



Religious Moderation and Social Welfare: A Multidimensional Approach to Poverty Alleviation and Human Development

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Abstract

This study discusses the role of religious moderation in the context of social welfare, focusing on a multidimensional approach to poverty alleviation and human development. In a pluralistic society, religious moderation becomes key to creating a harmonious and inclusive social environment. By promoting values of tolerance and mutual respect among religious groups, religious moderation can reduce social tensions and discrimination that hinder community empowerment. This research explores how the integration of religious moderation principles into social policies and development programs can create strong social networks, strengthen interfaith collaboration, and enhance community participation in economic empowerment initiatives. Religious moderation not only serves as a tool to reduce conflict but also as a driver of innovation in inclusive social policies that are responsive to marginalized groups. The study also identifies challenges in implementing religious moderation, such as resistance from certain groups and the still-present exclusive paradigms in society. Therefore, strengthening inclusive religious education and engaging religious leaders in intergroup dialogue is crucial to raising awareness about the importance of moderation in achieving social welfare. The findings show that a multidimensional approach involving religious moderation can accelerate poverty alleviation and improve human quality of life as a whole. The conclusion emphasizes the need for collaborative strategies involving the government, civil society organizations, and religious communities to achieve sustainable development goals.

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Introduction

Religious moderation has become a crucial issue in social, political, and policy discussions across various countries (Gumuruh, 2023; Hefni, 2020; Idi & Priansyah, 2023; Mala & Hunaida, 2023; Rusdiyanto et al., 2023; Wibisana, 2018). However, this approach has not been fully integrated into poverty alleviation



and human development efforts in Indonesia (Amni & Diyah, 2018; Nurias et al., 2023; Purnomo, 2022). In many cases, religious moderation is often narrowly understood, primarily as an effort to curb extremism, without considering its significant potential as a foundation for improving social welfare (Abdurrahim, 2023; Cholil, 2023; Idi & Priansyah, 2023; Wildan & Muttaqin, 2022; Yusuf et al., 2024). Meanwhile, poverty and social inequality remain serious challenges faced by Indonesia. Economic disparities are often closely tied to social, cultural, and religious differences, which can trigger conflicts within society (Bahasoan et al., 2023; Febriandika et al., 2022; Laksono et al., 2023; Rahayu et al., 2019a; Van Leeuwen & Földvári, 2016).

Regions with high poverty levels often experience social tensions, exacerbated by religious or social group differences (Idi & Priansyah, 2023; Laksono et al., 2023; Rahayu et al., 2019b; Van Leeuwen & Földvári, 2016). On the other hand, policy approaches that focus solely on economic aspects often fail to deliver optimal results. This is because such policies frequently overlook the social and cultural factors that significantly influence the community's acceptance of development programs (Muh Aditya Ibrahim et al., 2023; Nabila, 2021; Rahawarin et al., 2021; Zuhri et al., 2023). In this context, religious moderation, which can promote tolerance, social justice, and intergroup harmony, can play an important role in enhancing social welfare and reducing poverty (Faozan & Rasyidi, 2023; Gumuruh, 2023; Izazy, 2022; Tomalin, 2018). Therefore, it is evident that religious moderation is not only relevant for maintaining social stability but also holds potential as a multidimensional approach to poverty alleviation and holistic human development.

Although numerous studies have been conducted on religious moderation and poverty, these studies generally tend to examine these two aspects separately. Existing research has largely focused on sectoral issues, such as economic policies, without considering that social harmony fostered through religious moderation can strengthen economic interventions. Previous studies can be categorized into three main groups: first, studies emphasizing religious moderation to prevent social conflict (Gumuruh, 2023; Idi & Priansyah, 2023); second, research focusing more on economic policies for poverty alleviation without considering social factors (Feliciano, 2019; Nurdina, 2021; Susilawati, 2022; Vaezghasemi et al., 2014); and third, studies that assess the importance of human development in the context of poverty but do not link it with religious moderation (Ahdiyana et al., 2020; Nasution et al., 2015; Sihotang et al., 2023; Sumanto et al., 2021). Thus, it is clear that there has yet to be a comprehensive study that connects religious moderation with social welfare as an approach to overcoming poverty. This research aims to fill this gap by linking religious moderation and social welfare in the context of poverty alleviation and human

