

## Government Communication in Building Religious Moderation Based on Local Wisdom Values in Tanjung Balai City

**Mailin**

Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara  
[mailin@uinsu.ac.id](mailto:mailin@uinsu.ac.id)

**Lahmuddin**

Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara  
[lahmuddinlubis@uinsu.ac.id](mailto:lahmuddinlubis@uinsu.ac.id)

**Waris**

Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara  
[waristhalib26@gmail.com](mailto:waristhalib26@gmail.com)

**Abstract:**

*The objective of this study is to examine the government's communication strategies in building religious moderation in Tanjung Balai City. This research holds significance due to the historical prevalence of intolerance instances in the city of Tanjungbalai, earning it the reputation as one of the places with a high level of intolerance. Tanjung Balai possesses a rich historical heritage of local wisdom that might serve as a means to promote religious moderation within the community. This study employs a qualitative research methodology utilizing a phenomenological approach. The data collection techniques employed in this article are observation, interviews, and documentation. Then, the collected data will be analyzed. The obtained data will undergo analysis employing qualitative research methods. The research findings indicate that the city of Tanjung Balai is currently rich in ethnic and religious diversity. This city possesses a distinctive cultural background due to the presence of multiple communities that still adhere to animism and dynamism. Local knowledge can be effectively utilized to combat intolerance by promoting unity and setting aside differences. Currently, the government has been advocating for the utilization of local knowledge as a means to achieve religious moderation. However, the extent of its effectiveness has not yet been measured. At this level, it is necessary for the government to actively collaborate and create synergy with the community in order to mitigate religious issues in the city of Tanjung Balai.*

**Keywords:** Local Wisdom, Religious Moderation, Government Communication, Tanjung Balai

## INTRODUCTION

The tolerance crisis that occurred in Indonesia remains a prolonged polemic. The results of the Wahid Institute survey in 2021 revealed a 54% rate of intolerance, marking a 8% rise compared to the previous year (Media Indonesia, 2022). The issue of religious sensitivity frequently arises in Indonesia due to various factors including disharmony, intolerance, transnational cultural influences, and fanaticism, among others. This can be seen from various phenomena such as attacks on temples in Kediri (2018), monks prohibited from worshipping in Tangerang (2018), forced dissolution of churches in Yogyakarta (2017), and so on. The aforementioned cases indicate that the Indonesian nation still lacks tolerance.

It needs to be highlighted the religious issues in Indonesia extend beyond its external boundaries. Today's intolerance has affected internal boundaries such as pronouncing someone as disbelievers, truth claims and bullying of fellow religious believers. This demonstrates that Indonesian people are still nervous about the gift of pluralism given by God. In fact, Indonesia is a pluralistic nation. This plurality is characterized by diverse social entities that are formed based on differences in ethnicity, customs, culture and religion (Rozak, 2008). This is in line with the guarantee given by the state to the religious freedom of its citizens, which is confirmed in article 29 of the 1945 Constitution, which states, "The state ensures the freedom of each resident to embrace their own religion and to worship according to their religion and beliefs."

Freedom of religion is a constitutional right of every citizen. Article 28 E of the 1945 Constitution highlights the freedom to embrace religion and worship according to the religion one adheres to while also ensuring protection from the State against all forms of discrimination, This includes the following rights: 1) Every person has the freedom to embrace religion and worship according to his religion, choose education and teaching, choose work, choose citizenship, choose residence in the territory of the State and leave it, and have the right to return. 2) Every individual possesses the entitlement to embrace religion, express thoughts, and attitudes, in accordance with their conscience.

However, it is very common for issues of intolerance to occur in a heterogeneous society. The greater the number of disparities, the greater the variety of perspectives available for assessing the truth (Taufani, 2018). Unfortunately, there are several important points in social life that are not completely internalized, specifically the absence of an absolute veracity in a subjective viewpoint. It is also strongly suspected that the prevention of intolerance is not yet significant because of subjective messages. Messages of religious moderation should not be separated from the social context, unfortunately there are quite a few public figures who spread messages of moderation using certain religious arguments.

It is essential for Tanjung Balai City, which has a diverse population of different ethnicities, races, cultures, and religions, to embrace and acknowledge the various existing differences. The diversity present in Tanjung Balai City should be harnessed as a source of strength and unified within the framework of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. Tanjung Balai City has a historical background that dates back to the Malay Sultanate of Asahan. Over time, it has experienced cultural influences from Batak Toba and Malay, resulting in a distinct local identity characterised by various acculturations. This has contributed to the development of

a unique social system and local wisdom in the area (Mailin, 2017). It would be a shame if the diversity of local wisdom in Tanjung Balai City cannot be optimized as an instrument in implementing religious moderation.

The city of Tanjungbalai, which was first established, was known as a city with Malay culture, despite its diverse population comprising individuals from numerous ethnicities and tribes. For centuries, the people of Tanjungbalai have adhered to the customs and cultural traditions of the Malay community. However, this changed when in 2016 there was a burning of a place of worship, causing the city of Tanjungbalai to be included in the list of cities known for their tolerance, which was a cause for concern. According to data from Tolerant City, the tolerance index in Tanjung Balai City is extremely low, making it the most intolerant city in Indonesia (Toleran City, 2018). It is very unfortunate that the rich history of diversity in the people of Tanjung Balai City, along with their local wisdom, which is currently crucial for promoting religious moderation, is not being given due importance. This diversity has the potential to foster an inclusive and harmonious environment among different religious communities. In a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, local wisdom provides a strong cultural and moral foundation for mutual respect and respect for religious differences. The incorporation of values such as tolerance, cooperation, and respect for diversity, which are reflected in local wisdom, can effectively mitigate inter-religious tensions and prevent religious-based conflicts. Values such as tolerance, cooperation and respect for diversity that are reflected in local wisdom can help overcome inter-religious tensions and prevent religious-based conflicts. It is crucial to mitigate the possibility of conflict and violence from religious differences by fostering peace and social stability.

