IBNU RUSHD'S RATIONALITY AND ITS RELEVANCE FOR MALAY MUSLIM IDENTITY IN RIAU

Alpin Harianto[1], Dian Nur Anna[2]

1   Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta ; 25205031019@student.uin-suka.ac.id
2   Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta; dian.anna@uin-suka.ac.id

Abstract:

This study is motivated by the importance of examining the relevance of the Muslim philosopher Ibn Rushd's thought in shaping the Islamic Malay identity in Riau, which is currently facing the challenges of globalization, modernization, and shifting cultural values. The main problem addressed in this research is how Ibn Rushd's concept of rationality is understood and integrated into the formation of religious and cultural character within the Islamic Malay community in Riau. This research employs a library research method by analyzing Ibn Rushd's works alongside scholarly literature related to the Islamic Malay identity. The findings reveal that Ibn Rushd's idea of harmonizing reason and revelation aligns with the principle of "adat bersendikan syarak, syarak bersendikan Kitabullah" in the Riau Malay tradition. The rationality promoted by Ibn Rushd strengthens the intellectual framework of the Islamic Malay community, fostering a more moderate, critical, and responsive attitude toward contemporary challenges. In conclusion, Ibn Rushd's thought significantly contributes to constructing an Islamic Malay identity rooted in Islamic values while remaining open to knowledge and modern intellectual developments.

Keyword *: Ibn Rushd, Rationality, Riau Malay Identity*
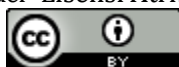
1. INTRODUCTION

The existence of an ethnic and cultural identity that integrates religious elements with local traditions particularly among the Malay communities in the Riau region holds a significant role in the contemporary social development of Indonesia. The Riau Malay community has long been understood as a group that upholds the Malay language, practices Malay customs, and adheres to Islamic teachings as fundamental components in shaping their collective identity.[1] In the context of contemporary globalization and cultural diversity, the interplay between local identity and the rapidly evolving socio-cultural landscape presents its own set of challenges. Several studies affirm that Malay identity in Riau is not solely grounded in traditional cultural heritage, but is also founded upon Islamic values that serve as essential components in the construction of that identity.[2]

Meanwhile, within the classical Islamic intellectual tradition, figures such as Ibn Rushd (Averroes) contributed a distinctly rational mode of thought. He emphasized the harmony between reason and revelation, advanced an interpretive (ta'wil) approach to scriptural texts, and rejected deterministic views.[3] According to Ibn Rushd's perspective, reason and revelation are not two opposing sources of truth, but complementary instruments. Reason functions to probe the deeper meaning of revelation through the process of *ta'wil*, especially when a literal reading appears to diverge from rational considerations. Contemporary studies also indicate that Ibn Rushd's formulation of *ta'wil* serves as a crucial mechanism for integrating the two, as he regards both reason and revelation as epistemological pathways oriented toward the attainment of truth.[4]These ideas hold significance in the process of identity formation, as rationality can function as a dialectical framework for both preserving and renewing religious and cultural identity in the face of modernity. Consequently, examining how Ibn Rushd's rational thought is applied or regarded as relevant to the construction of Malay-Islamic identity in Riau becomes an important endeavor, both theoretically and practically. Such an inquiry helps to understand how local communities are able to formulate, strengthen, and revitalize their identity amid ongoing social change.

A number of previous studies have examined rationalism within the corpus of classical Islamic thought through the ideas of Ibn Rushd. For instance, research conducted by Kholis (2017) reveals that the rationalist orientation of Ibn Rushd is characterized by his rejection

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[1] Tafsiruddin Muhammad Hafiz, "Masyarakat Melayu Riau Berbudaya" 6, No. 2 (2022): 89–96.

[2] Hasse Jubba, Muh Rafi, And Zuly Qodir, "Politik Identitas Melayu Islam Sebagai Upaya Mewujudkan Budaya Berintegritas," Politicon : Jurnal Ilmu Politik 3, No. 1 (2021): 88–110, Https://Doi.Org/10.15575/Politicon.V3i1.11481.

