriction on religious freedom and the other interpreting it as an issue of compliance with regulations governing the use of buildings. Consequently, the discussion evolved into a struggle over legitimacy rather than an effort to establish common ground based on the factual information presented in the videos.

Public responses concerning the government and law enforcement agencies revealed an equally significant pattern. Unlike discussions of legality, which focused primarily on the status of the shelter house, comments addressing the government largely evaluated the state's capacity to manage the conflict. Expressions of support, such as "*Mantap gubernur Jawa Barat pak Dedi Mulyadi maju terus pak demi kebenaran dan keadilan*" ("Well done, Governor Dedi Mulyadi. Keep moving forward for truth and justice"), appeared alongside criticism such as "*Mundur aja kau Dedi jadi gubernur*" ("Just step down as governor, Dedi"), transforming the comment section into a space for assessing regional political leadership. A similar tendency emerged in comments directed at law enforcement agencies, including "*gw salut dan bangga kepada anggota TNI dan Polisi yg ada di tempat kejadian CUMA jadi penonton saja*" ("I salute the military and police officers who were at the scene for doing nothing but watching"). Such comments extended beyond criticism of the police or military, reflecting broader public expectations that state institutions should have prevented the escalation of the conflict. Thus, the videos stimulated discussions not only about the perpetrators but also about governmental accountability in responding to religious conflicts.

Another dominant narrative concerned accusations of intolerance and demands for legal accountability. Although these two themes initially appeared closely related, a closer examination of the comments revealed important distinctions. Comments such as "*Jelas intoleran*" ("Clearly intolerant") and "*Murni intoleran, no debate*" ("Pure intolerance, no debate") immediately labeled the incident without distinguishing between issues related to the use of the shelter house, the vandalism itself, or the

ongoing legal process. In contrast, comments such as "*Para pelaku pengrusakan harus ditangkap dan dihukum*" ("The perpetrators of the vandalism must be arrested and punished") focused primarily on the legal consequences of the collective violence captured in the videos. This distinction suggests that users adopted two different interpretive frameworks. The first framed the incident primarily as a symbol of religious intolerance, whereas the second emphasized legal accountability for acts of violence. Notably, these competing narratives rarely intersected within a single line of argument, resulting in a fragmented comment space where competing positions coexisted without meaningful dialogue.

Conversely, narratives emphasizing factual clarification, the rejection of violence, and calls for dialogue represented the smallest proportion of the corpus. Comments such as "*Rumah singgah bukan rumah ibadah*" ("A shelter house is not a place of worship") attempted to restore the discussion to the factual context presented in the videos, while comments such as "*Anarkis weh sampe ngerusak gitu*" ("That's pure anarchy, destroying property like that") explicitly condemned the vandalism without associating it with any particular religious identity. Likewise, appeals such as "*Kita sebagai umat Islam di NKRI harus saling menghormati pada semua orang*" ("As Muslims in Indonesia, we must respect everyone") appeared only infrequently. These findings indicate that clarifying and reconciliatory narratives were substantially overshadowed by confrontational ones. In other words, digital conversations appeared to be driven more by emotional reactions and opposing positions than by collective efforts to foster mutual understanding of the conflict.

Overall, the characteristics of the corpus demonstrate that the meaning of the Cidahu shelter house conflict shifted considerably once it entered the digital sphere. Public discussions were no longer dominated by the chronology of the incident, mechanisms for conflict resolution, or reconciliation efforts. Instead, they evolved into competing narratives concerning identity, legality, the legitimacy of collective actions, and state responsibility. The dominance of confrontational comments, combined with the limited presence of dialogical narratives, suggests that social media functions not merely as a medium for disseminating information but also as a space that accelerates the formation of public polarization. This pattern provides the foundation for examining how these digital narratives represent the four pillars of religious moderation—national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation to local culture—which are discussed in the following section.

Manifestations of the four pillars of religious moderation in the digital narratives of the shelter house conflict

In this study, religious moderation is understood as a social practice manifested through public responses to conflict in digital spaces. By employing the four pillars of religious moderation as the analytical framework, this study not only identifies the

dominant themes emerging in public conversations but also examines how national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation to local culture are represented within digital narratives. Interestingly, these four pillars do not emerge with equal prominence. Instead, the comment section is dominated by narratives concerning legality, state authority, and religious identity rather than those promoting dialogue and reconciliation. This finding indicates that social media functions not merely as a platform for disseminating information but also as a space where people negotiate the values of religious moderation according to their interpretations of the Cidahu shelter house conflict. The relationship between the emerging digital narratives and the four pillars of religious moderation is illustrated in Figure 1.

