

# The Influence of Lecturers' Religious Orientations on the Mindsets of Students at the Faculty of Ushuluddin, State Islamic University Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau

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## Abstract

This study shows the influence of different faith streams embraced by lecturers on the worship practices of students at the Faculty of Ushuluddin UIN Suska Riau. The focus is on the difference between *Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah* (*Aswaja*) and *Salafi*, which differ in understanding the source of Islamic teachings, methods of worship, and the use of *ijtihad*. Students as recipients of knowledge often experience confusion when they find differences of opinion between lecturers whom they both respect. This research uses a qualitative approach with phenomenological methods, using interviews with lecturers and students, and observations on academic practices. The results of the study show that these differences of views affect students in three main forms: first, confusion in responding to the issue of khilafiah; second, the formation of exclusive groups affiliated with the faith; and third, the emergence of critical awareness and tolerant attitudes among students. The role of lecturers is very important in bridging these differences through a dialogical and fair approach, so that the diversity of beliefs does not become a trigger for conflict, but rather becomes a means of learning and the formation of inclusive intellectual character. Thus, the campus is expected to be a safe space for constructive differences, not a space for polarization.

**Keywords:** Differences in Beliefs; Lecturers; Students; Tolerance; *Salafi*; *Ahwaja*.

## 1. Introduction

There are differences in religious sects among lecturers of the Faculty of Ushuluddin UIN Suska Riau regarding worship practices. Some of the Ushuluddin lecturers adhere to *the Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah* school, and others adhere to *the Salafi school*. One of the lecturers from the Department of Faith and Islamic Philosophy, Mrs. Nurrahmi, said that lecturers at the Faculty of Ushuluddin have different streams of faith.<sup>1</sup> This difference has at least confused students about correct worship, especially in the implementation of prayer and other aspects of fiqh.

The study of different schools of faith influences diverse theological understandings. Two main aspects need to be considered, namely lecturers who understand *ahlussunnah wal jama'ah*, who make the Qur'an, Sunnah, *ijma'*, and *qiyas* as the main sources in understanding the teachings of Islam.<sup>2</sup> Second, *Salafi*-educated lecturers also use the Qur'an and Sunnah as legitimate sources of teachings

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<sup>1</sup> Nurrahmi, interview on April 14, 2025.

<sup>2</sup> Harun Nasution, *Rational Islam* (Bandung: Mizan, 1995), p. 106.

to be used<sup>3</sup> as references in worship, but do not use *qiyas* and *ijtihad* as sources of reference. This is in accordance with *Q.S. al-Ma'idah* verse 3. Thus, for *the Salafis*, the space for *ijtihad* and *religious qiyas* is tightly closed.<sup>4</sup>

This paper aims to complement and add to previous studies in responding to differences in religious streams, especially in the academic environment of the Faculty of Ushuluddin UIN Suska Riau. In line with that, 3 questions arise. First, why do these differences in schools have a great influence on the worship practices of students? Second, how should students behave in dealing with these differences? Third, what will happen if these differences are not respected? The answers to those 3 questions are meant to give an idea of how these differences look like beautiful dynamics, not as conflicts that are difficult to eliminate.

This research is based on the argument that the different streams of faith embraced by lecturers at the Faculty of Ushuluddin UIN Suska Riau affect students' worship practices. Most students are in the position of receiving incomplete scientific information and guidance. The diversity of views of faith conveyed in the learning process has influenced the way students understand and carry out worship.

Lecturers who understand *Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah* tend to open up the space for *ijtihad* through a moderate, rational, and contextual approach to *madhhab*.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, *Salafi lecturers* emphasized the purification of teachings and a literal approach to *nash* and rejected the use of *qiyas* and *ijtihad*.<sup>6</sup> This difference, although it comes from the same intention to restore the teachings of Islam to their purity, actually presents a diversity of worship procedures, such as in the practice of prayer and *dhikr*, which then confuses students in determining which practices they consider to be true and valid.<sup>7</sup>

If these differences are not bridged with an inclusive and dialogical approach, then students can experience doubts, exclusivity, or even conflicts between groups. On the other hand, if this diversity is used as a means of education to form a tolerant and critical attitude, then students are better prepared to face the complexity of Islamic discourse maturely and openly.

