

Religious Moderation In The Framework Of Malay Islam

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Abstract : This study aims to examine the concept and practice of religious moderation within the framework of Malay Islam and its relevance in maintaining social harmony in the modern era. This research employs a qualitative approach using library research, drawing on various scholarly sources such as journals, books, and related documents. The findings reveal that religious moderation in Malay society is reflected through the integration of Islamic values with local culture, based on the principle "custom is founded upon Islamic law, and Islamic law is founded upon the Qur'an." Values such as tolerance, balance, justice, and deliberation serve as the foundation for building harmonious social life. However, religious moderation also faces challenges in the modern era, including globalization, digital media influence, and the emergence of extreme religious ideologies. Therefore, strengthening strategies are needed through education, the role of religious and traditional leaders, as well as the wise use of digital media. This study concludes that religious moderation within the Malay Islamic framework plays a significant role in creating a tolerant, inclusive, and civilized society.

Keywords : Religious Moderation, Malay Islam, Social Harmony, Local Culture

Abstrak : Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji konsep dan praktik moderasi beragama dalam kerangka Islam Melayu serta relevansinya dalam menjaga keharmonisan sosial di era modern. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kepustakaan (library research), yang bersumber dari berbagai literatur ilmiah seperti jurnal, buku, dan dokumen terkait. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa moderasi beragama dalam masyarakat Melayu tercermin melalui integrasi nilai-nilai Islam dengan budaya lokal, yang berlandaskan pada prinsip "adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi Kitabullah." Nilai-nilai seperti toleransi, keseimbangan, keadilan, dan musyawarah menjadi dasar dalam membangun kehidupan sosial yang harmonis. Namun demikian, moderasi beragama juga menghadapi tantangan di era modern, seperti globalisasi, pengaruh media digital, serta munculnya ideologi keagamaan ekstrem. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan strategi penguatan melalui pendidikan, peran tokoh agama dan adat, serta pemanfaatan media digital secara bijaksana. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa moderasi beragama dalam kerangka Islam Melayu memiliki peran penting dalam mewujudkan masyarakat yang toleran, inklusif, dan beradab.

Kata Kunci: Moderasi Beragama, Islam Melayu,

INTRODUCTION

Religious moderation is one of the important issues in religious life in Indonesia which is characterized by diversity of ethnicities, cultures, languages, and religions. The reality of this pluralism is an inevitable (*sunnatullah*) that cannot be avoided, but at the same time has the potential to give birth to social conflicts if not managed properly. Therefore, an approach is needed that is able to bridge these differences, one of which is through strengthening religious moderation as an effort to create a harmonious and peaceful life in a pluralistic society Mhd. Abror. (2020). Conceptually, religious moderation refers to a middle attitude (*wasathiyah*) in understanding and practicing religious teachings, which is not excessive (extreme) and does not ignore religious values. Religious moderation emphasizes the principles of balance (*tawazun*), justice (*i'tidal*), and tolerance (*tasamuh*) in religious life, so that it can give birth to an attitude of mutual respect between religious believers without having to mix their respective faiths (Elly Warnisyah Harahap, et al., 2023). In this context, religious moderation does not mean relativism or compromise on basic religious principles, but rather a wise, proportional, and contextual way of religion in social life (Muaz and Uus Ruswandi, 2022).

In Indonesian society, especially the Malay community, religious moderation has strong historical and cultural roots. Islam that developed in the Malay region is known for its inclusive, adaptive, and accommodating character to the local culture. The process of Islamization in the Malay world is not carried out confrontationally, but through a peaceful, dialogical, and cultural approach, thus giving birth to a harmonious integration between Islamic teachings and Malay traditions (Lailatul Mukjizat, et al., 2025). Values such as deliberation, tolerance, equality, and balance are integral parts of the life of the Malay community based on the principle of "*adat berjun syarak, syarak berjundi Kitabullah*". Furthermore, Malay Islamic civilization shows that religious moderation is not only a normative concept, but has been implemented in the practice of socio-cultural life. Moderation values such as compassion, plurality, and multiculturalism are reflected in various local traditions, such as traditional ceremonies, social systems, and religious architecture (Dian Andesta Bujuri, et al., 2023). This shows that Islam in the Malay framework is able to become a model of religion that is peaceful, tolerant, and relevant in the face of the dynamics of a pluralistic society.

