
Research Article

The Urgency of Tolerance-Based Education: Integration of Religious Moderation and Social Science

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Abstract

In this era of globalization, the integration of religious moderation in education has an important role in maintaining inter-religious harmony. Social Studies can be an effective platform to introduce the concept of religious moderation to students. This study uses a qualitative research approach with an interview method to explore educators' strategies in integrating social studies learning and religious moderation. The results of the analysis show that the integration of religious moderation in social studies has several significant benefits. First, this approach allows learners to gain a better understanding of the religions around them, respect differences, and avoid prejudice or negative stereotypes. Second, the integration of religious moderation can facilitate interfaith dialog and build trust among learners with different religious backgrounds. Third, it encourages learners to develop an attitude of tolerance and mutual respect in building an inclusive and harmonious society. However, this study also identified some challenges faced in implementing the integration of religious moderation in social studies subjects. Some of these challenges include diverse perspectives on religious moderation, limited availability of resources, and educators' ability to manage and facilitate sensitive discussions about religion. This research contributes to the understanding of the effectiveness of religious moderation integration in social studies learning. The results of this study can be used by educators and policy makers to improve and develop religious moderation integration programs in the education curriculum.

Keywords

Integration; Learning Strategy; Diversity; Tolerance; Approach.

Introduction

Amidst the complexity of the world, life in society is full of diversity. Plurality, a fundamental concept, reflects the reality that humans have differences in beliefs, values, cultures, and identities. In the context of Indonesian society, plurality is a distinctive and important characteristic to be understood and



appreciated. Indonesia, as a country with diverse cultures, religions, and ethnicities, has tremendous wealth in terms of the plurality of society (Azzuhri, 2012.). However, with this diversity also comes the challenge and responsibility to ensure that every individual and group in society feels valued, recognized, and accepted because there are not a few conflicts caused by religion.(Chanifah & Mustapa, 2016).

Educational institutions have a central role in instilling the value of tolerance because education as a character-building process is expected to help shape a more inclusive generation, promote peace, and build a harmonious society. The Religious Moderation Program launched in 2019 by the Ministry of Religious Affairs is one of the solutions to the divisions that occur. At the beginning of its emergence, religious moderation targeted educators and education personnel, then the religious moderation program was integrated into the Education curriculum, especially the Islamic religious education clump in the 2020/2021 school year, then in the 2021/2022 school year it was integrated into all subjects tailored to the topic (Tedy, 2022).

Religious moderation is an approach or attitude shown by individuals or groups in carrying out their religious practices with simplicity, balance, and tolerance for the religious beliefs and practices of others. Religious moderation emphasizes efforts to avoid extremism, fanaticism, or attitudes that trigger religious conflict Zuhri, S. (2020). In the context of religious moderation, individuals or groups tend to adopt inclusive attitudes, respect differences in religions and beliefs, and seek to promote constructive interfaith dialog (Apandie et al., 2022).

Moderation in religion promotes a broader understanding of other religions, respects religious plurality, and upholds universal human values. A moderate approach to religion values religious freedom and recognizes that every individual has the right to choose and practice their religion without discrimination. It also involves an understanding that religion does not have to be a source of conflict or hostility, but can be a source of peace, compassion, and brotherhood. This definition is also in line with that conveyed by Pajarianto and Novianti. Religious moderation refers to attitudes and behaviors that uphold tolerance, and interfaith dialogue (Novianto, 2021; Pajarianto et al., 2022).

The integration of religious moderation in the education curriculum is one of the National Medium-Term Development Plan 2020-2024 (Cahyaningtiyas, N., & Rahayu, D. N., 2023). One of the subjects that has a central role in introducing the concept of integration of religious moderation is social studies (Social Studies). Through social studies subjects, can be studied and understood in depth about the plurality of Indonesian society, including differences in religion, culture, tradition, and outlook on life.

As a country with diverse cultures, religions, ethnicities, and languages, Indonesia is home to many different groups of people. In this context, it is important to understand, appreciate, and celebrate this diversity. One way to achieve this is through the education curriculum (Zahroh, 2022) and the integration of religious moderation in subjects.

Social studies subjects have an important role in equipping students with an in-depth understanding of society, including the diversity of cultures and religions that exist in Indonesia. In the context of integrating religious moderation, social studies is an ideal vehicle to teach learners about the importance of tolerance, mutual understanding, and cooperation between various religious groups in everyday life. Through social studies learning, learners can explore concepts such as plurality, equality, human rights, and democratic values that become the foundation for building a harmonious and inclusive society.

Social studies subjects provide opportunities for students to learn and understand how pluralistic Indonesian society can coexist peacefully, respect differences, and work together to achieve common goals. In learning social studies will also explore various aspects of the plurality of Indonesian society, ranging from differences in religion, culture, and traditions, to customs that exist in various regions. As



well as learning how Indonesian society has managed to maintain inter-religious harmony and harmony, and how the values of religious moderation become the foundation in achieving these goals.

In essence, social studies aims to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to become conscious and responsible citizens. In the context of integrating religious moderation, social studies provides opportunities for learners to understand and appreciate the diversity that exists in society, and see it as a strength that can enrich life.

