
Reception of Tolerance Verses Across Academic Habitus: PTKI Students and Digital Polarization

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Abstract

Inter-sectarian debates on social media have triggered sharp internal polarization among Muslims. While previous Living Qur'an studies overlook institutional academic habitus in verse reception, this research explores how Islamic Studies master's students from five PTKIs; UIN Jakarta, PTIQ Jakarta, UIN Yogyakarta, UIN Banjarmasin, and UNIDA Gontor reproduce tolerance verses responding to digital internal conflicts. Employing a qualitative Living Qur'an approach, along with analyses of the sociology of knowledge and habitus, this study involved 22 purposively selected informants. The study reveals three primary findings. First, students' reception of tolerance verses is non-monolithic, spanning six intersecting paradigms that demonstrate the text's flexibility when engaging with readers' distinct habitus. Second, digital responses are polarized between disengagement strategies, which function as mechanisms of academic distinction, and a range of active strategies. Third, students' reception is constructed by an interlocking web of academic habitus, undergraduate background, organizational activism, cross-disciplinary interactions, fragmented authority of reference, and digital literacy. This study demonstrates that religious moderation in the digital sphere is profoundly shaped by students' academic habitus, institutional ecosystems, and critical digital literacy.

Keywords: *academic habitus, internal polarization, living qur'an, religious moderation, social media, tolerance verses.*

Introduction

The dynamics of polarization on social media indicate that social tensions are driven not only by clashes between large groups but also by intensifying ideological differences in the digital public sphere. Recent research demonstrates that exposure to opposing views on social media exacerbates political polarization rather than mitigating it (Bail et al., 2018a, pp. 9216–9221). Tufekci observes that social media does not simply reflect existing polarization, but actively produces it through a logic of virality that privileges confrontational content (Brown, 2021, pp. xiv–xv).

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Within Indonesia's religious context, this phenomenon of digital polarization exhibits distinct characteristics. Research by Fauzan et al. (2024) indicates that digital platforms frequently function as echo chambers that trigger selective exposure, wherein individuals tend to interact only with information that reinforces their beliefs while disregarding differing perspectives (Fauzan et al., 2024). This polarization is further intensified by technological capabilities in personalizing information, thereby transforming social media discourse into debate and intolerance toward others. This situation reflects a paradox: while many religious traditions, including Islam, promote ethical ideals of coexistence and social harmony, the contestation between religious activism and political interests often distorts these values into triggers for conflict and segregation (Hasan, 2008, pp. 247–274).

Living Qur'an studies have undergone significant development over the past decade. Ahmad Rafiq, in his article "The Living Qur'an: Its Text and Practice in the Function of the Scripture," asserts that the Qur'an does not merely exist as a static text, but dynamically interacts with Muslim communities through practices, discourses, and the transformation of meaning in everyday life (Rafiq, 2021).

The digital dimension of this phenomenon has also gained increasing attention; recent research demonstrates how platform-based hermeneutics, particularly on YouTube and social media, have altered the ways in which Qur'anic meaning is constructed and disseminated (Ubaidillah & Widiastutik, 2025a). On a national scale, prior research by Solahudin and Fakhruroji (Solahudin & Fakhruroji, 2020) observes that social media has become a productive space for campaigning tolerance values that align with cultural norms and are media-friendly; through a process of negotiation between traditional (offline) authority and digital (online) platforms, religious messages can be recontextualized to reach a broader audience. Within the international academic sphere, studies on religious practices in digital spaces have developed rapidly through the *digital religion* approach. Campbell demonstrates that digital media serve not merely as distribution channels for religious content, but as active arenas where ritual practices, religious identity, and religious authority are renegotiated (Heidi. Campbell & Cheong, 2024). This aligns with the so-called transformation of religious authority from textual to digital transmission, which, according to Raya has reshaped the contemporary Islamic religious landscape, including in Indonesia (Raya, 2025).

Nevertheless, existing Living Qur'an studies tend to focus on ritual practices, symbolic reception, or media distribution, while overlooking how the institutional academic habitus, in the Bourdieusian sense, shapes interpretative responses to intra-Muslim polarization in the digital sphere. No study has systematically compared how different campus epistemic ecosystems shape variations in the interpretation of sacred texts in the context of digital sectarianism. This gap is critical because, as Castells analyzes, the network society shapes new power relations that asymmetrically redistribute religious authority and meaning-framing capabilities (Castells & Castells, 2000, pp. 7–9).

Amidst this situation, religious dynamics underscore the need to examine Islamic identity not merely as a rigid theological doctrine, but also empirically through a living Qur'an approach. This approach highlights how Islamic values are animated in the daily

reality of society through the processes of externalization, objectification, and internalization (Rusyadi et al., 2025). Consequently, the reception of tolerance verses is heavily influenced by readers' social experiences, education, and digital exposure, ultimately opening spaces for dialogue and a more inclusive understanding.

Students of Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) occupy an analytically strategic position. They integrate structured Islamic scientific competence with personal religious experiences that unfold alongside the intensity of digital media usage. Unlike other groups, PTKI students stand at the intersection of formal scholarly traditions and a horizontal digital culture, a position that renders them both agents and objects in the ongoing process of interpretive polarization.

To capture the complexity of this phenomenon comprehensively, this study draws subjects from five distinct academic habitus: UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta (representing a heterogeneous metropolitan discourse), PTIQ Jakarta (representing a textual-Qur'anic tradition), UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta (representing a progressive-discursive climate), UIN Antasari Banjarmasin (representing a traditionalist culture centered on local *ulama* authority), and UNIDA Gontor (representing the independent values of modern Islamic boarding schools/ *pesantren*). This epistemic and geographical diversity creates an ideal space for examining how various scholarly ecosystems shape the understanding of sacred texts amid polarization.

This phenomenon occurs not only in the general public sphere but also in Islamic higher education environments. Recent research indicates that the new religious authority emerging from digital platforms, which Muis terms as algorithmic religious authority, has significantly attracted the interest of Indonesian Muslim students through the utilization of social media algorithms, at times competing with traditional religious authority rooted in *pesantren* and local *ulama* (Muis et al., 2023). Furthermore, van Dijck, Poell, and de Waal assert that digital platforms are not neutral distribution channels; rather, they are governed by algorithms and architectures that actively shape user behavior. However, this insight has yet to be widely integrated into studies of Qur'anic reception (Keskin, 2018).

In line with these findings, Askar et al. (2025), in their study on students at two Indonesian Islamic universities, discovered that new sources of Islamic knowledge—such as Islamic organization websites, *ulama* webpages, social media, and even internet memes have become legitimate religious authorities, standing on par with or even replacing traditional authority (Askar et al., 2025). These findings demonstrate that students' academic habitus is shaped not only by formal education but also by the digital ecosystem they actively consume.

This study integrates two primary frameworks. First, the Living Qur'an approach highlights how Qur'anic values are animated in everyday reality. Second, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus conceptualizes individuals' interpretative dispositions as products of the social fields in which they are educated—a framework that has proven productive in the analysis of religious and educational practices (Bourdieu & Bourdieu, 2008a, pp. 53–68).

