

## LITERATURE REVIEW: PERSPECTIVES ON RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES

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### **Abstract**

This research examines the perspective of religious moderation in a multicultural society and its impact on social harmony. Religious moderation, which emphasises the values of tolerance, mutual respect and interfaith dialogue, is considered an effective approach in dealing with potential conflicts arising from differences in religious beliefs and practices. Through inclusive education, the involvement of moderate religious leaders, and the support of government policies that favour pluralism, religious moderation can be strengthened and implemented more effectively. Despite challenges such as media influence and narrow religious interpretations, cooperation between various stakeholders was identified as a key factor in overcoming these obstacles. The results of this study show that a religious moderation perspective is not only essential in mitigating conflict, but also in building a peaceful and tolerant society amidst cultural and religious diversity.

**Keywords:** Religious Moderation, Multicultural Society.

### **Introduction**

Religious moderation is one of the concepts that has received great attention in religious and cultural discourse, especially in multicultural societies. Religious moderation is basically a middle approach that avoids extremism and radicalism, and encourages tolerance, dialogue and understanding between religious communities. In a multicultural society, where there are various religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, religious moderation is an important key to achieving social harmony (Mustaniruddin, 2023).

Religious moderation is an important aspect that enables multicultural societies to coexist in harmony and mutual respect. In an increasingly globalised and connected world, religious moderation encourages individuals from different religious backgrounds to interact without prejudice and discrimination. It encompasses mutual respect, inclusiveness, and open dialogue that all contribute to social stability and

cohesion in society (Rantung, 2024) . Without religious moderation, differences in beliefs can easily trigger conflict, tension, and even violence (Santoso et al., 2024) . Promoting religious moderation is therefore crucial in creating an environment where pluralism and difference are treated as strengths, not threats.

In addition, religious moderation also plays a significant role in countering extremism and radicalism. When individuals and communities commit to moderation in their religious practices, they tend to be more wary of extreme ideologies that can undermine social order. Education that emphasises the values of religious moderation can help young people develop with an inclusive and tolerant perspective. This is important, especially in the current global context where radical movements often try to manipulate identity policies to their advantage (Wahid et al., 2023) . Overall, religious moderation is key to strengthening the social fabric of multicultural societies, ensuring that every individual feels valued and accepted, and preventing divisions that are troublesome for sustainable social and human development.

Religious moderation can be understood through various theoretical perspectives. According to the theory of religious pluralism, religious moderation is an effort to respect the existence and truth of various existing religions, without claiming the superiority of a particular religion. This theory emphasises the importance of interfaith dialogue as a means of understanding and respecting differences. Furthermore, social integration theory states that religious moderation plays an important role in shaping social cohesion in heterogeneous societies. Through religious moderation, religious individuals and groups are expected to be able to establish cooperation and avoid conflicts caused by differences in beliefs (Chotimah et al., 2022).

A number of literatures show that religious moderation has been applied in various contexts of multicultural societies. For example, a study conducted by Smith (2018) examined religious moderation in Indonesia, a country with the world's largest Muslim population that also has significant religious diversity. Smith found that religious moderation in Indonesia plays an important role in maintaining social stability and preventing extremism. Another body of literature by Chan (2019) discusses religious moderation in Malaysia, where religious education programmes aim to shape a moderate understanding of religion. Moderate religious education is considered capable of fostering religious tolerance and enhancing inter-ethnic and religious harmony. Furthermore, Anderson's (2020) research on religious moderation in Europe shows that despite the continent's increasing religious pluralism, a moderate approach to religion has helped suppress incidents of intolerance and radicalism. Anderson emphasises the importance of public policies that support interfaith dialogue and multicultural education as strategic measures to control extremism.

Thus, from the literature review, it is clear that religious moderation is an effective approach in creating harmony in a multicultural society. Religious moderation not only promotes tolerance and understanding, but can also be an important

instrument in countering the threat of radicalism and extremism. Public policies that support multicultural education and interfaith dialogue are needed to strengthen religious moderation in society.

## **Research Methods**

The study in this research uses the literature method. The literature research method is an approach that involves collecting, reviewing, and analysing various written sources relevant to a particular research topic. These sources can be books, scientific journal articles, reports, previous research documents, and other materials that have been published (Moleong ;, 2019) (Barlian, 2018) . The main purpose of literature research is to understand the current state and development of knowledge in the field under study, identify gaps in previous research, and gain theoretical and methodological insights useful for designing further research. The research process includes steps such as identifying relevant keywords and topics, searching for valid and reliable sources, analysing and synthesising the information obtained, and compiling the findings in a systematic and structured format. This method is very important in building a strong theoretical foundation and supporting research arguments or hypotheses (Suprayogo & Tobroni, 2003) .

