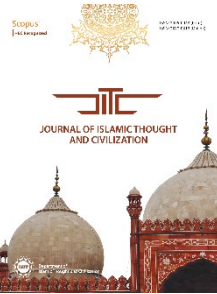


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Navigating Modern Challenges: The Practical Role of Triple-Relationship of Religious Moderation through an Islamic Perspective

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Abstract

Humans inherently maintain three inseparable relationships in life: their relationship with God, their interaction with fellow human beings, and their connection to the natural environment. These three relationships are essential for holding a balanced, harmonious, and meaningful life that prevents the detrimental consequences of misguided thinking. These relationships are intrinsically interconnected, with each exerting influence on one another. However, instability in one relationship can lead to imbalance, ultimately resulting in potential conflict and tension in social life. Hence, this research aims to interpret the in-depth meaning of religious moderation through the concept of the Tri-Relations of Religious Moderation, which includes *hablum minallah* (relationship with God), *hablum minannas* (relationship with fellow humans), and *hablum minal 'alam* (relationship with nature). The study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The study relied on the literature review that analyses various relevant sources on the selected topic. The findings indicated that the implementation of religious moderation from an Islamic perspective will not be complete if it solely focuses on human-to-human relationships, without involving their relationships with God and their natural environment. Moreover, this study claimed that Tri-Relations of Religious Moderation create a balance and harmony in life, especially in the contemporary era marked by technological advancements and modern challenges. Thus, implementing these tri-relations ensures a balanced, peaceful, and harmonious life. Additionally, this research aims to contribute to the study of religious moderation and the development of public policies that support strengthening religious moderation in society.

Keywords: harmony and balance, Islamic perspective, religious moderation, social cohesion, Tri-Relations

Introduction

The era of globalization and digitalization has diminished mutual respect among religious groups, contradicting the teachings of Islam and Indonesia's tradition of diversity, which emphasizes tolerance. Managing this diversity presents significant challenges, as religion is

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increasingly associated with extremism and violence because of narrow textual interpretations and the rejection of other perspectives. This has led to religious exclusivism and the assertion of singular truth claims. In line with this, Muchlis asserts that there are at least four factors behind violence and fundamentalism in the name of religion. First, a textualist understanding of religious doctrine. Second, a rejection of relativism in religious doctrine. Third, a rejection of historical and sociological approaches to understanding religious doctrine. Fourth, the monopolization of truth in religious interpretation.¹

Isnaini found that violence in the name of religion also occurs in preaching activities.² In response, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia has launched a campaign for religious moderation to maintain social harmony and minimize violence and terrorism. Religious moderation, which advocates for a balanced approach to practicing religion without leaning towards extremism, has become a priority program for the Ministry of Religious Affairs.³ It is essential for building the nation's culture and character that serves as a national cultural strategy to preserve peace, tolerance, and respect for diversity.

Religious moderation can also be viewed as a cultural strategy that preserves the nation's identity. Although Indonesia is not a religious state, it is a deeply religious country that integrates faith into the daily lives of its citizens. Indonesians practice religion that is friendly, tolerant, and respectful for diversity, with Pancasila serving as a reflection of the national identity. With its vast diversity of religions, ethnicities, and languages, Indonesia has strong cultural roots and a robust social capital that serves as the foundation for religious moderation.⁴

In a large and diverse country like Indonesia, there is an advantage in continually nurturing and preserving the nation's wisdom, as the high level of cultural diversity that makes society vulnerable to social conflict. When the social realities related to ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group relations (SARA) are not thoroughly, harmoniously, and systematically maintained, the risk of division and destruction within SARA communities increases. Therefore, Indonesia faces significant challenges in managing SARA differences, requiring effective solutions to ensure that every citizen can live in safety and peace. This commitment has become the responsibility of all components of the nation, especially Islamic religious leaders, who play a crucial role in implementing Islamic law within society. Islamic law itself is based on the principle of building the welfare of humanity.

Social interactions among religious communities in Indonesia involve dynamic relationships at various levels, from individuals to broader communities. According to Harahap, such interactions, which can be associative or dissociative, occur when people or groups meet and communicate. In Indonesia's sociocultural context, shaped by the Eastern customs, these interactions are crucial for

¹Jaetul Muchlis, "The Radicalism of Young People in Indonesia the Religious Portraits of Islamic Spiritual Organizations," *Cultural Religious Pulpit* 38, no. 2 (March 11, 2022): 145–64, <https://doi.org/10.15408/mimbar.v38i2.25167>.

²Ahmad Isnaini, "Violence in the Name of Religion," *Kalam* 8, no. 2 (February 22, 2017): 213–26, <https://doi.org/10.24042/klm.v8i2.221>.

³Yoga Irama, and Mukhammad Zamzami, "A Review of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Religious Moderation Mainstreaming Formula 2019-2020," *Dialogic Journal of Usuluddin Sciences* 11, no. 1 (February 9, 2021): 65–89, <https://doi.org/10.36781/kaca.v11i1.3244>.