The urgency of this research is to integrate local wisdom in religious moderation efforts that increase relevance and acceptance by local communities. When governments and religious institutions take an approach that respects local culture and traditions, they will be more easily accepted by society. By utilizing the existing values and norms in local community life, religious moderation will become more authentic and have a more positive impact. Furthermore, involving community leaders and religious leaders who have a deep understanding of local wisdom can also build trust and better cooperation in promoting interfaith understanding and harmony. Thus, the urgency of local wisdom as an instrument of religious moderation lies in its potential to create peace, reduce tension, and build social closeness in religiously diverse communities.

This research substantively examines local wisdom in Tanjung Balai City as an instrument of religious moderation. Throughout the research process, the authors collected several previous studies related to this article. Previous study serves as an illustration for the authors in carrying out this research, including: First, a study regarding the prevention of conflict between religious believers based on community activities (Engkizar et al., 2022). The difference in research lies in the context of discussion where this article uses local wisdom as an instrument for religious moderation. Meanwhile, previous research used community activities as an instrument for religious moderation. Furthermore, there is research on strengthening religious moderation based on local wisdom in an effort to shape the moderate attitude of madrasa students (Rinda Fauzian et al., 2021). Previous writing mentioned that there was a phenomenon of intolerant attitudes that occurred among madrasah students. As a response, the madrasah employed local wisdom as a means to promote religious moderation. The difference between previous research and this article

lies in the local wisdom instrument, where this paper uses an ethnic local wisdom instrument to bring about religious moderation in Tanjung Balai City.

Then, literature examines the concept of religious moderation within the Donggo community in Bima, focusing on the influence of culture and local wisdom (Aksa & Nurhayati, 2020). The previous article examined the role of culture and local wisdom in strengthening religious moderation. The difference between previous research and this article is the research review. This article relies on a sociological-communicative review, while the previous article relies on a socio-historical review. The fourth literature is research on religious moderation in the Pancasila ideology (Islamy, 2022). Prior studies have examined the role of religious moderation in shaping religious comprehension among individuals in Indonesia, in accordance with the Pancasila worldview. The difference between this article and previous research is that this article specifically discusses local wisdom, so ensuring that the context is not depend on state substance. The fifth literature is research on religious and media moderation. The findings of this study indicate that in general the content of the fatwa in Republika has effectively promoted and supported the religious moderation agenda in Indonesia. However, if measured by each indicator, the content of religious moderation tends to only appear formally in the aspect of national commitment. This approach seems to be an attempt to avoid difference of perspectives, as it emphasises the importance of moderation solely in relation to physical and tangible acts of violence, while neglecting the non-physical and hidden forms of aggression (Iskandar, 2023)

Finally, al-Mujtahid's research (Al-Mujtahid & Sazali, 2023) discusses the Medina charter as a means of building religious moderation. Previous research has shown that the Prophet Muhammad successfully implement the local knowledge and practises of the city of Medina into legislative draft, which served as a means to promote religious moderation. The difference lies in the review of the discussion where this research is empirical while previous research is normative.

This study employs qualitative methodologies utilising a sociological-communicative framework. The data collection techniques used in this research are interviews, observation and documentation (Creswell, 2014). The data sources in this research are primary data and secondary data. The primary data used in this research is the result of data collection through the Tanjung Balai City government and the Tanjungbalai City ministry of religion under the head of Islamic Community Guidance. Meanwhile, the secondary data used are scientific articles, books and documentation that support research data. In processing the data, the authors use qualitative data analysis techniques. Holsi in Moeloeng defines it as a systematic and objective approach to drawing conclusions by uncovering the characteristics of a communication (Weber, 2017). The approach used in this research is a phenomenological approach. The phenomenological approach is a qualitative research method that emphasizes the comprehension and interpretation of the subjective meaning of individual or group experiences. The primary objective of the phenomenological approach is to investigate and understand the essence nature or structure of human experience that is immediately perceived (Moustakas, 2011). Phenomenological study aims to acquire in-depth understanding of the perspectives and subjective experiences of research participants. The primary methodologies employed in phenomenological research include in-depth interviews, participant observation, and textual analysis. At this level, there are two distinct phenomenological approaches,

specifically practical and reflective (Van Manen, 2014). Meanwhile, this research is focused on a practical approach as the main strategy.

## DISCUSSION

### General Description of Religious Heterogeneity in Tanjung Balai City

Tanjung Balai City is a municipality located in the province of North Sumatra, with an area of 60.52 square kilometers. The 2020 Population Census in Tanjung Balai City recorded a population of 176,027 individuals, with a sex ratio of 102.64. The proportion of the population in the productive age group was 68.94%, while the percentage of the aged population was 4.21% (Central Statistics Agency, 2020).

