ANALYSIS OF M. QURAISH SHIHAB'S PREACHING THROUGH THE YOUTUBE CHANNEL ABOUT LIVING HARMONIOUSLY IN DIFFERENCES

Muhammad Salman Palewai
Makassar Religious Education and Training Center (BDK)
Sultan Alauddin Street, Makassar, Indonesia
Email: salman_palewai@yahoo.co.uk

Hanafi Pelu
Makassar Religious Education and Training Center (BDK)
Sultan Alauddin Street, Makassar, Indonesia
Email: silawanehanafi@gmail.com

Sri Rahmayana Syam
State Vocational High School (SMKN) 10 Makassar
Bonto Manai Street, Makassar, Indonesia
Email: srisyam76@gmail.com

Abur Hamdi Usman
Universiti Islam Selangor (UIS)
Bandar Seri Putra, 43000 Kajang, Selangor, Malaysia
Email: aburhamdi@uis.edu.my

Article received January 28th, 2026; Article revised October 8th, 2026; Article approved November 16th, 2026

Abstract

Religious differences in Indonesia continue to generate disputes, both within the Muslim community and between religious communities, even though religious teachings normatively promote harmony. This study analyses how M. Quraish Shihab addresses living harmoniously amid differences in a defined corpus of six YouTube videos. It uses qualitative content analysis with a combined deductive–inductive coding scheme, followed by hermeneutic interpretation informed by Gadamer and by Shihab's printed works. The study coded argumentative segments of the videos, grouped them into seven themes, and transparently mapped the path from data to interpretation. The findings show that, on internal differences, Shihab presents difference as a divine design (sunnatullah) and a source of ease, explains it through the plurality of scriptural wording and the distinction between religion, religious understanding, and religiosity, and requires disagreement without quarreling. For interfaith relations, he stresses freedom of choice, individual accountability, common ground in social affairs, the protection of houses of worship, and competition in goodness, while maintaining that respect does not mean recognizing another faith's truth claims. The study contributes a two-register model of digital wasathiyah, in which the scriptural basis and the logic of persuasion are calibrated to internal and external audiences. The model refines digital da'wah and framing approaches, and it offers practical guidance for religious training, education, and public communication on tolerance.

***Keywords**: Digital da'wah, Interfaith Relations, Religious Moderation, M. Quraish Shihab, Tolerance*

©Author(s), 2026. Published by Balai Penelitian dan Pengembangan Agama Makassar
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Licence. (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/)

INTRODUCTION

All religions teach brotherhood and peace. In practice, however, conflicts, disputes, and even violence often arise between groups. Intra-Muslim cases in Indonesia include the dispute over the Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal Mosque in Bogor, which escalated after a renovation plan in March 2016 (Sumandoyo, 2017), and the attack on Shia followers in Sampang, Madura, on August 26, 2012 (Abidin et al., 2020). Interfaith conflicts have also occurred, including the Poso and Tolikara conflicts (Yunus, 2014).

A major question follows: why does religion, which normatively teaches people to live in harmony with others despite different beliefs, paradoxically coexist with conflict and even hostility? Existing studies point to two main causes: an unwillingness to accept differences of opinion or claims to truth (Yunus, 2014) and the misinterpretation of the teachings of jihad (Maulana et al., 2022). Both suggest that disharmony stems largely from a lack of understanding of religious teachings, which makes public religious education, including through digital media, a strategic response.

M. Quraish Shihab is one of the scholars who consistently teaches how to live harmoniously amid differences. Previous studies of his thought have examined religious moderation in general: Al-Zamzami (2019) traced the concept of moderate *da'wah* on his official website, and Huda et al. (2020) examined *wasathiyah* in *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* through Gadamerian hermeneutics; and Fahriani (2025) described his moderation as an active, balanced approach. Studies of his YouTube preaching have focused on message framing, semiotic markers, and language style (Fauziah, 2021; Taufiqurrohmah, 2022; Tahira et al., 2025).

Despite this growing body of work, the studies reviewed in the next section largely treat moderation as a single, uniform message. They do not systematically distinguish how Shihab addresses differences among Muslims (internal) and differences between religious communities (external), nor how his scriptural basis and communicative strategy change with the audience. This article addresses that gap by analyzing a defined and documented corpus of six YouTube videos.

This study addresses three primary questions: (1) How does Shihab address internal differences among Muslims in his YouTube preaching? (2) How does he address differences between religious communities? (3) What patterns connect these approaches, and how do they contribute to the theory of digital wasaṭiyyah? The research aims to describe the principles for living harmoniously amid differences, based on the Qur'an, the hadith, and the practices of the Prophet's Companions. Additionally, it proposes a conceptual model to explain how these principles are adapted for different audiences.

This article discusses previous studies on moderation and harmony that examine local wisdom, student attitudes, houses of worship, and regional history (Mustafa, 2020; Nurhayati and Suhardin, 2020; Nuruddin and Aksa, 2022; Wagiu et al., 2026). It contributes a digital *da'wah* perspective focused on a nationally influential exegete. The study is limited to differences among Muslims and between religious communities, and it does not assess audience reception.

Literature Review

This review synthesizes studies published mainly between 2019 and 2026 across three clusters and concludes by identifying the research gap.

Wasathiyah in Shihab's Thought

Studies of Shihab's printed works and institutional role converge on one point: *wasathiyah* is more than a midpoint between extremes. Huda et al. (2020), applying Gadamer's hermeneutics to *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, show that Shihab's understanding of *wasathiyah* emerged from a fusion of textual and social horizons and results in a fair, balanced, and tolerant

attitude. Fahriani (2025) argues that his preaching defines moderation as an active, balanced approach to worldly and spiritual affairs. Wardani et al. (2026) add a comparative dimension: they find that Shihab's contextual hermeneutics are deep and nuanced yet lack the enforcement power of state-backed religious institutions such as those in Malaysia. These studies differ in sources and aims, but they share a limitation: they rely on printed works, websites, and institutional documents and therefore say little about how the ideas are performed for online audiences.

Studies of Shihab's Digital Preaching

Research on Shihab's YouTube preaching can be grouped into three strands. The first examines message and framing. Taufiqurrohmah (2022), applying Entman's framing model to the Najwa Shihab channel, reports that Shihab frames moderation through the pillars of *'adl*, *tawazun*, *tasamuh*, and *tawassuth*, and as a pursuit of being "the best" (*sabiqun bil khairat*) rather than as half-hearted faith. Hidayat and Afidah (2022) describe a humanist-inclusive way of presenting Islam, and Khasanah (2021) finds that the *Ramadan Cinta* series counters *takfiri* attitudes by stressing mercy (*rahmah*). The second strand concerns language and signs. Tahira et al. (2025) argue that Shihab uses semiotic markers and soft language in the segment "Islam yang Disalahpahami" to deconstruct radical interpretations; Fauziah (2021) identifies a conversational style that reduces the distance between scholar and audience; Sahari (2025) describes a multimodal combination of visual and auditory cues that projects a peaceful image of Islam; and Samsuriyanto et al. (2025) link his communication style to credibility and emotional connection. The third strand deals with specific issues: Elisa (2023) examines the term *kafir* and its replacement by "non-Muslim" as a social category, Marzuqoh et al. (2025) examine the relationship between religion and politics, Mauladani (2024) analyses moderation on his own channel through universal linguistic frames, and Anggraini (2021), using Van Dijk's discourse model, shows that religious moderation on the Najwa Shihab channel is conveyed through discourse that presupposes correct knowledge, controlled emotion, and carefulness on the part of the audience.

Research on religious media and online authority provides further context. Bakti (2018) shows that a religious television channel can take part in civil society discourse, and Campbell (2010) argues that online religious authority is negotiated between established and emerging sources rather than simply replaced. Both suggest that Shihab's YouTube presence is best read as an extension of, not a break with, his scholarly authority.

Moderation and Harmony Studies in Al-Qalam

Studies published in *Al-Qalam* show how moderation and harmony are researched in the region, mostly through community practice. Mustafa (2020) identifies the To Wotu philosophy *awa itaba la awai assangoatta* as local wisdom with the nuance of religious moderation, and Wagiu et al. (2023) find similar values in the Minahasan practice of *mapalus*. Dachlan (2021) and Nuruddin and Aksa (2022) show how local wisdom and interfaith cooperation build and protect houses of worship in Palu and the Kei Islands, and Nurhayati and Suhardin (2020) compare religious moderation among students at Universitas Tadulako and IAIN Palu. Most recently, Wagiu et al. (2026) argue that moderation in Minahasa is a negotiated process threatened by digital extremism and misinformation, and they call for peace education that engages digital media. This body of work explains how harmony is practiced locally, but it has not yet examined how a national religious authority argues for harmony online.

