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Religious Moderation of Muslim and Buddhist communities to realizing interfaith harmony in Veteran Street, East Banjarmasin

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Abstract

Muslims and Buddhists, as fellow believers, have the potential to support each other and establish mutually beneficial and productive relationships in building society, nation and state. The portrait of diversity, harmony, and religious tolerance in Indonesia is reflected in Veteran Street, East Banjarmasin District. The study aimed to analyze religious moderation in Muslim and Buddhist communities in realizing harmony between religious communities. The study used a qualitative approach with a naturalistic phenomenology type. Data collection used observation, interview, and documentation techniques. The study resulted in 1) religious moderation of Muslim and Buddhist communities in realizing harmony between religious communities through long-standing interactions between Muslim and Buddhist communities; 2) the existence of social cooperation in the form of interfaith social services; 3) the absence of conflict in society manifests the existence of tolerance; 4) the existence of a national commitment by upholding democratic attitudes and national values; 5) participation in religious activities is shown by sharing happiness in essential moments of Islam and Buddhism; 6) the existence of humanity by showing high empathy towards each other. Harmony between moderate religions, which is the goal of moderate attitudes, needs to be preserved and become a habit for all religious communities.

Keywords:

Buddhist Community; Harmony; Muslim Community; Religious Moderation

Abstrak

Umat Islam dan Buddha sebagai sesama pemeluk agama memiliki potensi untuk saling mendukung satu sama lain, menjalin hubungan yang saling menguntungkan dan produktif dalam membangun masyarakat, bangsa dan negara. Potret kemajemukan, keharmonisan, dan toleransi beragama di Indonesia tercermin pada masyarakat di Jalan Veteran, Kecamatan Banjarmasin Timur. Tujuan penelitian untuk menganalisis moderasi beragama pada masyarakat Muslim dan Buddhis dalam mewujudkan kerukunan antarumat beragama. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis naturalistik phenomenologi. Pengumpulan data menggunakan teknik observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi.Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan: 1) moderasi beragama tercermin dari interaksi yang telah terjalin lama antara masyarakat Muslim dan Buddhis; 2) adanya kerja sama sosial melalui kegiatan bakti sosial lintas agama; 3) toleransi diwujudkan dengan tidak adanya konflik di masyarakat; 4) komitmen kebangsaan tercermin dalam penghargaan terhadap nilai-nilai demokratis dan kebangsaan; 5) partisipasi dalam kegiatan keagamaan ditunjukkan dengan saling berbagi kebahagiaan pada momen penting agama Islam dan Buddha; 6) nilai-nilai kemanusiaan tercermin dari sikap empati yang tinggi antarumat beragama. Moderasi beragama yang menjadi dasar kerukunan ini perlu dilestarikan dan dijadikan kebiasaan oleh seluruh umat beragama untuk menjaga harmoni sosial yang inklusif dan berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci:

Kerukunan; Komunitas Buddhis; Komunitas Muslim; Moderasi Beragama

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Introduction

Humans are inherently social beings who consistently live and interact with others (Hantono & Pramitasari, 2018). As social beings, humans cannot live alone, so they need the presence and help of others (McNerney, 2024). Social interaction serves as the foundation of social processes and involves dynamic social relationships (Melkas, 2016). It occurs when individuals communicate directly or indirectly, utilizing symbols and language to create meaning and establish connections in human relationships (Frau et al., 2023). In integration between groups in society, several institutions must be created that bind all members of social groups, both ethnic and religious, so that each citizen can identify themselves with a characteristic that is also possessed by other social groups (Hariyanto, 2022). These institutions prioritize universal values that each religious group can refer to without leaving their respective religious identities.

The phenomena of social change in society, such as shifts in mindsets regarding social norms, values, behaviors, social patterns, and stratification, contribute to the emergence of new societal conflicts (Wahyu & Yani, 2020). These conflicts often begin at the individual level and can escalate to group-level tensions within society. Such occurrences can have detrimental effects on the community as a whole. This evolving way of life significantly influences the social dynamics of ethnic populations, particularly in terms of communication, interaction, and societal integration (Yang & Wang, 2021).

