

RELIGIOUS MODERATION BASED ON LOCAL WISDOM IN THE ART OF REYOG PONOROGO

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Abstract

Throughout its history, the Ponorogo Reyog art form has often been plagued by problems stemming from factors such as politics, ideology, and other factors. These challenges have helped mature and further develop the art form. One such issue is the ideological differences between religious beliefs and Islam, particularly between Reyog old, which adheres to traditions identified with animism and dynamism, and Reyog Santri, which uses Reyog art as a medium for Islamic propagation. To prevent conflict, moderation education is necessary. as an effort to unite various The view that unites the same pole, namely the mutual preservation of Reyog art, continues to develop with its respective variations. As a result, differences are inevitable, but respect and appreciation of each style must be prioritized over individual claims of truth, so that strong synergy is established among Reyog art preservers for further progress and development both in Indonesia and internationally .

Keywords: Moderation, Religion, Reyog, Ponorogo

INTRODUCTION

Islam has played a crucial role in shaping the outlook on life, morality, and norms of society throughout history. From birth, humans are considered to possess a pure natural instinct, before being influenced by various interactions in social life. Therefore, Islam strives to maintain and ensure that this natural instinct is maintained. (Penebangan et al., 2024) This life is also influenced by other factors that can change human nature towards good or evil, both of which begin with a person's understanding of a religious outlook that is inclusive, open, and peaceful. (Mikraj et al., 2025) This perspective is crucial in maintaining religious and cultural harmony within a diverse society. (Muhajir, 2025)

Social life is inseparable from the diversity of characters, traits, groups, ethnicities, cultures, and religions, especially in a pluralistic society like Indonesia. Indonesia's rich potential certainly calls for a harmonious life, ideally a living condition that reflects a peaceful, orderly, peaceful, prosperous, respectful, esteemed, tolerant, and cooperative atmosphere in accordance with religious teachings and the *Pancasila* ideology. Religious harmony also strives for a good social order where all religious

groups can live together peacefully without compromising the rights and freedoms of each to adhere to and carry out their religious obligations. (Administration & Fadhillah, 2025)

The practice of this attitude to life, reflected through the view of a *I-Wasathiyyah al-Islamiyyah* in Arabic, is a concept that carries the principle of the middle way in living life. This concept positions Islam as a religion that teaches to have a polite, harmonious, and harmonious attitude in interacting with its environment. Moderate Islam, or Islamic moderation, focuses on the principles of politeness, justice, harmony in society, and prioritizes dialogue, peace, and anti-extremism in preaching. This attitude is in accordance with the mission of Islam itself, namely *Rahmatan Lil Alamin*, which means bringing blessings to all nature. (Revised, 2025). The concept of religious moderation such as exemplary behavior (*qudwah*), tolerance (*tasamuh*), balance (*tawazun*), the middle way (*tawassuth*), and uprightness (*i'tidal*) as well as respecting differences, togetherness in diversity, preventing discrimination and so on. (Habibi, 2025)

The construction of strengthening moderate attitudes above, formed through religious awareness and scientific awareness based on respect for other religions, ethnicities, and cultures, is not understood as a single entity that does not provide a correlation between harmony with different ideologies. (Pokhrel, 2024) The concept of religious moderation in It emphasizes respect, appreciation, tolerance, and maintaining harmonious values among religious communities. (Ridwan et al., 2025) Therefore, internalizing the value of religious moderation can help someone become more tolerant and respectful of the differences in religion and beliefs of others (Pangkalpinang, 2023) Attitudes in building a harmonious social life (Lestari et al., 2025) as well as strengthening national integration, maintaining harmony, and supporting the development of a more just and prosperous society. (Scientific et al., 2025)

The above strategy, can be achieved through the integration of local religious and cultural values can be an effective solution to build tolerance (Hasanah, 2024) One of the cultures found in Ponorogo is the art of *Reyog*, this art is full of religious and cultural values. The Ponorogo government includes this art as an extracurricular and intracurricular subject in schools as an effort to preserve and sustain this art so that it continues to develop. Schools play an important role as an effort to cadre artists, so the

art of *Reyog* began to receive attention and a touch of modernity. This policy, there are pluses and minuses, from certain sides the elements as traditional art experienced a shift, especially in the spiritual aspect of old beliefs such as the use of offerings, mysticism and magic began to erode.

In the context of art, there are two different styles between traditionalist and modernist *Reyog* which sometimes give rise to ripples of problems due to certain claims of truth which are sometimes considered outside the rules, customs and so on. This attitude can sometimes give rise to friction and certain factions which can result in disharmony among artists. Therefore, this article aims to portray religious moderation based on local wisdom in the art of *Reyog* Ponorogo, so that it is hoped that there will be good synergy and collaboration that will give birth to the advancement of this noble culture that remains sustainable from various sides, both traditionalist and modernist *Reyog* become equally sweet in quality synergy

LITERARY REVIEWS

Religious moderation is a religious attitude that emphasizes balance in understanding, experiencing, and practicing religious teachings. Essentially, religious moderation encourages people to be neither excessive (extreme right/radical) nor too lax (extreme left/liberal), but rather to place religion fairly, proportionally, and appropriately within the context of national and state life. (Prakosa, P, 2022) Based on this understanding, this theory is implemented in the art of *Reyog* Ponorogo in building harmony and synergy to build a strong culture.