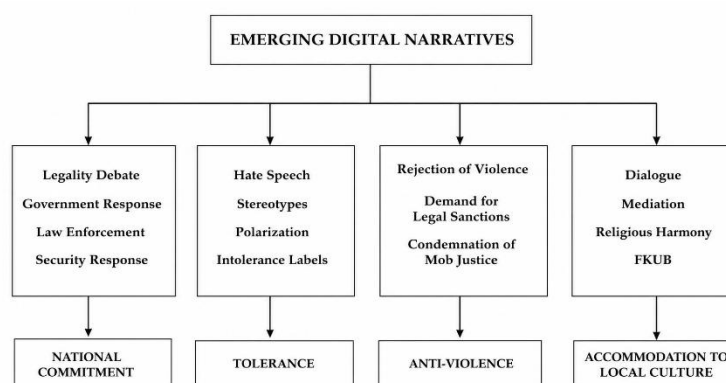


Figure 1. Mapping Emerging Digital Narratives to the Four Pillars of Religious Moderation

Source: Developed by the authors based on a digital netnography analysis of YouTube comments (2026).

The most prominent manifestation identified in this study relates to national commitment. This pillar is reflected in the dominance of discussions concerning the legality of the shelter house, governmental authority, law enforcement, and the role of security institutions. Collectively, these four themes appeared in 82 comments, representing approximately 36% of the entire corpus, consisting of discussions on the role of the government (22 comments; 9.6%), the legality of the shelter house (21 comments; 9.2%), law enforcement agencies (20 comments; 8.8%), and the alleged involvement of local officials (19 comments; 8.3%). The prominence of these themes suggests that most social media users perceive conflict resolution as requiring not only social reconciliation but also the active presence of the state as the guarantor of constitutional rights and the enforcer of the rule of law. From the perspective of religious moderation, this tendency reflects a strong orientation toward the rule of law as a fundamental expression of national commitment. In other words, state legitimacy remains the primary point of reference in responding to religious conflicts.

Nevertheless, the manifestation of national commitment in the digital sphere is not entirely constructive. Debates over the legality of the shelter house frequently evolved into instruments for legitimizing competing group positions, causing discussions of the rule of law to become intertwined with identity politics and ideological

preferences. Consequently, commitment to the state was not always expressed through respect for constitutional principles but was sometimes employed to reinforce opposing arguments. These findings demonstrate that national commitment within digital spaces is inherently dynamic. On the one hand, it encourages demands for law enforcement and governmental accountability; on the other hand, it remains highly susceptible to the polarization that characterizes public discourse. This finding is consistent with Ridwanulloh et al. (2025), who argued that governmental legitimacy and the enforcement of law constitute essential dimensions in strengthening religious moderation within multicultural societies. Likewise, Henne and Klocek (2019) demonstrated that public trust in state institutions significantly influences how communities respond to religious conflicts. However, unlike Mohiuddin (2023), the present study reveals that digital spaces function not only as platforms for reinforcing national commitment but also as arenas where competing interpretations of legality and state authority in resolving religious conflicts are actively negotiated.

In contrast to national commitment, which is primarily manifested through demands directed toward the state, the pillar of tolerance presents the greatest challenge within the corpus of this study. The findings indicate that tolerance is more frequently represented through its violation than through its actual practice. This pattern is reflected in the predominance of comments containing *hate speech*, stereotypes, and interreligious polarization, which account for 76 comments, or 33.3% of the entire corpus. This proportion makes narrative-based intolerance the most dominant theme among all identified categories. These findings suggest that digital spaces are used more extensively to reinforce group identities than to foster understanding of religious diversity. From the perspective of religious moderation, tolerance is measured not only by the willingness to accept diversity but also by the commitment to respecting the dignity of others within the public sphere (Verkuyten et al., 2019). Therefore, the high prevalence of *hate speech* observed in this study indicates that tolerance has yet to become the dominant orientation of digital conversations surrounding the Cidahu shelter house conflict.

