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## Religious Moderation Campaigns on Social Media: Trend, Content Strategies and Public Sentiment

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**Abstract:** Mainstreaming religious moderation began to be launched by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia since 2019 in the era of Minister Lukman Hakim Saifuddin. This mainstreaming of religious moderation is not only through structural approaches and dissemination of thought, but also through campaigns on social media. Especially social media has become a field for discourse in this information era and social media has also become a platform that is widely accessed by Indonesians. This article aims to explain trends, content strategies and public sentiment about religious moderation campaigns on social media. The method used in this article is descriptive qualitative, by taking research data through #ModerasiBeragama on three social media platforms namely YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. The results of this study are: The trend of #ModerasiBeragama campaign has increased exponentially from 2018 to 2022. The content strategy used by using #ModerasiBeragama both for groups with pros and cons to get public engagement and sentiment. Public sentiment looks positive and neutral on YouTube and TikTok, but negative and neutral sentiment is more noticeable on Instagram.

**Keywords:** campaign; religious moderation; social media

### INTRODUCTION

Strengthening religious moderation as one of the strategies to prevent radicalism, terrorism, and intolerance in Indonesia has been used as a structural policy under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Strengthening religious moderation is carried out with three main strategies (Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2019), namely: first, the dissemination of ideas, knowledge, and understanding of religious moderation to all ways of life; secondly the institutionalization of religious moderation into binding programs and policies; and third, the integration of the formulation of religious moderation in the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020-2024. This structural strategy is carried out to complement and strengthen other steps that have been taken so far, and increasingly need to be strengthened, namely facilitating spaces of encounter between groups of people, to strengthen inclusive values and tolerance, for example in the form of interfaith dialogue.

This structural policy strategy has been consistently implemented by three Ministers of Religious Affairs, starting from Lukman Hakim Syaifuddin (2014-2019), then Fachrul Razi (2019-2020), to Yaquut Qolil Qoumas (2020-to-date) (Malik et al., 2021). The first strategy of strengthening religious moderation is the dissemination of ideas,

knowledge, and understanding of religious moderation to all levels of society. One of the socialization of this idea is through campaigns on social media. The socialization of religious moderation on social media can be tracked on various social media such as Facebook, there are 5.7 thousand people who post religious moderation (Facebook, 2022), on YouTube there are 7.3 thousand videos spread across 4.4 thousand channels (YouTube, 2022). On Instagram a total of 34,638 posts (Instagram, 2022), and on TikTok for 14.2 million impressions (TikTok, 2022). Apart from query data on social media, data from Google Trends also shows an exponential increase from 2017 to 2022. (Google Trends, 2022). From the data that has been mentioned, it is confirmed that the socialization of religious moderation has existed on social media, and received a public response through searching for queries, conversations to getting public sentiment on social media.

The power of social media is unquestionable as a medium that influences public opinion on an issue. Social media has amplified issues about Islamic discourse, Islamic religious movements, as well as Muslim relations and expressions (Akmaliah, 2020; Bunt, 2018; Chakim, 2022). The facilities provided by social media such as interaction, sharing, archiving in real time make social media a media that is able to amplify Islamic issues (Nasrullah, 2016). The use of social media in Indonesia according to the Digital Report survey is also increasing exponentially, with changes in the favoritism of social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and Twitter (Hootsuite, 2020, 2021; Riyanto, 2022). It is not surprising that the discourse of religious moderation has also been amplified on social media to account for the narratives of radicalism, terrorism and intolerance that have participated in the conflict and seized the public opinion of Indonesian netizens.

Research on religious moderation on social media has two approaches, such as regarding message delivery strategies (content strategies) and message content. Strategies for content strategies of religious moderation, such as; religious moderation campaign from traditional to digital (Setia, 2021), religious moderation campaigns on Facebook: forms and strategies of the message (Wibowo et al., 2019), religious moderation campaign through social media at multicultural communities (Anwar & Haq, 2019), and building religious moderation amid the buzzer raid (Chairiyah et al., 2022). Meanwhile, the content of the message about religious moderation, such as; Ministry of Religious Affairs message in moderation via Instagram social media (Arenggoasih & Wijayanti, 2020), revitalization of religious moderation on social media: echoing moderation content to build harmonization (Hamdi et al., 2021), religious moderation and social media (Instagram & TikTok content analysis study) (Pratiwi et al., 2021), and strengthening religious moderation in counteracting hateful narratives on social media (Burhanuddin & Khumaini, 2021).