Other *Al-Qalam* Studies on Harmony, Authority, and Moderation

In a quantitative study in Mamasa Regency, West Sulawesi, M. S. Mustafa (2014) surveyed 162 Muslim, Christian, Catholic, and Hindu respondents with a questionnaire built on four variables derived from Walzer's concept of active tolerance, and obtained a total harmony index of 3.27, in the "very high" category. The same study found that the lowest indicator (2.62) concerned the view that religion should not be propagated to people who already adhere to another faith: about 38 percent of respondents gave answers the author classifies as negative, and he reads this as a possible source of identity conflict in the future. The finding is relevant here because it shows that high harmony scores can coexist with unresolved attitudes toward proselytizing, the very issue to which Shihab's emphasis on freedom of choice and individual accountability (V4) speaks.

Nensia, Aflahah, and Arafah (2021) describe Pasalae Village in North Gorontalo, where Muslims (about 70 percent) and Christians (about 30 percent) live side by side under the principle *torang samua basudara* and the practice of *baku masuk*, supported by the Gorontalo tradition of mutual cooperation (*huyula*), kinship ties, shared markets and piers, and the custom of sharing fish. They also report that, since the arrival of the Tablighi Jama'ah around 2007–2008, practices such as exchanging religious holiday greetings have begun to fade, although kinship and economic ties continue to hold the two communities together. The case shows both the local foundations of interfaith neighborliness and the pressure that stricter readings can place on it, a tension that the two-register reading of Shihab's preaching also addresses: how to keep neighborly conduct while remaining committed to one's own creed.

Saprillah (2016) studies the role of government religious educators (*penyuluh agama*) in managing harmony in Palu, a city still shaped by the memory of the Poso conflict. Drawing on interviews with Muslim, Christian, and Hindu educators, officials of the Interreligious Harmony Forum (FKUB), and community figures, he finds that the educators have no specific harmony program because their duties are defined around normative religious guidance, yet they contribute by serving in the FKUB and by inserting harmony themes into their routine counseling materials; he also points to the moderate Islam promoted by the Al-Khaerat network as part of the local context. The study shows that messages of harmony reach communities through institutional channels that depend on trained communicators, which supports this article's recommendation that Shihab's videos be used as case material in religious training.

Khariri, Masudi, and Masuwd (2025) document how Muslims and members of the Evangelical Church in Tanah Jawa (GITJ) in Bulungcangkring Village, Jekulo, Kudus, share the Javanese *lelayu* mourning tradition, which comprises *takziyah* (condolence visits) and *tahlil* (communal prayer). Neighbors of both faiths visit the bereaved, help with funeral arrangements, and pray according to their own beliefs without mixing rituals or entering the theological content of one another's rites. The authors read this as practical tolerance and as an informal form of interfaith dialogue sustained by neighborhood associations and residents rather than by religious institutions. The case parallels Shihab's advice that neighbors of different faiths should share in one another's joy and difficulty while keeping their own creeds (V3, V4).

Mubarak et al. (2025) analyze *Marakka' Bola*, the Bugis tradition of collectively lifting and relocating a wooden stilt house in Barru Regency, which was designated an intangible cultural heritage in 2021. Through a qualitative literature review, they interpret the practice as an enactment of *sipakatau* (treating one another as human beings), social solidarity, and *gotong royong* that involves participants of all ages and social positions, and they relate it to the Islamic principles of *ta'awun* (mutual assistance)

and *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), with the proviso that prayers be addressed to God alone. Because cooperation in this case rests on shared work rather than shared doctrine, it is a local counterpart to Shihab's call to seek common ground and cooperate in social affairs (V3).

Amin (2014) examines Islamic moderation in the tradition of Islamic law and argues that it rests on three paired principles: the definitive and the speculative (*qath'i–zanni*), objectives and means (*maqasid–wasa'il*), and fundamentals and branches (*ushul–furu'*). He identifies four phenomena that express moderation in legal practice: flexibility and renewal, facilitation (*taysir*), concessions (*rukhsah*), and gradual legislation. He contrasts this with conceptions of moderation that treat nearly all rulings as changeable means, which he regards as departing from the Islamic understanding. The distinction between fundamentals and details, and the preference for ease illustrated by Shihab's *tayammum* example (V1), are close to this juristic framework, so Amin's article helps anchor the claim that Shihab's register for fellow Muslims is juristic and not merely conciliatory.

Suarning et al. (2025) reexamine the Qur'anic punishment of *qisas* within contemporary sharia through a qualitative case study of classical sources, contemporary scholarship, and practice in Muslim-majority countries. They find that its application ranges from strictly retributive models, as in Saudi Arabia and Iran, to more restorative and rehabilitative approaches, as in Indonesia and Turkey, and they argue that *qisas* should be understood contextually, in light of the objectives of sharia, human dignity, and pluralistic societies. The argument is another example of the contextual reading of Qur'anic norms that this article attributes to Shihab's treatment of scriptural wording and differences of understanding, and, like Amin (2014), it shows that contextual reasoning is a recognized strand in contemporary Islamic legal thought.

Kuba et al. (2025) examine the 2022 rejection by the As'adiyah pesantren community of the invitation of the Salafi preacher Ustadz Firanda to a public religious event in Wajo, South Sulawesi, as a contest between authority grounded in *sanad*, pesantren networks, and Bugis cultural legitimacy and authority built through social media. They argue that online popularity does not by itself produce social acceptance, that the rejection was motivated by concern for local harmony and the continuity of Shafi'i-based local fiqh as well as by theological differences, and that local fiqh should be reactualized through the objectives of sharia. The study offers a regional case of the negotiated online authority discussed above and shows why a digital preacher's anchoring in recognized scholarly credentials matters, a point relevant to Shihab's YouTube presence.

Alfi et al. (2025) analyze viral religious content on TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram by observing the top 30 videos on each platform and interviewing ulama and digital influencers. They report that short da'wah clips of 15–60 seconds generate three to five times the engagement of long-form content, that themes such as the prohibition of heresy (32 percent) and criticism of modern lifestyle (25 percent) dominate, and that algorithmic logic simplifies religious material and shifts authority from depth of knowledge to popularity. They call for collaboration among scholars, content creators, platforms, and regulators. Against this background, the Shihab corpus, in which the videos last between 15 and 29 minutes and explain their reasoning step by step, is a useful contrasting case of long-form, scripture-based digital da'wah.

Asrori et al. (2025) study how urban Muslim millennials in Jakarta perform halal consumption on social media, using semi-structured interviews and digital ethnography. They find that halal becomes a curated "Halal Self," a moral and cultural distinction, and a basis for a Digital Ummah in which peers exchange religious knowledge and engage

in soft advocacy or everyday da'wah, while questions of authority and authenticity remain open. The study shows another route through which religious messages circulate online, one that is peer-based rather than scholar-led, and it suggests that the audiences who watch Shihab's videos also encounter competing, identity-oriented forms of religious content.

Ridhoh and Alfian (2025) read *Pasang ri Kajang*, the ancestral teachings of the Ammatoa Kajang Indigenous community in South Sulawesi, as a contextual ecotheology in which the Ammatoa acts as an "ecological imam" whose authority rests on moral and spiritual leadership rather than political power. Using participant observation, interviews, and document analysis, they show that faith and local wisdom can ground ethical practice without contradicting cultural identity. The study is distant in topic from Shihab's preaching, but it adds a comparable point about religious authority: legitimacy is tied to moral exemplarity and local meaning, a theme also visible in the contest of authority described above, and it extends the *Al-Qalam* literature on local wisdom from harmony to the environment.

Fauzi et al. (2025) trace how KH. Uso, an envoy of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, helped establish Islamic schools in Sorong, Papua, from 1965. They use Ibn Khaldun's *'asabiyah* to explain solidarity between indigenous and migrant Muslims, and they point to state support and organizational networks (NU, Muhammadiyah, and YAPIS) as further factors. They also note that schools such as those run by YAPIS and Muhammadiyah accepted students of other religions, which they describe as a multicultural Islamic education model, and that some non-Muslim parents chose these schools for their discipline. The study shows education as a channel of coexistence in a Muslim-minority setting and supports the use of tolerance material in school and training contexts proposed in this article.