The predominance of intolerant narratives is reflected in various forms of negative labeling that emerged following the publication of the conflict-related videos. Comments such as "*Gerombolan perusak NKRI*" ("A gang of destroyers of the Republic of Indonesia"), "*SDM rendah IQ 78*" ("Low-quality people with an IQ of 78"), and "*Negara ini hancur karna golongan ini lo*" ("This country is being destroyed because of this group") no longer criticized the perpetrators as individuals but instead generalized accusations toward broader social and religious groups associated with the incident. At the same time, comments such as "*Jelas intoleran*" ("Clearly intolerant") and "*Murni intoleran, no debate*" ("Pure intolerance, no debate") framed the entire incident as an act of intolerance without considering the complexity of its legal, administrative, or social dimensions. This pattern demonstrates that the comment

section tended to construct a dichotomy between "us" and "them," transforming the conflict from a social issue requiring resolution into a justification for reinforcing collective identities. Within the framework of religious moderation, this tendency reflects the erosion of tolerance, as differences are no longer regarded as a social reality to be managed but rather as a basis for drawing sharper boundaries between groups.

These findings are consistent with Rodenhausen (2025), who argued that social media contributes to increasing identity polarization in religious issues. Similarly, Dawson (2020) found that social media algorithms tend to amplify emotionally charged narratives rather than those promoting dialogue. The present findings also reinforce those of KhosraviNik and Esposito (2018), who identified *hate speech* and stereotypes as dominant features of digital conversations. However, unlike Claassen et al. (2021), this study demonstrates that polarization is driven not only by differences in religious identity but also by debates surrounding the legality of the shelter house, governmental responses, and media framing of the incident. Consequently, intolerance in digital spaces does not emerge as an isolated phenomenon but develops through the interaction of legal, political, and identity-related issues that mutually reinforce one another. These findings suggest that strengthening religious moderation in digital environments cannot rely solely on disseminating messages of tolerance; it also requires the strategic management of public narratives to prevent them from escalating into deeper forms of social polarization.

The next manifestation identified in the digital narratives is the principle of anti-violence, although its prominence is considerably lower than that of national commitment and tolerance. Based on the thematic classification, 16 comments (7.0%) explicitly demanded legal action against those responsible for the vandalism, while 11 comments (4.8%) condemned acts of violence without associating them with any particular religious identity. Although these themes appeared less frequently than narratives characterized by polarization, they nevertheless demonstrate that a segment of social media users continued to advocate for conflict resolution through legal mechanisms and rejected acts of vigilantism. Within the framework of religious moderation, the anti-violence pillar extends beyond the rejection of physical violence; it also reflects a commitment to resolving conflicts through lawful procedures and peaceful means (Ulinuha, 2022). Accordingly, these findings indicate that anti-violence remains a visible value within digital conversations, despite being overshadowed by more confrontational narratives.

Comments such as "*Para pelaku pengrusakan harus ditangkap dan dihukum*" ("The perpetrators of the vandalism must be arrested and punished") demonstrate that some members of the public expected the conflict to be resolved through legal accountability rather than retaliation. Likewise, the comment "*Anarkis weh sampe ngerusak gitu*" ("That's pure anarchy, destroying property like that") explicitly condemned the use of

violence as a means of addressing differences. Both forms of response indicate that some users shifted their attention away from defending particular groups toward emphasizing the need to end violence in social conflicts. These findings are consistent with Neo (2020), who argued that the rule of law is a fundamental prerequisite for strengthening religious moderation in plural societies. Similarly, Annan et al. (2021) demonstrated that public condemnation of violence reflects an increasing awareness of peaceful conflict resolution. Nevertheless, the overwhelming dominance of *hate speech* and polarization in the corpus suggests that narratives advocating peaceful resolution are often marginalized by emotionally charged responses to conflict.

