

## The Javanese Philosophy of Memayu Hayuning Bawana and Religious Moderation in Central Java

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### Abstract

*Religious moderation is a critical component for ensuring social stability and fostering harmony among religious communities in Indonesia. The nation's religious diversity must be approached with maturity and wisdom to realize the ideal of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity). This study aims to explore the philosophical values embedded in Memayu Hayuning Bawana as a conceptual framework for understanding religious moderation within the Central Javanese society. Employing a qualitative design with a library research approach from a sociological perspective, this study systematically examines theoretical sources and literature related to the philosophy of Memayu Hayuning Bawana, religious moderation, and Javanese cultural traditions. The findings reveal that this philosophy serves as an ethical guideline and offers insights for fostering interreligious harmony through reflective social engagement. Through this worldview, community members are encouraged to cultivate tolerance, prioritize collaborative efforts for mutual well-being, and exercise self-control—principles that resonate with the core ideals of religious moderation. The paper concludes with recommendations for scholars, educators, and stakeholders to consider the values of Memayu Hayuning Bawana when discussing religious moderation in Central Java.*

**Keywords:** religious moderation, Memayu Hayuning Bawana, Central Java, local wisdom, religious tolerance

### Introduction

Religious radicalism continues to be a persistent threat to Indonesian society and remains a pressing challenge for the state in maintaining social cohesion. Said Aqil Siradj, a former leader of Nahdlatul Ulama, emphasized that one of the latent dangers confronting Indonesia is the spread of terrorism and religious extremism, phenomena capable of destabilizing national unity (Santoso, 2021). This concern aligns with numerous empirical studies documenting the persistence of radical tendencies among specific groups within the population. For instance, Haryanto (2018), using data from the Wahid Foundation in 2016, found that 7.7% of respondents expressed willingness to engage in radical actions, while 0.4% admitted to having participated in such acts. Although most rejected radicalism, 7.7% translates into approximately 600,000 individuals nationwide, underscoring the seriousness of the problem. Similarly, a joint survey by the Alvara Research Center and the Mata Air Foundation in 2017 revealed that 23.5% of university students and 16.3% of high school students supported the establishment of an Islamic state and the implementation of Sharia law (Haryanto, 2018). These findings suggest that young people, who represent the nation's future, are not immune to the appeal of exclusivist ideologies.

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Recent academic studies have highlighted the persistence of radicalism among Indonesian youth, particularly in higher education contexts. Rahman and Mala (2024) examined how soft radicalism infiltrates students at State Islamic Universities via digital platforms and social media, exposing them to non-violent extremist narratives that subtly shape exclusivist worldviews. In a complementary study, Nafi'a et al. (2022) demonstrated that students in Islamic colleges remain highly vulnerable to radical influences due to uncritical textual approaches to religious interpretation, limiting their capacity for critical engagement with diverse perspectives. Arifin et al. (2025), investigating Islamic Religious Education curricula at Gadjah Mada University and Syiah Kuala University, emphasized that curricular innovations—such as counter-narratives, multi-perspective lectures, and direct engagement with former extremists—are essential for promoting tolerance and moderation. Collectively, these studies indicate that radicalism is not a peripheral phenomenon but is embedded in educational contexts, where systemic factors—including digital exposure, curriculum design, and institutional frameworks—play decisive roles in both facilitating its spread and preventing it.

Indicators of intolerance remain relatively high in several regions across Indonesia. According to a 2023 report by the Setara Institute, ten cities scored low on tolerance indicators, with Depok recording the lowest score (4.01). In contrast, several cities in Central Java demonstrate comparatively higher levels of tolerance, including Salatiga (6.45), Semarang (6.23), Magelang (6.22), and Surakarta (5.80) (Amaranggana & Afifah, 2024). These patterns suggest that although pockets of intolerance persist, some regions possess cultural and social foundations that contribute to interreligious harmony.

Central Java is often cited as an example of relative success in fostering interfaith harmony and cooperation. However, presenting a balanced depiction is essential. Even in areas with high tolerance scores, incidents of radicalism continue to emerge, and several individuals involved in acts of terrorism originate from Central Java. For instance, episodes of Islamic-Christian tension and the emergence of various radical groups have been documented in Surakarta, Central Java (Baidhawiy, 2018). Umar Patek, one of the perpetrators of the Bali bombing, was born in Pemalang (Ditjenpas, 2022), while Abu Bakar Ba'asyir—who was imprisoned for his involvement in terrorism financing and support networks—came from Sukoharjo (Amindoni, 2021; Wardah, 2011). More recently, in 2024, the police arrested several individuals in Boyolali and Sukoharjo who were reportedly linked to the terrorist leader Dr. Azhari (BBC News Indonesia, 2024). These cases illustrate that episodes of radicalization can arise even within regions that are generally regarded as tolerant.

The cultural landscape of Central Java is deeply shaped by Javanese philosophy, which provides a moral compass for everyday life. *Falsafah hidup*, or life philosophy, refers to socio-cultural values that guide individuals and communities toward broader life goals. Endraswara (2018) notes that Javanese culture contains enduring philosophical traditions relevant to contemporary challenges, particularly in promoting social harmony. Among these, *Memayu Hayuning Bawana* emphasizes the preservation of harmony, avoidance of harmful behavior, and cultivation of peace within society.

Recent scholarship highlights the practical relevance of local wisdom, such as *Memayu Hayuning Bawana*, in promoting social resilience. Pujiyanti et al. (2024) argue that Javanese philosophy provides an ethical foundation for strengthening family resilience, emphasizing values such as *tepa selira*, *karyenak tyasing sesama*, and *eling lan waspada* as mechanisms for sustaining harmony amid social change. Similarly, Trilaksana et al. (2023) demonstrate how local wisdom traditions in Surabaya contribute to character education, reinforcing tolerance, empathy, and harmony that counter exclusivist tendencies. These studies affirm that Javanese philosophy is not merely abstract thought but an applied ethical framework capable of addressing contemporary societal challenges, including religious radicalism.

Memayu Hayuning Bawana embodies a moral responsibility to preserve cosmic harmony, encompassing environmental stewardship, social cohesion, and spiritual well-being. Central to this philosophy is the emphasis on balance and ethical conduct, which aligns with the principles of religious moderation. Riyanto (2022) highlights that Javanese philosophy functions as a “middle-way” framework, guiding individuals to navigate social and spiritual differences without succumbing to extremes. By promoting peace and discouraging harmful behavior, Memayu Hayuning Bawana provides a culturally grounded approach compatible with contemporary frameworks of religious moderation in Indonesia.

