

Discourse on Religious Moderation in the North Sumatra Baznas Media: Critical Linguistic Analysis Based on the Principles of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the discourse of religious moderation constructed in the digital media language of the National Zakat Agency (BAZNAS) of North Sumatra Province, as reflected on its official platform at sumut.baznas.go.id. Using a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, this study examines the official posts of BAZNAS North Sumatra for the 2025–2026 period. The evaluative framework of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah—which includes safeguarding religion (ḥifẓ al-dīn), soul (ḥifẓ al-nafs), intellect (ḥifẓ al-'aql), descendants (ḥifẓ al-nasl), and wealth (ḥifẓ al-māl) is used integratively to evaluate the welfare orientation of the discourse practices found. The analysis reveals six main linguistic mechanisms that shape the architecture of BAZNAS North Sumatra's moderation discourse: (1) the naturalization of ideology through the three-element slogan "Safe Syar'i, Safe Regulation, and Safe NKRI"; (2) the reframing of the meaning of zakat from ritual worship to a socio-economic policy instrument; (3) dual intertextuality that presents the authority of sacred texts and state regulations simultaneously; (4) the formation of a moderate identity through contextual associations with state counter-terrorism institutions and the construction of an implicit enemy; (5) a structured gradation of modalities—high deontic for norms, low epistemic for claims of results—as a reflection of a firm yet humble ideological position. The maqāṣid reading of these five mechanisms shows that BAZNAS North Sumatra's digital discourse simultaneously realizes all five maqāṣid dimensions and mutually supports them, with ḥifẓ al-dīn and ḥifẓ al-nafs as the most dominant dimensions.

Keywords : BAZNAS North Sumatra, Religious Moderation, Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'ah

INTRODUCTION

The development of social media over the past decade has transformed the landscape of religious communication. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, X (Twitter), and YouTube are no longer simply channels for disseminating information but rather arenas for rapidly and massively producing discourse that promotes, negotiates, and competes for ideas (Rizal et al., 2024; Rustandi & Busro, 2020). This transformation affects not only message delivery techniques (audiovisual formats, short captions, hashtags) but also the argumentative structures, rhetorical strategies, and patterns of social interaction surrounding religious messages, with significant consequences for public perceptions of religious moderation. The phenomenon of cyber religion or digital religion is one example of how information and

communication technology is changing the way Indonesians practice their faith (Calista, 2024).

The phenomenon of digital religion demands a study that is not only descriptive but also critical of how language is used to shape religious meanings in cyberspace. This kind of symbolic construction is present not only in informal religious communities or movements but also in formal religious institutions that are increasingly actively utilizing digital platforms as public communication spaces. State religious institutions, for example, face the challenge of translating religious authority and public trust into the logic of social media that demands immediacy, creativity, and speed. This is where the practice of digital religious discourse becomes increasingly complex: it goes beyond mere dissemination and actively shapes the institution's image, redefining its relationship with society and legitimizing its socio-religious functions in the digital era. In this context, the National Zakat Agency (BAZNAS) of North Sumatra Province, through its digital ecosystem, which includes the official website sumut.baznas.go.id, the Instagram account @baznasprovsumut, Facebook @baznasprovsumut, TikTok @baznasprovsumut, and the YouTube channel @baznasprovinsisumaterautar1654, becomes a relevant and representative actor to be studied. In this study, the discussion focused on the official website sumut.baznas.go.id.

BAZNAS North Sumatra is not merely an Islamic philanthropic institution, but rather an official non-structural government agency established by the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Indonesia and mandated to manage zakat, infaq, and alms nationally down to the provincial level, with the vision of becoming a "Trusted, Modern, and Professional Zakat Manager for the Welfare of the Dignified People of North Sumatra." Its digitalization mission is also explicitly stated in the institutional document: "modernization and digitalization of ZIS collection, distribution, and reporting with an accurate and accessible data management system" (sumut.baznas.go.id/baznas-profile). BAZNAS North Sumatra has received several national awards, including Best Utilization Innovation and Best Planning from BAZNAS RI in 2025, and the Partner of the Directorate General of Corrections in 2026. These awards demonstrate that this institution is not merely a passive transmitter of central policies but rather an actor that creatively and innovatively constructs a moderate Islamic narrative in the digital space, with an institutional capacity recognized nationally. The religious moderation agenda has become a national priority since the launch of the related program in 2019. The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs is recognized as the leading sector in implementing the Strengthening Religious Moderation program, and religious moderation was subsequently designated as a strategic program in the 2020–2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) (Kemenag RI, 2019; Mukhibat et al., 2023). This seriousness is very clear in the formulation of Religious Moderation as a strategic program of the 2020–2024 RPJM, as set out in the Attachment to Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 18 of 2020.