The concept of internal polarization in this study refers specifically to the interpretative tensions among Muslim groups operating under a single umbrella of

Indonesian Islamic identity, yet possessing distinct theological orientations and religious practices. Operationally, this polarization encompasses at least three intersecting fracture lines. First, between traditionalist-Nahdliyyin groups that emphasize the authority of *ulama* and madhhab (school of thought) jurisprudence, and Salafi-reformist groups that emphasize textual purification (Slama, 2017, pp. 94–106). Second, between a progressive-hermeneutical orientation that promotes contextual reinterpretation and a literalist-conservative orientation. Third, between conventional (offline) *ulama* authority and digital da'wah influencer networks that construct authority based on followership and content virality (Hasan, 2002, pp. 343–376). These three fracture lines mutually reinforce one another through the logic of social media algorithms, transforming the digital sphere into the primary arena for the contestation of contemporary Indonesian Islamic identity.

This research is significant because studies of tolerance have predominantly operated at the normative level without examining how tolerance verses are received by readers embedded in different academic ecosystems. From an academic standpoint, a substantial research gap exists: prior Living Qur'an studies have largely overlooked the comparative dimension of how institutional habitus or academic culture influences the meaning-making of texts in digital space. The distinctiveness of this research lies in: (1) a comparative multi-site approach that maps the reception of tolerance verses across five PTKI ecosystems in Indonesia; (2) the integration of Pierre Bourdieu's habitus theory to analyze how academic backgrounds dictate students' strategies in the digital arena; and (3) a research context specifically focused on intra-religious polarization, thereby extending Living Qur'an scholarship into the domain of communal conflict management within the Muslim community.

Based on the phenomenon described above, this study seeks to address several key questions. First, how do students at different PTKIs interpret Qur'anic verses on tolerance and unity? Second, what forms of strategy and reception do they adopt when those verses are employed to respond to sectarian debates on social media? Third, to what extent does academic habitus encompassing campus institutional culture, academic discipline, and referential authority shape the variations in such reception?

In accordance with these research questions, this study aims to describe cross-habitus reception patterns among PTKI students toward tolerance verses and to analyze their strategies for navigating polarization in digital spaces. Theoretically, this research extends the application of hermeneutic reception approaches to the context of intra-religious polarization. Furthermore, it introduces a new perspective on how sacred texts are negotiated by academically trained readers from diverse campus cultural backgrounds in order to reduce sectarian disputes, thereby enriching the discourse on religious moderation in Indonesia.

Research Method

This study employs an interpretive qualitative approach with a multi-site case study design. The Living Qur'an approach is employed to analyze students' forms of reception of tolerance verses, while Karl Mannheim's Sociology of Knowledge perspective is used to explain the correlation between knowledge construction and the informants' social

backgrounds. Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus is applied to analyze academic influences on students' frameworks of thought, whereas Peter Connolly's perspective on pluralism helps explain identity formation and responses to diversity in digital spaces.

The research subjects consist of 22 master's students from five Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI), namely UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, PTIQ Jakarta, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, and University of Darussalam Gontor. The informants were selected through a purposive sampling technique based on the following criteria: (1) representing distinct academic habitus typologies; (2) originating from diverse Islamic academic disciplines; (3) actively utilizing social media; and (4) possessing experience in interacting with inter-group polarization issues. The number of informants was determined based on the principle of theoretical saturation, which occurs when additional interviews no longer yield new themes or information relevant to the research focus (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Primary data were obtained through asynchronous digital in-depth interviews via WhatsApp, voice notes, and text messages, as well as open-ended narrative questionnaires administered via Google Forms. Interviews were conducted in 1–3 sessions per informant, with an average session duration of 30–60 minutes. This method allows for a deep, focused exploration of the informants' subjective views while providing them with the flexibility to respond reflectively amid their academic activities. All interview results were transcribed verbatim and reconfirmed with the informants through a member checking process to ensure the accuracy of meaning and interpretation. Secondary data were gathered through a literature review of scholarly works concerning the *Living Qur'an*, habitus, tolerance, and digital polarization.

This study applies the ethical principles of qualitative research. All informants provided informed consent prior to participation. Informants' identities were pseudonymized using codes R1–R22 to maintain data anonymity and confidentiality. Participation was voluntary and could be discontinued at any time at the informant's discretion. All digital data was utilized solely for academic purposes.

Data analysis was conducted iteratively, using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The first stage involved open coding to identify units of meaning from the interview transcripts. The second stage consisted of thematic categorization, grouping codes with similar semantics into reception themes. The third stage was a cross-site comparative analysis of reception patterns across distinct PTKI academic habituses. The coding process was performed manually. Data trustworthiness was maintained through source triangulation, member checking, and researcher reflexivity to minimize interpretive bias. The detailed profiles of the informants involved in this study can be observed in Tables 1 and 2 below:

Table 1 Demographic and Academic Profile of Informants

No	Code	Undergraduate Institution	Concentration	Organizational Background	Social Interaction Patterns
A. UIN Jakarta					
1	R1	UIN Jakarta	Arabic Lang. & Literature	PMII (Intra & Extra)	Inter-departmental
2	R2	UIN Jakarta	Hadith Studies	External & Literacy Comm.	Inter-departmental
3	R3	Hasanuddin Univ.	Islamic Education	LDK, PMII, HMJ	Inter-departmental
4	R4	UIN Kediri	Islamic Thought	PMII (Intra & Extra)	Inter-departmental
5	R5	UIN Jakarta	Tafsir Studies	Tahfiz Organization	Inter-departmental
6	R6	Ma'had Aly H.A.	Hadith Studies	PMII & BEM PTNU	Intra-departmental
7	R7	Al-Azhar Cairo	Islamic Law	Active in Organizations	Inter-departmental
8	R8	UIN Madura	Tafsir Studies	<i>pesantren</i> Board	Intra-departmental
9	R9	UIN Jakarta	Sharia Economics	Student Cooperative	Intra-departmental
10	R10	UIN Jakarta	Islamic Education	Fatayat NU	Intra-departmental
B. PTIQ Jakarta					
11	R11	UIN Jakarta	Qur'anic Science & Tafsir	<i>pesantren</i> Board	Inter-departmental
12	R12	UNSIQ Wonosobo	Qur'anic Science & Tafsir	PKUMI LPDP Management	Intra-departmental
13	R13	UIN Jusila Lampung	Arabic Lang. & Literature	Research & Innovation Org.	Inter-departmental
C. UIN Yogyakarta					
14	R14	Ma'had Aly Darussalam	Islamic Studies	DEMA AMALI	Inter-departmental
15	R15	IAIN Manado	Qur'anic Science & Tafsir	An-Naqd Institute	Intra-departmental
16	R16	Yogyakarta State Univ.	Qur'anic Science & Tafsir	BEM KM UNY	Inter-departmental
D. UIN Antasari Banjarmasin					
17	R17	UIN Antasari	Islamic Education Manaj.	FC Mobile Community	Inter-departmental
18	R18	UIN Antasari	Islamic Education	BMIC Community	Inter-departmental
19	R19	UIN Antasari	Islamic Education	LPPQ & Musyrif	Inter-departmental
E. UNIDA Gontor					
20	R20	UNIDA Gontor	Arabic Education	Academic Organization	Inter-departmental
21	R21	UNIDA Gontor	Arabic Education	DEMA UNIDA	Inter-departmental
22	R22	UNIDA Gontor	Aqidah & Islamic Phil.	DEMA Region 8 UNIDA	Intra-departmental