This study wants to explain the pattern of religious moderation campaigns on social media. The difference between this study and the other research on religious moderation on social media is that this study describes trends, content strategies and public sentiments for the distribution of religious moderation campaigns on three social media, namely YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. This research is based on the argument

that the campaign of religious moderation on social media as a preventive measure to fight radicalism, terrorism, and intolerance needs to be comprehensively mapped across social media.

## **METHOD**

This research on religious moderation campaigns on social media is a qualitative approach to research with a descriptive type, because it only describes the search for religious moderation trends, religious moderation content strategies and public sentiments on social media. The data sources of this study are taken from websites, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. The data collection technique uses observation by searching #moderasiberagama on social media, and documenting the findings data of #moderasiberagama. Data analysis techniques use qualitative content analysis in the form of data collection, data coding, data analysis and interpretation of data (Nasrullah, 2014). The four stages of data analysis are as follows: the first stage, data collection YouTube, Instagram and TikTok from #moderasiberagama, by taking the content period during 2018-2022. The next second stage, is data coding by creating a figure/ categorization about trending religious moderation using Google Trends and social media analytic tools. The third stage is, data analysis by relating data findings with theoretical studies about religious moderation campaigns on social media. The fourth stage is, interpretation of data by grouping religious moderation campaigns on social media through the categories of trending, content strategies and public sentiment.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Campaigns on social media are an extension of the definition and practice of conventional campaigns. The definition of the campaign itself is a form of verbal and non-verbal communication, which means that the message conveyed in the form of images and videos can be conveyed well to other users. In general, the use of the term campaign is more about political communication that usually appears during elections (Pratiwi et al., 2021), however, campaigns have an expansion of meaning in the form of campaigns on social media. According to Hootsuite, social media campaign is defined as "series of coordinated actions that are intended to fulfill the goals set forth in your overall strategy" (McLachlan, 2022) which means "a series of coordination of activities aimed at achieving the goals already defined on the strategy as a whole." This definition can be applied more broadly to campaigns using digital media in general where the mediums used include a variety of digital media including websites.

McLachlan (2022) further explained that the social media campaign "features specific outcomes that can be tracked and measured over a specific period of time. It should be more concentrated and targeted than your "business as usual" social media content." This means the campaign "has specific results that are measurable and can be tracked over a given period (e.g. one month). This activity should be more focused with a more specific target than social media content that is released regularly for business activities in general." Based on some of these reviews, campaigns on the web and social

media can be defined as "campaign activities through websites and social media in a certain period more focused than regular digital communication activities with measurable results based on specified targets."

Various social media campaigns include: Marketing Campaign, Political Campaign, and Social Campaign (Afgiansyah, 2022). Marketing Campaign is carried out for the purpose of marketing a product or service to make a profit. Political Campaign is just like a political campaign Politicians "market" themselves to be elected by their constituents like products marketed to their consumers. Meanwhile, Social Campaign is a campaign activity with a social purpose to communicate an invitation to the community to provide support for certain activities. An example of a social campaign is an invitation to donate and a change in attitude This activity can be done by individuals, communities, organizations, and other bodies.

Religious moderation campaigns on social media are included in the social campaign category which aims to spread discourse and change people's attitudes towards religious phenomena that occur in Indonesia such as radicalism, terrorism, and intolerance. Religious moderation is understood as a way of view, attitude, and behavior always taking a position in the middle, always acting fairly, and not being extreme in religion (Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2019). An example of a religious moderation campaign on social media is a key message using the hashtag #moderationberagama used by the Ministry of Religious Affairs to be distributed by various channels on the web and social media. In addition to mass media websites, the hashtag is also echoed by opinion leaders on social media such as celebrities and public figures using their personal accounts on various social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, Facebook and others. The initiators of the religious moderation campaign can be from individuals, groups, institutions. The channels used are not limited to the initiator's official website and social media accounts. Religious moderation campaigns on social media can be carried out by integrating various digital assets such as trend tracing, content strategies, and analyzing public sentiment so that the message of religious moderation is conveyed optimally.