development. Religious moderation is believed to strengthen the social foundation that supports empowerment efforts in the fields of economy, education, and public health. In turn, this contributes to poverty reduction efforts. To explore this issue, three research questions are posed: First, how can religious moderation strengthen social readiness in adopting poverty alleviation policies? Second, how does religious moderation affect social inequality and cultural differences in a diverse society? Third, how can religious moderation be integrated into human development policies to achieve sustainable social welfare? Answers to these questions are expected to provide new insights into the importance of a multidimensional approach that includes religious moderation in poverty alleviation and human development programs.

This study is based on the argument that religious moderation can serve as a crucial foundation for social welfare and human development. Religious moderation creates a more inclusive social space, reduces social tensions, and enables more harmonious interactions between groups. In turn, this supports the stability needed for effective economic and social interventions. In a more harmonious society, access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities can significantly increase, while social disparities can be minimized. Religious moderation also encourages a collective sense of responsibility in addressing the challenges of social inequality and poverty. Thus, religious moderation is not merely a tool for achieving social harmony but also a strategic approach for attaining fairer social welfare and sustainable human development.

Research Methodology

This research employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method to explore the relationship between religious moderation and social welfare, particularly in the context of poverty alleviation and human development (Furlong & Lester, 2023). The research is conducted through meta-ethnography, focusing on synthesizing qualitative studies to generate new interpretations and insights. Atkins et al. describe this approach as a way to integrate findings from multiple qualitative studies, allowing researchers to build a more comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon (Atkins et al., 2008). By using meta-ethnography, the researcher can uncover underlying themes and concepts that may not be apparent in individual studies, thus enriching the overall discourse (Atkins et al., 2008). The literature review method was chosen to gain a deep understanding of the concept of religious moderation from various theoretical and empirical perspectives that have been previously studied. Data are collected from various secondary sources, including books, academic journals, research reports, and policy documents relevant to the themes of religious moderation, social policies, and human development. This approach allows the researcher to

analyze and synthesize existing findings to construct a comprehensive framework regarding the role of religious moderation in social welfare. In data analysis, this study uses content analysis techniques to identify key themes and patterns related to the contribution of religious moderation in addressing social inequality and supporting inclusive development, which are then discussed in a multidimensional context.

The Role of Religious Moderation in Strengthening Social Readiness to Adopt Poverty Alleviation Policies

Enhancing Acceptance of Social Assistance Programs Across Groups

Religious moderation plays a key role in increasing the acceptance of social assistance programs across groups in a diverse society. By emphasizing values of tolerance, mutual respect, and cooperation, religious moderation can reduce distrust and potential conflicts between groups with different religious backgrounds. In this context, religious moderation not only serves as a tool for maintaining peace but also acts as a bridge to facilitate better collaboration in implementing social assistance programs. One way that religious moderation contributes to the acceptance of social assistance programs is by enhancing tolerance among groups. According to Weiss et al., education about diversity and tolerance can reduce prejudice against other groups, which in turn increases support for social programs designed to assist disadvantaged groups (Weiss et al., 2023). By promoting values of moderation, communities can become more open to social assistance initiatives that involve diverse religious and cultural groups.

Häßler et al. demonstrate that positive experiences in intergroup contact can increase support for social change, especially when these experiences empower marginalized group members (Häßler et al., 2020). In the context of religious moderation, positive interactions between different groups can reduce tensions and increase acceptance of social assistance programs. When individuals feel empowered through these interactions, they are more likely to support initiatives aimed at improving their social and economic conditions. Religious moderation can also help in the formation of a shared identity among different groups. Simon et al. found that respect from members of outside groups can facilitate recategorization as a common group, which is crucial for reducing prejudice and enhancing cooperation (Simon et al., 2015). By fostering a shared identity, religious moderation can create a strong sense of solidarity, which

supports the acceptance of social assistance programs designed to help all members of society, regardless of their religious or cultural backgrounds.

