

Patterns of Qur'anic Study Approaches for Preventing Radicalism in Singapore

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Keywords: Singapore Government Regulations; Patterns of Qur'anic Study Approaches; Prevention of Radicalism	Abstract This study explores the patterns of approaches employed in Qur'anic studies to mitigate radicalism in Singapore. A qualitative descriptive methodology was utilised to examine the patterns of Qur'anic study. The primary and secondary data sources comprised the Muslim community in the country, alongside relevant literature including books, journals, and research reports. Data collection methods included interviews, documentation, and observation, with subsequent analysis conducted using qualitative data analysis techniques. The findings reveal that while the Muslim community generally enjoys the freedom of religious practice and access to Islamic educational institutions and organisations, the government has instituted regulations to ensure that Qur'anic study promotes moderate thought, openness, and interreligious harmony. Although the city provides a conducive environment for Qur'anic studies, measures are in place to maintain social harmony and prevent potential radicalisation. The Majelis Ulama Islam Singapura (MUIS) mandates requirements for preachers, including obtaining permits, demonstrating speaker competency, ensuring appropriate content, providing security assurance, and securing location permits. MUIS employs three main approaches in Qur'anic study: 1) categorising preachers based on their knowledge, experience, and skills; 2) using interpretive methods such as thematic, linguistic analysis, historical, and comparative approaches, which are regularly evaluated; and 3) monitoring the content of the material through reporting mechanisms and documentation from the start to the end of activities. The study concludes that the approach to Qur'anic study in the country plays a significant role in shaping understanding and the application of Islamic teachings, underpinned by the values of moderation and religious tolerance.
Kata Kunci: Regulasi Pemerintah Singapura; Pola Pendekatan Studi Quran; Pencegahan Radikalisme	Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi pola pendekatan yang digunakan dalam kajian Al-Qur'an untuk mengurangi radikalisme di Singapura. Metodologi deskriptif kualitatif digunakan untuk memeriksa pola-pola dalam kajian Al-Qur'an. Sumber data primer dan sekunder meliputi komunitas Muslim di negara tersebut, serta literatur relevan termasuk buku, jurnal, dan laporan penelitian. Metode pengumpulan data mencakup wawancara, dokumentasi, dan observasi, dengan analisis selanjutnya dilakukan menggunakan teknik analisis data kualitatif. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa meskipun komunitas Muslim umumnya menikmati kebebasan beragama dan akses ke lembaga pendidikan serta organisasi Islam, pemerintah telah menerapkan peraturan untuk memastikan bahwa kajian Al-Qur'an mempromosikan pemikiran moderat, keterbukaan, dan keharmonisan antaragama. Meskipun kota tersebut menyediakan lingkungan yang kondusif untuk kajian Al-Qur'an, langkah-langkah telah diterapkan untuk menjaga keharmonisan sosial dan mencegah potensi radikalisasi. Majelis Ulama Islam Singapura (MUIS) mewajibkan persyaratan bagi para khatib, termasuk memperoleh izin, menunjukkan kompetensi pembicara, memastikan konten yang sesuai, memberikan jaminan keamanan, dan mendapatkan izin lokasi. MUIS menerapkan tiga pendekatan utama dalam kajian Al-Qur'an: 1) mengategorikan para khatib berdasarkan pengetahuan, pengalaman, dan keterampilan mereka; 2) menggunakan metode interpretatif seperti analisis tematik, linguistik, historis, dan komparatif, yang dievaluasi secara berkala; dan 3) memantau konten materi melalui mekanisme pelaporan dan dokumentasi dari awal hingga akhir kegiatan. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa pendekatan kajian Al-Qur'an di negara tersebut memainkan peran signifikan dalam membentuk pemahaman dan penerapan ajaran Islam, yang didasari oleh nilai-nilai moderasi dan toleransi beragama.
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Introduction

Singapore, situated adjacent to the western part of Indonesia, maintains a significant historical and cultural link with the development of Islam in Indonesia, particularly on the island of Sumatra. This connection profoundly influences the practice of Islam within Singapore, despite the Muslim community being a minority in the country. While Singaporean Muslims are afforded the opportunity to practice their religion actively, this is achieved within the framework of stringent regulations imposed by the government. These regulations are designed to ensure that religious practices are conducted in a manner that upholds values of moderation and social harmony. Despite these constraints, Muslims in Singapore manage to express their faith meaningfully and contribute to the rich tapestry of the nation's diverse religious landscape. This scenario highlights the intricate balance between religious freedom and regulatory oversight in a multi-cultural and multi-religious society like Singapore, and underscores the evolving pattern of Qur'anic studies in addressing contemporary challenges¹.

Generally, the Singaporean government adopts a neutral stance on the religion of its citizens, provided that religious practices are conducted peacefully and align with values of moderation and tolerance. Within this framework, the government facilitates opportunities for religious expression. The Majelis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS) plays a crucial role in advancing Islam in Singapore, particularly in the domains of education and Islamic studies. The ongoing development of Islam in Singapore is supported by the dedicated efforts of Singaporean scholars, whose contributions are vital for the faith's sustainability in the country. This is especially evident in the context of Qur'anic studies, where the evolving pattern of study reflects broader educational and social trends. The focus on Qur'anic study underlines the importance of integrating traditional Islamic teachings with contemporary issues, ensuring that Islamic education remains relevant and impactful in Singapore's diverse and dynamic societal landscape².

Over time, Qur'anic studies in Singapore have evolved into two main patterns: continuous and contemporary. Continuous education takes place in Arabic schools or madrasahs, offering low-level (6 years), middle-level (4 years), and pre-university (2 years) programs. Despite over 90% of Malay students in government schools not receiving Islamic

¹ Toto Tohari, "IDENTITAS KEAGAMAAN MINORITAS MUSLIM SINGAPURA," *Maslahah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 2022.