### **Trends of Religious Moderation on Indonesia**

Digital records of religious moderation trends in Indonesia can be tracked on digital media and on social media. Digital media and social media have the ability to archive on servers with the help of big data of each platform. In addition, social media users can also become producers and consumers of information that makes it possible to produce a lot of content. The function of digital media and social media here is as a content curator, its users as producers-consumers of information, and media platforms rely on algorithms to take control to determine which content will be sent to users based on user behavior and habits while using social media (Luik, 2020). Content curation functions, algorithms, and high engagement rate averages about an issue can make a trending topic on each media platform. Including issues or information about religious moderation in digital media and

social media allows it to become a trend of content in the category of religious fields in the media.

The distribution of religious moderation content on digital media and social media was started by the Ministry of Religious Affairs since 2019. Policy structurally through a strategy of socializing the idea of religious moderation on social media. This strategy in media studies includes being part of a social media campaign. To explain this pattern of digital and social media campaigns, it is necessary to track the trending of religious moderation keywords spread across digital media and social media. The tool used to track the keyword "religious moderation" in digital media uses Google Trends, while to track trending topics on social media using hashtags in the search columns of the YouTube, Instagram and TikTok platforms.

To track the last five years of religious moderation, researchers conducted data crawling or digital media data mining using the help of Google Trends. Google Trends is a service from Google that provides data and graphs regarding the popularity that is happening on Google search pages. The unique thing about Google Trends is that this tool not only shows what is being hotly discussed, but can also be used to do keyword research. Google Trends can search for keywords that are often used, not only that Google Trends can also compare performance between keywords. Google Trends can search websites, images, news and YouTube (Adieb, 2021). The data results from entering the keywords of religious moderation in Indonesia with the last five years (2018-2022) on Google Trends are as follows:

Figure 1. . Religious Moderation on Google Trends for the period 2018-2022



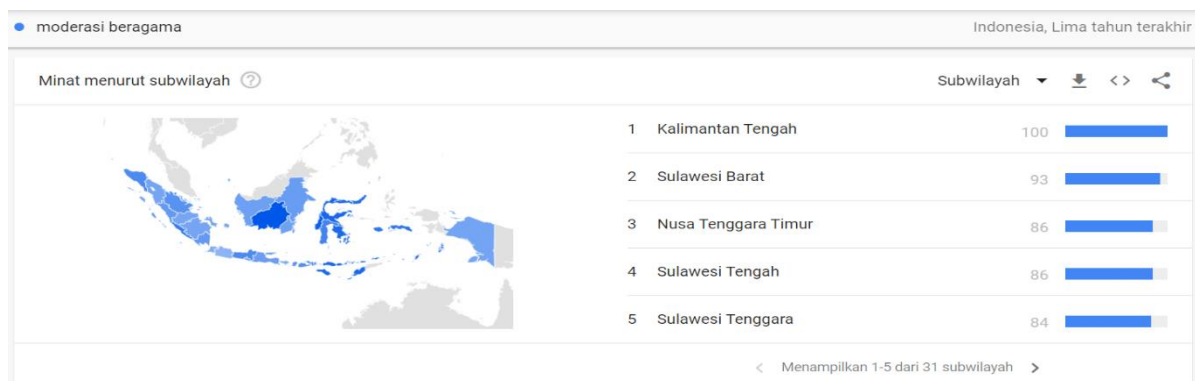
Source : Google Trend

This search for religious moderation since 2018 is to condition how the distribution of content from a year before religious moderation policies were structurally implemented. The data results show that the distribution of religious moderation content since 2018-2019 has averaged 25 content posts, and has increased to the next three years (2020-2022). The increase in content posts began in August 2020 with the highest number of posts of 50 posts, and in 2021-2022 content posts can be above 50-100 posts. This exponential upward trend signals the search for the word "religious moderation"

and the public engagement rate has been rising over the past five years. Queries related to religious moderation in Google Trends such as "moderation is", "religious moderation is", "islamic moderation", "examples of religious moderation", and "religious moderation"