Religious moderation has emerged as a national policy aimed at fostering tolerance, non-violence, and acceptance of diversity to strengthen national cohesion (Khasanah et al., 2023). Its formal integration into educational curricula and social programs seeks to cultivate moderate attitudes and mitigate extremism. While top-down policies provide structural guidance, their effectiveness depends on community-level engagement and cultural resonance. Indigenous philosophies such as Memayu Hayuning Bawana are particularly significant, offering locally meaningful idioms that make abstract concepts of moderation tangible and actionable.

Empirical evidence underscores the potential of integrating local wisdom into religious moderation strategies. Haryanto (2022) demonstrates that cultural practices in Central Java, including communal rituals and local gatherings, contribute to reducing intergroup tensions and fostering social coexistence. Riyanto (2022) further argues that the values embedded in Javanese philosophy can support interfaith dialogue, facilitating peaceful interactions among diverse religious communities. Together, these studies suggest that Memayu Hayuning Bawana serves as both an ethical framework and a practical cultural resource for advancing religious moderation in contemporary Indonesian society.

Despite these insights, significant gaps remain in the literature. Research on Memayu Hayuning Bawana has largely focused on ecological and ritual dimensions, emphasizing environmental ethics or local communal practices (Riyanto, 2022). While valuable, these studies often overlook the conceptual relevance of the philosophy for understanding religious moderation in pluralistic settings. Moreover, previous research predominantly employs qualitative, localized methods, focusing on individual communities or case studies. There remains a need for studies that analyze Memayu Hayuning Bawana conceptually, bridging local cultural wisdom and theoretical discourse on religious moderation.

This study addresses this gap through a library research methodology with a descriptive-analytical orientation, focusing on philosophical and theoretical insights rather than field observations. As a result, the study contributes to the theoretical discourse on religious moderation and offers perspectives for scholars, educators, and stakeholders.

In conclusion, the persistence of radicalism in Indonesia underscores the importance of understanding philosophical and ethical frameworks that support tolerance and coexistence. While national policies provide guidance, their interpretation and relevance can be informed by local cultural traditions resonant with community values. The Javanese philosophy of Memayu Hayuning Bawana offers such a conceptual resource. By emphasizing harmony, balance, and peace, it provides a culturally grounded perspective for thinking about religious moderation that is both contextually meaningful and ethically profound. This study thus seeks to conceptually examine the values of Memayu Hayuning Bawana in relation to religious moderation in Central Java, offering a novel contribution to theoretical discussions on how indigenous wisdom can inform approaches to tolerance and social cohesion.

## **Research Method**

This study was conducted under a qualitative paradigm, which is based on the assumption that social reality is constructed, experienced, and interpreted differently by individuals and

communities. Within this paradigm, the researcher seeks to explore meanings and understand the dynamics of social and cultural phenomena rather than measuring them statistically. The choice of this paradigm aligns with the objectives of the study, which aim to conceptually examine the philosophy of Memayu Hayuning Bawana, principles of religious moderation, and Javanese cultural traditions as ethical and philosophical resources for understanding tolerance. A qualitative paradigm provides the flexibility to highlight the richness of interpretation contained in texts, traditions, and scholarly works (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

The research adopted a library research approach as the primary data collection. Library research is appropriate when the data required are in the form of written texts, scientific works, and cultural documentation rather than direct observations in the field (Zed, 2014). The nature of this study is conceptual and theoretical, focusing on how philosophical and religious ideas can be analyzed through existing sources. Therefore, the main technique for gathering data was by systematically collecting written materials that were relevant, credible, and authoritative.

The research procedure was carried out in four main stages. First, the identification stage involved searching for literature through university libraries and online databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, and Garuda (Sinta 1 and 2), as well as consulting books specifically related to Memayu Hayuning Bawana and trustworthy websites, in order to guarantee that the selected works were academically reliable. Second, the selection stage required filtering the sources based on relevance, accuracy, and recency, prioritizing references published in the last five years, except for classical works that are considered foundational. Third, the organization stage was aimed at classifying materials into categories according to the research focus: (1) the philosophy of Memayu Hayuning Bawana, (2) concepts of religious moderation, and (3) Javanese cultural traditions. Fourth, the interpretation stage involved reading, comparing, and synthesizing the selected sources to construct arguments that address the research objectives from a conceptual and philosophical perspective.

The data sources of this study included both primary and secondary materials. Primary sources included books and journal articles that directly discuss Javanese philosophy, religious moderation, and sociological approaches to religion. Secondary sources were drawn from newspapers, online articles, and institutional reports that provide contextual information on interreligious relations in Indonesia. The combination of these sources was necessary to obtain a comprehensive conceptual view connecting classical philosophical values with contemporary discussions of religious moderation (Snyder, 2019).

Although library research does not involve field sites in the conventional sense, the study was conducted at the author's academic institution, where access to physical libraries and digital databases was available. The study was conducted over approximately six months, with intensive reading, note-taking, and synthesis as the primary activities. The materials used were academic texts such as books, peer-reviewed journal articles, cultural essays, and official documents published by governmental and non-governmental institutions.

The method of data analysis in this research was descriptive-qualitative. The descriptive approach was applied to portray, explain, and articulate the philosophical and sociological aspects contained in the texts. This method allowed the researcher to present the findings in narrative form, showing the interrelation between Memayu Hayuning Bawana, religious moderation, and the conceptual understanding of tolerance in Javanese society (Bungin, 2020). Analysis was conducted through careful reading, comparison, and integration of relevant concepts, rather than using statistical tools or empirical observation.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Religious Moderation in a Multicultural Society**

Indonesia, as one of the most culturally diverse nations in the world, consists of 17,508 islands

inhabited by approximately 360 ethnic groups and 1,340 sub-ethnic communities (Isra & Faiz, 2021). This demographic reality situates Indonesia as a multicultural state with unique opportunities and challenges. Cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity is widely acknowledged as a valuable asset for national development, yet it can also cause tension and conflict if not properly managed (Mariyono, 2024; Utomo & Wasino, 2020). Kusumohamidjojo (2000) highlights that diversity in Indonesia should not merely be recognized but also embraced as a constructive foundation for nation-building. Without a deliberate effort to cultivate inclusivity, diversity may become a factor that weakens national unity.

Historical experiences have shown that Indonesia has witnessed multiple large-scale conflicts rooted in ethnicity, religion, race, and social groups (commonly known as SARA conflicts). Some of the most severe cases include the May 1998 riots, which escalated into violent clashes between indigenous and Chinese-Indonesian communities; the Ambon conflict of 1999, characterized by prolonged interreligious violence; the Sampit tragedy in 2001 involving Dayak and Madurese communities; clashes between the Indonesian government and the Free Papua Movement (OPM); and the 2012 Sampang incident targeting the Shi'a Muslim community (Diputra, 2016). These episodes underscore how diversity, if not approached through moderation, can easily devolve into violence.