² Yuli Fatimah Warosari, "Analisis Peran MUIS Terhadap Kebijakan Pendidikan Islam Pada Madrasah Di Singapura," *Jurnal Adzkiya*, 2022.

education, this system remains central to the Muslim community. Conversely, contemporary classes are organised in mosques or religious study groups, adopting a structured approach similar to formal education. This dual approach bridges traditional teachings with modern educational needs, ensuring Qur'anic studies in Singapore effectively address the evolving requirements of its diverse Muslim population³.

Given the context, it is essential to examine the pattern of Qur'anic exegesis used to counter radicalism in Singapore. As a secular state with stringent regulations on Islamic teachings, Singapore ensures that these practices align with national standards of moderation and social harmony. Despite these controls, effective Qur'anic studies persist within this framework. Investigating how Qur'anic exegesis contributes to counter-radicalisation is crucial, as it sheds light on the adaptation of Islamic education to contemporary challenges while adhering to strict regulations. This research aims to reveal strategies in Qur'anic study that support anti-radicalisation efforts, providing insights into the balance between religious instruction and national security in a diverse society.

According to data from ceicdata.com, Singapore's population reached 5.6 million in 2022, up from 5.5 million the previous year. Muslims constitute approximately 15-16% of the population, with the majority being ethnic Malays. Other Muslim communities include Indians, Pakistanis, and smaller groups of Chinese, Arabs, and Eurasians. Notably, around 17% of Singapore's Muslim population is of Indian ethnicity. The predominant Islamic tradition in Singapore is Sunni Islam, with most adherents following the Shafi'i school of thought. However, there are also followers of the Hanafi school and a minority who adhere to Shia Islam. This diverse pattern of Islamic practice reflects the rich tapestry of Muslim communities in Singapore, each contributing to the broader discourse on Qur'anic studies and counter-radicalisation efforts. Understanding this demographic and religious diversity is crucial for comprehending the implementation and effectiveness of Qur'anic exegesis in addressing radicalism within Singapore's unique regulatory and cultural context⁴.

Principally, Singapore adopts a neutral stance towards religion, meaning that the state does not excessively favour or interfere with the religious practices of its citizens. Despite Muslims being a minority in the country, this neutrality does not diminish the vibrancy and commitment of the Muslim community. On the contrary, the development of Islam in Singapore is notable for its advancement and progressive nature, particularly when

³ Saifuddin Amin, "Islam Dan Keharmonian Kaum Di Singapura," *Ri'ayah: Jurnal Sosial Dan Keagamaan*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.32332/riayah.v3i01.1180>.

⁴ Tohari, "IDENTITAS KEAGAMAAN MINORITAS MUSLIM SINGAPURA."

compared to its neighbours such as Malaysia and Indonesia. The effective integration of Islamic practices within Singapore's secular framework, alongside the country's diverse demographic and regulatory landscape, underscores the unique approach to religious education and community engagement. This environment has facilitated a sophisticated pattern of Qur'anic studies that addresses contemporary challenges, including radicalism. Understanding this dynamic is essential for appreciating how Singapore's balanced approach supports the ongoing evolution and impact of Islamic teachings within the region⁵.

Singapore's approach to religious education and facilities reflects its commitment to supporting its diverse population. The country boasts 21 religious schools catering to students from kindergarten through high school. In addition to these educational institutions, Singapore is home to 76 *surau* (Muslim praying halls) and 40 mosques. In recent years, urban modernization led to the demolition of 23 mosques, which previously accommodated 5,830 worshippers. However, these were replaced by 10 new mosques with a combined capacity of 26,000 worshippers. Furthermore, around 1988, five additional mosques were constructed, further increasing the capacity to accommodate 15,000 worshippers. This expansion of religious infrastructure underscores the government's effort to meet the needs of its Muslim population while maintaining a balanced approach to religious pluralism. Alongside these facilities for Muslims, Singapore also provides places of worship for adherents of other faiths, highlighting its commitment to religious diversity and harmony⁶.

To facilitate the effective implementation of Islamic teachings within Singapore's socio-political context, the Majelis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS) serves as an advisory body to the President on Muslim community matters. MUIS plays a crucial role in aligning the needs of Muslims with government policies, ensuring collaboration between both entities. Its vision is to develop a distinguished Muslim community that excels in religious practice while thriving in Singapore's diverse, secular, and globalised environment. By enhancing understanding and practice of Islam, MUIS aims to foster conscientious citizens who contribute positively to society, supporting Singapore's broader goal of nurturing resilient, intelligent, and exceptional individuals.

About *tafsīr* (Qur'anic exegesis) study in Singapore, various methodologies are utilised to interpret and understand the meanings of the Qur'anic verses. *Tafsīr*, or exegesis,

⁵ Ajat Sudrajat, "Perkembangan Islam Di Singapura," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 2019.

⁶ Syed Muhammad Adib Termizi Ahmad Al Jafari and Sharifah Nadirah Nasibah Ahmad Al Jafari, "CABARAN PEMBANGUNAN MASJID PADA MASA HADAPAN DI SINGAPURA: SUDUT PANDANG FIKH," *Malaysian Journal of Syariah and Law*, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.33102/mjssl.vol7no2.162>.

involves a detailed examination of the Qur'anic text to uncover its deeper meanings. In Singapore, traditional Islamic studies encompass a range of institutions, including village-style learning centres, community religious schools, home-based education, surau, madrasahs, and Malay schools. These institutions typically employ informal and non-systematic teaching methods. Unlike neighbouring countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia, Singapore's traditional Islamic education system does not incorporate the pondok system. Conversely, modern Islamic studies in Singapore are distinguished by their systematic and structured approach, often incorporating contemporary management techniques to enhance educational effectiveness. This integration of traditional and modern methodologies reflects Singapore's unique educational landscape, where both historical practices and innovative approaches contribute to a comprehensive understanding and application of Qur'anic teachings within a diverse and secular context.⁷

