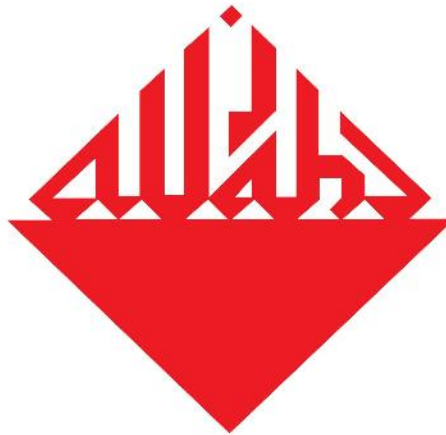


STUDIA ISLAMIKA

INDONESIAN JOURNAL FOR ISLAMIC STUDIES

Volume 30, Number 3, 2023



PRIORITIZING LIFE OVER RELIGION
IN INDONESIA'S COVID-19 FATWAS:
THE FATWAS OF NU, MUHAMMADIYAH, AND MUI

Syafiq Hasyim

THE RELIGIOUS IDENTITY OF ROHINGYA REFUGEES
IN MALAYSIA

Nur Nadia Lukmanulhakim & Mohd Al Adib Samuri

RISALAT AL-SHEIKH ASNAWI AL-QUDS AL-JAWI:
REBUTTAL OF JAWI ULAMA
AGAINST FATWA OF THE MECCAN ULAMA

Jajang A. Rohmana

STUDIA ISLAMIKA

STUDIA ISLAMIKA

Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies

Vol. 30, no. 3, 2023

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Saiful Mujani

MANAGING EDITOR

Oman Fathurahman

EDITORS

Jamhari

Didin Syafruddin

Jajat Burbanudin

Fuad Jabali

Ismatu Ropi

Saiful Umam

Dadi Darmadi

Din Wahid

Jajang Jabroni

Euis Nurlaelawati

INTERNATIONAL EDITORIAL BOARD

M. Quratish Shihab (Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University of Jakarta, INDONESIA)

Martin van Bruinessen (Utrecht University, NETHERLANDS)

John R. Bowen (Washington University, USA)

M. Kamal Hasan (International Islamic University, MALAYSIA)

Virginia M. Hooker (Australian National University, AUSTRALIA)

Edwin P. Wieringa (Universität zu Köln, GERMANY)

Robert W. Hefner (Boston University, USA)

Rémy Madinier (Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS), FRANCE)

R. Michael Feener (National University of Singapore, SINGAPORE)

Michael F. Laffan (Princeton University, USA)

Minako Sakai (The University of New South Wales, AUSTRALIA)

Annabel Teh Gallop (The British Library, UK)

Syafaatun Almirzanah (Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University of Yogyakarta, INDONESIA)

ASSISTANT TO THE EDITORS

Testriono

Muhammad Nida' Fadlan

Rangga Eka Saputra

Abdullah Maulani

Savran Billahi

Endi Aulia Garadian

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ADVISOR

Benjamin J. Freeman

Daniel Peterson

Batool Moussa

ARABIC LANGUAGE ADVISOR

Tb. Ade Asnawi

Yuli Yasin

COVER DESIGNER

S. Prinka

STUDIA ISLAMIKA (ISSN 0215-0492; E-ISSN: 2355-6145) is an international journal published by the Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University of Jakarta, INDONESIA. It specializes in Indonesian Islamic studies in particular, and Southeast Asian Islamic studies in general, and is intended to communicate original researches and current issues on the subject. This journal warmly welcomes contributions from scholars of related disciplines. All submitted papers are subject to double-blind review process.

STUDIA ISLAMIKA has been accredited by The Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education, Republic of Indonesia as an academic journal (Decree No. 32a/E/KPT/2017).

STUDIA ISLAMIKA has become a CrossRef Member since year 2014. Therefore, all articles published by STUDIA ISLAMIKA will have unique Digital Object Identifier (DOI) number.

STUDIA ISLAMIKA is indexed in Scopus since 30 May 2015.

Editorial Office:

STUDIA ISLAMIKA, Gedung Pusat Pengkajian
Islam dan Masyarakat (PPIM) UIN Jakarta,
Jl. Kertamukti No. 5, Pisangan Barat, Cirendeu,
Ciputat 15419, Jakarta, Indonesia.
Phone: (62-21) 7423543, 7499272, Fax: (62-21) 7408633;
E-mail: studia.islamika@uinjkt.ac.id
Website: <http://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/studia-islamika>

Annual subscription rates from outside Indonesia, institution:
US\$ 75,00 and the cost of a single copy is US\$ 25,00;
individual: US\$ 50,00 and the cost of a single copy is US\$
20,00. Rates do not include international postage and
handling.

Please make all payment through bank transfer to: **PPIM,
Bank Mandiri KCP Tangerang Graha Karnos, Indonesia,**
account No. **101-00-0514550-1 (USD),**
Swift Code: bmrriidja

Harga berlangganan di Indonesia untuk satu tahun, lembaga:
Rp. 150.000,-, harga satu edisi Rp. 50.000,-; individu:
Rp. 100.000,-, harga satu edisi Rp. 40.000,-. Harga belum
termasuk ongkos kirim.



Pembayaran melalui **PPIM, Bank Mandiri KCP Tangerang
Graha Karnos, No. Rek: 128-00-0105080-3**

Table of Contents

Articles

- 407 *Syafiq Hasyim*
Prioritizing Life over Religion
in Indonesia's Covid-19 Fatwas:
The Fatwas of NU, Muhammadiyah, and MUI
- 439 *Nur Nadia Lukmanulhakim & Mohd Al Adib Samuri*
The Religious Identity of Rohingya Refugees
in Malaysia
- 469 *Jajang A. Rohmana*
Risālat al-Sheikh Asnawī al-Quds al-Jāwī:
Rebuttal of Jawi Ulama
against Fatwa of the Meccan Ulama
- 495 *Arif Maftuhin*
Disability and Islamic Law in Indonesia:
Beyond the *Rukhṣah*
- 525 *Ali Munhanif & A. Bakir Ihsan*
Ideas, Politics, and the Making
of Muslim Democracy:
An Historical Trajectory in Indonesia

- 561 *Arief Subhan*
Al-madrasah (Madrasah) am al-madrasah
al-'āmmah (Sekolah): al-Mufaḍḍalah
'inda atbā' jam'iyyah al-Muḥammadiyah
wa Nahḍah al-'Ulamā' fi Indūnīsiyā

Book Review

- 595 *Zezen Zaenal Mutaqin*
Sharia Yes, Sharia State No:
Negosiasi dan Akomodasi Syari'ah di Indonesia

Document

- 607 *Abdullah Maulani*
Revealing New Insights: Preserving Islamic
Manuscripts in Eastern Indonesia

Nur Nadia Lukmanulhakim & Mohd Al Adib Samuri

The Religious Identity of Rohingya Refugees in Malaysia

Abstract: *This paper explores the role of religious identity in the experiences of Rohingya refugees in Malaysia. It explores how their religious identity shapes their social engagement, coping mechanisms, and integration approaches. In contrast to focusing solely on race, this study underscores the significance of religion, especially in a Muslim-majority country like Malaysia, where Rohingya seek refuge from religious persecution while upholding their faith. Through qualitative analysis, the paper examines post-migration challenges faced by Rohingya refugees in integrating with the host community and maintaining their religious identity. Despite sharing the Islamic faith with many Malaysians, Rohingya encounter difficulties in integration and often feel marginalized. They establish community-centric spaces to preserve their religious practices and cultural heritage. This research underscores the complex interaction between religious identity and social integration among Muslim refugees in Muslim-majority countries, offering crucial insights that will inform integration policies and interventions.*

Keywords: Rohingya, Refugees, Religious Identity, Islam, Malaysia.

Abstrak: Artikel ini mengeksplorasi peran identitas agama dalam pengalaman para pengungsi Rohingya yang membentuk keterlibatan sosial, mekanisme penanggulangan, dan pendekatan integrasi mereka di Malaysia. Berbeda dengan hanya fokus pada ras, studi ini menekankan pentingnya agama, terutama di negara mayoritas Muslim seperti Malaysia, di mana Rohingya mencari perlindungan dari penindasan agama sambil mempertahankan identitas keimanan mereka. Melalui analisis kualitatif, artikel ini menguji tantangan paska migrasi yang dihadapi oleh Rohingya dalam berintegrasi dengan komunitas tuan rumah dan mempertahankan identitas agama mereka. Meskipun berbagi identitas keislaman dengan penduduk Malaysia, Rohingya yang menghadapi kesulitan dalam integrasi, seringkali merasa terpinggirkan. Mereka mendirikan ruang yang berpusat pada komunitas untuk mempertahankan praktik keagamaan dan warisan budaya mereka. Penelitian ini juga menekankan interaksi kompleks antara identitas agama dan integrasi sosial di antara para pengungsi Muslim di negara mayoritas Muslim, serta menawarkan sudut pandang krusial untuk merumuskan kebijakan integrasi dan intervensi.