Indonesia is a pluralistic country with a diverse array of religious groups coexisting within its society (Azizah & Purjatian, 2015). However, this diversity can negatively impact social interactions if religious groups prioritize egocentrism, such as the belief that their own religion is the most correct or emphasizing the superiority of their respective groups (Zuhdi, 2017; Anggraeni et al., 2023). Harmonious relations between religious communities in a heterogeneous society are a social wealth that must be maintained and preserved (Umar, 2017). In such a pluralistic society, individuals must uphold the coexistence of their faiths alongside others and navigate the challenges of religious diversity with mutual respect (Muslih, Anggraeni, & Ghoni, 2023).

Meanwhile, philosophically, Indonesia has strength with the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* which should build unity in managing religious differences in social interactions to create a harmonious and peaceful life. Seeing the current condition of the nation, it seems that the Indonesian nation needs to reflect on the meaning of the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* to be more applicable in social, national, and state life so that heterogeneous life is not a reason for conflict (Anwar et al., 2022). Data from the Indonesian Survey Circle and the Denny J.A. Foundation reveal that most Indonesian people feel uncomfortable living side by side and as neighbors with those who are different, including those of other religions (detiknews, 2012).

In 2014, the Setara Institute recorded 122 incidents of violations of freedom of religion and belief across Indonesia, involving various forms of actions. By 2016, this number had risen to 208 incidents with 270 recorded actions spread across 24 provinces, of which 140 acts were perpetrated by state officials (Setara Institute, 2016). These figures highlight the significant threat of social disintegration and the potential for religiously motivated social conflict. In a pluralistic society like Indonesia, the challenge lies in fostering harmony and peace while minimizing disputes and clashes among groups, tribes, and followers of different religions. These data and facts show that the threat of social disintegration and the potential for social conflict is quite significant from a religious perspective.

The challenge for a heterogeneous society like Indonesia is creating and maintaining harmony and peace and minimizing disputes and clashes between groups, tribes, groups, communities, adherents, and followers of specific religions. Moderation is the main principle of Islam (Shihab, 2019). In the context of diversity in all aspects, including religion, customs, tribes, and nations, moderate Islam is a relevant religious doctrine. Viewing religion in a mild way, namely understanding and practicing religious teachings without being extreme, both right and left groups, is known as religious moderation (Anwar, 2023b). The presence of a moderate attitude is the key to the emergence of tolerance and harmony. Religious moderation is an attitude that sincerely

obeys one's religion and has a moderate attitude towards the beliefs of others by respecting them. Religious moderation results in peace, harmony, and maintaining diversity (Hamdi et al., 2021).

Harmony is a term filled with the meaning of "good" and "peace" (Tim Penyusun Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, 2020). In essence, living together in society with "unity of heart" and agreeing not to create disputes and quarrels. Harmony is ideal and desired by human culture. Harmony (from *rukun*', Arabic, meaning pillar or pillar that support the house; support that provides peace and prosperity to its inhabitants) broadly implies an atmosphere of brotherhood and togetherness between all people even though they differ in ethnicity, religion, and class (Shihab, 2019).

The appreciation and manifestation of religious teachings manifest in community life interactions. Glock and Stark state that five universal dimensions can measure a person's religious behavior, namely ideological, intellectual, ritualistic, experiential, and consequential (the impact of the other four dimensions applied in the secular world) (Ben-Nun Bloom et al., 2021). These dimensions measure the extent to which a person's behavior is motivated by religious teachings in social life (Ryan et al., 2021). Religion serves as a driving force that influences an individual's interactions with others, manifesting in daily life through diverse cultural expressions and local wisdom. It also acts as a unifying element, fostering cohesiveness, collective identity, and strengthening various social dimensions (Mukhoyyaroh, 2023).