In Singapore, post-traditional Qur'anic studies emphasize Baghdadi rules for recitation, reflecting a focus on classical methodologies. However, the educational landscape has evolved with the advent of post-modern systems that merge elements from both Egyptian and Western traditions. This shift began with Egyptian scholar Othman Effendi Rafat, who founded the Al-Iqbal Al-Islamiyyah Madrasah in 1908, marking a pivotal development by combining traditional Islamic education with modern pedagogical practices. This evolution underscores a broader trend in Singapore, where contemporary Qur'anic study methods blend classical scholarship with innovative Western techniques. This integration not only preserves traditional teachings but also adapts to the needs of a diverse, secular society, thereby enhancing the effectiveness and relevance of Qur'anic education.⁸

The study of Qur'anic exegesis in Singapore is conducted in a more systematic and organized manner in mosques. Qur'anic study sessions are held specifically in certain mosques to ensure that the study is carried out effectively and efficiently. For example, the Al-Khair Mosque inaugurated the *Dār Al-Tafsīr* program in mid-2005. Among its objectives is to become a center for research in the field of Qur'anic exegesis and to provide reference materials in the field of Qur'anic interpretation. Similarly, lecture activities in institutions

⁷ Saifuddin Amin, "Islam dan Keharmonian Kaum di Singapura," *Ri'ayah: Jurnal Sosial Dan Keagamaan*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.32332/riayah.v3i01.1180>.

⁸ Ulil Amri Syafri, Rahendra Maya, and Akhmudi Bin Sarkiman, "Program Learning Islamic Value Everyday (AL.I.V.E.) Di Madrasah Masjid Al-Taqua Singapura," *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v11i01.2185>.

focus on the study of *Tafsir al-Jalālayn*, *Tafsir Maudūdī*, *Tafsir Ayat-Ayat Janji Allah* (The verses of Allah's Promises Exegesis), *Tafsir Ayat Hukum* (Laws Exegesis), and other exegesis.⁹

Moreover, the development of Qur'anic exegesis in Singapore were contributed by prominent figure, Ahmad Sonhaji. His dedication to conveying the messages of the Quran in various places and media, particularly in the field of Holy Quran exegesis, has been noteworthy¹⁰. In the field of the exegesis, there are at least five prominent works that have been extensively studied in Singapore. These works include: *Tafsir Al-Quran* (Singapore edition), *Tafsir al-Quran 'Abr al-Athir/Tafsir Al-Quran on Radio* (Malaysia edition), the works of Ahmad Sonhaji, *Pedoman Kemuliaan Pada Mentafsirkan al-Qur'an* (Interpretation of Surah al-Fatihah and al-Baqarah) by Fadhlullah Suhaimi, *Pelita al-Qur'an* by Abdullah al-Jufri, and *Pedoman Tafsir Juz 'Amma* by Osman Jantan¹¹.

This reality reveals a unique and distinctive aspect that prompts this research to be undertaken. With the qualitative research method, the study explores the phenomena experienced by research subjects, focusing on their behaviours, perceptions, motivations, and actions in a comprehensive manner. According to Sugiyono's definition, this approach employs descriptive means through words and language, within the subjects' natural contexts. By using various natural methods for data collection and interpretation, qualitative research is particularly effective in uncovering the patterns and approaches in Qur'anic exegesis. Its inherent flexibility allows for adjustments based on emerging insights during fieldwork, making it adaptable to complex and nuanced influences. This method ensures a thorough analysis of Qur'anic interpretation patterns and their role in countering radicalism in Singapore, highlighting the relevance of religious education in addressing contemporary challenges.

This research was conducted in Singapore in collaboration with Muhammadiyah Islamic College. The study spanned six months, encompassing all phases from planning and preparation to data collection, analysis, evaluation, seminars for presenting findings, report writing, and publication. The research utilised both primary and secondary data sources. Primary sources comprised the Muslim community in Singapore, selected through purposive

⁹ Hasani Ahmad Said, "Mengenal Tafsir Nusantara: Melacak Mata Rantai Tafsir Dari Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapura Hingga Brunei Darussalam," *Refleksi*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.15408/ref.v16i2.10193>.

¹⁰ Wardani dan Taufiq Warman Mahfudz, *Perkembangan Tafsir Al-Qur'an Di Indonesia Dan Malaysia*, ed. Faizin, 1st ed. (Yogyakarta: Zahir Publishing, 2022).

¹¹ Said, "Mengenal Tafsir Nusantara: Melacak Mata Rantai Tafsir Dari Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapura Hingga Brunei Darussalam."

sampling. Data collection methods included interviews, documentation, and observation. The primary data were analysed using qualitative data analysis techniques. Secondary sources consisted of literature such as books, journals, and relevant research reports related to the study's focus. This comprehensive approach ensured a thorough examination of the patterns and approaches in Qur'anic exegesis within the context of Singapore.

As a follow-up to this reality, this research is urgent, both theoretically and practically, due to the pressing need to understand the application of Qur'anic exegesis in Singapore's unique socio-political context. Given Singapore's secular nature and stringent regulations on religious practices, examining how Qur'anic studies are structured and executed is crucial. The study sheds light on the methods and patterns of Qur'anic interpretation that play a role in countering radicalism, while promoting moderation and tolerance. By exploring both traditional and modern approaches, the research aims to identify effective strategies that could serve as models for similar contexts. This insight not only enhances religious education effectiveness but also contributes to global efforts in fostering interfaith harmony and combating extremism.