[3] Nur Kholis, "Rasionalisme Islam Klasik Dalam Pemikiran Ibnu Rusyd," International Journal Ihya' 'Ulum Al-Din 19, No. 1 (2017): 213–244, Https://Doi.Org/10.21580/Ihya.18.1.1740.

[4] Muslikhul Ibad And Ahmad Dwi Nur Khalim, "Epistemologi Ibnu Rusyd (Telaah Relasi Wahyu Dan Rasio)," An-Nur: Jurnal Studi Islam 14, No. 1 (2022): 80–92, Https://Doi.Org/Https://Jurnalannur.Ac.Id/Index.Php/An-Nur.

of fatalistic attitudes, his efforts to reconcile revelation with reason, his emphasis on intellectual activity or interpretive reasoning (ta'wil), and his conviction in the continuity of the universal intellect.[5] A more recent study by Wahyudi (2023) examines the relationship between reason and revelation in the thought of Ibn Rushd and Ibn Taymiyyah, demonstrating that Ibn Rushd positions reason as an essential instrument for understanding revelation.[6] On the side of Malay-Islamic identity in Riau, several studies have also been conducted. For example, Jubba et al. (2021) examine the construction of Malay-Islamic identity in Riau through collaboration between traditional institutions and the government, as well as through the accentuation of Islamic–Malay cultural symbols.[7] Another study, the article *'Media Identitas Melayu Pascareformasi di Indonesia'* (2019), highlights how material symbols and the spiritual values of Malay identity emerge in efforts to reinforce Malayness in the post-reform era.[8]

Nevertheless, existing studies have rarely examined in a specific manner the use of Ibn Rushd's rationality as a direct theoretical framework for strengthening Malay-Islamic identity in Riau. In other words, although research on rationalism in Islamic thought and studies on Malay-Islamic identity already exist, efforts to integrate the two namely, to employ classical rationalist thought as a foundation for developing a contemporary Malay-Islamic identity in Riau remain limited. Therefore, this article seeks to fill this gap by linking Ibn Rushd's thought with the practical dynamics and the construction of Malay-Islamic identity in Riau.

The novelty of this study lies in its attempt to integrate Ibn Rushd's concept of rationality into the analysis of Malay-Islamic identity in Riau an approach that has rarely been applied in studies related to Malay identity in the region. This article does not merely outline the cultural elements or values that shape Malay-Islamic identity, but seeks to analyze how Ibn Rushd's rationality paradigm, which emphasizes the relationship between reason and revelation, can serve as a conceptual instrument for interpreting and mapping the formation of Malay-Islamic identity in Riau, both in its historical development and its contemporary manifestations. Thus, this study offers a contribution in the form of a philosophical framework that can be applied practically to understanding the dynamics of local religious identity in Riau.

The central issue in this study concerns how Ibn Rushd's concept of rationality which emphasizes the harmony between reason and revelation within the framework of Islamic

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[5] Nur Kholis, "Rasionalisme Islam Klasik Dalam Pemikiran Ibnu Rusyd."

[6] Kaipal Wahyudi, "Filsafat Ibnu Rusyd Hubungan Akal Dengan Wahyu," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic and Social Science* 1, no. 2 (2023): 5–24, http://repo.iain-tulungagung.ac.id/5510/5/BAB 2.pdf.

[7] Jubba, Rafi, and Qodir, "Politik Identitas Melayu Islam Sebagai Upaya Mewujudkan Budaya Berintegritas."

[8] Alfarabi et al., "Media Identitas Melayu Pascareformasi Di Indonesia," *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding* 6, no. 1 (2019): 21–31, https://ijmmu.com/index.php/ijmmu/article/view/587.

thought can be implemented in the process of forming Malay-Islamic identity in Riau, particularly in the face of modernity, cultural globalization, and the tensions between local Islamic traditions and contemporary demands for rationality. Although Malay-Islamic identity in the region possesses strong historical and cultural foundations, a conceptual question remains as to the extent to which the rational approach offered by Ibn Rushd can strengthen, clarify, and provide critical thinking tools for the Malay community to both preserve and advance their identity adaptively. Therefore, this research seeks to examine how these rational values are manifested in the social reality of the Riau Malay community, what their relevance is in responding to contemporary social change, and how their implications contribute to the development of local religious and cultural identity.