Veteran street is one of the areas in Banjarmasin Timur District, Banjarmasin City, South Kalimantan Province. A portrait of diversity, harmony, and religious tolerance in Indonesia, community life is reflected in the community in the Veteran Strees area. This statement can be proven by the existence of four religious adherents in that place: Muslims, Buddhists, Confucians, and Christians. Islam is a religion whose adherents dominate compared to Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity. Based on the results of comparative observations of the four religious identities. The four religions can live harmoniously together without conflict leading to negative things. This harmony is marked by several activities carried out by each adherent of the two religions safely and peacefully.

Previous studies that discuss religious moderation in religious harmony in East Banjarmasin, namely research that discusses local wisdom related to the application of Chinese architectural rules to buildings commonly used and inhabited by ethnic Chinese people in Banjarmasin (Widiastuti & Oktaviana, 2012). Research discusses religious moderation in the taklim assembly in Banjarmasin City, which produces religious expression during the COVID-19 pandemic (Wahdini et al., 2022). Research on Chinese Muslims and the world of trade in Banjarmasin from the 13th to 19th centuries produces a literature review on the history of its development (Mukhoyyaroh et al., 2021;Noor & Sayyidati, 2020).

This study focuses on the concept of religious moderation and its role in fostering harmony between Muslim and Buddhist communities on Veteran Street, East Banjarmasin. It seeks to understand how a culture of religious moderation is cultivated within these communities and highlights its significance in achieving interfaith harmony. The findings are expected to contribute to a broader understanding of religious moderation and its impact on sustaining peaceful coexistence in diverse societies.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a phenomenological naturalistic design. The approach enables researchers to understand and experience the concept of religious moderation in fostering harmony between religious communities. Data were collected from natural settings, which served as direct data sources, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon. The naturalistic paradigm is applied to uncover the meaning behind each phenomenon, aiming to identify local wisdom, moral values, and other unique characteristics present in the research location. Qualitative research emphasizes the results derived from researchers' observations, making the role of humans as research instruments essential.

The role of the researcher as a key instrument is critical because their direct presence and engagement enable the identification and interpretation of meanings more effectively than nonhuman tools, such as questionnaire instruments. Through direct interaction, researchers can clarify and verify information with research subjects, ensuring data accuracy. This process, known as member checking, allows researchers to confirm and refine their interpretations based on feedback from participants, ensuring the credibility and reliability of the findings.

The data collection technique in this study used procedures as described by Sugiyono, which included three things: observation, interviews, and documentation (Sugiyono, 2017). Data collection techniques in qualitative research are in-depth interviews, participant observation, and study documentation. Researchers carried out the data analysis process throughout the study. Complete data and information were reduced by abstracting and summarizing the core, after which the summary was arranged into units and categorized by coding. The final stage of data analysis is to conduct a data validity check. The data analysis technique used in this study consists of three simultaneous activity flows: data reduction, data presentation, and concluding.

The validity of the researcher's data is based on specific criteria to ensure the trustworthiness of the data obtained by the researcher through research. The researcher will carry out four types of data validity criteria, namely credibility; the researcher intends to prove that the data that the researcher has successfully collected is by the natural world and occurs. To achieve credibility value, the researcher uses several techniques, namely source triangulation techniques, methods and theories, member checking, the presence of researchers in the field, discussions with colleagues, continuous observation, and checking the adequacy of references (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Results

Interaction between Muslim and Buddhist Communities

The pattern of social interaction in realizing harmony between religious communities is seen in two patterns of interaction. In the Muslim and Buddhist communities in Veteran Street, East Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan Province, an associative social process is formed, namely cooperation, tolerance and acculturation. Interaction between religious communities in Veteran Street, East Banjarmasin is well established, as stated by Mr.FR. The people of Veteran Street, East Banjarmasin interact without questioning religion; they help each other and work together without looking at religious identity. Based on the results of the interview with Mr FR he stated that the social interaction of the Muslim and Buddhist communities in Veteran Street, East Banjarmasin could not be separated from the historical facts of the relationship between the Muslim and Buddhist communities that have existed for a long time.

