

## Adab teachers of Islamic religious education in Singapore: Analysis of the guidance book of the Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS)

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### Abstract

*Among the problems faced by Singaporean Muslim educators is the issue of asatizah etiquette. Given their position as teachers, asatizahs become role models for madrasa students and the local Muslim community. For this reason, Islamic religious leaders in Singapore see the need for an accreditation or certification institution for educators or commonly referred to as asatizah in Singapore. The purpose of this article is to see what and how the accreditation institution for asatizahs called the Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS), as well as analyzing the manners of asatizahs in Singapore which are the provisions in the Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS). This research method uses a qualitative method with a literature research approach. The author obtains data from official documents related to the asatizah certification policy in Singapore issued by the Singapore Islamic Religious Council (MUIS) and the Asatizah Recognition Board (ARB). The results of this study found that the Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS) program is a kind of teacher certification intended for all who teach Islamic science in Singapore. The program aims to improve the competence of Islamic religious education teachers so that they can become a credible source of reference for Singapore's Islamic community. The competence is given only to religious teachers who are worthy and suitable for preaching and teaching religion in Singapore. The teacher's manners are things that must be obeyed by teachers who take part in the Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS) program, called the code of ethics. With this code of ethics, it is hoped that asatizahs will further improve their professionalism so that they can increase the trust of the Islamic community in Singapore towards asatizahs.*

**Keywords:** Adab; Asatizah; Islamic Education; Singapura.

### Abstrak

Di antara masalah yang dihadapi oleh para pendidik muslim Singapura adalah masalah adab atau etika asatizah. Mengingat posisinya sebagai guru, asatizah menjadi role mode bagi para siswa madrasah dan masyarakat muslim setempat. Untuk itu, para pemuka agama Islam di Singapura memandang perlu adanya lembaga akreditasi atau sertifikasi bagi pendidik atau biasa disebut dengan asatizah di Singapura. Tujuan artikel ini adalah untuk melihat apa dan bagaimana lembaga akreditasi untuk para asatizah yang dinamakan Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS), juga menganalisis adab para asatizah di Singapura yang menjadi ketentuan dalam Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS). Metode penelitian ini

menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan penelitian kepustakaan. Penulis mendapatkan data-data dari dokumen-dokumen resmi yang berkaitan dengan kebijakan sertifikasi asatizah di Singapura yang diterbitkan oleh Majelis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS) dan Asatizah Recognition Board (ARB). Hasil penelitian ini mendapati bahwa program Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS) menjadi semacam sertifikasi guru yang diperuntukan untuk semua yang mengajar keilmuan Islam di Singapura. Program ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kompetensi guru pendidikan agama Islam agar bisa menjadi sumber rujukan yang kredibel bagi masyarakat Islam Singapura. Kompetensi tersebut diberikan hanya kepada guru-guru agama yang layak dan sesuai untuk berdakwah dan mengajar agama di Singapura Adapun adab guru menjadi hal yang harus dipatuhi oleh para guru yang mengikuti program Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS), dinamakan sebagai kode etik. Dengan adanya kode etik tersebut, diharapkan para asatizah semakin meningkatkan profesionalismenya sehingga bisa meningkatkan kepercayaan masyarakat Islam di Singapura terhadap para asatizah.

**Kata kunci:** Adab; Asatizah; Pendidikan Islam; Singapura.

## **Introduction**

Singapore has been known as a secular country that does not include religion in its government system. But on a deeper analysis, Singapore is not truly secular. With most of Singapore's population being immigrants, they have a heterogeneous society with almost every religion and faith in the world (Wee, 2005). The Pew Research Center in its 2014 study on "Global Religious Diversity" showed that Singapore has the highest religious diversity in the world (<https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/>).

Singaporean Malay Muslims make up 15% of the total population of Singapore, which is a multi-ethnic (Chua et al., 2005), multi-cultural (Noor & Leong, 2013), multi-religious, and "religion-friendly" secular state (Musa, 2016; Neo, 2016). As a multi-ethnic country, Singapore's population is a mixture of Chinese, Malay, Indian, and other ethnicities (Helmiati, 2021). The majority of Singaporean Muslims in this country are moderate Muslims, in the sense that they are neither extreme right nor extreme left. What is meant by extreme right is extremism or radicalism, while what is meant by extreme left is a strong understanding of liberalism that carries the ideology of pluralism (Peacock, 2014). The simplicity of Singapore's Muslim community is recognized and appreciated by the Singapore government (MoHA, 2003).