Historical Legacy and Evolution of Islam in Singapore: Education and Anti-Radicalisation Strategies

1. An overview of the development of Islam In Singapore

Islam is a significant religion in Singapore, with a long history and rich heritage that has profoundly influenced the identity and culture of the Muslim community. Introduced in the 13th century through maritime trade and interactions with Arab and Indian communities, Islam's presence in Singapore became more prominent during the 19th century as Arab and Indian traders settled in the region. When Singapore became part of the British colony in the southern straits in 1824, the Muslim community was governed by British Islamic religious laws. From that point, Islam began to flourish within the Malay community, supported by the arrival of imams and religious teachers from India and Sumatra who established Islamic educational institutions. The spread of Islam was further facilitated by the Sultanate of Malacca, which had strong trading ties with Arab merchants. In 1959, Singapore gained full autonomy from Britain, and Islam was officially recognised as one of the country's principal religions¹².

¹² Riyanto et al.

Building upon the historical foundation established by early Islamic influences, the Malay community has played a crucial role in the development and propagation of Islam in Singapore. From the earliest times, Malays have formed a significant portion of the Muslim population, profoundly influencing the nation's political, cultural, and social landscape. Despite Islam being a minority religion in Singapore, comprising approximately 15% of the total population, the contributions of the Malay community in strengthening Islamic identity and shaping broader Singaporean culture are substantial. Their historical, cultural, and socio-political impact underscores their vital role in the nation's Islamic heritage¹³. Below is the data on the number of religious adherents in Singapore based on the 2020 census.

No	Religions	Population Size
1	Buddha	31,10 %
2	Christian	18,90 %
3	Islam	15,60 %
4	Taoism	8,80 %
5	Hinduism	5,00 %
6	Other Religions	0,80 %
7	Non-Religious Group (Atheist)	20,00 %

The Malay community played a crucial role in the development of Islam in Singapore. Since the early days, the Malay ethnic group has constituted a significant portion of the Muslim population in the country and has contributed immensely to its political, cultural, and social fabric. In terms of population, Islam is indeed a minority religion in Singapore, accounting for approximately 15% of the total population. However, their role in strengthening Islamic identity and their influence on Singaporean culture cannot be ignored. Over time, Islam in Singapore has evolved significantly with the establishment of numerous Islamic educational institutions and *madrasahs*, which have been instrumental in nurturing and sustaining the Islamic heritage within the community¹⁴.

Over time, Islam has developed significantly in Singapore, marked by the establishment of numerous Islamic educational institutions and *madrasahs*. These institutions have been pivotal in nurturing the Islamic community, preserving religious traditions, and fostering a robust educational framework. In this context, the Singaporean government has actively ensured that the Islamic education provided in these institutions is

¹³ Serli Retno Sari, "Important Role of Civic Education in Multi-Ethnic Countries Malaysia and Singapore," *Journal of Moral and Civic Education*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.24036/885141222201883>.

¹⁴ Syafri, Maya, and Sarkiman, "Program Learning Islamic Value Everyday (AL.I.V.E.) Di Madrasah Masjid Al-Taqua Singapura."

aligned with moderate thinking, promotes inclusivity, and strengthens societal pluralism. By implementing policies that support these principles, the government aims to balance religious education with the broader goal of fostering harmony and mutual respect among Singapore's diverse communities¹⁵.

The evolution of Islam in Singapore has been significantly shaped by the establishment of various Islamic educational institutions and madrasahs. These centres of learning have been instrumental in nurturing the Muslim community, preserving religious traditions, and providing a structured framework for education. The Singaporean government has actively ensured that the curriculum in these institutions promotes moderate thinking, inclusivity, and reinforces societal pluralism. This strategy is intended to integrate religious teachings with the broader aim of enhancing social cohesion among Singapore's diverse communities. Consequently, Muslims in Singapore are afforded the freedom to practice their religion openly. They benefit from the presence of numerous mosques throughout the island and have access to a range of Islamic educational institutions and religious organisations that support their religious studies and practices. Additionally, they are able to observe Ramadan and partake in various religious rituals, underscoring the nation's commitment to safeguarding religious freedoms while fostering social harmony¹⁶.

In addition to these initiatives, the Singaporean government actively fosters the development of a robust and responsible Muslim community. It extends support across various domains, including Islamic education, social welfare, and the preservation of Muslim cultural heritage. Furthermore, the government champions interfaith dialogue and strives to enhance understanding between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. The Muslim community in Singapore holds a prominent political position, with representation in Parliament and active involvement in the policymaking process. Notably, several Muslim leaders have made significant contributions to Singaporean politics, serving as ministers and members of Parliament. This underscores their pivotal role in shaping national governance and policy¹⁷.

Muslims in Singapore enjoy the freedom to practise their religion fully. The government recognises and upholds the rights and religious freedoms of the Muslim community while actively working to maintain interreligious harmony across the country.

¹⁵ Amin, "Islam Dan Keharmonian Kaum Di Singapura."

¹⁶ Abdul Rahman, Idi Warsah, and Ali Murfi, "Islamic Education System in Singapore: Current Issues and Challenges," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2019.82.197-222>.

¹⁷ Tohari, "IDENTITAS KEAGAMAAN MINORITAS MUSLIM SINGAPURA."

The Muslim community holds a significant political presence, with representation in Parliament and a notable role in the policymaking process. Several Muslim leaders have made substantial contributions to Singaporean politics, serving as ministers and members of Parliament. This involvement highlights their crucial role in shaping the nation's governance and policies.

2. The Implementation of Islamic Studies in Singapore

The study of the Quran is integral to the lives of Muslims in Singapore, reflecting its profound significance in their religious practice. As a nation committed to religious freedom, Singapore provides an environment that fosters and supports Qur'anic studies. The country is home to a variety of educational institutions, research centres, and religious organisations dedicated to the in-depth study and practice of the Quran. These institutions offer a range of programmes and resources designed to enhance understanding and facilitate the application of Qur'anic teachings in daily life. This supportive framework ensures that Muslims in Singapore can engage deeply with their religious heritage¹⁸.