Jalan Veteran was designated as a village of religious moderation because the community interacts harmoniously and communicates well. This is by the statement of the Head of the Islamic Community Guidance Section, H. Ahmad Sya'rani, M.Ag, who stated that religious moderation in East Banjarmasin is a model of harmonious interaction because the community has the key to religious moderation, namely humanity, public welfare, fairness, balance, obedience to the constitution, national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and respect for tradition. This statement is reinforced by the statement of Mr. RR, He said

"During my time as a resident around Jalan Veteran, from the past until now there has been no conflict, everyone is harmonious, always peaceful, side by side, if there is any activity here everyone supports, and respects each other."

Based on the interview results, it is clear that the interaction between the Muslim and Buddhist communities in Veteran Street, East Banjarmasin is dynamic. The people of Veteran Street, East Banjarmasin do not mix Buddhism and Islam when practising their religion. The Muslim and Buddhist communities practice their worship according to the principles of their respective religious teachings.

Social Cooperation

Based on the results of the investigation, it was found that the Muslim and Buddhist communities in Veteran Street, East Banjarmasin have various activities that show social cooperation; the results of the interview with Mrs RNA stated that:

"Veteran Street, East Banjarmasin is accustomed to carrying out activities together in various activities, this has been done for generations and is a normal thing for us, we are one part without considering the inherent differences."

This statement illustrates that the Veteran Street community is a community that has quite intense social cooperation. The study results show that the form of social cooperation carried out by the Muslim and Buddhist communities in Veteran Street, East Banjarmasin is through an interfaith social service program.

In realising harmony between religious communities, religious figures, community leaders, and the community carry out social services to build or maintain public facilities, such as cleaning public cemeteries and roads. According to Mr SS, the selected village already has the concept of a Religious Moderation Village, namely there is no difference in treatment in terms of muamalah; daily interactions already reflect religious moderation shown by helping each other without any differences to people of different tribes, religions and beliefs.

Tolerance

The results of the observations found that the Veteran Street, East Banjarmasin community rarely experiences conflict in a religious context. It is rare to see Muslim and Buddhist communities tense or clash due to spiritual issues. The observations found that the people of *Kampung Moderasi* Jalan Veterans rarely experience conflict in the context of religion. It is rare to see Muslim and Buddhist communities tense or clash due to religious issues. The results of an interview with Mrs. RA the Head of RW, stated that the Muslim and Buddhist communities did not discuss religious differences; she said

"The people here live in mutual cooperation, and we are brothers. There is never a term who are you, where are you from, what is your religion. If you want to say tolerance, we are also confused about what tolerance is actually meant, because we have no problem with religious differences and the discussion about religion is over."

Based on the results of observations, community service activities ahead of the celebration of the Buddhist holy day are one of the religious tolerance activities. This activity is to clean the temple area, such as sweeping and cleaning the church yard, including other facilities. This activity is carried out by local Muslim residents as well as several young people. The activity was carried out as a tangible manifestation of the involvement of the community and officials in preparing a clean and comfortable environment before celebrating the Buddhist holy day.

National Commitment

The people of Veteran Street, East Banjarmasin reject all forms of intolerance and violence in the name of religion. In decision-making, the people of Veteran Street, East Banjarmasin always uphold the value of deliberation and consensus. This shows a democratic attitude and upholds national values. The national commitment in Veteran Street, East Banjarmasin as conveyed by Mr. SS, is as follows.

"The people here have a strong national commitment, mba, by respecting the differences that exist in the aspect of the nation's motto, namely Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. The community's commitment here can be seen from several existing activities."

ntolerance and

The Muslim and Buddhist communities together reject all forms of intolerance and violence in the name of religion. In decision-making, the Muslim and Buddhist communities always uphold the value of deliberation and consensus. This shows a democratic attitude and upholds national values.

