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**Religious Moderation from the Perspective of Mosque  
Administrators in North Sumatra-Indonesia**

***Moderasi Beragama Perspektif Pengurus Masjid di Sumatera  
Utara-Indonesia***

**Muhammad Basri**

**Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara**

**Corresponding author\*: [muhammadbasri@uinsu.ac.id](mailto:muhammadbasri@uinsu.ac.id)**

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**Abstract**

*Indonesia is a democratic country so there are often differences in views and interests. The problem that often occurs is related to the lack of moderation in religion, both of the same religion and different religions, whether living in the general public or in a housing complex, all of which are very vulnerable to conflict. Therefore, religious moderation is needed for religious leaders, in this case the mosque administrators in North Sumatra are chosen. This study aims to determine the religious moderation perspective of mosque administrators in North Sumatra. This research method uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive study method of analysis. Research data collection using observation, interview and documentation techniques. Observations and interviews were conducted directly to the location of the mosque in Medan City and Deli Serdang, but for the other two mosques, namely the Langkat and Batubara areas, interviews were conducted via WhatsApp phones and recorded, due to long distances. The results and discussion found that the understanding of the implementation of religious moderation from the perspective of mosque administrators is quite good. Religious moderation from the perspective of mosque administrators in North Sumatra, namely how we can bring religious moderation in the midst of society, we also live with other religions. Religious moderation is not also interpreted as not having a stance that can be tossed here and there, but someone must hold his religion well and carry it out according to his beliefs, but must not blame other people's religions and beliefs, especially in terms of muamalah must be tug of war in social life. Fostering tolerance within the religion of Islam, namely by not disputing the differences that exist among Muslims themselves as long as they follow the ahlu sunnah wal jamaah and do not leave Islam. Fostering tolerance towards different religions, namely in terms of social what we can help our fellow human beings help, let alone neighbors, friends like social nature we do together, which is important as long as it does not violate the creed then we do it together.*

**Keywords: Religious; Mosque; Moderation; Perspective; Management.**

**Abstrak**

Indonesia adalah negara yang demokrasi sehingga sering terjadi perbedaan dalam pandangan dan kepentingan. Masalah yang sering terjadi berkenaan dengan tidak meoderatnya dalam beragama, baik seagama maupun beda agama, baik tinggal di tengah masyarakat umum maupun di komplek perumahan, semuanya itu sangat rentan terhadap konflik. Oleh karena itu diperlukan moderasi bergama bagi tokoh-tokoh agama dalam hal ini yang dipilih adalah pengurus masjid di Sumatera Utara. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui moderasi beragama perspektif pengurus masjid di Sumatera Utara. Metode Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan



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metode studi deskriptif analisis. Pengumpulan data penelitian menggunakan teknik observasi, wawancara dan dokumentasi. Observasi dan wawancara dilakukan langsung ke lokasi masjid yang berada di Kota Medan dan Deli Serdang, namun untuk dua masjid lainnya yakni daerah Langkat dan Batubara wawancara dilakukan melalui telepon WhatsApp dan direkam, karena jarak yang jauh. Hasil dan bahasan ditemukan bahwa secara pemahaman pelaksanaan moderasi beragama perspektif pengurus masjid sudah cukup baik. Moderasi beragama perspektif pengurus masjid di Sumatera Utara, yakni bagaimana kita dapat membawakan moderasi beragama itu ditengah-tengah masyarakat, kita juga hidup bertentangga dengan agama lain. Moderasi beragama itu tidak pula dimaknai dengan tidak punya pendirian yang bisa terombang ambing ke sana ke mari, tetapi seseorang harus memegang agamanya dengan baik dan menjalankannya sesuai dengan kepercayaannya, namun tidak boleh menyalahkan agama dan kepercayaan orang lain, apalagi dalam hal muamalah haruslah tarik ulur dalam kehidupan bermasyarakat. Memupuk toleransi dalam seagama Islam yakni dengan cara tidak mempermasahkan perbedaan yang ada dikalangan umat Islam itu sendiri asalkan berfaham ahlu sunnah wal jamaah dan tidak keluar dari Islam. Memupuk toleransi terhadap agama yang berbeda agama yakni dari segi sosial apa yang bisa kita bantu sesama manusia kita bantu, apalagi bertentangga, berteman layaknya bersifat sosial kita lakukan bersama, yang penting selagi tidak melanggar akidah maka kita lakukan secara bersama.