Religious moderation in Indonesia is positioned as a strategy to maintain social cohesion, prevent polarization, and safeguard national values amid religious and ethnic plurality. However, in practice, the enforcement and dissemination of moderation narratives are often non-linear: official narratives intersect with decentralized public communication practices on social media, influenced by diverse actors (religious figures, influencers, mass organizations,

and ordinary users), and susceptible to rhetorical manipulation that can obscure or even diminish the substance of moderation itself. Social media algorithms that prioritize viral and provocative content, along with user anonymity, can accelerate the spread of hate speech and exacerbate polarization and radicalization (Baroroh, 2024).

Policy statements and program initiatives do not always align with how moderation is described in social media users' language. Yet, in the current digital era, promoting and actualizing religious moderation within the Indonesian context is absolutely essential (Taufiq, 2021). One strategic effort to achieve this is understanding how moderate religious discourse is constructed, disseminated, and negotiated through language in the digital space.

Theoretically, the study of religious discourse typically encompasses two broad areas: (1) normative-theological studies that examine religious concepts, interpretations, and practices; and (2) socio-communicative studies that examine how discourse is disseminated in society. In this research, I combine critical linguistic analysis (Critical Discourse Analysis—CDA) of social media discourse with an Islamic normative framework. CDA presents itself as an interdisciplinary approach that examines how language is used to shape, maintain, or challenge social and political domination, with key figures such as Norman Fairclough, Teun A. van Dijk, and Ruth Wodak. Furthermore, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* offers a framework of five principles for preserving religion, intellect, life, lineage, and wealth that can serve as a guide for evaluating the use of digital space to maximize benefits and ward off various harms (Sabariah, 2021). The integration of CDA and *maqāṣid* positions language as a social practice that can be evaluated not only from an ideological or power perspective, but also from a moral-theological perspective. *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, as the ultimate value of Islamic legal provisions that uphold the protection of personal and public interests, is expected to respond to the various negative impacts of social media (Nur, 2020). Practically, this integration opens up analytical space to assess whether the discourse practices constructed on social media support the principles of safeguarding religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), reason (*ḥifẓ al-‘aql*), life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), descendants (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*) or, conversely, pose a threat to these five goals.

From a methodological perspective, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides conceptual tools to explain how language reproduces or challenges power relations and ideologies in society, which can be applied at the microstructural, mesostructural, and macrostructural levels (Martalia, 2024), while the study of *Maqāṣid* provides a normative benchmark for assessing the welfare orientation of a discourse. The combined approach of CDA with other frameworks allows for a dual reading: reading language as a social practice connected to social structures and power, while simultaneously evaluating the normative implications of that language practice.

Social media offers enormous potential for *da'wah* (Islamic outreach), but it also requires thoughtful strategies to overcome challenges and maximize its positive impact in strengthening religious communication and spirituality in the digital age (Rahmah, 2024). This article examines how linguistic strategies (lexical and metaphorical choices) are used to represent religious moderation on social media. The analysis focuses not only on message content but also on the form, persuasive techniques, and interactional context that shape public reception.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach, grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), to examine the construction of religious moderation discourse in social media language, with a normative evaluation based on the principles of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*. The research data, in the form of posts on sumut.baznas.go.id that narrate religious moderation, were collected through digital documentation techniques using thematic keyword searches for religious moderation, moderate Islam, religious tolerance, and *wasatiyyah* in the period 2025–2026.