From a historical standpoint, the presence of Tanjung Balai City cannot be separated from the role of the Asahan Malay Sultanate. Hence, the city of Tanjung Balai continues to be closely associated with Malay patterns and customs. Nevertheless, Malay does not function as a representative identity of the City of Tanjung Balai. Rather, it is upheld as a means of preserving the historical significance of the Malay tribe. Over time, the city of Tanjung Balai experienced the influence of various tribes including Batak, Javanese, Acehnese, and others. The number of tribes in Tanjung Balai City, according to the Central Statistics Agency in 2020, is as follows:



Figure 1. The Number of Tribes

Since 2015, the city of Tanjung Balai has been inhabited by many Batak people. This suggests that Malay serves solely as a historical symbol rather than a true reflection of the city. The entry of several tribes into Tanjung Balai City resulted in the emergence of cultural symptoms such as assimilation and acculturation. This has also led to the emergence of a number of unique local knowledge systems that have preserved their essence nature and continued to exist up to the present time.

The local wisdom of Tanjung Balai City is characterized by its distinctiveness and inclusivity, allowing various religious traditions to be harmoniously celebrated at a communal level. This is inseparable from cultural symptoms, as elucidated by the authors before. The local wisdom in Tanjung Balai City should be utilized as a means of building religious moderation, given that Tanjung Balai City is mostly known for its ethnic diversity rather than its religious affiliation. Tanjung Balai City should prioritise religious moderation due to its significant heterogeneity index. The data is presented in the following manner:

Table 1. Data on Islam, Protestant, Catholic and Hindu religions

<b>Kecamatan Sub District</b>	<b>Islam</b>	<b>Protestan Protestant</b>	<b>Katholik Catholic</b>	<b>Hindu</b>
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Datuk Bandar	30 346	8 873	1 004	5
Datuk Bandar Timur	29 564	918	78	3
Tanjungbalai Selatan	12 910	955	143	27
Tanjungbalai Utara	15 307	1 258	105	-
Sei Tualang Raso	25 808	1 097	122	-
Teluk Nibung	41 272	90	1	-
<b>Tanjungbalai</b>	<b>155 207</b>	<b>13 191</b>	<b>1 453</b>	<b>35</b>

Table 2. Tabulation of Religious People in Tanjung Balai City (BPS Tanjung Balai City, 2023)

<b>Kecamatan Sub District</b>	<b>Budha Buddha</b>	<b>Konghucu Confucianism</b>	<b>Aliran Kepercayaan Animism, Dynamism</b>
(1)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Datuk Bandar	107	1	-
Datuk Bandar Timur	895	12	-
Tanjungbalai Selatan	6 477	29	3
Tanjungbalai Utara	1 260	-	-
Sei Tualang Raso	239	1	5
Teluk Nibung	120	-	-
<b>Tanjungbalai</b>	<b>9 098</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>8</b>

Based on the tabulation provided, it is evident that Islam is the predominant religion, followed by Christianity and Buddhism. Notably, the city of Tanjung Balai is home to not just the six religions officially recognised by the state, but also to beliefs such as animism and dynamism. The presence of this sign indicates that Tanjung Balai City is characterised by its religious nature, while emphasising its cultural representation, resulting in a visually appealing display of diversity.

### Theoretical framework

#### Middle Theory: Participatory Government Communication Theory

The notion of participatory communication is a framework that highlights the active involvement of individuals in the process of communication. It encourages active participation, collaboration, and engagement in the exchange of messages. According to

this view, communication encompasses more than just the transmission of information between two parties. It also entails active participation and mutual understanding.

One known expert in the field of participatory communication is James W. Dearing. He is a professor in the fields of communication and political science, and he has conducted significant research in participatory communication and health communication. Dearing has published numerous articles and books on these topics, including participatory communication strategies in education and public health campaigns.

James W. Dearing is a renowned communications scholar recognised for his extensive study in the domain of participatory communication (Dearing, 2020). Dearing and Everett M. Rogers together introduced a participatory communication paradigm called the "Rogers-Dearing Model of Participatory Communication." This model is used to illustrate the important role of community participation in the communication and decision-making process (Dearing & Singhal, 2014).

The Rogers-Dearing participatory communication model has several key elements:

1. **Community Participation:** This model highlights the significance of active community participation in the communication process (Parry et al., 2021). This participation includes community contributions in the collection, analysis and dissemination of information.
2. **Learning Process:** This model creates a reciprocal learning process between the parties involved (Chen et al., 2022). Society is not only a recipient of information, but also a creator of information and understanding.
3. **Social Context:** This approach recognises the importance of social context in participatory communication. This context includes culture, values, social norms, and specific communication needs (Wentzel & Skinner, 2022).
4. **Information Sources:** This model describes a wide range of sources from which information can be obtained, such as society, non-governmental organizations, government, and mass media (Müller et al., 2022).
5. **Feedback Cycle:** Participatory communication is an ongoing process that involves continuous feedback between the community and the parties involved (Hsu et al., 2023).

This model is used in a variety of contexts, including in public health, education, and community development campaigns. The aim is to promote community-centered communication, where communities are not only recipients of messages, but also as decision makers and parties who play an active role in formulating solutions and policies. Implementing participatory communication theory in government is an important step to increase interaction between government, in this case religious instructors and the community. This approach places emphasis on active participation, cooperation and empowerment in the process of providing information related to the concept of religious moderation. Below, we will explain five aspects related to the implementation of participatory communication theory in a government context.

