

THE IMPLICATIONS OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN LOUDSPEAKERS IN HOUSES OF WORSHIP A CASE STUDY AT THE AMAL SHOLEH MOSQUE, JL. KESEHATAN, GG. CINTA KASIH, KEC. MEDAN DENAI

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Abstract. *This study looks at implementation moderation in religion values in the use of loudspeakers at Amal Sholeh Mosque, located within a multicultural community. The primary focus is on the responses and perceptions of both Muslim and non-Muslim residents regarding the use of loudspeakers, as well as the extent to which the principles of religious moderation are reflected in interreligious social relations. A qualitative approach was employed, utilizing in-depth interviews and field observations. The findings indicate that although the term "Religious Moderation" is not widely recognized by the local community, its core values such as tolerance, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence are evident in their daily practices. Nevertheless, complaints persist regarding the direction and volume of the loudspeakers, which are perceived as disturbing. Therefore, it is necessary to disseminate the technical regulations issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and to enhance collective awareness in order to foster a harmonious worship environment without compromising the comfort of surrounding residents.*

Keywords: Religious Moderation, Loudspeakers, Masjid Amal Sholeh

I. INTRODUCTION

The Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia initially proposed the concept of Religious Moderation between 2014 and 2019. Lukman Hakim Saifuddin in 2019, this idea emerged as a response to the diversity of beliefs held by the Indonesian people (Juli Santoso, et.al, 2022). This diversity requires every individual in society to respect, appreciate, and act wisely toward one another in order to create a peaceful and harmonious life. The year 2019 was designated as an important moment for strengthening religious moderation. In the context of a nation rich in culture, ethnicity, and religion, this approach is considered very important for maintaining unity and preserving national identity (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019). The term moderation is rooted in Latin, referring to a state of balance without excess or deficiency. Another meaning is related to the ability to control oneself to avoid extreme attitudes. According to the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), moderation is the act of avoiding extreme or excessive views and minimizing violence. The word "moderation" comes from the Latin word "Moderatio," which means "to balance," not too much or too little. The term moderation in English is called Moderation, which carries the meaning of a balanced attitude that is neither excessive nor insufficient. The following are a number of literature reviews related to literacy in religious moderation. One of them comes from Samuel Selanno's writing entitled Religious Moderation in the Framework of Christian

Religious Education in Life. Selanno emphasizes that Christian Religious Education (PAK) and understanding of religious moderation are two things that are closely related (Samuel Selanno, 2022).

The moderate value of life in human relations, especially in a religious context, was taught by Jesus as written in Matthew 22:39: "And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself!'" This statement also serves as a correction to the mistaken understanding of some Jews who referred to Leviticus 19:18, which interpreted love for one's neighbor as applying only to fellow Israelites. On the contrary, Jesus emphasized that the teaching of love is universal, encompassing all humanity, including those from different religious backgrounds (Desti Samarena, 2020). Although loudspeakers are often used to listen to verses from the Holy Qur'an, their use in mosques often causes controversy in Indonesian law. One such case that came to public attention occurred in 2018, when Meliana, a resident of Tanjung Balai, Medan, North Sumatra, was sentenced to one year and six months in prison for allegedly committing blasphemy after complaining about the volume of the loudspeakers, which she deemed too loud. Recently, the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, Yaqut Cholil Qoumas, also known as Gus Yaqut, reissued regulations regarding the use of loudspeakers through Ministerial Circular No. 5 of 2022. The letter explains that loudspeakers are divided into two types, namely those used for indoor and outdoor areas. Indoor

loudspeakers are directed at areas inside mosques or prayer rooms, while outdoor loudspeakers are directed at outdoor areas (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022). In the context of a multicultural society, the management of sound from places of worship is a sensitive issue that requires special attention. Disputes arising from the use of loudspeakers in places of worship generally stem from practices that do not comply with official regulations issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kanya Anindita Mutiarasari, 2024). One concrete example occurred at the Amal Sholeh Mosque located on Jl. Kesehatan Gg. Cinta Kasih, where loudspeakers were used in violation of applicable regulations. This caused tension with local residents, especially non-Muslims, who felt disturbed by the intensity and frequency of the sound produced.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study applies a qualitative approach that emphasizes subjective understanding of the social dynamics occurring in the field. In the data collection process, researchers utilize in-depth interviews and direct observation through field studies to obtain a complete and contextual picture of the phenomena occurring (Randy Fadillah Gustaman, 2024). The main focus of this research is on the implications of religious moderation related to the use of loudspeakers in places of worship. The qualitative approach allows researchers to investigate the emerging impacts. As an initial step, researchers will collect data using various techniques, including direct observation at the Amal Sholeh Mosque. This observation will help researchers identify the impacts of religious moderation that occur. The researcher will also conduct interviews with experienced religious leaders and Christian residents living around the mosque to understand their perspectives. Once the data has been collected, researchers will analyze the sequence of events in the Religious Moderation Implication Process. Researchers aim to understand how harmony and tolerance are maintained in the region, as well as how the community accepts the use of loudspeakers in places of worship.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Implications Of Religious Moderation

