

Religious Moderation By Organization Of Islamic *Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah* (Character, Identity, And Attitude)

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Abstract

This study discusses religious moderation by the Islamic organization Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah (Al Washliyah). Al Washliyah is a moderate organization; even Al Washliyah was born due to mediate (connect) between the old and young people fighting over furu'iyah (worship) issues at that time in North Sumatra. Various writings have produced that Al Washliyah is a moderate and not extreme organization. However, the forms (character) of Al Washliyah's moderation have yet to be classified (generalized) much. This research is library research. This article found the character of Al Washliyah's religious moderation, namely: al-Manhaj Washatiyyah (moderate manhaj), Dirasah Washatiyyah (moderate education), al-Fikr Washatiyyah (moderate thoughts/perspectives), tawazzun washatiyyah (moderate balance), mas'uliyah diniyyah (religious responsibility) and mas'uliyah wathaniyyah (national responsibility).

Keywords : *Al washliyah; Moderat; Religious Moderation.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas tentang moderasi beragama yang dilakukan oleh organisasi Islam *Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah* (*Al Washliyah*). *Al Washliyah* adalah organisasi moderat; bahkan *Al Washliyah* lahir karena menjadi penengah (menghubungkan) antara kaum tua dan muda yang memperebutkan persoalan furu'iyah (ibadah) saat itu di Sumatera Utara. Berbagai tulisan menghasilkan bahwa *Al Washliyah* merupakan organisasi yang moderat dan tidak ekstrim. Namun bentuk-bentuk (karakter) moderasi *Al Washliyah* masih belum banyak diklasifikasi (digeneralisasikan). Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kepustakaan. Artikel ini menemukan karakter moderasi beragama *Al Washliyah*, yaitu: *al-Manhaj Washatiyyah* (*manhaj moderat*), *Dirasah Washatiyyah* (*moderat pendidikan*), *al-Fikr Washatiyyah* (*moderat pemikiran/cara pandang*), *tawazzun washatiyyah* (*moderat keseimbangan*), *mas'uliyah diniyyah* (*tanggung jawab agama*) dan *mas'uliyah wathaniyyah* (*tanggung jawab nasional*).

Kata kunci: *Al-washliyah; Moderat; Moderasi Beragama.*

Introduction

Why is it important to understand religious moderation in Indonesia because there are so many cases of discrimination and racism in Indonesia's multicultural society (Akhmadi, 2019), destroying harmonization by being stereotypical, exclusive, explosive, intolerant, and terrorist (Sutrisno, 2019), liberalism (Hikmatullah & Maulana, 2021), vandalism (Purbajati, 2020) As well as commit violence (extremism) (Dianto, 2021), and tyranny in the name of religion (Hasan, 2021), mutually disbelieve (takfiri), and claim bid'ah to others (carrying out cases without legal basis). In state life attacking different political opponents with the wrong understanding of *al-wala' wal barra'* (the principles in the Islamic creed are about loyalty to Muslims and refraining from disbelievers) to disbelieve Muslim leaders who have different ideological orientations (Muhammad Khoirul Huda, 2021), saying that the Police and Pancasila are thogut, Indonesia is an infidel country, and feels right alone. The various roles of community organizations are needed to promote religious moderation in Indonesia. One of the organizations that the writer wants to conduct a research is the *Al Washliyah* organization, which is a moderate organization that adheres to *ahlussunnah wal jama'ah* in the field of faith and adheres to the Imam ash-Shafi'i school of jurisprudence (Ja'far, 2019), and places the third largest Islamic organization outside Java after Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah.

Al Washliyah itself was founded on 30 November, 1930 in Medan City, North Sumatra, *Al Washliyah* was founded due to *khilafiyah* (difference) (I. Nasution, 2021) quarrels between the old and young people in the field of worship (*furu'iyah*) (Saragih, 2016), and it was exacerbated by the politics of pitting one against the other (*divide et impera*) by the Dutch who want the people to be divided. The presence of *Al Washliyah* is intended to be a liaison (*wasilah*) to mediate between the old and the young, Therefore Muhammad Yunus gave the name of the linking organization as "*Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah*" which means a association that connects (Batubara, 2015). In fact, *Al Washliyah* was born due to what is called today's term "religious moderation." Why is that? This is because *Al Washliyah* is an organization that connects humans with humans (*hablum minannas*) and humans with their God (*hablum minallah*), as well as mediates various religious issues or other matters in the midst of society.

