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Harmony in Islamic Worship across Organizational Differences: A Case Study of Nahdlatul Ulama, Persatuan Islam, and Muhammadiyah in Coba Cluster, Indonesia

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Abstract	Article Info
<p>This study aims to analyze the level of consistency in worship harmony among Muslims from Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Persatuan Islam (Persis), and Muhammadiyah residing in the same housing complex. This research was conducted in the Koba Cluster, a residential neighborhood in Purwakarta, using qualitative methods with a case study approach. Using participatory observation and in-depth interviews, this research reveals daily religious practices, values adopted, and challenges faced in maintaining harmony. The results show that despite differences in spiritual understanding and practice, tolerance and mutual respect remain strong between the two groups. However, some challenges need to be overcome, such as differences in the interpretation of religious teachings and external influences. This research makes a significant contribution to understanding religious harmony at the micro level, as well as implications for efforts to foster a harmonious society.</p>	<p>Article History: Submitted / Received: 10-06-2025 First Revised: 07-08-2025 Accepted: 07-12-2025 First Available online: 24-12-2025 Publication Date: 30-12-2025</p> <hr/> <p>Keywords: Nahdlatul Ulama, Persatuan Islam, Muhammadiyah, Harmony, Worship</p>

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Introduction

In daily life, differences in beliefs often serve as potential sources of conflict (Burhanuddin & Ilmi, 2022). However, this study aims to explore how the values of tolerance and mutual respect can serve as social adhesives among members of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Persatuan Islam (Persis), and Muhammadiyah Muslim communities residing in the same housing area, specifically in Cluster Koba, Purwakarta. By examining daily religious practices, social interactions, and the values upheld by these communities, the study highlights that religious harmony is not static but dynamic, evolving. This research aims to analyze how social changes at both local and global levels influence the degree of harmony among Muslims affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Persatuan Islam (Persis), and Muhammadiyah, to contribute to a deeper understanding of interfaith harmony at the local level.

Consequently, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence the long-term sustainability of religious harmony (Daheri et al., 2023). This research also seeks to identify the factors that affect the level of harmony in worship practices among Muslims from NU, Persis, and Muhammadiyah residing in the housing area. These factors may include internal elements, such as religious values, religious leadership, and social interactions among community members, as well as external elements, including government policies, media influence, and socio-political dynamics (Darmi et al., 2024).

Essentially, as religious beings, humans yearn for peace. Every religion teaches the values of tolerance. Some findings suggest that Islam, as a religion, upholds the principles of peace and harmony (Haqqullah & Harisah, 2025). Islam introduces the concept of tolerance towards differences, known as *tasamuh*. The idea of *tasamuh* encompasses values such as compassion (*rahmat*), wisdom (*hikmat*), universal welfare (*maslahat ammat*), and justice (*adl*). Tolerance is examined from theological, sociological, and cultural perspectives in this context (Hasan, 2020). It is hoped that tolerance will enable people to acknowledge diversity, including religious diversity, which is referred to as pluralism (Karim, 2022). Beyond tolerance and pluralism, the concept of interfaith dialogue also plays a role in fostering harmony, as exemplified by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Medina, where he protected all citizens, both Muslims and non-Muslims, from external threats, thus creating the Charter of Medina.

Theoretical review

Structural functionalism, also known as 'structural functionalism', is a result of the powerful influence of general systems theory (Kurniawan, 2025). The functionalist approach, adopted from the natural sciences, particularly biology, emphasizes the study of ways to organize and maintain systems. Structural functionalism, also known as 'systems analysis,' in principle revolves around several key concepts, but the most important are those of function and structure (Mulyana, 2023). Structural functionalism is a broad perspective in sociology and anthropology that attempts to interpret society as a structure with interconnected parts. Functionalism interprets society as a whole in terms of the functions of its constituent elements, especially norms, customs, traditions, and institutions (Putri & Arifinsyah, 2025). In the structural-functional paradigm, all elements that make up society are interconnected, forming a cohesive system. Therefore, if one of the elements does not function, the society will be disrupted. With interdependence, cooperation shows that society is integrated, whole, and long-lasting (Graham, 2009).