Kata kunci: Rohingya, Pengungsi, Identitas Keagamaan, Islam, Malaysia.

ملخص: يستكشف هذا المقال دور الهوية الدينية في تجارب اللاجئين الروهينجا في ماليزيا. ويستكشف هذا المقال أيضاً كيف تشكل هويتهم الدينية المشاركة الاجتماعية، وآليات التكيف، وأساليب التكامل. وعلى النقيض من التركيز فقط على العرق، تؤكد هذه الدراسة على أهمية الدين، خاصة في البلدان ذات الأغلبية المسلمة مثل ماليزيا، حيث يبحث الروهينجا عن ملجأ من الاضطهاد الديني مع الحفاظ على هويتهم الدينية. من خلال التحليل النوعي، تتناول هذه المقالة تحديات ما بعد الهجرة التي يواجهها الروهينجا في الاندماج مع المجتمعات المضيفة والحفاظ على هويتهم الدينية. وعلى الرغم من تقاسم الهوية الإسلامية مع السكان الماليزيين، يواجه الروهينجا صعوبات في الاندماج، وغالباً ما يشعرون بالتهميش. لقد أنشأوا مساحات تتمحور حول المجتمع للحفاظ على ممارساتهم الدينية وتراثهم الثقافي. يؤكد هذا المقال على التفاعلات المعقدة بين الهوية الدينية والاندماج الاجتماعي بين اللاجئين المسلمين في البلدان ذات الأغلبية المسلمة، ويقدم رؤى مهمة لصياغة سياسات التكامل والتدخل.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الروهينجا، اللاجئين، الهوية الدينية، الإسلام، ماليزيا.

Recent scholarly discourse has increasingly focused on the role of religious identity in refugee experiences (Hasan, Mitschke, and Ravi 2018; Di Lorenzo Pires and Zahreddine 2021; Şafak-Ayvazoğlu et al. 2021). Discourse on this subject is essential for several reasons. Firstly, religious identity plays a significant role in shaping refugees' sense of belonging and well-being. It provides them with comfort, strength, and community support during displacement and uncertainty. Secondly, understanding the religious dimensions of refugee experiences can inform culturally sensitive interventions and support mechanisms that recognize and respect the religious beliefs and practices of refugees. Thirdly, religious identity often intersects with other aspects of refugees' identities, such as ethnicity and nationality, contributing to the complexities of their experiences and integration processes. Religious identity significantly influences the social engagement, coping mechanisms, and acculturation approaches of refugees throughout their migration. It also shapes their interactions with host communities, especially in developed Western nations. Wu et al. (2021) explored the interrelation of religiosity and well-being among refugees in New York, emphasizing the importance of religious freedom for their sense of belonging. However, the authors noted that religiosity alone does not guarantee better inclusion.

Religious identity is crucial for Muslim refugees as it provides comfort, strength, pride, and humility (Hasan, Mitschke, and Ravi 2018). This identity profoundly influences coping strategies and acculturation preferences, with the more strongly affiliated leaning toward integration and those with weaker ties tending toward assimilation (Şafak-Ayvazoğlu et al. 2021). Most existing research focuses on Middle Eastern refugees emerging from non-religious conflicts and settling in developed countries. However, there remains a notable gap in understanding how other refugee groups from different regions, such as the Rohingya in transit countries like Malaysia, where Islam is the majority religion, adapt and practice their religious identity. For the Rohingya, religious identity and citizenship have been central to their discrimination and forced migration over the years (Leider 2018; Kipgen 2019; Alam 2018; M. Islam 2020). The Rohingya Muslims have been doubly victimized in Myanmar due to radicalization among a section of Buddhists there, compounded by state security forces and Buddhist extremists (Subedi and Garnett 2020). This backdrop has intensified their struggle to

maintain their religious and cultural identities post-migration amid persecution and human rights abuses. Rebolledo (2019) and Mim (2020) highlighted that religious practices among Rohingya refugees in places like Bangladesh are crucial for preserving their cultural identity, negotiating with local authorities, and building solidarity with host communities.

Rohingya refugees in Malaysia encounter various challenges related to their religious identity. Despite being fellow Muslims in a Muslim-majority country, they struggle to integrate into the wider Malaysian Muslim community. Language barriers, legal restrictions, and socioeconomic disparities compound this struggle. As a marginalized and stateless population, Rohingya refugees face discrimination and exclusion, limiting their access to essential services and opportunities for social and economic integration. Additionally, their religious identity exposes them to heightened vulnerability, with reports of religious persecution and restrictions on practicing their faith.

The present study aims to explore the religious identity of Rohingya refugees and examine the role of their faith in their migration and settlement in Malaysia, as well as the strategies employed to maintain and strengthen their religious identity. The study aims to inform policymakers, civil society organizations, and governments through the insights and findings of this research to enhance their understanding of the religious identity and practices of Rohingya refugees in transit and host countries. The following section presents a review of the literature on the religious identity of Rohingya refugees and the role of religion in their post-migration experience. The subsequent sections detail the research methods, findings, and discussion. The study concludes with a summary and the overall implications of this research.

Religious Identity in the Muslim Context

To understand the significance of religious identity in the context of Muslim refugees, it is imperative to examine the intricate facets and profound implications that religious identity holds for individuals and broader Muslim society. Being shaped by core beliefs and symbols, religious identity provides a profound sense of belonging and a unique perspective rooted in sacred values. It reflects an individual's affiliation with a specific religion or religious group, encompassing beliefs, values, practices, and a sense of belonging (Peek 2005). Linked with

national, ethnic, and cultural identities, religious identity is influenced by historical, geographical, and socio-political contexts. It profoundly impacts one's worldview, moral framework, and lifestyle (Zine 2001). This identity is formed through personal experiences, family upbringing, social interactions, and spiritual pursuits, indicating a complex network of influences contributing to religious connectedness (Bankier-Karp 2022). It evolves and is uniquely crafted for each individual. The constructivist approach highlights the ongoing process of formation and transformation, recognizing that identity is fluid and continuously changing.

For Rohingya refugees and other refugees before them, religious identity influences their understanding of the world and their place within it. Religious identity not only provides comfort, direction, and purpose but also serves as a comprehensive framework for addressing existential questions. It plays a crucial role in shaping values, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as moral, social, and philosophical worldviews (Muratkhan et al. 2021). Religious groups foster strong bonds through this collective worldview, fulfilling psychological needs and reinforcing shared beliefs (Wakefield et al. 2023). Additionally, religious identity serves as a coping mechanism during stressful events, offering hope and solace through prayer, meditation, and a belief in an afterlife or benevolent higher power (Fischer et al. 2010).

In the Muslim communities, religious identity arises from a complex interplay of individual beliefs, cultural influences, and communal practices. Peek (2005) delineated three critical phases of religious identity development among young Muslims—*ascribed* (inherited), *chosen* (personal selection), and *declared* (public profession)—highlighting its multifaceted nature. Core to both individual and communal Muslim identity are the Pillars of Faith and Islam. Cultural contexts also shape expressions of Islamic beliefs, resulting in variations in attire, dietary customs, and religious festivities, all of which are grounded in Islamic principles but adapted to local cultures. Communal practices such as congregational prayers, Friday prayer, and acts of worship like *zakat*, *sadaqah*, fasting during Ramadan, and the Hajj pilgrimage contribute significantly to individual and community Islamic identity. These practices reinforce Islamic values on a personal level and foster unity within the broader Muslim community, nurturing the concept of *ummah*.

In Islam, *ummah* signifies the global Muslim community united by their faith, promoting unity irrespective of national, ethnic, or cultural differences. This unity extends beyond spiritual ideology to encompass social and political dimensions, shaping the self-perception and global role of Muslims. In prioritizing adherence to Islamic beliefs and laws over political affiliations, Muslims view their community primarily through a religious lens. Faruqi and Maysam (2005) proposed that an *ummah* can form even within a small group of individuals on a remote island, independent of any established governmental structure. Bakar (2012) highlighted the Quran's emphasis on balance in defining the Muslim *ummah's* identity, portraying knowledge as integral to their collective identity.

The concept of *ummah* fosters a deep sense of brotherhood among Muslims, emphasizing mutual support and care. Founded on principles of equality and brotherhood (al-Ahsan 1986), the Islamic *ummah* expanded the tribal solidarity of pre-Islamic Arabia to a broader, inclusive community, transcending tribal boundaries and replacing blood ties with universal ideals. Muslims bear a unique responsibility toward their fellow Muslims and the wider *ummah* by providing aid and solidarity; promoting justice, peace, and harmony; and opposing oppression and injustice (Oda 1984). The concept of *ummah* guides Muslims to prioritize community well-being, emphasizing the pursuit of high moral standards above other aspects of identity. It underscores the importance of collective action and active participation in addressing the challenges facing the *ummah*. This discourse on religious identity and the *ummah* forms the basis for the subsequent discussion on Muslim refugees and their religious identity in the Rohingya context.