RESEARCH METHOD

Article uses a qualitative approach with a case study type *with* a series of data collection processes through observation and obtaining documentation . Data collection was carried out through observation. Information sources used included books, journals, and previous research results. Qualitative research data were collected through direct observation relevant to the research topic. After the data was collected, the next step was data analysis. This analysis was carried out using the content analysis method, which

allows researchers to identify key themes, patterns, and relationships between concepts in relevant literature (Bungin, 2015). The collected data were analyzed critically and in depth to ensure the validity and reliability of the information.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The *Reyog* art form has its roots in Ki Ageng Kutu's rebellion against Majapahit King Brawijaya V, who was often controlled by his queen. Ki Ageng Kutu became irritated by this situation, creating a satire in the form of a tiger's head, symbolizing a king, and a peacock, symbolizing a beautiful queen. Ki Ageng Kutu had many students, known as *warok*, who possessed powerful powers. Ki Ageng Kutu, as a follower of Javanese spiritualism, forbade his students from engaging with women, a taboo that could lead to the loss of their supernatural powers. Therefore, a *warok* was accompanied by a *gemblak*, whose job was to prepare all the necessary equipment for meditation.

In the *Reyog* art, the *gemblak* plays the role of a *jathil* dancer, whose graceful movements satirize the weakness of the Majapahit army, this is contradictory to the *warok* who are powerful who have the extraordinary strength to lift *Reyog* weights up to 50 kg with the strength of their jaws and teeth. The popularity of the *Reyog* art is growing rapidly, making the Majapahit army restless, so Prabu Brawijaya V sent his son named Raden Djoko Piturun to Wengker as a dialogical effort. As a result, in an effort to avoid battles that can harm the body and soul, Raden Djoko Piturun married the daughter of Ki Ageng Kutu named Niken Gandini. From this marriage, there were significant changes, especially in the socio-cultural community in Wengker, namely Wengker, the city planning changed to Ponorogo and marked the beginning of Islamic rule, while the *Reyog* art was used as a medium for preaching in the community by Raden Djoko Piturun, who after marriage was given the title Raden Batara Katong.

In the context of *Reyog* art, the differences in beliefs and ideologies in *Reyog* art are very apparent, traditionalist *Reyog* tends to maintain ancestral traditions that have a closeness to animistic and dynamic such as offerings, mysticism and magic, while modernity tends to use it for cultural da'wah interests in society. The differences between the two poles in the dynamics of society are exacerbated by political conditions that utilize this art as a propaganda agenda to attract the masses as *vote getters* since the Old Order

era, the New Order until today. Political hegemony continues to be carried out such as changing the name of *Reyog* to *Reog*. *Reyog* in various literatures comes from the song Macapat (*R*) *asa Kidung*, (*E*) *ngwang Sukma Adiluhung*, (*Y*) *ang Widhi*, (*O*) *lah Kridaning Gusti*, (*G*) *elar Gulung Kersane Kang Moho Kuoso* became the political jargon Resik, Endah, Omber, Girang Gemirang (REOG). This change sparked heated debate until now.

The disappearance of the letter (Y) which means *Yang Widhi* is a representation of divine values so that removing the letter Y is considered an attempt to eliminate the element of belief in art. This conflict continues to have an impact to the point of becoming a serious question when submitting *Reyog* Ponorogo to the UCCN UNESCO in Paraguay regarding the consistency of the correct use of words. These conflicts, not without a solution but behind it there is a wisdom by making this art continue to grow and develop, one of the keys is moderation in religious beliefs related to beliefs that are the peak of transcendence with the values of balance and justice among several conflicting parties by connecting the same binding rope, in the same container and for mutual progress.

In the artistic life that adheres to religious beliefs, there needs to be balance as an effort to implement fair thinking, neither extreme right nor left as an embodiment of a moderate attitude. (Rahmat & Anshari, 2025) . Moderation in religion is actually the key to creating tolerance and harmony, both at the local, national, and global levels. This idea is the result of deliberation and sitting together between the two conflicting parties by conducting coaching by a third party, namely the *Reyog* Ponorogo Foundation as a large home for artists in *Reyog* in Indonesia by carrying out routine and programmed coaching stages through grassroots gatherings and large-scale coaching by presenting *Reyog* artists which is carried out once a year before the *Grebeg Suro* celebration.

The choice of moderation, avoiding claims of absolute truth with extreme views and liberalism in religion, is the key to balance, for the preservation of civilization and the creation of peace. (Taneo & Haan, 2023) Moderation in religion is a very important concept in the context of plural Indonesian society. In facing the diversity of religious beliefs, ethnicities, and cultures, religious moderation serves as a pillar that connects the values of diversity with the practice of daily life. (Kh et al., 2025) so that in the context of cultural advancement the path taken is the same among the preservers of *Reyog's* art,

wanting *Reyog* to develop and progress, various variants of forms and ideologies of the artists are a necessity, differences should not be used as a gap between artists, but become a beauty that offers diverse charms as long as *Reyog* art does not deviate from the identity of *Reyog Ponorogo*, development in cultural arts is a blessing.

CONCLUSIONS

The conflict arose due to ideological differences among artists, some of whom adhered to traditionalism and others to modernism. These two poles can lead to friction and factionalism in understanding life in the arts, necessitating a savior: religious moderation. Moderation, then, is a mutual respect and appreciation of differences that must be fostered through efforts to achieve a common goal, namely, between traditionalists and modernists: to preserve the art of *Reyog* so that it continues to thrive and flourish within a framework of unity.

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