The persistence of intolerance in everyday life further complicates Indonesia's democratic consolidation. According to the 2023 report by the Setara Institute for Democracy and Peace, there were 217 incidents and 329 violations against freedom of religion or belief, marking an increase compared to 2022 (SETARA Institute for Democracy and Peace, 2024). Alarming, the same report documented a steady upward trend over the last seven years in violations targeting houses of worship. A survey by the Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI) in West Java in 2022 further revealed that a significant number of respondents opposed non-Muslims holding political office and objected to the construction of non-Muslim houses of worship in their neighborhoods (Admin LSI, 2023). Taken together, these patterns illustrate that intolerance remains embedded not only in isolated incidents but also in public attitudes, highlighting the urgent need for more systematic efforts to strengthen civic education, promote interfaith dialogue, and reinforce the principles of equal citizenship in Indonesia's democratic development.

In response, the Indonesian government and civil society actors have promoted religious moderation as a strategy to mitigate the risks of intolerance, radicalism, and extremism. The Ministry of Religious Affairs has defined religious moderation as a balanced approach in which individuals remain steadfast in practicing their own religion while showing inclusivity toward others' beliefs (Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama R.I., 2019). This concept mirrors broader scholarly discussions on religious pluralism and interfaith dialogue, which emphasize tolerance, recognition, and mutual respect. Religious moderation thus functions as both a normative framework and a practical agenda to build harmonious coexistence in plural societies.

Scholars argue that religious moderation in Indonesia is not only a religious discourse but also a socio-political necessity. Haryanto (2022) explains that moderation strengthens the social fabric by positioning diversity as a shared identity rather than a dividing line. Similarly, Kawangung (2019) conceptualizes religious moderation as an "innovative effort" to transform religious differences into opportunities for cooperation. Complementing this conceptual view, Aprilianto et al., (2025) emphasize that embedding religious moderation in schools and universities functions as a counter-narrative to intolerance and radicalism, thereby underscoring its socio-political relevance in contemporary Indonesia.

From this perspective, religious moderation must be seen as a long-term investment for Indonesia's democratic resilience. The emphasis on balance, inclusivity, and dialogue resonates strongly with the constitutional ideal of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity) — which commands citizens to view diversity as an inseparable aspect of national identity (Apandie et al.,

2022). Yet, challenges remain: radical groups continue to exploit identity politics, digital media amplify polarizing narratives, and socio-economic inequalities often exacerbate intergroup tensions. To counter these threats, strengthening religious moderation requires a multi-level approach that involves educational reforms, inclusive state policies, engagement by religious leaders, and grassroots initiatives to foster harmony.

Thus, religious moderation in Indonesia's multicultural society is not merely a conceptual framework but an urgent strategy for ensuring peace, justice, and inclusivity. It positions religion as a force for unity rather than division, while aligning with local values and constitutional commitments. The subsequent sections will elaborate on the values underpinning religious moderation, its resonance with Javanese philosophy — particularly Memayu Hayuning Bawana — and its implications for religious harmony in Central Java.

### **Values of Religious Moderation: Weaving Mutual Understanding Amid Diversity**

Indonesia's multicultural and multi-religious landscape demands more than mere coexistence; it requires the cultivation of shared values that enable constructive engagement across differences. Within the framework of religious moderation, five core values are emphasized: the middle path, tolerance, balance, justice, and dialogue. These values are not abstract ideals but practical guidelines that can be applied to everyday life, social institutions, and state governance (Sulaiman et al., 2022). When integrated holistically, they nurture a religious outlook that is inclusive, empathetic, and grounded in cultural wisdom, thereby reinforcing peace in plural societies.

#### **The Value of the Middle Path**

The middle path, often referred to as *wasatiyyah* in Islamic discourse, represents the essence of moderation: neither extreme rigidity nor excessive permissiveness. It is a call to uphold religious teachings in a manner that is firm yet accommodating. The Ministry of Religious Affairs (2019) emphasizes that moderation does not mean compromising one's faith; rather, it entails deep and correct adherence to one's beliefs while acknowledging others' right to practice differently.

Empirical research underscores the importance of this principle in countering radical ideologies. For instance, Nasution (2023) shows that *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) adopting *wasatiyyah* values are more effective in promoting resilience against intolerant interpretations. Likewise, Aflahah et al. (2023) demonstrates that exposure to discourses on the "middle path" significantly enhances students' acceptance of pluralism and interfaith dialogue in Indonesian universities. These findings affirm that *wasatiyyah* functions as both a theological and sociological foundation for religious moderation in Indonesia.

#### **The Value of Tolerance**

Tolerance is perhaps the most recognizable value associated with religious moderation. In its simplest form, tolerance denotes respect for differences in belief, opinion, and practice without coercion. In religious contexts, it reflects an openness to diversity while resisting exclusivist tendencies. Hakim (2021) argues that tolerance should be understood not merely as passive acceptance but as an active pursuit of interreligious harmony through structured dialogue.

Empirical studies across Indonesia illustrate how tolerance operates in practice. For instance, Manuain et al. (2024) demonstrate that interfaith dialogues among women in Kupang foster sustainable tolerance and daily harmony, extending beyond mere coexistence. In Central Java, Muhtador et al. (2025) show the pivotal role of local religious elites in constructing interfaith peace through both formal and informal community arenas. These findings reinforce the notion that tolerance cultivated through religious moderation has far-reaching implications for democratic consolidation and social cohesion.

### **The Value of Balance**

Balance refers to the integration of religious commitment with social responsibility. It requires believers to harmonize the spiritual and worldly dimensions of life, ensuring that religious interpretations promote holistic well-being. According to the Ministry of Religious Affairs (2019), balance involves distinguishing between legitimate diversity of interpretation and harmful deviations, thereby preventing extremism.

Scholars note that balance is particularly relevant in navigating the intersection of religion and politics. According to Khaidir et al. (2023), imbalances—where religious dogma dominates public policy without consideration of pluralism—often result in exclusionary practices and social fragmentation. Conversely, balanced interpretations enable religious principles to guide ethical governance while upholding minority rights and pluralistic values. Balance thus functions as a crucial mechanism to ensure that religious authority and state power work together to promote inclusivity and prevent authoritarian tendencies.