Religious Identity among Refugees

Spirituality and religion play integral roles in the journeys of refugees from their home countries to resettlement in new lands (Ennis 2011). Religion is a multifaceted support system for resettled refugees, offering continuity during challenging times and reinforcing connections with their communities and families. It provides stability and solace, serving as a coping mechanism and refuge, particularly for those who have endured trauma and loss (Muruthi et al. 2020). Religious communities also offer refugees a sense of belonging and assistance in maintaining their cultural traditions and identity, especially when they feel isolated

in new environments (Nagel 2023). For Muslim refugees, the Islamic faith provides comfort, strength, pride, and humility, underscoring the need for infrastructure that supports and preserves these faith traditions within the context of refugee resettlement (Younis and Hassan 2019). Refugees also utilize their religious beliefs and practices to reconnect with their homeland and regain a sense of belonging. Dorais (2007) observed that Vietnamese refugees have revitalized their religious practices in their new countries, bringing continuity to their disrupted lives. In another study, Hoskins (2015) explored this concept by examining the practice of spirit possession among Vietnamese refugees, highlighting how religion ties them to their homeland and fosters a sense of diasporic community despite their new and alien surroundings. He elaborated on how indigenous Vietnamese people practicing religions such as Caodaism and Dao Mau have created connections to their homeland by maintaining their religious and spiritual possession practices and relevant geographical features.

Religious identity significantly influences the coping strategies and acculturation orientation of refugees in their host communities. To cope with the challenges and stresses of resettlement such as adapting to new cultures and rebuilding their lives, refugees often turn to religion as a source of comfort. For example, a study by Şafak-Ayvazoğlu et al. (2021) examined how the significant influence of religion in Syrian refugee social life impacted the perceived differences between Syrian refugees and Dutch culture. The study revealed that the social life of these refugees was interwoven with religious aspects and activities that actively encouraged a community lifestyle with frequent social contact, as opposed to the individualistic lifestyle embraced by the Dutch. Meanwhile, religious prohibitions such as drinking alcohol made it difficult for the refugees to enjoy an integrated social life with the local Dutch community. In his research on refugees and religion, Jung (2020) described how North Korean refugees have maintained and practiced their faith after resettlement. Based on an ethnographic study on North Korean refugees in the United Kingdom and Germany, the article explains how Christianity has helped North Korean refugees cope with the process of rebuilding their lives and communities as former North Koreans and now citizens of other states. The article describes, in detail, the experiences of two North Korean refugees, one in the United Kingdom and another in Germany, in terms of their use

of Christian belief and the Church, not only as a community center connecting them to other community members but also to create their transnational identity.

Despite the various positive aspects of religious identity, it can also pose challenges during resettlement. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh (2010) noted that Muslim asylum-seekers and refugees in the UK have often faced exclusion from established Muslim communities, indicating that religious identity can hinder integration. Furthermore, the resettlement process can lead to significant shifts in religious identity, suggesting its fluidity during this period (Burwell, Hill, and Van Wicklin 1986). Refugees may face an identity crisis in their host countries, leading to a re-evaluation or even an abandonment of their faith, exacerbated by the challenges of integrating into their new society and the loss of familiar support systems (M. S. Islam and Şahin 2023). Some refugees transition away from the Islamic faith toward secular or non-religious identities, as illustrated by Radford and Hetz (2021) in their study. One of their research participants admitted her evolution from being a practicing Muslim to identifying as a 'closet atheist', yet she still embraced the cultural or ethical aspects of Muslim identity, such as performing acts of kindness.

Much of the existing research focuses on religious identity narratives and experiences of various refugee groups in Western host countries, leaving the Rohingya comparatively understudied. Given this situation and the ensuing gap in the literature, the question arises of how other Muslim refugee populations (such as the Rohingya) navigate the development, protection, and negotiation of their identity amid the challenges of living as refugees in predominantly Muslim nations.

Rohingya and Their Religious Identity

The religious identity of Rohingya refugees holds immense significance and profoundly influences multiple aspects of their lives. It serves as a cornerstone of their cultural preservation, resistance to persecution, fostering of community solidarity, and shaping of their transnational identity. In Myanmar, systematic prohibitions have prevented the Rohingya from safeguarding their cultural and religious heritage. Yusuf (2018) contended that the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar stems not from religious conflict but nationalism and racial issues regarding citizenship rights, despite the depictions given

by radical leaders within both the Islamic and Buddhist communities. This interpretation has been contested by those who argue that religious aspects, intensified by radical figures from both sides, have significantly contributed to the crisis. Thus, to fully grasp the plight of the Rohingya, it is imperative to acknowledge the primacy of religious identity over racial or ethnic considerations. In enduring severe persecution and deprivation of their basic human rights, the Rohingya have also faced unspeakable abuse and statelessness (Wildan 2021). Their religious identity has become a symbol of resistance that is central to their struggle for recognition and rights. It not only aids in cultural preservation but also facilitates negotiation with authorities and strengthens solidarity within refugee communities. While some authors have emphasized the historical significance of ethnic identity for Rohingya claims in Myanmar, it is also crucial to recognize the escalating persecution and discrimination based on religious identity, fueled by the rise of exclusionary Buddhist nationalism activism. In Myanmar, the Rohingya have faced coordinated persecution from both Rakhine Buddhists and the military, enduring discrimination and violence (Samuri, Lukmanulhakim, and Hanip 2020). Complicating the Rohingya crisis is the influence of religious narratives in Myanmar. Buddhist nationalist groups there have constructed a discourse portraying the country's Buddhist culture, values, and existence as under threat from foreign elements, particularly Muslims like the Rohingya, whom they accuse of seeking to undermine Buddhism. Disseminated through various channels including sermons and publications, these narratives are steeped in anti-Muslim sentiments, often based on rumor or distorted interpretations of Islamic teachings (Foxeus 2023).

The decision of many Rohingya refugees to seek refuge in Malaysia, often perceived as an Islamic nation, is heavily influenced by their religious identity. Research indicates that 60% of Rohingya refugees fleeing to Malaysia did so because of its Islamic image (Khairi and Wahab 2018). Malaysia's reputation as a bastion of moderate Islam significantly impacts their migration choice, alongside considerations of economic prosperity and political stability (Missbach and Stange 2021). Compared to other host countries like Bangladesh, Malaysia offers the promise of protection, support, and solidarity for the Rohingya from local Muslims while allowing them to maintain their religious identity. However, the Rohingya encounter a stark reality in

Malaysia due to the absence of a legal framework for refugees because the government has not ratified the necessary conventions. Consequently, they face restrictions in accessing formal employment, education, and healthcare, and they are vulnerable to exploitation (Farzana, Pero, and Othman 2020; Khairi and A. Wahab 2018; Chandran, Sakina, and Suki 2020). In response to these harsh conditions, many Rohingya rely heavily on their religious identity as a coping mechanism (Alam 2018).

Refugee governance in Malaysia adopts a case-specific approach, affecting the integration of refugees into Malaysian society, particularly in areas such as labor market access, healthcare, and education. Varied experiences regarding mobility and freedom of movement have been reported among the Rohingya (Nursyazwani 2020; Azis 2014). Hoffstaedter (2017) noted Malaysia's inclination toward refugee groups with shared cultural and religious backgrounds, such as Thai Muslims, Vietnamese Cham, and Acehnese. However, integrating Rohingya refugees has posed unique challenges as Malaysian religious institutions lack the infrastructure to address their specific needs. While efforts have been made to distribute *zakat* funds to Muslim refugees, inconsistencies persist in categorizing eligible recipients, including Rohingya refugees (Hoffstaedter 2017). Achieving successful integration and fostering a sense of belonging for refugees in Malaysia, particularly the Rohingya, are pressing concerns (Abdullah, Mohamed Dali, and Abd Razak 2018). Wong and Suan (2012) underlined the importance of religious identity in shaping the Rohingya's distinct identity.

Despite these circumstances, a literature gap exists regarding the religious practices of Rohingya refugees in Malaysia. While previous studies have explored integration, belonging, and identity formation, more focused research is needed on how Muslim refugees like the Rohingya navigate and express their religious identity in Malaysia's multicultural context. This is vital for understanding their integration process and strategies for preserving their cultural and religious heritage in a diverse and often challenging environment. This article aims to address this gap by offering a comprehensive understanding of the religious dimension of the lives of Rohingya refugees in Malaysia and contributing to broader discussions on refugee integration.