Alam et al. (2025) apply PLS-SEM to data from 542 students to test how campus religious culture and campus legal policy affect student resilience. They find that religious culture influences cultural empathy, emotional intelligence, and resilience, that empathy and emotional intelligence mediate this influence, and that legal policy has a positive but weak effect. They recommend integrating religious values into campus culture as character formation and adding cross-cultural empathy training to student development programs. Although their object is campus life and not preaching, the findings support the educational use of messages such as Shihab's on non-insult and neighborliness, which can be read as appeals to empathy as well as to doctrine.

Research Gap

Three gaps emerge from this synthesis. First, studies of Shihab's digital preaching rely on a single channel, program, or episode, and their corpora are rarely documented in a way that others can trace. Second, they treat moderation as one message addressed to a general audience, even though research on digital religion shows that authority is negotiated with specific audiences. Third, none of the reviewed studies compares the arguments Shihab directs at fellow Muslims with those he directs at people of other faiths, or links video data to the hermeneutic principles of his printed works. Studies in Al-Qalam, meanwhile, have not examined a nationally influential digital preacher. This article responds to these gaps with a documented multi-channel corpus, a transparent coding procedure, and an explicit comparison between internal and external audiences.

Conceptual Framework

The study combines three lenses. First, *wasaṭiyyah* (religious moderation) supplies the substantive values that guide coding: *'adl* (justice), *tawāzun* (balance), *tasāmuḥ* (tolerance), and *tawassuṭ* (the middle way) (Huda et al., 2020; Jannah et al., 2023). Second, framing analysis (Entman, 1993) provides the message's

structure: each segment is examined for how it defines a problem, diagnoses its cause, makes a moral evaluation, and recommends a remedy. Third, theories of digital *da'wah* and online religious authority (Bakti, 2018; Campbell, 2010; Fakhruroji, 2019) treat YouTube as a medium in which a traditionally trained scholar addresses a dispersed audience without institutional mediation.

On this basis, the study works with one analytic expectation: because Shihab addresses two kinds of difference, the problem definitions, causal explanations, and scriptural supports in his videos may differ by audience. The study analyses the structure of the message; it does not measure its effect on viewers.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study, titled "Analysis of M. Quraish Shihab's Sermons on His YouTube Channel Regarding Living Harmoniously Amid Diversity," examines M. Quraish Shihab's sermons delivered via his YouTube channel, focusing on messages about living harmoniously amid diversity. This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method, which involves analyzing the sermon videos as the primary source and relating their content to relevant literature. The results of the study indicate that these sermons emphasize the importance of mutual respect, tolerance, dialogue, and understanding of differences as the foundation for building a harmonious and peaceful life within society.

Design

This is a qualitative, document-based study. It combines content analysis of video transcripts (Krippendorff, 2019) with hermeneutic interpretation in the tradition of Gadamer (2004). Content analysis extracts and codes the data in a systematic and traceable way; hermeneutics is then used to interpret the resulting themes in light of Shihab's printed works and the Indonesian social context. No interviews or field observations were conducted.

Research Subject

M. Quraish Shihab was born in Rappang, South Sulawesi, on February 16, 1944. He studied Tafsir and Hadith at the Faculty of Uṣūl al-Dīn, al-Azhar University, and earned his M.A. in 1976 with a thesis titled "al-I'jāz al-Tashrī 'ī li al-Qur'ān al-Karīm." He returned to al-Azhar in 1980 and obtained his doctorate in 1982 with a dissertation on al-Biqā'ī's *Naẓm al-Durar*, graduating *summa cum laude*. His principal work, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, comprises 15 volumes, and he has authored more than 60 books.

Video Corpus

The corpus consists of six videos that discuss differences among Muslims or between religious communities (Table 1). A video was included if (a) Shihab is the main speaker, (b) its topic is the nature of religious differences or the proper response to them, and (c) the full video is publicly accessible on YouTube. Videos that mention differences only in passing, videos dominated by another speaker, and third-party re-uploads whose source cannot be identified were excluded.

Based on the text, the research corpus consists of six publicly accessible YouTube videos featuring Shihab as the main speaker discussing interfaith differences. The videos were selected based on topical criteria concerning the nature of, or responses to, such differences, while third-party re-uploads or videos that merely touched upon the topic in passing were excluded.

Table 1 records the metadata displayed on YouTube for each video: the title in its original language with an English gloss, the channel, the upload date, the duration, and the link. For a television program re-uploaded online, the upload date is given and the original broadcast period is noted where the title indicates it. The same dates are used in the text and in the References, where each video is listed under its channel name.

Table 1. Video Corpus

Code	Title (as published)	Channel/publisher	Date	Duration	Link	Main content coded
V1	How to Tolerate Religious Differences?	https://www.youtube.com	July 15, 2021	25 minutes	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKzlCupZopI	Internal differences: fundamentals vs. details; ease; *tayammum* example
V2	Differences of Opinion in Understanding Islam	https://www.youtube.com	March 19, 2022	15 minutes	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2EkURR4-rY	Internal differences: *sunnatullah*; polysemy of the text; three levels of religion; *ijtihad*
V3	Diversity of God's Will: This Is the Prophet's Covenant with Christians (Part 2)	Shihab & Shihab	March 26, 2019	27 minutes	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=irPYKHt-xFc	Interfaith: common ground; Prophet's examples; Najran treaty
V4	The difference is the will of Allah; Surah Saba'/25: every person is responsible for their own actions	Ustadz Dr. Musthafa Umar, Lc, MA	Aug 29, 2019	28 minutes	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPDhnsTxjrk.	Interfaith: QS Hud/118; al-An'am/108; al-Hajj/40; Saba'/25; al-Baqarah/256
V5	Tafsir Al-Misbah [Verses 24–31]	Metro TV	June 11, 2017	29 minutes	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fllbmsfQkWM.	QS Saba'/24
V6	Islam Wasathiyah [Moderate Islam]	Ustadz Abdullah Haidir, Lc	December 6, 2019	22 minutes	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJd2ImVjCE8.	QS Saba'/24 for interlocutors of other faiths; Ali Imran/19 for Muslims

Source: Researchers' analysis

Unit of Analysis and Coding Scheme

The unit of analysis is the argumentative segment: a continuous stretch of speech that expresses one proposition together with its support, whether a verse, a hadith, a historical report, or an everyday analogy. The coding scheme combines deductive and inductive coding (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008; Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Categories C1 to C4 were derived deductively from the *wasaṭiyyah* pillars and Entman's (1993) framing functions, whereas their subcategories and categories C5 and C6 emerged inductively through open coding of the transcripts. Table 2 presents the final scheme.

Table 2. Coding Scheme

Category (origin)	Subcategories (codes)	Operational indicator
C1 Nature of difference (deductive: problem definition)	C1.1 Difference as *sunnatullah* / divine will; C1.2 Difference as ease or wisdom	Statements attributing difference to God's design or pointing to its benefit
C2 Sources of disagreement (deductive: causal interpretation; subcodes inductive)	C2.1 Fundamentals vs. details; C2.2 Polysemy of scriptural wording; C2.3 Levels of religion, understanding, and religiosity	Explanations of why people, especially Muslims, hold different views
C3 Ethics of difference (deductive: moral evaluation; *tasamuh*, *'adl*)	C3.1 No quarrelling; C3.2 Reward of sincere *ijtihad*; C3.3 No insult to others' beliefs	Normative statements about how to behave when views differ

Category (origin)	Subcategories (codes)	Operational indicator
C4 Interfaith stance (deductive: remedy; *tawassuth*, *tawazun*)	C4.1 Freedom of choice and accountability; C4.2 Common ground and cooperation; C4.3 Competition in goodness; C4.4 Mutual protection of houses of worship; C4.5 Neighbourly sharing	Statements on relations with people of other faiths
C5 Boundaries (inductive)	C5.1 Commitment after choosing a creed; C5.2 Respect without recognising truth claims	Statements that limit the scope of tolerance
C6 Support and communication (inductive)	C6.1 Qur'anic verse; C6.2 Hadith; C6.3 Prophetic or historical precedent; C6.4 Everyday example or analogy; C6.5 Audience-specific scriptural basis	Resources used to support a claim and the way they are addressed to an audience

Source: Researchers' analysis

Analytical Procedure

The analysis proceeded in six stages. (1) Each video was watched in full and transcribed verbatim in Indonesian; the passages quoted in this article were translated into English by the authors. (2) The transcripts were divided into argumentative segments. (3) Each segment was coded with the deductive categories, and new codes were added where a segment did not fit. (4) The codes were grouped into seven themes (T1–T7) following the phases of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). (5) The themes were interpreted hermeneutically: the authors made their pre-understanding explicit (they work in religious training, school education, and Islamic higher education), read each segment in the context of the whole video, and compared Shihab's statements with his printed works (Shihab, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2013, 2019, 2022) to reach a fusion between the horizon of the text and that of the contemporary Indonesian context (Gadamer, 2004; Huda et al., 2020). (6) The relationship among video, segment, code, theme, and interpretation was recorded in a mapping table (Table 3), which serves as an audit trail.