**Kata kunci: Beragama; Masjid; Moderasi; Perspektif; Pengurus.**

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is the country with the fourth largest population in the world, numbering 277.5 million people as of April 21 2023. (<https://www.cnbcindonesia.com>) With such a large number, it is both a strength for the Indonesian nation and a challenge. It is said that it is a strength if you can maintain it and make it remain united, but it can be a challenge if you cannot maintain unity, then there will be divisions, riots and it is not impossible that it will become a state and even disbandment will be history, but this is not what we want. We want Indonesia to remain big, advanced and prosperous.

Indonesia is a democratic country so there are often differences in views and interests (Abror & Riau, 2020). The problem that often occurs is related to lack of moderation in religion, whether of the same religion or of a different religion, whether living among the general public or in housing, all of which are very vulnerable to conflict. (Faridah, 2013)

Within Islamic circles themselves, disputes often occur due to only maintaining the opinions of their own group, this is as per research conducted by Edi Junaidi which states that some Muslim groups are strict and intolerant and understand their religion and impose their understanding among Muslim communities, sometimes in some situations using violence caused by the extreme right or fanatics. However, there are others who are lax or loose in their religion and even submit to negative behavior and thoughts originating from other civilizations and cultures, namely extreme left or secular. (Edi Junaedi, 2019).

In North Sumatra, which is one of the provinces in Indonesia where the author lives, based on research by the North Sumatra Provincial Statistics Agency, the population of North Sumatra is 15,115,206 people as of 10 March 2023 and there are 32 thousand places of worship in North Sumatra and Islam is the most numerous. numbering 10.12 million as of December 2021, the Muslim population reached 66.34% of the total population in North Sumatra. (<https://databoks.katadata.co.id/> accessed on August 26 2023).

This research aims to determine the religious moderation perspective of mosque administrators in North Sumatra. The choice of mosque administrators was due to two things; Firstly, because mosque administrators are those who have direct contact with the congregation in their mosque. Second, because the mosque management is the one who determines the imam and lecturer for Friday sermons, recitations and Islamic holidays.

Based on observations, interviews and documentation, it is necessary to strengthen religious moderation for mosque administrators and the community through socialization in mass media, recitations and other social activities both within the same religion and with other religions.

## **WRITING METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive analysis study method. Research data collection uses observation, interview and documentation techniques. Observations and interviews were carried out directly at the mosque locations in the cities of Medan and Deli Serdang, but for two more mosques in the Langkat and Batubara areas, interviews were carried out via WhatsApp telephone due to the long distance. The interview process was recorded and then analyzed and filtered according to the research objectives and then converted into written form using the Google Documents application, then filtered again by listening to the interview recording so that the voice of the interview matched the written description. Documentation of mosques and interviewees is presented throughout this research.

This research was carried out in August 2023, in four mosques representing districts and cities in North Sumatra, namely first; Ar-Rahman Mosque Jl. Durung Gg. Aspin, Kel. Siderejo Hilir Medan Tembung District, Medan City, North Sumatra, postal code 20222. Second; Hidayatul Iman Mosque Jl. Starling no. 13, Tembung, Kec. Percut Sei Tuan, Kab. Deli Serdang, North Sumatra postal code 20226. Third; Safiyyul Amaliyatil Hadiqah Mosque Jl. KH. Zainul Arifin No. 1 b, Kwala Bingai, District. Stabat, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Postal Code 20811. Fourth; Nurul Huda Mosque, PT Inalum Tanjung Gading Housing Complex, Batu Bara Regency, Postal Code 21657.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Religious Moderation Perspectives of Mosque Administrators in North Sumatra**

Moderation in all things is important, including moderation in religion. In a matter, the best thing is the middle as in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW "khairul agedi ausathuha" (HR. Ahmad). Even in discussions and deliberations, we must not insist on our own opinions, we must be able to hear and respect other people's opinions, we must be able to empathize. If we don't like seeing the behavior of someone who doesn't want to listen to other people's opinions and insists on only his opinion and considers his opinion to be the most correct, then we shouldn't apply this to other people, that's what is meant by respect or moderation.

This is in line with what was conveyed by Mr. Ibnu Hidayat Sumantri, SE (aged 50 years) Chairman of the Mosque Prosperity Board (BKM) at the Arrahman Mosque, Jl. Durung GG. Aspin, Siderejo Hilir Village, District. Medan Tembung, North Sumatra Postal Code 20222. According to Mr Ibnu Moderasi of religion, our understanding is how we are religious, how we interact with other religions. Moderation is possible in my opinion, tolerance, so religious moderation is like that and in our environment the majority are Muslims, but there are also non-Muslims

and in my opinion moderation is well established and there are no problems in the environment around the Ar-Rahman mosque.

