

## Zhong Yong and moderation of Chinese Muslims in Indonesia

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**Abstract:** Chinese Muslims are a minority among Indonesian Muslims and are categorized as moderate Muslims. This research aims to identify the factors which contribute to moderation in this community. Using qualitative analysis, this research found that the classic Chinese philosophy, Confucianism, plays a big role. The concept of Zhong Yong in Confucianism is used by Chinese Muslims in Indonesia as their life philosophy even though many do not really know what it is. Research informants admit that even though they are Muslims, Confucianism is practiced and is well developed in their everyday lives. This is a concept of balance in life and they practice a moderate life in the Indonesian community in three ways: first, by balancing culture and religion through building mosques that are unique to Indonesia. These mosques, which are called Muhammad Cheng Hoo, use Chinese ornamentation. Second, trying to be innovative in the way they present Islam, so that Islamic teaching will be easily understood. Third, taking the middle ground to overcome any conflicts that may happen. Other aspects that are also important in order to understand Indonesian Chinese Muslims are family tradition and their interactions with Indonesians.

**Keywords:** Zhong Yong, Moderation, Chinese Muslim, Indonesia

### 1. Introduction

Data on the existence and development of Chinese Muslims in Indonesia is limited. In particular, there is limited data available on Chinese Muslims who are involved in radical movements, who are anti-Pancasila, or who are against the Republic of Indonesia. There are two main reasons for this: first, the majority of Chinese communities are Buddhist and Christian. Chinese Muslims are considered a minority, making their voices left unheard. Second, since the Dutch colonial era, the Chinese in Indonesia have tended to be viewed as an eastern stranger (Kwartanada, 2008), so they lack interaction with Indonesian people.

In terms of thought and knowledge, according to Bambang Sujanto (2019), Head of The Hajj Muhammad Cheng Hoo Indonesia Foundation (YHMCHI), Chinese Muslims in Indonesia follow Ahlu al-Sunna wa al-Jama'ah, the same as the majority of Indonesian Muslims. Most are affiliated with moderate Muslim organizations, such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdatul Ulama (NU). As Haryanto Satryo (2019), Head of the Indonesian Chinese-Muslim Association (PITI) of East Java, said, "we believe in aswaja". Hence, there are few Chinese Muslims that seem to think and act radically. However, there are exceptions. Felix Siauw, for instance, is a Chinese Muslim who is actively involved in da'wah activities, both in meetings and on social media. In Siauw's view, the idea of khilafah and Islamic state in Indonesia is very rational considering that khilafah is part of Islamic teachings. He has criticized the Indonesian government for disbanding Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI). He said that the government has failed to uphold the Islamic system (Jawa Pos, 20-09-2018). Felix Siauw's Instagram account is followed by some 4,3 million people. But, his views do not represent the religious attitudes of Chinese Muslims in general.

The missionary activities of Chinese Muslims in Indonesia are well accepted and appreciated. Being a minority does not prevent Chinese Muslims in Indonesia from being an active voice for moderate Islam. There are some well-known Chinese Muslim preachers, such as Hj. Tan Mei Wa in Surabaya, H. Mahdi in Magelang, and H. Iskandar Chang in Salatiga. The Hajj Muhammad Cheng Hoo Indonesia Foundation (YHMCHI) and the Indonesian Chinese-Muslim Association (PITI) have built Muhammad Cheng Hoo Mosques in: Batam, Jambi, Palembang, in Sumatra; Purbalingga, in Central Java; Surabaya, Malang, Pandaan, Jember, Banyuwangi, in East Java; Balikpapan, Samarinda, in Kalimantan; Makassar, Gowa, in Sulawesi; and West Nusa Tenggara. These mosques are not only a place for praying but have also become religious tourism objects.

This study aims to identify and to probe the factors underlying moderation in the Chinese Muslim community in Indonesia. This research, explores the connection between ancient Chinese thought and the moderate behavior of Indonesian Chinese Muslims. An important concept that helps to explain this moderate behavior is Zhong Yong which is derived from Confucianism. Grounded in this finding, this research attempts to answer three research questions: (1) How do Chinese Muslims in Indonesia view the Zhong Yong concept?; (2) Is the Zhong Yong concept

the foundation of moderation for Chinese Muslims in Indonesia?; and (3) Are there any other factors which can account for moderate Chinese Muslims in Indonesia?

## **2. Literature Review**

Many studies have been conducted to look at Zhong Yong. In general, those studies focus on three aspects: meaning of Zhong Yong philosophically (Li, 2004; Ni 2004; and Sze-Kar, 2008), its influences on psychology or mental healthiness (Yang, 2016 and Tseng and Huang, 2017), and its influences on the behavior of its adherents (He, 2011; Ping and Yihua, 2014; Yu and Wang, 2018).