The word function is used in various areas of human life, referring to human activity and dynamics in achieving life goals. Viewed from the perspective of life goals, human activities are functions that serve a purpose (Sabli et al., 2025). Qualitatively, function is seen in terms of the usefulness and benefits of a particular person, group, organization, or association (Siregar & Suhendra, 2025). Function also refers to a process that is currently or will be ongoing, namely referring to a specific object that is an element or part of the process, hence the terms "still functioning" or "not functioning." Function depends on its predicate, for example, the function of a car, the function of a house, the function of a body organ, and so on. Quantitatively, a function can produce a certain amount, according to a predetermined target, projection, or program (Nasir & Rijal, 2021).

The Greek term "Harmonia," meaning "suitably and harmoniously tied," is the origin of the word "harmonization." The philosophical meaning of harmonization is "cooperation between various factors in such a way that these factors produce a noble unity." Etymologically, the word "harmonization" describes a procedure that begins with an effort to create or realize a harmonious system (Mustolehudin et al., 2024). Harmony can also refer to a pleasant balance of elements. Harmonization in the psychological sense refers to the psychological understanding of factors in a person's thoughts, feelings, and behavior becoming balanced and in harmony, thereby preventing undue stress (Horton, 2006).

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), harmonization refers to an effort to achieve harmony. Harmony here means that humans, as social beings, are truly required to live in peace and harmony, minimizing conflict and division in various aspects. In addition, harmonization is a social order that can be interpreted as a social system, characterized by relationship patterns and habits that facilitate smooth functioning to achieve societal goals (Afwadzi et al., 2024).

Harmonization originates from the root word "harmony," which refers to a process that begins with an attempt to create or actualize a harmonious system. Meanwhile, the word "harmony" originates from the Greek "harmonia," meaning "harmoniously" and "woven together" (Daheri et al., 2023). In philosophy, it is described as the combination of several components in such a way that these factors produce a noble unity (Kurniawan et al., 2025).

Harmony is achieved through harmonization. In a harmonious state, everything runs dynamically, enabling the achievement of societal goals. One of the pillars of realizing the nation's and state's ideals is religious harmony (Zaluchu, 2025). Religious groups must strive for harmonization so they can unite despite differing opinions and foster a sense of brotherhood and kinship. Harmonization aims to foster compassion between individuals rather than to reconcile the religious views of the community (Nata, 2021).

The harmony in question is built by its constituents. Religious teachings can be put into practice by adopting certain behaviors or actions, which can lead to social harmony and represent a dynamic and creative community (Usman, 2023). Rukun, meaning "calm and serene," is another term for harmony. In efforts to foster cooperation between religious communities, several social activities have emerged and gained influence. To achieve ideal conditions in spiritual life, three essential elements are necessary: mutual respect (tolerance), cooperation (reciprocity), and mutual recognition and understanding of diversity, including events organized by governments, municipalities, and other organizations.

Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach. In general, qualitative research is used to explore various aspects of community life, history, behavior, organizational functionality, social activities, and other related topics. According to Bogdan and Taylor, qualitative methodology is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from observed individuals

and behaviors. The data analysis techniques employed in this study follow Creswell's guidelines, which include:

Data Reduction: In this stage, the researcher selects data that are relevant to the topic and discards unnecessary information.

Data Presentation: The data are organized and structured into patterns and relationships, making them easier to understand. Miles and Huberman emphasize that narrative texts are often used to present data in qualitative research, which is the method employed in this study.

Data Verification or Conclusion Drawing: At this stage, the researcher draws conclusions related to the forms and functions of harsh language. Additionally, the researcher reviews the data to ensure its accuracy.

