

Religious Moderation in the Perspective of Madrasah Tsanawiyah Teachers

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Abstract

This study discusses the implementation of the religious moderation program in private Aliyah Madrasah in Lebak Regency, Banten Province. The purpose of this study is to describe the implementation of religious moderation policies, identify strategies for the implementation of religious moderation policies, and identify supporting and inhibiting factors for the implementation of religious moderation by teachers at Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Hidayah Lebakjaha and Madrasah Aliyah Daar El-Ishlah Malingping, Lebak Regency. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with observational data collection methods, interviews, and documentation. The stages of data analysis include data reduction, data presentation, and data verification, while checking the validity of data is carried out by expanding participation, accuracy of observation, triangulation, and consultation with supervisors. The results of the study show that: (1) The implementation of the strategy to strengthen religious moderation in madrassas has been integrated with the values of religious moderation through teaching and learning activities, extracurricular activities, and habituation activities. (2) The strategy to strengthen religious moderation in Madrasah is an effort made by the head of the madrasah. The implementation of the religious moderation program at the private Aliyah Madrasah in Lebak Regency has shown positive results. The strategies implemented by the head of the madrasah and the existing supporting factors have helped in integrating the values of religious moderation into learning activities and madrasah life. However, there are still several inhibiting factors that need to be overcome to increase the effectiveness of religious moderation programs in madrassah.

Keywords: inclusive education, learning management, multi-level, implementation

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INTRODUCTION

Religious moderation also plays an important role in warding off radicalism and extremism that can threaten social security and stability. By promoting the values of tolerance, interreligious dialogue, and respect for plurality, religious moderation can be the foundation for the creation of a peaceful and harmonious religious life in the midst of a multicultural society. Religious moderation can be defined as an approach that emphasizes balance, tolerance, and respect for differences in religious practices and beliefs. Religious moderation includes mutual respect, not extremes, and prioritizing dialogue in interactions between religious communities (Sutrisno, 2019). This approach aims to reduce the potential for conflicts that often arise due to differences in beliefs. Therefore, the understanding and implementation of religious moderation needs to be continuously improved and strengthened in an effort to maintain harmony and peace between religious communities in Indonesia. Through a deep understanding of religious moderation, people can better understand the importance of respecting differences in beliefs and maintaining harmony between religious communities. Thus, religious moderation is not just a concept, but must also be implemented in daily life to create harmony and peace in a heterogeneous society such as Indonesia (Saumantri, 2023).

With religious moderation, it is hoped that all parties can respect each other's beliefs without prolonged conflicts. This will certainly have a positive impact on social and political development in Indonesia. Programs in Gampong Jawa and Katingan Regency utilized PAR to engage communities in resolving religious conflicts, leading to increased empathy and understanding among residents (Ajahari et al., 2024). Therefore, efforts to continue to strengthen religious moderation must continue to be carried out so that all citizens can coexist in peace and harmony. In the ministry of religion's manual, it is explained that moderation as a spiritual center is basically a unifier that reconciles human beings, not a cause of division. Often religion is politicized to force the emergence of a common understanding of religious teachings so that it develops an exclusive nature that eventually causes conflict and division between religious people. Lately, there are often many situations of differences and debates that occur among the community. One example is that there are often violence, riots and even cases of disputes between communities and what is even more tragic is that these incidents are often based on their ignorance and unconsciousness as well as misunderstandings between the two parties and some are motivated by political interests alone. In fact, the Indonesian government has issued various kinds of laws and regulations that regulate a harmonious religious life.

The rise of radicalism and terrorism has placed Muslims to blame. Incidents of violence in the name of religion have gone against the principles of human life. These violent incidents occur due to a proper understanding of religion, conflicts in the establishment of places of worship, and unpreparedness to coexist are one of the factors causing intolerance. That operational understanding will make its followers act inconformly with religious teachings. Religious moderation is a solution to this problem, from several research results show that the concept of moderation is one of the efforts to erode radicalism. Although some people think that the problem of radicalism, fundamentalism, puritanism, or extremism does not need to be exaggerated, because it will muddy the atmosphere of religious diversity. But, extremism, fanaticism, radicalism, and excessive attitudes towards religion in Indonesia are very disruptive to religious diversity and are still thriving and mushrooming.