In the philosophical aspect, it can be seen that all authors agree that Zhong Yong is a doctrine in Confucianism that emphasizes on the importance of mean in human's life. But there are differences among them related to the meaning of mean and how it works. Ames and Hall, for instance, translate Zhong Yong as "focusing the familiar". According to Holloway who reviewed the book, in this book Ames and Hall are not just translating the original text of Zhong Yong but also giving commentary to the texts. There were many elements of realities influenced to the presence of the texts. Therefore the philosophy can be easily understood. Li and Ni response to Ames and Hall's interpretation. Li shows his disagreement to the way Ames and Hall translated the text. He, for example, said that it is not really appropriate to translate Zhong Yong by separating the term into two words because it will lead to different meaning. In Chinese language if two words are compound into one new word, it will result in the new meaning. For Li, Zhong Yong cannot be translated as focusing the familiar. After explaining many terms related to Zhong Yong, Li concludes that Zhong Yong means "grand harmony". Sze-Kar was similar with that of Li. Interpreting Zhong Yong cannot be done adequately if the interpreter disregards the substantial meaning of the language. Language of Zhong Yong is a transcendent language.

Study on Zhong Yong from psychological aspect are reflected through the study of Yang, et al. Doing comparative study between undergraduate students who have high and lower believe in Zhong Yong was enable them to see that undergraduates students with high Zhong Yong are less anxiety and depress compare to those who have low Zhong Yong. Self-esteem of students with high Zhong Yong are higher than those who have low believe in Zhong Yong. Tseng and Huang who conducted comparative research on marriage persons who have high and low Zhong Yong found that those who have high Zhong Yong are using more holistic perspective and highly controlled their emotions in dealing with conflicts in their marriage life compare than those who have low Zhong Yong.

The third aspect, which is the relation between Zhong Yong and behavior of its adherents can be seen in the study of He. Applying quantitative study through analyzing questionnaire filled by family type business owners, He found that business owners who hold Zhong Yong tend to choose good family relation than merely benefits. Even though there is a risk for the development of business through hiring family members as employees, they are likely to believe that family based employees will be more loyal particularly at the time of crisis. In other words they are prefer to choose harmony within family rather than pursuing many benefits. Ping and Yihua in their study have also found there is a correlation between Zhong Yong and behavior of its believers, particularly in innovation intention of employees. However, they cannot measure how high or low is the innovation level, because other factors such as working environment and autonomy of the employees are also matters. Similar findings are also shown in the study of literatures conducted by Yao and Wang. Zhong Yong is positively correlated with innovative behavior of employees individually or in team. Employees that hold Zhong Yong are also likely to make their working environment peacefully. Yao and Wang suggest that more empirical researches to know the level of the correlation.

Based on our traces on the sources above, we can say that our study shares similarities as well as differences from the above studies. In our study we also look at the meaning of Zhong Yong for Chinese Muslims of Indonesia. We also would like to know correlation of Zhong Yong with individual or organizational behavior. But instead of looking at correlation between Zhong Yong and innovation of employees, we focus our study to look at religious behavior. Is it Zhong Yong that encourage Indonesian Chinese Muslims to be moderate in religious practice or any other factors?

## **3. Research Method**

This study employs a qualitative approach. According to Neuman (2014), in a qualitative approach, the researcher is the instrument of the study. Researchers actively interact with the environment, employ many logics in practice, are subjective, and use their personal perspective to gain a complete understanding of social life. A qualitative approach was selected to answer the first two problems of the study, while a descriptive method was employed to answer the third research question.

The unit of analysis of the study was Indonesian Chinese Muslim Communities. Using purposive sampling, the participants of the study were (1) the Central Management (DPP) and the Regional Management (DPD) of the Indonesian Chinese Muslim Association (PITI), (2) the Management of the Haji Muhammad Cheng Hoo Indonesia Foundation (YHMCHI), (3) the Management of the Haji Karim Oei Foundation in Jakarta, and (4) the Management

of the Al-Mahdi Foundation in Magelang. Interviews were held with twenty-one individuals from various parts of Indonesia, namely, Palembang, Jakarta, Samarinda, Makassar, Gowa, Purbalingga, Magelang, Salatiga, Semarang, Surabaya, Jember, Banyuwangi, and Bali. Finding participants was not an easy task because, in general, they 'conceal' their Muslim identity. Our exploration was conducted through community foundations and organizations managed by Chinese Muslims.