First, participatory communication theory encourages government to involve the community in discussions and exchange of ideas through counseling. This creates space for questions, reflection, and debate, thereby enabling the public to understand the material better (Sintiawati et al., 2022). The government implementing this approach provides opportunities for the community to play an active role in disseminating the concept of religious moderation. Second, this theory promotes collaboration between government and society (Sahertian et al., 2020). Group projects, discussions in small groups, and joint projects are methods that can increase understanding of the concept of religious moderation, both personal and group, in an increasingly diverse and global environment. Third, the implementation of participatory communication theory also involves the use of technology that allows government officers to interact and participate online (Wafi et al., 2022). Online discussion forums, collaborative platforms, and other communication tools can support more inclusive and affordable dissemination, especially in remote settings.

Fourth, this approach encourages people to contribute in designing the content and direction of their own understanding. In the participatory communication model, people have the opportunity to choose topics, projects, or approaches that suit their personal interests and goals (Suzina et al., 2020). Fifth, measuring and assessing learning in this context can focus on deep understanding and ability to communicate and collaborate. Extension workers can use formative assessments, project-based assignments, or portfolios that allow communities to demonstrate their communication and collaboration competencies (Ali & Sonderling, 2017).

In general, the application of participatory communication theory in government supports active participation, collaboration, and community empowerment. This creates an atmosphere that is highly responsive to cultural and ideological diversity, equips individuals to navigate a progressively diverse and complex world, and enhances their comprehension of the notion of religious moderation. This method offers a chance to comprehend and value the cultural diversity present in society.

### **Grand Theory: Intercultural Communication Theory**

Intercultural communication theory is a field of study that examines the process of communication between individuals or groups from different cultures. Furthermore, this theory was developed into Cultural Dimensions Theory, which compares national cultures based on a number of dimensions, such as individualism-collectivism, power distance, and avoided uncertainty. This theory helps understand cultural differences in communication (Hofstede, 2018).

Intercultural communication theory is a conceptual framework used to understand how the dynamics of communication between individuals or groups originating from different cultural backgrounds (R'boul, 2022). This theory seeks to examine the impact of cultural disparities, such as values, beliefs, conventions, and language, on the process of communication. In an era of escalating globalisation, understanding intercultural



communication is growing more crucial in overcoming differences and fostering cross-cultural understanding (Braslauskas, 2021).

One of the central concepts in intercultural communication theory is “coding” and “decoding.” Encoding refers to how a message is sent by the sender in their cultural context, while decoding refers to how the message is received and interpreted by the receiver in their cultural context. Cultural differences in how messages are encoded and decoded can lead to misunderstandings or communication errors. Intercultural communication theory also highlights the importance of cultural awareness (Kaihlainen et al., 2019). It involves individuals' awareness of the values, norms, and beliefs in their own culture, as well as the cultures of others. Cultural awareness helps in avoiding communication errors and conflicts that can arise due to stereotypes or prejudice (Kumlien et al., 2020). In addition, this theory discusses the importance of adapting communication in different cultural contexts. The ability to adapt communication to better suit the culture of the message recipient is an important skill in intercultural communication (Baker, 2022). This involves flexibility in language, speaking style, and even body language.

Intercultural communication theory highlights its important role in supporting intercultural dialogue and fostering peace. In an era characterised by growing connected globalisation, effective communication between cultures is the basis for promoting cross-cultural understanding and preventing conflicts that may arise due to lack of understanding (Balakrishnan et al., 2021). This theory helps shape strategies and approaches that support better dialogue and cooperation between individuals and culturally diverse groups. Intercultural communication theory has a close relationship with the implementation of religious moderation in society. Here are some ways how intercultural communication theory can play a role in this context:

1. **Understanding Cultural Differences:** Intercultural communication theory helps teachers and the public understand cultural differences involving religion. This includes an understanding of the values, norms, and practices of different religions. By acquiring this comprehension, society can respect and appreciate differences in a religious context (Islam, 2020).
2. **Awareness of Stereotypes and Prejudice:** Intercultural communication theory helps identify stereotypes and prejudice that can arise in interfaith communication. Society is taught to avoid prejudice and discriminatory attitudes in communicating with individuals from different religious backgrounds (Santalia & Zulfiani, 2023).
3. **Intercultural Communication Skills:** Intercultural communication theory provides a basis for people to develop effective communication skills in intercultural situations, including communication with individuals or groups of different religions (Prasojo & Pabbajah, 2020). This includes the ability to listen empathetically, avoid cultural conflict, and promote mutual understanding.
4. **Understanding Context and the Impact of Culture in Communication:** This theory helps educators understand how cultural context can influence communication and understanding. It also includes an understanding of how religious messages are

influenced by culture and how they can be delivered more effectively in diverse contexts (Lundeto, 2018).

By integrating intercultural communication theory in the dissemination of the concept of religious moderation, counselors can develop deeper insight into the importance of inclusive communication, respecting cultural differences, and promoting moderation in interreligious interactions. This will help them become better communicators and wiser leaders in an increasingly multicultural society. Cumulatively, intercultural communication theory provides a very crucial framework in facing the challenges of cross-cultural communication in an increasingly global world. This allows us to understand how cultural differences influence the communication process, develop cultural awareness, adapt our communications, and support better intercultural dialogue. With a deeper understanding of this theory, we can build strong communication bridges between different cultures and encourage deeper cross-cultural understanding.