However, in today's modern era, the challenge to religious moderation is increasingly complex. Globalization, the development of information technology, and the emergence of extreme and exclusive religious beliefs are serious threats to social harmony. In this condition, the values of moderation that have long lived in the Malay Islamic tradition need to be revitalized and recontextualized to remain relevant in the face of changing times (Muaz and Uus Ruswandi, 2022). Based on this background, the study of religious moderation in the framework of Malay Islam is important to be done. This article aims to examine the concept, values, and implementation of religious moderation in the Malay Islamic tradition, as well as see its relevance in building a harmonious, tolerant, and civilized society in the midst of Indonesia's plurality.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with the type of literature research (*library research*), which is research that focuses on collecting and analyzing data from various written sources such as books, journals, and scientific documents that are relevant to the theme of religious moderation in the framework of Malay Islam (Zed, 2018). This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to in-depth examine the concepts, theories, and results of previous research related to the object of study. The data collection technique is carried out through documentation studies by collecting, reading, classifying, and reviewing relevant literature in a systematic and structured manner. The data that has been obtained is then analyzed using the *content analysis* (content analysis), which is a method used to identify, interpret, and extract the meaning of the content of the text objectively in order to find patterns and relationships between the concepts being studied (Lexy J. Moleong, 2021). With this approach, the research is expected to be able to

provide a comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth picture of religious moderation in the context of Malay Islamic culture and its relevance in contemporary society.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Religious Moderation in Islam

Religious moderation in Islam is an important concept that emphasizes a balanced, fair, and non-excessive attitude of religion. The term moderation comes from the word *moderatio* which means the middle way, which in the context of Islam is known as the *wasathiyah*. This concept means that Muslims are required to be proportionate in understanding and practicing religious teachings, without being trapped in extreme attitudes towards both radicalism and excessive liberalism (Mhd. Abror, 2020). The Qur'an as the main source of Islamic teachings affirms the principle of moderation through the concept of *The People of Wasathan* as stated in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 143. This verse shows that Muslims are positioned as a just and balanced ummah, who is able to be a mediator in social life. This principle affirms that Islam does not teach exaggeration (*Ghuluw*) in religion, but prioritizing the balance between spiritual and social aspects in human life (Elly Warnisyah Harahap, et al., 2023).

Religious moderation in Islam is also reflected in the universal values taught by religion, such as justice, tolerance, and compassion. These values are the foundation in building harmonious relationships between fellow humans, both those of the same religion and those of different religions. Islam teaches that differences are part of the sunnatullah that must be dealt with wisely and with respect. Therefore, the attitude of tolerance (*Tasamuh*) is one of the main indicators in the practice of religious moderation (Dian Andesta Bujuri, et al., 2023). Furthermore, the concept of religious moderation in Islam is not only normative, but also has a practical dimension in daily life. Principle *Tawassuth* (middle), *Tawazun* (balance), *itidal* (justice), and *Tasamuh* (tolerance) is a guideline in behaving and interacting in society. These values not only govern human relationships with God, but also relationships between human beings in a plural and multicultural social context (Lailatul Mukjizat, et al., 2025).

In the context of Indonesian society, religious moderation is very relevant considering the high level of diversity that exists. Indonesia as a multicultural country needs a religious approach that is able to maintain social harmony and prevent religion-based conflicts. Religious moderation is present as a solution that emphasizes the importance of mutual respect, respect for differences, and maintaining unity in diversity (Ruswandi, 2022). In addition, religious moderation is also closely related to the way of understanding religious texts. An understanding that is only text-oriented without considering the social context can give birth to an exclusive and rigid attitude in religion. On the contrary, an understanding that is too free without a solid basis can obscure the values of Islamic teachings themselves. Therefore, a balance between textual and contextual approaches in understanding religious teachings is needed to remain relevant to the development of the times (Muaz and Uus Ruswandi, 2022).