## 2. Review Literature

The differences in understanding that exist among the lecturers of Ushuluddin UIN Suska Riau are reflected in worship activities. In various studies, there are at least three conversations related to the flow of faith among lecturers, namely,

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<sup>3</sup>Rifki Abror Ananda, Muh. Khamdan, and Ahmad Khoirul Fata, "Salafism in Indonesia: Identity and Ideological Contestation in Indonesia," *Al-Ittihad: A Journal of Islamic Thought and Law* 10, no. 2 (2024): 16–33.

<sup>4</sup>Abu Ubaidah Yusuf As-Sidawi, *Knowing and Beware of Wahhabi Salafi Deviations* (Surabaya: Pustaka Sidogiri, 2015), p. 65.

<sup>5</sup>Harun Nasution, *Islamic Theology: Trends, History, Comparative Analysis* (Jakarta: UI Press, 1986), pp. 121–123.

<sup>6</sup>Yazid bin Abdul Qadir Jawas, *Mulia with Manhaj Salaf* (Bogor: Pustaka Imam Ash-Syafi'i, 2005), pp. 29–30.

<sup>7</sup>Jajat Burhanuddin and Dina Afrianty, *The Transformation of Islamic Thought in Indonesia* (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 2006), p. 77.

lecturers who understand *Ahlussunnah Wal Jamaah*,<sup>8</sup> lecturers who understand *Salafi*, and the impact on students. These three things are discussed as follows:

## 2.1 Lecturer understands *Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah*

One of the most dominant religious beliefs among lecturers of the Faculty of Ushuluddin is *Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah (Aswaja)*.<sup>9</sup> This school prioritizes a moderate understanding of religion, balanced between text and context, and combines *naqli* (textual) and *aqli* (rational) postulates.<sup>10</sup> Lecturers who understand *Aswaja* tend to adopt the approach of traditional schools, especially the Shafi'i school, and make the Qur'an, Sunnah, *Ijma'*, and *Qiyas* as the main sources in understanding Islamic teachings.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to being inclusive, *Aswaja's* understanding is also known to be flexible and adaptive to social dynamics. This can be seen from the openness of the lecturers in responding to differences of views in academic forums, as well as the spirit of dialogue that they carry. Lecturers in the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) environment not only teach classical Islamic sciences, but also encourage students to think critically, respect the authority of scholars, and develop scientific traditions.<sup>12</sup>

Lecturers with an understanding of *Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah* tend not to be exclusive.<sup>13</sup> Instead, it becomes a link between tradition and modernity. They not only teach sharia postulates, but also open up space for contextual approaches in answering contemporary problems, such as the issue of tolerance, pluralism, and minority fiqh.<sup>14</sup> This approach makes them more accepted by students from diverse backgrounds.<sup>15</sup>

*Aswaja's tendency* to embrace diversity is what makes it often used as the main reference in learning faith and fiqh. In practice, many students feel more comfortable studying with lecturers who understand *Aswaja* because of their approach that is not rigid, communicative, and upholds the values of *tasamuh* (tolerance), *tawazun* (balance), and *tawassuth* (moderation) in religion.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Abd Rahman, Baharuddin, "The Concept Of 'Ahl Al -Sunnah Wa Al- Jamā'Ah' Revisited Baharuddin Abd Rahman," *Hikamia: Journal of Sufism and Islamic Civilization* 2, no. 1 (2022): 1–11, file:///C:/Users/Afrizal/Downloads/The\_Concept\_Of\_Ahl\_Al-Sunnah\_Wa\_Al-JamaAh\_Revisit.pdf.

<sup>9</sup> Previously, the *Ahlussunnah* school was the Kalam school invented by Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari and Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, see Harun Nasution, *Theology*, p. 61. But now many schools claim to be *Ahlussunnah wa al-Jamaah* which is different from the previous concept. International Conference, "Who is Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama ' Ah"?, 2016, 1–6.

<sup>10</sup> M U H A M M A D N U R K H O I R O N, "MODERNITY OF NAHDLATUL ULAMA: 'PLAYING BETWEEN TRADITION (ONAL) AND MODERNITY,'" *Dialogue*, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.47655/dialog.v34i1.134>.