Indonesia, as an archipelagic country, has a very rich cultural and religious diversity. This diversity forms a pluralism that is bound by Pancasila and the motto Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, which is inscribed on the Garuda ribbon. In order for the struggles of the nation's heroes not to be in vain, the community is expected to actualize the spirit of unity contained in the state ideology, namely Pancasila. This is particularly reflected in the third principle, which emphasizes the importance of Indonesian Unity (Miftah Fadhlullah, 2023)

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), implication is defined as a state of involvement or engagement.

Therefore, terms such as implying or implying mean to bring involvement or connection to something. In Indonesian, implication is also understood as a consequence or impact that arises as a result of an action (Cindy Yogawa, 2023)

Therefore, every affixed word derived from the root word implikasi, such as berimplikasi or mengimplikasikan, contains the meaning of involvement or connection with something. In the context of Indonesian, the word implikasi itself is defined as a consequence or influence that arises in the future as a result of an action. According to Silalahi, implication refers to the impact that arises from the implementation of a program or policy, which can have a positive or negative effect on the parties involved in its implementation. Based on the previous explanation, it can be concluded that implication refers to the impact that arises from the implementation of a policy or program, which can have a positive or negative effect on the parties involved in the activity (M. Alfif Dalma, 2024).

Islam, as the religion practiced by the majority of the Indonesian people, has two main teachings: textual teachings derived from the Qur'an as God's revelation and the Hadith as guidance from the Prophet Muhammad, and contextual teachings that have developed as a result of human thought and creativity, influenced by geographical, social, and cultural conditions. This has resulted in different wisdom and traditions, creating variations in the practice of religious teachings. These differences are ultimately natural, as a form of grace from the laws of nature created by God Almighty (Mustaqim Hasan, 2021).

In the Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah verse 143 reads:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا ۗ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ ۚ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ ۚ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّ إِيْمَانَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

(Likewise, We have made you (Muslims) a moderate community) so that you may be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger (Prophet Muhammad) may be a witness over you. We did not establish the Qiblah (the Sacred Mosque) that you used to face, except to test who would follow the Messenger and who would turn back. Indeed, the change of the Qiblah is very difficult, except for those whom Allah has guided. Allah will not waste your faith. Verily, Allah is indeed Most Merciful and Most Compassionate toward mankind. (The Quran: 2:143).

Religion has two distinct powers: on the one hand, it can be a unifying (centripetal) and positive force, while on the other hand, it can be a divisive (centrifugal) force. In Indonesia, religious moderation has emerged for a number of compelling reasons, including a number of phenomena that support the concept. Religious moderation provides a recipe for respecting other religions, various ways of understanding religion can be interpreted, and encourages individuals to abandon intolerance, violence, extremism, and division so that religious moderation can fulfill its function of fostering peace and harmony among religious communities (Sobri Febrianto, et.al, 2023).

Various implementation projects under the authority

of the Ministry of Religion and its entire hierarchy are carried out in efforts to realize these aspirations and indicators. Religious moderation can be implemented in various ways, including integrating the perspective of religious moderation into development programs and activities, institutionalizing religious moderation into binding programs and policies, strengthening commitment to the state, rejecting all forms of violence in the name of religion, and internalizing the core values of religious teachings. Additionally, there are also ways to strengthen the socialization and dissemination of the concept of Religious Moderation (Jamaluddin, 2022).

It is said that Muslims are a moderate people, that is, a people who occupy a fair middle ground and are the chosen people. The essence of good religion does not lie solely in the direction of prayer, as was once debated by the Jews when Muslims changed the direction of their prayers toward Baitul Maqdis. The best community is one that maintains balance, acknowledges and respects the prophets sent by Allah, without committing acts such as killing prophets, as the Jews did, or deifying prophets, as some Christians have done (Fauziah Nurdin, 2021). Similarly, in terms of religious moderation in moral aspects, the Quran emphasizes the importance of moral balance and consistency in facing life's challenges, with a firm stance and not easily swayed.

Someone who is easily tempted by material offers and worldly pleasures can fall into corruption and damage their faith, even becoming easily controlled by arrogance and luxury, because of a fragile soul that does not hold firmly to principles and values. Such a model of religious moderation is often involved in cases of corruption and distorting reality to gain worldly benefits and personal interests (Nurdin, ac.id).