Through social studies learning, students will be introduced to various concepts and principles that underlie the integration of religious moderation. They will learn about the importance of respecting human rights, appreciating differences, and building harmonious cooperation in daily life. In addition, social studies subjects also provide opportunities for students to understand the history, development, and contribution of various religions and cultures in the formation of a pluralistic Indonesian society. With a thorough understanding of different backgrounds and worldviews, learners will be better able to establish good relationships with other individuals and groups and overcome prejudices and stereotypes that may arise. In the context of globalization and technological advancement, the integration of religious moderation is becoming increasingly relevant. Learners need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to interact positively in an increasingly diverse society.

Social studies is an effective tool to prepare students to be open, tolerant, and ready to face multicultural challenges faced in everyday life. To face this challenge, the role of educators is very important. Educators can create an inclusive learning environment, encourage dialogue and critical reflection, and provide examples of religious moderation behavior in interactions with students. Thus, social studies teachers not only deliver teaching materials but also become facilitators in the process of shaping students' attitudes and understanding of the plurality of Indonesian society. Therefore, this study will explore strategies and approaches that can be used in teaching social studies to improve the integration of religious moderation and students' understanding of the plurality of Indonesian society. Through social studies, students are expected to become agents of change who can build a harmonious, inclusive, and respectful society to realize a harmonious Indonesian society in diversity.

Method

This research was conducted using qualitative analysis, qualitative research is a research method that aims to understand and explain social phenomena in depth, through the collection and analysis of descriptive data. The data collection technique uses in-depth interviews with 4 social studies teachers from Islamic schools and a social studies teacher from a public school. To obtain data, interviews were conducted by telephone and Zoom meeting room.

After data compilation, data reduction, data presentation, and data verification were carried out using the interactive data analysis technique of the Miles and Huberman model. The data obtained is then checked for validity in this study to obtain data that can be scientifically accounted for using triangulation of methodology and sources and member checks

Results and Discussion

Understanding Plurality in Indonesian Society

Plurality refers to a condition that describes the existence of diversity, variation, and diversity in various aspects of social life, culture, religion, ethnicity, language, and opinions as well as the diversity that exists among individuals who have differences in terms of beliefs, values, traditions, and identities within a society or community. In the context of Indonesian society, plurality includes the diversity of religions, ethnicities, cultures, and languages that exist within it. Plurality includes the recognition of



differences as a characteristic of Indonesian society that enriches social and cultural life and demands tolerance, mutual respect, and harmony between different groups (Sutrisno, 2019).

Indonesia as a country with a diverse population in terms of religion, ethnicity, culture, and language, is a clear example of the plurality of society. As Fidiyani said, an example of diversity in Indonesia is religion. Indonesia is not a secular state, nor is it a religious state, but the recognition of religion by the state only includes six religions, namely Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Catholicism, and Confucianism (Fidiyani, 2013).

Understanding the plurality of the Indonesian nation is very important because, firstly, it encourages tolerance and respect for differences. Understanding plurality allows individuals to see that differences are natural and acceptable. In a plural society, tolerance and mutual respect are important cornerstones in creating social harmony.

Second, it enriches social and cultural life. The plurality of Indonesian society provides opportunities to learn from and share experiences with people from different backgrounds. This opens the door to greater cultural exchange, intellectual wealth, and social development. Third, overcoming conflict and discrimination, a strong understanding of plurality can help overcome social conflict and discrimination that often arise due to a lack of understanding of differences. Understanding plurality allows individuals to work towards a more inclusive and just society. In dealing with the plurality of Indonesian society, it is important to adopt an inclusive and open approach. Recognizing diversity as a strength and resource is the first step in building awareness and respect for differences.

The characteristics of Indonesia's plural society include several aspects that distinguish and enrich social, cultural, and religious life in Indonesia. Here are some of the main characteristics of Indonesia's plural society:

The first, religious diversity, Indonesia is known as one of the countries with high religious diversity. Various religions such as Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism are recognized and practiced freely by the Indonesian population. This religious diversity reflects the tolerance and diversity of spiritual beliefs that exist in Indonesian society.

Second, multiethnic and multicultural, Indonesian society consists of various tribes and ethnicities that have different cultures, languages, and traditions. Each tribe has a unique cultural identity, such as Javanese, Sundanese, Batak, Minang, Dayak, Bugis, Aceh, and many more. This ethnic diversity produces richness in the form of art, music, dance, traditional clothing, and diverse customs.

Third, regional languages, in addition to Indonesian as the official language, Indonesia also has many regional languages spoken by local communities. Regional languages such as Javanese, Sundanese, Minangkabau, Balinese, Batak, Bugis, Aceh, and others become a means of communication and identity for the people who speak these languages. These regional languages enrich the linguistic diversity of Indonesia.

Fourth, cultural plurality, Indonesian culture is very diverse and is reflected in art, music, dance, culinary, and traditional celebrations. Each region has a different cultural wealth and shows a diversity of traditions and customs. This cultural diversity is a valuable heritage and one of the tourist attractions in Indonesia.