Evidence Layers and Terminology

To keep the sources of evidence distinguishable, each argument in the Results and Discussion is organised in layers marked in italics: *Video data* (what Shihab said in a coded video, cited as V1–V6), *Printed work* (his published writings), *Interpretation* (the authors' reading), and *Prior studies* (how the finding relates to published research). Arabic terms follow one transliteration throughout (*wasathiyah*, *tawazun*, *tasamuh*, *tawassuth*, *'adl*, *da'wah*, *sunnatullah*), and "YouTube" is written in this form except in quoted titles.

DISCUSSION

The analysis produced seven themes: difference as divine design and ease (T1); textual and epistemic sources of internal difference (T2); the ethics of disagreement (T3); freedom of choice, accountability, and the limits of tolerance (T4); common ground and competition in goodness (T5); respect and mutual protection (T6); and audience-differentiated scriptural grounding (T7). Table 3 maps the data to these themes. T1–T3 mainly concern differences among Muslims, T4–T6 differences between religious communities, and T7 cuts across both.

Table 3. Mapping Of Video Data, Codes, Themes, And Interpretation

Video	Data segment (paraphrased)	Code	Theme	Interpretation
V1	Muslims agree on the principles (oneness of God, Day of Judgment, final prophet, prayer) but may differ in details.	C2.1	T2	Locates disagreement in details, not in creed
V1	*Tayammum* on an aeroplane: Shafi'i and Maliki rulings; he chooses the one easier for the situation	C1.2; C6.4	T1	Presents plurality of schools as practical ease through an everyday example

Video	Data segment (paraphrased)	Code	Theme	Interpretation
V2	No two people share fingerprints; even mountains differ; uniformity would end life.	C1.1; C6.4	T1	Frames difference as *sunnatullah* with an analogy from nature
V2	The letter *ba'* in the ablution verse is read as emphasis or as partitive	C2.2; C6.1	T2	Shows how textual polysemy yields legitimate differences
V2	Three terms: the Islamic religion (Qur'an and Sunnah), understanding of it, and religiosity	C2.3	T2	Protects scriptural authority while allowing plural understandings
V2	A sincere *mujtahid* receives two rewards if right and one if wrong	C3.2	T3	Gives a moral basis for tolerating good-faith error
V2	No need to argue; the Companions differed over the instruction about praying Asr at Banu Qurayza	C3.1; C6.3	T3	Uses prophetic-era precedent to normalise disagreement
V3	Seek common ground; where we cannot meet, compete in good deeds	C4.2; C4.3	T5	Moves from doctrinal agreement to social cooperation
V3	The Prophet fed an elderly Jewish man; the Najran treaty	C4.5; C6.3	T5	Prophetic examples as models of neighbourliness
V4	QS Hud/118: difference is God's will; QS Saba'/25: each is accountable for own deeds	C1.1; C4.1; C6.1	T4	Combines divine will with individual responsibility
V4	Hadith on cursing one's parents; QS al-An'am/108: do not insult what others worship	C3.3; C6.1; C6.2	T6	Reciprocity: insulting others invites insult in return
V4	QS al-Hajj/40: places of worship are protected through mutual restraint	C4.4; C6.1	T6	Mutual protection as a shared duty
V4; Printed work	"No compulsion in religion" concerns the choice of creed; once chosen, its guidance binds.	C5.1	T4	Pairs tolerance with commitment to one's own creed
V5; V6	QS Saba'/24 for interlocutors of another faith; QS Ali Imran/19 for fellow Muslims	C6.5	T7	Chooses a different scriptural basis by audience

Source: Researchers' analysis

Differences among Muslims: Divine Design, Textual Plurality, and Ease

Video data. In "How to Tolerate Religious Differences?" (V1), Shihab urged viewers to learn from differences. He said:

> *"As fellow Muslims, we are all equal in the principles of our religious teachings. We all acknowledge the oneness of God, the Day of Judgment, the Prophet Muhammad as the final prophet, and prayer, among others. However, the details of religious teachings can differ. Sometimes, a practice may better suit our circumstances. For example, if we can't perform ablution on an airplane, we perform tayammum. According to the Shafi'i school of thought, tayammum is performed from the fingertips to the elbows, while according to the Maliki school of thought, tayammum is performed from the fingertips to the wrists. In certain situations, I find it difficult to ask questions in the way the Shafi'i school of thought does, so I choose to ask questions according to the Maliki school of thought. This is the wisdom of differences, which provides convenience."*

In "Differences of Opinion in Understanding Islam" (V2), he said:

> *"Difference is the essence of life, the sunnatullāh. No two people have identical fingerprints, and even mountains are distinct. Diversity is fundamental to existence; when uniformity is imposed, vitality is lost. Religion reflects this principle: while some teachings are universally accepted, many details are subject to interpretation because verses and hadiths can convey multiple meanings. God intended humanity to be diverse. Interpretations also vary because the language in the Qur'an can contain more than one meaning. For example, the Qur'an commands believers to wipe over their heads when performing ablution. Some interpret the letter ba' in this verse as indicating emphasis, while others understand it as partitive, resulting in different legal rulings. Islam maintains unity in creed but allows for diversity in its particulars. Therefore, avoid disputes; this religion accommodates diversity to facilitate ease."*

In another section of V2, three distinct meanings of "religion" are identified. The first denotes Islam itself, specifically the Qur'an and the Sunnah, which are regarded as complete and unaltered since the Prophet's death. The second meaning pertains to the interpretation of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, from which religious sciences and prominent scholars emerged, often differing as new societal issues developed. The third meaning addresses religious practice, or religiosity. An individual knowledgeable in religious matters is not necessarily devout, while a devout person may simply adhere to scholarly guidance. When divergent opinions arise, some may be incorrect; however, God is described as tolerant: those who sincerely engage in *ijtihad* receive two rewards if correct and one if mistaken. It is further noted that differences had already appeared among the Companions when they received the Prophet's instruction, "Do not pray 'Aṣr except at Banū Qurayẓah."

Interpretation. Shihab's argument follows a clear sequence. He first separates fundamentals from details ("we are all equal in the principles"), so that disagreement is located at the level of understanding, not of revelation. He then explains why disagreement is inevitable: nature itself is plural (fingerprints, mountains), and scriptural wording is polysemous (the letter *ba* in the ablution verse). Finally, he makes disagreement morally safe, because sincere *ijtihad* is rewarded even when mistaken, and practically useful, because the choice among schools of thought brings ease. In Entman's terms, the problem is that differences in details are mistaken for differences in the religion itself; the cause is a lack of awareness of the levels of religion; the moral evaluation is that differences are permissible, but quarrelling is not; and the remedy is to learn from differences and, where circumstances require, to choose the easier opinion.

The observed pattern in previous studies aligns with the conditions of sound knowledge, controlled emotion, and carefulness identified in Shihab's discussion of wasaṭiyyah (Ikrimah et al., 2021), as well as with the courteous and accessible style reported by Anggraini (2021) and Samsuriyanto et al. (2025). The airplane example in V1 further illustrates this accessibility. However, the present corpus introduces an additional dimension not emphasized in earlier research: the argument is primarily epistemic and juristic. Rather than advocating tranquility alone, Shihab explains the legitimate origins of disagreement within religious structures. This approach corresponds to the pillars of tawāzun and tasāmuḥ described by Jannah et al. (2023) and the contextual hermeneutics identified by Huda et al. (2020) and Wardani et al. (2026).

Differences between Religious Communities: Freedom, Accountability, and Mutual Protection

Video data. In "Keragaman Kehendak Tuhan: Inilahn Perjanjian Nabi dengan Kaum Nasrani (Part 2)" ("Diversity of God's Will: The Prophet's Covenant with Christians", V3), Shihab said that, amid differences, people should seek common ground where adherents of different religions can meet; where they meet, they should cooperate, and where they cannot, they should compete in good deeds such as social activities. Asked how the Prophet associated with non-Muslims, he recounted the story of the Prophet feeding an elderly Jewish man and mentioned the treaty with the Christians of Najrān.