Rohingya Refugee Communities in Malaysia: Materials and Methods

This study was conducted in 2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic spread throughout the world. The research methods included conducting an ethnography, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions among Rohingya refugee communities in Penang, Johor, Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, Negeri Sembilan and Selangor. In Malaysia, these five areas have become significant hotspots for Rohingya refugees living in urban areas, who rent and share houses as there are no official refugee camps in the country (Azis 2014). Twenty participants, comprising 16 males and four females, were interviewed with the help of intermediaries and interpreters. The unequal representation of female participants is due to the conservative nature of Rohingya communities, in which the role of women is to take care of the family at home, and they would need permission from their husbands to leave the house.

Meanwhile, an ethnography was conducted on Rohingya refugee communities in the Klang Valley (an area encompassing Kuala Lumpur and Selangor), with the resulting ethnographic notes later analyzed. Focus group discussions were conducted in five states; Selangor, Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, Johor, and Penang, each with separate sessions for male and female participants. Between six and eight participants took part in each session, and the total number of participants in the FGD was 36. The reason for the division into gender-specific sessions was to ensure that male participants could not dominate the conversations and undermine the female voices. Furthermore, most Rohingya adhere to the practice of *purdah*, which mandates that women should not be seen or exposed to men (Samuri and Hopkins 2023; Sanchez Bean 2021), making their participation in mixed focus group discussions (FGDs) potentially uncomfortable. A purposive sampling approach was employed to enlist participants, with community gatekeepers—leaders within the Rohingya community—utilized to identify potential participants for the FGDs. Several recruitment criteria were established: participants needed to be men or women aged 18 or above who had been in Malaysia for over three years.

The reason for using a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews and an ethnography was the explorative nature of the study, which aimed to explore the religious identity and issues of the Rohingya refugee community. Qualitative research explores and understands

the meanings that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell and Creswell 2018). As such, the qualitative method was an appropriate choice as the research design of this study. In-depth interviews were employed as the primary means of understanding deep, complex, personal attitude formation processes (Rivas and Gibson-Light 2016).

The other reasons for choosing a qualitative research design were the literacy level of the community and the language barrier between the researcher and the respondents. Given this barrier, interpreters well-versed in the Rohingya language and culture were mainly present to accompany the researcher during the in-depth interviews and ethnography. Each interpreter was tested for their language skills through informal and written assessments, and feedback was obtained from the Rohingya community members on the quality of the interpretation.

The interview protocol and questions were then reviewed by an internal ethical committee comprising two Malaysian academics. They met to review the instruments and procedures that would be utilized among the Rohingya refugee community in Malaysia in terms of applicability; ethical considerations involving the participant recruitment; and psychological considerations when researching vulnerable communities. The research successfully passed the ethical committee review. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and later coded with NVivo under the close supervision of the principal investigator. To determine the accuracy of the coding, two reviews were performed, followed by a categorization of the coding. Using the results, the researchers identified several emerging themes, one of which was related to the refugees' religious identity. All the names given in the excerpts below are pseudonyms to maintain the anonymity of the participants.

Rohingya Refugees and Religious Identity in Malaysia

Key themes emerged from this study regarding the significance for Rohingya refugees of Islam as their religious identity and how this has shaped their post-migration experience in Malaysia. This study found that religious identity is a crucial matter for Rohingya refugees living in Malaysia. This can be demonstrated in how Rohingya refugees uphold and perform their religious rituals and practices to maintain their identity, which was evident throughout the study. Despite the

discrimination and marginalization they face, their faith and religious identity enable them to sustain hope and resilience in challenging times.

The Distinct Muslim

The importance of religious belief was consistently emphasized by most of the Rohingya refugees interviewed. They identified themselves as Muslims first, with statements such as “We as Muslims give ourselves only to Allah” (Khairi, male, Johor) and “We are first and foremost Muslims” (Amar, male, Johor). One male refugee from Johor described his Islamic identity as based on two core components: belief in God and Prophet Muhammad. He distanced himself from group affiliations, asserting that his identity was rooted solely in Islam.

I believe in Islam. We must believe in one God and Prophet. We believe in these two things. I only believe in these two. I am not part of any groups. Everyone follows Prophet Muhammad’s and Allah’s instructions to stay on the straight path... - Hasan, male, Johor.

For many Rohingya refugees, religion is perceived as the foundation for success in this world and salvation in the hereafter. One Rohingya refugee described his understanding of Islam as being successful in this world and the hereafter. Ghafoor, a young man in the Klang Valley, said, “To be successful in this world and hereafter: that is the main reason for Islam. I am successful in this regard in this world, and if God is willing, in the hereafter too.” This conviction was also echoed among the female participants. Laili from Johor said that the purpose of the religion is to gain salvation in the hereafter, which is what she needed in this life.

These convictions have become an integral part of the identity of these refugees, shaping their migration experiences as they seek asylum in countries with similar religious identities, like Malaysia. Malaysia’s reputation as an Islamic country and the prospect of joining a Muslim community have attracted Rohingya refugees and contributed to their sense of security, with Malaysia viewed as a place where they can practice their faith and maintain their identity. The following interview excerpts provide more insights on this issue:

After migrating to Malaysia, I am hopeful. I want to build relationships with my fellow Muslims in Malaysia [and] Malaysian citizens. - Diana, female, Penang.

You know, this country is better compared to Myanmar. Back there, we could not even perform solat like here. There was no sound of azan in Myanmar. That is why I prefer staying here. However, moving to another country would be our best choice if we cannot stay here. – Siraj, male, Selangor.

Islam as a religion has been a refuge for us because it is a strong faith for Muslims. It always leads us towards faith and belief. With Allah's presence, we feel protected. Having Allah means we have a chance in this life, knowing another world awaits us in the afterlife. We know we will pass on no matter what, but we will find our place in heaven. So with Islam, our faith remains strong. Even in countries where we face persecution in the name of Islam, our religion only makes us more determined to uphold and defend it. – Aminah, female, Johor.

Diana, Siraj, and Aminah are examples of Rohingya refugees who feel the same way about Malaysia as an Islamic country and Malaysian Muslims. Others expressed the same sentiments, saying how they were grateful to live in a Muslim country. This highlights how the Rohingya's religious identity plays a strong influencing role in deciding whether their 'safe haven' will ultimately be; in this case, it is Malaysia. One participant refused to resettle to a third country because it was not a Muslim country and practicing their religion there would be difficult. Mahadir from Johor said:

I moved from Thailand to Malaysia because of Islam, safety, and my children's education. Despite being offered to resettle to a third country, I did not want to go since it is not a Muslim country.

A female Rohingya refugee, Ani, even praised Allah and described Malaysia as '*bumi Allah*' (Allah's land) as she described her feelings about living in the country.

After ten years since migrating here and living in Butterworth, Malaysia, I praise Allah for this peaceful life in an Islamic state governed by Muslims.
- Ani, female, Penang.

Despite the perception that Malaysian Muslims accept Rohingya refugees, they are often excluded from the wider Muslim community and communal celebrations like Eid. This reality contradicts their initial expectations of the Muslim fraternity and reinforces their identity as a 'distinct Muslim' group. Based on the participants' responses, Eid was like any other day, only with special morning prayers.

Interviewer: What do you do in the mosque during Eid?

Participant: Just ... praying and sometimes reading the Quran. – Khairi, male, Selangor

They [the Rohingya] attend prayers at the local mosque, but they did not receive charity nor meat during the recent Eid al-Adha celebrations. - Field notes, Selangor.

The local Malay Muslim community generally exhibits mixed reactions to Rohingya refugees, with experiences varying from a sense of shared religious identity to feelings of social distance. Ismail, a male refugee from Johor, pointed out the common ground of their shared Sunni Islamic practices and beliefs. He noted that these similarities, especially in religious observances and cultural practices, foster a sense of community with local Malays. According to him, “We do not have much, but if there is work, we do talk a bit. That is about it. We mix with the Malays because our religion is the same. We go to the mosque and pray together. Our practices are similar in many ways, like marriage and other things. We are alike ... the local people in these aspects.”

Hafiz, a young father from Selangor, offered a contrasting perspective. He observed a clear social divide, mentioning that the local Malay Muslim community, while not directly problematic, often fails to fully acknowledge the refugees. This had resulted in a lack of deep and meaningful connections despite Hafiz’s familiarity with many at the nearby mosque. The predominantly Malay population, he stated, kept a certain distance, indicating a more reserved or cautious approach toward the refugees. This difference in experiences highlights the complex nature of the relationship between Rohingya refugees and the local Malay Muslim community, which alternates between shared religious ties and social separation.