### **Overview of Religious Heterogeneity in Tanjung Balai City**

#### **Local Wisdom as an Instrument of Religious Moderation in Tanjung Balai City**

The city of Tanjung Balai has a rich and varied heritage of local wisdom. Local wisdom in this city reflects a long history of cultural interactions, religions and traditions that have influenced the development of its society. One important aspect of local wisdom in Tanjung Balai is harmony between various ethnic and religious groups. The city is home to various groups such as Malays, Chinese, Bataks, and others, as well as religions such as Islam, Buddhism, and Christian.

Local wisdom in Tanjung Balai teaches the values of mutual respect and coexistence, which has contributed to the relatively peaceful coexistence between these groups. At this level the authors will classify through tabulation the local wisdom values of the city of Tanjung Balai which can be optimized as instruments of religious moderation, some of which are:

Table 3. Classification of Local Wisdom in Tanjung Balai City

No	Classification	Information
1	Coexistence of Ethnicity and Religion	The local wisdom of Tanjung Balai is reflected in the harmony between various ethnic groups such as Malays, Chinese and Bataks, as well as various religions such as Islam, Buddhism and Christianity. The values of mutual respect and coexistence are an integral part of everyday life (Supriyanto, 2022).
2	Cultural Traditions	The local cultural festivals and traditions, such as the feast of Korang, Gubang, and the practice of treating the sea, exemplify the

---

		local wisdom of appreciating differences and embracing diversity. These traditions strengthen social connections and promote cross-cultural understanding (Suarnaya, 2021).
3	Mutual cooperation	The values of mutual cooperation and communal cooperation remain relevant in community life. Mutual cooperation is used to construct houses, help neighbors on special occasions, and in various social activities (Nashohah, 2021).
4	Local Customs	Local customs such as marriage ceremonies, birth customs, and death anniversaries play an important role in maintaining cultural identity. It is also a forum where religious and cultural values are integrated (Lede, 2022).
5	Arts and Performance	Traditional art performances such as Senandung Asahan, Serampang Twelve Dance and Gubang music are a means to document and celebrate cultural heritage. These art events can also become a forum for cultural exchange between ethnic groups (Hamdani, 2020).
6	Local Cultural Heritage	Tanjung Balai has sacred local cultural heritage such as the Gubang dance and singing which functions as a wind caller for fishermen's activities (Irmayanti et al., 2022). There are also traditional treatments such as Songgot, wage wages and uplifting spirits.

---

In addition, the unique local traditions and culture of Tanjung Balai also serve as a reflection of the local wisdom. For the city of Tanjung Balai, it is desirable to have a high level of religious moderation that is able to adapt to the local culture. This includes local understandings of natural balance, human relationships, spiritual beliefs, ethics, and ways of life that differ from one place to another. Local wisdom can serve as a means of building religious moderation due to various factors, including:

1. Inclusivity: Local wisdom often reflects cultures and beliefs that embrace and accommodate differences and diversity. The document embodies the principles of

- mutual respect and appreciation for difference, with the aim of fostering tolerance and unity among different religious communities (Rumahuru, 2021).
2. **Conflict Solutions:** Local wisdom often contains views on resolving conflicts and seeking balance between different parties. These principles can help overcome religious differences and prevent prolonged conflict (Islam, 2020).
  3. **Context Relevance:** Local wisdom tends to develop according to the needs and challenges of local communities. Hence, utilising local areas in the context of religious moderation can be more effective in solving problems specific to that area (Arafah, 2020).
  4. **Building Trust:** When local wisdom principles are used in religious moderation efforts, it can help build trust and acceptability among followers of different religions. This can serve as a basis for building more constructive dialogue and cooperation (Saumantri, 2022).
  5. **Respecting Other Wisdom:** Using local wisdom as an instrument of religious moderation to appreciate and respect the cultural and spiritual heritage of a community (Surbakti, 2019). This can help avoid confrontation or negative judgment about other people's religious practices.

However, it is important to note that local wisdom sources also need to be evaluated to ensure that they do not conflict with human rights principles and universal values. Apart from that, in efforts for religious moderation, we also need to open ourselves to global perspectives and align local values with universal aspirations for peace and justice. At this level, to initiate local wisdom as an instrument of religious moderation, it is necessary for the government to play a role in dissemination. To ensure equal internalisation of messages promoting moderation through local knowledge, it is imperative to employ the diffusion of innovation theory (Rogers, 1962). In order to convey the progress of religious growth using indigenous knowledge as a tool, the government can implement the following measures:

**Research and Understanding:** The government needs to conduct in-depth research on local wisdom that exists in certain regions or communities. A good understanding of local religious values, traditions and practices will help the government recognize the best ways to communicate with local communities (Abidin, 2021). **Research and Understanding:** The government should undertake in-depth research on local wisdom that exists in certain regions or communities. A good understanding of local religious values, traditions and practices will help the government recognise the best ways to communicate with local communities (Abidin, 2021). **Collaboration and Consultation:** The government should collaborate with community leaders, religious leaders and local wisdom experts in the religious development process. Through open dialogue and consultation, the government can understand local perspectives, ensuring that religious development programs respect and accommodate existing local wisdom values (Tanjung, 2022).

In this case, the Tanjungbalai city government built a religious moderation village, as a way to mainstream the concept of religious moderation in the city of Tanjungbalai. By comprehending cultural norms, one might internalise religious moderation as a means to counteract the detrimental effects of religious fanaticism. Through the Religious Moderation Village, it is hoped that the community will more easily understand the concept of religious moderation and understand the norms, values, traditions and practices that have developed in a society over the centuries.