From an educational perspective, religious moderation has a strategic role in shaping the character of a tolerant and inclusive young generation. Islamic education that integrates the values of moderation can be a bulwark against the development of radicalism and intolerance. Through a holistic educational process, values such as justice, balance, and tolerance can be instilled from an early age, thus forming a moderate and noble Muslim personality (Lailatul Mukjizat, et al., 2025). In the Malay Islamic tradition, the values of religious moderation have long lived and developed as part of the culture of society. Islam in the Malay region is known for its peaceful, inclusive, and accommodating approach to local culture. This shows that religious moderation is not only a theoretical concept, but has become a real practice in the lives of Muslims in various regions, including in Indonesia (Dian Andesta Bujuri, et al., 2023).

Thus, religious moderation in Islam is an integral concept and is integrated with the teachings of Islam itself. Religious moderation is not a form of compromise on religious teachings, but rather a wise and proportionate way of religion in the face of the complex realities of life. Therefore, efforts to strengthen religious moderation have a very high urgency in maintaining the stability and harmony of social life in the midst of a pluralistic society. Through the application of

moderate religious attitudes, the values of tolerance, balance, and justice can be well internalized in daily life. This will ultimately contribute to realizing the teachings of Islam as a religion that brings peace, compassion, and benefits to all mankind, as reflected in the concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*.

Religious Moderation in Malay Community Practices

Religious moderation in Malay practices is evident in social life that upholds harmony, balance, and respect for differences. The Malay tradition which is based on the principle of "adat berjun syarak, syarak berjun Kitabullah" shows a strong integration between religious values and local culture. In practice, the Malay society does not separate the teachings of Islam and customs, but rather harmonizes them in their daily lives. This is reflected in various aspects of social life such as deliberation, mutual cooperation, and mutual respect between others, both those of the same religion and those with different beliefs (Fauzi and Anisa, 2021). One of the manifest forms of religious moderation in Malay society is the attitude of high tolerance towards differences. This tolerance is not only normative, but also manifested in inclusive and dialogical social interactions. The Malay community tends to prioritize deliberative resolution of conflicts and avoid violence, so as to create a peaceful social life. In this context, religious moderation is an important instrument in maintaining social stability and strengthening the cohesion of a multicultural society (Ahmad Najib Burhani, 2021).

In addition, the practice of religious moderation in Malay society is also reflected in religious traditions that are accommodating to local culture. Various traditional rituals such as marriage, birth, and death contain Islamic values combined with local wisdom. This acculturation process shows that Islam in the Malay world develops peacefully, inclusively, and adaptively to the local culture. Thus, religious moderation serves as a bridge between the normative teachings of religion and the socio-cultural reality of society (M. Yusuf and S. Arifin, 2022). In the field of education, religious moderation is internalized through Islamic educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools, madrasas, and family-based education. This education instills values such as *Tawassuth*, *Tawazun*, *itidal*, and *Tasamuh* as a foundation in forming a moderate character. Through integrative education, the Malay community is able to produce a generation that not only understands religious teachings deeply, but is also able to coexist peacefully in a plural society (Siti Nurhayati, 2022).

The role of religious leaders and traditional leaders is also very important in maintaining the practice of religious moderation in the Malay community. They function as social mediators who maintain a balance between religious values and local culture and serve as a reference in resolving conflicts. The presence of these figures strengthens the practice of religious moderation as part of a social system that lives and develops in society (Zainal Abidin, 2020). However, the practice of religious moderation in Malay society faces challenges in the contemporary era, especially due to the influence of globalization and digital media that allow the entry of extreme religious beliefs. This condition requires the strengthening of the values of moderation through education, da'wah, and the revitalization of local culture so that it remains relevant in facing the changing times (Muhamad Wildan, 2021). Thus, religious moderation in Malay practice is not only a normative concept, but has become a living and developing social reality. The values of moderation that are internalized in Malay culture have proven to be able to create a harmonious, tolerant, and peaceful life, so that they can be used as a model in building an inclusive religious life in the modern era.