A major challenge in the acceptance of social assistance programs across groups is distrust. Zagefka et al. note that assistance offered by outside groups is often met with suspicion and rejection, especially when there is a perception that the aid has hidden motives (Zagefka et al., 2023). Religious moderation can help reduce this distrust by promoting open dialogue and transparency in the implementation of social assistance programs, allowing communities to feel more comfortable accepting help from other groups. In conclusion, religious moderation plays a critical role in enhancing the acceptance of social assistance programs across groups in a diverse society. By increasing tolerance, facilitating positive intergroup experiences, building shared identity, and reducing distrust, religious moderation can create a more inclusive and harmonious environment. Therefore, it is essential for policymakers and community leaders to promote the values of religious moderation in efforts to alleviate poverty and enhance social welfare.

Encouraging Inter-Community Collaboration in Philanthropic Activities

Religious moderation is a crucial factor in fostering collaboration among various religious communities, particularly in the context of philanthropic initiatives. By promoting values of tolerance, respect, and cooperation, religious moderation encourages diverse religious groups to engage in inclusive philanthropic efforts that ultimately benefit the broader society. This paper explores how religious moderation facilitates social synergy through collaborative initiatives and highlights its importance in addressing social issues. Religious moderation creates a conducive environment for collaboration among different religious groups. According to Gumuruh, promoting moderate religious values helps build trust and understanding between diverse communities, which is essential for collective philanthropic efforts. When religious groups recognize shared goals and values, they are more likely to work together on initiatives addressing social challenges such as poverty, education, and healthcare (Gumuruh, 2023).

Inclusive philanthropic initiatives are characterized by the participation of various religious communities working together to support those in need. Hefni emphasizes that religious moderation encourages interfaith dialogue and cooperation, which can lead to the development of joint programs that benefit marginalized populations. For example, collaborative efforts between Muslim

and Christian organizations in Indonesia have resulted in successful initiatives aimed at providing education and healthcare services to underprivileged communities (Hefni, 2020). The collaborative nature of inclusive philanthropic initiatives fosters social synergy that enhances the impact of these efforts. Akhmadi notes that when different religious communities come together to tackle social issues, they can pool resources, share expertise, and leverage their networks to create more effective solutions. This synergy not only expands the reach of philanthropic initiatives but also strengthens social cohesion among different groups (Akhmadi, 2022).

Religious moderation and inclusive philanthropy contribute to building community resilience in the face of social challenges. Zuhri argues that when religious communities collaborate, they are better able to respond to crises and support each other during difficult times. This collaborative approach fosters a sense of ownership and solidarity, which is crucial for maintaining social stability and harmony (Zuhri et al., 2023). In conclusion, religious moderation plays a vital role in encouraging various religious communities to engage in inclusive philanthropic initiatives. By facilitating collaboration, promoting interfaith dialogue, and creating social synergy, religious moderation enhances the effectiveness of philanthropic efforts and contributes to the overall well-being of the broader society. As communities continue to face complex social challenges, the promotion of religious moderation will be essential in driving impactful and inclusive philanthropic initiatives.

Helping to Overcome Stereotypes and Discrimination in Aid Distribution

Religious moderation serves as a crucial pillar in ensuring the fair and inclusive distribution of social aid, especially in a diverse society like Indonesia. By fostering an environment of tolerance, respect, and collaboration among various religious communities, religious moderation enhances the effectiveness of social assistance programs and promotes social cohesion. This paper explores how religious moderation facilitates fair distribution of social aid and encourages inclusive philanthropic initiatives. Religious moderation encourages unity and cooperation among different religious groups, which is essential for the successful implementation of social assistance programs. According to Idi, promoting moderate religious values can help reduce interfaith conflicts and foster a sense of community among diverse groups (Idi & Priansyah, 2023). When religious communities collaborate, they can pool resources and work together on

initiatives aimed at addressing social issues, thus increasing the overall impact of social aid efforts.