In contrast to the anti-violence pillar, which still demonstrates the presence of narratives supporting peaceful conflict resolution, a different pattern emerges in relation to accommodation to local culture. Within the corpus, themes associated with dialogue, factual clarification, and efforts to build mutual understanding constitute the least represented categories. Only 12 comments (5.3%) attempted to clarify the legal status of the shelter house, 8 comments (3.5%) criticized media framing, and merely 6 comments (2.6%) explicitly encouraged tolerance, dialogue, and national unity. This distribution indicates that reconciliation-oriented narratives occupy only a marginal position compared with confrontational ones. From the perspective of religious moderation, these findings suggest that dialogue and deliberation as culturally embedded mechanisms for conflict resolution have not become dominant tendencies in digital conversations surrounding the Cidahu shelter house conflict.

Comments such as "*Rumah singgah bukan rumah ibadah*" ("A shelter house is not a place of worship") sought to correct public misconceptions and redirect the discussion toward the factual context presented in the videos. Likewise, the comment "*Waduh tindakan warga seperti itu tidak dibenarkan apapun alasannya, kita sebagai umat Islam di NKRI harus saling menghormati pada semua orang*" ("Regardless of the circumstances, the actions of those residents cannot be justified. As Muslims in Indonesia, we must respect everyone.") represents an explicit appeal to prioritize mutual respect over the escalation of conflict. Nevertheless, dialogical comments were substantially outnumbered by those containing accusations, stereotypes, and demands directed at particular groups. These findings are consistent with Martin (2019), who found that reconciliatory narratives tend to receive less public attention than conflict-oriented narratives on social media. Serttaş et al. (2025) likewise argued that digital platform algorithms are more likely to amplify interactions with controversial content than with dialogue-oriented content. However, unlike Forestal (2021), the present study demonstrates that digital spaces still contain a small but meaningful group of users seeking to restore discussions to factual clarification and respect for diversity. Thus, accommodation to local culture does not emerge as the dominant discourse but rather as an alternative narrative striving to preserve dialogue amid intense public polarization.

Overall, the four pillars of religious moderation are manifested with varying degrees of intensity in the digital narratives surrounding the Cidahu shelter house conflict. National commitment is reflected in the public's strong emphasis on legality, governmental authority, and law enforcement, whereas tolerance emerges as the pillar facing the greatest challenge due to the predominance of *hate speech*, stereotypes, and identity-based polarization. Meanwhile, the anti-violence and accommodation to local culture pillars remain evident within the corpus, although they appear far less frequently than confrontational narratives. These findings demonstrate that social media functions not merely as a space for reflecting on conflict but also as an arena that actively shapes the development of religious moderation within society. Therefore, strengthening religious moderation in digital environments cannot rely solely on disseminating normative messages of tolerance; it also requires communication strategies capable of promoting dialogical narratives, enhancing digital literacy, and fostering more constructive public engagement with religious issues.

Reorienting Islamic education to strengthen religious moderation in the digital space

The predominance of *hate speech*, stereotypes, and polarization, accounting for 76 comments (33.3%), compared with only 6 comments (2.6%) promoting dialogue and reconciliation, indicates that digital spaces have yet to become environments that effectively support the internalization of the values of religious moderation. These findings suggest that the primary challenge facing Islamic education in the digital era extends beyond strengthening religious understanding to equipping students with the ability to critically interpret, evaluate, and respond to religious narratives circulating on social media. Consequently, Islamic education requires a pedagogical reorientation that moves beyond the transmission of religious knowledge toward fostering digital literacy, ethical communication, and peaceful conflict resolution. Based on these findings, the proposed direction for this reorientation is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Reorientation of Islamic Education for Strengthening Religious Moderation in the Digital Space

Research Findings	Challenges for Islamic Education	Proposed Reorientation
<i>Hate speech</i> , stereotypes, and polarization dominate public conversations (33.3%)	Limited religious digital literacy	Integrate digital literacy, digital media ethics, and information verification into Islamic education learning
Debates over legality and state authority are more prominent than conflict resolution	Religious moderation is still understood primarily as a normative concept	Implement case-based learning and <i>problem-based learning</i> focusing on contemporary religious issues

Anti-violence remain limited	narratives	Conflict resolution skills have not been optimally developed	Integrate <i>peace education</i> and conflict resolution into the learning process
Narratives promoting dialogue and reconciliation account for only 2.6% of the corpus		Weak culture of dialogue in digital spaces	Strengthen collaborative learning, interfaith dialogue, and diversity-based <i>project-based learning</i>

Source: Developed by the authors based on the research findings (2026).