<sup>11</sup> Mohammad Hasan, *Aswaja as a Paradigm of Islamic Thinking* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2021), p. 88.

<sup>12</sup> Ismail Fajrie Alatas, *Tradition and Intellectual Struggle of NU* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2004), p. 102.

<sup>13</sup> Khanafiln, Imam. et al., "The Contribution of *Ahlussunnah Waljamaah* ' s Theology in Establishing Moderate Islam in Indonesia Research Methods," n.d., 1–10, file:///C:/Users/Afrizal/Downloads/The\_contribution\_of\_Ahlussunnah\_Waljamaahs\_theolo.pdf.

<sup>14</sup> M. Amin Abdullah, *Islam as Science: Epistemology, Methodology, and Islamic Scientific Ethics* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Siswa, 2006), pp. 144–146.

<sup>15</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *Substantive Islam: So that the Ummah is Not Divided* (Bandung: Mizan, 2004), pp. 115–116.

<sup>16</sup> Suaib Tahir, *The Values of Moderation in Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* (Makassar: Alauddin University Press, 2017), pp. 56–57.

## 2.2 Salafi Lecturer

The term *Salafi* comes from the word *Salaf*, referring to the three early generations of Islam, namely companions, tabi'in, and tabi'ut tabi'in, as mentioned in the hadith of the Prophet PBUH.<sup>17</sup> These three generations are called al-Qurun *al-Mufadhdhalah* because they have the virtue of pure Islamic understanding. However, this virtue does not automatically apply to every individual in that generation. They are considered the main link that is directly connected to the Prophet PBUH in understanding faith, worship, and *muamalah*.<sup>18</sup>

Over time, the term *Salafi*, which was initially only a label for the three main generations of Islam, developed into a certain understanding or group that tried to revive *Salafi teachings*. This understanding is often associated with the Wahhabi movement, which was pioneered by Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab, a scholar who is considered to be of the Hanbali madhhab.<sup>19</sup> In later days, figures such as Muhammad Nashiruddin al-Albani, who came from a Hanafi madhhab family, also used the term *Salafi* for the da'wah movement.<sup>20</sup>

Despite the differences in the background of the sect, they have similarities in understanding and belief, especially in the spirit of returning to the Qur'an and Sunnah and abandoning *taqlid*. However, the term *Salafi* in this modern context is different from the meaning of *Salaf ash-Shalih*, which refers to the early generation of Islam, because now the term is used as the identity of a certain group with its own understanding and philosophy.<sup>21</sup>

The scholars try to find a conclusion: who is entitled to be called Salafi: whether explicitly those who call themselves *Salafis*, or whether it is enough to see from the religious methods used. Mustafa Hilmi concluded that a Muslim deserves to be called *a Salafi* if he meets three main criteria. First, viewing Islam as a complete unit, inseparable between faith, sharia, and morals. Second, believing that *Salafi* thinking is a form of progress in religion, not regression. Third, to have an intellectual and spiritual identity, not just a blind plagiarist or follower of the past.<sup>22</sup>

To achieve these criteria, both Ibn Taymiyyah and thinkers who, according to their history, belong to the Salafi category provide three research methodologies in studying the problems of faith, namely: a) Nash priority in understanding the problems of faith, b) avoiding ta'wil tafsilî, and c) following the flow of the explanation of the Qur'an and hadith in aqidah.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Narrated by al-Bukhari, *Saheeh al-Bukhari*, Kitab Fadhā'il Ashḥāb al-Nabi, no. 3651: "The best generation is my generation, then the one after it, then the one after it."

<sup>18</sup> Yazid bin Abdul Qadir Jawas, *Mulia with Manhaj Salaf* (Bogor: Pustaka Imam Ash-Syafi'i, 2005), pp. 15–17.

<sup>19</sup> Zainul Milal Bizawie, *Masterpiece Islam Nusantara: Sanad and the Ulama-Santri Network* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Compass, 2016), pp. 207–208.

<sup>20</sup> Sahiron Syamsuddin, *Hermeneutics and the Development of Ushul Fiqh* (Yogyakarta: LKIS, 2007), p. 123.