In addition to their academic and organizational backgrounds, it is essential to map how the informants interact with the digital world and where they source their religious

references. Table 2 below details the informants' digital literacy levels, frequency of social media discussion, primary platforms used, and their preferred religious authorities:

Table 2 Digital Literacy and Religious Authorities

Code	Textual Reference	Social Media Discussion Frequency	Main Platforms	Religious Authority
A. UIN Jakarta				
R1	Both	Rare	Instagram, X	Classical Scholars
R2	Classical	Rare	Facebook, YouTube	Classical Scholars
R3	Both	Rare	Instagram, YouTube	Comprehensive (All)
R4	Both	Frequent	Instagram, TikTok	Classical Scholars
R5	Contemporary	Rare	YT, IG, FB	Digital Preachers (Classical Repr.)
R6	Both	Rare	Website (NU Online)	Classical Scholars
R7	Contemporary	Rare	Instagram, YouTube	Academic & Classical Scholars
R8	Both	Rare (Personal)	WA, G-Meet, Zoom	Independent Crosscheck
R9	Both	Rare	YouTube	Classical Scholars
R10	Contemporary	Rare	Instagram, YouTube	Academic Literature
B. PTIQ Jakarta				
R11	Both	Rare	YouTube	Comprehensive (All)
R12	Classical	Rare	Instagram, TikTok	Classical Scholars
R13	Classical	Rare	Instagram, YouTube	Classical Scholars
C. UIN Yogyakarta				
R14	Both	Rare	Instagram, YouTube	Comprehensive (All)
R15	Both	Rare	Instagram, YouTube	Comprehensive (All)
R16	Both	Rare	YouTube, TikTok	Comprehensive (All)
D. UIN Antasari Banjarmasin				
R17	Both	Frequent	Instagram, Facebook	Comprehensive (All)
R18	Both	Frequent	Instagram, YouTube	Classical Scholars
R19	Both	Rare	YouTube, TikTok	Comprehensive (All)
E. UNIDA Gontor				
R20	Both	Rare	YouTube, TikTok	Comprehensive (All)
R21	Both	Rare	YouTube	Comprehensive (All)
R22	Both	Rare	Instagram, TikTok, YouTube	Comprehensive (All)

Results and Discussion

1. The Dialectics of Text and Context: Diverse Exegetical Receptions of Tolerance Verses

The informants' understanding of the concept of tolerance in the Qur'an does not operate monolithically; rather, it manifests as a dynamic dialectic between the sacred text and social reality. This diversity confirms the foundational assumption of *Living Qur'an* scholarship: a sacred text never exists in a vacuum; it is always in dialogue with the cognition of its readers (Rafiq, 2021 pp. 469–484).

Based on the cross-campus findings, PTKI students' reception of tolerance varies across a spectrum, ranging from normative-textual to contextual-sociological approaches. In general, these interpretations can be classified into six primary paradigms. These six paradigms were derived through an open coding process of the interview data and subsequently categorized thematically based on recurring reception patterns.

First, the Universal Theological Paradigm. This paradigm emphasizes that tolerance in the Qur'an is not limitless but rather possesses a strict line of demarcation between matters of *aqeedah* (creed) and *muamalah* (social relations). Within the academic environment of UIN Jakarta, this paradigm is strongly represented by informants R1, R3, R6, and R9, who cited Q.S. Al-Kafirun verse 6 as the verse *لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِي دِينِ*, as the verse most deeply embedded in their memory. Meanwhile, informants R5, R6, and R10 cited Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 256, specifically the phrase: *لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ*. Informant R6, asserting:

"The tolerance verses that most frequently come to mind are QS. Al-Kafirun verse 6 and QS. Al-Baqarah verse 256, which essentially provide space for religious freedom without compulsion. However, if read more comprehensively, the subsequent parts of the verses still clarify the absolute nature of Islam as an already obvious truth "(interview with R6, 14 November, 2025).

Within the Living Qur'an framework, this represents exegetical reception aimed at safeguarding *aqeedah*, aligning with Indonesian religiosity that welcomes tolerance, provided religious teachings are not syncretized (Aspinall, n.d., p. 67). R16 (UIN Sunan Kalijaga) receives Q.S. Al-Kafirun: 6 as an axiom requiring no elaboration, a sign of deeply embedded habitus, while R13 (PTIQ Jakarta) adds a dimension of steadfastness: "Its meaning concerns tolerance toward the adherents of other religions and steadfastness in one's own convictions."

This formulation is highly representative of the foundational character of this paradigm, namely, a tolerance that runs parallel with a robust theological identity. These two paradigms are interconnected; in receiving the tolerance verses, the informants similarly hold firm to their convictions, yet they maintain a flexibility of principle in its implementation.

The most distinctive variant comes from R18 (UIN Antasari Banjarmasin), who explicitly integrates tolerance verses with *aqeedah* verses, citing Q.S. Ali 'Imran: 19 and 85 as balancing verses alongside Tafsir Ibn Kathir as his reference authority: "When understanding tolerance verses, they are usually linked with *aqeedah* verses... as well as their exegeses, such as that of Ibn Kathir." This constructs what may be termed *aqeedah*-fenced tolerance, typical of traditionalist-local scholarly ecosystems centered on *ulama* authority and classical exegesis.

Informants R22 and R20 (UNIDA Gontor) present a more elaborate synthesis, combining Al-Kafirun: 6, Al-Hujurat: 13, and Al-Baqarah: 256 within a single balanced

framework and invoking the Constitution of Medina as historical evidence of Islam's tolerance predating modernity. R20 articulates: "These verses convey a message of appreciation for difference, a prohibition against the coercion of belief, and an invitation to live in peaceful coexistence without sacrificing the principles of faith" reflecting Gontor's core value that openness and steadfastness of principle are two sides of the same coin (Azra, 2006, p. 117).

Second: The Contextual-Substantive Paradigm. This paradigm views difference not as a threat but as an ontological necessity willed by God Himself. At UIN Jakarta, this tendency is strongly represented in the responses of informants R7 (Islamic Law) and R8 (Qur'anic Exegesis). When asked about the concept of tolerance, their collective memory immediately turned to Q.S. Al-Hujurat: 13 as the theological foundation for diversity:

وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا

In understanding this verse, R7 emphasized its sociological dimension of human creation, drawing attention to the phrase *wa qabā'ila lita'ārafū* as the core message of tolerance:

The verse with the phrase 'wa qabā'ila lita'ārafū' about Allah creating all beings in groups to know one another (interview with R7, 14 November 2025)."