Data analysis was conducted using Fairclough's three-dimensional model. Fairclough, in his analysis by Haryatmoko (2017), offers a discourse model containing three dimensions: text, discursive practice, and social practice. Each dimension has its own domain, process, and analytical model, and all three are dialectically related. Specifically, the text dimension encompasses all linguistic forms, from vocabulary, grammar, syntax, to metaphorical and rhetorical structures; the discursive practice dimension encompasses all forms of text production and consumption, focusing on how authors appropriate existing discourses and genres; while the social practice dimension relates to contexts beyond the text. These three dimensions are operationally applied through text analysis (lexical choice, metaphor, syntactic structure, and argumentative strategies), discursive practice analysis (the production, distribution, and legitimacy of discourse), and social practice analysis (the relationship of discourse to the context of religious moderation policies and social dynamics). The results of the linguistic analysis are then evaluated using the principles of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, which in this study function not merely as a list of normative categories but as an evaluative standard to assess the extent to which the discourse constructed by BAZNAS North Sumatra contributes to the protection and advancement of substantive Islamic values. In other words, CDA is used to uncover how discourse works linguistically and socially, while *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* is used to assess whether the discourse aligns with the fundamental objectives of sharia. *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* provides five main evaluative dimensions that can be applied in assessing digital practices: protection of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), protection of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), protection of reason (*ḥifẓ al-‘aql*), protection of descendants (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and protection of property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*) (Sanusi, 2025).

To ensure the validity and reliability of the analysis results, this study implemented several procedures to assess data validity. First, source triangulation was conducted by comparing the findings from the website text analysis with content on other BAZNAS North Sumatra social media platforms to verify the consistency of the constructed discourse. Second, to ensure the consistency and objectivity of the data categorization, verification was conducted through analytical discussions with colleagues competent in discourse studies and Islamic studies to minimize the interpretive bias of a single researcher.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data in this study were selected through a criteria-based purposive sampling procedure, not randomly or solely based on quantitative representation. The data were filtered using four criteria: (1) containing linguistic constructions that explicitly or implicitly refer to the values of moderation, tolerance, or *wasatiyyah*; (2) having sufficient discourse density to be analyzed using Fairclough's three dimensions; (3) representing a variety of normative

functions—directive, hope, social-fact, and legitimacy; and (4) encompassing at least three of the five dimensions of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah. The six data presented (D01, D03, D05, D16, D19, D28) meet all these criteria and, together, form a representative spectrum of the discourse strategies used by BAZNAS North Sumatra.

Table 1. Data Analysis

Code	Data Sentence	Normative Function	Maqāṣid	Dimension of Moderation
D01	<i>"The distribution of BAZNAS funds must be guided by 3 SAFE principles: Sharia Safe, Regulatory Safe, and NKRI Safe, to build peace and strengthen Islamic values that are rahmatan lil 'alamin."</i>	Absolute obligation— non-negotiable; sets minimum standards of compliance	Ḥifẓ al-dīn	Linguistically, the choice of deontic modality must place this discourse within a regime of absolute, non-negotiable obligations. Critically, the tripartite sequence: sharia → regulation → NKRI is not neutral. This sequence implicitly asserts that Islamic legitimacy precedes state legitimacy, yet the two are synthesized in a single, tensionless formula. This is a strategy of ideological naturalization—the potential conflict between religious and state authority is reduced to three seemingly self-consistent, safe words. Within the Maqāṣid framework, this formula protects the ḥifẓ al-dīn, but it is important to note that religious protection here is operationalized through institutional obedience, not strengthening the theological consciousness of the community—a significant shift from the substantive function of the maqāṣid to a procedural one.
D03	<i>"We hope that the synergy between BAZNAS, BNPT, and Densus 88 will be a</i>	Open expectations— humble, non-deterministic; collaborative	Ḥifẓ al-nasl	Epistemic modality rhetorically positions BAZNAS as a humble actor who does not dictate outcomes. However, what is