The religious identity of the Rohingya community can be further distinguished through their application of *madhhab* (Islamic law schools) to their daily lives. As with many South Asians, the Rohingya primarily adhere to the Sunni Hanafi school and seek to preserve this aspect of their religious identity while residing in Malaysia. This preference sets them apart from Malay Muslims, who predominantly follow the Sunni Shafie school. Zaini, from Kuala Lumpur, articulated this adherence to the *madhhab*, stating, “We follow our forefathers’ *madhhab*. So when we learn, we follow the Hanafi sect.” This was echoed by Hamid, a male

refugee from Negeri Sembilan, who explained, “We follow the Hanafi school of Islam. It is the same Islam here, but we are Hanafi, while here it is mostly Shafie. The most important thing for us is to follow the Quran. That is all we need.”

Among the various distinctions between local Muslims and refugees are that the latter’s times for the dawn and late afternoon prayers differ. There are also minor variations in the prayers themselves. These discrepancies have led to refugees being absent from congregational prayers during those times, which conflict with their Hanafi school interpretation. Regarding dietary practices, a Rohingya woman was surprised to discover that Malaysian Muslims eat seafood varieties beyond fish, which the Hanafi school deems forbidden (*haram*). She expressed a belief that the Rohingya interpretation of Islam, with its strict adherence to halal food consumption, is more authentic than the Malaysian practice. This highlights the limited awareness among Rohingya refugees of the diversity within Islamic dietary laws, mainly attributable to their lack of education in formal Islamic studies. Despite this preference for the Hanafi school, it is essential to note that the community does not strictly adhere to it in terms of the interpretation of religious practice.

Maintaining Religious Identity: Strategies to Strengthen Religious Identity

Despite residing in a Muslim-majority country, the Rohingya community in Malaysia has devised three ways to maintain and construct their specific religious identity through education. The first is the establishment of madrasah and religious schools focusing on Quranic recitation for children. Secondly, Rohingya refugees have assumed responsibility for educating their children at home and passing down religious knowledge and practices to the younger generation. The third is the establishment of Rohingya community-based *suraus*, which refugees use as meeting places and religious learning centers. Instead of utilizing local religious services, refugees have established these institutions to preserve their cultural heritage and provide safe spaces for practicing their faith and teaching their children its values. It is worth mentioning that the religious learning of Rohingya refugees through transnational Islamic movements such as *Jamaat Tablighi* strengthens their religious commitment.

The first initiative emphasizes the importance of religious education from an early age. It ensures the younger generation is deeply rooted in their faith through the meticulous study of the Quran. Regrettably, these madrasahs primarily concentrate on Quranic recitation and basic Islamic studies, neglecting the complexities of other Islamic disciplines such as *aqidah*, *fiqh*, and *sirah*. This fieldwork revealed that the Rohingya community in Selangor had set up a madrasah and hired an *Ustaz* to teach Arabic and the Quran. Each family was contributing MYR300 per month for the *Ustaz*'s services. This madrasah, which is close by to their houses, was recently established by the community; this entailed the involvement of five people who organized it at a *surau*. The madrasah was set up because Rohingya children cannot attend Malaysian public schools. As a result, the community decided to hire the *Ustaz* specifically to educate their children in basic Arabic for Quranic recitation purposes, with no other subjects being taught at the school.

Although the Rohingya refugees in Malaysia primarily identify as Muslim, their pre-migration knowledge of Islamic education and religious practices remains unknown. The Malaysian government provides no official support for religious practices for refugees, making it necessary to investigate how Rohingya refugees develop and maintain their identity through religious education in Malaysia. Most of the participants in the current study mentioned that religious education for their children was self-funded and established by the Rohingya community. Most religious teachers in these self-established schools had obtained their religious education certificates and credentials in the Arakan/Rakhine states. Rohingya participants based in southern Malaysia said:

The Rohingya community established a religious school. The religious teachers belonged to a Rohingya organization based in Kuala Lumpur. - Ali, male, Johor.

For religious class, religious teachers have religious certificates from Myanmar and have experienced teaching in Myanmar. - Azam, male, Johor

It is interesting to note that the backgrounds of the religious teachers were mentioned, with many identified as coming from a specific Rohingya organization in Kuala Lumpur. Despite limited resources, some Rohingya refugees have hired teachers and mobilized people for education. The background common to most Rohingya

religious teachers is that they had received their religious certificates and/or gained teaching experience in Myanmar. A crucial focus of the Rohingya community in Malaysia is to provide their children with religious education similar to that provided in Myanmar. This refugee group has yet to engage with local Islamic education authorities despite Malaysian education (including Islamic studies) being relatively far more advanced than that of Myanmar. In the opinion of many participants, religious lessons in Myanmar are more traditional and well-received by Rohingya community, which is why they recognize the teachers' credentials.

Secondly, at the family level, Rohingya refugees prioritize religious education for their children. This emphasis on religious learning helps to strengthen the children's beliefs and understanding of Islam. This was demonstrated in interviews with some of the fathers who participated in this study:

A few days ago, I met one of my childhood friends with whom I went to madrasah; he became a Hafeez Quran and completed (his) religious study. However, I did not complete it. We talked about many things. He told me right now that many Rohingya earn lots of money, but they are not concerned if the money is halal, so I invited him to see my work to tell me if it is halal [activities] I am doing. He visited my place, saw what I was doing, and told me there was nothing wrong with that, as I have five kids, all girls. He emphasized the [need for them to have] continuous Islamic teaching. - Ishak, male, Klang Valley.

In my understanding, religious education and understanding religion [are needed] to protect myself and the kids, which act as the basis of humankind. We educate the children during the development stage of their mind and memory as we teach them *aqidah*, *akhlak*, and all the good things in their mind to strengthen their beliefs in the future." - Hamdi, male, Penang.

Religion is for the hereafter. Religion is for the children to learn. [Our] worries are when they do not know halal [from] haram. We often discussed the matters of prayers, halal, and haram. No politics. - Afif, male, Johor.

As part of their identity and cultural preservation, Rohingya parents are primarily concerned with the religious upbringing of their children. Rohingya children receive religious education as a moral and spiritual development foundation, emphasizing halal and haram principles. Children are expected to live a life they believe is permissible by Islam,

which will serve as a moral compass. As illustrated by the interview excerpts above, teaching young children about their faith during their early development stage is crucial for strengthening their future identity by focusing on the Islamic creed, good manners, and other positive values.

Thirdly, the Rohingya community's religious education is also influenced by the establishment of prayer spaces (*suraus*) that serve as gathering places for daily prayer and socialization. Some of these communities have set up informal places of worship separate from government-approved mosques. This approach allows them to maintain their religious identity and participate in congregational prayers and religious study circles. Several factors have driven this establishment of such informal places of worship, the most pertinent of which is that the local mosques and *suraus* conduct sermons and lectures in Bahasa Malaysia, creating a language barrier for any refugees who do not understand it.

For the refugees, learning the local language to the extent that they can comprehend the formal Bahasa used in sermons and lectures would require years, but without significant interaction with locals—which is rare given their limited social mixing—language acquisition becomes even more challenging. The informal worship spaces also serve as social hubs where refugees can learn, meet, and communicate freely, fulfilling a crucial need for community connection. There are two discernible patterns of practices among Rohingya regarding congregational prayers at a *surau* or mosque. Except for Friday, the first group prays at *suraus* managed and established by Rohingya communities. Due to the strict regulation of Friday prayers by the Islamic authorities, these Rohingya refugees avoid the risk of prosecution for unlawfully performing these prayers in unregistered places of worship, such as their self-established *suraus*. The second group opts to pray at any mosques established and managed by the local religious authorities, attending daily prayers there, including Friday prayers. This decision has been informed by the fact that these mosques impart similar content regarding Islamic teachings or essential celebrations in the Islamic calendar, making them accessible and informative for the Rohingya refugee community.

In addition to participating in communal prayers, some Rohingya refugees, upon becoming proficient in the local language, also join religious study circles at their *surau* or local mosque. The teaching

content is usually based on the Quran, Hadith, Islamic legal rulings, Islamic creed, Prophet biographies, and general lessons. This was described by a respondent based in Penang:

Both the local mosque and the Rohingya-established *surau* teach al-Quran and Hadith. - Muhammad, male, Penang.

The lecture topic depends on the group's interest, such as *Maulidurrasul* [Prophet Muhammad's Birthday]. - Azam, male, Johor.

Some Rohingya communities, mainly those who have been in Malaysia for decades, actively participate in religious education through study circles held in local mosques and *surau*s. In addition to strengthening their religious knowledge, this communal learning environment fosters bonding and shared interests within the community.

Some Rohingya refugees have bolstered their religious identity by joining the apolitical transnational *da'wah* movement, *Jamaat Tablighi*, which advocates traditional and orthodox Islam on an individual level. This involvement allows them to connect with people from various backgrounds, including local Malay Muslims. *Jamaat Tablighi* has gained popularity because of its conservatism, aligning with the values and culture of South Asian Muslims. In this way, their religious experiences and learning help to develop their sense of identity and daily piety.