Results

The research results present the primary findings of the study. If the research results are presented in tables or figures, then only a short sentence is needed to support the table or figure presented. Tables and figures are included in the body of the manuscript. Table and figure titles are numbered and written in Candana font 9, spaced 1. Using a pixel size of 300 is better for optimal image sharpness and quality.

The term "tolerance" originates from the English word tolerance or the Latin *tolerantia*. In Arabic, the term refers to *tasamuh* or *tasahul*, meaning to tolerate, overlook, excuse, be indulgent, forbearing, lenient, tolerant, or merciful. The word *tasamuh* implies forbearance, and *tasahul* is interpreted as indulgence, tolerance, leniency, clemency, mercy, and kindness. Meanwhile, in the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian Dictionary), "*kerukunan*" (harmony) is defined as "living together in society with a unity of heart and agreement to avoid conflict and disputes." Harmony is imbued with connotations of goodness and peace, essentially symbolizing coexistence in unity without discord.

In Arabic, according to *Kamus al-Munawir*, *tasamuh* refers to an attitude of openness or tolerance. It is considered a core teaching in Islam, parallel to other fundamental doctrines such as compassion (*rahmah*), wisdom (*hikmah*), universal welfare (*maslahah' ammah*), and justice (*'adl*) (Ghazali, 2005). *Tasamuh* is manifested in an attitude of accepting diverse perspectives, even if they differ from one's own. However, Milad Hanna, a Coptic Christian thinker, critiques the translation of "tolerance" as *tasamuh*, suggesting that it implies condescension. Instead, he prefers

the term *qabulul akhar*, which signifies actively welcoming and embracing others rather than merely tolerating them (Subchi, 2024). The *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* defines tolerance as the quality or attitude of being tolerant—respecting and allowing differing beliefs, opinions, practices, or behaviors—for instance, religious, ideological, or racial tolerance (Misrawi, 2009).

Mohammad Arkoun notes that modern tolerance in Islam emerged only in the 19th century, borrowing from Milton Rokeach and Jean Pierre Deconche's theory of mental rigidity. This theory posits that exclusivism and fanaticism stem from dogmatic religious doctrines, resulting in an inability to accept differing perspectives—Arkoun advocates for de-ideologizing religion to distinguish between authentic faith and radicalized interpretations. Authentic religion promotes openness and tolerance, while radicalized religion is often manipulative, reductive, and subjective (Masduqi, 2011).

Mohammad Abid al-Jabiri argued that the roots of Islamic tolerance during the classical period can be traced to the thoughts of the Murji'ah, Qadariyah, and the philosophy of Ibn Rushd. The ideas of Murji'ah and Qadariyah are reflected in their definition of faith during the conflict between the groups of Ali and Muawiyah. According to al-Jabiri, their definition of faith represents a neutral stance, distinguishing between faith and deeds, and refraining from declaring anyone involved in the conflict as infidels. This contrasts with the Khawarij sect, which stigmatized those engaged in and supportive of the conflict as infidels (Masduqi, 2011).

According to the Moderate Muslim Society (MMS), tolerance is not a single, static attitude, but rather a gradual and multidimensional process that develops through several interconnected levels. Each level reflects the depth of social awareness, interaction, and ethical commitment among diverse groups within society.

The first level, *peaceful coexistence and equality of rights among citizens* (co-existence), represents the most basic form of tolerance. At this stage, individuals or groups choose to coexist without open conflict. Differences are acknowledged, and fundamental civil rights are respected. However, tolerance at this level remains passive mainly. There is minimal interaction, dialogue, or mutual recognition between groups. While social stability is maintained, deeper social cohesion has yet to be achieved.

The second level, *openness to viewing other groups as equal citizens and creatures of God* (awareness), reflects a growing moral and civic consciousness. At this stage, tolerance is grounded in an understanding of shared humanity and the necessity of equality before the law. Individuals begin to recognize that social justice and democratic life can only flourish when all citizens are treated fairly, regardless of religious, ethnic, or cultural differences. This awareness moves tolerance beyond mere coexistence toward ethical responsibility.