In Singapore, there are several dedicated centres for the study of the Quran, which reflect the country's commitment to nurturing a well-rounded religious education. These centres focus on studying, teaching, and applying the teachings of the Quran in everyday life. They offer diverse Qur'anic education programmes, ranging from basic to advanced levels. Qualified and experienced instructors guide students in deepening their understanding of the Qur'anic texts and exploring the meanings and wisdom behind them. This structured approach to Qur'anic education ensures that Muslims in Singapore have access to comprehensive resources and expert guidance, further enhancing their religious and spiritual engagement.

Complementing these centres, the Muslim society in Singapore has several Islamic educational institutions that play a vital role in the dissemination and understanding of the Quran. Islamic schools in Singapore provide a curriculum that includes Qur'anic studies, *tafsīr*, hadith, and other Islamic studies. Students are given the opportunity to learn the Qur'anic verses well and develop a deep understanding of Islamic teachings.

In addition to formal educational institutions, the Muslim community in Singapore actively engages in organising Qur'anic study sessions. These sessions, held in mosques, community centres, or private homes, represent an informal yet essential aspect of religious

¹⁸ Rahman, Warsah, and Murfi, "Islamic Education System in Singapore: Current Issues and Challenges."

education. Participants come together to collaboratively explore and interpret Qur'anic texts. Through shared discussions, questioning, and dialogue, they deepen their comprehension and appreciation of the Quran. Such grassroots engagement in Qur'anic studies, outside formal educational frameworks, significantly enriches the community's understanding of Islamic teachings, thereby complementing and reinforcing the broader educational infrastructure available to Muslims in Singapore¹⁹.

The significance of Qur'anic study in Singapore extends beyond mere textual understanding. The Muslim community is committed to integrating the values and teachings of the Quran into their daily lives, including social interactions, business practices, and community development. This commitment involves not only studying the Quran but also actively applying its principles to promote justice, equality, and well-being. By embodying the ethical teachings of Islam, the community strives to reflect Qur'anic ideals in both personal conduct and public actions. This holistic approach ensures that the impact of Qur'anic study influences not just religious knowledge but also broader societal values and practices²⁰.

One of the key institutions responsible for the spread of Islam in Singapore is the *Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura* (MUIS). This body plays a central role in promoting, overseeing, and regulating Islamic affairs within the country. Established in 1968, MUIS has been instrumental in shaping a vibrant and responsible Muslim community. Its efforts extend to developing a pattern of Islamic practice that aligns with contemporary societal needs while preserving traditional values. By fostering a strong sense of identity and ensuring the effective integration of Islamic principles into daily life, MUIS contributes significantly to the cohesion and progress of Singapore's Muslim community²¹.

MUIS has several core responsibilities in Singapore, including overseeing the conduct of worship and religious activities. It manages mosques across the country, including the appointment of imams and mosque administrators. Additionally, MUIS facilitates the implementation of both obligatory and recommended religious practices and provides guidance to the Muslim community. To ensure the continuity and quality of worship, MUIS also plays a crucial role in developing educational and training programmes for *imam* and

¹⁹ Sudrajat, "Perkembangan Islam Di Singapura."

²⁰ Rahman, Warsah, and Murfi, "Islamic Education System in Singapore: Current Issues and Challenges."

²¹ Nihayatul Masykuroh, *Islam Di Singapura*, ed. Mujang Kurnia, 1st ed. (Banten, Indonesia: Media Karya Publishing, 2020), [http://repository.uinbanten.ac.id/5616/2/ISLAM DI SINGAPURA.pdf](http://repository.uinbanten.ac.id/5616/2/ISLAM%20DI%20SINGAPURA.pdf).

khatib, thereby supporting the effective delivery of religious services and upholding the standards of worship within the community²².

As the official body responsible for promoting and regulating Islamic affairs in Singapore, the Majelis Ulama Islam Singapura (MUIS) plays a crucial role in Islamic education. MUIS supports the establishment of Islamic schools, provides curriculum guidelines, and offers assistance in terms of facilities and teacher training. Additionally, MUIS is involved in overseeing Islamic education programmes and developing teaching materials that meet the demands of the modern era. It ensures that Islamic education in Singapore encompasses a holistic understanding of the religion and is well-equipped to address the challenges and opportunities of the contemporary world.

In the realm of social development, MUIS plays a pivotal role in advancing social welfare and empowering the Muslim community in Singapore. It organises a range of social and humanitarian programmes, including scholarships, financial assistance for underprivileged families, and community capacity-building initiatives. MUIS also collaborates with the private sector and charitable organisations to enhance the economic and social well-being of the Muslim community. By fostering strategic partnerships, MUIS aims to create a supportive environment that facilitates the economic and social advancement of Muslims in Singapore. This comprehensive approach underscores MUIS's commitment to improving the overall quality of life for the community²³.

Building on its extensive role in Islamic education and social welfare, MUIS, the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore, also oversees the halal certification process. Through its Halal Certification Body, Badan Penyelaras Halal, MUIS ensures that food, beverages, and cosmetic products adhere to stringent halal standards. The Council collaborates closely with industry and regulatory bodies to maintain a rigorous and accurate certification process. Additionally, MUIS's halal certification is internationally recognised, which helps expand the global reach of Singapore's halal products. This comprehensive approach not only supports the Muslim community domestically but also enhances Singapore's position in the global halal market²⁴.

²² Amin, "Islam Dan Keharmonian Kaum Di Singapura."

²³ Senin Nurhanisah, "PENDIDIKAN ISLAM DI SINGAPURA: REALITI DAN CABARAN," *INSIS, International Seminar of Islamic Studies* 4, no. 1 (2023): 948, <https://jurnal.umsu.ac.id/index.php/insis/article/view/14137/pdf>.