Consonant with this, R8 deepened the interpretation by drawing the narrative into the theology of divine decree. For him, difference is not a problem but a divine ordinance:

"...Tolerance is definitely the focal point, as differences are part of *sunnatullah* (divine law). Tolerance verses exist to promote mutual understanding and to reside within a convergence area (the middle path), neither imposing our respective ideologies nor overly permitting everything "...Tolerance is definitely the focal point, as differences are part of *sunnatullah* (divine law). Tolerance verses exist to promote mutual understanding and to reside within a convergence area (the middle path), neither imposing our respective ideologies nor overly permitting everything" (interview with R8, 14 November 2025).

The use of the term *sunnatullah* by R8 serves as a crucial point in this analysis. It indicates that diversity is no longer viewed as a theological threat to be avoided, but rather as an ontological necessity willed by God Himself (Shihab, 2000, p. 482). Consequently, the reception of the phrase *li-ta'arafu* shifts from mere cognitive knowledge to an ethical foundation for social cohesion. From a sociological perspective, this paradigm enacts a desacralization of conflict; it refuses to use religious differences as a pretext for division, instead deploying the authority of the Qur'an to legitimize human fraternity.

This paradigm proves to be the most geographically cross-habitat in its reach. Informant R17 (UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, Islamic Education Management) stated that Q.S.

Al-Hujurat: 13 constitutes the primary foundation of tolerance in Islam, one he frequently draws upon in discussions and academic articles:

"I frequently employ this textual evidence (*dalil*) in several articles. Because this verse constitutes the primary foundation of tolerance in Islam, asserting that differences in tribes and nations are created for mutual acquaintance (interview with R17, 23 March 2026)."

The phrase "primary foundation" signifies that the internalization of this verse is not merely rote memorization but has become a taken-for-granted epistemic bedrock within his intellectual tradition. Subsequently, informant R12 (PTIQ Jakarta) broadens this paradigm by adding a cultural dimension that transcends mere religious boundaries:

"...Tolerance is not solely a matter of religion, but also regarding our ethics across tribes and nations. And we must respect the diversity of customs and traditions in each respective locality (interview with R12, 23 March 2026)."

R12 perceives that tolerance is not merely about religion, but also about appreciating the diverse local customs in each area. This represents a reading that goes beyond formal religious boundaries toward a broader ethic of multiculturalism.

The richest and most expressive elaboration within this paradigm comes from R15 (UIN Sunan Kalijaga). He does not merely receive Q.S. Al-Hujurat: 13 as a command for cognitive mutual acquaintance, but draws out its message by explicitly portraying physical differences among tribes as signs of diversity to be celebrated, rather than ridiculed:

"So that humans recognize that diversity and do not ridicule one another, because Allah asserts at the end of the verse that the most noble in His sight are those who possess *taqwa* (piety)... it is not the white, not the black, nor the ones with sharp noses, nor those with flat noses who are noble."

He then deployed the verse's closing reference to piety as the sole measure of nobility as a social equalizer that dismantles all hierarchy based on race and ethnicity:

"...This verse mentions nations and tribes to demonstrate that you will encounter tribes with black skin, tall statures, and curly hair... So that humans realize that diversity and do not ridicule one another, because Allah asserts that the most noble in His sight are those who possess *taqwa* (piety)...(interview with R15, 25 March 2026)."

This reception by R15 can be categorized as an anthropological-emancipatory reception: Al-Hujurat: 13 is read not merely as a social norm, but as the most radical declaration of human equality. He uses physical comparisons in his narrative to understand that a person's piety is not judged by their background or physical traits.

Third: The Moderation-Wasathiyah Paradigm. This paradigm represents a distinctive finding that cannot be reduced to the preceding categories. Informant R19 (UIN

Antasari Banjarmasin, Islamic Religious Education) advanced Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 143, containing the phrase *ummatan wasatan* as the primary foundation of tolerance:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ.....

"When speaking about tolerance, this is what I recall... *wa-kadhalika ja'alnakum ummatan wasatan li-takunu shuhada'a*... That speaks about moderation; religious moderation means the middle path, where religion is moderate, balanced, neither extreme nor too lax."

This choice of verse marks a significant paradigmatic shift. While most informants receive tolerance through the lens of *ta'aruf* (mutual acquaintance) or *la ikraha* (the absence of compulsion), R19 precisely interprets it through the lens of *wasatiyyah* (the middle path) as an epistemological principle. For R19, tolerance is not merely a social stance, but an expression of a religious approach that is not extreme at either end. He emphasizes that understanding tolerance must be grounded in sound knowledge, and that differences of opinion among scholars are a blessing, not a source of division (Qaraḍāwī, 2012, pp. 32–45). This reception is highly consistent with the scholarly ecosystem of UIN Antasari, which is robust in the traditions of *fiqh* and moderate Islamic thought, and demonstrates how the concept of religious moderation institutionally campaigned for by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia has been internalized at the level of individual habitus (Abdullah, 2020, p. 134).

In addition to the three paradigms, this study's findings reveal a unique variant of reception: the Ethical-Philosophical Paradigm. This paradigm emerges from a profound exegetical literacy capable of shifting the orientation from theological debate toward sociological ethics. This finding comes from informant R4 (UIN Jakarta), who presented Q.S. Al-Baqarah verse 139, which reads:

.... وَلِنَا أَعْمَلْنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَلُكُمْ ...

R4 identified this verse as the ethical foundation of interfaith engagement. In his view, the verse is not merely a separator but a code of conduct for responding to truth claims:

"Surah Al-Baqarah verse 139. We should not debate about truth based solely on our own convictions, whether in the context of religion, sect, and so forth. What is clear is that we must respect the beliefs and conceptions of truth according to that particular sect without comparing or assigning blame (interview with R4, 13 December 2025)."

The phrase "without comparing or assigning blame" indicates that Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 139 is received as a mandate to respect the autonomy of another's faith. The informant recognizes that each sect possesses its own conception of truth that cannot be measured from an outsider's perspective.

Subsequently, the fifth paradigm is the Theological Humanism Paradigm. This paradigm is born out of the capacity to contextualize a verse that has historically been stigmatized as harsh, thereby steering it toward a universal humanistic mandate. Informant R2 (UIN Jakarta) receives the tolerance verse by quoting Q.S. At-Taubah verses 6 and 7.

Q.S At-Taubah 9:6

لَا قَوْمَ بَأْتَهُمْ ذَلِكَ مَأْمَنُهُ أَبْلَغَهُ ثُمَّ اللَّهُ كَلَّمَ يَسْمَعُ حَتَّىٰ فَأَجْرُهُ اسْتَجَارَكَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ مِنْ أَحَدٍ وَإِنْ
يَعْلَمُونَ

Q.S At-Taubah 9:7

لَكُمْ اسْتَقْمُوا فَمَا الْحَرَامُ الْمَسْجِدِ عِنْدَ عَهْدِ الَّذِينَ إِلَّا رَسُولِهِ وَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ عِنْدَ عَهْدٍ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ يَكُونُ كَيْفَ
الْمُتَّقِينَ يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ إِنَّ هُمْ فَاسْتَقِيمُوا

This data is highly unique because Surah At-Taubah is frequently stigmatized as a "sword verse" with militaristic undertones. However, R2 performs a re-reading that accentuates the aspects of theological humanism.