In addition, observations were made on the track record of Islamic missionary work carried out by Indonesian Chinese Muslims. These were conducted in fifteen Muhammad Cheng Hoo Mosques in Indonesia by identifying the history of the mosque, the person responsible for building the mosque, and the mosque management. Observations were also conducted on the Lautze Mosque, Jakarta, and the Al-Mahdi Mosque, Magelang.

The secondary data of the study was obtained from printed media, online media, books, documents, and archives related to Chinese Muslim organizations and foundations. Observations were conducted to collect data regarding the life of Indonesian Chinese Muslims, depicting the compatibility of the Spirit of Zhong Yong and Indonesian Chinese Muslim moderation (Spradley; 1980, Denzin and Lincoln; 2000).

The data was analyzed qualitatively. Analysis was done interactively and continuously. In order to ensure data credibility, triangulation and peer group discussion were conducted. Triangulation technique covers data collection triangulation, source triangulation, and time triangulation. Based on the peer group discussion, critiques, feedback, and suggestions were obtained (Sugiyono, 2009).

## **4. Results And Discussion**

### **4.1 Zhong Yong in Chinese Confucian Philosophy**

#### **4.1.1 Confucius: Philosophy Teacher from China**

Confucius was born in 551 BC in Lu, East China (Fung Yu Lan, 2015). He was known as K'ung Fu Tzu. He was a Chinese philosopher who developed a blended system between Chinese thought and beliefs. Confucius was a proponent of individual moral values and the idea that the government should serve its people using a good behavior model (Zarkasi, 2014). His ideology has significantly influenced Chinese life and East Asian life in general (Chang and Chu, 2002).

Confucius is considered one of the most influential people in the world. It is undeniable that Confucianism has played a pivotal role in supporting East Asia to become a crucial international political, economic, and security power. The strong East Asian character is formed by the moral values and social relationships taught by Confucius. The teaching of Confucius continues to be maintained in East Asia through four principles, namely jen (humanism), i (loyalty), li (politeness), and chih; wisdom, or liberal education (Yum, 1988).

#### **4.1.2 Confucianism**

In general, classic Confucianism is divided into four holy books about norms. The first, is Lunyu/The Confucian Analects. Lunyu has become one of the most influential books in the classical history of China. It is the earliest reference book about human matters, from the management of the state, companies, social problems, friendship, family, to self-control. According to Confucius, one way to reach absolute goodness is by conquering oneself and behaving politely. Regarding state life, Lunyu emphasizes political philosophy. Confucius taught that a leader's main duty is to obtain prosperity and happiness for his/her people. To this end, a leader should be the first to have good morals, and be a role model for his/her people. Through this manner, people's behavior can be formed.

The second, Mengzi (Mencius) was a student of Confucius's grandson (Zisi). He is viewed as the second most important philosopher in Confucianism. From an intellectual perspective, he attempted to continue and develop Confucius's teachings by proposing that human nature is basically good, as natural as water flowing downhill (Schwitzgebel, 2007). With regard to state life, Mencius followed the Ru tradition, that the state exists because it should (Adler and College, 2011). Humankind is viewed as possessing full consciousness and from the development of human relationships the state exists.

The third, Daxue/ The Great Learning. Daxue honors ethics, in family, society, and the state. The core of Confucianism is teaching and building humankind to obtain achievement. Daxue exists to realize human virtue, for the common people to reach virtue in the world (Johnston and Ping, 2012). With regard to state life, the world's goodness may be achieved if people practice virtue in the smallest scope themselves. The purpose of Daxue is to illustrate virtue, compassion, and to achieve the highest advantage. On the political level, Daxue supports both the people and the government. Thus, it can be simply stated that Daxue's virtue is illustrated by peace and a calm state condition (Legge, 1935).

The fourth, Zhong Yong/ The Doctrine of The Mean. One of the key points of the Doctrine of The Mean is that morality is viewed as the character of daily spontaneity, and that our experience is the basic form of Dao. In fact, it attempts to unify humans and nature in the term "heaven and earth" through adherence to moral values in daily life (Li, 2008).

#### **4.1.3 Zhong Yong/The Doctrine of The Mean as a doctrine of Confucianism**

Zhong Yong is the fourth holy book of Confucianism which is the focus of the present study. There are two views related to the writing of Zhong Yong. First, Tsze-sze, who was the grandson of Confucius. The book that is a part of Li Chi was written by Zi Shi (Kung Chi), consisting of 32 descriptive chapters and one chapter for closing. Zhu Xi then re-arranged this book in 1190, making Zhong Yong as one of the four holy books.