Religious moderation is also contained in Jesus' teachings on the concept of Salt and Light of the World found in Matthew 5:13, "You are the salt of the earth" and verse 14, "You are the light of the world." The lives of believers in the midst of the world should have a positive influence on their surroundings. Salt that is clean and shiny when exposed to sunlight symbolizes its pure identity, while salt itself gives a distinctive taste to various things. Thus, Christians in building tolerance must maintain their identity as God's people and strive to have a positive impact on the surrounding community (Evans Dusep Dongoran, 2020).

In Christian teachings on diversity and moderation, it is explained that God highly respects human freedom of choice, as God does not desire conflict arising from differences. Therefore, believers are strictly forbidden from committing violence. God fundamentally hates all forms of violence (Genesis 6:13; 2 Samuel 3:39; 22:3; Psalm 7:16; 11:5; 140:11; Ezekiel 12:19, and so on). Violence is hated by God because He wants every believer, wherever they are, to show the love that is within them and to manifest it to others with peace (Andar Gunawan Pasaribu, 2023).

In a multicultural society, a deep understanding and multicultural awareness based on respect for differences and openness to fair interaction with all elements of society are needed. Diversity demands tolerance, the implementation of which may vary according to the social and cultural conditions

of each region. The essence of moderation is reflected in the recognition of the existence of others, acceptance of differences, opinions, a tolerant attitude, and rejection of all forms of coercion, especially through acts of violence. Therefore, the strategic role of the government, community leaders, and religious educators is needed in efforts to socialize and internalize the values of religious moderation to the wider community in order to create a harmonious and peaceful way of life (Susanti, 2022).

Overall, religious moderation plays a very important role in creating peace and harmony in a pluralistic society, especially in the interaction between Christians and Muslims. A moderate attitude that emphasizes tolerance and mutual respect can reduce public potential and strengthen interfaith relations. Therefore, it is important to continue developing a deeper understanding of Religious Moderation, both among Christians and Muslims, by involving contributions from the government, religious leaders, and the community. Some members of the community, or even a significant number of residents around the Amal Sholeh Mosque, do not yet have a complete understanding of the concept of Religious Moderation.

The term is still unfamiliar to them and has not yet become part of everyday discourse. Nevertheless, the values embodied in religious moderation are already reflected in their social behavior, especially in terms of tolerance. The community in this region demonstrates a good understanding of tolerance and successfully applies it in their social life.

The mutual respect among followers of different religions, cooperation in social activities, and efforts to maintain environmental harmony are clear evidence that tolerance is still highly valued. They maintain harmony without viewing religious differences as a divisive factor. Even when complaints arise from some non-Muslim residents or Muslims themselves regarding the use of mosque loudspeakers that are perceived as too loud, especially during times outside of mandatory prayers, the community responds calmly and non-reactively.

B. Dynamics Of The Use Of Loudspeakers In The Amal Sholeh Mosque

In Indonesian society, the term "TOA" is often used to refer to a loudspeaker. However, the KBBI does not include a specific definition for this term. Historically, TOA is the brand name of a Japanese company specializing in sound system technology. However, in social practice, the term has expanded in meaning and is now used generically to refer to sound amplification devices, particularly horn speakers commonly installed in mosques (Chairunnisa Nasution, 2023).

In response to this, the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, through the Directorate General of Islamic Community Guidance, issued Circular Letter No. SE.05 of 2022, which contains technical guidelines regarding the operation of sound systems in mosques and musholas. The regulation includes five main points, covering general provisions, procedures for installing and using the devices, guidelines for their utilization, quality standards and suitability of the sound emitted, and mechanisms for ongoing training and

supervision.

The Chairman of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) of North Sumatra Province, Dr. H. Maratua Simanjuntak, expressed appreciation for the policy. He stated that the provisions regarding guidelines for the use of loudspeakers in mosques and musholas are in line with the consensus decision of the ulama. He provided an explanation regarding the use of loudspeakers in the context of the adhan and the recitation of Quranic verses. According to him, the call to prayer is a form of *i'lam* or notification to Muslims that it is time to pray (Nasution, ac.id). The Amal Sholeh Mosque is located on Jl. Kesehatan, Gang Cinta Kasih, Medan Denai District, an area known for its religious and cultural diversity. In the vicinity of the mosque, residents from various backgrounds, both Muslim and non-Muslim, reside. Generally, the mosque uses loudspeakers for religious activities such as the adhan and sermons. However, occasionally complaints arise from some nearby residents who feel disturbed by the volume of the sound, which is considered too loud.

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the community's response to the use of loudspeakers, researchers conducted interviews with a number of residents living near the Amal Sholeh mosque. In general, the majority of Muslims expressed that the presence of loudspeakers is still considered important, particularly for the call to prayer and announcements of religious activities. However, some non-Muslims stated that the intensity and duration of the sound, especially outside of prayer times, can sometimes cause discomfort.