Educational institutions have a strategic role to break the chain of violence in the name of religion. Teachers are one of the most important components in moving educational institutions such as madrasas (Hidayat, 2023). Teachers are also required to be professional in carrying out their duties as teachers (Sugeng et al., 2023). An educational approach for all students that can be implemented in peace education that is integrated with the school curriculum, constructive conflict resolution exercises, mediation and negotiation by peers is a joint effort for the Indonesian nation to become a reconciling

nation. Broad and non-partial religious knowledge must be taught in educational institutions so that students have a foundation of religious understanding that is not narrow. According to Khaled abu el Fadl, *wasathiyah* is an understanding that takes the middle way, that is, an understanding that is not extreme to the right and not extreme to the left. Abdurrahman Wahid also formulated that moderation encourages efforts to realize social justice which in religion is known as *al-maslahah al-'ammah*. The word Moderate in Arabic is known as *al-Wasathiyah*. *Al-Wasath* in the Qur'an is mentioned 5 times, namely in Surah *al-Baqarah* verse 143, Q.S. *al-Adiyat* verse 5, Q.S. *al-Maidah* verse 89, Q.S. *al-Qalam* verse 28, Q.S. *al-Baqarah* verse 238.

A moderate attitude is a better act in acting in the sense of accepting with a good attitude to others not with violence or not extreme right or extreme left, as the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Which means: Abu Hurairah Ra. Saying, the Prophet Muhammad PBUH said: the best thing is to be in the middle (Moderate Attitude). Religious moderation is often interpreted as an attitude of ambiguity or indecisiveness, because the position in the middle is not easy. Enforcement of religious moderation in daily life can minimize prejudice and prevent conflicts (Hefni, 2020). The middle between the extreme left and the extreme right, when standing close to the right, will be claimed to be fundamentalist-conservative, when standing close to the left, it will be claimed to be a liberal. Therefore, as Muslims, to be able to be moderate, and be moderately religious, it is mandatory to know the principles of moderation. Ammar Sukri and Yusuf Qardawy as quoted by Afifuddin Muhajir equate *wasathiyah* with three things that are the main characteristics of Islam, namely: 1) *tawassuth* (middle); 2) *ta'adul* (fair); and 3) *tawazun* (balanced) (Depi Akbar et al., 2022). So the three expressions are then united in the term "*wasathiyah*" or in other languages moderation.

Mohammad Hashim Kamali (2015) explained that the principles of balance and justice in the concept of moderation (*wasathiyah*) mean that in religion, a person should not be extreme in his views, but must always look for common ground. For Kamali, *wasathiyah* is an important aspect of Islam that is often forgotten by his people, in fact, *wasathiyah* is the essence of Islamic teachings. Moderation is not only taught by Islam, but also other religions. Furthermore, moderation is a virtue that encourages the creation of social harmony and balance in personal, family and community life to wider human relationships. These two values, fair and balanced, will be easier to form if a person has three main characteristics in him: wisdom, *purity*, and courage.

Therefore, the role of religious teachers is needed in instilling religious moderation. Based on this background, the formulation of the problem in this study is. (1) *Tsanawiyah* teacher's perspective on religious moderation? (2) Factors Influencing Religious Moderation in Tobelo State MTS schools? (3) Challenges faced by *Madrasah Stanawiyah* teachers in the Implementation of Religious Moderation.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach to describe the problem and focus of the research. The location and time of the research will be carried out from September to November 2024, in Halmaherat Regency. The data sources in this study were obtained from primary data and secondary data. Primary data sources were obtained by researchers directly coming to the research site, namely by participatory observation, semi-structured interview results. Primary data sources were obtained from teachers who teach at public and private *Staniwiyah* *Madrasah* Schools spread across Tobelo City, North Halmahera Regency. Secondary data sources are obtained from the results of documentation of activity archives, articles from previous research. The validity test of the results of this study uses triangulation with the method and triangulation with data sources. Triangulation with the method of comparing the results of interviews, observations and documentation. Triangulation with data sources, namely comparing the circumstances and perspectives of research informants. The data analysis technique uses the Miles and