<sup>21</sup> Syamsu Syauqani, *Mapping Religious Streams in Indonesia: Historical and Sociological Perspectives* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2022), p. 134.

<sup>22</sup> Mustafa Hilmi, *Madzhab Salaf Antara Textualism and Rationalism* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2004), pp. 101–104.

<sup>23</sup> Suaib Tahir, *The Values of Moderation in Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* (Makassar: Alauddin University Press, 2017), pp. 91–92.

## 2.3 Impact on students

The difference in the faith of the lecturers at the Faculty of Ushuluddin not only has an impact on academic dynamics but also greatly affects the way students view, understand, and carry out daily worship. Students who are in the search phase for intellectual and spiritual identity often feel confused when they find different religious views from lecturers they both respect. For example, in terms of prayer procedures, some lecturers emphasized the importance of following a certain madhhab, while others invited us to return to *Salaf* practices literally.<sup>24</sup>

In addition, the subtle tensions that occur between lecturers of different streams are sometimes implied in academic forums or religious discussions in the classroom, which indirectly affect the learning atmosphere. Students feel a fragmentation of thought that, if not addressed wisely, has the potential to create polarization of groups based on religious affiliation. Some students become very exclusive after being exposed to certain streams, rejecting other views, and only wanting to join communities that share the same faith.<sup>25</sup> This is contrary to the spirit of science that should be open, critical, and tolerant.

But on the other hand, these differences can also be valuable educational opportunities. If properly facilitated by the faculty, the difference in faith streams can be used as a scientific laboratory that shapes students to become more inclusive and wise individuals in responding to differences. Students can learn that diversity in Islam is an inevitability that must be addressed with knowledge, not fanaticism<sup>26</sup>. In this context, learning about differences in beliefs can actually be the starting point for the formation of a tolerant, objective attitude in understanding Islam inclusively.

Therefore, there needs to be a pedagogical approach and curriculum that emphasizes the importance of adab in differences and carefully weighing the evidence, so that students are not only intellectually intelligent, but also spiritually and socially mature when facing the diversity of religious beliefs among the ummah.<sup>27</sup>

## 3. Method

This study uses a *descriptive qualitative* approach to describe how different streams of lecturers' beliefs affect students' worship practices. The main focus of the research is students' experiences, perceptions, and responses to the diverse religious approaches they receive in the lecture process and academic interactions.

This type of research is a field study with a phenomenological approach, which tries to understand the subjective experience of students in responding to differences in understanding the beliefs embraced by lecturers. This approach was chosen because it can portray the social reality in its entirety from the perspective of the informant.

The research was conducted at the Faculty of Ushuluddin UIN Suska Riau. The research subjects consisted of two main groups:

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<sup>24</sup> Nurrahmi, interview.

<sup>25</sup>Aksan Amadi, "Salafi Movement at Makassar State University" 2 (2020): 1-9, [https://repository.unhas.ac.id/id/eprint/428/4/E032181011\\_tesis\\_23-10-2020%28FILEminimizer%29...ok.pdf](https://repository.unhas.ac.id/id/eprint/428/4/E032181011_tesis_23-10-2020%28FILEminimizer%29...ok.pdf).

<sup>26</sup>Ismail, *interview* on April 9, 2025.

<sup>27</sup> Mohammad Hasan, (2021).

1. Lecturer who teaches Islamic courses (faith, fiqh, Islamic thought), with a background in *Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah* and *Salafi understanding*.
2. Active students, from various departments at the Faculty of Ushuluddin, who are participants in classes or academic activities taken care of by lecturers from the two faiths.

Data collection was carried out by direct interviews with lecturers from *the Aswaja* school and 4 students of the Faculty of Ushuluddin UIN Suska Riau. Second, the content analysis of online studies on YouTube delivered by *Salafi* lecturers. The students interviewed consisted of various semesters who had taken faith courses with the two lecturers.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques that included three stages, namely data reduction, sorting important data from the results of interviews, observations, and documents. Information delivery is in the form of a descriptive narrative that displays the main findings and patterns. Concluding involves connecting empirical data with the theory used and answering the formulation of research problems.

The validity of the data is maintained by using source triangulation, which involves comparing data from the lecturer, student, and documentation interviews. In addition, a member check is also carried out, which reconfirms the results of the interview with the informant to ensure the accuracy of the data.