	<p><i>concrete step in creating a peaceful, inclusive, and socially just society."</i></p>			<p>overlooked on the surface is a hidden ideological tension: the collaboration of zakat institutions with the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) and Densus 88—the state's counterterrorism apparatus—indirectly places the discourse of moderation within a security framework (securitization of religion). Religious moderation is no longer solely a theological matter, but rather an instrument of social order monitored by the state. From a CDA perspective, this discursive practice has the potential to narrow the space for religious expression: "moderate" is that which is compatible with national security interests. The intended dimension of ḥifẓ al-naṣl—namely, the construction of a peaceful and inclusive generation—becomes problematic if its formation is managed through the logic of surveillance, not empowerment.</p>
D05	<p><i>"This activity, which carries the national theme 'Zakat Strengthens Indonesia,' is a momentum for togetherness and a tangible manifestation of social concern."</i></p>	<p>A social-fact statement that does not need to be proven — zakat is claimed to have been proven to strengthen the nation</p>	<p>Ḥifẓ al-māl + Ḥifẓ al-naṣl</p>	<p>The social-fact construction in this data works through the presupposition: zakat has been proven to strengthen Indonesia, not being attempted to strengthen it. This is a technique of reification—a normative claim presented as a settled reality. More ideologically significant is the way this data unites two historically conflicting identities: Islam and Indonesianness. The theme</p>

				<p>"Zakat Strengthens Indonesia" is not simply a mobilization slogan, but rather an ontological statement that being a devout Muslim is being a good citizen. This is an important achievement of the discourse of moderation, but it also requires criticism: is this reconciliation of identities substantive or merely integrative rhetoric that conceals the ongoing inequality in zakat distribution?</p>
D16	<p><i>"Zakat is not only intended to meet short-term needs, but must also be directed as an instrument for sustainable economic empowerment."</i></p>	<p>Normative-programmatic obligations — institutional directives, not fatwas; opening up space for implementation</p>	Ḥifẓ al-māl	<p>Contrastive structures are not only... but also linguistic markers that programmatically deconstruct conventional understandings of zakat. This is not simply an expansion of meaning, but rather an epistemological reorientation: from zakat as a ritual obligation oriented toward recipients (mustahiq) to zakat as a system-oriented economic policy. Within the framework of CDA, this reflects the penetration of developmentalism discourse into the religious domain. While from the perspective of ḥifẓ al-māl, this transformation is indeed relevant and progressive—but the critical question that must be asked is: who has the authority to define "sustainable"? And does this productive orientation not have the potential to exclude mustahiq who are indeed only able to receive consumptive assistance?</p>
D19	<p><i>"Aid not only focuses on emergency needs,</i></p>	<p>Redefining humanitarian action</p>	Ḥifẓ al-nafs	<p>The closing sentence of this datum—humanitarian concern</p>

	<p><i>but also addresses health, hygiene, and psychological recovery. This is a form of humanitarian concern rooted in religious values."</i></p>	<p>as a product of religion — not a borrowing from secular traditions</p>		<p>rooted in religious values— performs a subtle yet powerful ideological function: it claims that modern humanitarian practices (including psychological healing, a concept from the Western scientific tradition) actually originate from Islam. This is a discursive appropriation strategy that positions Islam as the source, not the adopter, of universal values. In the context of religious moderation, this strategy is effective in presenting Islam as a comprehensive religion compatible with modernity. Critically, however, appropriation without adequate theological elaboration risks producing shallow rhetorical syncretism. The expansion of ḥifẓ al-nafs to the psychological dimension is a commendable achievement, but it requires a more explicit Islamic argumentation to avoid appearing as merely a pragmatic adjustment.</p>
D28	<p><i>"The synergy between BAZNAS RI and BAZNAS North Sumatra Province is concrete evidence of the state's presence through zakat management to help restore places of worship."</i></p>	<p>Mutual legitimacy claims: the state is legitimized through zakat; zakat is legitimized through the state</p>	<p>Ḥifẓ al-dīn + Ḥifẓ al-nafs</p>	<p>This datum represents the culmination of BAZNAS North Sumatra's moderation discourse: the state exists through religion, not separate from or above religion. The construction of concrete evidence serves as a claim of mutual legitimacy that works both ways—the state gains moral legitimacy through the instrument of zakat, while zakat gains institutional legitimacy</p>