The authors conducted a study and argued that *Al Washliyah* is the initiator of religious moderation atmosphere. Like Syahrin Harahap's writings, *Al Washliyah* has a role in moderation (S. Harahap, 2009), and Ja'far and Zaini Dahlan's article have resulted in *al Washliyah*'s moderation, one of which is by rejecting terrorism, radicalism (Ja'far, 2017b), and *Al Washliyah* is a moderate organization (H. Nasution, 2022). However, the form of religious moderation carried out by *Al Washliyah* has not been specifically classified (generalized), only that *Al Washliyah* is a moderate organization (Ja'far, 2022b).

On the other hand, many studies on *Al Washliyah* refer to *Al Washliyah's* contribution (Mashyuril Khamis, 2022), the *Al Washliyah* Fatwa Council's response to issues of faith and sharia in the global era (Ja'far, 2016b), and the role of women in *Al Washliyah* Educational Institutions (Hanum, 2018).

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to analyze and classify the moderation character of *Al Washliyah's* religion, which is studied from the works of students from various universities themselves. Apart from that, the goal is to strengthen previous studies so that it is more comprehensive and undeniable that *Al Washliyah* and its generation of intellectuals adopt a moderate understanding.

Methodology

This study used a library research, which originates from various work of literature. So, library research utilizes library resources to obtain research data. Strictly speaking, library research limits its activities to library collection materials (literature) without the need for field research (Zed, 2008). In this case, later the authors will see and read the literature of students who are still in college or already hold bachelor's degrees up to the doctoral level who are researching *Al Washliyah*. Then, there are discussions about religious moderation in the form of dissertations, theses, books, journals, scientific, texts written by students from various universities.

Discussion

Brief Study of Religious Moderation Identity

The word moderation comes from the Latin "*moderatio*" which means "moderate" (not excessive and not lacking) (Hefni, 2020). Meanwhile, synonyms for *moderatio* are average, core, standard, or non-aligned. Whereas moderation in Arabic is taken from the word "*wasatha*" which means to be in the middle of a place (Yunus, 1973), according to Sheikh Yusuf al-Qardhawy that *wasathiyah* is also called *at-tawazzun*- an effort to balance between two opposite or opposite sides/ends/edges, so that one does not dominate and overpower the other (Abror, 2020).

The opposite of moderation is excessive, or *tatharruf* in Arabic, which means radical, extreme, excessive in English. The word extreme can also mean to go too far, go from end to end, turn around, take the opposite action/path. In Arabic itself, at least there are words that are the same as the words extreme, namely *ghuluw* and *tasyaddud*. Even though the word *tasyaddud* is linguistically not found in the Koran, its derivatives are *syidad*, *syadid* and *asyadd*. Words that only refer to the basic words which have a meaning hard and firm.

If we take an analogy, moderation is like a movement from the edge which always tends towards the center or axis (centripetal), while extremism is the opposite movement away from the center or axis, towards the outermost and extreme sides (centrifugal). It looks like a pendulum clock, where there is a dynamic movement, not stopping at one extreme outside but moving towards the middle. (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019)

In the Koran, there is a verse that explains moderation which means: "And so we have made you (Muslims) a middle nation ... (QS. al-Baqarah: 143) (Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahan, 2005). Imam Jalaluddin al-Mahalli and Imam Jalaluddin asy-Suyuti explained that in the sentence "*wakazalika ja'alnakum* (thus we have made you), " the meaning of "*kum*" there explains to the people of the Prophet Muhammad (As-Suyuthi & Al-Mahalli, 2003), whereas according to Imam ath-Tabari in Tafsir ath-Tabari *Jamiul Bayan 'an Takwilil Quran* that in this verse the word "*wasatha*" means *udullan* (behave fairly) and *khiyaran* (choice). (Ath-Tabari, n.d.) Just like az-Zijaz (Qosim, n.d.) and Muhammad Ali ash-Shabuni that the meaning of the word "*wasatha*" is *udullan* and *khiyaran* as wasatha said in surah al-Qalam verse 28 "*qola ausatuhum alam aqulLakum laulan tusabbihuna*," Muhammad Ali ash-Shabuni also explained in his interpretation is that this is also in line with the opinion of al-Jauhari and al-Akhfas. (ali al-sobuni, n.d.) Imam Ibnu Katsir explained that the meaning of the word "*wasatha*" there is *khiyaran* (choice) and *awjudan* (good, good, beautiful, beautiful) as in the sentence "*quraiys awsatul araby nisaban* (the Arab Quraysh tribe is of good lineage). (Katsir, 1999) The characters of religious moderation include: *tasamuh* (tolerance), *tawassuth* (middle), *tawazzun* (balanced), *udulan* (justice), *marhamah* (compassionate), not *ifrath* (excessive), *musawah* (egalitarian), legal moderation, etc.