The notion of simplicity in religion was established in Singapore in the findings of the first ulama congress in 2003, and it was reinforced in the outcomes of the second ulama congress, which was held on August 12, 2017, and was hosted by the Perhimpunan Ulama dan Guru Agama Islam Singapura (PERGAS). Dr. Fatris Bakaram, the State Mufti of Singapore, outlined the

meaning of modesty and *washatiyah*, being neither too nice nor too terrible, as he closed the congress. Islam is practiced moderately in Singapore by staying in the center of the horizontal line and not veering too far to the right or left. Between excellent deeds without *ifrath* is a phrase that is frequently used.

Muslims in Singapore hold a unique status in terms of how laws are implemented there. This is due to the fact that, in addition to having equal status with ordinary Singaporeans under the Singapore constitution, they also receive exemptions in some cases involving personal concerns under Singapore's lower court system. A specific statute known as the Administration of Muslim Statute Act (AMLA) gives them the right to seek redress through the Syariah Court, which oversees the Islamic court system (Muthalib, 2015). In Singapore, the Muslim community's religious matters are governed by the AMLA. It was enacted in 1966, and on July 1st, 1986, it became effective (<https://id.wikipedia.org/>).

Islamic education in Singapore is under the control of MUIS. This means that all activities related to education for Singaporean Muslims must be approved by MUIS. This includes regulating the existence of Islamic religious educators, in this case commonly referred to as 'asatizah'. These asatizahs are teachers in Singapore's Islamic educational institutions known as 'madrasas'. They gather in an organization called PERGAS (Persatuan Ulama dan Guru-Guru Agama Islam Singapura). This organization is dedicated to improving the quality of Islamic education and the welfare of Islamic teachers in Singapore (<https://www.pergas.org.sg/about/>). Compared to MUIS, PERGAS is more conservative and has a more significant influence on the Malay-Muslim community in Singapore (Abdullah, 2013).

The existence of educators or teachers in the world of education is important in the teaching process. The role of the teacher has an inseparable unity of functions, between the ability to educate, guide, teach, and train students (Sopian, 2016). Wina Sanjaya (2013) explains the role of the teacher as a learning resource, facilitator, manager, demonstrator, guide, and motivator, in managing learning. Its role is strategic in achieving educational goals to develop all aspects of human personality and abilities, both in terms of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects (Fatmawati, 2021). In the education and teaching process, it is necessary to have qualified teachers, meaning that in addition to mastering the subject matter, teachers must also understand the basics of education (Sopian, 2016). Teachers must also have professional competence which includes the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate learning in accordance with their field of expertise (Utami & Hasanah, 2019).

The issue of teacher competence then became a concern of senior scholars and *asatizah* in PERGAS. The figure of Islamic religious education teachers in Singapore is considered a role model for the local Muslim community (Mostarom, 2014). Islamic religious education teachers play an important role in providing religious guidance for the Singaporean Muslim community in a changing landscape and an increasingly diverse and evolving socio-religious landscape. Singaporean Muslims feel that they need religious guidance that is moderate and appropriate to the context and ways of modern life in multi-ethnic and multi-religious Singapore (Abdullah, 2013). Islamic religious education teachers are deemed necessary to convey and explain Islam that is "*rahmatan lil-'alamin*" and nurtures and protects the community from any form of ideology that breaks the harmony of society (MUIS, 2017). In addition, it is important for them to make strict policies in regulating the diversity of their society, especially for Islamic religious education teachers, in dealing with the understandings developed through the internet media, which are not in accordance with Singapore's national values (Rahman, 2023).