The third level, *recognition and engagement through constructive dialogue* (mutual learning), marks a significant advancement in the development of tolerance. Recognition implies not only acknowledging the existence of others but also actively engaging with them through open and respectful dialogue. Through communication and interaction, individuals gain a more comprehensive understanding of differing beliefs, traditions, and worldviews. At this stage, tolerance becomes an active process of learning, where misunderstandings can be addressed, and trust gradually built.

The fourth level, *understanding of other groups*, emphasizes the importance of empathy and perspective-taking. Understanding goes beyond dialogue; it involves internalizing the values, experiences, and social realities of others. Without such knowledge, peaceful and harmonious coexistence remains fragile. This level highlights that sustainable tolerance requires emotional and intellectual engagement, enabling individuals to respond to differences with wisdom rather than prejudice.

The fifth level, *respect and acknowledgment of other groups' existence*, serves as a critical benchmark of mature tolerance. Respect at this stage is demonstrated through attitudes and behaviors that honor the dignity, beliefs, and rights of others in everyday social life. It reflects an advanced awareness of the need for balance and harmony in a pluralistic society, where diversity is not merely tolerated but ethically upheld.

The highest level, *which is the appreciation of similarities and differences and the celebration of diversity* (in value and celebration), represents the culmination of tolerance. At this stage, diversity is no longer perceived as a challenge or threat, but as a valuable social asset. Differences are appreciated alongside shared values, and diversity becomes a source of collective strength for building a just, peaceful, and civilized society. As noted by Misrawi (2009), recognizing both differences and

similarities enables societies to transform pluralism into social capital rather than conflict.

Overall, this framework illustrates that tolerance develops progressively, from passive coexistence to active appreciation and celebration of diversity. It underscores the idea that true tolerance is not merely the absence of conflict, but the presence of understanding, respect, and shared commitment to humanity.

Discussion

As a diverse and plural nation, Indonesia must build a path of reconciliation between democracy and moderation, as well as between democracy and tolerance, to combat dictatorship and extremism. Democracy and moderation, or democracy and tolerance, are like two sides of the same coin; if one is lost, the strength of the other disappears as well. Democracy without tolerance leads to authoritarian political systems, while tolerance without democracy results in pseudo-tolerance, a fragile form of tolerance prone to triggering communal conflicts.

The discussion extends into the philosophical roots of Islamic tolerance, exploring ideas from groups such as the Murji'ah, Qadariyah, and the philosophy of Ibn Rushd. These ideas emphasize neutrality, distinguishing between faith and deeds, and avoiding labeling others as infidels, contrasting with the Khawarij's exclusionary perspective.

To foster tolerance, at least two types of social capital are required. First, tolerance necessitates social interaction through intensive conversations and relationships. Minority groups should be treated fairly and equally in all realms, including economics, politics, society, and religion. Second, another essential factor for creating tolerance is building mutual trust among various groups and communities. This involves fostering a sense of unity grounded in national principles.

Persatuan Islam (Persis), as an Islamic organization, has distinctive characteristics compared to other Islamic organizations, such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) or Muhammadiyah. Persis, as a reformist organization, is known for its slogan *ar-ruju' ila Al-Qur'an wal Hadith* (returning to the Qur'an and Hadith). This movement to return to the Qur'an and Hadith has also opened the door widely for *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) while rejecting *taqlid* (blind imitation) by referring directly to the primary sources of Islam: the Qur'an and Hadith (Kurnia, 2017).

The Persis slogan was influenced by the thoughts of Muhammad Abduh, who initiated a cultural and intellectual confrontational movement during a period of

Islamic decline. Abduh attributed this decline to traditional ways of thinking and adherence to the ways of earlier generations (taqlid). Additionally, Persis was influenced by modernist Muslim thinkers such as Ibn Taymiyyah (1263–1328), his student Ibn Qayyim (1292–1350), and Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703–1792).