In another video (V4), he expounded QS Hud/11:118:

وَلَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ أُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً

Meaning: If your Lord willed, He would have made humans one people. (QS Hud/ 11:118)

According to Shihab, differences are God's will; humans are free to choose, and each person is responsible for that choice. To establish mutual respect, he cited a hadith narrated by 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr ibn al-'As and reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Prophet said that one of the major sins is a man cursing his own parents. The Companions asked, "O Messenger of God, how can a man curse

his own parents?" He answered, "He insults another man's father, and that man insults his father in return; he insults another man's mother, and that man insults his mother in return." From this hadith, Shihab drew the lesson that people should not insult others or their religions, because others will insult their religion in return. He then recited QS al-An'ām/6:108:

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللّٰهَ عَدْوًاۢ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍۗ كَذٰلِكَ زَيَّنَّا لِكُلِّ اُمَّةٍ عَمَلَهُمْۖ ثُمَّ اِلٰى رَبِّهِمْ مَّرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ

Meaning: And do not insult those they invoke other than Allāh, lest they insult Allāh in enmity without knowledge. Thus, we have made pleasing to every community their deeds. Then to their Lord is their return, and He will inform them about what they used to do." (QS al-An'ām/6:108).

Other exegesis. Hamka (2015) held that if Muslims truly adhered to their religion, arguments leading to verbal abuse would not occur, because such behavior arises only from a lack of knowledge.

Video data. In the same video, Shihab continued with QS al-Ḥajj/22:40:

الَّذِيْنَ اُخْرِجُوْا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّقُوْلُوْا رَبُّنَا اللّٰهُۗ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللّٰهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَّهُدِّمَتْ صَوَامِعُ وَبِيَعٌ وَّصَلَوٰتٌ وَّمَسٰجِدُ يُذْكَرُ فِيْهَا اسْمُ اللّٰهِ كَثِيْرًاۗ وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللّٰهُ مَنْ يَّنْصُرُهٗۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيْزٌ

Meaning: ˹They are˺ those who have been expelled from their homes for no reason other than proclaiming: "Our Lord is Allah." Had Allah not repelled ˹the aggression of˺ some people by means of others, destruction would have surely claimed monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which Allah's Name is often mentioned. Allah will certainly help those who stand up for Him. Allah is truly All-Powerful, Almighty. (QS al-Hajj/40).

He interpreted this verse to mean that, without cooperation among people, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques would be destroyed by the enemies of religion; cooperation is therefore necessary so that communities protect one another.

On social interaction between religious communities, he grounded his view in QS Saba'/34:24:

قُلْ مَنْ يَّرْزُقُكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِۗ قُلِ اللّٰهُۙ وَاِنَّآ اَوْ اِيَّاكُمْ لَعَلٰى هُدًى اَوْ فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ

Meaning: Say (Prophet Muhammad), "Who provides for you from the heavens and the earth?" Say, "Allah." Indeed, either we or you (the polytheists) are truly upon guidance or in clear error." (QS Saba'/34:24) (V5; V6).

In another video, he explained that this verse is specifically addressed to interlocutors of a different faith. Meanwhile, regarding fellow Muslims within the community, the guiding principle is Surah Ali Imran, verse 19 (V6).

He further explained that, in relations between religious communities, each side should attend to its own responsibilities and need not be concerned with the worship of people of other religions, citing QS Saba'/34:25:

قُلْ لَّا تُسْـَٔلُوْنَ عَمَّآ اَجْرَمْنَا وَلَا نُسْـَٔلُ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُوْنَ

Meaning: Say, "You will not be held accountable for what we have committed, and we will not be held accountable for what you do." (QS Saba'/34:25)

He emphasized that harmonious coexistence requires people to seek common ground rather than argue over religious differences. At the end of the video, he advocated peace, saying that, at a minimum, people should avoid disturbing others and instead offer support. He further asserted that neighbours of different faiths should be included in moments of joy and assisted during times of difficulty. He argued that belief is not for humans to judge, a principle that applies even to the Prophet, whose responsibility was solely to convey the message; Shihab concluded with QS al-Baqarah/2:256. According to Shihab, living peacefully amid diversity is a core aspect of *da'wah*, in which society upholds moral values.

Printed work. In Tafsir Al-Mishbah, Shihab (2005) explains that "no compulsion in religion" concerns the choice of creed. A person who has chosen a creed, for example, Islam, is bound by its guidance, must carry out its commands, and faces sanctions for violating its provisions; having accepted the creed, one cannot claim the freedom to ignore its obligations.

Exegesis. Unlike his arguments to fellow Muslims, the arguments here do not explain why interpretations differ. They affirm a divine will for plurality (Hūd/11:118), combine freedom with

individual accountability (Saba'/34:25), and then turn to conduct: do not insult (al-An'ām/6:108), protect one another's places of worship (al-Ḥajj/22:40), and share in neighbors' joy and difficulty. The recurrent move is to avoid adjudicating whose belief is right and to direct attention to what people can do together in social affairs (*mu'āmalah*). In Entman's terms, the problem is hostility arising from disrespect and ignorance; the cause is a lack of knowledge and insulting speech that provokes reciprocal insult; the moral evaluation is that each person answers for their own choice; and the remedy is common ground, cooperation, and competition in goodness. The qualification attached to al-Baqarah/2:256 shows that this openness has a boundary: freedom of religion does not remove the obligations of those who have chosen a faith.

Prior studies. Elisa (2023) shows that Shihab does not automatically label non-Muslims as kāfir, emphasizing peaceful coexistence. Taufiqurrohmah (2022) frames moderation as competition in goodness. V3 and V4 add the scriptural and prophetic basis (the treaty with the Christians of Najrān and the feeding of an elderly Jewish man) that supports that framing. The neighborly ethic also parallels practices documented in Al-Qalam: Mustafa (2020) describes To Wotu Muslims who live peacefully with neighbours of other faiths, and Nuruddin and Aksa (2022) report non-Muslim residents serving on the committee that built a mosque in the Kei Islands, a concrete instance of the mutual protection of houses of worship that Shihab derives from al-Ḥajj/22:40. That the same ethic appears in a national preacher's argument and in local practice suggests that digital preaching and local wisdom can reinforce each other, a possibility that merits empirical testing.

Related studies in Al-Qalam. Yogesi, Amriani, and Alfian (2025) show how the common ground that Shihab recommends in V3 can be lived as shared work. In the Omah Tani farmers' community in Batang, Muslims, Christians, Catholics, Hindus, Buddhists, Confucians, and followers of local beliefs cooperate in land redistribution advocacy, farmers' education, and the Krempyeng direct-market scheme, and one of its leaders states that differences of belief do not prevent them from working together for the community (2025). The authors read this as dia-praxis, dialogue that takes place through joint action and interfaith prayer rather than theological debate (2025). Read alongside Shihab's emphasis on social affairs (mu'āmalah) and competition in goodness, the case suggests that his advice to leave the adjudication of truth claims aside can be translated into collaborative practice, although Omah Tani does not address the boundary that Shihab maintains between respect and recognition of another faith's truth claims.

Rodiah (2025) reads the Iraqi novel Tashari from an Indonesian standpoint and highlights a scene in which a Christian doctor tells her Muslim patient that their Gods speak different tongues yet understand the same suffering. The author interprets this as a moral refusal of sectarian violence and relates it to Indonesian experiences in Ambon and Poso, where interfaith dialogue, reconciliation, and shared mourning have countered sectarian hatred; the refusal is directed at the weaponization of faith, not at faith itself (2025). This resonates with Shihab's position in V4 that differences are part of God's will and that insulting another community's beliefs invites hostility in return. It is also notable that this study opens by mentioning the Poso conflict (Yunus, 2014): Rodiah's reading suggests that literary and homiletic discourse can both frame difference as acknowledged, not erased, while shifting attention from doctrinal rivalry to shared human vulnerability.

Anjarsari et al. (2025) analyze Banu Mushtaq's short-story collection Heart Lamp and offer three points that bear on the audience-calibrated argument developed here. First, they refuse to shelter "Islamic issues" under a timeless essence and instead read piety as situated practice (2025), which parallels Shihab's separation of religion, religious

understanding, and religiosity in V2. Second, they treat humor as ethical ventilation that lowers tension without removing responsibility (2025), a function comparable to Shihab's everyday analogies, such as the aeroplane example, in the videos. Third, they argue that difference is a medium of ethical exchange rather than noise, and that critique travels in the same idioms that carry blessing and affection (2025). Because their object is literary fiction and translation, not preaching, the comparison is analogical; still, it supports the view that tone and idiom are part of how moderation is argued to different audiences.