### **The Value of Justice**

Justice is central to religious moderation because it establishes the principle of equality among individuals regardless of faith. It guarantees freedom of belief while prohibiting claims of superiority that delegitimize others. Mawikere et al. (2023) emphasize that justice in religious moderation aligns with constitutional principles of equality and human rights, ensuring that religion becomes a source of solidarity rather than discrimination.

From a practical standpoint, justice is reflected in policies that ensure equal access to public services, protect minority rights, and fairly regulate interfaith relations. A study by Halwati and Alfi (2022) emphasize that perceptions of fairness and inclusive dialogue foster harmony and reduce conflict, showing that justice is a fundamental element for peaceful coexistence in diverse societies.

### **The Value of Dialogue**

Dialogue stands at the heart of religious moderation, enabling mutual understanding and collaborative problem-solving. Unlike debate, which seeks to establish superiority, dialogue is oriented toward empathy, listening, and respect (Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama R.I., 2019). Atasoge et al. (2022) argue that dialogue fosters transformative encounters where prejudices are dismantled and solidarities across religious boundaries are cultivated.

Empirical cases highlight the transformative power of dialogue in Indonesia. Al Qurtuby (2013) documents how interfaith dialogues in Ambon and Maluku contributed significantly to post-conflict reconciliation between Christian and Muslim communities. More recently, Ridwan et al. (2024) analyze interfaith initiatives such as the World Peace Forum and Religion Twenty, showing how dialogue functions as a new form of public diplomacy to bridge divides and strengthen inclusivity. These examples illustrate how dialogue, as a value of religious moderation, operates as a proactive strategy to preempt radicalization and promote inclusive citizenship.

### **Synthesis of Values**

Together, these five values create a comprehensive framework for religious moderation. The middle path prevents extremism, tolerance encourages openness, balance integrates spiritual and worldly life, justice ensures equality, and dialogue cultivates empathy. Importantly, these values resonate not only with universal human rights principles but also with Indonesia's local wisdom traditions. As the next section will demonstrate, the Javanese philosophy of *Memayu Hayuning Bawana* mirrors and reinforces these values, offering a culturally grounded paradigm for nurturing moderation in Central Java.

## **Memayu Hayuning Bawana in the Perspective of Philosophy, Ethics, and the Plural Life of the Indonesian Archipelago (Nusantara)**

As one of the pinnacles of Javanese cultural wisdom, Memayu Hayuning Bawana offers a rich conceptual framework for understanding how human beings maintain the order of the self, society, and the cosmos. In scholarly discourse, this concept is significant not only as a cultural heritage but also as a source of philosophical, moral, and social values that remain relevant in Indonesia's plural and dynamic context. This section provides a comprehensive analysis of the philosophical foundations, ethical principles, and social praxis embedded in Memayu Hayuning Bawana, before examining its relevance to contemporary life.

### **Javanese Philosophy of Harmony and Cosmology as the Foundation of Memayu Hayuning Bawana**

Memayu Hayuning Bawana is a fundamental concept in the Javanese philosophy of life, whose historical roots are difficult to trace due to its transmission through oral tradition. Nevertheless, it is believed to have been embedded within Javanese value systems since the earliest stages of civilization (Endraswara, 2013, p. 15). Etymologically, *memayu* derives from *ayu*, meaning beautiful, good, or orderly, while *hayuning bawana* refers to the safety and well-being of the world in a cosmic sense. The expression functions not merely as a moral slogan but as an actionable ideology that guides individuals toward maintaining cosmic harmony through ethical and spiritual conduct (Endraswara, 2013, p. 16). Geertz (1976) emphasizes that within Javanese culture, the principle of *rukun* (social harmony) serves as a normative foundation in regulating social relations, often taking precedence over formal religious doctrines. Thus, the value of harmony within Memayu Hayuning Bawana possesses strong cultural legitimacy, functioning as a guiding principle for generating tranquility across various domains of life.

This cosmological worldview is rooted in the dynamic relationship between the *jagad cilik* (microcosm) and the *jagad gede* (macrocosm). In the framework of Javanese spirituality (*kejawen*), humans are viewed as centers of moral energy capable of influencing the balance of the universe. Accordingly, all individual actions must be oriented toward preserving cosmic order, which can only be achieved through inner cultivation, self-control, and spiritual awareness (Endraswara, 2013). Mulder (1996, p. 63) reinforces this view by noting that the ultimate aim of Javanese life is to achieve *tata-titi-tentrem*, or orderliness, meticulousness, and tranquility—conditions that reflect harmony between the inner self and the natural world. Within this frame, Memayu Hayuning Bawana becomes more than guidance; it is a moral cosmology linking personal ethics with universal order.

Javanese cosmology also suggests that the human realm (*jagad rame*) is not solely physical but also a spiritual domain encompassing mystical practices such as *ngelmu titen* and *petung*, which assist individuals in interpreting natural signs and determining actions that align with cosmic rhythms (Endraswara, 2013, pp. 16–17). The presence of these spiritual elements underscores the Javanese understanding of life as a continuous interplay between the material and the supernatural, enriching the interpretation of Memayu Hayuning Bawana as a holistic philosophy.

### **Javanese Ethical Values and Moral Foundations for Harmonious Living**

Javanese ethics functions as a social instrument shaping personal character and moral orientation. Four key principles—*prihatin*, *nrimo*, *tepa slira*, and *tresno*—represent concrete manifestations of Memayu Hayuning Bawana in everyday life (Endraswara, 2013; Pranoto, 2024). As Suseno (1987) notes, Memayu Hayuning Bawana is inherently tied to ethical studies because its application contains fundamental moral teachings that guide individuals toward harmonious living.

*Prihatin* emphasizes self-control through ascetic practices such as fasting and the reduction of

worldly pleasures. Its purpose is not solely spiritual but also to cultivate sensitivity toward others' suffering, nurture patience, and foster inner resilience in navigating life's challenges (Endraswara, 2013, p. 71). The principle of *nrimo* is often misunderstood as passive resignation, whereas it encompasses an active acceptance following one's optimal effort. Mulder (1996) explains that *nrimo* represents inner maturity, enabling individuals to achieve calmness (*ayem*) and foster social tranquility (*tentrem*), while cultivating realism, regulation of desires, and acceptance of life's differences. Similarly, Koentjaraningrat (1994) notes that Javanese view life as governed by the universe—ultimately by God—which shapes their tendency to accept life's course while remaining connected to their community and the natural cosmos. In line with this, Suseno (1996) emphasizes that *nrimo* prevents individuals from collapsing under pressure, enabling them to accept the unavoidable without being overwhelmed.