So religious moderation is how we bring religion into society, we also live next door to other religions.

This was also conveyed by Mr. Abdul Kadir, M.Pd (aged 40 years) Secretary of BKM Nurul Iman Mosque Jl. Starling 13 no. 1 Perumnas Mandala, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra Province, religious moderation is how we Muslims are people who are always in the middle, not left, not right, not above, not below. However, we are not swayed, we are consistent with sharia worship but in muamalat we must be able to be in the middle and not be arrogant, not too intolerant, respecting that is much better than being consistent with our truth, especially in the field of muamalah, we must You can talk about muamalah activities in Indonesia.

Religious moderation is not also interpreted as not having a stance that can be swayed here and there, but a person must hold his religion well and practice it according to his beliefs but must not blame other people's religion and beliefs, especially in matters of muamalah there must be push and pull in life. social.

Religious moderation is very good if applied in social life. This was stated by Dr. Muhammad Sodri, MM (Age 45 years) position as Chair of the BKM Safiyul Amaliyatil Hadiqah Mosque which is located at Jl. Proclamation no. 1 Stabat, Langkat district, North Sumatra, "Actually that is good because the important thing is that it is not related to faith, if there is no problem there is no problem, tolerance is recommended, but if it is related to faith then each must go his own way."

Tolerance is highly recommended in Islam, as well as preaching in a polite and kind manner, as in Indonesia, which was done by the Wali Songo. This was conveyed by Muhammad Agus Salim Kaban, S.Si (aged 34 years), position as Head of the Da'wah Division of the Nurul Huda Mosque whose address is the PT Housing Complex. Inalum Tanjung Gading Batu Bara Regency, "Like the Wali Songo in spreading Islam they pay attention to local wisdom, so today with local wisdom religious moderation is being carried out."

In religious moderation you must also pay attention to local wisdom or local customs. Respecting local customs is part of moderation in religion. Wali Songo or Wali Sembilan who convey Islamic da'wah in Indonesia pay attention to or respect local wisdom or local traditions and customs. Preaching using puppets carried out by Wali Songo was a form of local wisdom because people on the island of Java at that time liked the art of wayang kulit and wayang golek.

Paying attention to local customs is part of tolerance in social life. The previous study conducted by Fitriani regarding religious moderation and tolerance stated that tolerance is not just accepting differences, but more than that, we must be able to acknowledge each other, be open to each other, understand each other about differences and not question these differences even if someone disagrees.

(Fitriani, 2020).

### **Fostering Tolerance in the Islamic Religion**

In Islam, there is wide opportunity for differences of opinion both in understanding fiqh and monotheism and the science of kalam. Likewise, in the case of dhikr, there are those who carry out zikr together by strengthening their voices, there are also those who do not dhikr together but individually and with a voice that is not strong (sirri), but dhikr is highly recommended in Islam, because by carrying out dhikr This can make a person more religious because they always remember God (Arifin et al., 2021), but in practice there are often differences.

In understanding fiqh, it is known that there are four schools of thought that are muktabarah or the most famous, namely the Maliki, Hanafi, Syafi'i and Hanbali schools. The Koran and Hadith provide opportunities for this difference of opinion. For example, in the Al-Quran, Surah al-Maidah verse 6 concerning the procedures for performing ablution, regarding wiping part of the head (famsahu bi ru'u sikum), there is a difference of opinion among the ulama. Some people say that part of the head means the whole head, there is a third of the head and just a little, even if it is exposed to ablution water, three strands of hair are considered valid. The same verse can give rise to different understandings. Likewise, the different worship practices carried out by the Prophet Muhammad SAW in different situations also gave rise to differences among Muslims. In this case, tolerance is needed between people of all religions regarding the differences that occur.

In the practice of performing the morning prayer in the last rak'ah, some people use the qunut prayer and some don't. In the four mosques where the author researched, the issue of differences in understanding among Muslims seemed to have resolved, no longer questioning existing differences. This is what Mr. Ibnu said, "The Ar-Rahman Mosque does not have a Muhammadiyah ideology, not a Nahdatul Ulama (NU) ideology. If I listen to Mr. Ustadz Abdul Somad's lecture, it is close to the Ahlussunnah Wal Jamaah ideology. Organizationally neither NU nor Muhammadiyah. "Even though every day at the Ar-Rahman Mosque, every morning prayer uses the qunut prayer, after the prayer we continue with dhikr and prayer together."