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Perspectives on Religious Moderation in the Context of Multicultural Society**

The perspective of religious moderation in the context of a multicultural society plays a very vital role in creating harmony among various groups with different religious backgrounds. Religious moderation, which means an open, tolerant, and non-extreme attitude towards one's own and others' religious beliefs, is the foundation for healthy diversity (Sulaiman, 2021) . In a multicultural society, differences in religion, race, and culture are a real reality and must be faced wisely. Religious moderation allows individuals to appreciate and respect the religious beliefs and practices of others, which in turn creates an inclusive and harmonious social environment (Firmansyah, 2021) .

In a multicultural society, religious moderation also serves as an effective mechanism to prevent conflicts and tensions that can arise from differences and misunderstanding between religious groups. Religious moderation encourages constructive and open dialogue, which is crucial in defusing potential conflicts. Through interfaith dialogue, individuals and communities can exchange views, build deeper understanding, and find common solutions to problems. Thus, religious moderation helps maintain social stability and strengthen cohesion in diverse societies (Darmawani et al., 2021) .

In addition, religious moderation plays a crucial role in countering the growth of extremism and radicalism. Amid global threats from extremist groups that often manipulate religious teachings for violent purposes, religious moderation is a powerful

shield. Education that emphasises the values of moderation and tolerance can instil an inclusive understanding and respect for differences from an early age (Yuliasih, 2023) . A society filled with individuals with a moderate understanding of their religion will be more resistant to the influence of harmful extremist ideologies (Abidin & Murtadlo ., 2020)

Finally, religious moderation improves the quality of life together by encouraging an ethic of mutual respect and empathy. A multicultural society that practises religious moderation is one that is able to celebrate diversity as a wealth rather than a source of conflict. This is not only important for maintaining harmonious social relations but also for creating an environment where every individual feels safe and accepted. Religious moderation becomes a key pillar in building a just, peaceful and prosperous society for all its members, regardless of religious, ethnic or cultural differences.

### **Factors Affecting Religious Moderation**

Religious moderation is influenced by a number of factors that are interrelated and play a role in shaping individual attitudes and behaviour in religion. One of the main factors is education. Education that teaches a deep and inclusive understanding of religion can help individuals understand the essence of every religious teaching which basically teaches peace, tolerance and compassion. In addition, an educational curriculum that includes learning about cultural and religious diversity can help foster mutual respect and appreciation of differences from an early age (Zulkarnaen et al., 2023) .

The family environment also plays an important role in the formation of religious moderation. Parents and family are the first environment where one learns about values and beliefs. Families that instil the values of tolerance, respect for differences, and moderate religious practices will form individuals who are able to respect the beliefs of others. Thus, a harmonious family full of positive support can shape children into religiously moderate individuals (Sumadiyah & Wahyuni, 2024) .

Social factors and neighbourhood communities also influence religious moderation. A social life that is inclusive and respectful of diversity can encourage individuals to develop a moderate attitude. Healthy interfaith interactions, joint activities, and interfaith dialogue can foster mutual understanding and respect. Mass media and social media also play a big role in shaping public opinion. Wise use of media to spread moderation values and positive content about religious diversity can support the creation of a harmonious society (Husni et al., 2023) .

Finally, the factor of government policy and the role of religious institutions cannot be ignored. Fair and non-discriminatory government policies that protect all religious communities will strengthen religious moderation. Religious institutions that encourage interfaith dialogue and cooperation also contribute greatly to creating an atmosphere of tolerance. Government initiatives to ensure religious freedom and

prevent discrimination on the basis of religion are important steps in building a moderate and peaceful society. Thus, the combination of education, family environment, social interaction, as well as policies and the role of religious institutions together shape and strengthen religious moderation in society.

### **Benefits and Challenges Faced in Practising Religious Moderation**

Practising religious moderation has a number of significant benefits for individuals and society as a whole. One of the main benefits is the creation of peace and harmony between religious communities (Darmawani et al., 2021) . With religious moderation, individuals are more likely to appreciate and accept differences in beliefs, which in turn reduces religious-based conflicts and tensions. In addition, religious moderation also encourages interfaith dialogue and cooperation, which is important in building an inclusive and tolerant society. This collaboration can give birth to various social initiatives that benefit all parties (Kusumaningrum et al., 2023) .