Religious Moderation of Al Washliyah: Examination of the Works of Various Universities

In this case, the authors analyzed and presented the discussion on related works on the present study topic using classification to simplify the understanding. The authors argued that the characters *Al Washliyah's* religious moderation for the study and contribution of college student works in various tertiary institutions, as follows:

1. *Al Manhaj Washatiyya (The Washatiyya Gospel)*

The *Al Washliyah* organization is a moderate organization, with the creed of *Ahlussunnah wal jama'ah* and the sect of Imam Ash-Syafi'i. (ja'far, 2016a) At first, *Al Washliyah* was based on Islam, which in *fiqh* (understanding) adheres to the Shafi'i school and in the creed of the *Ahlussunnah wal jama'ah*, until the 18th Mukhtar in Bandung underwent editorial changes, previously in the basic budget of *al Washliyah* it was mentioned that "this group is based on Islam, in law jurisprudence of the Shafi'i school, and in the belief of the *Ahlussunnah wal jama'ah*," then changed

to "*Al Washliyah* of the Islamic faith, in *the belief* and Islamic law of the *Ahlussunnah wal jama'ah* school , with the priority of the *Shafi'i* school of thought." Thus, from the year of birth in 1930-1997 *Al Washliyah* belonged to the *Syafi'i* school, while from 1997-2015, *Al Washliyah* prioritized the *Syafi'i* school; this is also seen in the matter of *Al Washliyah's* fatwas (ja'far, 2016a), and the method of *istinbathul ahkam*, namely: al Quran, Sunnah, *Ijma'* (ja'far, 2016a) *Al Washliyah's* fatwas are no longer issued because of questions but because they respond to developments (reactive), protect the people and their citizens (anticipative-protective), and answer people's questions (responsive) (Irwansyah, 2021).

In *manhaj* way, the moderate organization is strengthened by the existence of an *awsat* forum whose name has a moderation philosophy, Which stands for *Al Washliyah* Studies (*Al Washliyah* study), aiming to upgrade *insight* into *Al Washliyah* members, administrators, and cadres, a place for discussing the existence and role of *Al Washliyah*, inspiring, motivating, and encouraging *Al Washliyah* scientists to conduct quality research (Ja'far, 2022a).

2. *Dirasah Washatiyyah* (A *Washatiyyah'* study)

Madrasah affiliated with *Al Washliyah* has always taught the leading books of the *Shafi'i* (ja'far, 2016a) and *Asy'ariyah* schools (the theological mazhab which is based on Imam Abu al-Hasan al-Asy'ari). (Ja'far, 2017a) *Al Washliyah* scholars also have scientific *sanad* (backrest or seat) with the *Shafi'i* mazhab, such as Sheikh Muhammad Yunus (who gave the name *Al Washliyah*) had a teacher like Abdul Qodir al Mandili, who had studied with Sheikh Abu Bakar Syatha. Meanwhile, Syekh Hasan Matsum studied under Syekh Ahmad Khatib al Minangkabawi, who had also studied under Syekh Abu Bakar Syatha and Syekh Zaini Dahlan. (ja'far, 2016a) Many historical traces regarding learning and study in the *Al Washliyah* education system are inseparable from the founders, administrators, and scholars who taught the *Shafi'i* school of thought. Abdurrahman Syihab and Adnan Lubis have studied with Syekh Hasan Masysyath in Makkah al Mukaaromah, Muslim Nasution (General Chairman of the *Al Washliyah* Executive Board 2010-2012 had studied with Sheikh Yasin Isa al Fadani, as well as Nukman Sulaiman (Demissioned Chancellor of *Al Washliyah*), (ja'far, 2016a) Who including moderate clergy (Hasballah Thaib, 2012).