Nasrullah et al. (2025) study congregants' perceptions of mosque libraries in South Sulawesi and find that many congregants know the library exists but prefer sermons and study circles, which they consider more interactive and easier to follow than reading dense texts (2025). The authors recommend combining text-based literacy with discussions and guided explanations, and complementing print collections with digital resources, particularly in an information environment saturated with misinformation (2025). Shihab's YouTube preaching can be read as one such bridge: it delivers explanations of Qur'anic verses and hadith, which are otherwise accessible mainly through his printed works such as Tafsir Al-Mishbah (Shihab, 2005), in spoken, example-rich form. This supports the practical recommendation of this article that the coded videos be used together with written tafsir in training and education, though, as noted, the present study does not measure audience reception.

Rahman (2025) applies the wasathiyah paradigm to the Pringgasela Cultural Festival in East Lombok and lists five operating principles: tawassuth, tawazun, i'tidal, infitah, and tathawwur wa ibtikar (2025). The study finds that local youth combine social media with traditional deliberation to carry the festival's message (2025), that openness to foreign visitors is treated as an opportunity for cultural preaching rather than a threat (2025), and that da'wah is understood to include aesthetic and social expressions, not only lectures (2025). This is consistent with Shihab's statement in V3 that living peacefully amid diversity is a core aspect of da'wah. The comparison also clarifies the contribution of the present article: whereas Rahman shows wasathiyah operating in a community event with a digital layer, the Shihab corpus shows it operating in a single preacher's argumentation, calibrated to two kinds of audience.

Syahrial, Rahman, and Nazarudin (2025) describe a local episode that illustrates the internal differences Shihab discusses in V1 and V2. In Pameungpeuk, a dispute over reciting the Qunut prayer in the dawn prayer, on which Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Umat Islam took opposing positions, polarized the community. The master of the Singa Dorang silat school chose a neutral stance and regarded the matter as an internal Muslim affair to be settled through scholarly deliberation and community education, so as not to deepen the division (2025). Since Qunut is a question of detail rather than of the fundamentals of belief, the case is a practical instance of what Shihab teaches: differences in details are legitimate, and the proper response is to avoid quarrelling. The authors present this neutrality as one reason the school remained socially acceptable, which suggests that Shihab's ethic of disagreement without contention has long-standing local analogues.

Pradana and Berakon (2025) approach hadith from electoral politics and supply a necessary caution for the analysis of preaching. They recall the Charter of Medina as a Prophetic compromise that accommodated the interests of diverse groups (2025), a precedent comparable to the Najrān treaty that Shihab cites in V3. At the same time, they report that in Indonesian elections hadiths on trust and just leadership are used as symbols of legitimacy, including in Friday sermons that build a candidate's moral image and delegitimize rivals (2025), and they recall the hadith warning against attributing

words to the Prophet that he did not say, as a reminder of integrity in information (2025). Against this background, Shihab's use of the hadith on cursing one's parents to argue for non-insult is aimed at conduct rather than candidacy; however, because this study analyzes messages and not intentions or effects, whether audience calibration remains ethical persuasion in every context is a question for future reception research.

Audience-Differentiated Scriptural Grounding and the Boundaries of Tolerance

Exegesis. Across the corpus, Shihab develops his messages informatively rather than coercively: he explains concepts step by step, uses everyday examples (the airplane, fingerprints, a neighbour in difficulty), supports claims with verses, hadiths, and prophetic precedent, and keeps his language simple. What differs is the logic of persuasion. When addressing differences among Muslims, he explains where and why readings diverge; when addressing other faiths, he stresses freedom, accountability, and conduct. The choice of scripture follows the same line: Saba'/34:24 is presented as addressed to interlocutors of other faiths, whereas Āl 'Imrān/3:19 is the guiding principle for fellow Muslims (V6). Table 4 summarizes the two registers.

Table 4. Two Registers Of Shihab's Preaching On Difference

Dimension	Register A: internal differences	Register B: external differences
Scriptural anchor	QS Ali Imran/19; the ablution verse; the hadith on *ijtihad*	QS Hud/118; Saba'/24–25; al-An'am/108; al-Hajj/40
Logic of argument	Epistemic-juristic: why readings differ	Ethical-civic: how to live with difference
Exemplar	Differences among the Companions; choice of school of thought	The Najran treaty; the elderly Jewish man
Aim of the message	Ease and non-contention	Peace, non-disturbance, cooperation
Boundary	Difference in details, not in fundamentals	Respect, not recognition of truth claims

Source: Researchers' Analysis

The boundary row deserves emphasis. Respect for different beliefs does not mean recognizing their truth. Respect is expressed in courteous communication, using the language the Qur'an teaches for addressing people of other faiths, while matters of belief proper are discussed within the community. Tolerance in Shihab's videos is therefore not relativism: it combines openness toward others' choices with commitment to one's own creed (V4; Shihab, 2005).

Prior studies. This differentiation refines the common reading that Shihab presents a single moderate voice (Jannah et al., 2023; Taufiqurrohmah, 2022). Anggraini's (2021) observation that he uses universal language captures the interfaith register well but not the intra-Muslim one, where the frames are explicitly Islamic and juristic. It also contrasts with YouTube exegesis that grounds moderation mainly in al-Baqarah/2:143 as the mainstream position (Yusufa et al., 2025): Shihab instead varies his scriptural anchor by audience. Finally, it nuances Wardani et al. (2026), who describe his approach as contextual and persuasive but lacking enforcement power: the two-register structure may help explain why his message is intelligible both to Muslims who share his juristic vocabulary and to non-Muslims who do not, although this study does not test reception.

Nurhayati and Suhardin (2020) compare religious moderation among students at Universitas Tadulako and IAIN Palu through interviews, observation, and documentation, and report two features that bear directly on the audience-differentiated argument developed here. First, IAIN Palu strengthens moderation among Muslims first, taking intra-Muslim disputes such as the number of *tarawih* units, the *qunut* in the dawn prayer, and the

audible or silent recitation of the *basmala* as a starting point, and only then extends it to interaction with non-Muslims, whereas Universitas Tadulako, with a religiously plural student body, stresses shared Indonesian and humanitarian values. This sequence parallels the internal and external registers identified in Shihab's videos. Second, the authors identify two opposing deviations: a fundamentalist-scriptural view that truth is only one, and a liberal-contextual view that all religions are equally true, and they observe that the second tends to provoke the first. Read alongside them, Shihab's position that respect does not mean recognizing another faith's truth claims appears as a path between these two poles. The authors also note that students' reliance on online sources such as YouTube and Google to learn about Islam complicates efforts at moderation, which underlines why the quality of digital preaching matters.

Novelty and Theoretical Contribution

The study offers three contributions. First, empirically, it analyzes a documented corpus of Shihab's YouTube videos and distinguishes internal from external differences, which the studies reviewed above do not do. Second, conceptually, it proposes a two-register model of digital *wasaṭiyyah*: moderation is not a uniform message but an audience-calibrated argument, in which the same anchor (difference as divine will) supports an epistemic-juristic logic for Muslims and an ethical-civic logic for people of other faiths. This extends the *wasaṭiyyah* pillars from a list of values to a discursive structure, and it extends Entman's framing functions by showing that each function is filled differently for each audience. Third, methodologically, the mapping from video to segment, code, theme, and interpretation (Table 3) shows how content analysis and Gadamerian hermeneutics can be combined for audiovisual *da'wah* data. The findings also support the view that online religious authority is negotiated rather than replaced (Campbell, 2007, 2010): Shihab's authority on YouTube remains anchored in the scriptural and exegetical credentials that the videos continuously display, while his choice of register adapts that authority to each audience.

Public Benefits and Implications

The findings have practical value for several groups. For the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which has made religious moderation a national program (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019), and for its training institutes, the coded videos and the scheme in Table 2 can serve as case material and a discussion guide in training on religious moderation. This matters because Shihab's approach relies on voluntary acceptance rather than enforcement and therefore depends on institutional channels for wider reach (Wardani et al., 2026). For religious extension workers (*penyuluh agama*), whose role in managing interfaith harmony has been documented in *Al-Qalam* (Nuruddin, 2016), and for interfaith forums and religious leaders, the two-register model offers a practical way to prepare messages: explain the reasons for disagreement when speaking to fellow Muslims, and emphasize freedom, accountability, and shared conduct when speaking across faiths. For teachers, including those in vocational schools, the segments on *khilāf* and neighborliness can open classroom discussion on handling disagreement without hostility. For preachers and content creators, the corpus shows how simple language, everyday examples, and scriptural grounding can be matched to different audiences, which is relevant at a time when moderate voices are underrepresented online (Akmaliah, 2020) and peace education is urged to engage digital media (Wagiu et al., 2026). For the wider public, the videos yield concrete ethics: do not insult others' beliefs, help neighbors of other faiths, protect one another's houses of worship, and treat differences in details as room for ease rather than grounds for quarreling.