**Education and Counselling:** The government might employ media, seminars, and training to provide education and counseling to the public regarding the significance of integrating local wisdom with religious development (Hakim, 2018). By promoting understanding and highlighting the beneficial aspects of local knowledge, this can effectively address misinterpretations and raise awareness of its value. **Integration in Development Policy:** the government must ensure that the integration of religious development strategies aligns with local wisdom values and upholds religious rights and freedom. By incorporating local wisdom into policy, the government can ensure that these initiatives are more pertinent and more accepted by the community (Sazali et al., 2015). **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The government must persistently monitor and evaluate the impact of communication efforts with local wisdom. This will help in assessing the effectiveness of the steps taken and provide opportunities for further improvement (Noor, 2023). By adopting an inclusive and open approach, the government can effectively utilise local wisdom as a powerful instrument to promote sustainable and harmonious religious development within local communities.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the aforementioned explanation, it can be concluded that local knowledge serves as a tool to accommodate religious moderation in the city of Tanjung Balai. By doing this, it is guaranteed that the level of intolerance in the city of Tanjung Balai can be reduced. However, the task is challenging due to the cultural resistance of the residents of Tanjungbalai City towards embracing anything new, compounded by the influence of social media. This research aims to foster collaboration between the government and its workers in order to enhance their awareness of religious moderation for the community. So far, researchers have exclusively examined the government's efforts in disseminating knowledge about religious moderation to the community. Nonetheless, they have not investigated whether the populace of Tanjungbalai City is receptive to and comprehends the notion of religious moderation. This represents a limitation in the scope of this research. Researchers hope that in the future there will be further research that discusses the extent to which the people of Tanjungbalai City understand and implement the concept of Religious Moderation and its impact on the tolerance within the community.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The researcher would like to express gratitude to the Tanjungbalai City Government and its staff for their invaluable assistance during the research process. The researcher also extends appreciation to all individuals and organizations that contributed to the completion of this research. The researcher also would like to express gratitude to the journal review team for their invaluable assistance in facilitating the publication of the research findings.

## **REFERENCES**

- Abidin, A. Z. (2021). Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Beragama Dalam Permendikbud No. 37 Tahun 2018. *JIRA: Jurnal Inovasi dan Riset Akademik*, 2(5). Published by Ahlimedia Press Vol 2, No 5 <https://doi.org/10.47387/jira.v2i5.135>
- Aksa, A., & Nurhayati, N. (2020). Moderasi Beragama Berbasis Budaya Dan Kearifan Lokal

- Pada Masyarakat Donggo Di Bima (Tinjauan Sosio-Historis). *Harmoni*, 19(2), 338–352. <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v19i2.449>
- Al-Mujtahid, N. M., & Sazali, H. (2023). Revitalization Of Moderation Messages In The Madinah Charter: Religious Development Communication Studies. *At-Turās: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 10(1), 59–79. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.33650/at-turas.v10i1.5301>
- Ali, A. C., & Sonderling, S. (2017). Factors affecting participatory communication for development: The case of a local development organization in Ethiopia. *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 33(1). <https://doi.org/10.17576/jkmjc-2017-3301-06>
- Arafah, S. (2020). Moderasi Beragama: Pengarusutamaan Kearifan Lokal Dalam Meneguhkan Kepelbagaian (Sebuah Praktik Pada Masyarakat Plural). *Mimikri: Jurnal Agama dan Kebudayaan*, 6(1).
- Badan Pusat Statistik. (2020). *Jumlah Penduduk Kota Tanjung Balai*.
- Baker, W. (2022). From intercultural to transcultural communication. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 22(3). <https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2021.2001477>
- Balakrishnan, K., Harji, M. B., & Angusamy, A. (2021). Intercultural communication competence: well-being and performance of multicultural teams. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, 21(2). <https://doi.org/10.36923/jicc.v21i2.16>
- BPS Kota Tanjungbalai. (2023). *Kota Tanjung Balai Dalam Angka 2022*.
- Braslauskas, J. (2021). Developing intercultural competences and creativity: The foundation for successful intercultural communication. *Creativity Studies*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.3846/cs.2021.14583>
- Chen, X., He, Y., Wang, L., Xiong, J., & Joy Jiang, R. (2022). The legitimization process of social enterprises across development stages: Two case studies. *Journal of Business Research*, 148. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.04.054>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- Dearing, J. W. (2020). Collaboration networks. In *Growing a Japanese Science City*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203210581-15>
- Dearing, J. W., & Singhal, A. (2014). Communication of Innovations: A Journey with Ev Rogers. In *Communication of Innovations: A Journey with Ev Rogers*. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9788132113775.n1>
- Engkizar, E., Kaputra, S., Mutathahirin, M., Syafril, S., Arifin, Z., & Kamaluddin, M. (2022). Model Pencegahan Konflik Antarumat Beragama Berbasis Kegiatan Masyarakat. *Harmoni*, 21(1), 110–129. <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v21i1.603>
- Hakim, A. L. (2018). Strategi Komunikasi Lintas Agama FKUB Surabaya Dalam Menangani Konflik. *Al-Mada: Jurnal Agama, Sosial, dan Budaya*, 1(1), 19–34. <https://doi.org/10.31538/almada.v1i1.129>