#### 4. Research Results

The results of the study show that the difference in the flow of faith between lecturers has affected students' worship practices. Often, students feel confused in carrying out their daily worship because of the differences in the schools of faith and doctrines that arise and affect their thinking. This causes them to have difficulty in determining which one to follow.

The difference in alignment with one school of faith between Aswaja and Salafis has also affected their social interactions with friends who have different views of the faith, thus creating polarization for students themselves. On the other hand, it is an encouragement for students to develop a more critical understanding of religion, so that they become more active in finding out and understanding various perspectives. It can enrich their understanding.

##### 4.1 Student Confusion in Worship Procedures

This difference in views creates confusion among students, especially in terms of daily worship procedures. Fadillah (Semester 4):

*"At first, I was really confused. In Mrs. Rahmi's class, it is said that qunut in the dawn prayer is okay, depending on the sect. But in the video study of Ustadz Dasman, it is explained that qunut in the dawn prayer is bid'ah because there is no strong evidence. So which one should I choose?"*<sup>28</sup>

This confusion is also seen in other worship practices, such as how to pray, dhikr, and even in terms of dressing. Students feel trapped between two different approaches and worry about making wrong decisions. The confusion experienced

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<sup>28</sup> Interview with Fadillah, Semester 4 Student of the Department of Aqidah and Islamic Philosophy, Faculty of Ushuluddin, UIN Suska Riau, May 22, 2025.

by students like Fadillah also reflects the challenges faced by many other students in understanding and carrying out worship. In this context, questions often arise as to the source of this confusion, for example, in the case of qunut in the Fajr prayer, where some schools consider it to be a recommended sunnah, while others argue that it has no clear basis.

This is what makes students like Fadillah feel confused and trapped between different opinions, so they often feel that they do not have enough knowledge to make the right decisions. This confusion is not only limited to qunut, but also extends to aspects such as how to pray and dhikr. Furthermore, in terms of dressing, students often feel confused about the boundaries that must be followed. Some consider that clothes that are in accordance with the sharia come from a certain circle, while others consider that the most important thing is to be polite and not violate social norms. So this condition shows the need for guidance and a deep understanding of religion.

#### **4.2 Formation of Partiality and Polarization**

Students who do not receive balanced guidance tend to choose one particular understanding and reject another. This exclusive attitude is seen in religious associations and class discussions. Ali Fajar, a 4th-semester student, admitted: *"I now prefer to participate in Salafi studies, because I think it is purer. I have rarely participated in activities held by the NU or Aswaja groups, because I often have different opinions."*<sup>29</sup>

He also added that it is important to return to the pure teachings of Islam, which are believed not to be influenced by outside influences or innovations that are very far from the recommendations of the Prophet. *Salafis* tend to be more conservative in politics and focus on the strict application of Islamic law. Salafis also emphasize the importance of textual interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith, so according to them, it is better in accordance with the recommendations of the Prophet, PBUH.

Najwa, a 2nd-semester student, said, *"I am more inclined to the teachings of lecturers who understand ahlussunnah because it is more moderate and does not make it complicated. Islam is an easy religion; don't make it difficult. What matters is the substance, not excessive formality."*<sup>30</sup>

This phenomenon shows the existence of social and scientific fragmentation among students, which, if not addressed, can hinder the inclusive academic spirit. This polarization is clearly seen in campus activities. Students tend to be grouped based on the tendencies of the streams they follow. Likewise, in study activities, they tend to choose studies that are in accordance with the stream they believe in.

#### **4.3 The Emergence of Critical Awareness and Tolerance**

In the midst of differences in religious beliefs that develop in the campus environment, some students actually see this situation as a space to expand their horizons and deepen their religious understanding. They are not trapped in a fanatical or follow-up attitude, but are encouraged to dig up postulates, read

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<sup>29</sup> Interview with Ali Fajar, Semester 4 Student of the Department of Qur'an and Tafsir Faculty of Ushuluddin UIN Suska Riau, May 19, 2025.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Najwa, Semester 2 Student of the Department of Qur'an and Tafsir Faculty of Ushuluddin UIN Suska Riau, May 19, 2025.

references, and discuss openly. Yogi Aridansyah, a 2nd-semester student, said: *"At first I was also confused, but after reading a lot and participating in discussions, I realized that differences are part of the richness of Islam. The important thing is that we have a knowledge base, not just follow along."*<sup>31</sup>

This critical awareness can be seen from the increasing enthusiasm of students in religious discussions. They no longer accept what is being conveyed rawly, but begin to ask questions and look for references on their own. Students like this tend to develop a tolerant approach, as well as respect diversity as part of the dynamics of Islamic science.