Searching for religious moderation according to interest categories according to Indonesian sub-regions over the past five years on Google Trends, successfully mapped the distribution in 31 regions in Indonesia. The five most mapped areas according to the search results are Central Kalimantan, West Sulawesi, East Nusa Tenggara, Central Sulawesi and Southeast Sulawesi.

**Figure 2.** Interests by subregion on Google Trends for the period 2018-2022



**Source :** Google Trend

The results of interest searches according to this sub-region are the top ten occupied by Central Sulawesi, Maluku, North Sulawesi, Bengkulu, and South Sulawesi. Areas outside Java, such as Kalimantan, Sulawesi and Nusa Tenggara dominated the conversation about religious moderation compared to Java, which was only included in the top 20 and 30 interest searches. Demographically, religion in Indonesia in Kalimantan, Sulawesi and Nusa Tenggara has a diversity of religious believers compared to Java. Diversity on the three islands can be the subject of religious moderation, and an example of the implementation of religious moderation.

Researchers also compared the keyword religious moderation with moderate Islamic and Islamic moderation in Google Trends. This keyword comparison is to find out the distribution of issues or topics regarding moderation over the past five years. Data from Google Trends shows that the topic of religious moderation has increased content since 2020 and continues to rise exponentially in 2021-2022. The topic of moderate Islamic content is actually more stable from 2017 to 2022 considering that the term moderate Islam has been an Islamic narrative in Indonesia for longer, while the topic of Islamic moderation is a topic that is lower in content.

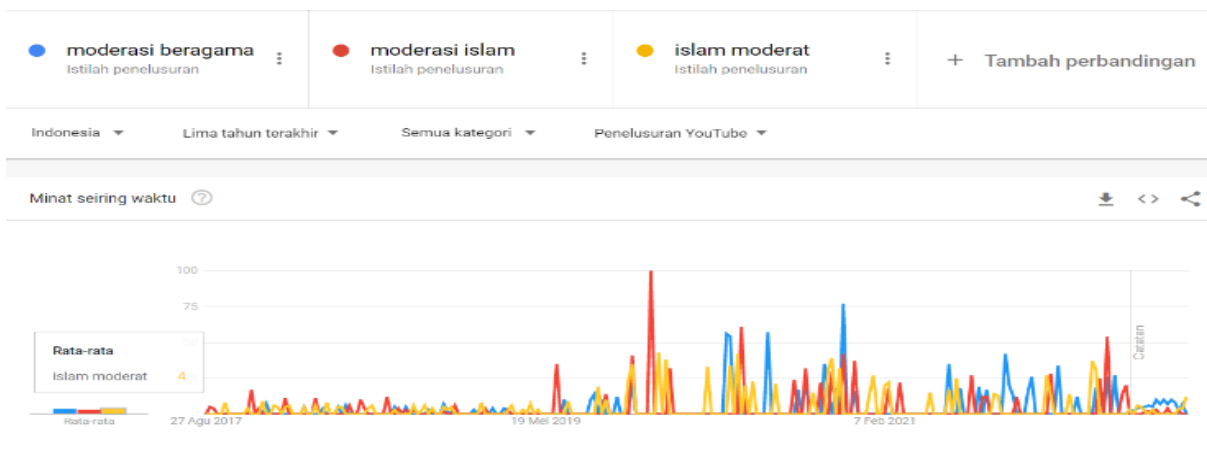
**Figure 3.** Comparison of Religious Moderation Topics in Google Trends for the period 2018-2022



Source : Google Trend

Google Trends can also map content trends on YouTube social media, but it cannot be used to analyze trends on social media such as Instagram, Twitter or TikTok. YouTube is indeed affiliated with Google so trend analysis on YouTube is provided on Google Trends. Results from a search of religious moderation content trends on YouTube over the past five years show an upward chart movement in 2019-2022. Religious moderation content on YouTube was the highest in the 2020 period, and there was a movement in the average content graph on YouTube of 50 videos in the 2021-2022 range.