- Hamdani, H. (2020). *Pengobatan Gobuk Dan Seni Tradisi Melayu Pesisir Tanjungbalai Asahan*.
- Hofstede, G. (2018). National Culture - Hofstede Insights. In *Hofstede Insights*.
- Hsu, C. W., Anastasopoulos, A., & Kim, H. S. (2023). Instantaneous Feedback-Based Opportunistic Symbol Length Adaptation for Reliable Communication. *IEEE Transactions on Communications*, 71(7). <https://doi.org/10.1109/TCOMM.2023.3266356>
- Irmayanti, I., Panggabean, K. D., & Nasution, A. H. (2022). Pemanfaatan Cerita Rakyat Sinandong Gubang Dalam Penanaman Nilai – Nilai Kearifan Lokal Pada Masyarakat Tanjungbalai. *Puteri Hijau: Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.24114/ph.v7i1.33759>
- Iskandar, N. (2023). Actualization of Religious Moderation in Islamic Fatwas in Mainstream Online Media in Indonesia. *Jurnal Penelitian*, 20(Query date: 2023-08-15 01:53:33), 25–40. <https://e-journal.uingusdur.ac.id/index.php/Penelitian/article/view/7088>
- Islam, K. N. (2020). Moderasi Beragama di Tengah Pluralitas Bangsa: Tinjauan Revolusi Mental Perspektif Al-Qur'an. *KURIOSITAS: Media Komunikasi Sosial dan Keagamaan*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.35905/kur.v13i1.1379>
- Islamy, A. (2022). Moderasi Beragama Dalam Ideologi Pancasila. *POROS ONIM: Jurnal Sosial Keagamaan*, 3(1), 18–30. <https://doi.org/10.53491/porosonim.v3i1.333>
- Kaihlanen, A. M., Hietapakka, L., & Heponiemi, T. (2019). Increasing cultural awareness: Qualitative study of nurses' perceptions about cultural competence training. *BMC Nursing*, 18(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-019-0363-x>
- Kota Toleran. (2018). *10 Kota dengan Skor Toleransi Terendah 2018*.
- Kumlien, C., Bish, M., Chan, E. A., Rew, L., Chan, P. S., Leung, D., & Carlson, E. (2020). Psychometric properties of a modified cultural awareness scale for use in higher education within the health and social care fields. *BMC Medical Education*, 20(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-020-02326-8>
- Lede, Y. U. (2022). Membangun Sikap Moderasi Beragama Melalui Penanaman Nilai Budaya Lokal Tama Umma Kalada. *Ideas: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial, dan Budaya*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.32884/ideas.v8i1.627>
- Lundeto, A. (2018). Menakar Akar-Akar Multikulturalisme Pendidikan di Indonesia. *Jurnal Ilmiah Iqra'*, 11(2), 38–52. <https://doi.org/10.30984/jii.v11i2.584>
- Mailin, M. (2017). Akulturasi Nilai Budaya Melayu Dan Batak Toba Pada Masyarakat Melayu Kota Tanjungbalai Asahan. *Miqot: Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Keislaman*, 41(1). <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v41i1.328>
- Media Indonesia. (2022). *Intoleransi-Radikalisme Cenderung Naik*.
- Moustakas, C. (2011). Phenomenological research methods. In *Phenomenological research methods*. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412995658>
- Müller, R., Schischke, D., Graf, B., & Antoni, C. H. (2022). How can we avoid information

- overload and techno-frustration as a virtual team? The effect of shared mental models of information and communication technology on information overload and techno-frustration. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 138. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2022.107438>
- Nashohah, I. (2021). Internalisasi Nilai Moderasi Beragama melalui Pendidikan Penguatan Karakter dalam Masyarakat Heterogen. *Prosiding Nasional*, 4(November).
- Noor, H. (2023). Upaya Membangun Sikap Moderasi Beragama Melalui Pendidikan Agama Islam pada Mahasiswa Perguruan Tinggi Umum di Banjarmasin. *Al Qalam: Jurnal Ilmiah Keagamaan dan Kemasyarakatan*, 17(1). <https://doi.org/10.35931/aq.v17i1.1811>
- Parry, J., Brookfield, K., & Bolton, V. (2021). “The long arm of the household”: Gendered struggles in combining paid work with social and civil participation over the lifecourse. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 28(1). <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12569>
- Prasojo, Z. H., & Pabbajah, M. (2020). Akomodasi Kultural Dalam Resolusi Konflik Bernuansa Agama Di Indonesia. *Aqlam: Journal of Islam and Plurality*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.30984/ajip.v5i1.1131>
- R'boul, H. (2022). Epistemological plurality in intercultural communication knowledge. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, 17(2). <https://doi.org/10.1080/17447143.2022.2069784>
- Rinda Fauzian, Hadiat, Peri Ramdani, & Mohamad Yudiyanto. (2021). Penguatan Moderasi Beragama Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Dalam Upaya Membentuk Sikap Moderat Siswa Madrasah. *AL-WIJDĀN Journal of Islamic Education Studies*, 6(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.58788/alwijdn.v6i1.933>
- Rogers, E. (1962). Difussion of Innovations (First Edition). In *The Free Press, New York*.
- Rozak, A. (2008). Komunikasi Lintas Agama: Media Sosial Pembentukan Masyarakat Sipil. *Jurnal Dakwah*, IX(1).
- Rumahuru, Y. Z. (2021). Pendidikan agama inklusif sebagai fondasi moderasi beragama: Strategi merawat keberagaman di Indonesia. *KURIOS*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.30995/kur.v7i2.323>
- Sahertian, C. D. W., Wajabula, C. M., & Amtu, O. (2020). Contribution of assure learning model to improve student learning skills. *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 7(9). <https://doi.org/10.31838/jcr.07.09.207>
- Santalia, I., & Zulfiani. (2023). Kerukunan Umat Beragama Pasca Konflik Di Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta. *Jurnal Ushuluddin: Media Dialog Pemikiran Islam*, 25(1). <https://doi.org/10.24252/jumdpi.v25i1.36238>
- Saumantri, T. (2022). Konstruksi Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Beragama dalam Perspektif Filsafat Agama. *Substantia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin*, 24(2). <https://doi.org/10.22373/substantia.v24i2.14854>
- Sazali, H., Guntoro, B., Subejo, & Partini, S. U. (2015). “ Analisis Komunikasi Pembangunan Agama ” ( Studi Pemerintahan Kota Bogor ). *Jurnal Komunikasi Profetik*,