Doctrine of the mean is quite difficult to translate. Interestingly, the word polished with compound term (yong 庸) is found the key part of Zhuangzi, namely "Views that all things are the same," meaning that anything cannot be viewed as either low or high, yet it should be seen as the same (Eno, 2016). Only individuals with complete understanding know how to see it as one entity. The Zhuangzi chapter claims that a wise man will attempt to find out what actually happens without being interrupted by others so that he could correctly understand and act in any matter.

The main chapter of Zhong Yong states that there are two ways to obtain a holy path in this world and the afterlife. Both ways should balance. Religion is a guide to walk on the holy path. One may not be separated from religion even for a second. Accordingly, humankind should be afraid of God, and people who are able to control their emotion will create a harmonious situation. The middle ground is the main situation of this world, harmony is the way to go on the holy path in this world. When it can be done in balance and harmony, prosperity will cover the world, all creatures will be cared for.

#### **4.1.4 New Confucianism: Politics of Everyday Life**

Modification of classic Confucianism occurred in an attempt to make it interact with Western rationalization, resulting in the concept of Neo-Confucianism. This thought was developed by Professor Daniel Bell, a western academic who had spent a long time teaching in China. He states that today's rise of China, both regarding governance and social matters, is related to the rise of Confucianism among Chinese people. He calls this phenomenon "the revival of the Confucian in politics and everyday life".(Bell, 2008) Confucius was able to explain how changes in various factors in China stemmed from Eastern values.

On the one hand, he regrets how western scholars have often directed their analysis at democracy, openness, and technology as the key to China's state of development today. On the other hand, he does not deny the fact that western values such as democracy, solidarity, human rights, and law still need to be adopted. More importantly, these principles should be adjusted to fit classic Confucianism. New Confucianism can be a life reference for the Chinese government and people, not only for the present but also for the future.

According to Bell, Neo Confucianism in modern China could be the answer to China's future challenges. The principles of harmony and respect in Confucianism have become the basis for improving regulatory legislation concerning workers in China. Bell is convinced that Confucianism is a cosmopolitan, universal world view within the concept of tianxia which can survive and adapt with globalization. For Bell, New Confucianism will inform the implementation of pragmatic concepts in daily life practices.

## **4.2 Indonesian Chinese Muslims' View of Zhong Yong**

One's choice of attitude and behavior are significantly influenced by his/her values, especially the values which originate from religion. However, such choice does not always correspond with knowledge about the source of such values. In fact, many people do not really know their religious text and teaching, yet they behave in ways considered to be good. In contrast, many people do bad things although they know that their behavior is forbidden by their religion. Such a phenomenon is found in our study about the Chinese Muslims' knowledge of Zhong Yong. In fact, Chinese Muslims often exhibit moderation in their life in Indonesia.

Our research identified at least two informants who definitely knew and had learned about Zhong Yong. For instance Mr. Iskandar Chang, Head of PITI Salatiga, states:

"Accidentally, my undergraduate thesis discussed Confucius philosophy, it was entitled "Filsafat Pendidikan Konghucu dalam Perspektif Islam". I have many references related to Confucius's teaching. Confucius as a Teacher, The Sacred Book of China, The four Holy books of Confucius translated by James Legge, "The Analect of Confucianism", including Zhong Yong, and some references that admit the greatness of Confucius thought, such as a work by Muhammad Sibel, "Hikmatu al-Shiin", you can copy them later if you need it. "

Another informant, H. Sulaiman said,

"Clearly, Chinese people know Confucianism. Yet, their understanding may differ from one another. The level of their understanding depends on their willingness to learn it. I had read a bit about Sushu, including Zhong Yong. Yet I had not learned in-depth about some aspects".

The majority the informants did not know much about the details of Zhong Yong as written in the four Si Shu in Chinese Doctrine. However, all informants recognized and even implemented it in their daily life. They viewed it as a living doctrine that developed traditionally, especially in the family environment . As stated by H. Fefen from PITI DKI Jakarta:

“I had not directly read Confucius’s books, Yet, we, as Chinese, use it as our life philosophy from generation to generation. China is a great civilization and able to be the world's leader, supported by a mature mindset, which comes from Confucius’s philosophy. This doctrine invites all people (at all levels) to be a good individual”.

His statement is in agreement with H. Maksum, Head of PITI Semarang, who said

“Confucius is Chinese Philosophy, and also Indonesians who descended from China. Although I have not read Confucius’ books, this doctrine is implemented from generation to generation by the Chinese”.