Citing the perspective of M. Quraish Shihab, he explains that the concept of *istajaraka* is not merely about political asylum, but rather social acceptance:

"At-Taubah verse 6... If one of the polytheists comes to you asking for protection linguistically meaning asking to be your neighbor, wanting to live amid the Muslim community then the response is to protect him, provide him with a place and space... This is incredibly tolerant; Prophet Muhammad did not view a person's faith as a political identity, so everyone is equal (interview with R4, 13 December 2025)."

An analysis of this narrative reveals R2's capacity to contextualize a verse of war as a verse of peace. The informant captured the spirit of *jiwar* (neighborly protection) in the verse and brought it into a modern context as a concept of safe space that transcends boundaries of theological identity. He further connected verse 7 to the ethics of the Hudaibiyah Treaty, that tolerance is not merely a social courtesy but a commitment to a reciprocal social contract (Shihab, 2002, p. 545):

"Subsequently, verse 7 illustrates the existence of a treaty between Muslims and non-believers (*kafr*), exemplified by the Treaty of *Hudaibiyah*. Historically, notwithstanding the disadvantages imposed upon the Muslims and Prophet Muhammad, the Prophet remained steadfast (*istiqamah*) in honoring his pledge. For according to this verse, as long as the polytheists maintain an upright posture and do not threaten security, you must likewise act uprightly toward them (interview with R2, 13 November 2025)."

This underscores that tolerance, from R2's perspective, transcends mere social pleasantries and constitutes a profound commitment to a Social Contract. Tolerance is operationalized as an embodiment of justice and reciprocity; insofar as non-Muslim entities maintain goodwill and uphold their agreements, the Muslim community is religiously bound to guarantee full protection. This exegesis effectively deconstructs the narratives of hostility that are conventionally predicated on the verses of At-Taubah (Hamid, 2015, p. 88)

The second variation within this identical paradigm is articulated by informant R11 (PTIQ Jakarta), who invokes Q.S. Al-Mumtahanah: 8

وَمَا يُخْرِجُكُمْ مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ أَن تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ

The choice of this verse is highly uncommon in popular tolerance discourse. However, R11 accurately captures its essence: the Qur'an explicitly commands *al-birr* (doing good) and *al-qisth* (acting justly) toward non-Muslims who maintain peace, reflecting that "Islam is a religion full of love." The comparison between R2 and R11 is highly significant analytically: both recontextualize verses historically perceived as having political-military undertones, but with different emphases. R2 emphasizes the dimensions of protection and asylum, whereas R11 underscores kindness and social justice. The combination of the two proves that within a profound exegetical tradition, even the verses of war can serve as a foundation for interfaith humanistic ethics (Hamid, 2015, p. 88).

Sixth: The Contextual-Progressive Paradigm. This paradigm represents the most dynamic and least anticipated form of reception found in the entire dataset. Informant R14 (UIN Sunan Kalijaga, Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies) advanced Q.S. Maryam: 33 as the theological foundation of cross-religious tolerance.

"Q. 19:33. An explanation that we are permitted to wish a Merry Christmas on the grounds that Prophet Isa (Jesus) also invoked 'peace' (salam) upon his own birth."

وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ يَوْمَ وُلِدْتُ وَيَوْمَ أَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ أُبْعَثُ حَيًّا

The verse refers to the statement of the Prophet Isa (Jesus), who proclaimed peace upon his birth, death, and resurrection. From this verse, R14 constructed a contextual ijtihad that transcends conventional limits: since the Prophet Isa himself proclaimed peace upon his own birth, a Muslim may offer congratulations on Christmas Day on the basis of this Qur'anic argument.

R14 is the sole informant who receives the tolerance verse using Surah Maryam, a chapter that is almost never included in the popular discourse on tolerance verses. His movement from text to context is analogical-deductive: he does not merely interpret what is explicit, but constructs a new precedent from the spirit of the verse to legitimize social practices that remain debated to this day. Within the theoretical framework of the Living Qur'an, this reception can be conceptualized as a performative-transformative reception, wherein the Qur'an is not merely read and interpreted, but actively functions to respond to

a highly concrete contemporary interfaith reality (Rafiq, 2021c, pp. 469–484). His *Ma'had Aly* background, deeply rooted in classical Islamic sciences, which subsequently interacts with the progressive-discursive ecosystem of UIN Sunan Kalijaga, appears to serve as a highly productive laboratory for the emergence of this kind of *ijtihad*.

From the narratives above, it can be concluded that tolerance verses are not understood in a monolithic way among PTKI postgraduate students. The spectrum of reception ranges from the verse's function as a guardian of *aqeedah* (creed), a social bridge, *wasathiyyah* moderation, ethical rules in debate, and a mandate for protection and justice, to its Qur'anic legitimacy for contemporary interfaith practices. This diversity validates the high flexibility of the sacred text when dialoguing with the cognition of readers from different habitus backgrounds (Lukman, 2018, pp. 147–190).

Variations in reception are also determined by the fragmentation of the reference authority. Informants with a textual habitus (R2, R6, R11, R18) place classical literature as the primary authority, while those with a critical habitus (R3, R4, R10) perform a desacralization of authority, focusing on the substance of the argument rather than the figure presenting it. R22 (UNIDA Gontor) exhibits the most explicit hybridity of authority, referencing Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi and Syamsuddin Arif alongside Azyumardi Azra and Buya Yahya within a single integrative framework. This phenomenon aligns with Campbell's findings on *selective appropriation* within digital religious communities: authority is no longer monolithic, but rather selectively curated according to the epistemic needs of each actor (Heidi A. Campbell (ed.) & Pauline Hope Cheong (ed.), 2024).

Consequently, the depth of interpretive discourse formed within this academic space faces a distinctive challenge when transmigrating into the digital sphere. The complexity of algorithms and polarization on social media demand that students not only comprehend the verses, but also formulate social strategies in articulating them. How these receptions are negotiated amidst the clamor of the digital arena becomes crucial to dissect in the subsequent section.