*Tepa slira* constitutes a fundamental value governing social relations based on empathy and respect for others. It requires individuals to consider how their words and actions may affect others' feelings, functioning as a cultural mechanism for conflict prevention (Endraswara, 2013, p. 29). Closely related is *andhap asor*, or humility, which Mulder (1996) regards as a concrete expression of respect for human dignity. Meanwhile, *tresno* (compassion or love) embodies the idea of *sepi ing pamrih*, or selfless affection expressed for collective well-being. This principle sustains social solidarity, mutual cooperation, and harmonious family relations (Endraswara, 2013, p. 31). Collectively, these values reinforce Memayu Hayuning Bawana as a form of collective ethics prioritizing communal welfare over individual egoism.

### **Social Harmony: Local and National Perspectives**

Javanese local wisdom integrates ethical values, spirituality, and environmental stewardship. Concepts such as *memetri wiji*, or nurturing the seeds of life, symbolize a commitment to environmental preservation (Endraswara, 2013, p. 18). In agrarian contexts, *pranata mangsa* serves as an ecological guide aligning agricultural practices with natural cycles (Karjanto, 2022). These practices demonstrate that environmental care is an integral part of Memayu Hayuning Bawana, linking ethical conduct to sustainable interaction with the natural world.

Social cohesion is further reinforced through communal rituals and cultural performances. Practices such as *Slametan* and *Rasulan* create spaces for dialogue, fostering solidarity and conflict prevention among community members (Geertz, 1976; Sartini et al., 2023). *Wayang kulit* performances convey moral messages on justice, self-restraint, and collective responsibility, reinforcing a shared ethical orientation (Mulyono, 1982; Suyanto, 2013). Empirical studies indicate that local wisdom functions as adaptive knowledge supporting disaster mitigation and community resilience, particularly in flood- and landslide-prone areas (Suwarno et al., 2022).

At the national level, these values provide a foundation for managing Indonesia's pluralistic society. Principles such as *rukun*, *tepa slira*, and *tresno* help bridge differences among diverse ethnic, religious, and social groups, promoting self-control, empathy, and compassion (Endraswara, 2013). Taken together, Memayu Hayuning Bawana operates as a practical framework for promoting social harmony across scales—from village interactions to national pluralistic engagement—integrating ethical conduct, communal practices, and ecological awareness.

### **Comparative Perspectives**

Although Memayu Hayuning Bawana is uniquely rooted in Javanese philosophical thought, its core emphasis on harmony, balance, and ethical responsibility resonates with wisdom traditions across Indonesia and globally. In Bali, *Tri Hita Karana* ("three causes of well-being") underscores harmonious relationships among humans, the divine, and the environment, influencing spatial planning, cultural preservation, and sustainable tourism (Mildawani et al., 2024). In South Sulawesi, the Bugis-Makassar principle of *Siri' na Pacce* highlights dignity, moral accountability,

and solidarity as ethical foundations for social justice and communal life (Azis et al., 2020). These comparisons reveal parallel frameworks promoting social cohesion and moral order, situating Memayu Hayuning Bawana within a broader *Nusantara* ethos of relational harmony.

At the global level, Memayu Hayuning Bawana aligns with indigenous philosophies emphasizing interdependence and collective well-being. The African concept of *Ubuntu*, for example, stresses that one's humanity is realized through relationships with others and mutual care (Banda & Mudzanire, 2019). Such convergences highlight Memayu Hayuning Bawana as a philosophical resource for peacebuilding and intercultural dialogue (Zaman et al., 2024).

### **Relevance to Contemporary Challenges**

In contemporary Indonesia, where rapid technological change, social fragmentation, and environmental pressures shape everyday life, Memayu Hayuning Bawana offers an ethical compass. Its emphasis on empathy, communal responsibility, and ecological mindfulness counterbalances rising individualism, digital polarization, and declining social trust. Values such as *tepa slira*, *guyub rukun*, and mutual respect contribute to character development and moral resilience, particularly among younger generations (Siregar et al., 2023).

Local wisdom provides culturally grounded mechanisms for conflict mediation. For instance, in Pelompek Village (*Kerinci*), customary mediation led by *Depati Niniak Mamak* resolved disputes on land use and communal resources through consensus and emotional reconciliation (Gunawan, 2021). A systematic review by Zulkifli and Nuryaman (2025) shows that diverse local wisdom practices address inter-ethnic tensions, religious disputes, and social welfare concerns, reinforcing their relevance to sustainable peacebuilding and Sustainable Development Goals.

### **Memayu Hayuning Bawana and Religious Moderation**

Social plurality is an inevitable reality that must be addressed appropriately by Indonesian society. In the context of religious diversity, a moderation-based approach is essential for fostering mutual understanding and harmonious relations among religious communities (Sulaiman et al., 2022). The core values of religious moderation—tolerance, inclusivity, and respect for local wisdom—resonate with the philosophical orientation of Memayu Hayuning Bawana, which emphasizes the preservation of harmony, balance, and prudent conduct when navigating differences.

Furthermore, diverse forms of local wisdom across Indonesia demonstrate that cultural traditions can indirectly nurture attitudes of moderation, even when the concept is not explicitly articulated (Zahrah & Amaliyah, 2024). In Karimun Jawa, traditions such as *barikan kubro*, *mudunke kapal*, *kumpulan*, and *sambatan* reinforce solidarity and intergroup harmony (Faizah et al., 2022). Interreligious initiatives, religious institutions, and educational programs also create constructive spaces for dialogue and cooperation (Maulana et al., 2024). The *Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama* (Forum for Religious Harmony) contributes significantly to disseminating moderation values through mediation, community forums, and public education (Huda et al., 2024).

Other empirical findings support this pattern. The *mo basa-basa* tradition in Tongalino strengthens social cohesion and mutual respect (Asman & Arqam, 2023), the Torajan *pangngan* tradition fosters tolerance by diminishing social and religious boundaries (Rerung, 2023), and the nose-kissing (*cium hidung*) tradition in East Nusa Tenggara promotes kinship and conflict resolution (Hermanus & Rerung, 2024). Thus, although Memayu Hayuning Bawana is a Javanese cultural construct, its spirit of harmony resonates with the ways religious moderation is practiced within various cultural traditions across the Indonesian archipelago.