The Challenges of Religious Moderation in the Modern Era

Religious moderation in the modern era faces various challenges that are increasingly complex along with the development of globalization, digital technology, and social dynamics of society. The development of information technology, especially social media, has opened up a wide space for the free dissemination of various religious beliefs without adequate filters. This condition causes people to easily access religious information that is not necessarily valid and can cause misunderstandings in understanding religious teachings (Ahmad Zainul Hamdi, 2021). One of the main challenges of religious moderation is the emergence of extreme religious beliefs, both in the form of radicalism and excessive liberalism. Radicalism tends to understand religion

narrowly and textually, thus rejecting distinction, while extreme liberalism has the potential to ignore basic religious values. Both of these tendencies can disrupt the balance in religion and threaten social harmony in society (M. Atho Mudzhar, 2021). In addition, the low level of religious literacy among the community, especially the younger generation, is also a serious challenge in implementing religious moderation. The lack of a comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings causes some people to be easily influenced by religious narratives that are provocative and exclusive. Therefore, strengthening moderate religious literacy is very important to fortify society from the influence of deviant beliefs (Siti Ma'arif, 2022).

Another challenge is the politicization of religion that often uses religious sentiments for specific interests. This phenomenon can trigger social conflicts and weaken community unity. In this context, religious moderation is very important to keep religion from being used as a tool of political interests that can damage the social order (Nur Rohman, 2022). On the other hand, rapid social changes due to modernization also have an impact on the shift in values in society. Traditional values that have been the support of religious moderation are beginning to erode, especially among the younger generation. This requires efforts to revitalize cultural values and local wisdom that are in line with Islamic teachings so that they remain relevant in modern life (Abdul Karim, 2020).

In the context of education, the challenge of religious moderation can also be seen from the lack of optimal integration of moderation values in the educational curriculum. Religious education often still focuses on the cognitive aspect and places less emphasis on the formation of attitudes of tolerance and inclusivity. Therefore, innovation is needed in the education system that is able to internalize the values of moderation more effectively (Lilik Nur Kholidah, 2022). Thus, the challenges of religious moderation in the modern era do not only come from external factors such as globalization and technology, but also from internal factors such as low religious literacy and the lack of strengthening of moderation values in education. Therefore, synergy between various parties, both the government, educational institutions, religious leaders, and the community is needed to strengthen religious moderation as a foundation in maintaining social harmony in the midst of diversity.

Strategy to Strengthen Religious Moderation in the Malay Islamic Framework

Strengthening religious moderation within the framework of Malay Islam requires a comprehensive and contextual strategy, by utilizing the values of local wisdom that have been living in society for a long time. Malay culture based on the principle of "adat berjun syarak, syarak berjun Kitabullah" is a strong foundation in building a moderate religious attitude. Therefore, the strategy of strengthening religious moderation needs to be directed at the revitalization of Malay cultural values that are in line with Islamic teachings, so that they can become a guideline in the social life of a plural society (Ahmad Muttaqin, 2022).

One of the main strategies is through strengthening Islamic education based on moderation. Educational institutions such as madrasas, Islamic boarding schools, and schools have a strategic role in instilling the values of moderation from an early age. The educational curriculum needs to be designed in an integrative manner by incorporating values such as *Tawassuth* (middle), *Tawazun* (balance), *i'tidal* (justice), and *Tasamuh* (tolerance). In addition, learning methods must also encourage dialogue, openness, and respect for differences so that students have an inclusive attitude in community life (Kholidah, 2022).