The informant conveyed that the Muslim and Buddhist communities on Jalan Veteran have a very strong national commitment, respecting the differences in the nation's motto, namely Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. The national commitment in the Muslim and Buddhist communities can be seen from several existing activities.

Participation in Religious Activities

There is significant participation from Muslim and Buddhist communities in religious celebration activities. For example, during the Waisak celebration, Muslims are present to provide support and participate in ritual activities carried out by Buddhists. These activities include worship rituals, meditation, and candlelight parades at places of worship. The presence of the Muslim community shows support and mutual respect. Conversely, during Eid al-Fitr, Buddhist communities are also present to celebrate and give congratulations to Muslim neighbors. Buddhist communities also give congratulations and sometimes celebrate by attending open houses held by Muslim communities. This creates an atmosphere of sharing happiness in crucial moments for both religions. Results of an interview with Mrs NA as

'If there is an event to commemorate the anniversary of the city of Banjarmasin, there is a decorated boat race, and then there are displays of religious buildings. The event is very crowded and becomes an attraction for local traditions."

The study results show that despite differences in beliefs, the community has successfully built harmonious cooperation through various religious activities. Involvement in interfaith religious activities, such as celebrating religious holidays of other religions, shows an attitude of mutual respect.

Humanity

Communities from both religions show a high level of empathy for each other. When one community faces difficulties, such as natural disasters or social needs, the different community often shows concern through material assistance or moral support.

The results of interviews with informants revealed that the Muslim community expressed empathy for Buddhist religious practices, and conversely, Buddhists expressed empathy for Muslim religious practices. This empathy is carried out because of the closeness that exists between communities. When a natural disaster occurs, religious communities from various backgrounds come together to assist regardless of the victim's Religion.

The importance of religious development during the COVID-19 pandemic is to build a sense of concern, sympathy, and empathy, strengthen national commitment, and realize peace. This interaction pattern illustrates an associative solid process in the religious community in Veteran Street. This relationship is built continuously from small to large scopes. Religious moderation and teaching strategies that foster critical thinking, empathy, and respect for diversity (Yulianti et al., 2023). This is also in line with research that shows caring attitudes are commendable actions and that instilling caring values is meaningful in society (Effendi et al., 2023).

Discussion

Based on the research results, it was found that the religious moderation of Muslim and Buddhist communities in realizing harmony between religious communities is indicated by good interaction. Social interaction is a dynamic process in which individuals influence each other (Liu, 2024). This study strengthens that interaction is a process in which individuals or groups communicate and influence each other in a social context, including norms, values, and culture (Schmader et al.,

2022) This interaction can occur directly or indirectly, including various forms of verbal and non-verbal communication. Social interaction is the basis of social life because, without interaction, society cannot form and sustain social relationships between individuals and groups that involve communication and reciprocal actions (Bell, 2020). This process creates a relationship in which each party can influence each other.

Social interaction is a process in which individuals communicate and interact in a social context. According to Goffman (2016), social interaction involves the exchange of symbols and meanings between individuals that impact society's social behavior. Social interaction is the main requirement for social activities to occur. Social interaction is a dynamic relationship involving relationships between individuals, groups of people, and individuals and groups of people. With this social interaction, differences in cultural backgrounds can be minimized. This is because, in this interaction process, mutual learning and adaptation are very dominant. The results of the study found that religious moderation muslim and buddhis in realizing religious moderation, is indicated by the results that there is social cooperation. Cooperation between religious institutions, community organizations, and government institutions can help strengthen the ecosystem of religious moderation by promoting cooperation in various activities (Mukhibat et al., 2023).

The results of the study also found that tolerance is part of the efforts of the Muslim and Buddhist communities to realize harmony in Veteran Street, East Banjarmasin. Religion teaches about a life of mutual love, mutual respect, and high tolerance between fellow religious communities so that religious communities can live in harmony, peace, and side by side (Tumuatja et al., 2021). The study results align with other studies that state that tolerance is essential to realizing religious harmony in society (Adawiyah et al., 2021).