For this reason, Islamic religious leaders in Singapore saw the need for an accreditation or certification body for Islamic religious education teachers in Singapore. The proposal was then submitted to MUIS and in 2004 MUIS established the *Asatizah Recognition Board* (ARB). The ARB's main objectives are to improve the scientific quality and skills of *asatizahs* through the Continuous Professional Education (CPE) program, to homogenize the quality goals of *asatizahs*, and to implement a recognition scheme program for *asatizahs* known as the *Asatizah Recognition Scheme* (ARS). In this regard, ARS issued guidelines to ensure that *asatizahs* adhere to the Code of Ethics (CoE) in guiding the Islamic community and providing religious guidance in line with Singapore government policies (MUIS, 2017).

The code of ethics compiled in the ARS is a kind of ethics that *asatizahs* must have. They undertake a process of rigorous training and certification to ensure that they are qualified to teach Islamic religious knowledge. Ethics is part of *adab* (Syafri, 2023). In this case, the teacher *adab* compiled by MUIS is something interesting to research and analyze. That uniformity of the teacher *adab* who teaches Islam in Singapore is a form of MUIS's prudence so that heretical or problematic ideologies and teachings can be prevented and guarded.

Research on Islamic religious education teachers or *asatizahs* in Singapore is of considerable interest to education observers in Singapore. They discuss the role of *asatizahs* in Singapore and how they navigate within the context of a strong state (Mostarom, 2014). It is said that *asatizahs* in Singapore have a unique

position in the Muslim community, as they are both religious leaders and representatives of the state (Hamid, 2020). Nevertheless, some of the *asatizahs* engage in religio-political activism, and there have been incidents where the government has attempted to control the activities of the *ulama* (Osman & Nawab, 2012). In another study Abdullah (2016) argued that *asatizahs* in Singapore have been co-opted by the state, but they also resist state control by maintaining their religious authority and independence. On the other hand, the presence of *asatizah* is able to build a superior community for the Singaporean Muslim community (Hassan & Shuhaimy, 2018) and develop the condition of the Muslim community in Singapore which is getting better today (Khair, 2021).

This article has a similar theme in discussing the role of *asatizah* in the Muslim community in Singapore. Some previous studies have also discussed the *Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS)* which is only given to Islamic education teachers and clerics who meet the minimum qualification standards and are deemed fit to preach and teach. However, this article is more specialized in terms of *adab* or code of ethics that Islamic religious education teachers must have as a condition of competence for the *Asatizah Recognition Scheme* in Singapore. This is interesting because to regulate, maintain, and protect the *asatizah* from doing things that are far from their function as educators, it must be emphasized in the *adab* chapter, under the supervision of MUIS, PERGAS and ARB. This is to better protect the good of the *asatizahs* who have registered as experts in the existing associations.

## **Research Method**

This article uses a type of qualitative research with a descriptive analysis research model, which is to understand the phenomenon of what the research subject experiences thoroughly by means of descriptions in the form of words and language, in a special context experienced and by utilizing various scientific methods (Moleong, 2007). This type of research is commonly used to examine social life, history, behavior, and others (Cresswell, 1998). The research approach used in this article is a library study approach. (library research). This means that library research whose data is taken from written materials, either in the form of books or others related to the topic of discussion. The content of the literature study can take the form of a theoretical study whose discussion is focused on information about the problems to be solved through research (Sukardi, 2003).

As literature research, the research data is obtained from various literatures, books and other writings related to the research topic discussed. The data sources to be collected consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data sources are

obtained directly from the original source. The data that is in accordance with this research is the Singapore Asatizah Recruitment Scheme (ARS) Regulatory Handbook. While the secondary data sources are research data sources obtained through intermediary media such as books, journals and others.

There are several stages taken by the author in library research. First, collecting research materials in the form of information or empirical data sourced from books, journals, results of official and scientific research reports and other literature that supports or corresponds to this research. Second, reading library materials, not only being asked to simply absorb all the knowledge information in reading materials, but a hunting activity that requires active and critical reader involvement in order to obtain maximum results (Zed, 2008). Third, making research notes. This step is arguably the most important stage and perhaps also the most strenuous culmination of the whole series of library research because all the material that has been read and poured into the form of a report. Fourth, processing research notes, namely the results of this research analysis are compiled in the form of a journal research report.