The next strategy is to strengthen the role of religious leaders and traditional leaders in spreading the values of religious moderation. In Malay society, religious and traditional leaders have a highly respected and influential position in shaping the mindset of the community. Therefore, they need to be empowered as agents of moderation who are able to convey the teachings of Islam in a wise, peaceful, and contextual manner. The da'wah carried out should be persuasive and cultural, so that it is easily accepted by the community without causing resistance (Zainal Abidin, 2021). In addition, the systematic collection of data on artists, cultural figures, art communities, and various forms of Islamic art in each region is also a strategic step that needs to be taken to ensure the sustainability and preservation of these cultural traditions. (Sufia et al., 2025) This must also be accompanied by the use of digital media. Social

media can be used as a means to disseminate moderate and educational religious content. However, the use of digital media must be balanced with good digital literacy so that people are able to filter information and are not easily influenced by extreme narratives. Therefore, collaboration between the government, academics, and the community is needed in creating a healthy digital space and supporting religious moderation (Ahmad Zainul Hamdi, 2021).

Strengthening religious moderation can also be done through the revitalization of Malay local wisdom which contains the values of tolerance, deliberation, and mutual cooperation. Local traditions that are in line with Islamic teachings need to be preserved and developed as a medium for internalizing the values of moderation in daily life. This local wisdom can be a social fortress in the face of the negative influence of globalization that has the potential to damage the harmony of society (Abdul Karim, 2020). In addition, government policies are needed that support the strengthening of religious moderation through structured and sustainable programs. The government can play a role in providing regulations, facilities, and support for activities that promote the values of moderation, both in the educational, social, and cultural fields. Synergy between the government and the community is the key to the successful implementation of religious moderation widely (Nur Rohman, 2022a).

Thus, the strategy of strengthening religious moderation in the framework of Malay Islam must be carried out holistically by involving various aspects, ranging from education, *da'wah*, culture, to public policy. An approach that integrates Islamic values and Malay culture has proven effective in creating a harmonious and tolerant life. Therefore, efforts to strengthen religious moderation need to be developed in order to be able to answer the challenges of the times while maintaining the identity of Islam and Malay in people's lives.

The Relevance of Religious Moderation for Social Harmony

Religious moderation has a very important role in maintaining social harmony in a pluralistic society. A moderate attitude in religion encourages individuals to respect each other's differences, both in terms of beliefs, culture, and outlook on life, so that the potential for conflict can be minimized. In this context, religious moderation is the foundation for building a peaceful, inclusive, and civilized social life (Mohamad Fahri and Ahmad Zainuri, 2021). In addition, religious moderation also functions as a social glue that is able to strengthen the unity and unity of society, especially in facing the challenges of intolerance and radicalism in the modern era (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021). Furthermore, religious moderation encourages the creation of a healthy and constructive space for dialogue between religious communities, so that differences are no longer seen as a threat, but as social assets that must be protected. This open and inclusive attitude allows the building of social cooperation in various areas of life such as education, economy, and culture. Thus, religious moderation not only has an impact on relationships between individuals, but also contributes to social stability and sustainable community development.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the discussion that has been described, it can be concluded that religious moderation in the framework of Malay Islam is a form of religion that emphasizes balance, tolerance, and justice in social life. These values are not only sourced from Islamic teachings, but are also harmoniously integrated into Malay culture through the principle of "*adat bertindi syarak, syarak berindi Kitabullah*". This moderation practice can be seen in the attitude of the community that upholds deliberation, respects differences, and maintains harmony in a plural life. In the midst of the challenges of the modern era such as globalization, digitalization, and the emergence of extreme beliefs, religious moderation is very important as an effort to maintain social stability and strengthen community unity. Thus, religious moderation in Malay society is not only conceptual, but has become a living and relevant social reality to this day.

Based on this conclusion, strengthening religious moderation within the framework of Malay Islam needs to be carried out in a sustainable manner through various sectors of life. Educational institutions are expected to be able to integrate the values of moderation in the learning process in order to form a tolerant and inclusive generation. Religious leaders and

traditional leaders are also expected to continue to play an active role in conveying peaceful and contextual Islamic teachings in accordance with local Malay wisdom. In addition, the government and the community need to work together to strengthen religious literacy and use digital media wisely to spread the values of moderation. With integrated efforts, religious moderation is expected to continue to develop as a foundation in creating a harmonious, harmonious, and civilized society in the midst of diversity.

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