²⁴ Afni Regita Cahyani Muis and Rifda Zulfani Aisyah, "Competitive Advantage Industri Pariwisata Halal Singapura Dalam Berdaya Saing Di Asia Tenggara," *Intermestic: Journal of International Studies*, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.24198/intermestic.v7n1.4>.

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To foster harmonious interfaith coexistence, MUIS actively promotes interreligious dialogue between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities in Singapore. This initiative includes the participation of religious leaders from various faiths within the country. Such dialogue aims to cultivate mutual understanding and cooperation among different religious groups, thereby enhancing collaboration and comprehension between the Muslim community and others. Recognising the critical need to maintain social harmony and counter potential threats of radicalism that could undermine community stability and security, the Singaporean government has enacted strategic measures and stringent policies governing the organisation of lectures and Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*) in mosques throughout the country²⁵.

Based on the previous explanation and supported by interviews with mosque administrators, Muslim residents, and religious preachers in Singapore, it has been established that several requirements must be met for conducting religious lectures in the country²⁶. These conditions may vary depending on government policies and religious authorities in Singapore, but here are some general prerequisites that are usually required.

Requirement	Description
1. Permit Application	Organisers must apply for a permit from relevant authorities, such as MUIS or local religious institutions. The application should include event details like date, time, location, and theme.
2. Competent Speakers	Speakers must possess adequate skills and knowledge in their field. They are expected to have relevant educational qualifications or experience in the religion they will be teaching.
3. Appropriate Content	Sermons must align with the official framework of religious teachings in Singapore and must not contain content that contradicts laws or promotes hatred, violence, or radicalism.
4. Cooperation with Security Authorities	Organisers must cooperate with security authorities to ensure safety and order during the event. This may include security arrangements, participant reporting, and compliance with security procedures.
5. Location Permission	For sermons held in public places or government properties, a location permit may be required to ensure the event is held in a suitable and safe location.
6. Announcements and Promotion	Organisers must adhere to provisions regarding event announcements and promotions, ensuring accurate and non-misleading information.

It is important to note that the requirements for obtaining a permit for religious lectures are general and may change as regulations and policies in Singapore evolve. Consequently, MUIS, as the local religious authority, regularly updates the latest information regarding the requirements and procedures for securing a permit for religious lectures in Singapore.

²⁵ Riyanto et al., "Islam Dalam Politik Luar Negeri Singapura."

²⁶ Interviews and data validation were carried out by the research team in August 2023

3. The Approach of Qur'anic Study for Preventing the Radicalism in Singapore.

Singapore, as a diverse and multicultural country, is not exempt from the challenges of radicalism faced by the international community²⁷. The Singaporean government and society have a strong commitment to combat and prevent the spread of radical ideologies that could endanger the safety and social harmony of the country. Although the number of individuals involved in radical activities is relatively small, the Singaporean government considers it a serious threat that must be addressed immediately to protect the security and stability of the nation²⁸.

To effectively counter radicalism in Singapore, a multifaceted strategy is essential, targeting the root causes of radical ideologies. Central to this approach is a comprehensive and contextual study of the Quran. This deep engagement with the Quran is pivotal for fostering a nuanced and accurate understanding of Islam. In Singapore, such a rigorous examination of the Quran plays a significant role in cultivating a balanced and contextually relevant interpretation of Islamic teachings²⁹.

A thorough study of the Quran involves not only analysing the text itself but also exploring its exegesis and understanding the historical and social contexts in which the revelations were revealed. This holistic approach ensures that interpretations of the Quran are grounded in a deep and well-rounded comprehension of its teachings. By advancing this level of understanding, the Muslim community in Singapore can safeguard against misinterpretations and distortions that could be exploited by radical groups. This comprehensive study thus contributes significantly to promoting a coherent and secure social environment.

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Furthermore, applying a contextual approach to the Quran emphasises the importance of integrating Islamic teachings within Singapore's specific social and cultural

²⁷ Eugene K.B. Tan, "Norming 'Moderation' in an 'Iconic Target': Public Policy and the Regulation of Religious Anxieties in Singapore," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 2007, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546550701590610>.

²⁸ Sudrajat, "Perkembangan Islam Di Singapura."

²⁹ Samuri, "Kelangsungan Pendidikan Agama Islam Di Negara Sekuler: Madrasah Di Singapura."

context. This method enables the Muslim community to align Qur'anic principles with national values such as interfaith harmony, cooperation, and tolerance. By contextualising the Quran's messages appropriately, they can become a force for promoting goodness, inclusivity, and peace, rather than being misused to further radicalism or extremism.

The Singaporean government has designated the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) as the principal authority for overseeing Islamic affairs in the country. This includes coordinating various religious activities and ensuring that Qur'anic studies conducted in mosques adhere to strict guidelines. MUIS plays a vital role in safeguarding these studies from influences that could promote radical ideologies. To this end, the institution relies on a network of skilled Islamic scholars and experts who specialise in moderate and contextual Qur'anic studies³⁰.

Religious educators, such as Ustadz and Ustadzah, are integral to the Muslim community in Singapore, serving as key figures in imparting Islamic teachings. Their role is critical in maintaining the quality of religious education and preventing the spread of radical thinking. The Singaporean government has implemented a tiered system to regulate the qualifications and expertise of these religious teachers, ensuring that they possess the necessary knowledge and credentials.

MUIS is instrumental in ensuring that religious teachers in Singapore receive comprehensive and relevant education. By upholding high standards for training and qualifications, MUIS ensures that the Muslim community benefits from accurate and contextually appropriate religious guidance. Furthermore, MUIS establishes guidelines and criteria for Qur'anic studies, including the qualifications of individual religious teachers, the methodologies employed, and the content taught in mosques. This regulatory framework ensures that Qur'anic studies align with both the cultural and contextual needs of Singapore³¹.