### **Conclusion of the Subsection**

Memayu Hayuning Bawana presents a holistic philosophical vision interweaving cosmological

insight, personal ethics, social responsibility, and ecological awareness. It recognizes the interconnectedness of the *jagad cilik* and *jagad gede*, emphasizing that social harmony and environmental balance begin with inner discipline and moral clarity. Through values such as *rukun*, *tepa slira*, and *tresno*, Javanese culture has developed enduring practices nurturing social cohesion, cultural resilience, and ecological stewardship. As both cultural wisdom and ethical practice, Memayu Hayuning Bawana supports contemporary discourses on religious moderation and societal harmony. In a pluralistic and globalized era, this worldview offers valuable guidance for fostering peace, mutual understanding, and sustainable living.

### **The Intersection Between Religious Moderation and Memayu Hayuning Bawana**

The dialogue between religious moderation and the Javanese philosophy of Memayu Hayuning Bawana reveals deep conceptual and practical convergences. While religious moderation is a policy-driven framework developed by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, Memayu Hayuning Bawana is an indigenous cultural wisdom that has guided Javanese society for centuries. Together, these frameworks demonstrate how religious values and local traditions can intersect to promote harmony within a pluralistic context.

### **Shared Foundations of Harmony and Inclusivity**

Religious moderation emphasizes tolerance, balance, dialogue, and justice as core values (Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama R.I., 2019). Similarly, Memayu Hayuning Bawana encourages individuals to maintain peace (*katentreman*), balance (*keseimbangan*), and respect for others through self-control and empathy (Endraswara, 2018). Both frameworks are committed to preventing extremism, fanaticism, and social fragmentation.

This alignment underscores the argument by Hefner (2021), who observed that in Southeast Asia, successful models of religious pluralism often emerge when state frameworks of moderation resonate with local cultural idioms. In the Javanese context, grounding moderation in Memayu Hayuning Bawana ensures that it is not perceived as an abstract government policy but as an extension of long-standing cultural practices.

### **Tolerance and Tranquility: A Convergence of Values**

Tolerance, as defined in religious moderation, refers to the respect and acceptance of religious diversity without coercion. This principle finds a parallel in the value of tranquility (*katentreman*) in Memayu Hayuning Bawana, which emphasizes peaceful coexistence and the avoidance of hostility. Historically, Javanese communities have welcomed outsiders—from traders to missionaries—by extending respect and hospitality (Bayuadhy, 2024). This ethos reinforces the belief that peace and respect for difference are integral to societal stability. The centrality of *rukun* (social harmony) in Java further explains why civility and conflict-avoidance are treated as everyday moral obligations rather than exceptional responses, shaping community expectations around concord and restraint (Syakur & Khoiroh, 2021).

Empirical evidence also shows that mobilizing local wisdom as cultural capital can be more effective for sustaining interreligious peace than relying solely on formal enforcement. A multi-site qualitative study in Indonesia demonstrates that interfaith communities achieve durable harmony by activating inherited local practices—ritual cooperation, mutual aid, and shared customs—which embed tolerance in everyday life (Gede Agung et al., 2024).

Complementing this, recent research on *guyub rukun* (communal solidarity) documents how respected elders and customary norms help de-escalate tensions and maintain intergenerational cohesion—mechanisms that align closely with *katentreman* and the preventive, peace-first logic of Memayu Hayuning Bawana (Uluwwi et al., 2024). Together, these findings indicate that Javanese philosophies provide not only normative guidance but also practical, community-owned tools

for embedding tolerance in daily interactions.

### **Balance: Preventing Extremism and Cultivating Harmony**

Religious moderation identifies balance as a principle that rejects both radical rigidity and excessive liberalism. Similarly, Memayu Hayuning Bawana emphasizes maintaining equilibrium between the spiritual and worldly dimensions of life. The concept of balancing *jagad cilik* (the individual self) and *jagad gede* (the universe) resonates strongly with moderation's call for proportionality and inclusivity.

This intersection is not merely philosophical but has real social implications. For instance, Nuriyanto et al. (Nuriyanto et al., 2025) illustrate that the Javanese *slametan*, a communal thanksgiving ritual, serves not only as a religious event but also reinforces unity and collaboration across diverse religious communities. Such cultural expressions demonstrate how the value of balance can mitigate polarization and strengthen social harmony.

### **Dialogue and Spiritual Wisdom: Pathways to Mutual Understanding**

Dialogue is one of the central pillars of religious moderation, advocating sincere and deliberative engagement across religious boundaries. Similarly, Memayu Hayuning Bawana, with its emphasis on spiritual wisdom, reinforces this value by encouraging ethical interactions grounded in humility, empathy, and moral clarity. Both frameworks recognize dialogue not only as a means of conflict resolution but also as a transformative practice for deepening mutual understanding.

Contemporary examples from Central Java attest to how ritual traditions facilitate interfaith harmony. Muqoddam and Maghfiroh (2019) demonstrate that the *slametan* tradition—an integration of Javanese culture and Islamic values—functions as a syncretic communal mechanism that strengthens social cohesion in rural communities. In another analysis, Nasir (2019) re-examines the Javanese Muslim *slametan*, emphasizing how it merges local Javanese beliefs with Islamic teachings, thereby serving as a potent agent for fostering tolerance and social integration. Together, these examples underscore that embedding Islamic moderation (*wasathiyah*) within the Javanese framework of Memayu Hayuning Bawana significantly enhances the effectiveness and depth of interfaith dialogue initiatives.

### **Justice and Ethical Responsibility**

Justice, as emphasized in religious moderation, guarantees equal rights and freedoms for all religious adherents. This principle resonates with the ethical dimension of Memayu Hayuning Bawana, which requires individuals to act with fairness and compassion toward others (Mawikere et al., 2023). Both frameworks challenge hierarchical or exclusionary claims of superiority, instead affirming egalitarian relationships.

Ethnographic evidence from Central Java suggests that appeals to justice framed through local wisdom gain greater acceptance. For instance, Sulistiyani et al. (2021) examine how the philosophy of Memayu Hayuning Bawana is embedded in local elites' discourse within the Green Village Program in Yogyakarta, finding that moral appeals toward environmental stewardship are more influential than technocratic language in shaping community behaviour. Such findings suggest that indigenously grounded ethical frameworks can legitimize and strengthen the social basis for justice-oriented moderation.

### **Operationalizing the Intersection in Central Java**

The intersection between religious moderation and Memayu Hayuning Bawana can be operationalized through educational, cultural, and policy initiatives. Schools, for instance, can integrate both frameworks into character education curricula, ensuring that students learn values

of tolerance, balance, and justice within both religious and cultural contexts (Sulaiman et al., 2022).

At the community level, rituals such as *kenduren* and *bersih desa* can be revitalized as platforms for interfaith gatherings. These events embody both the cultural ethos of harmony and the religious imperative of moderation, thereby reinforcing peaceful coexistence. Government agencies and NGOs can further institutionalize these practices through formal recognition and support.