This article uses two data analysis techniques. First, Content Analysis, which is a research method with certain stages to take the essence of an idea or information which is then drawn a conclusion. Second, Descriptive Analytics, which is a method by describing and analyzing. By using both methods together, it is hoped that the object can be given maximum meaning (Ratna, 2010).

## **Result and Discussion**

### **A. About Project of Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS)**

As a population living in a multi-religious country, the Malay Muslim minority practice their religion in a more "Singaporean" way in their various religious and educational practices. The Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) controls all activities of Singaporean Muslims, both in terms of Islamic propagation and education. What MUIS has done can be said to be the success of this institution in accommodating the diversity of its people and their religious life, as well as being able to control various Islamic discourses that have the potential to damage the stability and security of the country (Rahman, 2023).

One of MUIS's ways of nurturing the diversity and religious life of Singapore's Muslim community is by organizing a certification project for teachers and preachers who teach Islam. This project is known as Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS), which is a recognition scheme for Muslim educators and preachers in Singapore. If they pass this scheme, they will then have a license

to teach or preach according to the scientific certification that has been determined.

The intention to have a certification body for *asatizahs* in Singapore was proposed in the 90s by scholars and *asatizahs* who were members of the organization *Persatuan Ulama & Guru-Guru Agama Islam Singapura* (PERGAS). The proposal was presented to the *Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura* (Muis) for discussion. In 2004, Muis established the *Asatizah Recognition Board* (ARB) and appointed *Ustaz Hj Ali bin Hj Mohamed* as its first chairman and the PERGAS organization as its secretariat. The following year, the *Asatizah Recognition Scheme* (ARS) program was created and several *asatizahs* voluntarily registered as the first batch of certification (MUIS, 2017).

This ARS project has gone through several changes over the years. The purpose of the project is to improve the competence of Islamic religious education teachers so that they can be an authoritative source of reference for Singapore's Islamic community. The competencies are given only to those religious teachers who are fit and proper to preach and teach religion in Singapore, which are evaluated and approved by *Asatizah Recognition Board* (ARB). ARS also aims to enhance the professionalism of *asatizahs* and improve their skills. Muslim community leaders have welcomed the *asatizah* certification program by strengthening it into a comprehensive mandatory program for all *asatizahs* from 1 January 2017. Based on the law, ARS applies only to *asatizahs* who have passed the certification process and received recognition from ARB to be able to teach religious knowledge. Meanwhile, the certification policy for Islamic education institutions only became effective in January 2018 (MUIS, 2017).

From the aspect of shariah, especially from the *maqashid syariah'ah* policy, ARS is part of the *hifdzuddin* (protecting religion) effort. What is meant by "protecting religion" here is an effort so that the glory of Islamic teachings is not tainted with radical or extremist views (Mufid, 2013). This is implied by MUIS's statement:

*Asatizah* memainkan peranan penting dalam memberi panduan agama bagi masyarakat Islam Singapura dalam landskap perubahan dan kepelbagaian sosio Agama yang semakin rencam dan berkembang. Masyarakat telah berusaha gigih untuk mendapatkan panduan agama sesuai dengan nilai-nilai persamaan cara kehidupan moden di Singapura yang berbilang Bangsa dan Agama. Guru-guru agama kita perlu memelihara dan melindungi masyarakat dari dipengaruhi ideologi ekstrim. Berdasarkan pada perinsip mempertingkatkan taraf profesionalisme *asatizah* sebagai salah satu teras pengiktirafan ARS, pemimpin Masyarakat Islam mengalu-alukan skim ARS ini diperkukuhkan menjadi skim yang mandatori yang menyeluruh merangkumi semua *asatizah*. Begitu juga dengan peraturan Pusat dan penyedia khidmat Pendidikan Islam (IECP) yang

akan membantu masyarakat Islam untuk meperoleh maklumat mengenai senarai IECP yang mempunyai kredibiliti. Ini bagi memastikan agar idiologi dan ajaran sesat atau bermasalah dapat dicegah dan dikawal (MUIS, 2017).