**Figure 4.** Religious Moderation Content Trends on YouTube in Google Trends for the period 2018-2022



Source : Google Trend

In addition to searching for trends in digital media using Google Trend to determine the distribution of religious moderation content, researchers also analyzed trends in religious moderation content on social media such as YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. A tool used to analyze trends on social media using searches on social media search engines by embedding hashtags #moderasiberagama. This search is still manual because it does not use social media analytics. The results of #moderasiberagama search

on YouTube recorded 7.3 thousand videos spread across 4.4 thousand channels (YouTube, 2022). On Instagram a total of 34,638 posts (Instagram, 2022), and on TikTok with 14.2 million impressions (TikTok, 2022). The following is presented a table to find out the trend of content distribution on social media YouTube, Instagram and TikTok.

**Table 1.** Hashtags #moderasiberagama cross social media platforms

No	Social Media	Number of Visual Content
1	YouTube	7,300
2	Instagram	34,638
3	TikTok	14,2 million

From the trend data of religious moderation content on YouTube, Instagram and TikTok, this shows TikTok as the social media that produces the most content and the most watched by users compared to Instagram and YouTube. TikTok gets a high level of impressions compared to other social media because of the facilities provided such as creating music videos with a duration of 60 seconds that can be edited with various filter features and supporting music, and are easy to share. TikTok users in Indonesia rank fourth after WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram. Tiktok users in Indonesia as much as 63.1% of the total population, the previous year 38.7% up rapidly (Riyanto, 2022). The advantage of TikTok is that users can create unique short videos quickly and also easily to share with friends and to the rest of the world.

### **Content Strategies of Religious Moderation on Social Media**

Social media puts messages (content) as a new force to get public engagement of social media users. Content is information that diverse experiences in contexts that allow it to provide values to an audience. Content can also be interpreted as the presence of social values, something that humans need to define and validate those values. Content becomes a business commodity on social media, or is a product that is produced, distributed as well as consumed by the audience itself (Blossom, 2011). Moreover, the characteristics of social media allow audiences to become producers as well as consumers of the content itself (prosumer).

This practice of developing content and disseminating it on social media can be seen as an individual effort as a social media user and as an information society. According to (Nasrullah, 2021) There are three characteristics of social media dissemination, including: 1) Efforts to share information that is considered important to members of the social media community, 2) Show the position or partiality of the audience towards an issue or information that is spread, and 3) The content that is spread is a means to add information or other new data, so that the content becomes more complete (crowdsourcing).

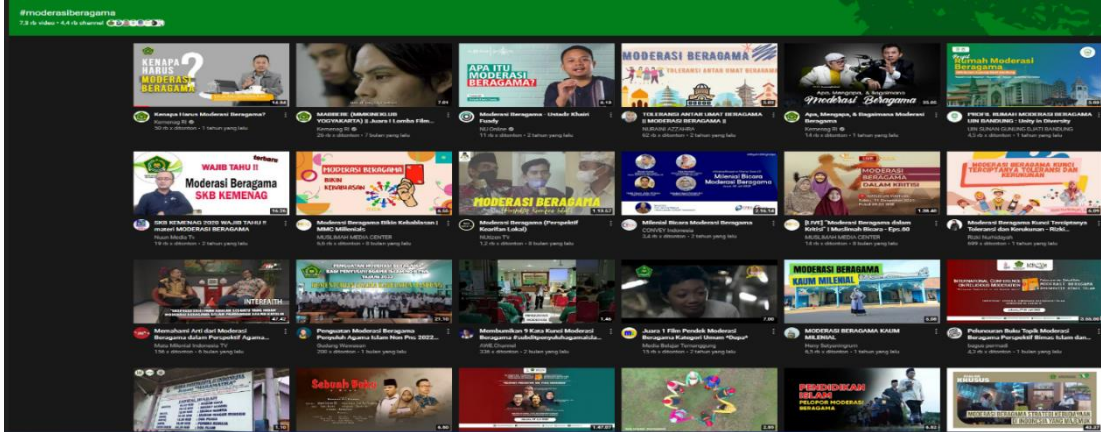
Every piece of content on social media has a content planning strategy before it is produced, uploaded and distributed. Social media content planning strategies aim to help