				<p>through state authority. Within Fairclough's framework of social practice, this reflects a state of power relations in which the boundaries between religious and state authority are deliberately blurred for the benefit of both parties. Normatively, this synthesis reflects the ideal of moderation that positions religion and the state as partners—not rivals. However, a critical question remains: in this synergy, who truly dominates the agenda? Does BAZNAS define moderation, or is moderation defined by the state and then implemented by BAZNAS?</p>
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Reading the six data points sequentially through the lens of modality reveals a structured, non-random ideological architecture. D01 opens with the highest deontic modality—"must be guided"—which places adherence to the "3 Safes" as an absolute obligation with no room for negotiation. This is the foundational layer of the entire discourse edifice: norms are established with complete firmness. D03 then moves to the opposite end of the spectrum—the lower epistemic modality "we hope"—which expresses collaboration and humility. The dramatic shift from "must" (D01) to "hope" (D03) is not an inconsistency; it is a deliberate rhetorical strategy: firm on principle, humble in claims of results.

D05 and D28 use declarative modalities—"becoming momentum" and "becoming real evidence"—without any explicit modality markers. In Haryatmoko's (2017) analysis of modality, the absence of modality markers is precisely the ultimate expression of self-confidence: when something is stated without "maybe," "seems," or "should," it is constructed as a fact that does not need to be proven. Zakat has become momentum—not hoped for or expected to be. The state has become present through zakat—not by trying to be present or by being expected to be present. Be present. This is the pinnacle of legitimacy strategy: reality is constructed, not reported.

D16, with its moderate deontic modality, "must be directed," straddles two poles: softer than "must" in D01, but still prescriptive. This difference in gradation reflects a difference in domain: D01 speaks of fundamental principles (uncompromised), while D16 speaks of policy direction (adaptable in implementation). This is a pattern known in the ushul fiqh tradition as the distinction between qatī (certain, absolute) and zannī (speculative, negotiable) — and BAZNAS North Sumatra, whether consciously or not, replicates this ushul fiqh logic in its linguistic modal architecture.

D19 uses the normative declarative construction "this is the form," which constitutes a unilateral authoritative definition: no markers of doubt, no invitation to debate. The act of providing psychological assistance is defined—once and for all, in this text—as "humanitarian care rooted in religio. Within van Dijk's framework, as analyzed by Raheem (2021), this is the most ambitious operation of semantic macro-strategy: defining reality rather than simply describing it. scribing it.

When read as a whole, the modality gradient in these six data forms a pattern: high deontic → low epistemic → declarative → medium deontic → normative declarative → strong declarative. This pattern is not a random sequence—it is a rhetorical journey from norm-setting (D01) through expressions of collaboration (D03), claims of achievement (D05), policy direction (D16), epistemological synthesis (D19), and finally, the culmination: claims of mutual legitimacy between religion and state (D28). This is a complete and systematic architecture of moderation discourse.

Slogans, Associations, and CDA analysis of the six data sets reveal three main strategies operating at different levels but supporting each other hierarchically. The first strategy, naturalization through slogans, operates most strongly in D01 and D05. The slogans "3 Aman" and "Zakat Memperkuat Indonesia" are not simply institutional marketing taglines; they are ideological formulas designed to be repeated, memorized, and internalized until they appear as truths that predate language itself. The tripartition of "Aman Syar'i, Aman Regulasi, Aman NKRI" creates a memorable prosodic rhythm: three elements of equal length, separated by commas with equal pauses. This prosody is no accident: it is a cognitive design to maximize internalization, exactly as political slogans have worked in the history of public rhetoric.