The first pattern, MUIS has established a comprehensive framework and qualification levels for Ustadz (muballigh) in Singapore. This structured pattern reflects the knowledge, experience, and skills required from these religious educators. By implementing such a framework, MUIS ensures that Ustadz meet high standards of proficiency and competence. This approach not only maintains the quality of religious education but also helps prevent the spread of radical ideologies. It ensures that Ustadz are well-equipped to provide

³⁰ Warosari, "Analisis Peran MUIS Terhadap Kebijakan Pendidikan Islam Pada Madrasah Di Singapura."

³¹ Tohari, "IDENTITAS KEAGAMAAN MINORITAS MUSLIM SINGAPURA."

accurate, balanced, and contextually relevant teachings, aligning with the values of moderation and contextual understanding in Singapore's diverse society.

The following are some of the muballigh levels according to MUIS Singapore.

Level	Description
<i>Muballigh Pemula</i>	Basic Muballigh possess a fundamental understanding of Islam and are capable of delivering simple sermons and teachings. They convey religious concepts clearly and accessibly.
<i>Muballigh</i>	Muballigh have a more comprehensive knowledge of Islamic teachings and deliver detailed sermons. They typically have formal religious education or extensive dakwah experience.
<i>Muballigh Bertauliah</i> (Certified Muballigh)	This level involves advanced knowledge of Islamic teachings, Sharia law, and related sciences. Certified Muballigh usually have advanced degrees in religious studies and provide detailed sermons.
<i>Muballigh Pengkhususan</i> (Specialist Muballigh)	The highest level, Specialist Muballigh possess profound knowledge in specific areas of religion such as Qur'anic exegesis, hadith, or fiqh. They deliver advanced-level teachings and engage in research.

The levels of muballigh are determined by regulations established by MUIS and may be adjusted according to the evolving needs of the Muslim community in Singapore. These levels reflect the knowledge and experience of the muballigh and offer a framework for assessing their qualifications to deliver religious sermons and teachings effectively. Interviews also confirmed that the Singaporean government enforces these regulations strictly, ensuring that only suitably qualified muballigh are permitted to teach Islam to its citizens.

The second pattern MUIS stipulates that when conducting Qur'anic studies in Singaporean mosques, religious teachers (ustadz) should employ the following methods.

Approach	Description
The Exegesis (<i>Tafsir</i>) Approach	Used to understand and explain Qur'anic verses ³² . Common methods include <i>tafsir bi-al-ma'thūr</i> (based on Qur'anic explanations), <i>tafsir bi-al-ra'yi</i> (rational interpretations), and <i>tafsir bi-al-ma'nā</i> (contextual understanding). Conducted by scholars with deep Qur'anic knowledge.
The Thematic Approach	Focuses on studying specific themes or topics in the Quran ³³ , such as faith, morality, human-Allah relations, and social values. This method involves selecting relevant verses to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic.
The Linguistic Analysis Approach	Examines the language and grammatical structure of the Quran ³⁴ . Researchers analyse words, phrases, and their relationships to ensure accurate interpretation aligned with the Arabic context.

³² Reza Adeputra Tohis and Mustahidin Malula, "METODOLOGI TAFSIR AL-QUR'AN," *Al-Mustafid: Journal of Quran and Hadith Studies*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.30984/mustafid.v2i1.570>.

³³ Tohis and Malula.

³⁴ Danial Danial, "Corak Penafsiran Al-Qur'an Periode Klasik Hingga Modern," *Hikmah Journal of Islamic Studies*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.47466/hikmah.v15i2.136>.

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The Historical Approach	Places Qur'anic verses within their historical and cultural context at the time of revelation ³⁵ . Helps scholars understand the social, political, and cultural situations during the revelation.
The Comparative Study Approach	Compares Qur'anic verses with other texts, such as hadith, <i>tafsir</i> books, and Islamic literature ³⁶ , to gain a broader perspective on Islamic teachings and deepen understanding of Qur'anic concepts and values.

The Qur'anic Study Approaches utilised in Singapore play a crucial role in enhancing religious understanding and fostering a balanced, contextual, and pertinent comprehension of Islamic teachings. By employing methods such as *tafsir*, thematic studies, linguistic analysis, historical studies, and comparative studies, Qur'anic scholars in Singapore are able to attain a profound grasp of the Quran and apply Islamic principles accurately in their lives. These approaches facilitate a deeper engagement with the Qur'anic text, ensuring that interpretations remain relevant to contemporary contexts. Through meticulous research and analysis, the Muslim community in Singapore can cultivate a robust religious understanding that supports tolerance and strengthens interfaith harmony within the country's multicultural society. This approach, commonly referred to within the community as '*beragama Islam sesuai konteks Singapura*', underscores the importance of adapting Islamic teachings to the local context while maintaining the integrity of religious principles³⁷.

The third pattern, rigorous and consistent oversight of Qur'anic studies content. MUIS has established regulations that mandate all organisers of religious studies to adhere to specific guidelines. This table details the specific regulations set by MUIS to ensure thorough and consistent supervision of Qur'anic studies in Singapore.

Regulation	Description
1. Submission of Materials and Speaker Profile	Submit a complete module of materials along with the speaker's profile to MUIS for validation before the activity takes place.
2. Recording and Verification	Record all the processes of the activity from the beginning to the end, and submit these recordings to MUIS for verification.
3. Detailed Reporting	Provide a detailed report after the completion of the activity, including the number of participants, the lecture's duration, video recordings, and event documentation.

The stringent procedures applied to the substance of religious activities are aimed at ensuring they do not disrupt societal harmony. If MUIS identifies elements that lean towards radical thinking or promote actions contrary to government policies, a warning letter will be

³⁵ Muchammad Fariz Maulana Akbar and Muhammad Rijal Maulana, "Kajian Historisitas Tafsir Lughowi," *Jurnal Iman Dan Spiritualitas*, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jis.v2i2.18349>.