The ideas developed by these figures emphasized that Islam is compatible with the advancement of knowledge and encourages humanity to use reason in their thinking. These ideas advocated for applying rational thought within society while taking the Qur'an as the ultimate reference. Consequently, traditional ways of thinking were replaced with a sensible and puritanical approach based on returning to the Qur'an and Hadith.

Since its establishment in 1923, Persatuan Islam has consistently advocated for a return to the Qur'an and Hadith, particularly in matters of ushul (creed) and ibadah (worship) (Dudung, 2020). In its early years, Persatuan Islam was heavily influenced by the thoughts of A. Hassan, who became known as the "Teacher of Persatuan Islam" due to the profound impact of his ideas within the organization (Juandi, 2016).

A. Hassan, as the principal mentor of Persatuan Islam, trained numerous successors to continue the movement's mission, including KH. E. Abdurahman, KH. Isa Ashary, KH. Abdul Qadir Hasan, and others. This way of thinking also shaped the interpretation of Qur'anic verses that emphasize moderation or wasathiyah (balance). Persatuan Islam adopted a distinct perspective compared to groups like NU and Muhammadiyah. Therefore, this article aims to examine how Persatuan Islam implements religious moderation.

Through the practice of tolerance, religious harmony can gradually be achieved. However, harmony is not the ultimate goal; it is merely a necessary means, a *conditio sine qua non*, to achieve a broader objective: a secure and peaceful environment. Such a situation is essential for all members of society to create both spiritual and material values necessary for achieving a higher standard of living. The awareness of the importance of living harmoniously and as brothers among followers of different religions is an ideal and a fundamental teaching upheld by every religion.

In Indonesia, as a pluralistic and diverse nation, reconciliation between democracy and moderation or tolerance is vital. Tolerance, seen as the foundation of harmonious coexistence, is categorized into three levels by the Moderate Muslim Society (MMS): peaceful coexistence (co-existence), openness and mutual understanding (awareness), and active engagement (mutual learning).

Tolerance, although a positive religious attitude, is often passive, characterized by allowing differences without actively engaging in understanding or

cooperation. Nevertheless, it remains essential for societal harmony. A lack of tolerance can lead to tensions, conflicts, and communal strife. Indonesia is positioned within "relative tolerance," supported by public policies that promote harmony and coexistence. However, with efforts to build mutual trust and inclusive dialogue, Indonesia has the potential to evolve into an "active tolerance" society.

Conflicts are not primarily caused by religion, as disputes can occur even within the same religious community. Religion serves only as a secondary or even tertiary factor that may be invoked to intensify a conflict. Therefore, it is essential to analyze the actual factors that ignite conflicts in Indonesia in depth. Upon closer examination, two primary factors contribute to social conflict: economic factors and political factors.

Economic factors drive people to act in pursuit of resources to secure their livelihoods. As the population increases while supplies of basic needs become scarcer and more limited, social conflicts become unavoidable. Similarly, political factors play a role as individuals vie for public space and authority. Religion, by contrast, is a secondary factor that can be drawn into play as a trigger for social conflict (Said, 2012).

Social conflicts can be categorized into two types: horizontal conflicts (e.g., between religions or ethnic groups) and vertical conflicts (e.g., between the exploiters and the exploited). In Islam, horizontal conflicts are strongly discouraged, as they yield no benefits, whether in the short term or the long term, and are aimed merely at destroying opponents. However, vertical conflicts can bring benefits, as their goal is not to destroy opponents or eliminate subordinates (workers) or superiors (employers) but to achieve structural changes. Vertical conflicts must be managed with civility to prevent destructive outcomes.