Huberman analysis model, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles, M. B., & Huberman, 1994).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tsanawiyah teacher's perspective on religious moderation

Tsanawiyah teachers have a big role in promoting religious moderation in the school environment and the surrounding community. Teachers actively participate in religious moderation programs, serving as central figures in imparting knowledge about tolerance and pluralism (Rahman & Mulyana, 2024). This research aims to gain a deeper understanding of the views and practices of religious moderation from the perspective of Tsanawiyah teachers. Thus, it is hoped that the results of this research can make a valuable contribution in efforts to increase tolerance and harmony between religious communities in Indonesia. Qualitative studies through interviews with teachers in junior high schools (MTs) show a strong understanding of the importance of religious moderation in creating harmony between religious communities. Respondents believe that religious moderation is a solution to social conflict and division. Furthermore, teachers are active in socializing and fostering the values of religious moderation to students. Therefore, the role of MTs teachers in promoting religious moderation is significant in building a pluralistic and tolerant society.

This is reflected in the statement of one of the science teachers at MTs Negeri Tobelo Gorua, Mrs. Grace Silvia Baud, who emphasized the importance of understanding and respect for the diversity of beliefs, balance in carrying out religious teachings while still respecting the beliefs of others, and national commitment as the foundation of unity and unity in diversity. MTs teachers have a crucial role in shaping students' understanding and attitudes towards religious moderation. They play a role not only as educators, but also as role models in the practice of tolerant and peaceful religious teachings. Teachers who embody the principles of tolerance and respect serve as role models, influencing students' character and moral development (Nurhakim et al., 2023; Irawan et al., 2024). The continuous efforts of MTs teachers are expected to create a harmonious society and be free from faith-based divisions. At MTs Negeri Tobelo, teachers have a great responsibility in instilling the values of religious moderation in students, being role models, and providing an accurate understanding of the importance of respecting differences in beliefs. Teachers as role models in practicing the values of moderation, as well as the need to create an inclusive and inclusive learning environment that supports tolerance (Puspita Sari et al., 2024). The consistent integration of religious moderation values in the school curriculum creates an inclusive learning environment.

Mr. Hata Lahabato's statement supported these findings, emphasizing the importance of building awareness of tolerance and respect for differences in beliefs to prevent conflict and discrimination based on religion. Teachers at MTs Negeri Tobelo understand and teach the concept of religious moderation, facilitate interfaith dialogue, and promote tolerance, making them agents of peace. This inclusive and tolerant approach aims to develop an attitude of mutual respect and cooperation among students. Inclusive education aims to facilitate understanding of religious diversity and at the same time instill values of tolerance, mutual respect, and collaboration among students from diverse religious backgrounds (Fadilah, 2024). Religious moderation education at MTs Negeri Tobelo aims to shape the younger generation as agents of peace and unity. A safe and peaceful learning environment is created through an inclusive approach that respects religious diversity, encouraging students to respect differences and build harmonious relationships. Schools can implement interfaith dialogues and collaborative activities to promote understanding and respect for various beliefs (Rasyidi et al., 2024; Angranti, 2024).

Teachers play an important role in guiding and being role models in the practice of the values of tolerance and religious diversity. Moderate and inclusive religious education prevents conflict and

discrimination based on religion (Akmaliah et al., 2022). Teachers need to improve their understanding of religious moderation, provide support to students, and collaborate with parents and communities to create an environment that supports the acceptance of religious diversity. Teachers also need to develop their knowledge of the principles of religious moderation, be a role model, and build good relationships with students. Establishing strong, respectful relationships with students enhances their willingness to engage in discussions about religious diversity (Heryana et al., 2024). Understanding of different religions and beliefs, as well as teaching about the importance of respecting diversity and cooperation, shape a young generation that is wise in accepting differences. Education is fundamental in instilling values of tolerance and respect for diversity among youth, as highlighted by Rasulova and Toroev, who emphasize that without tolerance, societal peace is unattainable (Rasulova & Toroev, 2024).