The second strategy is contextual association, which operates most explicitly in D03. Placing BAZNAS alongside BNPT and Densus 88 is a powerful discursive act: it creates an institutional constellation in which religious and security institutions are seen as natural partners, rather than potentially conflicting entities. This implicitly responds to a narrative frequently present in Indonesian public discourse—that religious and security institutions are in a strained relationship. D03 rejects this narrative not through direct rebuttal, but through performative means: by engaging in collaboration, it proves that collaboration is possible and natural. In Austin's terminology, as discussed by Allington (2021), this is a performative speech act, a sentence that not only describes. The third strategy is the religion-state synthesis, which culminates in D28 and is reinforced by D30 (in the broader corpus). The phrase "clear evidence of the state's presence through zakat management" is logically reversible: if the state is present through zakat, then zakat is the state's means of presence. This places BAZNAS—as the zakat manager—in a highly strategic position: it is not simply a philanthropic institution, but rather a state apparatus that uses religious language and practices. This position, within Gramsci's framework, as Siswati (2017) analyzes hegemony, allows the state to exercise its power through consent rather than coercion: society accepts the state's presence because it appears in a familiar and sacred guise. Evaluative

Framework: Holistic Moderation

The maqāṣid reading of these six data reveals something beyond mere categorization; it shows that the discourse of BAZNAS North Sumatra as a whole is a holistic and modern embodiment of maqāṣid, not a part. D01 realizes ḥifẓ al-dīn in its most active and contemporary dimension: safeguarding religion from extreme interpretations is no longer done through fatwas or textual approaches alone, but through the construction of linguistic norms embedded in slogans easily disseminated through the media. Silly disseminated in the media. In modern uṣhul fiqh terms, a fiqh rule modernized into a media slogan; it maintains the normative function of fiqh rules (providing behavioral guidance) but in a format compatible with the digital communication ecosystem.

D03 embodies the most expansive form of ḥifẓ al-nasl in this corpus: it speaks not of the protection of offspring in the narrow biological-familial sense, but rather of the protection of the social order (nasl as nasab, social genealogy) on a national scale. A “peaceful, inclusive, and socially just” society is the linguistic expression of a healthy nasl, a community that is sustained not only biologically but also socially, culturally, and politically. This semantic expansion of ḥifẓ al-nasl reflects what Al-Qaradawi and contemporary maqāṣid reformers call maqāṣid al-ḥadārah—the safeguarding of civilization that goes beyond its traditional, literal meaning (Auda, 2021).

D16 embodies ḥifẓ al-māl in the most conceptually innovative way: it speaks not only of safeguarding wealth (the protective dimension of maqāṣid), but of leveraging wealth to generate more wealth for the needy. This is an expression of what Ibn ‘Ashūr, cited by Citaningati (2024), in contemporary maqāṣid theory calls ḥifẓ al-māl al-wujūdī (the safeguarding of maqāṣid through cThe productive zakat envisioned by D16 is not simply a modernization of philanthropy—it is the implementation of maqāṣid that responds to contemporary conditions in which structural poverty cannot be addressed solely through consumptive distribution. roD19 embodies the ḥifẓ al-nafs in its broadest and most relevant sense in the post-disaster context: it goes beyond protecting the soul from the threat of physical death and extends to protecting mental health. lm of protecting mental health. The phrase "psychological recovery" in the context of religious discourse is an epistemological breakthrough: it recognizes that psychological trauma is a form of threat to the nafs that is as serious as a physical threat. This aligns with recent developments in contemporary maqāṣid studies that include mental health (al-ṣiḥḥah al-nafsiyyah) as an integral part of the comprehensive ḥifẓ al-nafs, an interpretation not found in the classical formulations of al-Ghazālī or al-Āmidī.

D28 simultaneously realizes the ḥifẓ al-dīn and ḥifẓ al-nafs in the most compact synthesis: the restoration of houses of worship is the restoration of the space of ḥifẓ al-dīn (where religion is practiced), while the presence of the state is the guarantee of ḥifẓ al-nafs (institutional protection for vulnerable citizens). Most significant theologically is the implication that the state has an active responsibility (collective-institutional farḍ kifāyah) to safeguard both of these maqāṣid—and zakat is the instrument through which this is an argument for the state as the implementer of the maqāṣid, a position that, in the history of classical Islamic thought, is associated with the concept of al-siyāsah al-shar’iyyah (politics

based on sharia) and, in the contemporary Indonesian context, finds expression in the institution of BAZNAS as an official state body. BAZNAS is an official state body, *as a*

Linguistic Practice

Reading the three dimensions of CDA analysis, modality, and maqāṣid together in a single integrated table yields sharper findings than simply summing up the three perspectives. This synthesis of findings can be formulated as follows: the discourse of religious moderation in the North Sumatra BAZNAS media does not simply represent or promote moderation; it is moderation itself in its linguistic form.