This study employs a qualitative method using a library research approach and document analysis. The data sources consist of scholarly articles, relevant books, regional policy archives particularly those related to Riau as well as various primary and secondary literature that support the discussion. The analytical process is carried out through a reflective-critical approach, namely examining Ibn Rushd's concept of rationality and subsequently linking it to the construction of Malay-Islamic identity in Riau through theoretical interpretation and its social context. With these characteristics, this research is exploratory and interpretative in nature, without involving field data collection procedures or quantitative methods.

2. Results And Discussion

2.1. Ibn Rushd's Rationality as the Epistemological Foundation of Islam

Ibn Rushd's ideas affirm that reason and revelation should not be positioned in opposition to one another. Reason functions as a legitimate instrument for understanding and interpreting revealed teachings, rather than as their rival or replacement. Within this framework, Ibn Rushd maintains that when religious texts appear to conflict with empirical reality, the method of interpretive reasoning (ta'wil) becomes an appropriate and rational approach to ensuring harmony between religious injunctions and human rationality.[9] This view reflects his effort to reject fatalistic modes of thought and attitudes that are closed to intellectual discourse.

From an epistemological perspective, the concept of rationality in Ibn Rushd's thought serves as a foundation for the development of Islamic scholarship that accommodates philosophy and scientific inquiry within the framework of faith. According to him, because

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[9] Chryssi Sidiropoulou, "Qur'anic Interpretation and the Problem of Literalism: Ibn Rushd and the Enlightenment Project in the Islamic World," *Religions* 6, no. 3 (2015): 1082–1106, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel6031082.

reason is a divine endowment, humans are obliged to employ it in examining God's creation and revelation. Thus, religion does not end with mere dogmatic acceptance; rather, it grows through processes of critical, reflective, and contextually responsive understanding in accordance with the dynamics of the times.[10] Thus, rationality is not merely a methodological aspect but also an ethical–intellectual dimension, suggesting that a sound religious life must involve intellectual reflection rather than the uncritical repetition of tradition.

Amid the development of modernity and ongoing socio-cultural change, Ibn Rushd's thought becomes even more evidently significant. His ideas which emphasize intellectual courage, openness to scientific advancement, and the integration of Islamic tradition with rational inquiry offer a relevant framework for Muslims in responding to globalization, cultural diversity, and the continual transformation of societal values.[11] Thus, Ibn Rushd's rational thought can be understood as an epistemological foundation for shaping religious and cultural identities capable of adapting to the dynamics of the times. This rationality affirms the importance of employing reason in the process of understanding religion, without neglecting fidelity to the principles of revelation as the primary source of values.

Rationality in Ibn Rushd's thought positions the human intellect as the primary instrument for comprehending revelation in a profound manner, so that religious practice does not remain at the level of literal reading but develops toward a more substantive and contextually relevant understanding. For Ibn Rushd, reason is a divine endowment that must be utilized to critically interpret reality, enabling humans to fulfill their responsibilities as God's vicegerents in the best possible way. This perspective not only affirms the harmony between the principles of the Shari'ah and human reason, but also provides a philosophical foundation for the emergence of a Muslim society characterized by moderation, progressiveness, and openness to social change and scientific advancement.[12]

Ibn Rushd's rational thought also assigns an important position to scientific knowledge and scholarly research in the development of civilization. He rejects religious attitudes that constrain the progress of knowledge and affirms that the effort to understand the laws of nature constitutes a form of intellectual devotion to God. This perspective suggests that Islam

[10] Mohammad Ali Khattab, "Reason and Narration with Ibn Rushd (Averroes)," Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal 6, no. 10 (2019): 274–296, https://doi.org/10.14738/assrj.610.7101.

[11] Abdulrashid Musa and Ibrahim Labbon, "Reflection on the Islamic Philosophical Contributions of Ibn Rushd: An Educational Overview," Fajr Islamic Journal IV, no. June (2019),https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Abdulrashid-Musa-2/publication/361282649_Reflection_on_the_Islamic_Philosophical_Contributions_of_Ibn_Rushd_An_Educational_Overview/links/62a8a6986886635d5cd91b0e/Reflection-on-the-Islamic-Philosophical-Contributions-o.