#### 4.4 The Role of Lecturers in Bridging Differences

The difference in aqidah among lecturers of the Faculty of Ushuluddin UIN Suska Riau is a good dynamic. Some believe in *Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah*,<sup>32</sup> while others tend to be *Salafi manhaj*.<sup>33</sup> In this condition, the role of lecturers is not only as teachers, but also as an adhesive for the intellectual and spiritual harmony of students.

Based on the results of interviews and field observations, lecturers who have an open and fair attitude tend to be more successful in guiding students to be tolerant and scientific. They do not impose certain understandings, but open up a space for discussion and dialogue. One lecturer stated, *"I have always stressed that differences of opinion in Islam are normal. The important thing is that students know the reasons and postulates, and can appreciate other views."*<sup>34</sup>

This approach has proven effective in creating a healthy and educational classroom atmosphere. Students not only receive information, but also learn how to respond to differences wisely. On the other hand, some lecturers explicitly support one understanding and reject the other approach absolutely. This can reinforce exclusivity among students and trigger polarization. In a video entitled *"Aqidah Salaf Ahli Hadith #Lanjutan"*, Dasman Yahya Ma'ali highlighted how students often experience confusion because they receive conflicting views. He revealed that *"The student often asks, which is right, sir, this is said to be bid'ah, this is said to be sunnah."*<sup>35</sup>

This statement emphasizes that clarity from lecturers is very important. Ideally, lecturers should not only explain the differences factually, but also provide guidelines on how to respond to them with morals and scientific manners. Some lecturers have also taken the initiative to create a forum for cross-conceptual discussion or to integrate the comparison of schools into the curriculum. This strategy not only increases students' insights but also fosters a critical and appreciative attitude towards Islamic treasures.

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<sup>31</sup> Interview with Yogi Ardiansyah., Semester 2 Student of the Department of Al-Quran and Tafsir Faculty of Ushuluddin UIN Suska Riau, May 19, 2025.

<sup>32</sup> Irfan Musadat, "The Paradigm of Ahlussunnah Wal Jamaah (Aswaja) with a Cultural Approach: Strategies for Building Religious Attitudes," *Islamic Studies of Aswaja* 1, no. 1 (2021): 73, file:///C:/Users/Afrizal/Downloads/10741-29212-1-PB.pdf.

<sup>33</sup> Amadi, "Salafi Movement at Makassar State University."

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Nurrahmi, M.Ag., Lecturer at the Faculty of Ushuluddin UIN Suska Riau, June 22, 2025.

<sup>35</sup> Ma'ali, Dasman Yahya. *Aqidah Salaf Hadith Expert #Lanjutan*. YouTube video, 35:48. Uploaded by HUM UIN Suska Riau, March 10, 2024. Retrieved 22 May 2025. [https://youtu.be/LYVBIBGU9SA?si=P\\_vtoTSZ3HZf2jPH](https://youtu.be/LYVBIBGU9SA?si=P_vtoTSZ3HZf2jPH)

Thus, the role of lecturers in bridging differences in beliefs is not only strategic but also transformative. They become a bridge between text and context, between difference and unity, and between science and morality.<sup>36</sup>

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Influence on Students

The difference in the stream of beliefs embraced by lecturers of the Faculty of Ushuluddin UIN Suska Riau has apparently had an impact on the practice of student worship. In addition to lowering knowledge, the lecturer who gives lectures also affects students.<sup>37</sup> In this position, students are vulnerable to receiving religious information due to conflicting perspectives. This causes confusion in understanding which worship practices are considered valid and in accordance with Islamic teachings.