⁴Mustaqim Hasan, "Principles of Religious Moderation in the Life of the Nation," *Jurnal Muftadiin* 7, no. 2 (2021): 111–23, <https://journal.an-nur.ac.id/index.php/muftadii>.

daily social dynamics. They reflect local wisdom aimed at fostering harmony and each individual's role in contributing to the well-being of others, from the neighbourhood level to the national level.⁵

Lubis suggests that social interaction has a significant impact on the reciprocal relationships between parties working to resolve various social issues according to their desired objectives.⁶ Social interactions between religious adherents in Indonesia are meaningful relationships, where feedback and meaningful contact occur in efforts to establish good relations among them. The symbiotic mutualism in social interactions between religious adherents reflects the realization of social justice, as evidenced in their social attitudes and actions.⁷ Islamic teachings provide guidance for their followers to act justly in all aspects of life, which is a noble value that must be implemented. A moderate attitude in daily life can create harmony among religious communities, extending beyond human relationships to include relationships with God and the surrounding environment.

Therefore, in practical terms, religious moderation is incomplete if it is limited only to human relations, without involving the relationship between humans and God and the natural environment. This gave rise to the Tri-Relational Religious Moderation, which emphasizes the importance of balance in the relationship between humans and God, fellow humans, and nature. The application of this concept can lead to a more dynamic, peaceful, and harmonious life. Tri-Relational Religious Moderation, encompassing moderation in thought, attitude, and behavior, provides a crucial framework for exploring how to effectively implement religious moderation within society. This concept is rooted in Islamic thought that teaches balance (*wasatiyyah*) and justice (*adl*), and avoids extremism and violence. In the contemporary era, where globalization, digitalization, and socio-political changes are rapidly advancing, the challenges to religious moderation are becoming increasingly complex. Therefore, it is crucial to examine how Tri-Relational Religious Moderation can be practically applied in these diverse contexts. This study aims to explore the practical implementation of Tri-Relational Religious Moderation in the perspective of Islamic thought in the contemporary era and assess its relevance in addressing current religious challenges amidst the technological advancements.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Religious Moderation

Etymologically, 'moderation' comes from the Latin word 'moderation,' which means moderation (neither excessive nor deficient). The term moderation can also be understood as self-restraint from both excessive and deficient attitudes. According to the Indonesian Dictionary, 'moderate' has two meanings: firstly, consistently avoiding extreme behaviour or expressions; and secondly, a tendency toward a middle path. A person is considered moderate if they act in a reasonable, average manner, and are not extreme, whether right-wing or left-wing. In English, the term 'moderation' is often used as 'average,' 'core,' 'standard,' 'heart,' or 'nonaligned.'⁸ Moderate

⁵Siti Rahma Harahap, "The Process of Social Interaction Amid the Covid 19 Virus Pandemic," *Al-Hikmah: Media of Da'wah, Communication, Social and Culture* 11, no. 1 (June 29, 2020): 45–53, <https://doi.org/10.32505/hikmah.v11i1.1837>.

⁶Ridwan Lubis, *Sociology of Religion Understanding Religious Development Social Interaction* (Jakarta: PT Fajar Interpratama Mandiri, 2017), 68.

⁷Rius Panji Prabowo, Elly Esra Kudubun, and Sri Suwartiningsih, "A Sociological Study of Forms of Social Interaction Among Religious Adherents in Indonesia," *Journal of Social Dialectics Sociology* 9, no. 1 (2023): 86–100, <https://doi.org/10.29103/jsds.v9i1.9527>.

⁸Sirajuddin, *Literacy of Religious Moderation in Indonesia* (Bengkulu: CV. Zigie Utama, 2020), 9–11.

means prioritizing balance in beliefs, morals, and character, both when treating others as individuals and when interacting with state institutions in social life. Allah in the Qur'an says: "And thus, we have made you a just community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you."⁹

The term "*wasata*" means just, but it can also be interpreted as middle or centre. When '*wasath*' is interpreted as moderate, it signifies diversity. According to the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, diversity in various conditions in Indonesia is a comprehensive religious education system that can represent flexible teachings without neglecting the texts (the Qur'an and Hadith), and emphasizes the use of reason as a solution to existing problems.¹⁰ Indonesia's diversity has existed for a long time, encompassing religion, ethnicity, culture, and language. Islam in Indonesia utilizes local wisdom to promote harmony among different religions. This means that moderate Islam has always prioritized tolerance and mutual respect while maintaining faith in the truth of each religion and sect.

Quraish Shihab expressed one reference regarding religious moderation in his interpretation of Al-Baqarah, verse 143. In his interpretation, Quraish Shihab states that Muslims are appointed as a middle nation, moderate, and exemplary. Therefore, the position of Muslims is the one who maintains a balance and reflects a moderate attitude, not leaning toward either extreme left or right, and can be observed from various perspectives. This encourages humanity to act justly and serve as a good example for all parties.¹¹

The term "religious" comes from Sanskrit, which means not chaotic, indicating that religion aims to make human life orderly, balanced, and directed. Religion encompasses beliefs, a vertical relationship with God, as well as a horizontal relationship with fellow humans and nature. Being religious means adhering to a religion that serves as a guide for human life.¹² Moderation in religion means avoiding extreme attitudes in perspectives, behaviour, and religious practices. Akhmadi explains the way of practicing religion in terms of moderation, not the religion itself, to remain balanced and tolerant under the teachings of all religions that promote peace.¹³

According to the terminology of religious moderation, as defined by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in the book "Religious Moderation", it is a perspective, mindset, attitude, and behaviour that always takes a middle path, acts justly, and avoids extremism in religion, whether it be right-wing or left-wing extremism.¹⁴ Meanwhile, in the book Roadmap for Strengthening Religious Moderation 2020-2024), religious moderation is formulated as a perspective, attitude, and religious practice in communal life by embodying the essence of religious

⁹Al-Baqarah 02:143

¹⁰Hadi Pajarianto, Imam Pribad, and Puspa Sari, "Tolerance between Religions through the Role of Local Wisdom and Religious Moderation," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 78, no. 4 (2022): 1–8, <https://doi.org/https://www.ajol.info/index.php/hts/article/view/246802>.