Mr. Ibnu further said that there is no problem of moderation among fellow Muslims, "There is no problem of moderating the practice of religion among fellow Muslims, even between religions we are tolerant, let alone between our fellow Muslims, whether Muhammadiyah or NU. At the Ar-Rahman Mosque, after prayer, remembrance and prayers are carried out regularly and from the time the Ar-Rahman Mosque was built until now, there have been group prayers.

In line with what Mr. Kadir said, the Hidayatul Iman Mosque also does not care about the differences that exist among Muslims themselves as long as they adhere to the understanding of Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jamaah and do not leave Islam. However,

if there is an ideology that has been declared by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) to be heretical, then the mosque management forbids the congregation from following it. This is as stated by Mr. Kadir "that in our mosque, starting from 1982 the construction of this mosque until 2023, we used the aswaja (ahlu sunnah wal jamaah) ideology with worship using Qunut to this day and for tarawih prayers there are still 23 rak'ahs."

Mr. Kadir further explained, "As far as I know, there are several mass organizations that have been released that can be joined by people who are Muslim, one of which is NU, Muhammadiyah, Alwasliyah, Perti and so on, but apart from that, if there are any calls for division, conflict, so don't follow it, for example, arguing for bits and pieces of heresy even though everything that has arguments for it cannot be categorized as heresy.

Mr. Kadir continued, "If someone has an understanding that we often hear about, like the Wahhabi understanding, it is not worth following and we at the Nurul Iman Mosque often cover that. There are those who believe that he and his group are the only ones who are right, so we do not agree with this. There used to be a person living in this area who claimed to be Muslim but didn't believe in mosques, he only believed in the ustadz, all the mosques in Indonesia are not mosques according to him, they are not places of prayer. So he prays at home, even though he prays on Friday. He didn't want to take part in the funeral prayer, because there were many challenges from the Hidayatul Iman mosque congregation, so in the end he moved to another place far away, because we told the congregation not to follow this kind of ideology.

There is also acceptance of various ideologies among Muslims among the administrators of the Safiyul Amaliyatil Hadiqah Stabat Langkat Mosque, as stated by Mr. Sadri, "In this mosque, everyone is accepted as a congregation, and for morning prayers they use Qunut and there is a permanent imam. For Friday preachers, apart from NU, there is also Muhammadiyah.

This is also what happened at the Nurul Huda mosque, PT Housing Complex. Inalum Tanjung Gading, Batubara Regency, as stated by Mr. Kaban, "Sociocultural understanding of the people in this complex is diverse, we see that some of the congregation's friends believe in Nahdatul Ulama, but there are also those who understand Muhammadiyah, there are also Salafis, there are also tabligh friends who join in. There are no issues that develop when there are differences between qunut and not qunut.

Tolerance among people in one religion must always be realized by mutual respect and mutual respect for practices in worship that are based on the truth of their understanding (Musthofa, 2019), of course accompanied by existing arguments.

### **Fostering Tolerance towards Different Religions**

Tolerance that has been well established needs to be maintained and cared for, just like plants that need to be watered and fertilized so that they grow healthy and fertile. Likewise, tolerance towards people of different religions. The mosque administrators in North Sumatra are of the opinion that tolerance needs to be maintained and cared for, as stated by Mr. Ibnu "as at the beginning of our

conversation, that our environment is predominantly Muslim, and that doesn't mean there are no non-Muslims, and we are very tolerant towards non-Muslims." Muslims, there are no problems, we are always tolerant. Moreover, the distance between Masjid Ar-Rahman and their house of worship, namely the church, is far from us. If in their homes they hold worship activities, they use the term "Pertangiangan" and that is also a normal thing and is not heard in mosques, so there is no problem, because we have principles in managing Ar-Rahman for you, your religion, for us, our religion. There has never been a dispute, let alone a conflict, never.

This is also what happened at the Hidayatul Iman Mosque, as stated by Mr. Kadir, "Thank God, I have been teaching at SMAN 18 Medan for 9 years. 70% of the students are Christian and 70% of the teachers are Christian and 30% are Muslim, both teachers and students, so we are quite tolerant. Coincidentally, the principal is also Christian and he is also the most tolerant one. I have been there for 9 years until today. When Christmas comes, the principal and Christian teacher say that we don't have to say Merry Christmas to us, that's okay, he says, then he often says Happy Eid al-Adha, Eid al-Fitr, sometimes we just don't hesitate. The important thing is that we all get along, there is no regard for religion in carrying out this task, except for our respective new religious matters, said the principal.

This is what happened to the caretaker of the Safiyul Amaliyatil Hadiqah mosque, Langkat, as stated by Mr. Sadri, "From a social perspective, what we can do to help fellow human beings, especially if we are neighbors, making friends is like a social thing, we do it together." The important thing is that as long as we don't violate the faith, we do it together."