Table 3 Matrix of Diverse Exegetical Receptions of Tolerance Verses

Qur'anic Verse	Reception Category	Sociological Meaning and Function	Key Informants
Q.S. Al-Kafirun: 6	Theological-Universal	Boundary maintenance of creed (<i>aqidah</i>): social tolerance without blending religious beliefs.	R1, R3, R6, R9, R13, R16, R22
Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 256	Theological-Universal	The principle of religious freedom as a protector of identity and an affirmation of Islamic truth.	R5, R6, R10, R12, R22
Q.S. Ali Imran: 19 & 85	Theological-Universal	Reinforcement of Islamic theological supremacy as a foundation prior to the application of tolerance.	R18
Q.S. Al-Hujurat: 13	Contextual-Substantive	Diversity as an ontological necessity (<i>sunnatullah</i>) to build social cohesion.	R7, R8, R12, R15, R17, R18, R22
Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 143	Moderation-Wasathiyyah	Tolerance as an expression of <i>wasathiyyah</i> : a moderate middle path, avoiding extremes in either direction.	R19
Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 139	Ethical-Philosophical	"Rules of the game" in confronting the truth claims of other sects through the suspension of judgment.	R4

Q.S. At-Taubah: 6-7	Theological Humanism	A mandate for social protection and the provision of a safe space regardless of theological status.	R2
Q.S. Al-Mumtahanah: 8	Theological Humanism	Command to act kindly and justly toward peaceful non-Muslims as a reflection of Islam as a religion of love.	R11
Q.S. Maryam: 33	Contextual-Progressive	Qur'anic legitimation of contemporary cross-religious tolerance practices through the precedent of Prophet Isa (Jesus).	R14

2. Resistance in the Digital Arena: Functional Reception and Strategies of Distinction

When the discourse on tolerance migrates to social media, students' responses are far from uniform. Field findings reveal a polarization of strategies in responding to the chaos of information in the digital arena. From the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu's sociology, social media is a contested arena of symbolic struggle (Malkov et al., 2023, pp. 186–208). In navigating this arena, students are split into two strategic camps: the Distinction Strategy (Passive) and the Contestation Strategy (Active).

The first group, consisting of R2, R3, R7, and R9, chooses the "silent path" or disengagement, perceiving social media as a space polluted by pseudo-intellectual egos. R7, an Al-Azhar alumnus with deep mastery of classical turath literature, applies a strict selection of debate opponents:

"If the goal isn't a scholarly debate, it's better to leave it, as it will likely only cause chaos and waste time (interview with R7, 14 November 2025)."

His silence is not indifference but a strategy of distinction, a self-defense mechanism to protect scholarly authority (*marwah*) from algorithmic banality (Fuadi et al., 2024, pp. 1–17). R3 (Islamic Education) identifies anonymity as the root cause of ethical erosion:

"Everyone has a platform... there is no *adab* (etiquette) in debating (interview with R3, 14 November 2025)."

In response, R3 adopts Silent Observation, withdrawing from active participation while synthesizing debates into personal knowledge:

"My approach is more about how I can learn... personally synthesizing those debates so they become new knowledge (interview with R3, 14 November 2025)."

This passive-distinction pattern extends across campuses. R14 (UIN Sunan Kalijaga) responds to sectarian debate with a concise "Skip. Not interested in debating," not from inability, but from the mature realization that "difference is an inevitability." R15 (UIN Sunan Kalijaga) expresses fatigue: debates have become circular, "driven only by the desire to win, without offering any new insights." Within PTIQ, R11 refrains, convinced that everyone possesses their own textual evidence (*dalil*); R13 practices selective internalization by consulting a trusted ustadh privately; R12 prefers closed circles to public digital debate. At UNIDA Gontor, R20 applies a methodical approach, tracing sources and weighing scientific versus provocative content before opting out, while R22 adds an emotional

dimension, feeling saddened when sectarian debates devolve into mutual insults. R16 (UIN Sunan Kalijaga) summarizes the stance most concisely: "Just stay silent; not everything needs a comment, and not everything requires an answer." Sociologically, this group operates through the mechanism of distinction: cultural capital in the form of authoritative religious knowledge is an asset that must not be depreciated by the banality of the comment section (Bourdieu & Bourdieu, 2006, pp. 66–73).

The second group adopts active strategies strongly correlated with their organizational habitus. Data shows they are student activists; PMII, *Tahfizh*, *Pondok*, and *Fatayat* NU organizations, accustomed to dialectics and conflict management. R6 (UIN Jakarta) articulates the moral responsibility of an academic referee:

"Students of Islamic Studies must serve as mediators... explain religion calmly, scientifically... differences in *furu'iyah* within religion are natural (interview with R6, 22 December 2025)."

In Bourdieu's terms, R6 practices Mediating Authority, deploying symbolic capital not to win arguments but to normalize difference and reduce social tension. R8 (Tafsir) adopts a more aggressive counter-narrative stance:

"Since many debates take place on social media, naturally, the antidote must also be on social media... scientifically (interview with R8, 15 December 2025)."

This is a Symbolic Struggle, converting academic capital into digital products to challenge intolerant narratives, transforming from an ivory-tower academic into an organic intellectual who steps into the public arena (Hosen, 2008, p. 174). R4 (Islamic Thought) complements this with a technical-pragmatic adaptation, translating interpretive complexity into visual formats:

"Provide infographics regarding the verses and tafsir perspectives... people in the virtual world tend to learn from things that are visual in nature (interview with R4, 13 November 2025)."

A strategic effort to win the "ideological market" and foster awareness so users are "wiser and not swept away by the intolerance crisis." R17 (UIN Antasari Banjarmasin) practices a measured academic referee role, selectively intervening in debates with literature-grounded clarifications. R18 (UIN Antasari) employs a verificatory strategy, seeking stronger references across multiple opinions before responding with intensive intellectual activism that is cognitively demanding, even as it remains invisible in the public sphere. R21 (UNIDA Gontor) uses a probing strategy, leaving minimal comments to map opponents' positions before conducting a deeper independent investigation.

Broadly, the passive camp preserves academic dignity through disengagement, while the active camp maneuvers through diverse roles: academic referees (R6, R17), symbolic combatants (R8), visual translators (R4), and verifiers (R18). Despite opposing tactical paths, both groups share a common concern: safeguarding the sacredness of Quranic values from public distortion, expressed through different defense mechanisms.

The choice of platform is not a neutral preference but a strategic decision that unconsciously reflects an individual's habitus within the arena of symbolic struggle (Bourdieu & Bourdieu, 2008, p. 53). YouTube dominates as the primary medium for religious consumption across nearly all institutions. R16 (UIN Sunan Kalijaga) spends up to ten hours daily on YouTube yet adopts the most passive stance, confirming Bail et al.'s finding that repeated exposure to polarized content produces information fatigue, triggering strategic withdrawal rather than deeper engagement (Bail et al., 2018b, pp. 9216–9221). R9 (PTIQ Jakarta) uses YouTube for initial verification before consulting a trusted ustadz; R11 (PTIQ Jakarta) uses it solely for consumption, explicitly avoiding comment sections, consistent with Sunstein's argument that algorithmic social media tends to strengthen opinion fragmentation rather than facilitating productive dialogue (Abbey, 2018a, pp. 9–15).