Factors Influencing Religious Moderation in Tobelo State MTS schools

Based on research conducted at MTS Negeri Tobelo, there are several factors that affect religious moderation in the school environment. One of them is religious education taught in schools, where a moderate and inclusive approach can form an attitude of tolerance and respect for differences. In addition, the role of teachers and school principals in setting a good example also plays an important role in forming a moderate attitude towards religion. Discipline and firmness in maintaining security and order in schools can also help create an environment conducive to religious moderation. Educators are the main key in implementing moderate Islamic education that emphasizes the values of tolerance (Kartikawati, 2022), justice, and mutual respect (Nove et al., 2024). The social environment in schools also has a great influence on religious moderation.

Positive and respectful interactions between students, as well as social activities that encourage cooperation and unity between students from various religious backgrounds can form tolerance and respect for differences. A multicultural approach in Islamic education has been shown to enhance tolerance by integrating values such as respect for diversity and empathy into the curriculum (Mukarom et al., 2024). Thus, religious moderation in the school environment is not only an individual responsibility, but also the result of the cooperation and collaboration of all parties involved in the educational process. Several factors affect religious moderation, such as tolerance, a deep understanding of the values of other religions, and awareness of the importance of religious moderation. The establishment of religious moderation in the school environment can begin by raising awareness of the importance of tolerance and respect for differences among students (Albana, 2023). The role of teachers and school staff is also very important in creating an environment conducive to religious moderation, through an inclusive and supportive approach to diversity. Integrating universal values such as respect, cooperation, and unity in the educational curriculum can help develop a moderate attitude toward religion among students.

Collaboration between parents, local communities, and other related parties can also strengthen efforts to establish religious moderation in the school environment. Parents and community members can create a supportive atmosphere that encourages students to embrace diversity and practice moderation in their beliefs (Muhtar et al., 2024). It is important to provide a space for open discussion and dialogue on religious issues to strengthen mutual understanding and build closeness between students from various faith backgrounds. Ethical behavior, including sincere listening and respectful communication, is crucial in interfaith dialogues to overcome distrust and prejudice (Rosidah et al., 2024).

The challenge of Religious Moderation faced by Tobelo State MTS Teachers is how to integrate the values of religious moderation into the existing curriculum, as well as how to provide students with a deep understanding of the importance of tolerance and respect for differences. Incorporating character values related to divinity and humanity into school activities promotes mutual respect and awareness among students (Rahmawati et al., 2023). In addition, teachers also need to be able to be a good example

in carrying out the values of religious moderation in daily life, so that students can see and follow the example. With the collaboration between various parties and an open discussion room, it is hoped that efforts to establish religious moderation in the school environment can continue to be improved and have a positive impact on student development holistically. An interview with Mrs. Erni Isti Syamsiyah, a teacher at MTs Negeri Gorua, shows the understanding and implementation of the values of religious moderation in learning, both inside and outside the classroom. He emphasized the importance of teachers' exemplary in instilling respect for differences in beliefs and harmony between religious communities to students. Teachers serve as role models, demonstrating good behavior that students are likely to emulate (Aisida & Wahid, 2023; Simbolon, 2023). These findings indicate that religious moderation has been integrated in religious education in MTs Negeri Tobelo, making teachers a role model in the practice of religious teachings that are tolerant and respectful of differences. This is expected to shape students as agents of peace and harmony between religious communities.

Challenges Faced by Madrasah Tsanawiyah Teachers in the Implementation of Religious Moderation

There are several challenges faced by Tobelo State MTS teachers, namely how to integrate moderation values into the existing religious curriculum. In addition, they also need to ensure that the messages of moderation are delivered consistently and integrated in every aspect of learning. This requires close collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community to create an inclusive educational environment and support the development of moderation attitudes in the younger generation. In addition, teachers also need to continue to develop their knowledge and skills in facilitating interfaith dialogue and building a deeper understanding of the plurality of beliefs. Thus, they can become agents of change that bring positive impacts to society and future generations. Islamic moderation as a harmonious synthesis between spirituality and materiality, individuality and collectivity, text and context, and consistency and change, with a balanced charity between theocentric and anthropocentric (Mohammad et al., 2023).