In fact, one of the forerunners to the establishment of *Al Washliyah* is that it cannot be separated from MIT (Madrasah Islamiyah Tapanuli) which taught Islamic education also oversees and spreads the *Shafi'i* school of thought and

moderate understanding, namely *ahlussunnah wal jamaah*. (Asari et al., 2019) *Al Washliyah* also has the inclusive characteristic due to accepting the joining of 7 schools in 1932-1933 to hand over their administration to *Al Washliyah*. To advance the education system, *Al Washliyah* sent Mr. Baharuddin Ali, Udin Syamsuddin, and Muhammad Arsyad Thalib Lubis to West Sumatra on 30 November 1934 to do comparative studies to religious schools such as *Tawalib School*, Normal Islam, Madrasah Diniyah Encik Rahmah, and so on. This activity was done for comparison and adjusting the schools' curricula managed by *Al Washliyah*. (Rozali, 2018) *Al Washliyah's* educational contribution, from its early days in religious education (Maktab Islamiyah Tapanuli) to building general education, has made progress in education in North Sumatra. (Lubis & Rusydah, n.d.)

Recorded in 2012 nationally, *Al Washliyah* already has 1,050 educational institution units and nine universities, and North Sumatra itself already has 615 schools and madrasahs. (Rasyidin, 2016) Several subjects in the field of Islamic science, also taught the book of *al-Mahalli*, *Syarah Jalaluddin al Mahalli 'ala Jam'ul Jawani*, *Minhaj Tholibin*, and *al Asyhbah wan nazhoir*, *Matan Taqrib*, *Fath al Qorib*, *Tuhfah al Saniyah*, *Tuhfah at-Thullab*, *Riyadhush Sholihin*, *al Waraqat*, *al-Luma'*, *Ushul min Ilmi Ushul*, *Tafsir Jalalain*, *Jawahir al Bukhari*, *Mughni Muhtaj*, and so on. (Ja'far, 2016a) Mastery of the yellow book is included in the special characteristics (*sibghah*) of *Al Washliyah*. The education system maintains the *diniyah* (religious) curriculum and modifies the curriculum by combining the *diniyah* curriculum and the curriculum of the Ministry of Religion. (M. R. Harahap, 2019)

In this moderate education, *Al Washliyah* has made a major contribution to the reproduction of clergy in North Sumatra. The activities of *Al Washliyah* scholars can be mapped to several educational activities, *da'wah* (invite others to believe in and practice Islamic *aqeedah* and *sharia*) (S. A. Nasution, 2001), social charity, economics and politics, these activities contribute and are relevant in the midst of North Sumatran society. (Rozali, 2018) Educators at *Al Washliyah* also have good morals and can be the role models in the midst of social life (Fauzi, 2016), and *Al Washliyah* always strives to improve the quality of teachers at *Al Washliyah* educational institutions (S. A. Nasution, 2001).

3. *Al Fikr Washatiyyah* (The Washatiyyah Thought)

Al Washliyah is an organization that rejects terrorism and the movement in Indonesia. Not only that, *Al Washliyah* also rejects atheism, communism, (Ja'far, 2017b) secularism (Riza, n.d.), terrorism and radicalism. (Ja'far, 2022a) The rejection of these thoughts was internalized in *Al Washliyah* education and *Al Washliyah* (the way) cadres by introducing the concepts of *wijhah* (direction and purpose) and

sibghah (personality or traits) *Al Washliyah* (Ja'far, 2017b). *Sibghah Al Washliyah* such as peace-loving, Islamic mindset, hospitality, fondness of and diligent in worship, sincere, often helpful, active in building society and the nation, having adequate religious knowledge, carrying out good deeds and good deeds, being a role model, having flexible personality and not extreme. Other *sibghahs* are like being in congregation and friendship, speaking sweetly and gently, looking neat and not exaggerating, being careful in researching a problem and not being in a hurry, being diligent in worship, and being sincere in tasks (Ja'far, 2017b).

Al Washliyah's moderate thinking was proven by the acceptance of the preaching of Islamic teachings conveyed by *Al Washliyah* when this group succeeded in Islamizing several areas in the Batak Lands, such as Porsea, which at that time there was also a preaching of Christian *zending* in the Porsea area. (SIREGAR, 2019) *Al Washliyah*, through Sekh Arsyad Thalib Lubis, succeeded in carrying out da'wah in Porsea while still using language that was easy to understand (Batak language) and succeeded in gathering people who were Christians and ghost worshipers (animism) and layers of society so that the da'wah carried out by *Al Washliyah* was easy to accept (Rozali, 2016), Not only that, founding figures such as Yusuh Ahmad Lubis also conducted dialogues with Christian religious leaders without resorting to violence (Said, 2012).