When disputes arise in resolving such conflicts, consultation (*shura*) becomes essential. The principle of *shura* involves four key considerations: *Shura* cannot proceed without recognition of the principle of equality. There must be an acknowledgment of the right to express opinions. The right to disagree must be recognized. There must be a commitment to honor agreements and adhere firmly to them (*aufu bil' ahdi*) (Said, 2012). Therefore, consultation is vital for resolving social conflicts within society.

According to Komaruddin Hidayat, religious attitudes can be categorized into five typologies: exclusivism, inclusivism, pluralism, eclecticism, and universalism. Exclusivism refers to a spiritual attitude that perceives one's own faith as the only

true religion, viewing others as misguided. Inclusivism holds that while other religions may contain elements of truth, they are not as complete or perfect as one's own religion. Pluralism recognizes theological pluralism as an inevitable reality, where all faiths stand on equal footing, rendering missionary and proselytizing efforts irrelevant. Eclecticism seeks to select and combine elements of various religious teachings that are deemed suitable, resulting in a mosaic-like religious format. Universalism posits that all religions are fundamentally the same, with their differences arising from historical and cultural factors. Thus, the universalist typology is highly valuable and can serve as an effective tool for mitigating social conflicts.

The discussion concludes with the acknowledgment that religious tolerance is a prerequisite for national unity and a foundation for spiritual and material growth. The teachings of compassion and peace in Islam and other religions reinforce this ideal, aiming for a society based on justice, welfare, and equality.

The controversy between the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) and defenders of pluralism gradually found common ground over time, following frequent dialogues. MUI condemns pluralism as forbidden because, in their view, pluralism refers to the belief that all religious faiths or religions are equally valid. However, MUI proposes replacing the term "pluralism" with "plurality," which they define as living together in harmony (Aryani et al., 2024).

Table 1. Differences in Views and Manifestations of Religious Tolerance

No	Affiliated Figure	Differences in Religious Views/Practices	Forms of Tolerance
1	Muhammadiyah Figure	1) Does not perform Qunut in Subuh prayer 2) Different determination of the beginning of Ramadan and Eid	1) Performs Qunut when praying behind an NU imam 2) Respects Muslims who are still fasting despite differing dates
2	Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Figure	1) Performs Yasinan 2) Performs Tahlilan 3) Performs Qunut Subuh	1) Does not promote Yasinan to organizations that do not practice it 2) Respects an imam who does not perform Qunut Subuh
3	Persatuan Islam Figure	1) Does not perform Qunut in Subuh prayer 2) Performs Tarawih with 11 rak'ahs 3) Does not perform Yasinan or Tahlilan	1) Performs Qunut when praying behind an NU imam 2) Participates in Tarawih led by an NU imam who performs 23 rak'ahs 3) Respects communities that perform Yasinan and Tahlilan

Conclusion

This study reveals that the level of harmony in worship among NU, Persis, and Muhammadiyah Muslims in the Koba Cluster Housing, Purwakarta, is generally satisfactory. Although there are differences in religious understanding and practices, tolerance and mutual respect remain strong between the two groups. This is reflected in positive social interactions, joint religious activities, and the shared values of tolerance held by both groups. The factors contributing to this harmony include moderate religious leadership, joint religious activities, and the role of community leaders in facilitating social interactions. Additionally, spiritual values that teach tolerance and mutual respect provide a strong foundation for fostering harmony.

Although the level of harmony is pretty good, this study also identifies several challenges that need to be addressed, such as differences in religious interpretations and external influences from outside the housing area. To enhance harmony, more intensive efforts are needed to strengthen interfaith dialogue and improve religious literacy within the community. The study concludes that the harmony in worship among NU, Persis, and Muhammadiyah Muslims in Koba Cluster Housing, Purwakarta, is the result of a complex and dynamic process. Internal factors, such as religious values, leadership, and social interactions, along with external factors like government policies and media influence, also play a role in shaping the level of harmony. To maintain and improve harmony, collective efforts from all elements of society, including the government, religious leaders, and the community itself, are necessary.

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