

## INSTILLING RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN PROSPECTIVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AS AN EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN MULTICULTURALISM

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**Abstract:** *This research seeks to describe the form of instilling religious moderation in elementary school students in Madiun City as an effort to strengthen multiculturalism. This research is a descriptive qualitative type using exposure narratively and verbally. As for data collection using ethnographic techniques, namely observation, interviews, recording, and recording of PGSD students at the University of PGRI Madiun. Data were analyzed with a triangulation model. The results of the study show that religious moderation as a view that does not matter whether a religion is right or wrong needs to be instilled in PGSD students as prospective elementary school teachers in an effort to create a multicultural Indonesian nation.*

**Keywords:** *religious, moderation, multiculturalism*

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### **Introduction**

The city of Madiun is one of the residency centers in the province of East Java. The city of Madiun is a city in the middle between the western region (Solo and Jogjakarta) and the eastern region (Jombang, Mojokerto and Surabaya) or often called the Mataraman region. Mataraman culture itself is said to be unique because it is a blend of Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic cultures.

Incidents of violence in the name of religion have contradicted the principles of human life. These incidents of violence occurred due to an unfavorable understanding of religion, conflicts over establishment of places of worship, and unpreparedness for coexistence, which is one of the factors causing intolerance. This unfavorable understanding will make followers act in ways that are not in accordance with religious teachings.

So a comprehensive understanding is needed that can accommodate and straighten out ideas that are contrary to the common good, especially for the continuity of the life of religious people. Special and planned handling must be carried out by various parties in order to resolve violent conflicts in the name of religion. Because if it is not handled seriously, the economic, social, political and material losses will be extraordinary will be experienced by the Indonesian people.

Educational institutions have a strategic role in breaking the chain of violence in the name of religion. An educative approach for all students that can be implemented in peace education which is integrated with the school curriculum, constructive conflict resolution exercises, mediation and negotiation by peers is a joint effort so that the Indonesian nation becomes a nation of peace. Extensive and non-partial religious knowledge must be taught in educational institutions so that students have a foundation of religious understanding that is not narrow.

Therefore, the teacher's role is needed in instilling religious moderation in the life of this multicultural nation and state. Religious moderation as described by Fahrudin in Akhmadi, has a balanced meaning, in the middle, not exaggerating, not *truth clime*, not using extreme theological legitimacy, claiming to be the most righteous, neutral, and not affiliated with a particular political party.

Currently, one of the greatest challenges in global society is division (Verkuyten *et al.*, 2020). In Indonesian society, especially divisions related to religion and intolerance are very sensitive and serious matters (Assyaukanie, 2018). As is known, Indonesia is a country that has many ethnicities, races and religions (Sutopo, 2021), of course moderation is very likely to occur.

Moderation has been widely studied in various parts of the world (Abdullah, 2018; Guess, 2021; and Osman and Arosoaie, 2020). In Indonesia, religious moderation is examined based on educational aspects (Akhmadi, 2019; Khaswara, 2022; Purwanto, Qowaid, and Fauzi, 2019; and Purwanto, Qowaid, Ma'rifatani, *et al.*, 2019).

Based on these previous studies, research on religious moderation has not been carried out much. Thus, religious moderation really needs to be instilled in students in order to create a harmonious relationship between teachers, students, the community and the surrounding environment so as to create a peaceful and safe environment from various threats. The formulation of the research problem is (1) what is the role of the lecturer in instilling religious moderation?; and (2) how is the implementation of religious moderation in the teaching and learning process? Based on the formulation of the problem above, the purpose of this research is to produce a learning model of religious moderation to strengthen multiculturalism.

## Literature Review

Indonesia is the largest multicultural country in the world with a diversity of tribes, religions, ethnicities and cultures (Nurcahyono, 2018). Cultural diversity (multicultural) is a natural event because of the meeting of various cultures, the interaction of various individuals and groups by bringing cultural behavior, and having different and specific ways of life (Najib *et al.*, 2022). This plurality has major consequences as a strength of the treasures of the Indonesian nation's wealth as well as a threat in the midst of frequent differences. Conflicts in the name of religion are still frequent happened in Indonesia. *Religions contact in Indonesian plurality implies two sides, namely the positive side as unifying wealth while the negative side makes fanaticism in exclusive and primordial radicalism that finally creates social conflict among religious communities in harmony of the plurality of the nation (Kawangung, 2019).*