The most striking contrast emerges in the Facebook ecosystem. R17 (UIN Antasari Banjarmasin) is the only informant who identifies Facebook as an active platform for religious discussion, routinely intervening in debates with *dalil*-grounded clarifications. This is not coincidental: Facebook's more mature demographic and long-form architecture structurally encourage substantive discussion rather than short-visual formats elsewhere. In the context of the Banjar scholarship, structured by the authority of local *ulama*, Facebook serves as a more conducive arena for R17 to practice as an academic referee. Instagram occupies a more ambiguous position used passively by R12, R14, and R20, while R22 (UNIDA Gontor) demonstrates rational selective exposure, engaging only on topics where he holds scholarly competence and reducing involvement where logical fallacies risk misleading audiences (Benkler et al., 2018, pp. 32–38).

TikTok presents the most complex dynamics. R4 (UIN Jakarta) actively uses TikTok's viral-first algorithm to distribute infographic-based tafsir education, treating the same mechanism that spreads intolerant narratives as an opportunity for counter-narrative dissemination, a transformation from ivory-tower academic into organic intellectual adept at adapting to the battlefield terrain (Fealy et al., 2008, p. 174). Meanwhile, R12 and R20 use TikTok only passively, viewing its short-form format as an epistemological weakness incompatible with the contextual depth Islamic argumentation requires. Closed platforms WhatsApp, Zoom, and Google Meet are strategically chosen by R8 and R18 as controlled information ecosystems, demonstrating advanced algorithmic literacy: not merely awareness that algorithms shape content, but active redesigning of information ecosystems to circumvent echo chambers. R6 (UIN Jakarta) chooses NU Online as a primary reference due to its methodological rigor, functioning simultaneously as an epistemic filter and a community identity marker — an authority heuristic in an information-overloaded environment (Abbey, 2018, pp. 60–65).

Crucially, the intensity of digital consumption and the intensity of debate participation do not correlate linearly. R16 spends 10 hours on YouTube daily but never comments; R17 uses Facebook less frequently but comments actively; R4 regularly produces TikTok content. This confirms van Dijck's argument that social media behavior is shaped not by platform architecture alone but by the complex interaction between platform

design, user competence, and the social identity users bring into the digital space (Keskin, 2018, pp. 20–24).

From a typological perspective, four patterns emerge. The active-productive pattern, represented by R4, uses open platforms proactively to produce educational tafsir content. The active-corrective pattern, represented by R17 and R22, uses platforms selectively to clarify debates through scholarly references. The passive-observant pattern, represented by R3, R8, R12, R14, R15, R20, and R21, treats platforms as spaces for consumption and mapping without active participation. The selective-verificative pattern, represented by R6 and R8, uses closed platforms or authoritative websites as tightly managed information ecosystems. These patterns are not merely technical preferences but reflect different habitus dispositions: who perceives social media as a field of struggle, who sees it as an observatory, who regards it as an epistemological threat, and who treats it as a tool requiring careful control (Bourdieu & Bourdieu, 2006, pp. 66–73).

The cross-campus comparison reveals a pattern consistent with Campbell's digital religion theory: communities with more closed and hierarchical scholarly ecosystems produce more uniform receptions and passive digital strategies, whereas more open and discursive ecosystems yield broader variance (Campbell & Cheong, 2024). Notably, UNIDA Gontor, despite high ideological cohesion, generates integrative multi-verse synthesis rather than mere dogmatic repetition, challenging the assumption that institutional homogeneity always correlates with interpretive rigidity. The key variable distinguishing students who become agents of discursive change from those who merely become objects of algorithmic flows is algorithmic literacy, the ability not only to use platforms technically, but to critically understand and respond to the power structures embedded within content recommendation systems (Ubaidillah & Widiastutik, 2025b, pp. 110–112).

Table 4 Cross-Institutional Comparison of Reception and Digital Strategies

Institution	Dominant Reception	Digital Strategy	Habitus Characteristics
UIN Jakarta	Plural spectrum (all paradigms)	Mixed: passive & active-productive	Metropolitan, heterogeneous, <i>critical thinking</i>
PTIQ Jakarta	Theological-Universal & Contextual	Passive-selective	Textual-Qur'anic, consistency of classical references
UIN Sunan Kalijaga	Contextual-Progressive & Substantive	Passive-observative	Progressive-discursive, tolerant of <i>ijtihad</i>
UIN Antasari	Theological-Universal & <i>Wasatiyyah</i>	Active-corrective & passive	Local-traditionalist, authority of <i>Tuan Guru</i> in transformation
UNIDA Gontor	Theological-Universal & Synthesis	Passive-observative & selective	Independence of <i>pesantren</i> , Islamization of Knowledge

The comparison table above demonstrates a pattern consistent with Campbell's digital religion theory, which posits that communities with more closed and hierarchical scholarly ecosystems tend to produce more uniform receptions and passive digital strategies, whereas communities with more open and discursive ecosystems yield a broader variance of reception (Campbell, 2012). Concurrently, this finding challenges the assumption that institutional homogeneity always correlates with interpretive rigidity:

UNIDA Gontor, despite possessing a highly ideologically cohesive ecosystem, actually generates an integrative multi-verse synthesis rather than mere dogmatic repetition.

This diversity of responses calls for a deeper sociological reading. These strategic choices are not merely random individual preferences, but rather manifestations of cognitive structures shaped through educational processes. An examination of the informants' academic backgrounds reveals that the intellectual environments in which they were formed, ranging from disciplinary traditions to lecturers' authority, play a decisive role in shaping distinct *habitus*. It is this intellectual genealogy that will be elaborated in the following section.

3. Genealogy of Understanding: Academic Habitus and the Fragmentation of Authority

The disparities in reception and patterns of resistance outlined earlier are not isolated phenomena. Referring to the Sociology of Knowledge proposed by Karl Mannheim, students' understanding is closely tied to their social bases (the existential determination of knowledge) (Mannheim, 1936, p. 239). In this context, differences in academic program backgrounds become a determining variable. Years of disciplinary training instill enduring mental structures, which Pierre Bourdieu refers to as *habitus* (Bourdieu & Bourdieu, 2006, p. 53).

The findings of this study indicate that students' reception patterns are not solely influenced by their current academic programs but are deeply rooted in the *habitus* formed during their previous level of education (undergraduate/S1). This is clearly illustrated in the contrasting cases of Informant R7 (Islamic Law) and Informant R3 (Islamic Education).

Although R7 is currently pursuing a field that demands legal reasoning, their strong reliance on classical texts (*turāth*) and scholarly chains of transmission is a manifestation of the *habitus* shaped during undergraduate studies at Al-Azhar, a tradition emphasizing memorization, mastery of *kitab kuning*, and respect for the hierarchy of scholars, forming a mental structure resistant to free interpretation. For R7, the validity of Qur'anic interpretation must be grounded in authoritative references, such as *Maktabah Syamilah*, rather than in mere logical reasoning. In contrast, R3, a graduate of Hasanuddin University, a public university not bound by *pesantren* traditions, approaches religious texts through sociological and anthropological lenses, employing critical reasoning as the primary tool for filtering religious information. This confirms the crucial role of prior educational background in shaping *habitus* (Mannheim, 1936, p. 246).