4. *Tawazzun al Washatiyyah (Al Washatiyyah Harmony)*

The *Al Washliyah* organization also owns the moderate balance, this can be seen from the name *Al Jam'iyatul Washliyah* itself which means "a connecting association." This has a philosophical meaning that is not arbitrary, namely: a) so that the *Al Washliyah* organization connects between members and members, b) linking fellow structural members, (Fakhriyani, 2019) c) Connecting organizations with other organizations, d) connecting Muslims with their religion, e) connecting humans with their gods, f) connecting things that are following God's commands (Sulaiman, 1956). Other balances are also explained by Ja'far quoting *Al Washliyah's* Memorandum of Association/ Articles of Association in the results' of the 21st *Muktamar* in 2015, namely establishing, improving, and strengthening brotherly relations of Muslims at home and abroad (Ja'far, 2017b).

The other balance is that the figures and founders of *Al Washliyah* do not only master religious matters, such as mastery in the field of Islamic sciences, but also have a balance towards worldly matters, such as social and political issues, as

played by Ismail Banda, Abdurrahman Syihab, Sheikh Arsyad Thalib Lubis, Adnan Lubis, Muhammad Ali Hanafiah Lubis, and Bahrum Jamil (Ja'far, 2022a).

5. *Mas'uliyah Wathaniyah wa Mas'uliyah Diniyah* (National Responsibility and Religious Responsibility)

Al Washliyah also has national responsibility (*mas'uliyah wathaniyah*) and religious responsibility (*mas'uliyah diniyah*), which is evidenced by *Al Washliyah* being appointed as the holder of the task of Islamic *zending* in Indonesia at the "Kongres Majelis Islam A'la Indonesia" (MIASI) - The Congress of the Indonesian A'la Islamic Council in Solo the third in 1938 to develop Islamic teachings, especially in North Sumatra (Ependi & Balai, 2019). The founder of *Al Washliyah* was also a member of the Masyumi Party, which became a forum for the struggle for Islamic nationalism; with his Islamic *syi'ar jihad* (spirit), the founder of *Al Washliyah* succeeded in raising awareness of patriotism and nationalism for the people and youth in North Sumatra to expel colonialists and communism. Even the founder *Al Washliyah* (Mr. Arsyad Thalib Lubis) was one of the initiators of making regulations (laws) regarding anti-communism and the prohibition of the PKI or Indonesian communist party (M. I. Harahap, 2020).

The founders of *Al Washliyah* participated in fighting against Dutch colonialism and made paramilitary troops and *Al Washliyah* go down to the battlefield (Saragih, 2016). Until post-independence, *Al Washliyah* was one of the many mass organizations that were always ready to fulfill independence well through education, social, trade, movement, and *da'wah*, along with other organizations. *Al Washliyah* was also ready in 1987 to move its organizational center which within 56 years was in the city of Medan to move its organizational center to Jakarta (Dedi Iskandar Batubara, 2019). According to the author, this is an effort to merge and comply with *Al Washliyah's* regulations made by the Government.

Al Washliyah remains committed to promoting and fighting to uphold moderate values in religious, national, and state life (Ja'far, 2022a). Even in the past, several founding figures such as Abdurrahman Syihab and Ismail Banda, have contributed and dedicated themselves to the Indonesian nation. Abdurrahman Syihab served as Chair of the Masyumi Party *DPP* Syuro Council during the Old Order era (Ja'far, 2022a). Meanwhile, Ismail Banda was a delegate to the Congress of the Arab League and the Arab-Islamic Conference, which got leaders of Arab countries, especially Egypt, to recognize the sovereignty and independence of the Indonesian nation. Ismail Banda is also one of the representatives of the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Kabul, Afghanistan. The acknowledgments of Ismail Banda were acknowledged by Soekarno and Sutan Sjahrir, who said Ismail Banda

was one of the figures who strengthened the efforts of the Republic of Indonesia abroad, as well as General Abdul Haris Nasution who said Ismail Banda was included in the six series, who were prominent students abroad who participated in fighting for Egypt's recognition of Indonesian independence (Ja'far, 2022a).

Conclision

Al Washliyah is a moderate organization that is not extreme, not radical, and rejects atheism, secularism, and terrorism. Al Washliyah in terms of religious moderation has characters that are moderate: *al-manhaj washatiyyah*, *felt washatiyyah*, *fikr washatiyyah*, *tawazzun washatiyyah* and *mas'uliyah diniyyah* and *mas'uliyah wathaniyyah*.

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