The study has limitations. The corpus is small and purposive, covers only one preacher, and depends on videos that remain publicly available. It analyzes messages, not audience reception or comments. Future research could combine this coding scheme with reception analysis, compare Shihab with other digital preachers, and test whether the two-register structure appears in other genres of religious communication.

CLOSING

This study set out to explain how M. Quraish Shihab teaches living harmoniously amid differences on YouTube. The answer is that he does not deliver one uniform message of moderation but argues in two registers. To fellow Muslims, he treats difference as part of God's design and explains where it legitimately arises, in the plurality of scriptural meaning and in the distinction between religion, religious understanding, and religiosity, so that disagreement can be accepted without quarreling. To people of other faiths, he grounds coexistence in freedom of choice and individual accountability and directs attention to shared conduct: not insulting others' beliefs, protecting one another's houses of worship, and competing in goodness. In both registers, respect does not imply recognizing the truth of other beliefs; it is expressed through courteous communication.

The study contributes a two-register model of digital *wasathiyah* and a transparent corpus-to-theme mapping that other researchers can replicate. In practical terms, it is recommended that the government, particularly the Ministry of Religious Affairs, disseminate Shihab's ideas widely together with all stakeholders as an effort to counter intolerant narratives, and that his thoughts be used as learning material in formal educational institutions and in training on tolerance and religious moderation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors thank the Head of the Makassar Religious Research and Development Center, the editors of *Al-Qalam*, and the journal's management for the opportunity to publish this article. They are also grateful to the reviewers, whose comments substantially improved the manuscript.

REFERENCES

Al-Qur'an al-Karim.

Abidin, Ahmad Zainal, Imam Fuadi, Nur Kholis, and Thoriqul Aziz. 2020. "Between Conflict and Peace: The Government Policies and Sunni-Shia Relationship in Sampang and Yogyakarta." *Esensia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 21(2):135–150. doi:10.14421/esensia.v21i2.2243.

Akmaliah, Wahyudi. 2020. "The Demise of Moderate Islam: New Media, Contestation, and Reclaiming Religious Authorities." *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 10(1):1–24. doi:10.18326/ijims.v10i1.1-24.

Alam, Aztri Fithrayani, Muhammad Ilham Bakhtiar, Resi Sepsilia Elvera, Khalid Rahman, and Ehsonov Jasurbek Rustamovich. 2025. "The Influence of Campus Religious Culture and Legal Policies on Student Resilience: The Role of Cultural Empathy and Emotional Intelligence Mediation." *Al-Qalam* 31(2):286–301.

Alfi, Imam, Abdul Basit, Umi Halwati, and Abdul Malik. 2025. "The Transformation of Religious Practices of Digital Ummah in the Age of Algorithms." *Al-Qalam* 31(2):331–345.

Amin, Abd. Rauf Muhammad. 2014. "Prinsip dan Fenomena Moderasi Islam dalam Tradisi Hukum Islam." *Al-Qalam* 20(Edisi Khusus, Desember):23–32.

Anjarsari, Fitrilya, Dini Sri Istiningdias, Zietha Arlamanda Asri, and Maulana Rifai. 2025. "Fluid Islamic Identities and Posthuman Assemblages in Banu

Mushtaq's Heart Lamp." *Al-Qalam* 31(2):407–422.

Asrori, Saifudin, Muhammad Isma'il, Joharotul Jamilah, and Ahmad Shabbir. 2025. "Performing Piety in the Digital Age: Halal Consumption and Muslim Identity." *Al-Qalam* 31(2):255–271.

Bakti, Andi Faisal. 2018. "Media and Religion: Rodja TV's Involvement in the Civil Society Discourse for Community Development." *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication* 34(3):226–244.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa edtechhub.

Campbell, H. (2007). Who's got the power? Religious authority and the Internet. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 12(3), 1043–1062. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00362. xuni-trier

Dachlan, Muhammad. 2021. "Best Practice Construction of House of Worship Based on Local Wisdom in Palu." *Al-Qalam* 27(2):291–302. doi:10.31969/alq.v27i2.984.

Elisa, Sinta Nur. 2023. "Makna Kāfir Perspektif M. Quraish Shihab dan Gus Baha' dalam Media YouTube." Undergraduate thesis, UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto. https://eprints.uinsaizu.ac.id/20205/.

Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H. (2008). The qualitative content analysis process. Journal of Advanced Nursing, 62(1), 107–115. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2007.04569. x nih.

Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. Journal of Communication, 43(4), 51–58. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304. x scilit.

Fahriani, L. 2025. "Konsep Dakwah Moderasi Beragama Prof. Muhammad Quraish Shihab (Kajian Buku Wasathiyyah Wawasan Islam tentang Moderasi Beragama)." *Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi* 4(1):59–78.

Fakhruroji, M. (2019). Digitalizing Islamic lectures: Islamic apps and religious engagement in contemporary Indonesia. Contemporary Islam, 13(2), 201–215. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-018-0427-9.

Fauzi, Nasrul, Abdurrahmansyah, Herlina, Azri Bhari, and Nur Faizah. 2025. "Building Islamic Schooling in a Muslim-Minority Region: KH. Uso, 'Asabiyah, and the Institutionalization of Islamic Education in Papua (1965–2020)." *Al-Qalam* 31(2):224–238.

Fauziah, Niswatin Nur. 2021. "Gaya Bahasa Ceramah M. Quraish Shihab 'Muhammad sebagai Nabi dan Manusia' di YouTube." Undergraduate thesis, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. http://digilib.uinsa.ac.id/id/eprint/73082/.

Fereday, J., & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 5(1), 80–92. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690600500107. edtechhub.

Gadamer, H.-G. (2004). Truth and method (2nd rev. ed., J. Weinsheimer & D. G. Marshall, Trans.). Continuum.

Hamka. 2015. *Tafsir Al-Azhar*. Jilid 3 dan 8. Jakarta: Gema Insani.

Hidayat, Taufiq, and Ida Afidah. 2022. "Analisis Pesan Dakwah M. Quraish Shihab dalam Kajian Dakwah Ala Nabi pada Video YouTube 'Najwa Shihab.'" *Bandung Conference Series: Islamic Broadcast Communication* 2(2):124–130.

Huda, Nur, Nur Hamid, and Muhammad Khoirul Misbah. 2020. "Konsep Wasathiyyah M. Quraish Shihab dalam Tafsir Al-Misbah (Analisis Hermeneutika Hans-Georg Gadamer)." *International Journal Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* 22(2):198–231. doi:10.21580/ihya.22.2.6768.

Ikrimah, Fauziyah, M. Alief Rindianto, Fikry Zahria Emeraldien, and Muhammad Wahyu Pratama. 2021. "Da'wa in Shihab & Shihab YouTube Content: Semiotic Analysis of 'Islam Wasathiyyah, Islam yang di Tengah' Episode." *Proceedings of International Conference on Da'wa and Communication* 3(1):37–47. https://proceedings.uinsa.ac.id/index.php/ICONDAC/article/download/469/535.

Jannah, Rosyada Roihatul, Moh. Slamet, and Suhari. 2023. "Pesan Moderasi Beragama Quraish Shihab dalam Channel YouTube Najwa Shihab Edisi Islam Wasathiyah, Islam yang di Tengah." *Menara Tebuireng: Jurnal-Jurnal Keislaman* 19(1). [Halaman artikel perlu dilengkapi.]

Kementerian Agama RI. 2019. *Moderasi Beragama*. Jakarta: Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI.

Khariri, Rifqi Irfan, Masudi, and Mowafg Masuwd. 2025. "The Interfaith Lelayu Tradition: Religious Pluralism in Bulungcangkring Village Jekulo Kudus." *Al-Qalam* 31(2):272–285.

Khasanah, N. 2021. "Counter-Narratives to Radicalism and *Takfiri* Ideology in the Ramadan Series *Cinta*: A Semiotic Analysis of *Rahmah* (Mercy/Compassion) and Religious Signs." *Jurnal Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam* 5(1):45–60. [DOI perlu dilengkapi.]

Krippendorff, K. (2019). Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Kuba, Imran Anwar, Muhammad Alwi HS, Asmullah, and Nurul Hasanah. 2025. "The Contestation of Religious Authority, Social Media, and Local Fiqh: As'adiyah's Rejection of Ustadz Firanda in Wajo." *Al-Qalam* 31(2):302–315.