Another benefit of religious moderation is the improvement of individuals' quality of life. When people adopt religious moderation, they tend to have a more balanced and open outlook. This can improve mental and emotional health as they are less susceptible to extremism and religious-based violence. Religious moderation also allows individuals to find common ground and cooperate with others in various aspects of life, such as education, work, and social activities, without being limited by religious differences (Surawan et al., 2022) .

However, in practising religious moderation, there are various challenges that need to be faced. One of the biggest challenges is resistance from those who hold extreme views. Religious extremists often reject the concept of moderation because it undermines their religious teachings and values. They tend to spread ideologies that discredit moderation and trigger conflicts with moderate individuals or groups. This challenge requires collaborative efforts from various parties to counter extremism and strengthen religious moderation through education and dialogue (Faruq et al., 2024) .

Another challenge is the use of social media and information technology that can accelerate the spread of extremist ideas. Content that discredits other religious groups or promotes intolerant attitudes can easily spread and influence society. Lack of digital literacy makes it difficult for many people to sort out accurate and useful information from potentially damaging ones. Therefore, it is important to improve digital literacy and promote content that supports moderation and religious tolerance (MARHAYATI & CHANDRA, 2023) .

In addition, less supportive government policies can also be a challenge in practising religious moderation. Governments that do not provide space for religious freedom or that tend to favour one religion more dominantly can create injustice and discrimination. This triggers tension and conflict between religious communities. Therefore, there is a need for policies that are fair and supportive of religious freedom,

as well as efforts from relevant institutions to ensure the implementation of these policies goes well. Through joint efforts, these challenges can be overcome and the benefits of religious moderation can be realised in everyday life (Nadiyah et al., 2024).

To overcome the challenges in practising religious moderation, various strategies can be applied. One of them is through education that promotes the values of tolerance, diversity and peace from an early age. By providing a deep understanding of the importance of religious moderation, the younger generation can be equipped with the ability to think critically and not be easily influenced by extremist ideologies. The education curriculum needs to be designed in such a way as to encourage respect for differences and build inclusive attitudes (Fauzi, 2021).

In addition, the role of religious and community leaders is crucial in supporting religious moderation. Religious leaders who have great influence in society need to campaign for the importance of moderation and avoid rhetoric that can trigger conflict. Through lectures, discussions and joint social activities, religious leaders can serve as role models in practising religious moderation. Communities also play a key role in spreading messages of peace and tolerance through activities involving different religious groups (Turhamun., 2024)

Another approach that can be used is through the media. Mass media and social media play a major role in shaping public opinion and disseminating information. The media needs to actively promote content that supports moderation and rejects all forms of extremism. Journalists and content creators also need to be equipped with adequate understanding of religious moderation in order to deliver positive and educational messages to the public (Nabhani, 2023).

In the face of global challenges such as radicalisation and extremism, international cooperation is also crucial. Countries need to share strategies and experiences in promoting religious moderation. Through this cooperation, effective policies and programmes can be adopted and widely implemented to reduce radicalisation and increase interfaith tolerance. International organisations such as the UN and other agencies can facilitate dialogue between countries and offer support in the form of education and training programmes (Garasic & Macioce, 2021).

Overall, practising religious moderation brings many benefits. It creates peace and harmony in society, improves the quality of life of individuals, and encourages interfaith co-operation. However, there are also a number of challenges that need to be faced, such as resistance from extremists, the spread of ideologies through social media, and less supportive government policies. With the right approach, such as education, the role of religious and community leaders, the media, and international co-operation, these challenges can be overcome. It is important for all components of society to work together for religious moderation in order to create a more peaceful and tolerant world.

## Conclusion

In the literature review related to the perspective of religious moderation in multicultural societies, it was found that religious moderation is the key to creating harmony and tolerance in the midst of differences. Religious moderation can overcome potential conflicts arising from differences in religious beliefs and practices, by emphasising values such as tolerance, mutual respect and interfaith dialogue. In a multicultural society, where diverse identities and beliefs coexist, a moderate approach can be the basis for building positive and productive interactions between different communities.

The research also shows that religious moderation can be strengthened through inclusive education, the involvement of religious leaders who are committed to moderate values, and support from government policies that support pluralism. Challenges in implementing religious moderation, such as media bias and narrow interpretations of religious dogma, need to be overcome through cooperation between various stakeholders. Thus, the perspective of religious moderation is not only important in preventing and overcoming conflicts, but also in strengthening peaceful and tolerant social structures amidst cultural and religious diversity.

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