In addition, HMY Bambang Sudjanto, of the advisory board of PITI East Java, said

“Chinese Confucianism is a philosophy and a wise thought which originated from humankind. However, in Indonesia, based on Gus Dur's policy, it is recognized as a religion. Because it teaches virtue starting from the individual level until the world-level, its purpose is harmony. Thus, if we want to be successful in this world, we should not only learn Confucianism but also implement it in daily life. I am sure that today's 3rd-5th generations of Chinese Indonesians did not directly learn Confucianism. However, it is possible that they directly practice Confucianism, considering that most of their ancestors learnt and implemented Confucianism, I honestly learnt only a few aspects of Confucianism, he he he..”.

As a valued philosophy, Zhong Yong, in the Indonesian Chinese Muslim’s view, is inseparable from the basic meaning of Zhong Yong, the mean, and the middle way (Chan, 2012). As stated by Mr. Iskandar Chang:

“Apart from that, Zhong Yong teaches Chinese people to perform balance, including in religious life. So, to hold a religion, when it is just for you and does not benefit other people, what is it for? There are self-restraint, national restraint, and social restraint. When I am with other people and they feel comfort, that is Zhong Yong. Differences are precious, it should be accepted wholeheartedly. That is how I view it in this context.”

This is a conscious choice made by the Chinese Muslim community in Indonesia because this balance is viewed as a life philosophy, as stated by H. Denny, the Head of PITI DKI Jakarta,

“I apply it in my life because this balance is a part of life philosophy. But, sometimes I find I tend to choose one aspect (that I had not been able to balance), which is a learning process. One of our figureheads is Gus Dur. In addition to his concern about us as a minority in Indonesia through his policies (revoking the President's Decision made in the Soeharto Era, which forbid Chinese culture and symbols in Indonesia, even recognizing Confucianism as a state religion, among other policies), I see him as capable of balancing situation and condition. When common people saw his visit to Israel, or his concern for ethnic Chinese, or his policies, they saw that Gus Dur tended to give more concern to Israel, the Chinese, and so forth. He implemented life balance in order to establish harmony”.

When it is used as a life philosophy, Zhong Yong can be implemented anywhere. It applies universally and it is not exclusive to certain ethnicities. This is in line with H. Edy Darmawan, Head of PITI Jember who said,

"We should have balance thoughts because this teaching brings virtue. For instance, an Islamic missionary established a Muallaf Center, in collaboration with the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Jember. In developing muallaf at Masjid Cheng Hoo Jember, we do not limit the participants to the Chinese, but any ethnic can make their pledge and join, as long as they adhere to the predetermined rules.

According to Chinese Muslims, one of the ways to achieve success is through moderation and balance. As Mr. Jos Oetomo, an elder member of PITI, said,

“In all life aspects, Mr. Jos Oetomo always states the importance of harmony. In his business life, family life, educational life, social work life, all of those need balance and harmony. He even makes friends with his enemies. He teaches us, his staff and employees, all of these things

Another opinion is given by Merry, Secretary of DPW PITI South Sumatera, who said,

"I try to implement balance in my activity because since I was a child, my parents taught me to think in a just and balanced way. When there are differences in beliefs between family members (Confucianism and Islam), Alhamdulillah, we can still maintain a peaceful and harmonious life”

In short, Zhong Yong, or balance, enjoys its place among the Chinese Muslim community in Indonesia even though they did not learn it academically. Zhong Yong is viewed as a living doctrine in all life aspects of the Chinese Muslim community.

Interestingly, this doctrine of the mean and the middle way is viewed as a doctrine that is close to Islam. Many Indonesian Chinese Muslims admitted that many concepts and doctrines of Confucianism are compatible with Islamic teachings. As Iskandar Chang, PITI Central Java, explained,

“In my opinion, there is a real thread between Confucianism and Islamic tradition. Confucianism greatly respects parents and ancestors even though they hold different beliefs to their children or grandchildren. In Islam, we know this as “Birru al-walidain”, in Confucianism this “u hao”. When their parents died, Confucians also prayed for them ( at 7 days, 100 days, and 1000 days, and so forth), in Islam, people know this as "tahlilan". Both Islam and Confucianism respect traditions, both of them are capable of establishing excellent dialogues with their tradition (for instance, pilgrimage). The concept of humanity in Confucianism “Within four seas, we are all brothers” is

identical with Surah Al-Hujurat; 13. Their concept of God is also the same, Confucianism- The Tao of Tauhid, recognizes the concept of God in Confucius; He is invisible, untouchable, yet exists. However, the depiction of God is not continued by the Chinese. One of the reasons is that China is a communist country. What is more, the fanaticism toward Confucius has resulted in visualizations such as statues, and other things”