content diversity and become an attraction for audiences to interact on social media. Content planning strategies by (Nasrullah, 2021), such as : 1)Content variations, 2)Determining content types and categories, 3)Content calendars, 4)Visual Content 5)Determining hashtags, and 6)Utilizing covers. As for the explanation, content variation is a variety of information that the audience wants when accessing social media and there is a process of interaction with that content. Determining the type and category of content is the selection of content types such as text, sound, video, photos, and illustrations/images. The selection of content categories will affect the content produced including visual aspects, color selection, composition and design aspects. The content calendar aims to manage content publications, select channels and social media accounts used and guide time management and content production. Visual content is a visual aspect that is a differentiator to get the audience's perception that is directly directed to the content owner. The use of hashtags is to make it easier for audiences to know a particular topic of discussion. Hashtags are keywords that algorithmically social media become a marker of searching for content or discussion clusters. Meanwhile, the use of publication covers can be an attraction in content planning activities.

The strategy of spreading religious moderation content on YouTube can be seen from the #moderasiberagama of 7,300 content. If analyzed, the types of accounts that campaign for religious moderation come from institutions, groups, and individuals. YouTube account from institution like Kemenag RI, Humas Kemenag Kota, Kantor Urusan Agama, Pendis Channel, Penyuluh Agama, Islamic Boarding School, Campuses and Schools under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Meanwhile, from group representatives, such as NU Channel, Muslimah Media Center, Convey Indonesia, NutizenTV, NuunmediaTV, Media Belajar Temanggung, Religious moderation campaigns from individual accounts such as Nuraini Azzahra, Bagus Permadi, Awe Channel, Heny Setyaningrum. The average viewer of the YouTube account, which is a trend topic of religious moderation, has been seen by tens of thousands of viewers.

Figure 5. #moderasiagama on YouTube



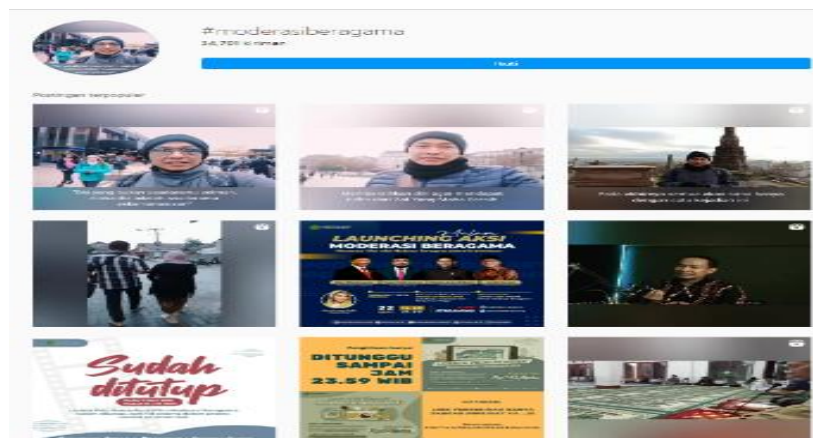
Source: YouTube

The analysis of the content strategy of religious moderation on YouTube is a variation of content from the Institution's account in the form of monologue videos on the basic introduction of religious moderation such as "what is religious moderation", "why

should religious moderation" "the relationship of religious moderation with religious books", "religious moderation perspective of local wisdom". The variety of content created by the group is more about the theme of discussion of religious moderation, the implementation of religious moderation, "the danger of religious moderation" while the variation of content from individuals such as short films of religious moderation, vlogs of religious moderation. The determination of the type of content is more in accordance with the theme of the variation of the content created. The most content calendars in the period 2020-2022. All religious moderation campaigns on YouTube use hashtags #moderasi religious to make it easier to theme and search for videos of religious moderation themes. A YouTube cover used a thumbnail that represents a campaigned theme.