³⁶ Muzakkir Muhammad, "Analisis Sejarah Jam'u Al-Qur'an," *Jurnal Al-Mubarak: Jurnal Kajian Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.47435/al-mubarak.v5i1.293>.

³⁷ Warosari, "Analisis Peran MUIS Terhadap Kebijakan Pendidikan Islam Pada Madrasah Di Singapura."

issued to the organizers and speakers concerned, and they will no longer receive recommendations to speak at events within Singapore. Additionally, non-Singaporean citizens may face deportation to their home countries. According to information from various sources, this policy has been enforced strictly and without exception by Singaporean authorities. This demonstrates the Singaporean government's serious commitment to preventing radicalism and maintaining social stability.

Strategies and Approaches in Qur'anic Study for Preventing Radicalisation: An Analysis of Regulations and Practices in Singapore

Based on the description provided, the approach to Qur'anic study in Singapore plays a critical role in countering radicalisation and reinforcing social stability in this culturally diverse nation. Although the number of individuals involved in radical activities is relatively small, the Singaporean government views this threat with utmost seriousness, highlighting the importance of national security and stability. The study of the Quran in Singapore, as part of the effort to enliven the Quran, integrates Islamic teachings with the local social and cultural context, aligning with the concept of "living Qur'an." This approach emphasises not only understanding the Qur'anic text but also its application in contemporary contexts to prevent radicalisation and promote social harmony.³⁸

To address this challenge, Singapore adopts a multifaceted strategy centred on a profound and contextual understanding of Islamic teachings through Qur'anic study. Firstly, a thorough study of the Quran involves not only textual analysis but also the interpretation of exegesis, linguistic analysis, and the historical context in which the revelations were received. This holistic approach ensures that interpretations of Qur'anic teachings are based on a deep and comprehensive understanding, thereby reducing the likelihood of misuse by radical groups. Local contextualisation, which integrates Islamic teachings with Singapore's social and cultural values such as interfaith harmony and tolerance, ensures that the Quran's messages remain relevant and are not misinterpreted.³⁹

³⁸ Nur Chanifah, Abu Samsudin, and Ibnu Hajar Ansori. "Qur'anic Leadership: The Effort to Realize the Integrity of Leaders in Preventing Corruption." *International Journal of Educational Management and Innovation* 5.1 (2024): 24-38, <https://doi.org/10.12928/ijemi.v5i1.9173>; Ibnu Hajar Ansori, Q. P. Wilwadikta, and E. D. I. M. Prafita. "Meaning Construction in Ancak Tradition: A Study of Living Qur'an". *QOF*, vol. 7, no. 2, Dec. 2023, pp. 301-16, doi:10.30762/qof.v7i2.1446; Umi Hanik, and Ibnu Hajar Ansori. "The Study of Living Hadith of the Ancak Tradition in Wedoroklurak Village, Candi, Sidoarjo." *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 20.2: 217-231, <https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v20i2.2110>.

³⁹ Abdullah Saeed. "Rethinking 'Revelation' as a Precondition for Reinterpreting the Qur'an: A Qur'anic Perspective." *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 1.1 (1999): 93-114.

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Secondly, the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) plays a crucial role in overseeing and regulating Qur'anic studies. By establishing stringent guidelines for organising religious activities, MUIS ensures that the content delivered adheres to set standards and does not contain radical elements. Procedures such as submitting material modules, recording activities, and providing detailed reports ensure transparency and accountability in the delivery of Islamic teachings. MUIS also implements a tiered qualification system for Ustadz (muballigh), ensuring that only those meeting high standards are permitted to teach.

Thirdly, the methods of Qur'anic study in Singapore, including exegesis, thematic, linguistic, historical, and comparative approaches, play a crucial role in maintaining the integrity of Islamic teachings. Diverse exegesis methods, for instance, enable more accurate and in-depth interpretations, while thematic and historical analyses help contextualise Qur'anic verses within a broader framework. Linguistic analysis and comparative studies ensure that interpretations remain consistent with the original text and other sources.

Lastly, adherence to the guidelines set by MUIS demonstrates a systematic commitment to preventing the spread of radical ideologies. Strict enforcement of policies, including the possibility of deportation for non-Singaporean citizens who violate these regulations, underscores the government's resolve to address radicalisation firmly and uncompromisingly. This approach not only protects against radicalism but also raises awareness of the importance of tolerance and contextual understanding within Singapore's Muslim community, thereby strengthening social cohesion and interfaith harmony.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the approach to Qur'anic study in Singapore exemplifies a comprehensive and contextually relevant strategy to prevent radicalisation and maintain social stability within its multicultural society. By integrating rigorous textual analysis, contextual exegesis, and a range of methodological approaches, Singapore ensures that Qur'anic teachings are understood and applied accurately. The role of the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) in setting stringent guidelines and monitoring religious activities further safeguards against radical influences. This systematic and multifaceted approach not only helps prevent the spread of radical ideologies but also fosters a deeper understanding of Islamic principles aligned with Singapore's values of tolerance and social harmony, thereby reinforcing the nation's commitment to a stable and cohesive society.

Future research should focus on investigating the impact of contextualised Qur'anic studies on community cohesion and interfaith dialogue to assess their effectiveness in fostering social harmony. Evaluating the role of MUIS regulations in radicalisation prevention could provide valuable insights into their influence on the quality of religious education and the suppression of radical ideologies. Comparative studies of Qur'anic interpretation methods across various contexts may help identify best practices that can be adapted to different settings. Additionally, examining the impact of religious educators' qualifications on the success of radicalisation prevention strategies is crucial. Finally, assessing community perceptions of Qur'anic studies and related measures can highlight areas for improvement and address any gaps in current approaches.

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