The acceptance of social assistance programs is significantly influenced by the level of trust and cooperation between groups. Pratiwi et al. highlight that religious leaders who adopt an inclusive perspective can effectively bridge the gap between different faith communities, leading to greater acceptance of social initiatives (Pratiwi et al., 2021). By promoting dialogue and understanding, religious moderation helps reduce suspicion and fosters a collaborative spirit that is crucial for the successful distribution of social aid. Religious moderation also contributes to the development of social capital, which is essential for mobilizing resources for social aid. Hwang and Lee argue that communities with strong social capital are better equipped to respond to social challenges, including the mobilization of philanthropic resources during crises (Hwang & Lee, 2023). By creating an inclusive environment where different religious groups can collaborate, religious moderation enhances the community's ability to support one another and effectively address the needs of vulnerable populations.

Religious moderation encourages diverse religious communities to engage in inclusive philanthropic initiatives that benefit the broader society. Sulaiman et al. emphasize that promoting moderation can lead to the formation of joint philanthropic programs that address social inequalities and support marginalized groups (Sulaiman et al., 2022). When religious communities unite to support common goals, they can create synergies that strengthen the impact of their efforts and foster a collective sense of responsibility for the well-being of all community members. In conclusion, religious moderation plays a vital role in ensuring the fair and inclusive distribution of social aid. By promoting unity, enhancing acceptance of social programs, building social capital, and encouraging collaborative philanthropic initiatives, religious moderation contributes to a more just and harmonious society. As Indonesia continues to navigate its diverse social landscape, the promotion of religious moderation will be essential to ensure that social aid efforts are effective and inclusive, ultimately benefiting the entire community.

The Role of Religious Moderation in Addressing Social Inequality and Cultural Differences in a Diverse Society

Encouraging Equal Access to Public Services

Religious moderation promotes a more inclusive approach to public services, which is crucial in ensuring that all members of society, regardless of their religious background, feel accepted and supported. According to Sulaiman (Idi & Priansyah, 2023), promoting religious moderation can help foster interfaith harmony and tolerance, which are essential for the successful implementation of public service programs. When religious communities collaborate and support one another, it reduces the stigma and discrimination that often accompany access to basic services. In the field of education, religious moderation can contribute to creating an environment where students from diverse backgrounds feel valued and accepted (Syaikhon et al., 2023). It is important to empower educators and parents to instill religious moderation values in early childhood education, which can lay the foundation for a more inclusive education system. By promoting tolerance and mutual respect among students, educational institutions can reduce instances of discrimination and create a fairer learning environment.

Access to healthcare is often hindered by discrimination based on religious or cultural identity (Sanogo et al., 2019). Ensuring equitable access to healthcare is vital to achieving universal health coverage, especially for marginalized groups. Religious moderation plays a significant role in addressing this inequality by promoting understanding and cooperation between healthcare providers and patients from diverse backgrounds. By fostering a culture of inclusivity, religious moderation can help ensure that all individuals receive the care they need without fear of discrimination. In the context of social assistance, religious moderation creates an environment in which all individuals in need can be recognized and supported without discrimination. When society is inclusive, social assistance policies become more effective and equitable, benefiting all segments of society. Therefore, religious moderation is a critical foundation to ensure equal and fair access to public services across all sectors.

By promoting religious moderation, we create an inclusive society where all individuals regardless of their religious or cultural background can access the public services they need to improve their lives, helping to bridge the gaps of inequality that often divide communities.

Reducing Social Polarization in Daily Life

Religious moderation is increasingly recognized as a crucial component in fostering tolerance and mutual respect among various communities, especially in multicultural societies. This concept serves as a framework for reducing polarization and improving social interactions by promoting a balanced approach to religious beliefs and practices. The essence of religious moderation lies in its ability to encourage individuals to adopt middle-ground positions, thus reducing extreme viewpoints that can lead to conflict and division (Sueca et al., 2024; Yuliawati & Asri, 2024). One of the key roles of religious moderation is facilitating understanding and respect between different religious groups. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing and appreciating diversity, which is especially critical in a multicultural context. For example, Sulaiman et al. argue that adherents of different religions must learn from each other to effectively manage and address religious differences, as this is essential for preserving human dignity and social harmony (Sulaiman et al., 2022). Similarly, Faozan highlights that in the complex social landscape of Indonesia, religious moderation is crucial for creating social harmony amidst cultural and religious diversity (Faozan & Rasyidi, 2023). This demonstrates that religious moderation not only promotes tolerance but also serves as a strategic approach to maintaining peaceful coexistence in diverse communities.