I often went to give lectures every Friday at [the] *surau* managed by Kulai District Council. On Wednesday, I went out with the *tabligh* group for about three to 40 days with the Malays. This activity is often held to invite people to the *surau* for congregational prayer. - Ali, male, Johor.

I have participated in the *Tablighi Jamaat*. I attended for 49 days. There, I learned many things about Islam, such as how to pray five times a day and the duties of a Muslim, like going [out] to give *da'wah*. - Halil, male, Klang Valley.

It depends on the time of year; sometimes Malay, Rohingya, and Pakistani are mixed in *Jamaat*. There were only Rohingya in the last *Jamaat* I attended. - Izzat, male, Kuala Lumpur.

The above interview excerpts and narratives demonstrate how the religious identity of Rohingya refugees is deeply rooted in Islamic practices that are not so different from those practiced by Malaysian Muslims, while this identity profoundly influences their migration

and settlement in Malaysia. However, due to the language barrier and general sense of being labeled outsiders, refugees face challenges in both maintaining their religious identity and fully integrating into the host community.

Rohingya in Malaysia and *Ummah*-Based Policies

This research underscores the profound impact of religious identity on the experiences of Rohingya refugees resettled in Malaysia as it offers them a crucial sense of belonging and continuity in their new milieu. Their robust religious identity serves as a guiding force as they navigate asylum-seeking in Malaysia, a country with similar religious affiliations. Despite unforeseen challenges and the denial of fundamental human rights (Abdullah, Mohamed Dali, and Abd Razak 2018; Samuri and Hopkins 2023), participants in this study have actively pursued strategies to uphold their identity. Their endeavors to strengthen their identity while staying in a Muslim-majority nation can be viewed as a means of survival, asserting their place within the global *ummah* and highlighting their need for protection as they aim to solidify their affiliation with the Muslim community, irrespective of their treatment.

The findings reveal that Rohingya refugees perceive themselves as a distinct Muslim group, differentiated from local Malay Muslims despite their shared faith. A significant contrast lies in their religious practices, with Rohingya predominantly following the Hanafi school of Sunni Islam, unlike the Shafie school predominantly followed by Malay Muslims. This disparity manifests in their daily religious rituals. Additionally, their experiences in Malaysia often entail exclusion from local Muslim community activities and gatherings, reinforcing their identity as a separate Muslim entity. This observation aligns with previous research O'Brien and Hoffstaedter (2020), suggesting that Rohingya are not assimilated into Malaysian Sunni Islam, face discrimination as foreigners, and encounter barriers to mosque attendance and participation in neighborhood *suraus*. With limited access to religious infrastructure tailored to their identity, many Rohingya must adhere to local religious customs and the *Shafi'i madhhab* practiced in Malaysian mosques.

The findings also show that Muslim refugees often grapple with feelings of alienation in Muslim-majority countries like Malaysia, contrary to previous assumptions that such experiences are confined

to Western, secular, and non-religious nations where Muslim refugees resettled (Zeno 2021; Tausch 2019). For example, studies have uncovered instances of marginalization and exclusion faced by Muslim refugee women in Australia (Northcote, Hancock, and Casimiro 2006). Similar patterns of alienation have been observed among Syrian refugees in Turkey, despite the shared religious identity of most Syrians and Turks (Bilge 2019; Demir and Ozgul 2019; Şahin and Kocadayı 2022).

This sense of rejection is often perpetuated and amplified by societal attitudes, political rhetoric, and media portrayal. Rohingya refugees in Malaysia are frequently labeled ‘illegals,’ ‘foreigners,’ ‘burdens,’ and sometimes ‘criminals’ by society (Lee and Mohd Don 2021; Ehmer and Kothari 2020). Research by Don and Lee (2014) revealed how political elites in the Malaysian media have depicted refugees and asylum seekers as illegal and threatening while emphasizing their victimization. Consequently, many Malaysians, including the Muslim majority, have developed negative perceptions of refugees, undermining the concept of Muslim *ummah* solidarity. Missbach and Stange (2021) argued that the idea of Muslim solidarity is primarily aimed at Malaysian domestic audiences for political gain while government support for refugees diminishes over time. The lack of official support and the alienation from the broader Muslim community contribute to a complex relationship between Rohingya refugees and locals, impeding the full integration of the former into Malaysian society.

The Rohingya community’s unique characteristics are evident in their approach to religious education, as demonstrated in the establishment of informal community-based madrasahs and *surau*s. These institutions serve as havens where they can practice their faith, preserve their cultural heritage, and instill Islamic values in their children. Despite the challenges encountered in Malaysia, this method enables the Rohingya to maintain a robust religious identity. However, stakeholders have raised concerns over the need for a balanced education to facilitate the adaptation and development of these children in their host country. Bakali and Wasty (2020) emphasized the absence of a formal curriculum in many Rohingya-operated madrasahs, resulting in a lack of standardized texts and raising worries about potential misinformation. This situation is exacerbated by the community’s experiences of oppression and rights violations. Moreover, the autonomy

of Rohingya-established madrasahs, operating outside the supervision of the Malaysian Islamic authorities, poses the risk of their being exploited by individuals with ulterior motives. This independence could lead to the propagation of intolerance or narratives that are divergent from mainstream Islamic teachings. Consequently, such religious education might shape the religious identities of young Rohingya refugees in ways inconsistent with the regulated Islamic teachings in Malaysia.

Concerns have arisen over the integration of Rohingya refugees into the Malaysian host community. While they have established community-based madrasahs and *suraus* to uphold their religious identity, these efforts might inadvertently isolate the refugees from the broader Malaysian society. This lack of integration into a Muslim-majority nation prompts questions about the obstacles they might encounter in non-Muslim countries that offer resettlement. In such nations, Muslim refugees face even greater integration challenges due to cultural, religious, and linguistic disparities. This could exacerbate their marginalization and foster a heightened sense of 'otherness' within their new communities. Policymakers and support organizations must realize the intricacies of religious identity and social integration among Rohingya refugees, especially in navigating the complexities of integrating into Muslim-majority nations like Malaysia. By doing so, more effective strategies can be devised to facilitate the seamless integration of Rohingya refugees into host communities, irrespective of the religious composition of the new country.

Muslim communities in Malaysia and Indonesia, which are key destinations for Rohingya refugees, hold a crucial responsibility to extend outreach and support, guided by the principle of *ummah*. It is imperative that these refugees are embraced without prejudice, mistreatment, or the weight of misconceptions and negative stereotypes. Compassionate assistance from fellow Muslims can significantly alleviate their adversities. This approach resonates with previous research advocating that Muslim-majority nations should fully embrace the concept of *ummah* in providing aid to refugees. As posited by Takahashi (2021), leveraging the notion of *ummah* is vital in addressing the inadequacies of international legal frameworks in protecting the rights of Muslim refugees and migrants. The *ummah* concept promotes a sense of Muslim solidarity aimed at ensuring safety and access for all adherents of Islam, actively challenging exclusionary practices and safeguarding

the citizenship rights of Muslim minorities. While explicit *ummah*-based policies may not be universally established in Muslim-majority countries, the responses of nations like Jordan, Turkey, and Bangladesh during refugee crises indicate their implicit acknowledgment of the *ummah* principle guiding their actions (Mohammed and Jureidini 2022). This demonstrates a contemporary and significant commitment to *ummah* values, embodying ideals of responsibility, inclusivity, and solidarity within the global Muslim community.

Conclusion Remarks

This study underscores the paramount importance of scholarly discourse on the role of religious identity in refugee experiences, particularly as it pertains to the challenges faced by Rohingya refugees in Malaysia. Drawing on a combination of existing literature and qualitative analysis, the research elucidates the profound relevance of religious identity in shaping the social engagement, coping mechanisms, and acculturation approaches of Rohingya refugees. The decision to spotlight the religious aspect, as opposed to emphasizing race, was rooted in the unique challenges encountered by the Rohingya in a Muslim-majority host country like Malaysia.

The complexities surrounding the maintenance of religious identity and the concomitant process of integration into the host society have been brought to the forefront. Rohingya refugees, despite sharing the same Islamic faith as the majority of Muslim Malays, grapple with integration challenges and experience feelings of marginalization and 'otherness' that are akin to the experiences of Muslim refugees in Western nations. Their proactive establishment of community-centric madrasahs and prayer spaces reflects a nuanced strategy to preserve their religious practices and cultural heritage in the face of these challenges. At the same time, while the establishment of community-based religious and educational institutions might provide vital support networks, it could also contribute to the isolation of Rohingya refugees from broader Malaysian society.