[12] Illa Fadhliya Lalahwa, Agus Gunawan, and Muhajir Muhajir, "The Relationship between Religion and Reason in the Context of Islamic Education Philosophy from the Perspective of Ibn Rushd and Ibn Taimiyah," Al-Jadwa: Jurnal Studi Islam 3, no. 2 (2024): 111–119, https://doi.org/10.38073/aljadwa.v3i2.1432.

possesses a progressive character, encouraging its adherents to continually expand knowledge for the common good. This principle becomes increasingly relevant in the context of contemporary Islamic education, which demands harmony between religious disciplines and rational sciences in order to cultivate Muslims who are moderate, scientifically minded, and capable of adapting to global dynamics.[13]

In addition, Ibn Rushd offers sharp criticism of theological modes of thinking that encourage passive resignation and do not promote productivity, as such attitudes, in his view, are inconsistent with sound reason and empirical reality. For him, the use of intellect necessitates the application of analytical–critical methods, the rational evaluation of arguments, and the willingness to reinterpret religious texts when social realities call for renewed readings. This intellectual framework plays an important role in curbing tendencies toward exclusivist and rigid religious attitudes, while simultaneously strengthening the formation of Muslim communities that uphold the ethics of dialogue and tolerance. Thus, the rationality proposed by Ibn Rushd can serve as a foundation for developing an Islamic civilization that is responsive, just, and aligned with the principles of social harmony and the advancement of knowledge.[14]

A study of Ibn Rushd's thought demonstrates that rationality, for him, functions not merely as an analytical technique, but as an epistemic foundation that unifies the roles of revelation and reason in the process of understanding religion. Within this framework, it becomes evident that Ibn Rushd sought to critique religious tendencies that separate faith from reflective intellectual engagement. His use of *ta'wil* as a method for reinterpreting scriptural texts when they intersect with empirical realities reflects a flexible religious orientation capable of adapting to social developments. His emphasis on reason as a divine gift further affirms that a rational approach does not fall outside the domain of faith; instead, it serves as a means to deepen and contextualize religious understanding.

A deeper analysis reveals that the edifice of rationality proposed by Ibn Rushd occupies a strategic position for the advancement of contemporary Islamic civilization. His critique of fatalistic tendencies and passive forms of religiosity underscores that religious maturity requires the engagement of reason in interpreting social dynamics, scientific developments, and historical change. Ibn Rushd's thought not only encourages the formation of a moderate and open Muslim community but also furnishes a philosophical foundation for the revitalization of the Islamic intellectual tradition. In a modern landscape characterized by globalization, cultural pluralism, and shifting values, the rationality he advocates offers a

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[13] Lalahwa, Gunawan, and Muhajir.

[14] Wahyudi, "Filsafat Ibnu Rusyd Hubungan Akal Dengan Wahyu."

balanced framework between commitment to the sharia and openness to the progress of knowledge.

Thus, an examination of Ibn Rushd's ideas demonstrates that rationality plays a crucial role in shaping a form of religiosity that is progressive, dialogical, and grounded in the advancement of knowledge. The rational approach he constructs not only mitigates tendencies toward extremism rooted in purely textual interpretations, but also opens space for more creative and socially responsive modes of interpretation. His intellectual framework provides a significant contribution to the development of an Islamic epistemology capable of addressing the challenges of modernity while remaining firmly anchored in the foundational principles of revelation.