Maulana, Aisha Alvina, Dina Nur Halimah, Reflani Fitrah, and Aditia Muhammad Noor. 2022. *Atas Nama Jihad: Konstruksi Pemikiran Radikalisme dan Terorisme*. *Tabbayyun: Jurnal-Jurnal Keislaman* 1(1). [Halaman artikel perlu dilengkapi dan jenis publikasi perlu dikonfirmasi.]

Mauladani, Y. R. 2024. *Religious Moderation on the YouTube Channel @QURAISHSHIHABMUHAMMAD*. Undergraduate thesis, State Islamic University (UIN) Sunan Ampel Surabaya. UIN Sunan Ampel Repository. http://digilib.uinsby.ac.id/id/eprint/69606/.

Mubarak, Ahmad Yusuf, Ahmad Khaerussalam, Ahmad Zaky Mubarak, Andi Lili Sukmawardani, Baharuddin, and Muhammad Yadri Abrar. 2025. "Marakka' Bola Tradition among the Bugis Community of Barru: A Cultural Expression of Solidarity, Local Wisdom, and Islamic Values." *Al-Qalam* 31(2):316–330.

Mustafa, Muhammad Sadli. 2014. "Potret Kerukunan Umat Beragama di Kabupaten Mamasa." *Al-Qalam* 20(1):129–138.

Mustafa, Muhammad Sadli. 2020. "Awa Itaba La Awai Assangoatta: Aplikasi Moderasi Beragama dalam Bingkai Kearifan Lokal To Wotu." *Al-Qalam* 26(2):307–318.

Mutaqin, Alzamzami. 2019. "Konsep Moderasi Dakwah dalam M. Quraish Shihab Official Website." *Jurnal Bimas Islam* 12(1). [Halaman artikel perlu dilengkapi.]

Nasrullah, Tawakkal, Irvan Muliyadi, Muh. Quraisy Mathar, Jashira Jamin, and Rhoni Rodin. 2025. "Congregants' Perceptions of the Mosque Library as a Center of Islamic Literacy." *Al-Qalam* 31(2):440–453.

Nensia, St. Aflahah, and Sitti Arafah. 2021. "Knitting Harmony in Diversity: A Best Practice for Religious Harmony in the Pasalae Community, North Gorontalo." *Al-Qalam* 27(2):221–231.

Nurhayati and Suhardin. 2020. "Komparasi Moderasi Keberagamaan Mahasiswa Universitas Tadulako dan IAIN Palu." *Al-Qalam* 26(2):339–352.

Nuruddin, Sabara. 2016. “Peran Penyuluh Agama dalam Pengelolaan Kerukunan Umat Beragama di Kabupaten Maluku Tengah.” *Al-Qalam* 22(2). doi:10.31969/alq.v22i2.322.

Nuruddin, Sabara, and Aksa. 2022. “Religious Harmony through the Development of House of Worship Based on Local Genius in Kei Islands, Maluku.” *Al-Qalam* 28(2):279–292. doi:10.31969/alq.v28i2.1087.

Pradana, Mahatva Yoga Adi, and Izra Berakon. 2025. “Hadith and Electoral Politics: Elite Discourse and Voter Mobilization in Indonesia.” *Al-Qalam* 31(2):393–406.

Rahman, Amri Malik Aziz. 2025. “Local Cultural Festival of Pringgasela Lombok: An Analysis of the Wasathiyah Islamic Perspective.” *Al-Qalam* 31(2):363–379.

Ridho, Ali, Anita Sartika, Muhammad Tahir Alibe, Zainun Nur Hisyam Tahrus, and Sahari. 2025. “Multimodal Strategies of Moderate Islamic Digital Da’wah on the Rukun Indonesia YouTube Channel.” *Harmoni* 24(2). doi:10.32488/harmoni.v24i2.900.

Ridhoh, M. Yunasri, and Andi Alfian. 2025. “Ecotheology of the Kajang People: The Encounter between Ecology and Theology in the Indigenous Kajang Community of South Sulawesi.” *Al-Qalam* 31(2):346–362.

Rodiah, Ita. 2025. “Reading Iraq from Indonesia: Dialogues between Iraqi Literature and Indonesian Sociocultural Contexts.” *Al-Qalam* 31(2):423–439.

Saprillah. 2016. “Penyuluh Agama dan Isu Kerukunan Antar Umat Beragama di Kota Palu.” *Al-Qalam* 22(2):152–166.

Shihab, M. Quraish. 2000. *Wawasan Al-Qur’an: Tafsir Maudhu’i atas Pelbagai Persoalan Umat*. Bandung: Mizan.

Shihab, M. Quraish. 2005. *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian Al-Qur’an*. Vol. 1. 5th ed. Jakarta: Lentera Hati.

Shihab, M. Quraish. 2010. *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian Al-Qur’an*. Vol. 12. Jakarta: Lentera Hati.

Shihab, M. Quraish. 2013. *Kaidah Tafsir: Syarat, Ketentuan, dan Aturan yang Patut Anda Ketahui dalam Memahami Al-Qur’an*. Jakarta: Lentera Hati.

Shihab, M. Quraish. 2019. *Wasathiyah: Wawasan Islam tentang Moderasi Beragama*. Jakarta: Lentera Hati.

Shihab, M. Quraish. 2022. *Toleransi, kemanusiaan, dan keberagamaan*. Jakarta: Lentera Hati.

Suarning, Islamul Haq, Fikri, St. Aminah, Resi, and Zulfahmi AR. 2025. “The Relevance and Application of Qisas in Contemporary Contexts: A Qur’an Perspective.” *Al-Qalam* 31(2):239–254.

Sumandoyo, Arbi. 2017. “Mereka Kompak Menolak Aliran Wahabi.” *Tirto.id*. https://tirto.id/mereka-kompak-menolak-aliran-wahabi-cker.

Syahrial, Irpan Ali Rahman, and Nazarudin. 2025. “Islamic Spirituality as the Foundation for the Continuity of Silat Buhun Singa Dorang in Pameungpeuk.” *Al-Qalam* 31(2):380–392.

Tahira, Jihan, Sobirin, and Irvan Iswandi. 2025. “Analisis Isi Pesan Dakwah M. Quraish Shihab dalam Channel YouTube ‘Najwa Shihab’ (Studi Kasus Jodoh itu Rezeki, Bagaimana Menjemputnya?)” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 2(6):691–701. https://doi.org/10.61341/jis/v2i6.121.

Taufiqurrohmah, Putri Ardelia. 2022. “Framing Moderasi Beragama dalam Ceramah Quraish Shihab di Kanal YouTube.” Undergraduate thesis, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. https://digilib.uinsa.ac.id/id/eprint/63444/.

Wagiu, Meily M., Olivia C. Wuwung, A. M. Nainggolan, and F. K. Manoppo. 2023. “The Cultural Value of Mapalus and Its Relationship to Religious Moderation in North Minahasa Regency along with Its Relevance to Christian Education.” *Al-Qalam*

29(1):151–162. doi:10.31969/alq.v29i1.1200.
Wagiu, Meily Meiny, David Rade Manat Simanjuntak, Ryanto Adilang, Andries Kango, and Englin R. Manua. 2026. “Exploring the History of Religious Moderation as a Pillar of Peace Education in Minahasa.” *Al-Qalam* 32(1):18–32. doi:10.31969/alq.v32i1.1753.
Wardani, Mustaffa Abdullah, and Shuaibu Umar Gokaru. 2026. “Qur’anic Reinterpretation in Contemporary Indonesia and Malaysia: A Response to Radical Islamic Discourse.” *QURANICA: International Journal of Quranic Research* 18(1):102–125. doi:10.22452/quranica.vol18no1.23.
Yogesi, Novitama Putri, Nita Amriani, and Andi Alfian. 2025. “Omah Tani as a Practice of Inter-Religious Dialogue Based on Dia-Praxis and Decolonization.”*Al-Qalam* 31(2):454–466.
Yunus M. 2014. “Konflik Agama di Indonesia: Problem dan Solusi Pemecahannya.” *Substantia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 16(2). [Halaman artikel perlu dilengkapi.]
Yusufa, Uun, Zulfan Nabrisah, and M. Al Qautsar Pratama. 2025. “Discourse on Religious Moderation in Oral Interpretation of the Qur’an on YouTube.” *QOF: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur’an dan Tafsir* 9(1):19–38. doi:10.30762/qof.v9i1.2653.