Analysis of content strategies on Instagram as many as 34,700 Instagram posts are variations of content coming from official accounts from institutions and from personal accounts. The type of distribution of content variations on Instagram is more in the form of flyers of religious moderation activities, flyers of socialization of religious moderation, reels of snippets of testimonials from figures about religious moderation. Content types and categories such as single images, carousels, reels, IG Stories. Tentative content calendar according to the needs of content posts. Hashtags used such as #moderasiberagama and similar hashtags that refer to the theme of content and tagging. Berikut ini #moderasiberagama di Instagram.

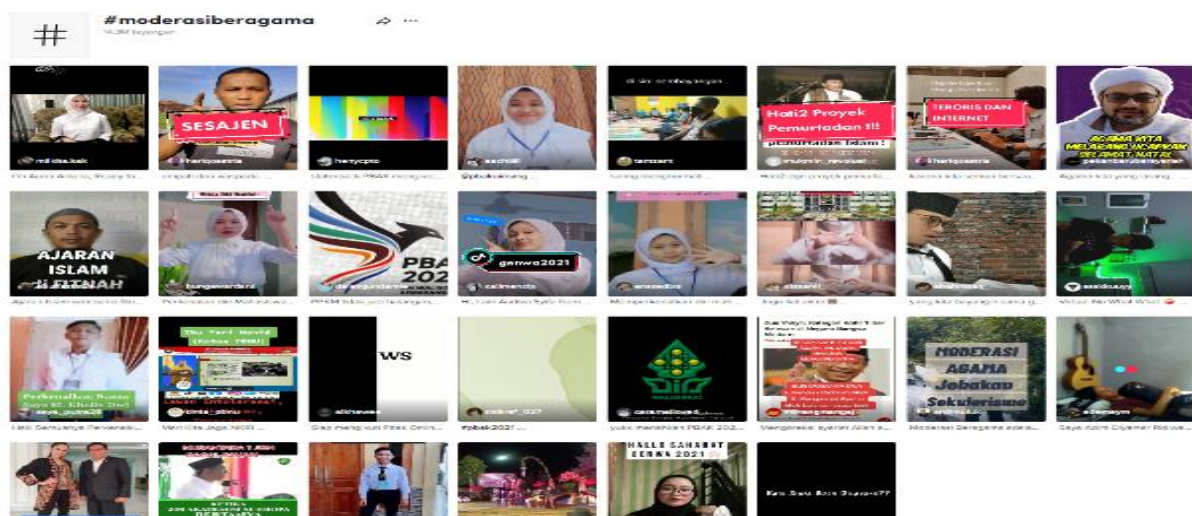
**Figure 6.** #moderasiagama on Instagram



**Source:** Instagram

Religious moderation content on TikTok gets an impression of 14.2 million and this is a high category. Analysis of content strategies on TikTok in content variation categories such as discuss current topics, Hashtag Challenges, konten pendidikan. When viewed from the high level of impressions, this is due to the hashtag challenge #moderasiberagama on activities in schools and campuses. TikTok users are indeed the most from generation Z (1996-2009) so the challenge #moderasiberagama get a high impression. Content visualization on TikTok is in the form of videos of a maximum of 60 seconds with the addition of text filters, backsound and video sharing. Determination of #moderasiberagama Hashtags on TikTok followed by other hashtags according to the theme of the hashtag challenge, discussing current topics, and educational content.

Figure 7. #moderasiagama on TikTok



Religious moderation content strategies on YouTube, Instagram and TikTok have different categories by adjusting the characteristics of social media tools. #moderasiberagama on YouTube has the advantage of presenting a comprehensive video and is not cut in terms of the message conveyed. Therefore, the official YouTube account of the Ministry of Religious Affairs produces a lot of content about socializing the idea of religious moderation. Furthermore, the ranks under the Ministry of Religious Affairs spread across various regions are also actively making campaigns of religious moderation. Religious moderation perspectives from religious groups also contributed to the campaign for religious moderation, the counter-camps also actively created counter-message narratives by choosing #moderasiberagama to voice their perspectives.