Moving forward, policymakers and practitioners must recognize and address the intricacies highlighted in this research. Understanding how religious identity influences social interactions, coping strategies, and integration processes is foundational for developing nuanced policies and interventions. Culturally sensitive approaches that respect

and accommodate the religious beliefs of refugees are essential to fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion in host communities. The insights gained from this study can inform future initiatives aimed at facilitating the integration of Rohingya refugees and, more broadly, Muslim refugees in Muslim-majority countries. This would include fostering greater understanding and solidarity within host communities to bridge the divide between local Muslims and refugee populations, ensuring that the notion of *ummah* is meaningfully applied.

Acknowledgement

- We thank to the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia for funding through the FRGS scheme (FRGS/1/2023/SSI12/UKM/02/1) and the High Commission of Canada in Malaysia for their funding and support to IMAN Research (PP-2019-018). Our acknowledgment extends to IMAN Research's team—Ms. Altaf Deviyati, Ms. Dina Zaman, Mr. Badrul Hisham, Mr. Tadzrul Adha, Ms. Farhana, and Ms. Sabrina—for their critical contributions to participant recruitment, budgeting, and psychological support, which have been fundamental to our project's success.

Bibliography

- Al-Ahsan, Abdullah. 1986. "The Quranic Concept of Ummah." *Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs. Journal* 7 (2): 606–16.
- Alam, Jobair. 2018. "The Rohingya of Myanmar: Theoretical Significance of the Minority Status." *Asian Ethnicity* 19 (2): 180–210.
- Azis, Avyanthi. 2014. "Urban Refugees in a Graduated Sovereignty: The Experiences of the Stateless Rohingya in the Klang Valley." *Citizenship Studies* 18 (8): 839–54.
- Bakar, Osman. 2012. "The Qur'anic Identity of the Muslim Ummah: Tawhidic Epistemology as Its Foundation and Sustainer." *ICR Journal* 3 (3): 438–54.
- Bankier-Karp, Adina Leah. 2022. "Catalysts of Connectedness: A Case for Greater Complexity in Religious Identity Formation Research." *Review of Religious Research* 64 (2): 343–73.
- Burwell, Ronald J., Peter Hill, and John F. Van Wicklin. 1986. "Religion and Refugee Resettlement in the United States: A Research Note." *Review of Religious Research* 27 (4): 356–66.
- Creswell, John W., and David J. Creswell. 2018. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Method Approaches*. Fifth. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.
- Di Lorenzo Pires, Guilherme, and Danny Zahreddine. 2021. "Religious Identities versus National Identity: An Assessment of the Views of Syrian Refugees in Brazil about National Identity Consciousness | Identidades Religiosas versus Identidade Nacional: Uma Avaliação Sa Visão Dos Refugiados Sírios No Brasil Sobre a Consciência de Identidade Nacional." *Mural Internacional* 12 (0): 60441.
- Dorais, Louis Jacques. 2007. "Faith, Hope and Identity: Religion and the Vietnamese Refugees." *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 26 (2): 57–68.
- Ennis, S. 2011. *Religion, Spirituality, and the Refugee Experience*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Faruqi, Al, and J. Maysam. 2005. "Umma: The Orientalists and the Qur'Ānic Concept of Identity." *Journal of Islamic Studies* 16(1): 1–34.
- Fischer, Peter, Amy L. Ai, Nilüfer Aydin, Dieter Frey, and S. Alexander Haslam. 2010. "The Relationship between Religious Identity and Preferred Coping Strategies: An Examination of the Relative Importance of Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Coping in Muslim and Christian Faiths." *Review of General Psychology: Journal of Division 1, of the American Psychological Association* 14(4): 365–81.
- Hasan, Nabiha, Diane B. Mitschke, and Kristen E. Ravi. 2018. "Exploring the Role of Faith in Resettlement among Muslim Syrian Refugees." *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought* 37(3): 223–38.
- Hoskins, Janet Alison. 2015. "What Is a Refugee Religion? Exile, Exodus, and Emigration in the Vietnamese Diaspora." In *Building Noah's Ark for Migrants, Refugees, and Religious Communities*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Islam, Md Saiful, and Ali Şahin. 2023. "Impact of Forcibly Displaced People's Identity Crisis on Host State's Security: The Case of Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh." *Saudi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 8(04): 80–91.
- Islam, Mohammad. 2020. "Rohingya Refugees: Implications of the Right to Return and the Right to Remain." *SSRN*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3711449>.
- Jung, Jin-Heon. 2020. "Crossing and Conversion among North Korean Refugee-Migrants." *Religions* 11(10): 510.
- Kipgen, Nehginpao. 2019. "The Rohingya Crisis: The Centrality of Identity and Citizenship." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 39 (1): 61–74.
- Leider, Jacques. 2018. "Rohingya: The History of a Muslim Identity in Myanmar." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*. Oxford University Press.
- Muratkhani, Makhmet, Yerzhan Kalmakhan, Imamumadi Tussufkhan, Akimkhanov Askar, and Okan Samet. 2021. "The Importance of Religious Education in Consolidating Kazakh Identity in China: An Historical Approach." *Religious Education* 116 (5): 521–30.
- Muruthi, Bertranna A., Savannah S. Young, Jessica Chou, Emily Janes, and Maliha Ibrahim. 2020. "'We Pray as a Family': The Role of Religion for Resettled Karen Refugees." *Journal of Family Issues* 41 (10): 1723–41.
- Nagel, Alexander-Kenneth. 2023. "'I Was a Stranger and You Welcomed Me'. The Role of Religion and Faith-Based Organizations in Refugee Accommodation." *Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society* 9 (1): 251–75.
- Oda, Yoshiko. 1984. "The Concept of the 'Ummah' in the Qur'an." *Orient* 20: 93–108.

- Peek, Lori. 2005. "Becoming Muslim: The Development of a Religious Identity." *Sociology of Religion* 66 (3): 215–42.
- Radford, David, and Heidi Hetz. 2021. "Aussies? Afghans? Hazara Refugees and Migrants Negotiating Multiple Identities and Belonging in Australia." *Social Identities* 27 (3): 377–93.
- Rebolledo, Olga. 2019. "Rituals and Healing Ceremonies Help to Promote Psychosocial Wellbeing by Increasing Sense of Identity and Community in Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh." *Intervention (Amstelveen, Netherlands)* 17 (2): 278.
- Rivas, Ricardo, and Michael Gibson-Light. 2016. "Exploring Culture through In-Depth Interviews: Is It Useful to Ask People about What They Think, Mean, and Do?" *Cinta Moebio* 57: 316–29.
- Şafak-Ayvazoğlu, Ayşe, Filiz Künüröğlu, Fons Van de Vijver, and Kutlay Yağmur. 2021. "Acculturation of Syrian Refugees in the Netherlands: Religion as Social Identity and Boundary Marker." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 34 (1): 555–78.
- Samuri, Mohd Al Adib, and Peter Hopkins. 2023. "Navigating 'Purdah' Culture in Urban Space: The Restricted Lives of Young Married Rohingya Refugees in Malaysia." In *Refugee Youth*, 81–99. Bristol: Bristol University Press.
- Sanchez Bean, María Celeste. 2021. "Women Who Dare: Exploring Experiences of Participation among Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh," *Refugee Law Initiative School of Advanced Study University of London* 55.
- Subedi, D. B., and Johanna Garnett. 2020. "De-Mystifying Buddhist Religious Extremism in Myanmar: Confrontation and Contestation around Religion, Development and State-Building." *Conflict, Security & Development* 20 (2): 223–46.
- Wakefield, Juliet R. H., Mhairi Bowe, Blerina Këllezhi, Lydia J. Harkin, Charles W. Baker, and Ardiana Shala. 2023. "‘I Knew I Needed to Live What I Realised Was Faith in Me’: Enacting and Transcending Religious Identity through Food Aid Volunteering." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 54: 265–281. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.3012>.
- Wildan, Muhammad. 2021. "The Persecution of Rohingya Muslims and the Path to Democratization in Myanmar." *Studia Islamika* 28 (1): 29–52.
- Wu, Stephen, Stephen Ellingson, Paul Hagstrom, and Jaime Kucinkas. 2021. "Religion and Refugee Well-being: The Importance of Inclusive Community." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 60 (2): 291–308.
- Younis, Tarek, and Ghayda Hassan. 2019. "‘I Know What a Muslim Really Is’: How Political Context Predisposes the Perceived Need for an Objective Muslim Identity." *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 34 (1): 1–19.
- Yusuf, Imtiyaz. 2018. "Three Faces of the Rohingya Crisis: Religious Nationalism, Asian Islamophobia, and Delegitimizing Citizenship." *Studia Islamika* 25 (3): 503–41.

Zine, Jasmin. 2001. "Muslim Youth in Canadian Schools: Education and the Politics of Religious Identity." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 32 (4): 399–423.

Nur Nadia Lukmanulhakim, *IMAN Research Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*.
Email: nadia.lukman93@gmail.com.