¹¹M. Quraish Shihab, *Wasathiyah: Islamic Insights on Religious Moderation* (Tangerang: Lentera Hati, 2020), 21–23.

¹²Hasahatan Hutahacan, "The Challenge of Theology of Religions: A Discourse Model," *Kurios* 6, no. 2 (November 2, 2020): 255–68, <https://doi.org/10.30995/kur.v6i2.136>.

¹³Agus Akhmadi, "Religious Moderation in Indonesia'S Diversity," *Religious Education and Training Journal* 13, no. 2 (2019): 45–55.

¹⁴Ministry of Religious Affairs, *Religious Moderation* (Jakarta: Research and Development and Training Agency of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019), 53–55.

teachings that protect human dignity and promote public welfare based on the principles of fairness, balance, and adherence to the constitution as a national agreement.¹⁵

Some contemporary Muslim scholars have interpreted religious moderation through the concept of Islam *wasatiyah*. Yusuf al-Qaradawi introduced Islam *wasatiyah* as a mainstream view that rejects extremism, whether radical or liberal, in response to extremism and political conditions in the Middle East.¹⁶ Saumantri emphasizes that a moderate stance means maintaining a balance between extreme poles, combining positive elements from both sides without excess or deficiency, and adjusting to conditions and situations.¹⁷ Strengthening religious moderation is helpful for individuals to navigate a multireligious society, creating social harmony and balance. In Indonesia, differences in religious practices and various social and cultural factors influence religious life. Religious moderation serves as a bridge amidst this diversity, as seen in the harmonious relationships between religions and local wisdom. This allows religious values and local culture to support each other without conflict, fostering a balanced harmony between spirituality and local traditions.

2.2. Islamic Thought

Linguistically, the term thinking comes from the Arabic word *'Alfikru*. Terminologically, "Thinking" refers to the result of activities that are involved in using intellect and reasoning to seek the essence of something, drawing from revelation, nature, and the phenomena of daily human social interactions. Thinking is a natural and inherent attribute of humans, endowed by Allah, to contemplate His creation to produce guidance, and knowledge or science.¹⁸ According to Ibn Khaldun, Islamic thought is something that enables us to distinguish between humans and animals, guides and directs humans in their lives, facilitates mutual assistance among them, and provides knowledge about what they worship and the teachings brought by the Messengers from Allah (SWT).¹⁹ Al-Qaradawi equates Islamic thought with *At-Tsaqafah Al-Islamiyah*, which is 'thought and knowledge containing values, ideologies, and spiritual teachings expressed in morals, worship, and behaviours, leading to the creation of various sciences, arts, literature, and material culture, among others.' Thus, Islamic thought refers to the contemplation and reasoning about Islam and all its teachings in human life, aligned with the language and conditions of its time, based on the Qur'an and Hadith as an absolute truth.²⁰

Bashri, in his study, explained that Islamic thought differs from Western thought regarding Islam. Western thought about Islam stems from Western philosophy and civilization, which are

¹⁵Sumarto Sumarto, "Implementation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of The Republic of Indonesia's Religious Moderation Program," *Journal of Teacher Education* 3, no. 1 (October 16, 2021): 107–21, <https://doi.org/10.47783/jurpendigu.v3i1.294>.

¹⁶Yousaf Al-Qaradhawi, *Al-Khashaish Al-Ammah Li Al-Islam* (Kairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 2007). 104.

¹⁷Theguh Saumantri, "The Dialectic of Islam Nusantara and its Contribution to the Development of Religious Moderation In Indonesia," *Focus: Journal of Islamic and Social Studies* 7, no. 1 (2022): 57–67, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.29240/jf.v7i1.4295>.

¹⁸Yusuf Ismail, "Postmodernism and the Development of Contemporary Islamic Thought," *Jurnal Online Studi Al-Qur'an* 15, no. 2 (July 31, 2019): 235–48, <https://doi.org/10.21009/JSQ.015.2.06>.

¹⁹Wawan Hernawan, "Ibn Khaldun Thought: A Review of Al-Muqaddimah Book," *Journal of Ushuluddin* 23, no. 2 (January 13, 2017): 173–81, <https://doi.org/10.24014/jush.v23i2.1197>.