As revealed, Fadillah (4th semester) experienced confusion when he understood the view of Mrs. Rahmi, who allowed qunut in the Fajr prayer, with the view of Ustadz Dasman, who called qunut an uncertain worship because it did not have strong evidence. Confusion like this is not only limited to qunut, but extends to the procedure of prayer, dhikr, and the way of dressing. This difference in understanding shows that the difference in sects is no longer just academic discourse, but has penetrated the daily aspects of students in carrying out religious teachings.

This phenomenon strengthens the theory that religious education that is not managed with a unified narrative or dialogical approach has the potential to cause theological confusion. According to Ahmad Tafsir, the formation of a complete religious understanding must be based on an integrative approach between rational, spiritual, and religious praxis aspects. When this approach is fragmented, ordinary students experience disorientation in choosing authentic sources of religious truth.<sup>38</sup>

In addition, Siti Musdah Mulia also emphasized the importance of dialogue space in Islamic education, especially when faced with the diversity of views of faith. According to him, education that only displays one single truth tends to close the door of ijtihad and narrow the critical space of students, thus forming a rigid religious attitude.<sup>39</sup>

Thus, the difference in the school of faith among lecturers, without contextual and open pedagogical guidance, greatly affects the practice of student worship. They not only experience confusion in fiqh, but also tension in building a firm and tolerant personal belief.

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<sup>36</sup> Petrus Nyavon, "The Influence of Lecturer Performance on Students with Learning Motivation," *Psychoborneo: Scientific Journal of Psychology* Vol. 4, no. 2 (2016): 184–90, <https://doi.org/10.30872/psikoborneo.v4i2.3998>.

<sup>37</sup> Sri Irawati and Irdam Idrus, "The Role of Lecturers in Developing Student Character," *Talenta Conference Series: Science and Technology (ST)* 2, no. 2 (2019): 88–97, <https://doi.org/10.32734/st.v2i2.550>.

<sup>38</sup> Ahmad Tafsir, *Philosophy of Science: Revealing Ontology, Epistemology, and Axiology of Science* (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2006), p. 120.

<sup>39</sup> Siti Musdah Mulia, *Encyclopedia of Reformist Muslimahs: Points of Thought for Reinterpretation and Action* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2019), p. 88.

## 5.2 Polarization and Fragmentation of Students

In addition to making students confused, the difference in the views of the lecturers also caused students to be divided into small groups. Some students choose to follow *the Salafi school* because it is considered purer and stricter in practicing Islamic teachings. On the other hand, some are more comfortable with *the Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah (Aswaja)* approach because they are considered more moderate and friendly to differences.<sup>40</sup>

For example, a student admitted that he only wanted to participate in *Salafi* studies and started to stay away from activities held by the NU or *Aswaja group*. On the other hand, some students avoid Salafi views because they are considered too rigid. As a result, students no longer associate openly, but prefer to be friends with those who understand each other. This makes the learning atmosphere unhealthy because there is an attitude of mutual assessment and closure.

This phenomenon is called polarization, which is the emergence of groups that are in different directions and find it difficult to meet. If left unchecked, this condition can damage the scientific spirit on campus. In fact, the academic environment should be a place that is open to discussion and mutual learning, not a place to defend one group and reject another.

According to M. Amin Abdullah, Islamic campuses must be the birthplace of tolerance, not just reinforce narrow fanaticism. He said that diversity in thought is part of the wealth of Islam that must be maintained, not rejected.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, Harun Nasution emphasized that students need to be taught to think rationally and critically, not only accept what is taught, but also dare to evaluate and open spaces for dialogue between understandings.<sup>42</sup>

Therefore, divisions among students due to differences in streams must be overcome by encouraging dialogue, understanding across viewpoints, and instilling mutual respect. The campus should be a unifying forum, not a breaker.

## 5.3 The Strategic Role of Lecturers in Bridging Differences in Aqidah

In a campus situation that has different views of faith, such as in the Faculty of Ushuluddin, the role of lecturers is very important. Lecturers with their competencies are not only teachers, but also supervisors who shape students' professionalism, personality, and way of thinking.<sup>43</sup>

Lecturers who are open-minded do not impose certain understandings. They provide space for students to get to know various opinions in Islam, then guide students so that they can choose wisely.<sup>44</sup> Some lecturers always say that differences in Islam are natural and must be addressed with knowledge, not emotions.<sup>45</sup> This approach really helps students to be calmer, open, and not easily blame others.