We need to maintain tolerance for religions that are different from ours by respecting each other. This was conveyed by Mr. Kaban, "We respect each other by providing opportunities to take time off. For example, on Eid al-Fitr, friends from religions other than Islam give us the opportunity to take time off and vice versa, at Christmas New Year, the Muslims finally give in. Let the non-Muslims have enough days off for their respective religious celebrations. Well, this is a system that has become a culture in us, so even if it is considered as an effort to foster religious tolerance, this is also included.

### **Strategic Steps in Strengthening Religious Moderation in Indonesia**

Indonesia is a large country, its population contains various ethnicities, religions and cultures, therefore it needs to be protected with strategic steps to strengthen it in moderation. The Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia has a very important role and is responsible for religious harmony in the territory of Indonesia. (Taufiq & Alkholid, 2021)

The first strategy that needs to be implemented is mutual respect. This was conveyed by Mr. Ibnu, "One thing that is important to do is respect each other, look after each other, we also try when holding activities so as not to coincide with them. For example, our activities for the Prophet Muhammad's birthday should not coincide with their worship activities. It's a long way from the Arrahmad Mosque with their house of worship, but perhaps they also hold worship in private homes



now. As long as they don't disturb each other, there's no problem, but if they both have loudspeakers, that might be annoying, but it's easy to communicate, and there's no problem. I think they do too, because of our tolerance, they also do the same things as us, and there has never been any conflict in our environment. This means that I think moderation has gone well and I think it has gone well before.

Apart from mutual respect, the step that needs to be taken to strengthen religious moderation in Indonesia is to campaign for it to spread widely. This is what Mr. Kadir said, "first we have to campaign about *tasamuh* or tolerance, then apart from campaigning, we have to act fairly to ourselves and others, to act fairly in the sense of the word, not distinguishing whether it is Islam that we blame, If other religions act wrongly then we blame them."

To strengthen religious moderation in Indonesia, what we need to do is provide mutual understanding, because sometimes people are very adamant about their opinions because they don't understand. As Mr. Sadri said, "you must often provide understanding because people who don't know yet don't understand, then often provide enlightenment, such as lectures on religious moderation." This can be done by creating general social activities or providing enlightenment about social relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. This material about religious moderation is rarely presented by *ustadz* in recitations."

The next step in strengthening religious moderation in Indonesia is balancing news on social media related to religious moderation. This was conveyed by Mr. Kaban, "the strategic step that comes to mind at the moment is how to balance developing issues. It could be that if we look at the current form of Indonesianism, it is more directed towards us who are Muslims. For example, when a bomb explosion is found on the ID card of the perpetrator who is Muslim, the legal process is carried out and investigated to the top, but not for the opposite situation." However, Islam is a religion that is non-violent, a religion that teaches hospitality, which is a blessing for all.

Social media must play an important role in conveying religious teachings truthfully. Islam is a humanist religion, seeks to change views more broadly and encourages understanding of Islam as a whole. (Hamdi et al., 2021)

If this diversity is cared for and maintained well, it will be a blessing that can encourage national creativity, intellectual enrichment, and the development of tolerant attitudes. (Marpuah, 2019).

## **CONCLUTION**

Religious moderation is the perspective of mosque administrators in North Sumatra, namely how we carry out this religion in the midst of society, we also live next door to other religions. Religious moderation is not also interpreted as not having a stance that can be swayed here and there, but a person must hold his religion well and practice it in accordance with his beliefs, but must not blame other people's religion and beliefs, especially when it comes to *muamalah*, there must be

push and pull. in social life.

Fostering tolerance within the Islamic religion, namely by not worrying about the differences that exist among Muslims themselves as long as they adhere to the understanding of ahlu sunnah wal jamaah and do not leave Islam. However, if there is an ideology that has been declared by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) to be heretical then the mosque management forbids the congregation from following it so that the wrong ideology does not spread widely.

Cultivating tolerance towards different religions, that is, from a social perspective, what we can do to help fellow human beings, especially if we are neighbors, making friends, like it is social, we do it together, the important thing is that as long as we don't violate the faith, we do it together.

Strategic steps in strengthening religious moderation in Indonesia are mutual respect, mutual protection. Then by campaigning for it to spread widely. Apart from that, you must often provide understanding, sometimes someone who cannot accept something because they don't understand it, then often provides enlightenment and enforces balanced news on social media related to religious moderation.



Gambar 1. Muhammad Basri (berkopiah)



Gambar 2. Abdul Kadir



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A  
Gambar 3. Muhammad Sodri

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