One of the reasons for the development of Islam among the Chinese is the similarity of certain aspects with Islamic teaching. This is admitted by Mulyono Li, Head of PITI Bali,

“I have not read Confucius books directly from its source. My father has a wider knowledge of Confucianism because he was a Confucian before entering Islam. His understanding is quite good. I merely inherit Islam blood from him. But I am sure that what my father teaches us is inseparable from Confucianism. He teaches it through daily behavior and mindset. Since Confucianism and Islam are close and are similar, my father prefers to choose Islam

### **4.3 Zhong Yong and The Establishment of Indonesian Chinese Muslim Moderation**

We found three aspects of balance and the middle way which establish Indonesian Chinese Muslims’ moderation. Firstly, the ability to balance culture and religion. Secondly, the balance of da’wah method and community needs. Thirdly, the middle way in conflict settlement.

The Balance of Culture and Religion. Indonesian Chinese Muslims have managed to balance cultural and religious dimensions. Muhammad Cheng Hoo Mosques are located throughout Indonesia, and others such as Masjid Al-Mahdi Mosque in Magelang, Lautze Mosque in Jakarta and Bandung, purposefully use pagoda architecture. Indonesian Chinese Muslims attempt to maintain their Chinese tradition and culture, and associate it with Islam as their new identity. It is realized by building mosques. Since Islam had not firmly regulated the mosque construction (except qibla), they make ijihad to build a mosque by combining culture, religion, and history in the architecture and the name of the mosque. Pagoda architectural style and graded roof in Cheng Hoo mosques have been seen since the Qin and Han Dynasty (221 BC- 23 AD). With regard to color, Cheng Hoo mosques choose Chinese colors, namely red and golden yellow, interspersed by green to represent Islam. Also seen in Cheng Hoo mosques are a closed podium (characteristic of Muhammadiyah) and drum (characteristic of Nahdatul Ulama). This suggests that Indonesian Chinese Muslims have a close relationship with the two biggest religious organizations in Indonesia.

Figure 1. Visualization of Podium and Drum in Cheng Hoo Mosque

Source: Muhammad Cheng Hoo Mosque



Balance can also be seen in Al Mahdi Mosque, Magelang. Built by the owner, H. Mahdi / Kwee Giok Yong, in an elite residential area, Armada Estate, Magelang, this mosque’s architecture resembles a Pagoda. However, its name is not Cheng Hoo like other Indonesian Chinese Muslim mosques. Al-Mahdi Mosque has eleven lanterns symbolizing Chinese identity, embossed with 99 Asmaul Husna. Each window of the mosque is round, following Chinese style architecture, embossed with verses from the Al-quran. Its inner ceiling is octagonal (pat kwa), symbolizing glory and luck in Chinese tradition. The ornamentation of the Al-Mahdi mosque represents the acculturation of culture and religion because they complement each other. The spread of religion can be enhanced through culture, and culture can be enhanced if it is supported by religion.

Figure 2. Lanterns embossed with Asmaul Husna



Source: Al-Mahdi Mosque in Magelang City

This balance is also developed by Chinese Muslims in Jember as explained by H. Edy Darmawan, Head of PITI Jember,

“We should have balanced thought because this teaching brings virtue. We attempt to create balance between Chinese culture and Islamic Missionary. On every Islamic Holiday, we use Chinese cultural icons (such as the Lion dance), but the essence of the event adheres to Islamic teaching. While for traditional Chinese Festivals, such as Chinese New Year, we perform Istighosah. We invite all elements of the government, public figures, religious figures, and the community, Alhamdulillah, they accept this event well.

The balance of the da’wah method and community needs. Indonesian Chinese Muslims have developed attractive and interesting innovations in regard to Islamic missionaries. As muallaf, Indonesian Chinese Muslims have different levels of religious knowledge. That knowledge depends on how long since they converted to Islam, their surroundings as well as their support facility.

Most of these attractive da’wah methods implement the value of balance. For instance, the “roadshow” method carried out by H. Mahdi in Magelang. He actively gives talks among the Muhammadiyah Community. It is interactive, with a question-answer session. Strong word choice, outfit, and reasoning seem to show “the same frequency” between the presenter and the participants. In contrast, when invited to speak with the NU community, he employed a different method, outfit, material, and jokes. When he was invited to speak to the Javanese Islam (Islam Kejawen) community, he created balance between his method and his participant’s needs.