²⁰Yusuf Al-Qaradhawi, *Al-Sahwah Al-Islamiyah Baina Al-Juhud Wa Al-Tatharuf*, trans. Alwi AM (Qatar: Al-Ummah, 2017), 124.

based on materialism and atheism, and then used to discuss the nature of religion, knowledge, and its universality, leading to the perspective that religion is a system of knowledge. Contrastively, Islamic thought has originated from a comprehensive and integral worldview that encompasses spiritual, moral, and social aspects. In Islamic thought, religion is not just knowledge but a guide for life that includes all aspects of human existence, including relationships with God, their relationship with fellow humans, and nature. Islamic thought views religion as something transcendental and integral to all dimensions of life, making it central to understanding reality and existence.²¹

Therefore, the current research adopts the concept of religious pluralism in interpreting religious moderation. According to John Hick, religious pluralism is the idea of presenting major religions and their different perceptions and conceptions, which represent diverse responses to the Supreme God, shaped by the varying cultural contexts of humanity. Hick further argues that, although religions differ, they all worship the same God, so the focus of religious people should be on the essence of divinity, as no religion is truer than another. Some argue that Islam *Wasatiyyah*, a principle of moderation in Islam, exists and that every Muslim should possess it. This character, they believe, will allow Islam to become central to human life. Islam *wasatiyyah* encourages Muslims to handle differences by recognizing that variations among religions or sects should not be homogenized, and commonalities should not be discriminated against or contested. This approach promotes tolerance, openness to diversity, and a balanced view among various schools of thought. Contemporary scholars like Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935), Hasan Al-Banna (1906-1949), Mahmud Shaltout (1893-1963), Muhammad Abu Zahrah (1898-1974), Yusuf Al-Qaradawi (1926-2022), and Wahbah Al-Zuhaili (1935-2015) have advocated for a moderate and just interpretation of Islam. These scholars have attempted to develop an understanding of Islamic moderation that will create a balanced practice of Islam, harmonizing extremes, simplifying versus complicating issues, and aligning the spiritual with the worldly.²²

3. Research Methodology

This study deploys a qualitative approach with a descriptive method, aiming to uncover facts and provide accurate interpretations of spiritual and worldly affairs. It is a library research study, meaning that the data collected comes from various books and literature relevant to the main topic. These books are selected and organized based on their relevance to the research theme. The study scrutinized various literature to build research discussion and for data collection. The data collection techniques include gathering, selecting, and analysing written sources that are deemed credible and relevant. The data analysis involves reviewing and interpreting the content of these sources, then relating it to the context of religious realities, concerning daily life affairs, and human interaction with the environment. The collected data was analysed in-depth to identify patterns, themes, and implications of the Tri-Relational concept of Religious Moderation in the contemporary era.

4. Results

Indonesia's demographic bonus is a significant advantage, given its large, diverse population and commitment to religious freedom as enshrined in Pancasila, 1945 Constitution. Historically,

²¹Yanto Bashri, "Hassan Hanafi's Reasoning; An Attempt to Align the West and the Islamic World," *Mozaic: Islam Nusantara* 1, no. 1 (April 8, 2015): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.47776/mozaic.v1i1.73>.

²²Khairan Muhammad Arif, "The Concept of Islamic Moderation in Thought," *Millah* 19, no. 2 (February 14, 2020): 307–44, <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol19.iss2.art6>.

religious diversity has been part of the archipelago through acculturation, fostering tolerant interfaith relationships. Tolerance, rooted in local wisdom, plays a crucial role in maintaining religious harmony and is passed down through traditions and culture. Indonesia is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-cultural nation, with its diverse society encompassing various ethnicities, languages, religions, cultures, and social statuses. While this diversity can be a unifying strength, it can also lead to conflicts, including stereotypes, discrimination, and violence. Understanding and awareness of cultural and religious diversity are increasingly important for societal cohesion.²³

Various conflicts in Indonesia's multicultural society often occur because of a lack of awareness of diversity, low religious moderation, and imprudence in managing differences. These frictions can lead to divisions and become a bitter experience for the nation. Thus, it is essential to prevent tension and conflict, which originates from a cultural approach and reinforces local wisdom with messages of peace. However, this approach must be balanced with wise religious understanding, given the deeply religious nature of Indonesian society. Religion plays a crucial role in shaping behaviour, so a peaceful religious approach that aligns with Indonesia's multicultural culture is necessary. Friendly, tolerant, open, and flexible religious moderation can serve as a solution to potential conflicts in a multicultural society.²⁴

Religious moderation does not mean mixing truths or eliminating identities, but it aims to maintain an open attitude and mutually respecting others' rights while upholding one's own beliefs. This attitude is crucial for building harmony within a national framework that values differences. The urgency of religious moderation in Indonesia's religious and cultural diversity needs to be addressed with the right mindset, attitude, and practices. Therefore, the application of the threefold relationship of religious moderation *hablum minallah*, *hablum minannas*, and *hablum minal 'alam* is very important. These three dimensions must be integrated into daily life to achieve a balance between the relationship with God, fellow humans, and nature.

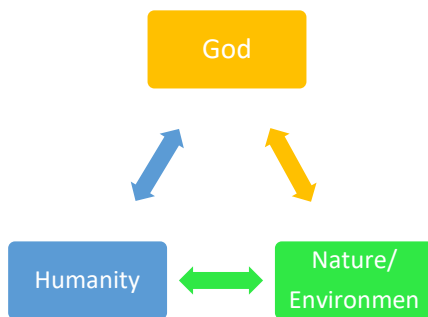


Figure 1. The Triple Relationship of Moderation

4.1 Religious Moderation: The Relationship Between Humans and Allah as Worship

²³Benny Afwadzi, and Miski Miski, "Religious Moderation in Indonesian Higher Educations: Literature Review," *Ulul Albab: Journal of Islamic Studies* 22, no. 2 (December 31, 2021): 203–31, <https://doi.org/10.18860/ua.v22i2.13446>.