2.2. The Islamic Malay Identity of Riau in Religious and Cultural Perspectives

Historically and culturally, the Malay community in Riau Province is recognized as having an identity shaped by three fundamental pillars: the use of the Malay language, the practice of Malay customs and traditions, and the adherence to Islamic teachings. This identity does not merely function as an ethnic marker; rather, it reflects a socio-cultural framework that harmoniously integrates local traditions with Islamic values. As noted by Madjid (2021), since the 13th century Islam and Malay culture in Riau have undergone a reciprocal process of influence, ultimately producing a distinctive communal character in which customary practices operate in alignment with the principles of the sharia.[15]

In relation to the efforts to preserve and further develop Malay culture as a shared (collective) identity of the Riau community, the regional government issued a regulation Regional Regulation No. 1 of 2012 concerning the Riau Malay Customary Institution (LAM Riau), Chapter V, Article 6 which outlines the objectives of the institution. The customary body is mandated to: (1) explore, nurture, preserve, maintain, and develop customary values and socio-cultural values as a foundation for strengthening and consolidating the identity of the Malay community; (2) protect and defend the traditional and constitutional rights of indigenous communities, along with their socio-cultural values, for the purpose of enhancing the material and spiritual well-being of the Malay people of Riau; and (3) realize an advanced, just, and prosperous indigenous society grounded in the principles of a civil society. One of the strategies undertaken involves collaborative initiatives aimed at reinforcing Malay culture, not only in terms of its soft cultural expressions but also in its hard cultural dimensions. The illustration in Figure 2 demonstrates the strong commitment of all

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[15] Abd Madjid, Santoso Santoso, and M. Ridwan, "Pengalaman Beragama; Keharmonisan Dan Minoritas Dalam Masyarakat Suku Muslim Akit Siak Riau-Indonesia," Al-Ulum 21, no. 1 (2021): 222–243, https://doi.org/10.30603/au.v21i1.1924.

stakeholders in building a Malay culture in Riau that is grounded in integrity. These various forms of cooperation among multiple actors have resulted in policy formulations, including the Riau 2025 Vision and Mission, which states: "The realization of Riau Province as the Center of Malay Economy and Culture within a religious and materially as well as spiritually prosperous society in Southeast Asia by the year 2025".[16]

A number of studies indicate that the relationship between Islam and Malayness is so deeply interwoven that the two are often perceived as virtually inseparable. Within the social reality of Riau's communities, Islamic teachings function as the primary reference point for evaluating behavior, formulating norms, and interpreting cultural practices. This linkage positions Islam as a moral and ethical benchmark for the Malay community, generating a collective sense of pride in Islamic identity as an inherent component of Malayness. Indeed, the degree to which an individual is regarded as "Malay" is frequently measured by their adherence to Islam; those who leave the religion are often perceived as simultaneously distancing themselves from their Malay identity. Conversely, when someone embraces Islam, society generally considers that person to have entered the sphere of Malay identity.[17]

In addition, the study conducted by Jubba and colleagues (2021) reveals that the formation of Malay-Islamic identity in Riau unfolds through three primary mechanisms. First is the process of cultural legitimization carried out through customary institutions such as the Riau Malay Customary Institution (LAM) in collaboration with regional governmental authorities. Second is the rejection of various stereotypes or negative portrayals associated with Malay culture. Third is the strengthening of identity through active initiatives that position Islam as a central component in the construction of Malay identity.[18] In this framework, Malay identity cannot be regarded as a static heritage; rather, it constitutes an evolving construct shaped continuously through the dynamics of social, political, and cultural interactions.

In line with the advancement of modernity, the currents of globalization, urbanization, and the expanding influence of mass media, the Malay Islamic identity in Riau is confronted with shifting cultural values and symbols. Research findings in Pekanbaru indicate that post-Reformasi identity is manifested in two primary dimensions: first, the material dimension, evident in cultural symbols such as clothing and architecture; and second, the spiritual

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[16] Hasse Jubba, Muhammad Rafi, and Zuly Qodir, "Penonjolan Identitas Melayu Islam Oleh Pemerintah Dan Masyarakat Riau," Sospol: Jurnal Sosial Politik 7, no. 1 (2021): 89–98, https://doi.org/10.22219/sospol.v7i1.12822.

[17] Hasse Jubba, Muhammad Rafi, and Zuly Qodir, "Penonjolan Identitas Melayu Islam Oleh Pemerintah Dan Masyarakat Riau."

[18] Jubba, Rafi, and Qodir, "Politik Identitas Melayu Islam Sebagai Upaya Mewujudkan Budaya Berintegritas."

dimension, reflected in the Islamic values embedded in both the objects and everyday practices of Malay society.[19] These challenges necessitate a strategic reflection to ensure that the identity does not undergo erosion and remains relevant in the modern era.