Furthermore, a moderate religious stance allows society to address complex social issues without resorting to negative sentiments or violence. When social interactions are characterized by tolerance, individuals are more likely to collaborate in solving collective problems, such as poverty or discrimination. In this way, religious moderation not only contributes to reducing polarization but also strengthens supportive social networks and builds solidarity.

Strengthening Support for Inclusive Social Policies

Religious moderation plays a vital role in increasing support for social policies that include all segments of society. This concept promotes tolerance, understanding, and cooperation among diverse religious groups, which are crucial for the drafting and acceptance of inclusive social policies. The relationship between religious moderation and support for social policies can be understood through various dimensions, including enhancing social cohesion, promoting interfaith dialogue, and creating frameworks for collaborative governance. One of the main ways in which religious moderation contributes to

support for social policies is by cultivating tolerance and respect among different religious communities. According to Masruroh et al., tolerance is a fundamental aspect of religious moderation that addresses intolerance and discord, thereby creating a more harmonious social environment (Masruroh & Ummah, 2018). This harmonious environment is conducive to developing social policies that are inclusive and representative of the diverse needs of communities. Additionally, Faozan's work emphasizes that the success of religious moderation is closely linked to a legal framework that supports social harmony, which in turn facilitates the acceptance of social policies at various levels of society (Faozan & Rasyidi, 2023).

Moreover, religious moderation encourages interfaith dialogue, which is crucial for building consensus on social issues. As noted by Soejoeti, interaction between religious actors and institutions can significantly influence societal values, promoting social harmony and justice (Soejoeti et al., 2024). This dialogue not only enhances mutual understanding but also enables the identification of common goals that can be addressed through social policies. For example, collaborative efforts by religious organizations in advocating for social justice and human rights can lead to the formulation of policies that reflect the collective aspirations of society, as revealed in the findings of Khan et al. on the role of social justice in reducing religious intolerance (Khan et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the role of government and religious leaders in promoting religious moderation is critical to the successful implementation of inclusive social policies. Research by Akbar and Rantesalu emphasizes the need for systematic and continuous socialization of moderate religious understanding to combat intolerance and support policies that benefit all community members (Akbar & Rantesalu, 2023). This collaborative approach not only strengthens the legitimacy of social policies but also enhances their effectiveness by ensuring that they are based on values of tolerance and respect for diversity.

In conclusion, religious moderation plays an essential role in increasing support for inclusive social policies that benefit all segments of society. By cultivating tolerance, promoting interfaith dialogue, and encouraging collaboration between religious leaders and government entities, religious moderation creates an environment where social policies can thrive. This synergy is crucial for addressing the complex challenges faced by diverse communities and ensuring that social policies reflect the collective values and needs of society.

Integrating Religious Moderation in Human Development Policies for Sustainable Social Welfare

Character Education Based on Religious Moderation in Schools

Integrating religious moderation into the education curriculum is a strategic step toward building tolerant character among students and respecting diversity. This integration is crucial in multicultural societies like Indonesia, where various ethnicities, religions, and cultures coexist. The application of religious moderation in education not only promotes tolerance but also equips students with the necessary skills to navigate and appreciate the complexities of a diverse society. One key aspect of integrating religious moderation into the curriculum is its potential to shape students' attitudes toward diversity. Rohimah emphasizes that educational programs focusing on religious moderation can help young learners develop moderate character traits that respect differences in their environment (Rohimah, 2023). Similarly, Suprpto discusses a model of religious moderation education that encourages tolerance among students from diverse backgrounds, promoting peace and interfaith dialogue (Suprpto, 2020). By embedding these values into the curriculum, educational institutions can create an environment where students interact positively with diversity.