²⁴Rohmat Mulyana, "Religious Moderation in Islamic Religious Education Textbook and Implementation in Indonesia," *Theological Studies* 29, no. 1 (2023): 260–80, https://doi.org/https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-hervorm_v79_n1_a8592.

Often, people think of worship as limited to the Five Pillars of Islam, like prayer, fasting, charity, and pilgrimage. However, worship also includes everyday activities like working, studying, and attending religious gatherings, provided they are done with sincere intentions for Allah (SWT). Scholars have categorized worship into two types: *ibadah mahdhah* (ritual) and *ibadah ghairu mahdhah* (non-ritual). The article focuses on ritual worship. According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, worship means acts of devotion to Allah based on one's obedience. Raghīb al-Asfahani describes worship as the pinnacle of submission to Allah, reflecting complete surrender and obedience.²⁵

A moderate approach to worship involves performing it correctly and sincerely, without feeling superior or criticizing others' practices. Feeling superior and condemning others' worship reflects extremism. Although Allah is *Rahman* (Compassionate), He is also *Adl* (Just), meaning every action will be judged fairly.²⁶ The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) exemplified moderation in ritual worship by adjusting the duration of prayers according to the situation and admonishing Mu'az bin Jabal for reciting long surahs that made it difficult for the congregation. Therefore, a moderate approach in worship, especially as an imam, involves adjusting the prayer duration based on the congregation's condition, not just the length of the surahs recited. It is important to cultivate self-control and understand the congregation's needs and abilities to avoid falling into extremism, ensuring that the needs of the worshippers.²⁷

Similarly, when serving as a khutbah (sermon) speaker, a moderate khutbah speaker must also consider the congregation and adapt to the worship traditions practiced in a particular mosque. For example, the typical duration of a khutbah in the regional Grand Mosque is around 7-10 minutes, while at the Istiqlal Mosque in Central Jakarta, it is about 30 minutes. Therefore, a khutbah speaker should adjust to the worship traditions of the mosque where they are delivering the sermon. An old proverb relevant to this situation is: "Where the earth is trodden, there the sky is revered." In this context, one principle of religious moderation practiced commonly is respecting the worship traditions of each mosque and region, as long as it does not contradict the principles of religion.

Moreover, paying *Zakat al-Fitr* before *Eid al-Fitr*, while the Shafi'i school typically advises giving it in the form of staple foods like rice, is also considered valid in monetary form (*qimah*) according to Imam Abu Hanifa. This view is supported by a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The evaluation of paying zakat fitrah with money should be based on a comprehensive and tolerant understanding of various opinions. The author's experience in Brunei and Malaysia shows that paying zakat fitrah with money, equivalent to the price of staple foods, is already practiced in both countries. Paying zakat with money, including online payments, presents its challenges for zakat collectors.

Thus, the implementation of a moderate attitude in worship encompasses not only obligatory acts of worship but also voluntary ones. Extremist attitudes often emerge in voluntary worship, such as during the *qunut* prayer in Salat al-Fajr. Some Muslims who believe in the *qunut* feel

²⁵Adenan Adenan, and Tondi Nasution, "Wahdat Al-Wujud and Its Implications for the Kamil Insan," *Al-Hikmah: Journal of Theosophy and Islamic Civilization* 2, no. 1 (March 22, 2020): 149–63, <https://doi.org/10.51900/alhikmah.v2i1.7609>.

²⁶Ulfatul Husna, and Muhammad Thohir, "Religious Moderation as a New Approach to Learning Islamic Religious Education in Schools," *Nadwa: Journal of Islamic Education* 14, no. 1 (July 13, 2020): 199–222, <https://doi.org/10.21580/nw.2020.14.1.5766>.

²⁷Faelasup Faelasup, "Islam and Religious Moderation in The Perspective of The Hadith," *Tahdis: Journal of Hadith Studies* 12, no. 1 (June 30, 2021): 38–51, <https://doi.org/10.24252/tahdis.v12i1.19542>.

uncomfortable praying behind an imam who does not recite it and even consider their prayer invalid. Conversely, those who do not believe in *qunut* may feel uncomfortable praying behind an imam who recites it and views it as an innovation (*bid'ah*). Both attitudes reflect an incomplete understanding of religious texts, leading to division and impeding religious moderation.

Similarly, in the practice of *Tarawīh* prayer in Indonesia, some perform 8 rak'ahs while others perform 20 rak'ahs, each with its evidence and arguments. It is important to maintain Islamic brotherhood and not allow the difference in rak'ahs to cause conflict. The technical implementation of *Tarawīh* prayer, whether 8 or 20 rak'ahs or a combination of both, should be adjusted according to the agreement of the mosque committee and congregation. The principle of religious moderation includes consultation for consensus, tolerance of differences, and prioritizing Islamic brotherhood over differences in the practice of voluntary worship.