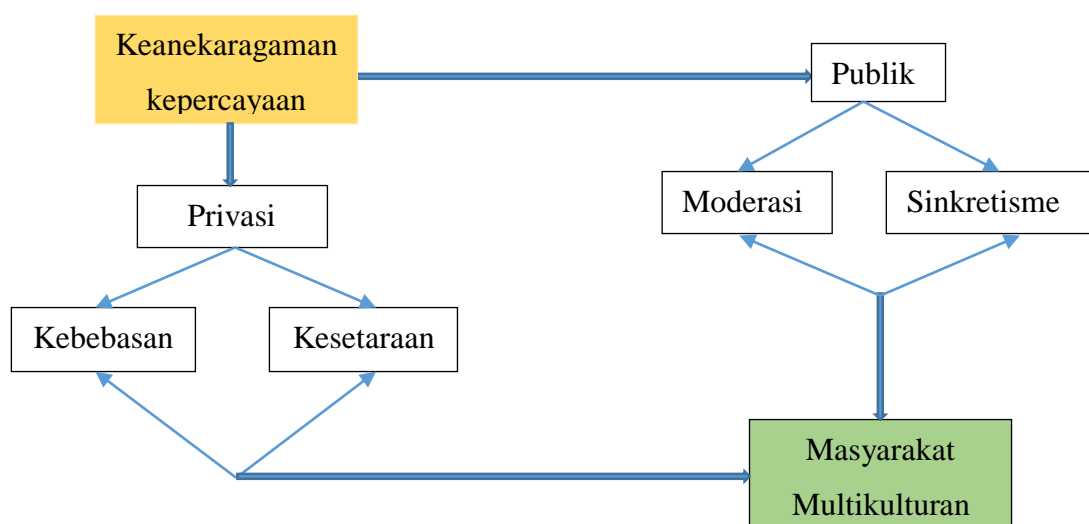
Religious moderation has often been discussed in various writings, both related to the harmony of religious life, dialogues on religious tolerance, and discussions of interfaith (Hakh, 2022). Religious moderation is used as the motto and breath of programs and policies issued by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia (Rambe *et al.*, 2022) which is also a form of *counter* to religious violence (Wacana *et al.*, 2022). Religious moderation is also intended to prevent understanding, attitudes and actions of extreme religion, such as hate speech, violence and terrorism (Prakosa, 2022).

The study of moderation is not new. Husna (2020) examines the design of religious moderation with a persuasive and preventive approach that can reduce extremism. Rhythm and Zamzami (2020) answers the public's concern that currently there are many radical movements that continue to carry out propaganda and terrorism. The focus of the research is a study of official efforts and steps used by the Ministry of Religion to mainstream religious moderation in Indonesia. In this study, the Ministry of Religion's formulation of religious moderation was developed by the Indonesian Ministry of Religion in several ways, including strengthening religious moderation through premarital sex and strengthening moderate religious understanding in a pluralistic Indonesian society.

Abror (2020) reviews moderation within a tolerance framework . Religious tolerance is not about merging in one another's beliefs nor is it about exchanging beliefs with different religious groups. Tolerance here is in the sense of mu'amalah (social interaction) so that there are shared boundaries that may and may not be violated. This is the essence of moderation within the framework of tolerance in which each party is expected to be able to control themselves and provide space for tolerance so that they can respect and respect each other's strengths and uniqueness with no fear of their rights and beliefs . Sutrisno (2019) stated that religious moderation is a middle way in dealing with differences, both extreme and fundamental groups . In order to apply religious moderation in a multicultural society, what needs to be done is to make educational institutions the basis for a laboratory for religious moderation and to take a socioreligious approach to religion and the state . Mansyur and Husni (2020) found that: *Literary-based learning succeeds in increasing students' understanding of the importance of religious moderation, as well as developing moderate attitudes and behaviors in religion, and also creating sincere ethics and friendship for adherents of different faiths.*

Religious moderation has long been known as an effort to develop religious attitudes in the midst of *constraints* , such as absolute truth claims and subjectivity between literal interpretations and arrogant rejection of religious teachings and between radicalism and secularism. In contrast to moderation, some journals state that syncretism is a real and serious problem because it is considered capable of eroding a person's identity regarding certain beliefs and religions so that they are no longer pure.

The conceptual framework in this study is as follows .



Picture 1 . conceptual framework

### Method

This research method uses qualitative because it uses more exposure narratively and verbally. As for data collection using ethnographic techniques, namely observation, interviews, recording,

and recording. The place of research is at the University of PGRI Madiun. The research respondents were seventh semester students of PGSD Study Program at PGRI Madiun University who were taking Cross-Cultural Education courses with a total of 186 students. Interview techniques were conducted using structured and unstructured techniques. Researchers explored data regarding the form of instilling religious moderation in PGSD students as prospective elementary school teachers in direct relation to ethnicity and multiculturalism

### **Result and Discussion**

Teaching and learning cannot be separated from the world of education because teaching and learning are two interactions that are mutually dependent, where there is a learning process, of course there is also a teaching or learning process. According to Habernas, new learning will occur if there is interaction between individuals and their environment. He divides the types of learning into three, namely: (a) technical learning , namely learning how a person can interact with his natural environment correctly; (b) practical learning , namely learning how a person can interact with his social environment, namely with the people around him properly; (c) emancipatory learning ( *emancipatory learning* ) That is learning that emphasizes efforts so that a person achieves an understanding and high awareness of cultural change or transformation with his social environment.