From the MUIS statement above, it can be ascertained that there are two main objectives of implementing the ARS policy. The first is to maintain the purity of Islamic teachings from the influence of extreme teachings. Second, to maintain the sanctity of Islamic teachings from deviation or misguided understanding. This certification policy can be categorized as an effort to protect religion not only from the attacks of outside thoughts, both orientalist thoughts and their agents, namely liberalists and secularists (Rahman, 2023). The main object of the certification policy aimed at by MUIS is the creation of an understanding of Islam that is truly *wasathiyah*, in the middle position.

In the scope of education, Islamic teaching in Singapore refers to the activity of teaching Islam, whatever the subject or field, in an Islamic educational institution or Islamic Education Centers and Providers (IECP) to one or more non-family members, i.e. who are not the spouse, children, parents, parents-in-law, siblings, or other individuals related by blood or marriage and living in the same household as the teacher (MUIS, 2017). Given this reference, the ARS project is for all those who teach Islam in Singapore, including Singapore residents, permanent residents, and those using the Employment Pass to teach religion, as well as those using the Long-Term Visit Pass granted by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICA). ARS is not permitted for foreign religious preachers as they are subject to the provisions of another permit scheme, the Miscellaneous Work Pass (MWP) issued by the Ministry of Manpower (MoM).

There are two classifications of asatizah referred to in ARS. First, religious teachers (asatizah) who have two categories: *Zamil* for those who are activists in da'wah and society, and who devote their knowledge to teaching Islamic science; *Graduan* for scholars (at least S1) graduates of accredited universities, mastering Arabic with at least a GCE 'A' pass, and passing an interview. Secondly, Qur'anic teachers who also have two categories: *QT1* for Diploma in Islamic Education or Qur'anic Education graduates from accredited universities, mastering at least GCE 'A' level Arabic, and passing an interview; *QT2* for those who have a diploma in Islamic Education or a structured Qur'anic Education Program, and are qualified to continue their education to the Pre-Diploma level (MUIS, 2017).



Table 1. Classification of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Singapore

Rating	Category	Criteria	Teaching Rating	Teaching Space
<b>Religion Teacher (Asatizah)</b>	ZAMIL	This special category is for those who wish to contribute to science, da'wah, and community activities. This status is granted based on candidacy only	Basic ranking of all Islamic Studies subjects based on eligibility, ability & proficiency (for all ranks - Basic to Advanced)	It is permissible to teach in all places of education including common places
	GRADUAN	Bachelor's degree in Islamic Education from a recognized higher education institution Arabic language proficiency of at least GCE 'A' level or equivalent Pass the interview Pass PCICS	Fields of Islamic Education, based on eligibility, ability & proficiency (Basic to Advanced ranks)	It is permissible to teach in all places of education including places for: Delivering lectures / <i>syarahan</i> /lectures Delivering a khutbah
<b>Al-Qur'an Teacher</b>	QT1	Diploma in Islamic Education or al-Quran from a higher education institution (recognized in the 'white list') Arabic language proficiency of at least GCE 'A' level or equivalent Pass the interview	Basic al-Quran & Fardhu 'Ain teaching based on AQIL curriculum Teaching of aLIVE (Kids-Youth) ranks IRK teaching based on GCE 'O' level	It is permissible to teach in all places of education including common places
	QT2	Certificates in Islamic or Quranic Studies Pass the interview  * The applicant must use a Course Completion Certificate from a structured Islamic Studies Certificate Program or Quranic Studies Certificate Program that enables the applicant to continue the study to	QT2 divided into 2: 1. <i>Fardhu 'Ain</i> : Teaching aLIVE (Kids or equivalent)  2. Al-Qur'an: Teaching Al-Qur'an (Tajwid, Tilawah) & basic <i>fardhu 'ain</i> This includes the AQIL curriculum or its equivalent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only allowed to teach in the classroom</li> <li>• Not allowed to teach in common places</li> <li>• Not allowed to: <i>Khutba</i> Lecture/General Lecture</li> </ul>

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Pre-Diploma Level  
and not an inclusion  
certificate.