### **Memayu Hayuning Bawana as a Middle Path Toward Religious Harmony in Central Java**

Central Java is one of Indonesia's provinces marked by remarkable cultural and religious diversity (Ismail & Amasta, 2021). According to data from the Central Java Provincial Civil Registry (2025), six officially recognized religions present across its districts and cities. As of 2024, the religious composition is as follows: Islam (37,093,684 adherents), Protestant Christianity (535,499), Catholicism (342,347), Hinduism (40,625), Buddhism (53,055), and other religions (3,722). This plurality positions Central Java as a region with significant potential for contributing to national development.

However, the region has also witnessed incidents of social conflict. A report by Arsal et al. (2021) documented 62 cases of social conflict in 2019, most of which were driven by disputes over economic resources (27.42%), natural resources (22.58%), religion (11%), and politics (8.06%), along with conflicts involving state authorities (ranging from 1.61% to 3.23%). These findings indicate that latent potential for conflict persists and may surface under certain conditions.

Addressing such challenges requires solutions that are contextually relevant and culturally grounded. Conflict resolution strategies rooted in local wisdom have proven effective in promoting communal harmony. Traditional practices and cultural norms can function as bridges across religious, ideological, and socio-economic divides by fostering empathy and dialogue in everyday interactions (Arsal et al., 2021). Local wisdom, therefore, serves not only as a mechanism of social integration but also as a framework for sustaining peace in pluralistic societies.

One of the primary objectives of religious moderation is to cultivate an inclusive and harmonious religiosity within society. As radicalism and intolerance become more prevalent, the need for such an approach has become increasingly urgent. The relatively high tolerance indices recorded in several Central Javanese cities provide a favorable foundation for advancing religious moderation initiatives in the region. Furthermore, the Javanese philosophy of *Memayu Hayuning Bawana*—with its focus on harmony, balance, and ethical conduct—offers a culturally resonant paradigm for shaping interreligious coexistence.

By revitalizing this philosophical heritage, Central Java can not only preserve its cultural identity but also contribute to a broader national strategy for mitigating intolerance and extremism. In this way, *Memayu Hayuning Bawana* emerges as a “middle path” for realizing a vision of religious life that is inclusive, peaceful, and deeply rooted in indigenous wisdom.

### **Conclusion of the Subsection**

The convergence between religious moderation and *Memayu Hayuning Bawana* is both conceptually aligned and historically grounded in Javanese political and ethical traditions. Historically, Javanese kingship was deeply shaped by the *dewaraja* doctrine, which positioned the ruler as a sacred mediator responsible for maintaining cosmic and social harmony (Mabbett, 1969). This legitimacy was reinforced through ritual-symbolic practices—such as *abhiceka* inscriptions and the portrayal of kings as *Harihara* (Wahyudi & Munandar, 2023)—and through Tantric-inflected moral frameworks that integrated spiritual discipline with ethical governance (Santiko, 2020). Within this system, *Memayu Hayuning Bawana* served as a foundational ethos guiding rulers to preserve balance between the self, community, state, and the universe, as expressed through principles such as *momong*, *momot*, and *memangkat* (Wijaya, 2020). This model of leadership

represents a long-standing indigenous precedent of moderation and pluralistic stewardship preceding modern state articulations of religious moderation.

In contemporary Central Java, elements of Memayu Hayuning Bawana continue to be institutionalized in governance and community ethics. The Village Regulation of Harjobinangun (Kepala Desa Harjobinangun, 2022) formally adopts *Sabda Tama* as a moral framework guiding both village administration and community life. Similarly, provincial leaders describe Memayu Hayuning Bawana as a cultural foundation for equitable development, environmental balance, and social harmony—values that align with national goals of sustainable and inclusive governance (Humas Pemerintah Provinsi Jawa Tengah, 2022). Its principles also appear in educational programs that integrate local wisdom into character formation (Prihatmi, 2003).

These historical and contemporary continuities clarify an important point: intolerance among Javanese communities reflects not an embodiment of Javanese philosophy but a deviation from it. Scholars note that rapid industrialization, market expansion, and the erosion of agrarian cultural orientations have weakened the societal attachment to local wisdom, including Memayu Hayuning Bawana (Abdullah, 2006). The decline of these norms helps explain the emergence of intolerant behaviors. Documented incidents of intolerance in Central Java—such as the establishment of houses of worship, licensing of religious activities, and civil rights services for religious groups (Kholiludin et al., 2024)—illustrate behaviors that contradict the philosophical core of Memayu Hayuning Bawana, which demands self-restraint, empathy, and the active pursuit of harmony.

Overall, the intersection between religious moderation and Memayu Hayuning Bawana demonstrates that state-driven frameworks of tolerance gain stronger cultural legitimacy when grounded in long-standing Javanese ethical traditions. This indigenous philosophy provides both historical depth and practical tools for strengthening pluralism and sustaining social cohesion in contemporary Indonesia.

### **Recommendations for Stakeholders and Readers**

This study reveals that the Javanese philosophy of Memayu Hayuning Bawana, deeply rooted in the cultural fabric of Javanese society, aligns closely with the principles of religious moderation. Emphasizing harmony, tranquility, and balance, this philosophy resonates with the ideals of peaceful and inclusive religious life. Within this framework, Memayu Hayuning Bawana emerges as a catalyst for strengthening practices of tolerance and interfaith harmony in Central Java.

Based on these findings, several practical recommendations are proposed for both individuals and stakeholders. At the individual level, firstly, revitalizing the principle of *sawang-sinawang* is essential as an embodiment of perspective-taking—the ability to view situations from another person's standpoint (Galinsky et al., 2008). This approach discourages hasty judgment or blame and promotes understanding of others' thoughts, feelings, and beliefs. When individuals cultivate such empathetic awareness, prejudice diminishes, fostering interreligious relationships grounded in mutual respect and understanding, which in turn facilitates social harmony.

Second, the value of self-control is crucial in the context of religious diversity. In Javanese culture, concrete expressions of self-control are reflected in practices such as *meneng* (remaining silent in moments of anger), *nahan* (restraining negative impulses), and *ngendhaleni* (suppressing ego). Self-control carries significant weight in Javanese tradition as a form of emotional intelligence integrated into the moral framework of Javanese culture (Sulistyo & Sunarmi, 2021). Discipline, sincerity of intention, and inner awareness constitute the foundation of emotional regulation, which prevents social conflict and maintains collective tranquility. Self-control is the primary factor that enables individuals to avoid being provoked by differences in beliefs or religious practices. When the ego is successfully restrained, conflict can be avoided, and social peace preserved. In other words, self-control serves as an ethical foundation for coexistence, enabling communities to live together peacefully (Tangney et al., 2004).