The teacher, as an educator is tasked with channeling, directing and motivating students so that they can develop their potential, not dictating, forcing their will, let alone curbing students' freedom to be creative. Every student has different potential. This uniqueness must be utilized by the teacher to make the potentials possessed by students develop students in respecting and respecting others.

In the process of teaching and learning, students will think openly, namely thinking how to respect the right to life, the right to education, the right to expression, the right to embrace religion and not easily blame others. As a result of encounters with other worlds, religions and diverse cultures will direct students to think more maturely and have perspectives and ways of understanding reality in various ways.

As the next generation of the nation, of course, they must be given a broad understanding of how to apply Islam that is *rohmatanlilamamine* and make Islam the basis for associating with other people by respecting differences. This requires the teacher's patience in instilling religious moderation. The implementation of religious moderation in the teaching and learning process can be applied to the following learning methods.

#### **1) Discussion method**

Discussion in the Big Indonesian Dictionary is a scientific meeting to exchange ideas on a problem. 26 Discussion is a communication interaction between two or more people/groups. Usually the communication between them or the group is in the form of one of the basic sciences or knowledge which will eventually provide a good and correct sense of understanding. 27 Thus, it can be concluded that discussion is an interaction between two or more people to discuss a particular problem or problem with a specific desired goal.

The discussion method provides many benefits for students in the teaching and learning process, namely training students to think critically and openly so that each student has broad insights sourced from other students. Then by discussing students have a democratic nature because they can express opinions still in discussion forums. Then by discussing, students have an attitude of mutual respect for the opinions of others who are different. Then, by discussing, students can add to the knowledge and experience that comes from the results of the discussion. By discussing, students' thinking skills can be honed, think critically, creatively and argumentatively, and mentally train students in expressing opinions in public.

The teaching and learning process by applying the discussion method provides flexibility for students to express the knowledge of each student. By discussing, students can get to know each other's characters how to respond and express a problem with a predetermined theme.

## **2) Group work**

Group work is an activity of helping each other in learning. Students are required to cooperate with each other in carrying out the tasks assigned to students. Help each other in solving the questions given by the teacher.

Group work in its meaning is the presentation of material by giving assignments to students who have been grouped to achieve goals. 29 The essence of group work is mutual cooperation, helping each other in solving a problem in learning.

For an educator, the group work method is important to apply because it trains students to understand each other's meaning of togetherness. In addition, group work has many benefits as described by Zakiah Darajdat, namely fostering cooperation between one student and another student, gaining mastery over teaching materials, cultivating and maintaining a sense of unity and oneness in a group, training student leadership, developing a sense of loyal friends and an attitude of mutual help, providing opportunities for students to actualize themselves in planning something for the common good, directing the personal growth and development of students in social life.

Therefore, this group work method is part of the teacher's strategy in instilling religious moderation in students so that students are low-key and not exclusive in religion.

## **3) Study Tour Method (Tourism Work)**

Providing direct experience to students about religious moderation is part of one of the ways that students can practice the knowledge gained in class and then implement it in real life. One of the methods used is a study *tour*. This field trip method is defined as a learning method that is outside the classroom, visiting the intended places outside the classroom so that you can learn directly from the intended object. Ariyanto defines the field trip method as a teaching method that is carried out outside the classroom by inviting students to pay attention to environmental conditions or events that are related to the learning material being discussed or to show directly to certain objects. 32 The direct involvement of students can help students develop themselves, respond, appreciate, and actualize the knowledge students get in class, then associate it in the surrounding environment.

This field trip method has several benefits, including: Students can learn directly from the objects visited, students can gain strengthening of theories learned at school with the fact that applications are applied to the objects visited, students can live up to the practical experience of a the knowledge they have acquired, students can obtain more accurate information by conducting interviews or by listening to lectures given by local officials, can study several subject matter at once and integrally.

The use of the field trip method in teaching religious moderation is part of the educator's efforts to be able to provide life experiences with other people who are different both from culture, beliefs, and social status. Because religious moderation needs to be practiced in the lives of students. Of course, the teacher must direct, guide, and show students the importance of religious moderation when making visits to designated places according to the learning material explained in class.

Therefore, teachers must be able to sort out and choose the right method for students so that an understanding of the concept of religious moderation can be embedded in students and can then be implemented in the life of the nation and state.

## Conclusion

From some of the explanations above, it can be concluded that the role of prospective elementary school teachers in instilling religious moderation in educational institutions is very important because teachers have an important role to provide a broad understanding and understanding of Islam which is *rohmatan lil alamin* and can respect differences. Religious moderation is part of a joint effort so that the Indonesian nation avoids division because division is the beginning of the destruction of a nation. Furthermore, the implementation of religious moderation in the teaching and learning process can be carried out using discussion methods, group work, and field trips. With these three methods the teacher can easily provide an understanding of diversity, respect for others, respect for the opinions of others, and be tolerant. apart from educating and giving students an understanding of how important life is to love one another and respect the right to life, the right to worship according to their respective beliefs.

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