Religious moderation content strategies on Instagram have a tendency to highlight text messages in the form of memes and photos of religious moderation ceremonial activities. In addition, there is also content on Instagram about the views of figures about religious moderation, both pro and con. The counter-religious moderation campaign also implemented #moderasiberagama to gain public engagement and impressions. The content strategy on TikTok is more targeted at generation Z who like hashtag challenges. The tendency of content on TikTok is more for the ceremonial agenda of campus and school activities. Religious influencers on TikTok also take part in creating religious moderation content according to their respective perspectives.

### Public Sentiment of Religious Moderation on Social Media

Public sentiment in social media is an opinion mining that involves a system for collecting and examining opinions about content posted in the social media comments column. Sentiment analysis can also be interpreted as a computational study of opinions, emotions, attitudes, views and judgments from a collection of several texts that focuses on identifying, extracting and discovering characteristics in text units as well as classifying textual documents into classes such as negative, positive and neutral sentiments (Liu, 2015). Public sentiment is seen from comments into 10 categories, namely: information, advice, impression, opinion, responses to previous comments,

expression personal feeling, general conversation, site processes, video content description, and non-response categories (Thomas et al., 2021).

Public sentiment about religious moderation on social media was analyzed from the spread of #moderasiberagama on YouTube, Instagram and TikTok by looking at the tendency to comment on posts. On YouTube, content tends to contain positive and neutral sentiments. In terms of the distribution of comments, many are in the form of opinions, expressions of personal feeling, advice and impressions. The tendency of public sentiment on YouTube is also positive and neutral, comments against religious moderation are not very domineering and have not been able to change to negative sentiments. Analysis of public sentiment on Instagram contains comments of information, opinions, responses to previous comments and expressions of personal feeling. The tendency of public sentiment on Instagram is more to neutral and negative. This negative sentiment can be seen from hashtags on Instagram such as #bahayamoderasi #bahayamoderasiberagama #moderasibukansolusi, #moderasimenghapusislamrahmatanlilalamin. Meanwhile, public sentiment on TikTok, whose tendency to comment contains impressions, opinions and video content descriptions, is more of a positive and neutral sentiment. One of the factors is that the content of religious moderation content on TikTok is the Hashtag Challenge and Video Challenge about the ceremonial religious moderation on campus and in schools.

## **CONCLUSION**

Religious moderation campaigns on social media YouTube, Instagram and TikTok are scrutinized from trend analysis, content strategies and public sentiment. Analysis of religious moderation trends on social media has increased exponentially since 2018-2022, the trend of religious moderation explains TikTok as the social media that produces the most content and the most watched by users compared to Instagram and YouTube. TikTok gets a high level of impressions compared to other social media, but in terms of comprehensive content it is amplified by YouTube and Instagram. Religious moderation content strategies on YouTube, Instagram and TikTok have different categories by adjusting the characteristics of social media tools. #moderasiberagama on YouTube has the advantage of presenting a comprehensive video and is not cut in terms of the message conveyed. Religious moderation content strategies on Instagram have a tendency to highlight text messages in the form of memes and photos of religious moderation ceremonial activities. The content strategy on TikTok is more targeted at generation Z who like hashtag challenges. The tendency of content on TikTok is more for the ceremonial agenda of campus and school activities. Religious influencers on TikTok also take part in creating religious moderation content according to their respective perspectives. Public sentiment on social media about religious moderation on YouTube and TikTok is more likely to be positive and neutral, public sentiment on Instagram is more likely to be neutral and negative.

This research on religious moderation campaigns on social media is more analytical with macro analysis to get an overview of campaigns during 2018-2022 both from trends, content strategies, and public sentiment. This macro analysis still has the shortcomings of in-depth analysis, especially in the analysis of public sentiment which should use analytical tools or algorithms. The recommendation for further research is to further examine using micro-analysis of religious moderation campaigns on each social media, and it is also necessary to conduct an analysis of public sentiment to see if this narrative of religious moderation has been accepted by the Indonesian public and religious people.

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