Another example can be seen from the da’wah method used by H. Edy Darmawan in the management of the Cheng Hoo Mosque Jember. He has developed a “soft” method when presenting routine recitation which targets muallaf participants. He was afraid if he was too rigid in teaching Islam, muallaf would find it difficult to practice Islam in their life. A special strategy is also implemented for the youth so that they can enjoy Islam. sFor instance, the ngabuburit program run every Ramadhan targets the youth in Jember. This encourages the youth to be closer with the mosque. The participants are required to perform "standup comedy" in front of the Cheng Hoo Mosque This is followed by tausiyah and then ends by breaking the fast together.

Da’wah strategy is also implemented by the management of the Cheng Hoo Mosque of Surabaya, in particular the organization of tarawih prayers during Ramadhan. Similar experiences were found among Chinese Muslims through PITI and Cheng Hoo Mosques in Samarinda, Palembang, and Bali, which attempt to balance the missionary method and community needs. Bambang Sudjanto, an elder member of YHMCHI, asserts:

“All mosque managements in YHMCHI involve monthly/ routine recitation, annual events (MTQ Masjid Cheng Hoo), donations for orphans, education, and other events. With regard to practice, since our advisory board comprises leaders from MUI, Muhammadiyah, and NU, when performing tarawih prayer, we facilitate both eight rakats and twenty rakats. In other words, technically, people who want to perform eight rakats in tarawih can stop and continue with witr prayer on their own, for those who want to perform twenty rakats, there is an Imam who will continue to finish twenty rakats, followed by witr prayer. This is done because Cheng Hoo Mosque is attended by a variety of people.”

The Middle Way in Conflict Settlement. Not only is there balance in building mosques and performing da’wah, Indonesian Chinese Muslims also believes in the middle way in settling a conflict. This is in line with the value and spirit of Zhong Yong in Confucianism tradition. When PITI is in crisis due to internal conflict, management seeks the middle way as soon as possible. As H. Denny Sanusi said;

“Some people consider this organization important for developing Islamic knowledge for muallaf, while other people try to take advantage of this organization and view it as a commodity for sale. I cannot tell you the details as it may trigger internal conflict. Eventually, a firm and respected PITI leader, Mr. Anton Medan, has emerged so that the group who tries to ‘play’ by taking advantage of PITI steps back.”

Such dynamics are also felt by regional management. Seeing this conflict potential, regional PITI management maintains balance by not worsening the conflict and improving missionary actualization through DPD and DPW PITI in each region. PITI is a settled organization in terms of internal conflict management. Although they had not directly learnt about the Spirit of Zhong Yong, they practice its values in daily life from generation to generation. They can take the middle way in managing conflict. DPD and regional DPW PITI are not carried away by conflict in central DPP PITI and are able to balance organizational performance in guiding *mualaf* and *da'wah*.

#### **4.4 Other Factors Underlying Indonesian Chinese Muslim Moderation**

##### **4.4.1 Internal**

Being moderate is one way for Indonesian Chinese Muslims to be accepted and to try to maintain family relationships. They want to prove that being a Muslim does not mean becoming a beggar, a radical, or a terrorist. However, pressure from non-Muslim family members can lead to difficult choices, leave Islam or leave home.

H. Nurawi, the Chief of YHMCHI, was rejected by his family. He recalled his family asking him whether or not he was sure that he wanted to be a Muslim, given that being a Muslim was synonymous with being a beggar. Mr. H. Iskandar Chang, PITI Salatiga, and H. Denny, PITI Jakarta, were expelled from their family for becoming a Muslim. A similar experience was reported by Mrs. Linda from DPW PITI Yogyakarta, who said:

"I remember that my brother was against me becoming a Muslim. Not only my family, the Chinese community also criticized my decision. Chinese people's view of Muslims is negative. Many Muslims are not successful, and they often ask for charity. When they want to build a mosque, they ask for donations, to help orphans and the poor, they also ask for donations. Some people even say 'be careful about being Muslim, you will get asked for many donations'. I was expelled from my family and community, but then I moved to Jogja and got married to an Indonesian Muslim.

##### **4.4.2 External**

There are a number of external factors that contribute to Indonesian Chinese Muslim adaptation and self-adjustment, including economic, social-religious, and socio-cultural aspects. The economic aspect is the dominant external factor among Indonesian Chinese Muslims. In addition to challenges from their family, they face challenges in their economic and social environment. They need to adapt to their surroundings to survive. Their entrepreneurial background has taught them that establishing good relationships is the main factor of life success. For instance, H. Edy Darmawan, PITI Jember., was the only Muslim in his family. At the beginning of his *muallaf* period, he was heavily criticized. However, those criticisms began to fade away when he was able to prove his success like any other Chinese Indonesian. The story of having greater success when being a Muslim was also experienced by a number of respondents, including: H. Tjandra Gunawan in Jember, H. Iskandar Chang in Salatiga, H. Mulyono Lee in Bali, H. Maksum in Semarang, and HM. Jos Oetomo in Samarinda. If Indonesian Chinese Muslims were radical and extreme, it will affect their business and investment. This is in line with the explanation of Mrs. Linda, PITI Yogyakarta, who said,