At present, the Malay community in Riau faces a range of challenges arising from economic transformation and demographic dynamics that increasingly influence their social and cultural structures. Phenomena such as population shifts toward urban centers, the accelerating processes of urbanization, and the penetration of external cultural influences compel the Malay community to renegotiate their identity in order to remain socially and culturally relevant. Various studies indicate that the regional government, together with the Malay communities of Riau, has responded to these developments by strengthening Malay-Islamic identity as a distinctive regional marker through three stages of identity formation: processes of legitimization, acts of resistance, and proactive identity-building initiatives.[20] Thus, Malay-Islamic identity is not merely inherited as a cultural legacy but is continuously and actively reconstructed by the community. In this context, the rationalist approach articulated by Ibn Rushd may serve as an important foundation for cultivating a mode of thought that is more critical and reflective in responding to ongoing social transformations.

Various Malay-Islamic cultural symbols in Riau such as the Malay language, customary traditions, traditional architectural forms, and religious ritual practices have undergone processes of reinterpretation in order to remain relevant amid the rise of the digital era and the dominance of mass media. Research on post-Reformasi identity shows that these symbols are not only preserved in their physical form, but are also imbued with more explicit Islamic values as an effort to reinforce the legitimacy of Malay identity as one fundamentally grounded in Islam.[21]

Furthermore, the process of adapting Malay–Islamic identity in Riau requires the community's ability to critically analyze the realities of globalization and cultural diversity without abandoning the local foundations that characterize them. By employing a rational framework of thought, the community does not merely act as a passive recipient of tradition, but actively engages in reinterpreting both their cultural–religious traditions and their collective identity. This approach enables Malay–Islamic identity to move beyond ceremonial symbolism and manifest concretely in daily social practices, educational systems, and public policy-making processes. Such an approach is essential to ensure that Malay–Islamic identity does not remain confined within rigid forms of conservatism, but continues

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[19] Alfarabi et al., "Media Identitas Melayu Pascareformasi Di Indonesia."

[20] Jubba, Rafi, and Qodir, "Politik Identitas Melayu Islam Sebagai Upaya Mewujudkan Budaya Berintegritas."

[21] Alfarabi et al., "Media Identitas Melayu Pascareformasi Di Indonesia."

to grow into a more open, inclusive identity capable of responding to the dynamics of contemporary developments.

Thus, Malay–Islamic identity in Riau can be understood as an important sphere where local traditions and Islamic teachings interact and undergo continuous formation. This identity confronts the pressures of changing times while simultaneously striving to preserve its distinctive regional character. Therefore, a conceptual framework capable of integrating cultural, religious, and rational dimensions is required so that this identity may develop constructively and sustainably.

Studies on the dynamics of Malay Muslim identity in Riau indicate that this identity is not a fixed entity, but one shaped through a long historical trajectory and continually reconstructed in response to social, political, and cultural change. Since the arrival of Islam in the 13th century, the interaction between customary norms and religious teachings has produced a societal character that places Islamic values at the center of its ethical and cultural orientation. The involvement of various institutions, including the Riau Malay Customary Institution, demonstrates that both the state and indigenous communities jointly contribute to legitimizing and reinforcing this collective identity. Through practices of cultural legitimization, efforts to counter prevailing stereotypes, and identity-building processes that position Islam as the primary foundation, Malay identity in Riau emerges as a social construct that is constantly negotiated and reshaped over time.

In the face of modernity and globalization, the transformation of Malay Muslim identity increasingly requires the community's reflective capacity to reassess the symbols, traditions, and cultural values they have inherited. Efforts to reinterpret various expressions of Malay culture from language and customary practices to architectural forms demonstrate that the community is not merely preserving tradition, but actively adapting it to remain meaningful in contemporary contexts. At this stage, a rational approach grounded in the thought of Ibn Rushd provides an important foundation for critically evaluating change without abandoning religious and cultural roots. Through this rational framework, the Malay Muslim community is able to respond to the pressures of urbanization, digital technological development, and demographic shifts, ensuring that their identity does not remain a ceremonial symbol but functions as a reflective force that shapes social behavior, educational practices, and the direction of public policy.