An integrated and sustainable approach in education has proven to be effective in promoting religious moderation in school settings. Collaboration between stakeholders—including teachers, parents, and communities—is critical in overcoming resource constraints and resistance to the values of tolerance and harmony. Through this strategy, these values can be effectively instilled, producing a generation that values diversity and upholds the principle of mutual respect. The implementation of an integrated and sustainable approach in the school environment has proven to be effective in facilitating religious moderation. Schools incorporate the values of religious moderation into lesson plans, particularly in the study of the Qur'an and Hadith, emphasizing principles such as tolerance and non-violence (M.Chalis et al., 2024; Ratnah et al., 2024).

Multi-stakeholder collaboration, which includes teachers, parents, and communities, plays a crucial role in overcoming resource barriers and social resistance. This strategy allows the optimal cultivation of the values of tolerance and harmony in the context of education, thus producing a generation that upholds diversity and mutual respect. To achieve this, training and professional development programs for teachers need to be continuously improved, so that they can understand and implement inclusive learning approaches. Training equips individuals with job-specific skills, whereas development cultivates overall skill growth and improvement through learning (Pratomo & Shofwan, 2022). Improving the quality of teaching and student achievement depends on continuous professional development (Afam et al., 2024). In addition, cooperation with educational institutions and non-governmental organizations can also help in expanding teachers' horizons and knowledge in terms of tolerance and harmony between religious communities. Collaborative engagement between stakeholders, such as teachers, families, and allied health professionals, is vital for supporting students

with disabilities, as it helps in creating tailored educational plans and improving developmental outcomes (Vlcek et al., 2024; Vlcek & Somerton, 2023). With the joint efforts of various parties, it is hoped that the young generation can grow and develop in an environment that promotes the values of moderation and tolerance as an integral part of their education.

Solutions to the Challenges of Madrasah Stanawiyah Teachers Against the Perspective of Religious Moderation In this context, it is important for Madrasah Tsanawiyah teachers to continue to implement inclusive learning approaches. In addition, cooperation with educational institutions and non-governmental organizations can also help in expanding teachers' horizons and knowledge in terms of tolerance and harmony between religious communities. Understanding important concepts such as religious tolerance and intellectual humility is essential for teachers (Suryani & Muslim, 2024). This framework helps educators to foster an inclusive environment that values a variety of faiths. With the joint efforts of various parties, it is hoped that the young generation can grow and develop in an environment that promotes the values of moderation and tolerance as an integral part of their education.

Based on the results of the research, there are several solutions that can be offered to be done in improving the perspective of religious moderation for teachers of Stanawiyah Negeri Tobelo, North Halmahera Regency, including improving teachers' social and communication skills in facilitating dialogue between religious communities in Madrasah Tsanawiyah; Development of a curriculum that integrates the values of moderation and tolerance as part of learning at Madrasah Tsanawiyah; Regular training for teachers to better understand religious and cultural diversity and apply an inclusive approach in their teaching; The involvement of students' parents in supporting religious moderation education through school programs, such as seminars or workshops on inter-religious harmony; Collaboration with research institutions or universities to conduct research on the effectiveness of religious moderation approaches in increasing tolerance among Tsanawiyah madrasah students.

Based on the above solution, it can be expected that religious moderation education in Madrasah Tsanawiyah will continue to develop and have a positive impact in forming a generation that is tolerant and respects diversity. By involving all related parties, it is hoped that a conducive and harmonious learning environment can also be created for students to grow and develop optimally. In addition, the existence of supporting research will also provide a strong scientific basis to continue efforts to develop religious moderation education in the Tsanawiyah madrasah.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that teachers' perspectives on religious moderation are positively correlated with the creation of an inclusive and harmonious educational environment. The application of religious moderation values in the learning process facilitates students' appreciation of diversity and the development of mutual respect. The impact is widespread, not only on the school environment, but also on strengthening tolerance and peace in the community, as well as being a preventive effort against intolerance and interreligious conflicts. Therefore, the promotion of religious moderation values by educational institutions is very important in producing a tolerant and peaceful generation. Education promotes a more comprehensive understanding of different religions and beliefs, thereby fostering an attitude of inclusivity and openness to differences. Ultimately, religious moderation not only creates harmony in the educational environment, but also prepares students to interact in a pluralistic and multireligious society, while also contributing to peace and harmony among religious communities.

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