"The challenge faced by Indonesian Chinese Muslims is quite significant in economic terms because in practice our friendship and business relations laugh at us and stay away from us, making our business network limited. So, being moderate is a solution for us to maintain good relationships. Considering that Chinese Indonesians are a minority, if we cannot adjust ourselves to the surroundings, it is no different from suicide. The majority of Indonesian Muslims are moderate, so we follow them.

The characteristics and propensity of Indonesian Chinese Muslims differ one from another, depending on the social-religious life of their surroundings. This is supported by the account of Iskandar Chang, PITI Salatiga, who said;

"Each region of PITI has different characteristics, depending on the development of Muslims in their respective regions. In downtown Yogyakarta, PITI tends to be Muhammadiyah, in suburban Yogya, PITI tend to be close with NU. Likewise, in East Java and Palembang, PITI tends to be close with NU. In Magelang, PITI is affiliated more with Yaman, Hadramaut. In Sulawesi, there are some salafi Chinese Muslim figures. This depends on the dynamics of the Muslim majority in each region.

In line with this, Hj. Merry, PITI South Sumatera, said that because the majority of Palembang people are *Nahdliyin* (followers of NU), the Chinese Muslims also become *Nahdliyin*. This is associated with their existence among the community. Bigger challenges are faced by Mr. Mulyono Lee of PITI Bali. His dual minority identity limits both his economic and social activity. He said that since the Bali Bombing, Hindu Balinese people's sentiment toward Muslims has changed. The government seems to complicate the permit process to build mosques and prayer rooms in Bali. Furthermore, routine recitation activity is always monitored. By showing moderation, Chinese Muslims in Bali can build networks in their economic and social environment.

Evidence of the socio-cultural life configuration of Indonesian Chinese Muslims can be found in Makassar, South Sulawesi where there are many Salafi Chinese Muslims, who tend to be more "hard and rigid" in understanding Islam. This is associated with the cultural condition and dynamics in that region. Chinese Muslims

compete in the economic market against Buginese Muslims and Makassarese Muslims, who are known as successful traders. This reality influences the religious model of Chinese Muslims there. Interestingly, the Cheng Hoo Mosque in Makassar was built by a Makassarrese Muslim trader, Hj. Ramlah Kalla Aksa, not by Chinese Muslims.

Figure 3. Cheng Hoo Mosque in Makassar



Cheng Hoo Mosque, Makassar



Inscription of Mosque Management Handover from Hj. Ramlah Kalla Aksa to PITI South Sulawesi.

## 5. Conclusion

The survival strategy shown by Indonesian Chinese Muslims is in harmony with the principle of new Confucianism called 'politics of everyday life.' Most Chinese Muslims said that they had to adjust themselves to their surroundings. Confucianism principles of harmony and respect for each other is maintained and applied by Chinese Muslims. As a stranger and minority, they realize that they should respect others. Thus, through harmony, conflict can be avoided.

From twenty-one Indonesian Chinese Muslim figures who were involved in the management of PITI, YHMCHI, Haji Karim Oei Foundation (YHKO), only two knew of and or had read about the concept of Zhong Yong in Confucianism. While most of the participants do not understand the Zhong Yong concept, it was admitted that Confucianism continues to live and grow, and is implemented in daily life from one generation to the next. They admit that their moderate character emerges from the Zhong Yong doctrine.

This is supported by the findings on Indonesian Chinese Muslims' three forms of balance and the middle way. Firstly, the ability to balance culture and religion. This is shown by the symbolization of the Muhammad Cheng Hoo Mosques and its ornamentation, which combines cultural and religious symbols. Secondly, the balance of da'wah method and community needs. Indonesian Chinese Muslims have developed innovations in delivering da'wah. Thirdly, the middle way in settling a conflict. Indonesian Chinese Muslims can take the middle way when internal organizational conflict emerges.

In addition, this study identified other factors underlying Chinese Muslim moderation. Internal factors relate to the family. Chinese Muslims faced considerable challenges from their families. Criticism, even expulsion, had been experienced by Chinese Muslims due to the Chinese's negative view of the Muslim community. However, Chinese Muslims were able to stifle this conflict by proving their capability. They succeeded in building a positive, moderate Muslim image. External factors concern adaptation to economic and social-religious contexts, as well as socio-cultural life configuration.

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