Further nuance emerges from informants with other disciplinary backgrounds. R1 (Arabic Language and Literature) exhibits a linguistic-metaphorical *habitus*, perceiving differences in interpretation not as conflict but as linguistic aesthetics — a natural product of familiarity with polysemy. R4 (Islamic Thought) demonstrates a philosophical-substantive *habitus*, alert to the dangers of unilateral truth claims that deconstruct rational thinking. R9 (Islamic Economics), shaped by active involvement in a student cooperative, adopts the most pragmatic orientation, measuring the validity of interpretation by its utility for social welfare (*maslahah*) (Mannheim, 1936, p. 246).

This spectrum becomes even more distinctive when examining cross-institutional data. Within the ecosystem of UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, Informant R17 (Islamic Education

Management) demonstrates an intriguing tension between reverence for local religious scholars and critical academic awareness. R17 acknowledges that the authority of the *Tuan Guru* remains dominant in Banjar society, yet prefers to filter incoming information, even from the *Tuan Guru* themselves (Rahmadi, 2022, pp. 77–94). This reflects what Eickelman and Piscatori describe as the *objectification of Islam*, a condition in which religious authority is evaluated by its substance rather than by the figure who conveys it (Lee, 1997, p. 38). Informant R18 (Islamic Religious Education), whose digital references are oriented toward *khilafah*-based preachers, represents a *habitus* in ongoing negotiation between two epistemologically distinct knowledge ecosystems — anchoring final validation in the Qur'an, classical tafsir, and academic mentors (Muthohirin, 2021, p. 257). Meanwhile, R19 (Fiqh) presents the most moderate profile, with a strong internalization of *wasathiyah* values rooted in comparative *fiqh* training that treats scholarly disagreement (*ikhtilāf al-'ulamā'*) as richness rather than threat.

Within the ecosystem of UNIDA Gontor, three informants (R20, R21, R22) exhibit the most cohesive and consistent *habitus* pattern among all institutions studied. The concept of the Islamization of Knowledge — Gontor's epistemological trademark — trains students not only to master Islamic texts but also to confront Western ideologies perceived as infiltrating Islamic thought (Asha'Ari et al., 2023, p. 142). This produces an orientation that is open in methodology yet ideologically bounded, explaining why Gontor informants adopt a passive-observant strategy rather than a disciplined approach to choosing the appropriate battleground.

Within UIN Sunan Kalijaga, diversity of *habitus* emerges as the most striking characteristic. R14 is highly progressive-*ijtihadī*, R15 is anthropological-emancipatory, and R16 is concise-theological, all within the same institution. These differences trace back to their respective undergraduate backgrounds: a classical *pesantren* tradition, a multi-ethnic regional context, and a secular public university. These inherited differences in *habitus* generate a wide spectrum of reception within a single institutional ecosystem (Mannheim et al., 1979, p. 1979).

Beyond formal education, patterns of social interaction function as a significant differentiating variable. Informants from homogeneous social environments, such as R11 (PTIQ) and R22 (Gontor), tend to exhibit stronger theological conviction, as peer reinforcement strengthens identity. Conversely, informants with cross-disciplinary social environments tend to be more reflective, less prone to fanaticism, yet also more reluctant to engage in polarized debates on social media (Bourdieu & Bourdieu, 2008b, p. 80).

Fragmentation of authoritative references further sharpens these disparities. Students with a textual *habitus* — such as R2, R6, R7, R11, and R19 — position classical literature as the primary authority in Qur'anic interpretation. This shift from figure-based to reason-based authority explains why the latter group is more fluid in accepting differences, while the former is more rigid yet procedurally grounded (Abbey, 2018b, pp. 87–103).

Digital literacy is emerging as an increasingly critical differentiating factor. R8 and R6 (UIN Jakarta) recognize that polarization is often driven not merely by differing textual evidence but by echo chambers and algorithms (Abbey, 2018a, pp. 87–103). In contrast, R16

(UIN Sunan Kalijaga), despite consuming up to ten hours of YouTube daily, adopts the most passive public stance, suggesting that intensity of digital consumption does not necessarily correlate with active discourse participation. On the contrary, excessive exposure to digital polarization can produce information fatigue and strategic withdrawal from engagement.

Thus, the genealogy of students' understanding mapped in this study confirms Karl Mannheim's thesis that social position determines consciousness. A student's academic positioning, whether as a specialist in Hadith, a literary scholar, a philosopher, an economist, a proponent of *wasathiyah* fiqh, or a graduate of a modern *pesantren*, shapes their consciousness and perspective in interpreting verses on tolerance. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that *habitus* is not formed by a single institution alone, but is the cumulative product of educational trajectories, organizational activism, social interactions, and digital literacy that shape the student.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the reception of Islamic Studies postgraduate students across PTKIs toward tolerance verses in the era of digital polarization is fragmented into a complex and dynamic spectrum. Three main findings can be formulated: first, student receptions form six intersecting paradigms (Theological-Universal, Contextual-Substantive, Moderation-*Wasathiyah*, Ethical-Philosophical, Theological Humanism, and Contextual-Progressive); second, responses in the digital arena are polarized between the passive camp (disengagement as an academic distinction) and the active camp (academic referees, symbolic fighters, and visual translators); third, receptions are constructed by the intertwining of undergraduate institutional habitus, organizational activism, social interaction patterns, fragmentation of authority, and digital literacy. This study extends Living Qur'an scholarship from ritual and symbolic receptions to the domain of digital intra-religious conflict management, a contribution that remains unexplored in prior literature. Theoretically, these findings confirm and extend Mannheim's thesis that social position determines consciousness: not only the currently pursued study program but also the cumulative educational path and the institutional ecosystem determine how sacred texts are read. Specific findings from UIN Antasari add a new dimension: the tension between the culture of *Tuan Guru* figurism and the demands of postgraduate critical reasoning produces a habitus in the process of transformation, a phenomenon relevant to the broader study of religious authority in the digital era.

The practical implications of this research are directed toward the following parties: (a) PTKI institutions need to integrate critical digital literacy into Islamic curricula so that students are capable of identifying *echo chamber* mechanisms and polarization algorithms; (b) the Ministry of Religious Affairs needs to develop moderation-based exegesis pedagogy tailored to the *episteme* of each institutional ecosystem; (c) curriculum developers need to design algorithmic literacy training as a core competence for Islamic studies students in the digital era. This study has several limitations that must be acknowledged: a limited sample size (22 informants), rendering the findings idiographic; a context specific to Indonesia,

meaning cross-context generalization requires verification; reliance on self-reported narratives susceptible to social desirability bias; and the limitations of asynchronous interviews that do not allow for direct probing. Future research is recommended to increase the sample size, conduct actual social media content analysis, and explore comparative dimensions across Muslim countries.

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Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

During the writing process of this article, the author(s) utilized generative artificial intelligence (AI) and AI-assisted technologies, specifically Gemini and Claude, solely to improve the language quality, translation, and overall readability of the text. These tools were not employed at any stage for data collection, data analysis, or drawing empirical conclusions. Following the use of these technologies, the author(s) thoroughly reviewed, verified, and edited the generated content, and assume(s) full responsibility for the academic integrity and final content of this article.

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