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Source: Guidance Book of Asatizah Recognition Scheme, MUIS, 2017

ARS is intended for all those who teach Islamic studies in Singapore. For those who apply, they will be considered based on predetermined criteria, i.e. the asatizah must meet sufficient eligibility standards to teach at an Islamic education center (based on the prescribed academic standards); and the asatizah is deemed worthy and suitable to teach at an Islamic education center. In addition, there are several aspects that need to be considered to determine whether someone is fit and proper to teach religion, including not committing mistakes related to cheating factors, morals, crimes, or can cause harm to children; not being in a suspended status or having a previous ARS canceled; behavior that is not in accordance with the behavior of an education center teacher in general, or that is embarrassing or unnatural (MUIS, 2017).

Applications for ARS certification by graduates of Islamic Education, whether they are graduates from local (twinning programs), overseas, part-time or online distance programs, will be scrutinized and assessed by the Asatizah Recognition Board (ARB). The ARB reserves the right to call the applicants for an interview. Successful applicants will be granted Provisional ARS and will proceed to the mandatory Postgraduate Certificate in Islam in Contemporary Societies (PCICS) program controlled by Muis Academy as one of the requirements for full recognition under ARS. PCICS is a year-long Advanced Education and Training program for graduates of Islamic colleges who apply for ARS Tier 1 (*Graduan*). PCICS aims to form a generation of professional asatizahs who are highly confident, *ihsan* in nature and proficient in the skills and knowledge required to provide Islamic religious guidance. After passing the PCICS, asatizah will receive full status from the ARS certification project (full ARS).

Over time, the ARS project has been able and effective in managing religious teaching and radicalism in Singapore (Zakariah, 2019). The scheme has also succeeded in improving the position of religious teachers and becoming a credible source of reference for Singapore's Muslim community (Yahya, 2018). Given the emergence of social media, which, while beneficial, is also an open window into ideological influences such as sectarianism, extremism and xenophobia. The ARS project further strengthens the responsibility of asatizahs in providing practical, contextual and holistic religious guidance to the Singaporean Muslim community.

## **B. Adab Teachers of Islamic Religious Education in Project of Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS)**

*Adab* is defined as a science that studies or assesses human behavior, whether good or bad (Syafri, 2023). In Greek, *adab* is equated with the word 'ethicos' or 'ethos', which means 'ethics' (Nasir, 1991). Ki Hajar Dewantara interpreted *adab* with several interpretations: *adab* as ethics, *adab* as part of the science of philosophy, and *adab* as the nature of human external order (Syafri, 2023). From some of these explanations, it can be said that *adab* is the attitude and behavior of human actions that arise from their characteristics, where the tendency of the meaning is positive.

*Adab* in the world of Islamic education is very important and must be present in the process, especially for teachers. As educators, they become role models for their students. Even according to Hasyim Asy'ari, the *adab* of a teacher takes precedence over the *adab* of students (Syafri, 2022). Teachers must have manners that can be imitated and emulated in realizing the creation of *insan kamil*, namely humans who are physically and mentally healthy, emotionally intelligent, skilled at work and have good character (Asad, 2020).

In the Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS) project, teacher *adabs* are the main competencies that teachers who want to teach Islamic knowledge must have in order to qualify for the certification program. These *adabs* are organized under the name 'code of ethics'. The purpose of ARS issuing these guidelines is to ensure that asatizahs adhere to the code of conduct in guiding the Islamic community and providing religious guidance that is in line with Singapore government policies.

These teacher code of ethics become a kind of personality competence that must be possessed for religious teachers and Qur'an teachers, namely:

### **1. Main personality competencies of religion teachers and al-Qur'an teachers.**

*A religious teacher or a teacher of the Qur'an must be:*

- a. Hold fast to the simple teachings of Islam
  - 1) Most scholars in the field of Islamic sciences, known as *Ahlu Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*, emphasize that we should follow *wasathiyah* Islamic teachings and practices to avoid the two negatives of excess (*ifrath*) and deficiency (*tafrith*).
  - 2) The teachings of Islamic science must be based on the *Ahlu Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*, such as the traditions of Abu Al-Ḥasan Al-Asy'ari and Abu Manṣur Al-Maturidy, as well as other traditions from earlier Islamic traditions (*salaf*).