08(02), 37–50.

- Sintiawati, N., Fajarwati, S. R., Mulyanto, A., Muttaqien, K., & Suherman, M. (2022). Partisipasi Civitas Akademik dalam Implementasi Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM). *Jurnal Basicedu*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v6i1.2036>
- Suarnaya, I. P. (2021). Model Moderasi Beragama Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Di Desa Pegayaman Kabupaten Buleleng. *Jurnal Widya Sastra Pendidikan Agama Hindu*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.36663/wspah.v4i1.239>
- Supriyanto, S. (2022). Principles Of Compassion In The World Religions For Coexistence Among Religions In The Perspective Of Karen Armstrong. *Mawa Izh Jurnal Dakwah Dan Pengembangan Sosial Kemanusiaan*, 13(02). <https://doi.org/10.32923/maw.v13i02.2663>
- Surbakti, N. (2019). Belajar Menghargai Kearifan Lokal Dari Yesus Dalam Matius 22:32. *VISIO DEI: JURNAL TEOLOGI KRISTEN*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.35909/visiodei.v1i2.31>
- Suzina, A. C., Tufte, T., & Jiménez-Martínez, C. (2020). Special issue: The legacy of Paulo Freire. Contemporary reflections on participatory communication and civil society development in Brazil and beyond. In *International Communication Gazette* (Vol. 82, Nomor 5). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048520943687>
- Tanjung, S. R. (2022). Implementasi Moderasi Beragama pada Program kerukunan Umat Beragama dan Layanan Kehidupan Umat Beragama. *Kompetensi*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.47655/kompetensi.v7i1.22>
- Taufani. (2018). Pemikiran Pluralisme Gusdur. *Jurnal Dakwah Tabligh*, 19(2), 198–217.
- Van Manen, M. (2014). Phenomenology of Practice: Meaning-Giving Methods in Phenomenological Research and Writing (Developing Qualitative Inquiry). In *Routledge*.
- Wafī, M. B. F., Ilhami, N., & Taufiqurohman, T. (2022). Transformasi Perilaku Beragama Masyarakat Muslim Kontemporer: Fenomena Al-Qur'an Di Era Digital. *IN RIGHT: Jurnal Agama dan Hak Azasi Manusia*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.14421/inright.v11i1.2503>
- Weber, M. (2017). Methodology of social sciences. In *Methodology of Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315124445>
- Wentzel, K., & Skinner, E. (2022). The Other Half of the Story: the Role of Social Relationships and Social Contexts in the Development of Academic Motivation. In *Educational Psychology Review* (Vol. 34, Nomor 4). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-022-09713-1>
- Apriyani, Siska Nur, Ryo Yudowirawan, Fathurozi, Moch Lukluil Makhnun, dan Umi Muzayanah. 2022. “Misplace Otoritas Berbagi Konten Keagamaan Pada Grup WhatsApp.” *Smart: Jurnal Studi Masyarakat, Religi, Dan Tradisi* 8(2):205–218. doi: <https://doi.org/10.18784/smart.v8i2.1747>.

- Bustam, Betty Maulirosa, dan Rika Astari. 2018. "Meaning Differences Between Two Quran Translation In Activism Era In Indonesia (Ideology In Translation Analysis)." *Analisa: Journal of Social Science and Religion* 3(1):131–47. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18784/analisa.v3i1.602>.
- Prasetyo, Andjar, Bekti Putri Harwijayanti, Muhammad Nur Ikhwan, Moch Lukluil Maknun, dan Mochammad Fahlevi. 2022. "Interaction of Internal and External Organizations in Encouraging Community Innovation." *Frontiers in Psychology* 13(903650). doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.903650.
- Purwanto, Edi. 2007. "Representasi Wong Tengger atas Perubahan Sosial dalam Perspektif Social Identity Theory (Studi Etnografis di Desa Wonokerto dan Ngadas Probolinggo)". *Skripsi*. UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.
- Muna, Muhamad Khusnul. 2016. "Nilai Toleransi Beragama dalam Surat Al-Hujurat Ayat 11-13 dan Relevansinya terhadap Tujuan Pendidikan Islam." *Tesis*. UIN Sunan Kalijaga.
- Sodli, Ahmad. 2012. Kearifan Lokal Bagi Kerukunan Umat Beragama di Probolinggo Jawa Timur. *Laporan Penelitian tidak diterbitkan*. Semarang: Balai Litbang Agama Semarang.