Differences of opinion among Muslims regarding non-obligatory practices, such as performing the Friday call to prayer twice, congregational dhikr, collective supplication after obligatory prayers, shaking hands after prayers, and reciting salutations during *Tarawīh* prayers should be viewed as a blessing rather than a source of conflict. These differences should be addressed with wisdom and mutual respect, as each opinion has its evidence and arguments. Extremism arises when someone believes their practice is the most in line with the Sunnah and considers differing practices as mistakes. A broader understanding acknowledges that various religious practices within the category of Sunnah, such as the manner of raising hands during *takbiratul-ihram*, the position of hands after *takbiratul-ihram*, and the method of prostration, reflect *tanawwu'u al-ibadat* (diversity of worship practices). Viewing one practice as the most *Sunnah* and others as not *Sunnah* is an unmoderated stance and does not reflect a comprehensive understanding of religion.²⁸

4.2 Religious Moderation: Human Relationships with Fellow Humans in the Era of Digital Disruption

One of the major challenges of religious moderation in the digital era is the dissemination of ideas and ideologies through technology and social media platforms, like YouTube and Instagram. Technological advancements and easy access to information have transformed domestic culture and increased competition with Western culture, leading to negative effects, such as the spread of extremism, anti-Pancasila ideologies, hoaxes, and hate speech. Self-regulation is crucial to mitigate the negative effects of imprudent technology use.²⁹ The digital era accelerated the spread of information and religious ideologies without spatial or temporal limits, with social media serving as the primary platform for interaction, especially for millennials and Gen Z. social media removes social barriers, allowing free commentary, but also creates opportunities for the spread of extremism and anti-Pancasila ideologies.

Many cases have highlighted the low digital literacy among millennials and Gen-Z, making them vulnerable to extremist ideologies, contrary to Pancasila. Digital literacy is crucial for young people to face future challenges. For example, the arrest of terrorism suspects A and T by Densus 88 in Central Kalimantan on June 19, 2019, was triggered by extremist ideas spread via social media like Facebook, coupled with weak digital literacy and religious understanding. Misleading

²⁸ Rasina Padeni Nasution, "Religious Moderation: Efforts to Overcome Conservative Understanding in Muslim Society in Indonesia," *Al-Usrah : Jurnal Al Ahwal As Syakhsyah* 10, no. 2 (December 20, 2022): 22–37, <https://doi.org/10.30821/al-usrah.v10i2.14675>.

²⁹ Wildani Hefni, "Religious Moderation in The Digital Space: Case Study of Mainstreaming Religious Moderation among Islamic Higher Education Institutions," *Islamic Community Guidance Journal* 13, no. 1 (July 21, 2020): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.37302/jbi.v13i1.182>.

ideologies like *hijrah*, *uzlah*, and jihad are difficult to change once ingrained. In response, BNPT collaborated with FKPT and research institutions to conduct the Radicalism Potential Index (RPI) surveys in 2020 and 2022. The results showed that Central Kalimantan's score was above the national average, ranking 4th in 2020 and dropping to 9th in 2022, indicating that weak digital literacy and shallow religious understanding are major factors contributing to radicalization potential.³⁰

In mid-2021, government policies regarding communal prayers during the COVID-19 pandemic triggered societal polarization, with intense support and opposition to social media. Rejection often stemmed from a lack of understanding and the spread of misinformation and hate speech, which exacerbated the situation.³¹ Necessary efforts include enforcing identity verification for new SIM cards by the Ministry of Communications and Information, addressing misleading content by social media platforms, teaching digital literacy in educational institutions, and having religious and traditional leaders actively counter hate speech. All parties, from families to the government, must collaborate to reduce the potential for radicalism and extremism through social media.

This research highlights the crucial role of formal educational institutions and social media in promoting religious moderation. Formal educational institutions, such as schools and universities, are responsible for instilling values of moderation through education led by knowledgeable teachers and lecturers. Meanwhile, social media plays a significant role in shaping societal behaviour in the digital age, where challenges to religious moderation arise because of the spread of extreme content and shifts in religious authority. The integration of digital technology in disseminating values of moderation becomes essential to prevent the excessive spread of extreme ideologies.

4.3 Religious Moderation: Human Relations with the Natural Environment

The environment functions as an interconnected system influenced by its inhabitants. From a religious perspective, it is seen as part of divine creation, emphasizing the importance of protecting it as an expression of divine will. Environmental damage is attributed to human actions, underscoring the need for religiously informed environmental stewardship. Religion plays a crucial role in shaping behaviours that preserve the environment, making religious moderation important for addressing global environmental crises. Experts have highlighted that these crises, including climate change and global warming, pose significant challenges to the planet's future.³²

Prophet Muhammad imparted profound guidance regarding human's relationship with their environment, underscoring their duty to safeguard nature as an integral aspect of human life. The Prophet's teachings regarding environmental protection can be found in various hadiths and

³⁰Wani Fitriyanti, and Adil Mubarak, "The Coordinating Role of the Central Kalimantan Provincial Government in Combating Radicalism and Terrorism," *Journal of Government Dynamics* 7, no. 2 (2021): 67–80, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.36341/jdp.v7i2.4931>.

³¹Muhamad Yasin, and M. Nabil Khasbulloh, "Moderation, Pandemics and The Era of Disruption: Strengthening Literacy Religious in Urban Millennials After The Outbreak of Covid-19," *Didaktika Religia: Journal of Islamic Education* 10, no. 1 (2022): 1–16, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30762/didaktika.v10i1.6>.

³²Muhtarom Ilyas, "Environment in Islamic View," *Journal of Social Humanities* 1, no. 2 (November 2, 2018): 102–15, <https://doi.org/10.12962/j24433527.v1i2.672>.

sunnah, where He reminds his followers not to harm the environment, to maintain the balance of ecosystems, and to treat living beings with kindness.³³

One concept taught by Prophet Muhammad related to environmental conservation is *hima'*, which refers to areas that the population should not use, especially for exploitative purposes. Thus, these areas are protected by the Islamic government based on Sharia, to safeguard and preserve nature.³⁴ Reflecting on the actions of the Prophet during that time reveals that they embody a long-term vision for environmental preservation. Therefore, in Islamic teachings, the protection of the environment is not merely a moral call, but also an integral part of humanity's social and spiritual responsibilities.