Mohd Al Adib Samuri, *Faculty of Islamic Studies & Institute of Islam Hadhari, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia of Selangor, Malaysia*. Email: al_adib@ukm.edu.my.

Guidelines

Submission of Articles

S*tudia Islamika*, published three times a year since 1994, is a bilingual (English and Arabic), peer-reviewed journal, and specializes in Indonesian Islamic studies in particular and Southeast Asian Islamic studies in general. The aim is to provide readers with a better understanding of Indonesia and Southeast Asia's Muslim history and present developments through the publication of articles, research reports, and book reviews.

The journal invites scholars and experts working in all disciplines in the humanities and social sciences pertaining to Islam or Muslim societies. Articles should be original, research-based, unpublished and not under review for possible publication in other journals. All submitted papers are subject to review of the editors, editorial board, and blind reviewers. Submissions that violate our guidelines on formatting or length will be rejected without review.

Articles should be written in American English between approximately 10.000-15.000 words including text, all tables and figures, notes, references, and appendices intended for publication. All submission must include 150 words abstract and 5 keywords. Quotations, passages, and words in local or foreign languages should

be translated into English. *Studia Islamika* accepts only electronic submissions. All manuscripts should be sent in Ms. Word to: <http://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/studia-islamika>.

All notes must appear in the text as citations. A citation usually requires only the last name of the author(s), year of publication, and (sometimes) page numbers. For example: (Hefner 2009a, 45; Geertz 1966, 114). Explanatory footnotes may be included but should not be used for simple citations. All works cited must appear in the reference list at the end of the article. In matter of bibliographical style, *Studia Islamika* follows the American Political Science Association (APSA) manual style, such as below:

1. Hefner, Robert. 2009a. "Introduction: The Political Cultures of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia," in *Making Modern Muslims: The Politics of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia*, ed. Robert Hefner, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
2. Booth, Anne. 1988. "Living Standards and the Distribution of Income in Colonial Indonesia: A Review of the Evidence." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 19(2): 310–34.
3. Feener, Michael R., and Mark E. Cammack, eds. 2007. *Islamic Law in Contemporary Indonesia: Ideas and Institutions*. Cambridge: Islamic Legal Studies Program.
4. Wahid, Din. 2014. *Nurturing Salafi Manhaj: A Study of Salafi Pesantrens in Contemporary Indonesia*. PhD dissertation. Utrecht University.
5. Utriza, Ayang. 2008. "Mencari Model Kerukunan Antaragama." *Kompas*. March 19: 59.
6. Ms. *Undhang-Undhang Banten*, L.Or.5598, Leiden University.
7. Interview with K.H. Sahal Mahfudz, Kajen, Pati, June 11th, 2007.

Arabic romanization should be written as follows:

Letters: ' b, t, th, j, ḥ, kh, d, dh, r, z, s, sh, ṣ, ḍ, ṭ, ḡ, ' gh, f, q, l, m, n, h, w, y. Short vowels: a, i, u. long vowels: ā, ī, ū. Diphthongs: aw, ay. *Tā marbūṭā*: t. Article: al-. For detail information on Arabic Romanization, please refer the transliteration system of the Library of Congress (LC) Guidelines.

ستوديا إسلاميكا (ISSN 0215-0492; E-ISSN: 2355-6145) مجلة علمية دولية محكمة تصدر عن مركز دراسات الإسلام والمجتمع (PPIM) بجامعة شريف هداية الله الإسلامية الحكومية بجاكرتا، تعنى بدراسة الإسلام في إندونيسيا خاصة وفي جنوب شرقي آسيا عامة. وتستهدف المجلة نشر البحوث العلمية الأصيلة والقضايا المعاصرة حول الموضوع، كما ترحب بإسهامات الباحثين أصحاب التخصصات ذات الصلة. وتخضع جميع الأبحاث المقدمة للمجلة للتحكيم من قبل لجنة مختصة.

تم اعتماد ستوديا إسلاميكا من قبل وزارة البحوث والتكنولوجيا والتعليم العالي بجمهورية إندونيسيا باعتبارها دورية علمية (رقم القرار: 32a/E/KPT/2017).

ستوديا إسلاميكا عضو في CrossRef (الإحالات الثابتة في الأدبيات الأكاديمية) منذ ٢٠١٤، وبالتالي فإن جميع المقالات التي نشرتها مرقمة حسب معرف الوثيقة الرقمية (DOI).

ستوديا إسلاميكا مجلة مفهرسة في سكوبس (Scopus) منذ ٣٠ مايو ٢٠١٥.

عنوان المراسلة:

Editorial Office:
STUDIA ISLAMIKA, Gedung Pusat Pengkajian
Islam dan Masyarakat (PPIM) UIN Jakarta,
Jl. Kertamukti No. 5, Pisangan Barat, Cirendeu,
Ciputat 15419, Jakarta, Indonesia.
Phone: (62-21) 7423543, 7499272, Fax: (62-21) 7408633;
E-mail: studia.islamika@uinjkt.ac.id
Website: <http://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/studia-islamika>

قيمة الاشتراك السنوي خارج إندونيسيا:
للمؤسسات: ٧٥ دولار أمريكي، ونسخة واحدة قيمتها ٢٥ دولار أمريكي.
للأفراد: ٥٠ دولار أمريكي، ونسخة واحدة قيمتها ٢٠ دولار أمريكي.
والقيمة لا تشمل نفقة الإرسال بالبريد الجوي.

رقم الحساب:

خارج إندونيسيا (دولار أمريكي):
PPIM, Bank Mandiri KCP Tangerang Graha Karnos, Indonesia
account No. 101-00-0514550-1 (USD).

داخل إندونيسيا (روبية):

PPIM, Bank Mandiri KCP Tangerang Graha Karnos, Indonesia
No Rek: 128-00-0105080-3 (Rp).

قيمة الاشتراك السنوي داخل إندونيسيا:
لسنة واحدة ١٥٠,٠٠٠ روبية (للمؤسسة) ونسخة واحدة قيمتها ٥٠,٠٠٠ روبية،
١٠٠,٠٠٠ روبية (للفرد) ونسخة واحدة قيمتها ٤٠,٠٠٠ روبية.
والقيمة لا تشمل على النفقة للإرسال بالبريد الجوي.



ستوديا إسلاميكا

مجلة إندونيسيا للدراسات الإسلامية

السنة الثالثون، العدد ٣، ٢٠٢٣

رئيس التحرير:

سيف المزاني

مدير التحرير:

أومان فتح الرحمن

هيئة التحرير:

جمهاري

ديدين شفرالدين

جاجات برهان الدين

فؤاد جبيلي

إسماتو راقي

سيف الأمم

داداي دارمادي

جاجانج جهرائي

دين واحد

ايويس نورليلاواتي

مجلس التحرير الدولي:

محمد قرش شهاب (جامعة شريف هداية الله الإسلامية الحكومية بجاكرتا)

مارتين فان برونيسين (جامعة أرتيخة)

جوهن ر. بووين (جامعة واشنطن، سانتو لويس)

محمد كمال حسن (الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية — ماليزيا)

فركنيا م. هوكير (جامعة أستراليا الحكومية كانبرا)

إيدوين ف. ويرنجا (جامعة كولونوا، ألمانيا)

روبيرت و. هيفنير (جامعة بوستون)

ريمي مادنيير (المركز القومي للبحث العلمي بفرنسا)

ر. ميكائيل فينير (جامعة سينغافورا الحكومية)

ميكائيل ف. لفان (جامعة فرينشتون)

ميناكو ساكاي (جامعة نيو ساوث ويلز)

انابيل تيه جالوب (المكتبة البريطانية)

شفاعة المرزاة (جامعة سونان كاليجاغا الإسلامية الحكومية)

مساعد هيئة التحرير:

تيسرتيونو

محمد نداء فضلان

رنغكا إيكسا سافوترا

عبد الله مولاني

سفران بالله

أيندي أولياء غراديان

مراجعة اللغة الإنجليزية:

بنيمين ج. فريمان

دانيل فترتون

موسى بتول

مراجعة اللغة العربية:

توباغوس أدي أسناوي

يولي ياسين

تصميم الغلاف:

س. برنكا

ستوديا اسلاميا

سثوديا اسراميا

السنة الثالثون، العدد ٣، ٢٠٢٣

مجلة إنذونيسية للدراسات الإسلامية



DISABILITY AND ISLAMIC LAW IN INDONESIA: BEYOND THE *RUKHSAH*

Arif Maftuhin

IDEAS, POLITICS, AND THE MAKING OF MUSLIM DEMOCRACY: AN HISTORICAL TRAJECTORY IN INDONESIA

Ali Munhanif & A. Bakir Ihsan

المدرسة (MADRASAH) أم المدرسة العامة (SEKOLAH):
المفضلة عند أتباع جمعية المحمدية ونهضة العلماء
في إنذونيسيا

عارف سبحان