- 3) The teachings of Islamic practice (*fiqh*) should be based on the *mazhabs* (*mazhab fiqhiyyah*) of the established '*ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah*', such as Hanafi, Maliki, Syafi'i, and Hanbali, as well as the opinions of the *mujtahid* recognized by the majority (*jumhur*) *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah* and accepted by the Muslim community of Singapore.
  - 4) The doctrine of Islamic spirituality (according to the concept of *ihsan*) must be based on the practice of the *ahlus sunnah wa al-jama'ah*, including the teachings of *tarekat* and *tasawwuf* that do not contradict the basic principles of Islam.
  - 5) Simple Islamic doctrine also states that religion does not involve coercion or violence.
- b. Demonstrate a deep understanding of religion and understand contextual considerations when interpreting religious teachings.
- 1) Every doctrine of Islam should be placed within a broader framework of Islamic thought that originates from various sciences such as *ulum al-hadits*, *ulum al-Quran*, *ushl al-fiqh*, *al-fikha al-muqaran*, *al-qawwa'id al-fiqhiyyah*, and *maqashid al-shari'ah*. Therefore, Islamic teachings should only come from reliable sources and presented to those who want to learn with a good understanding and interpretation of these sources.
  - 2) In interpreting religious sources, it is important to consider the context when they are understood. The views and positions of scholars are closely interrelated and can only be properly understood if placed in the context of their time and environment. If *asatizah* wants to teach Islam in Singapore, then he must consider the cultural, religious, and secular and democratic conditions of government.
- c. Always act in a manner that preserves the good name of religious teachers in the presence of the Singapore Islamic community and does not bring down the reputation of this field.
- 1) The position of teaching Islam and al-Qur'an is a belief given by the Islamic community and should be respected by the Muslims. Therefore, a religious teacher and al-Qur'an teacher should strive to maintain morality and noble behaviour in interacting with society and obey Islamic ethics in all public affairs. This includes avoiding, showing, or expressing public insult to other believers who have different opinions on a particular religious issue. Plagiarism and falsification of documents should be avoided when producing educational material.

- 2) Rules and laws relating to finance and trusts must be adhered to. Any business and involvement, whether private or public, that can create a conflict of interest should be avoided. This includes encouraging and/or conducting private business activities while teaching in public institutions such as mosques, or engaging in any kind of illegal activity, including supporting charitable projects or social activities for personal or business gain.
- d. Recognize that in Islam there are various opinions and currents, and a teacher has the right to choose to adhere to and teach any opinion and current as long as it does not threaten inter-religious clashes or cause chaos in society.
  - 1) Part of God's plan and desire is diversity in creation. But there is an inevitable difference (*ikhtilaf*) in the understanding of religion in matters of the branch of religion (*furu'iyah*), especially in the matters that are disputed about the establishment and understanding (*naş zanni al-thubut wa al-dalalah*). The acknowledged religious method (*manhaj shar'i*) is used in the process of *istidlal* and *istimbath* to interpret the matter responsibly.
  - 2) The diversity of views in differences of *fiqh* must not lead to disagreement in society. A teacher of Islam and al-Quran must always stick to the *adab* speaking (*adab al-ikhtilaf*) when facing differences. Therefore, an *asatizah* should not state that their view is the truest or their group is the safest, and should not declare that the view of others is misguided or deviated by using words such as *bid'ah*, *syirik*, or *kurafat*. Because such accusations will only create disharmony and division in society.
- e. In the case of religious law, *asatizahs* must be guided by the decision of the Supreme Court of Fatwa.
  - 1) The Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA) as the policy determinant of Islamic law and practice in Singapore stipulates that the Fatwa Committee is the only official board in Singapore that has the authority to make decisions on matters relating to Islamic law. This means that decisions made by the Fatwa Committee must be respected. Religious decisions taken from other sources, such as international fatwa boards that conflict with the decisions of the Fatwa Committee, should not be prioritized.
2. ***Advanced personality competencies of religion teachers and al-Qur'an teachers. A religious teacher or a teacher of the Qur'an must not be:***
  - a. Declare that any opinion regarding Islam or the practice of Islam is heretical or unacceptable unless the Fatwa Committee has decided so in its decision.