Many experts argue that human actions driven by an anthropocentric paradigm cause most environmental crises. Anthropocentrism views humans as the centre of the universe's system. This perspective often leads to humans making selfish decisions regarding environmental policies. Such a paradigm results in the exploitation and depletion of natural resources to fulfil personal interests and needs, with little regard for the well-being of the environment.³⁵ An adaptive attitude towards the social, cultural, and natural environment will shape an individual's character to better appreciate nature and the need to maintain a balance in life. Good practices perfect all human abilities through habit formation. The anthropocentric view, where humans aim to conquer nature without maintaining its balance, is referred to in Surah Ar-Rūm, "Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste a part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness]."³⁶

This verse emphasizes that the primary cause of environmental crises is human actions that dominate (*taskhīr*) and exploit nature without considering its benefits and harms. As a result, disasters occur, such as recurring floods every rainy season and forest fires that threaten during the dry season. In the 1980s, during the rainy season, floods in Tunggul Irang resulted in relatively clean water, with water levels reaching only up to an adult's knees. During floods, many children enjoyed learning to swim, bathing, and easily catching fish. In contrast, the flood that occurred in 2021 was severe. Tunggul Irang was submerged with water levels reaching 1.5 meters, and the water was muddy and mixed with silt. This change is attributed to several factors, including climate change with continuous heavy rain over several days, deforestation, and coal mining, without regard to its consequences. Additionally, the local culture of disposing of waste, especially plastic waste, into rivers and other places has further exacerbated the environmental conditions.

In addition, during prolonged dry seasons, Indonesia, including Central Kalimantan, has experienced forest and peatland fires in various regions, notably in 1998, 2015, and 2019. These incidents resulted in limited visibility because of thick smoke, breathing difficulties, respiratory infections among children, and the displacement of residents seeking cleaner air in safer areas. Human actions also caused these forests and land fires, aside from natural heat factors.

³³Muhammad Syariful Anam et al., "Natural Resources Conservation in Islamic Perspective," *Al-Madaris Journal of Education and Islamic Studies* 2, no. 1 (June 4, 2021): 26–37, <https://doi.org/10.47887/amd.v2i1.19>.

³⁴Hasan Ubaidillah, "Formulation of the Concept of Al-Maqasid Al-Shari'ah in Environmental Conservation and Restoration," *Al-Qanūn: Journal of Thought and Islamic Law Reform* 12, no. 1 (2010): 26–52, <https://doi.org/10.15642/alqanun.2010.13.1.26-52>.

³⁵Raden Mas Sukarna, "Human and Environment Interaction in The Perspective of Anthropocentrism, Anthropogeography and Ecocentrism," *Tropical Journal* 16, no. 1 (October 26, 2022): 84–100, <https://doi.org/10.36873/jht.v16i1.2969>.

³⁶Ar-Rum 30:41.

Environmental experts, such as Ali Yafie, Mudhofir Abdullah, and Sukarni assess that the primary cause of environmental crises, particularly natural disasters, is the flawed relationship between humans and the natural environment. Humans, driven by egoism, attempt to dominate and exploit nature without considering its benefits and harms.³⁷

In implementing religious moderation, the relationship between humans and the environment requires the principle of *maslahat*. *Maslahat* is often used interchangeably with *al-maqashid al-syar'iyah*, and they have similar meanings. While *mashlahat* refers to the concept of general good recognized by society, *al-maqasid al-shari'iyah* is a tool for operationalizing the concept of *mashlahat*. In the relationship between humans and the environment, the principle of *maslahat* is applied to prevent environmental damage by safeguarding five essential aspects: religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property.³⁸ According to Yusuf al-Qaradawi, preserving the environment is as obligatory as preserving religion. Furthermore, Yusuf al-Qaradawi connects *maslahat* with the value of *ihsan* (doing what is best). Examining the meaning of *ihsan* in the Qur'an reveals that it encompasses values of benefit and responsibility, as illustrated in QS. Al-Isra 17: 7, "[And said], 'If you do good, you do good for yourselves; and if you do evil, [you do it] to yourselves.'"

Then when the ultimate promise came, [We sent your enemies] to sadden your faces and to enter the temple in Jerusalem, as they entered it the first time, and to destroy what they had taken over with [total] destruction. The concept of *ihsan* can be expanded to encompass the rights and responsibilities within the relationships between humans and God, between humans themselves, and between humans and the environment. Acting benevolently toward the environment leads to reciprocation from nature as goodness, tranquillity, and natural beauty. Maftukhin emphasizes the importance of environmental preservation in the modern era for ensuring future survival and addressing environmental crises. Thus, protecting the environment can be included within *maqasid al-shariah* under the term *Hifzh al-Bi'ah* (preservation of the environment).