2.3. Integrating Ibn Rushd's Rationality for Strengthening Malay–Islamic Identity in Riau

Rationality in Ibn Rushd's thought provides an Islamic foundation that positions reason

as the primary instrument for understanding revelation without diminishing the authority of sacred texts. In the context of strengthening Malay–Islamic identity in Riau, this intellectual framework serves as an essential basis for maintaining a balance between Malay customary heritage and the principles of Islamic teachings. Rationality is not merely understood as logical reasoning, but as a dialogical process that brings together tradition, religious teachings, and contemporary socio-cultural dynamics. Consequently, the Malay community does not simply inherit its identity as a legacy passed down through generations, but embodies it with critical awareness and responsiveness to the demands of changing times.[22]

This rational approach provides space for the Malay–Islamic community in Riau to reinterpret customary and cultural values without departing from the principles of Islamic law. This concept aligns with Ibn Rushd's notion of *ta'wil*, which allows for contextual interpretation of religious texts when tensions arise between reason and empirical reality. Through this method, Malay identity is not understood as something static, but as a construction that continually evolves in response to changing times. Such a transformative process is essential to ensure that Malay–Islamic identity does not remain at a symbolic or ceremonial level, but instead continues to manifest concretely in social life, education, public ethics, and policy-making processes.[23]

In the context of global changes such as urbanization, the development of digital technology, and the penetration of popular culture, the application of Ibn Rushd's rationality becomes a significant epistemological strategy for preserving Malay–Islamic values without adopting an anti-modern stance. Ibn Rushd's ideas demonstrate that knowledge and religion are not two opposing domains, but can complement one another as long as the interpretive process is conducted scientifically and rationally. Through this framework, the Malay community of Riau has a foundation for cultivating religious practices that are moderate, inclusive, and adaptive to contemporary developments, while at the same time avoiding tendencies toward cultural exclusivism or religious extremism.[24]

In confronting global changes such as urbanization, digitalization, and the flow of popular culture, the integration of Ibn Rushd's rationality becomes an important epistemological strategy for preserving Malay–Islamic values without adopting an anti-

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[22] Sharif Islam, "The Ibn Rushd Syndrome: In Search of Rational Muslim," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2018, https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3211293.

[23] Nabila Huringiin and Sayyid Muhammad Indallah, "Rationality in Science: A Comparison Study Between Ibnu Rusyd and Rene Descartes," *Al-Risalah* 13, no. 1 (2022): 92–107, https://doi.org/10.34005/alrisalah.v13i1.1549.

[24] Lalahwa, Gunawan, and Muhajir, "The Relationship between Religion and Reason in the Context of Islamic Education Philosophy from the Perspective of Ibn Rushd and Ibn Taimiyah."

modern stance. Ibn Rushd's thought also emphasizes that knowledge and religion are not two opposing entities, but mutually reinforcing as long as interpretation is carried out scientifically and grounded in reason. This provides a foundation for the Malay community of Riau to cultivate a form of Islam that is moderate, inclusive, and adaptive, while simultaneously preventing cultural exclusivism and religious extremism. According to Ibn Rushd, reason and revelation cannot contradict one another because both originate from the same source of truth; therefore, Muslims are obliged to employ reason in understanding religious teachings and the realities of life.[25]

In the context of contemporary social change including urbanization, the expansion of digital technologies, and the influx of popular culture the rational approach articulated by Ibn Rushd must be translated into concrete and operational initiatives. Such efforts may take the form of digital literacy training grounded in Islamic ethical principles, the strengthening of interdisciplinary research between scholars of religion and modern scientific fields, as well as the establishment of intercultural dialogue forums that encourage scriptural interpretation to be more responsive to empirical evidence. Through these strategies, the values of Malay Islam can be sustained in adaptive and contextually relevant practices, while also reducing the risk of social fragmentation that may arise from an inadequate response to technological and societal transformations.[26]