Moreover, the role of educational institutions in promoting religious moderation is critical. As highlighted by Yani, initiatives such as the establishment of "houses of moderation" in universities function to reinforce understanding of religious moderation among students and faculty (Yani, 2022). These initiatives not only provide a platform for dialogue but also emphasize the importance of tolerance and respect in daily interactions. Likewise, Purwanto et al. argue that internalizing religious moderation values through Islamic education is vital for fostering unity and understanding among students in a pluralistic society (Purwanto et al., 2019). This approach ensures that students not only recognize the importance of moderation but also actively practice it in their interactions with others.

Encouraging Interfaith Involvement in Economic Empowerment Programs

Religious moderation also plays a role in creating policies that support inclusive economic empowerment. Miftah notes that policies integrating religious moderation values can help address challenges faced by minority groups in the context of economic development (Muhammad Miftah et al., 2023). By involving diverse religious groups in the decision-making process, the resulting policies

will be more representative and responsive to the needs of all parties, thereby increasing the success of economic empowerment programs. Furthermore, interfaith collaboration encouraged by religious moderation can create strong social networks, which are essential in the context of economic empowerment. Gumuruh points out that religious moderation can promote social justice and create a stable environment that supports economic initiatives (Gumuruh, 2023). When various religious communities unite to achieve common goals, they can overcome obstacles and create innovative solutions to the economic challenges they face.

Strengthening Inclusive Philanthropy Programs

Religious moderation plays an important role in strengthening inclusive philanthropy programs, especially in diverse societies like Indonesia. By integrating religious moderation values into philanthropic initiatives, a more harmonious and supportive environment can be created among different religious groups. This approach not only helps reduce tensions between groups but also encourages more effective collaboration in community empowerment efforts. One way that religious moderation strengthens philanthropic programs is by promoting mutual trust and appreciation for diversity. Rumahuru states that inclusive religious education can transform exclusive perspectives into more inclusive ones, thereby supporting interfaith collaboration in philanthropic programs (Rumahuru, 2021). When individuals from various religious backgrounds feel valued and recognized, they are more likely to participate in philanthropic initiatives aimed at improving the overall welfare of the community.

Furthermore, religious moderation can help address challenges faced by philanthropic programs, such as resistance from certain groups that may feel marginalized. Kamseno et al. highlight that religious moderation is a key strategy in nurturing multiculturalism and religious diversity, which can reduce the paradox of tolerance in social programs (Hanifah, 2023; Kamseno et al., 2022). By emphasizing moderation values, philanthropic programs are more likely to be accepted by a diverse society, thereby increasing their effectiveness and impact. Additionally, philanthropy programs based on religious moderation principles can create strong social networks among various communities. This is essential for building solidarity and sustaining cooperation.

Conclusion

Religious moderation plays a crucial role in promoting social welfare through a multidimensional approach in poverty alleviation and human development. In this context, religious moderation is not just a moral aspect, but also serves as the foundation for policies focused on improving the quality of life and social justice in diverse societies. First, religious moderation helps build a strong social readiness to support poverty alleviation policies. By strengthening tolerance and acceptance between groups, religious moderation creates a more harmonious climate, encouraging society to be more open to cross-religion and cross-background social assistance programs. This approach broadens the reach of inclusive, effective social policies that target vulnerable groups more precisely.

Second, religious moderation fosters cross-community collaboration in philanthropic activities and economic empowerment programs. This inclusive collaboration enables society to engage in social initiatives that promote economic justice and strengthen social bonds among different groups. By prioritizing moderation values, various religious communities can work together on projects aimed at reducing social inequality through equal access to economic resources, education, and healthcare. Third, the integration of religious moderation in character education in schools is an effective strategy for long-term human development. Education based on moderation not only creates a generation that is tolerant, values diversity, and is committed to collective progress, but also strengthens the foundation of sustainable and inclusive social welfare. A generation educated in religious moderation will be able to maintain social harmony and actively contribute to creating a fairer and more prosperous society. Overall, the multidimensional approach of religious moderation serves as a vital instrument in poverty alleviation and human development. By strengthening social cohesion and building a just, inclusive society that is ready to face future challenges, religious moderation significantly contributes to the creation of sustainable social welfare.

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