The manifestation of an attitude of tolerance is part of the indicator of a person's paradigm, attitude pattern, and social-religious practice in appreciating and accepting differences in social life as a natural law (Naim, 2020) On this basis, the manifestation of tolerance between Muslims and Buddhists in Veteran Street is an urgent element in building a harmonious pluralistic life in Indonesian society. The excellent interaction between Muslims and Buddhis manifests a sense of tolerance and active religious participation. The attitude of mutual respect and appreciation for differences in social interaction makes the environment more conducive and harmonious (Tuerah et al., 2023). This can be seen from the many activities that the community does together.

The concept of religious harmony itself, namely there are three elements in the idea of religious harmony: first, the willingness to accept differences in beliefs with other people or groups; second, the willingness to allow others to practice the teachings they believe in; and third, the ability to accept differences and then enjoy the atmosphere of togetherness felt by others when they practice their religious teachings (Nazmudin, 2018). Religious harmony aims for Indonesian society to be able to live together even though there are many differences. This concept is formulated carefully and maintained so that there is no removal or reduction of human rights in carrying out the obligations of the religious teachings they believe in (Anwar, 2023a). This triharmony includes three harmonies: Inter-religious harmony, harmony between religious communities, and harmony between religious communities and the government. Harmony is an effort to prevent social relations between religious communities. In terms of harmony, the initiative of the community is more dominant than the encouragement of the government, for religious harmony is a joint effort of religious communities and the government to create a safe and peaceful national and state life (Kerukunan & Beragama, 2019). The government implements Various policies so that there is no mutual interference between other religious communities as much as possible to avoid the tendency of conflict due to religious differences; all levels of society together create a harmonious and peaceful living atmosphere in the Republic of Indonesia.

Another research result is the national commitment to the Veteran Street, East Banjarmasin community, which is part of maintaining harmony in society. Gurvitch sees the implementation of individual freedom within the framework of social order as a projection of the problem of preserving individual liberty in the process of social development into political law

(Zagirnyak, 2023). Research by the Ministry of Religion shows that interfaith social service activities increase mutual understanding and reduce negative stereotypes between religious communities (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019). Cooperation is needed to build harmonious relationships, and in the context of religion, it emphasizes efforts to have a moderate attitude (Zidni, 2018). Goffman explores various aspects of face-to-face interaction and how social rituals play a role (Walsh, 2022).

In the context of a pluralistic society, worship also plays a role in promoting interfaith dialogue, mutual understanding, and tolerance. Through interaction in prayer, religious adherents can get to know each other, understand differences, and build harmonious cooperation in maintaining peace and diversity (Warnis et al., 2024). The results of research in Muslim and Buddhist societies are that with a sense of humanity in society, religious moderation can be implemented. Empathy and understanding of the social interaction of religion are essential to creating harmony between religious communities (Sumarto & Harahap, 2021).

Conclusion

Religious moderation of Muslim and Buddhist communities in Veteran Street, East Banjarmasin is a real example of how Muslim and Buddhist communities can live side by side in harmony. Religious diversity in this village is a strength for building unity and tolerance between religious communities. Religious moderation is vital to realizing a peaceful and prosperous life in Veteran Street. Religious moderation in Veteran Street, East Banjarmasin is shown in the excellent interaction between Muslim and Buddhist communities in realizing harmony between religious communities. The community realizes harmony through the interaction between Muslim and Buddhist communities, which has existed for a long time. The community also establishes social cooperation in the form of interfaith social services. Tolerance is manifested by the absence of conflict in the community, and the community has a national commitment to upholding democratic attitudes and national values.

Muslim and Buddhist communities also participate in religious activities, as shown by sharing happiness during essential moments in Islam and Buddhism. The community also has humanity by showing high empathy for each other. This research recommends that an in-depth study be conducted on the role of Islamic and Buddhist religious figures in maintaining diversity in the Veteran Street, East Banjarmasin.

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