From the author's perspective, the integration of Ibn Rushd's rationalist framework in strengthening the Malay Muslim identity in Riau should not be regarded merely as an abstract discourse, but rather as an intellectual and practical necessity for responding to ongoing social transformations. The rational thought he articulated provides an analytical foundation that enables Malay communities to reassess the relationship between customary practices, religious values, and the demands of modernity with greater nuance and proportionality. Amid rapid urbanization, the expansion of digital technologies, and the intensifying flow of global cultural influences, a reason-based approach functions as an essential instrument for ensuring that the Malay Islamic identity remains well-grounded neither rigidly confined within static conservatism nor adrift in the tide of change. In my view, the integration of this rational paradigm opens pathways for cultivating a more dynamic, moderate, and inclusive intellectual tradition and social practice, while simultaneously reinforcing the cultural and religious foundations of Riau's society in navigating contemporary transformations.

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[25] Lalahwa, Gunawan, and Muhajir.

[26] Abdul Rahim Karim et al., "Exploring The Rationality of Religious-Rational Islamic Thinkers Towards The Compatibility of The Islamic Education System," Tarbiyah: Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan 13, no. 2 (2024): 187–208, http://jurnal.uin-antasari.ac.id/index.php/jtjik.

A study of Ibn Rushd's concept of rationality demonstrates that this approach plays a significant role in sustaining Malay Muslim identity in Riau, particularly as the community confronts accelerating currents of modernity and social change. Rationality, in Ibn Rushd's perspective, not only provides a framework for reasoning about Islamic teachings but also creates space for a constructive encounter between customary traditions, religious law, and the demands of contemporary life. By emphasizing the harmony between reason and revelation, his thought offers an epistemological foundation that enables the Malay community to critically reassess various cultural practices without severing their connection to religious principles. In this way, Malay Muslim identity can continue to develop as a reflective and adaptive cultural–religious construct, while avoiding forms of conservatism that resist necessary renewal.

From the author's perspective, the integration of Ibn Rushd's rational thought offers a relevant conceptual framework for addressing the challenges of globalization, digitalization, and urbanization that are reshaping the social structure of Malay society in Riau. Strengthening this rational orientation has the potential to cultivate a more progressive scholarly culture one that is open to dialogue and grounded in empirical findings through initiatives such as promoting ethical digital literacy, fostering interdisciplinary research collaboration, and facilitating spaces for interreligious and intercultural engagement. In this regard, Malay Muslim identity does not remain confined to symbolic expressions but becomes articulated through inclusive, moderate, and contextually responsive social practices. Ultimately, the integration of Ibn Rushd's rationality not only reinforces the cultural and religious foundations of the Riau community but also provides a stronger basis for social adaptation, public policy development, and the shaping of a society oriented toward progress.

3. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Ibn Rushd's rationality holds significant relevance for the formation of Malay–Islamic identity in Riau, particularly through the integration of reason and revelation as the foundation for understanding Islamic teachings. Ibn Rushd's concept of harmonizing revealed texts with human intellect aligns with the cultural principles of Malay Riau, which position adat and syarak as two pillars that operate in balance and reinforce one another. Consequently, Malay–Islamic identity is understood not merely as a symbolic construction or a set of religious traditions, but also as a form of intellectual consciousness that emphasizes moral sensitivity, critical capacity, and a commitment to Islamic values. These findings affirm that strengthening rationality within the Islamic scholarly tradition can serve as a strategic foundation for sustaining a contextual, adaptive, and relevant Malay–Islamic identity amid the dynamics of contemporary change.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that research on the application of Ibn Rushd's rational principles within the contexts of education, da'wah, and the Malay–Islamic intellectual tradition in Riau continue to be developed at a more practical and applicative level. Academics, education practitioners, and cultural stakeholders should adopt Ibn Rushd's thought as a foundation for strengthening a religious paradigm that is moderate, dialogical, and grounded in rational reasoning. In addition, further research may be directed toward comparative studies with the ideas of other Islamic thinkers to broaden perspectives on the construction of Malay–Islamic identity. Such efforts are expected to yield more comprehensive contributions to the development of scholarly discourse, cultural practices, and the strengthening of religious character among communities in Riau and the wider Malay world of the Nusantara.

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