Religious moderation in Indonesian public discourse is often understood as a theological position (neither extreme left nor right), a political position (supporting Pancasila and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia), or a practical position (tolerant of difference). All of these positions are valid, but they are propositional and moderate. What this analysis uncovers is something different and more fundamental: moderation as a mode of speaking, as a linguistic architecture manifested in the simultaneous choice of modalities, CDA strategies, and maqāṣid orientations. It contains a message of moderation (propositional content: follow the 3 Aman); it also embodies moderation in the way it is constructed by balancing normative assertiveness (high deontic) with a merciful orientation (rahmatan lil 'alamin), and by synthesizing three different domains of power without dominating one of them. D03 not only calls for an inclusive society; it is inclusive in the way it formulates hope with a humble modality (hope), without claiming a monopoly on truth, open to collaboration with parties D28 not only claims that the state is present through zakat; it embodies that presence in the text itself by integrating the language of religion and the language of the state into a single sentence that flows without tension. It flows without tension.

This finding has important methodological implications for this research: critical linguistic analysis based on maqāṣid is not only a tool for reading the discourse of moderation from the outside, but also a tool for demonstrating that moderation itself is a linguistic practice, existing and operating within language, not just about language. And this, ultimately, is what makes the object of this study—the media discourse of BAZNAS North Sumatra—academically relevant, methodologically original, and theologically and socially meaningful.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the discourse of religious moderation in social media language does not merely function as a means of conveying normative values but as a discursive practice that shapes meaning, identity, and symbolic boundaries in digital religion. Through a Critical Linguistic Analysis grounded in the principles of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, this study found that religious moderation is constructed through evaluative, dichotomous, and persuasive linguistic strategies that position moderation as a superior moral value, while other positions are implicitly represented as threats to social harmony. These strategies are evident in lexical choices, spatial metaphors, and normative sentence structures that function as mechanisms of moral legitimacy.

CDA analysis of these six data reveals that the discourse of religious moderation in the North Sumatra BAZNAS media operates through five hierarchical and complementary linguistic

mechanisms: the naturalization of ideology through slogans (D01), the formation of identity through contextual associations and implicit enemies (D03), the nationalization of zakat through nominalization and slogans (D05), the modernization of the meaning of zakat through reframing and instrumental metaphors (D16), the hybridity of religion-science discourse (D19), and the culmination of religion-state synthesis through claims of reciprocal legitimacy (D28). These five mechanisms form a coherent architecture of moderation discourse: from the most normative (D01) to the most ontological (D28), from defining what should be done to defining who does it and within what framework of reality. This entire discourse, when read through the framework of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, proves that the religious moderation constructed by BAZNAS North Sumatra is not a compromising moderation, but rather an integrative moderation: it does not sacrifice the religious dimension for the sake of the state dimension, or vice versa, but rather builds a synthesis in which both strengthen each other in a However, this study has several limitations that need to be acknowledged and used as a basis for further research. First, the data corpus, limited to six data points from a single platform (website), produces a picture that does not fully represent the entire digital ecosystem of BAZNAS North Sumatra. Future research should expand the scope of data across platforms—Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube—to examine whether the same discourse mechanisms are replicated, adapted, or contested across media with distinct algorithmic logics and audience characteristics. Second, this analysis is synchronic and unable to capture diachronic discourse shifts; longitudinal studies comparing the construction of religious moderation before and after specific socio-political events would provide a more dynamic understanding of how discourse evolves in response to context. Third, this study analyzes only the production side of discourse, without incorporating audience reception; further studies integrating comment analysis, user interviews, or digital ethnography would complement our understanding of how moderation discourse is received, negotiated, or rejected by the public. By addressing these three limitations, the study of digital religious discourse in Indonesia can shift from a textual-analytical to a more comprehensive, participatory, and transformative perspective.

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