- 1) The general guideline on the diversity of *mazhab* and understanding in Islam is the *Amman* Book, confirmed by religious figures and scholars from all over the Islamic world. Furthermore, the Fatwa Committee may make decisions and make statements concerning certain teachings and/or groups as unacceptable or misleading. A teacher of Islam and a teacher of al-Qur'an shall not declare a doctrine and/or group as misguided if it is contrary to the *Amman* Book or the decisions of the Fatwa Committee.
- b. Do anything that directly or indirectly humiliates any religious or ethnic group, or that may disrupt the harmony of different religious groups or races, or which may cause chaos in the general society.
  - 1) Islam encourages noble and respectful engagement with other groups and communities to common interests for the welfare of the people. This is done because there are differences in understanding, race, and nationality. Any action that can incite hatred in a situation like this is unjustified, because it is unacceptable. Because this is contrary to the teachings of Islam and the life of Muhammad saw, a religious teacher and al-Qur'an teacher should not use words that insult any group, individual, or religion. Instead, it is important to emphasize safe Islamic teachings, especially those that encourage the establishment of close and respectful relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims. Furthermore, religious teachers and al-Qur'an teachers must be aware that misinterpretation and irresponsible interpretation of Islamic texts can lead to the use of insulting and painful words against non-Muslims. This should be avoided at all times.
- c. Support any concept that may encourage extremism or violence, either directly or indirectly.
  - 1) Extremism in religious practice today appears in forms that are contrary to the purposes, norms, and traditions of Islam. Mis-interpretation of religious texts can lead to religious practices that burden and prohibit legal things, such as working and actively participating in society.
  - 2) To maintain our understanding of the meaning of worship, asatizahs must also be careful with political perspectives misunderstood as religious orders. These views include those who use religious texts and arguments to encourage Muslims to revolt against non-religious or secular states, as well as using insulting words and labels, instigating those who live and serve in those countries. This view is linked to extremist groups that have a political agenda, some of which justify the use of violence to their

political goals. Religious teachers and Quran teachers should not support such ideas or use and teach religious literature that encourages such ideas.

Considering at the manners or codes of ethics that are the personal competence of religious teachers and teachers of the Qur'an in Singapore, it can be seen that the government and the people of Singapore generally pay great attention to the unity and stability of the country. It must be supported by different sections of society from various backgrounds, including religious. The MUIS Code of Ethics above indicates that, as the highest institution dealing with Islamic issues in Singapore, MUIS is responsible forining and monitoring the stability of the country.

In this way, MUIS takes part in the vibrant religious life of Singapore and works to regulate Islam as best it can give the local circumstances. Therefore, in order to maintain the stability of the social order, MUIS must establish theological principles that encourage decent regard for others. 2018's Yacoob Ibrahim. The ARS Code of Ethics is formed, according to Hassan & Shuhaimy (2018), taking into account the moral values of citizenship and religion as well as the principles and principles of historical records that have been documented by local and regional scholars. This demonstrates how hard MUIS worked to contextualize its knowledge. The asatiz's idealism then grew strong in their brains and even started to feel required. Regardless of the debate around the ARS liabilities (Yahya, 2018).

## **Conclusion**

As part of the multi-ethnic population of Singapore, Malay Muslims have a responsibility to create a peaceful and harmonious atmosphere in every religious activity. Thus, Majelis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS), which is responsible for education and worship, feels it necessary to integrate the vision and mission of Islamic educators in its country, including teachers. It is that the Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS) certification program, developed by MUIS and PERGAS, has successfully improved the competence of teachers of Islamic religious education in Singapore. This article concludes that there are two main objectives of the implementation of the Asatizah Recognition Scheme policy. (ARS). First, to preserve the purity of the teachings of Islam from the influence of extreme teachings, and secondly, to keep the holiness of the Islamic teachings from deviations or misunderstandings. This scheme can be categorized as an attempt to protect religion not only from the attacks of external thoughts, either orientalist thought or its agents, that is, liberal and secular. As for the main goal of the Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS) that MUIS wants to is to create a true

Islamic understanding, to be in the middle position. In the end, the Asatizah Recognition Scheme (ARS) certification program is a way to control various Islamic discourses and prevent dangerous religious radicalism from entering.

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