Contextually, implementing religious moderation, the principles of *maslahat* and *islāh* regarding environmental conservation must be integrated into daily life. The relationship between humans and the natural environment should shift from anthropocentrism, which exploits nature, to ecocentrism, which is friendly towards the environment. Ecocentrism views living beings, including humans, as interconnected with and dependent upon the natural world. This perspective aligns with Sayyed Hossein Nasr's argument that the anthropocentric theory of *khalifah* as the *al-'alam al-shaghir* (microcosm) should be reinterpreted to reflect the greater importance of the universe as the *al-'alam al-kabir* (macrocosm).³⁹ Thus, human perspectives on the environment need to change, grounded in the values of *maslahat*, *islāh*, and *ihsan*. Humans are created by Allah as the most perfect beings on Earth, and this perfection comes with the responsibility of acting as *khalifah* (stewards) of the planet.

5. Discussion

³⁷Nina Herlina, "Environmental Problems and Environmental Law Enforcement in Indonesia," *Galuh Justisi Scientific Journal* 3, no. 2 (May 16, 2021): 162–78, <https://doi.org/10.25157/jigj.v3i2.93>.

³⁸Safirliyah Safirliyah and Fitriani Fitriani, "Religion and Awareness of Protecting the Environment," *Substantia: Journal of Islamic Theology* 20, no. 1 (2016): 271–80, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.22373/substantia.v16i1.4918>.

³⁹Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Encounter of Man and Nature* (California: University of California Pres, 2004), 164.

The above discussion indicates that religious moderation in the relationship as a servant of Allah can be achieved effectively if a person has profound and extensive knowledge of religious matters and does not possess excessive fanaticism or blindness towards their sect or school of thought. Furthermore, a moderate attitude toward religion can also be fostered through mutual recognition, understanding, tolerance, and cooperation among individuals and groups, regardless of their different schools of thought or sects. This digital era, especially concerns about social media platforms, such as WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, are crucial for disseminating values of religious moderation through messages of preaching, education, and more. Without mastery of social media, extremist, liberal, and anti-Pancasila, messages will continue to reach Generations Y and Z without counter or moderating responses.⁴⁰

Religious moderation is essential to implement in educational institutions, particularly in schools and universities, not only for fostering tolerance within religious communities but also between different religions. Many extrinsic and intrinsic factors play a pivotal role in implementing religious moderation, but the most crucial among all are the educators who serve as role models (*qudwah*) for students. Additionally, it is indeed challenging to uphold responsibility for the environment because of the numerous shifts in conditions where humans engage in environmental exploitation. Modern humans often neglect the moral rights of every ecosystem on Earth. According to Sayyed Hossein Nasr, environmental problems cannot rely solely on scientific and technological approaches; a spiritual approach is also necessary. The issue faced by modern humans today is a lack of spirituality and ethical values in addressing ecological problems.⁴¹

Endless desires, often mistaken for needs, create contradiction towards religious teachings that advocate contentment with what one has. The solution lies in the desacralization of nature and science, viewing nature as a sacred reality rather than a profane one. Sacred science sees nature and science through a metaphysical lens, unlike secular science, which often leads astray. By restoring sacred values to both nature and science, we can address the environmental and spiritual crises facing modern civilization. Nature, as part of life and always praising Allah in its way, should be seen as a component that maintains the balance of the world. Humans, as stewards of the Earth, have the potential to fulfil this role through their intellect and creativity.⁴²

5.1. Conclusion

Religious moderation, from an Islamic perspective, can be understood through the concept of Tri-Relational Religious Moderation, which involves the relationship of humans with their God, fellow humans, and nature. Religious moderation in the relationship between humans and God is achieved when individuals having profoundly deep knowledge can balance aspects of faith and emotion with aspects of humanity, rationality, and physical health. Concerning human relations in the digital era, the implementation of religious moderation requires strengthening digital literacy and social media intelligence. Without adequate digital literacy and mastery of social media, extremist, liberal, and anti-Pancasila messages can spread without the presence of moderate and calming counter-narratives. Furthermore, the relationship between humans and the natural environment and the implementation of religious moderation requires a significant change from

⁴⁰ Partono Nyanasuryanadi et al., "Mainstreaming the Value of Religious Moderation by Teachers in the Digital Era," *Al-Ishlah: Journal of Education* 15, no. 2 (April 12, 2023): 1357–68, <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v15i2.3198>.

⁴¹ Nasr, *The Encounter of Man and Nature*, 167.

⁴² Asfa Widiyanto, "Traditional Science and Scientia Sacra: Origin and Dimensions of Seyyed Hossein Nasr's Concept of Science," *Intellectual Discourse* 25, no. 1 (2017): 18–32, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31436/id.v25i1.1000>.

anthropocentrism to ecocentrism. The approach must shift from exploitation and the degradation of nature to environmentally conscious development that is harmonious with nature. Socio-political-economic policies need to consider environmental aspects, both at the micro and macro level, such as forest conservation and natural resource management, and cleanliness and the beauty of the surroundings of homes, offices, schools, and public places. Thus, policymakers, officials, politicians, educators, preachers, and social media must synergize and commit to raising awareness of the importance of environmental stewardship for sustainable development in the future. Amid the currents of globalization and digitalization, the pursuit of implementing a moderate attitude has become increasingly complex. Depicting these challenges will help trace solutions and strategic steps to address the growing religious problems today. In this context, religious moderation not only involves an individuals relationship with God, but it also requires the ability to interact positively with fellow human beings and the environment.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of this manuscript declare that they have no financial or non-financial conflicts of interest related to the subject or materials discussed.

Data Availability Statement

The corresponding author will provide the data related to this study upon request.

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