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<sup>40</sup> Eny Fatimatuszuhro Pahlawati and Eko Hadi Wardoto, "The Inculcation of Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah An-Nahdliyyah Values" 7 (2022): 79–101.

<sup>41</sup> M. Amin Abdullah, *Islam as Science: Epistemology, Methodology, and Ethics in Islamic Studies* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Siswa, 2012), p. 144.

<sup>42</sup> Harun Nasution, *Rational Islam* (Jakarta: Mizan, 1995), p. 65.

<sup>43</sup> Nyavon, "The Influence of Lecturer Performance on Students with Learning Motivation."

<sup>44</sup> Sri Irawati and Irdam Idrus, "The Role of Lecturers in Developing Student Character."

<sup>45</sup> Pahlawati and Wardoto, "The Inculcation of Ahlussunnah Values Wal Jama'ah An-Nahdliyyah."

However, not all lecturers behave like this. Some overemphasize their own understanding and consider other schools to be wrong. This kind of attitude makes students behave narrowly, accept only one truth, and refuse to discuss different views. If this is left unchecked, the academic atmosphere can become tense, unhealthy, and far from the spirit of science.

According to Azyumardi Azra, lecturers must be agents of peace and knowledge, not triggers of conflict.<sup>46</sup> Modern Islamic campuses, he said, must be a place for dialogue between thoughts, not a place to defend one's own group.<sup>47</sup> According to Nurcholish Madjid, lecturers should instill an inclusive and fair religious attitude, as well as help students see Islam as a broad religion and friendly to differences.<sup>48</sup>

Several lecturers on campus have taken the initiative to create a discussion forum that brings together students from various backgrounds.<sup>49</sup> Some even teach the comparison of schools so that students can see firsthand that the differences are not to be opposed, but understood. In this way, students not only learn religion, but also learn how to be mature and respect others.

Therefore, lecturers play an important role in building a peaceful and intelligent campus atmosphere. Lecturers can be a bridge between various thoughts, so that students do not get trapped in narrow fanaticism, but grow as tolerant and scientific individuals.

## 6. Conclusion

The difference in the flow of faith between lecturers of the Faculty of Ushuluddin UIN Suska Riau, especially between *Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah (Aswaja)* and *Salafi*, has a real effect on the practice of student worship. Students experience confusion in determining the correct worship procedures, due to differences in lecturers' views on things such as *qunut*, prayer, *dhikr*, and even the problem of dressing. This confusion arises because students, as recipients of knowledge, do not have a strong foundation in distinguishing these various opinions.

In addition to being confusing, this difference also causes polarization among students. Some choose to side with one particular school and ignore other views, which has an impact on the formation of exclusive groups. This is contrary to the academic spirit that is supposed to encourage openness and tolerance. When differences are not addressed wisely, the learning atmosphere becomes less harmonious and tends to break the unity of students.

However, on the other hand, these differences also open up opportunities for the growth of critical awareness and tolerant attitudes among students. Some of them began to dig deeper into knowledge, discuss, and understand diversity in Islam as an intellectual property. In this case, the role of lecturers is very important as a

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<sup>46</sup> Noor Asyriah et al., "Tapis: A Journal of Scientific Research" 5, no. 2 (2022): 166–72.

<sup>47</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *Substantive Islam: Grounding Islam in Indonesian Society* (Bandung: Mizan, 2000), p. 94.

<sup>48</sup> Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam Doctrine and Civilization: A Critical Study of the Problem of Faith, Humanity and Modernity* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2000), p. 180.

<sup>49</sup> Segaf Baharun and Sodikin, "Instilling a Moderate Islamic Vision Through Ahlussunnah Faith Education Wal Jama'ah An-Nahdiah: Learning from Islamic Boarding School Education," *Adabuna : Journal of Education and Thought* 2, no. 1 (2022): 42–52, <https://doi.org/10.38073/adabuna.v2i1.922>.

balancer who can bridge differences, guide students with a fair approach, and instill moral values and manners in responding to differences in religious views.

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