The proposed reorientation indicates that Islamic education should move beyond a concept-oriented approach toward learning that is responsive to the realities of the digital age. The findings reveal that social media users are more likely to engage in identity-based polarization than in constructive dialogue. This pattern suggests that mastering the conceptual foundations of religious moderation alone is insufficient unless accompanied by the ability to identify *hate speech*, understand the mechanisms of digital polarization, and distinguish legitimate criticism of actions from negative labeling of particular social or religious groups. Accordingly, the learning process should provide authentic learning experiences that enable students to analyze real-world cases, critically evaluate digital narratives, and express their opinions responsibly within the digital public sphere. These findings are consistent with Irwanto (2025), who demonstrated that digital literacy is a fundamental prerequisite for strengthening religious moderation in the era of social media. Likewise, Liu and Mu (2022) argued that learning grounded in contemporary issues enhances students' critical thinking skills when responding to religious information circulating in digital environments.

Beyond digital literacy, the findings also indicate that the limited presence of dialogue and reconciliation narratives highlights the need to strengthen the dialogical dimension of Islamic education. To date, religious moderation education has tended to emphasize conceptual understanding, while providing relatively limited attention to developing students' abilities to engage in dialogue, negotiate differences, and resolve conflicts peacefully. However, the findings reveal that comments promoting tolerance and national unity account for only 2.6% of the entire corpus, a proportion substantially lower than comments characterized by polarization and stereotypes. This disparity indicates that the values of religious moderation have not yet been fully internalized within public communication practices in digital spaces. These findings reinforce those of Adib (2024), who emphasized the importance of *experiential learning* in cultivating moderate attitudes. However, unlike Rahmadi and Hamdan (2023), the present study demonstrates that the principal challenge for Islamic education lies not only in strengthening conceptual understanding of religious moderation but also in transforming these values into ethical patterns of communication within digital environments.

Overall, this study highlights the need to reorient Islamic education toward preparing students to become *digital citizens* who possess balanced religious competence, digital literacy, and social skills. Strengthening religious moderation can no longer rely solely on transmitting normative values within the classroom; instead, it must be integrated into learning experiences involving contemporary case studies, analyses of social media narratives, and dialogical practices that encourage peaceful conflict resolution. In this way, Islamic education contributes not only to the development of religious individuals but also to the cultivation of a generation capable of preserving social cohesion, resisting polarization, and fostering constructive dialogue amid the growing contestation of religious narratives in digital spaces.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the Cidahu shelter house conflict did not remain confined to the physical incident itself but evolved into a contest of digital narratives that directly reflects the dynamics of religious moderation in online public discourse. Based on the analysis of 228 YouTube comments, the findings reveal that the four pillars of religious moderation are manifested with varying degrees of intensity. National commitment is primarily reflected in discussions concerning legality, governmental authority, law enforcement, and the role of security institutions. In contrast, tolerance emerges as the pillar facing the greatest challenge due to the predominance of *hate speech*, stereotypes, and identity-based polarization, which account for 33.3% of the entire corpus. Meanwhile, the pillars of anti-violence and accommodation to local culture remain evident but appear less prominently, as narratives promoting dialogue, reconciliation, and peaceful conflict resolution are substantially outnumbered by confrontational responses. These findings demonstrate that social media functions not merely as a medium for disseminating information about religious conflicts but also as a space where the values of religious moderation are constructed, reinforced, negotiated, and, in some cases, transformed through public digital interactions.

This study contributes conceptually by providing an empirical mapping of the manifestations of the four pillars of religious moderation through a *digital netnography* approach to digital narratives, thereby extending the existing literature, which has predominantly focused on educational institutions, religious communities, and government policies. Practically, the findings underscore the importance of reorienting Islamic education by integrating digital literacy, communication ethics, interfaith dialogue, and conflict resolution as essential components for strengthening religious moderation in the digital era. Nevertheless, this study is limited by its focus on comments collected from only two YouTube videos related to a single conflict case, which does not fully capture the broader dynamics of digital conversations across different social media platforms or diverse contexts of religious conflict. Future studies

are therefore encouraged to expand the data sources to multiple social media platforms, compare different cases of religious conflict in Indonesia, and combine *digital netnography* with sentiment analysis or in-depth interviews to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the evolution of religious moderation within digital spaces.

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