C. Response Of Multicultural Communities To The Use Of Loudspeakers In The Amal Sholeh Mosque

To understand the social dynamics that arise from the use of loudspeakers in the vicinity of the Amal Sholeh Mosque, researchers conducted interviews with five residents, consisting of four Christians and one Muslim. All six interviewees are residents who live adjacent to the mosque and have direct experience with the use of loudspeakers in religious activities.

a. Views of non-Muslims

One of them, Ester Evi, has lived in the mosque neighborhood for nearly six years and is a Christian religion teacher at SMAN 5, Percut Sei Tuan District. She stated that the loudspeakers at the mosque do not disturb her family at all. Even before moving to the current neighborhood, Ester Evi had previously lived across from a mosque. Although the mosque's loudspeakers were very loud, she understood that it was one of the calls to prayer for Muslims (Ester Evi, 2025). The researcher also interviewed Mariana Boru Siregar, who shared a similar opinion. She fully accepts the volume of the mosque's loudspeakers and holds great respect for Muslims performing their prayers (Mariana Boru Siregar, 2025). One resident named Repida Hasibuan, who has lived in the area for more than ten years, said that the mosque's loudspeakers were too close to her house. She had complained to the mosque caretaker about the position of the loudspeakers, but no changes have been made to date. She feels disturbed because the sound coming from the loudspeaker is distorted and extremely loud, especially during the recitation of the Quran during last Ramadan, which continued past the nighttime rest period. The

situation becomes even more disruptive during the pre-dawn meal (*sahur*), as the sound emitted seems to be played excessively. He hopes for adjustments to the volume, changes in the direction of the loudspeaker, and stricter supervision to prevent unauthorized individuals from operating it. He also greatly enjoys listening to the recitation of the Quran and the call to prayer, which are so beautiful; sometimes he joins in prayer throughout the recitation of the verses or the call to prayer and enjoys it (Repida Hasibuan, 2025).

Nilo Sipahutar, a resident who has views on the Ministry of Religion, suggests implementing stricter and more detailed regulations. He highlights that not all mosques have the same capacity for loudspeaker systems, while the circular only mentions a maximum volume limit of 100 dB without specifying the number of loudspeakers needed for outdoor areas. According to him, this is very important to clarify, and mosque members must strictly control the loudspeakers to prevent disturbances. Not only non-Muslims are bothered, but even the majority community complains due to the loud volume. Therefore, he hopes that the Ministry of Religious Affairs can refine the content of the circular to make it clearer and easier to implement in other mosques (Nilo Sipahutar, 2025).

b. Views According to the Muslim Community

As a representative of the head of the Amal Sholeh Mosque BKM, Sugiarto, he has heard several complaints from non-Muslims and Muslims themselves. He said that the position of the mosque's loudspeaker cannot be changed, requesting that the volume of the loudspeaker be reduced further. Sugiarto himself believes that there is no issue with the volume of the mosque. He also noted that the loudspeaker can serve as an alarm for residents during dawn or early morning hours. All residents here accept the presence of Masjid Amal Sholeh, there are no disputes, and everyone lives in peace, upholding tolerance, and remains open to any community concerns that may arise (Sugiarto, 2025).

IV. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the implementation of Religious Moderation in the use of loudspeakers at the Amal Sholeh Mosque is going quite well but is not yet perfect, even though not all members of the community formally understand the term. Its values are reflected in social life, especially in attitudes of tolerance and mutual respect among religious communities.

These differing perspectives highlight the importance of Religious Moderation as a bridge to achieve balance. The refinement of technical regulations and the dissemination of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Circular Letter No. 5 of 2022 are urgently needed to ensure that its implementation is more targeted and does not cause social friction. The author's suggestion is important for the managers of places of worship, especially mosques, to actively socialize the rules for the use of loudspeakers to the entire community, as well as to conduct regular technical evaluations to ensure that the practices carried out do not cause disturbances to the surrounding environment. It is also hoped that the Ministry of Religious Affairs will

intensify its efforts to ensure that mosque administrators and religious leaders understand the principles of religious moderation comprehensively, so that religious practices can proceed harmoniously without disregarding social comfort in a multicultural society. The intention is certainly noble and commendable, aiming to spread the message of Islam. However, it must be acknowledged that excessive use can disrupt residents' comfort, especially in diverse communities. One of the challenges is that sometimes people feel that criticizing the sound of the mosque is the same as insulting Islam. However, this is not necessarily the case; criticism can be a sign of love, encouraging us to be wiser and maintain harmony, as we all live together, not alone.

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