Third, Javanese society is expected to embody the principle of extending love without expecting anything in return, which reflects the manifestation of noble Javanese moral teachings. Sincerity in offering affection without self-interest fosters trust and a sense of security among individuals and groups. Consequently, social relationships become more balanced and are no longer transactional or characterized by mutual suspicion. This value aligns with the spirit of Memayu Hayuning Bawana, which teaches that beautifying and sustaining the world can only be achieved when love and compassion are cultivated sincerely and equitably (Fehr et al., 2002). Therefore, the religious life of Javanese communities can develop in a moderate, peaceful manner, firmly rooted in their cultural values.

For stakeholders, three strategic programs are recommended to integrate Memayu Hayuning Bawana into religious moderation initiatives. First, the recommendation for religious leaders, the *Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama* (FKUB, the Interfaith Harmony Forum), and district and municipal governments in Central Java is to strengthen and optimize existing interfaith dialogue platforms. This strengthened FKUB platform should serve as an inclusive space that brings together Javanese cultural figures, traditional leaders, and representatives of various religious communities to engage in constructive dialogue. Through regular meetings, collaborative problem-solving, and thematic discussions on cultural–religious intersections, FKUB is expected to enhance tolerance, reduce intergroup tensions, and reinforce social cohesion grounded in Javanese philosophical values.

Second, the recommendation for educational institutions, curriculum developers, religious educators, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, as well as the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology is to design and implement Local Wisdom–Based Educational Programs as a strategic response to the continued presence of radical influences within education. Given evidence that students remain vulnerable to soft radicalism circulated through digital platforms and uncritical textual approaches (Nafi'a et al., 2022; Rahman & Mala, 2024), these programs must not merely incorporate cultural values but actively counter exclusivist narratives. Integrating the ethical principles of Memayu Hayuning Bawana—including balance, harmony, empathy, and emotional restraint—into religious and civic education can provide a culturally grounded framework for fostering critical thinking and moderation. In line with findings that curricular innovations and multi-perspective engagements are crucial for preventing radicalization (Arifin et al., 2025), institutions should develop workshops, pedagogical training for teachers and campus preachers, and contextualized instructional modules that explicitly equip students to evaluate diverse viewpoints, challenge intolerant interpretations, and navigate digital religious content responsibly. Such efforts will help ensure that religious moderation is not taught as abstract doctrine but embedded in daily academic practice and institutional culture.

Third, the recommendation for village leaders, cultural organizations, youth and community groups, and *kelompok kerja antaragama* (*Pokja*, interfaith working groups) is to initiate a Community-Based Local Wisdom Revitalization Program. This program aims to revitalize traditional communal practices such as *slametan*, *kenduren*, and *bersih desa* as cultural mechanisms for promoting interfaith harmony. Community stakeholders should strengthen documentation efforts, promote digital literacy campaigns that disseminate cultural values aligned with peaceful coexistence, and support *Pokja* initiatives that preserve and share local wisdom. By empowering community-based actors, this program provides a sustainable foundation for integrating Javanese cultural heritage into contemporary religious moderation efforts.

**Conclusion** This study concludes that the Javanese philosophy of Memayu Hayuning Bawana demonstrates a profound and meaningful alignment with the objectives of religious moderation in Indonesia. By emphasizing harmony, balance, and ethical responsibility, this indigenous philosophy offers core values that closely correspond with the principles of tolerance, balance, dialogue, and justice as advocated in contemporary religious moderation frameworks. The

philosophical and practical dimensions of Memayu Hayuning Bawana provide culturally grounded mechanisms to cultivate peaceful coexistence, mitigate social conflicts, and foster inclusive religiosity within the diverse communities of Central Java. In particular, values such as *katentreman* (tranquillity), *keseimbangan* (balance), *tepa selira* (empathy), and *eling lan waspada* (mindfulness) serve as ethical and behavioral tools that guide individuals in navigating interreligious relations, thereby reducing susceptibility to radicalism and exclusivist ideologies. The study also highlights that the relatively high tolerance indices in several Central Javanese cities, such as Salatiga, Semarang, Magelang, and Surakarta, provide fertile ground for the operationalization of local wisdom-based strategies. These findings suggest that cultural resonance plays a significant role in the acceptance and sustainability of moderation initiatives. By integrating Memayu Hayuning Bawana into educational curricula, community programs, and policy frameworks, local stakeholders—including educators, religious leaders, and policymakers—can enhance the effectiveness of national efforts to counter intolerance and extremism. Programs such as intercultural dialogue forums, local wisdom-based educational modules, and the revitalization of traditional communal rituals (e.g., *slametan*, *kenduren*, and *bersih desa*) are practical applications that operationalize this integration. Furthermore, embedding ethical principles derived from Memayu Hayuning Bawana into daily social practices can strengthen civic culture and promote empathy, social responsibility, and mutual understanding among diverse religious groups.

Despite these contributions, this study acknowledges certain limitations. As a library-based, conceptual-analytical study, it does not provide empirical field validation of how Memayu Hayuning Bawana could be applied in practice to support religious moderation. Future research could explore the practical application of Memayu Hayuning Bawana in promoting religious moderation, starting from small-scale contexts such as classrooms or schools, and extending to broader community or regional levels. Longitudinal or participatory studies could investigate the outcomes of integrating these concepts into real-life settings, including effects on interreligious attitudes, community cohesion, and resilience against radical ideologies over time. Additionally, comparative studies examining other indigenous wisdom traditions across Indonesia, such as *Tri Hita Karana* in Bali or *Siri' na Pacce* in South Sulawesi, would enrich the theoretical discourse on culturally grounded moderation. From a scientific perspective, this research contributes a conceptual framework bridging cultural philosophy and contemporary religious moderation discourse, offering theoretical insights for future empirical studies. From a policy standpoint, the findings highlight the value of culturally informed approaches that resonate with local communities, showing that sustainable strategies to foster tolerance, inclusivity, and social cohesion benefit from integrating indigenous values alongside formal governance measures. Ultimately, Memayu Hayuning Bawana represents both a cultural heritage and a conceptual resource for understanding religious moderation in Indonesia's pluralistic society .

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### **Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologies in the Writing Process**

The authors declare that generative AI tools and AI-assisted technologies were used solely to support the writing process of this manuscript, including drafting, revising, and language polishing. These tools were not used in the collection, processing, or analysis of research data. The authors take full responsibility for the content, interpretations, and conclusions presented in this study.

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