The last, culinary diversity, Indonesian cuisine also reflects the diversity of its people. Each region has different specialties, ranging from Padang rendang, Madura *sate*, fried rice, Jogja *gudeg*, Palembang



pempek, and many more. This culinary diversity reflects the diversity of food ingredients, recipes, and cooking techniques that exist in Indonesia.

This plural characteristic of Indonesian society underlines the importance of respecting differences and upholding the value of tolerance in everyday life. This diversity is a wealth that must be preserved and appreciated to strengthen the unity of the nation. A good understanding of the plurality of Indonesian society plays an important role in building harmony, tolerance, and unity in society.

Understanding the plurality of Indonesian society can encourage tolerance, and respect for differences and maintain social resilience. It creates a harmonious, inclusive, and dignified society in Indonesia, and provides an example for other countries in practicing diversity and intercultural cooperation. This understanding encourages better cooperation between different groups, reduces conflict, and creates an inclusive environment. As positive intercultural relationships are built, they enable the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and perspectives that can enrich understanding of the world. Through intercultural dialog and interaction, we can build better relationships, increase understanding of other cultures, and reduce negative stereotypes that can appreciate cultural diversity to create a strong national identity.

Regarding the diversity of the Indonesian nation, multicultural education is carried out in educational institutions, as a national identity. This foundation has been set in Pancasila to foster social justice for all minority groups regardless of race, religion, cultural background, age, gender, and language, as well as linguistic identity. Thus, the support of social justice in multicultural education is a form of justice and equality in life (Jayadi et al., 2022).

Similar to Jayadi's opinion, Silvia Rahmelia stated that learning religious moderation in learning so that students can be open to every difference is a necessity and appreciate it as one of Indonesia's wealth. The spread of religious moderation needs to be transformed, especially in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0. The need for understanding religious moderation must be disseminated, especially among the younger generation who have great curiosity. Their curiosity must, of course, be based on scientific reasoning, so as not to deviate from the philosophy and values that should be (Rahmelia, S., & Apandie, C., 2020).

The Role of Social Studies Teachers in Impacting Religious Moderation

Religious moderation involves an awareness of the social, political, and cultural context and, an understanding that religious practice should be in line with human values, social justice, and harmonious living in society. In many cases, religious moderation encourages collaboration between followers of different religions to work together to build a better life and promote values that are mutually beneficial for everyone. The importance of religious moderation is to create harmony and harmony between different religious groups, avoid religious conflict, and build an inclusive, just, and coexisting society. Religious moderation serves as a bridge to strengthen tolerance, mutual understanding, and interfaith cooperation to advance common goals in social life.

Embedding religious moderation starts from school as a means to instill character in students. Therefore, for this role to run well, it begins with implementing an educational curriculum that is oriented towards understanding the multicultural and plurality of the Indonesian nation. According to Azzuhri, three strategies can be applied to incorporate the concept of multicultural and plurality of the Indonesian nation, namely the revolution strategy, the strategy of self-exile, and the dialog strategy. Azzuhri added that in applying this strategy, educators must be committed to the religion of the students (Azzuhri, 2012). This is similar to the opinion of Suci Hidayati, that two principles of religious moderation are used as the basis for action, namely justice, and balance, meaning that they are firm in their stance and also do not favor any party (Hidayati et al., 2023).



Nurdin added that the inculcation of religious moderation in the education curriculum is based on teachings that integrate religion and Indonesianness in the sense of a nationalist-religious concept as a national concept. Religious moderation can be implemented through moderate behavior and attitudes of students in facing various difficulties in worship, relationships, and other dimensions of social life. Moderate attitudes emerge as a result of education that instills character and personality that has self-awareness and the need for information that is unique to itself and extensive knowledge for society. In addition, as the next generation of the nation, students must hold fast to the four pillars that have been established by the Indonesian nation, namely, Pancasila, Unity in Diversity, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, and the 1945 Constitution (Nurdin & Naqqiyah, 2019).

School culture influences learners' views on inclusive views, and supports the cultivation of contextual religious values so that it has an impact on decision-making in the development of learners' life meaning experience. Religious learning is not only in religious lessons but also in other subjects so it is necessary to optimize religious education and related subjects to be more contextual to the times and the individual and social development of students (Supardi & Rahmelia, 2020).

Religious moderation is interpreted as a balance between solid beliefs and tolerance, the school is considered one of the educational institutions that have successfully incorporated moderate Islam into its educational practices through the formulation and development of a vision and mission-oriented to Islamic moderation, comprehensive curriculum development by incorporating Islamic moderation values, optimization of habituation and school culture as a strategy for internalizing Islamic moderation character values, and development of Islamic moderation strengthening programs.

To understand the concept of religious moderation, a thorough understanding of the principles of religious moderation is required. Many components of religious moderation can be used as guidelines in religious attitudes and behavior, especially in Indonesia, which has the characteristics of an archipelago and multiculturalism. Indicators of religious moderation include: (1) National commitment; (2) Tolerance and harmony; (3) Lack of ideological violence; and (4) Acceptance of local culture. (5) Reasoning that is acceptable or reasonable (6) Contextualists who are also textualists; (7) Ijtihad exists in the creation of laws that are not found in the main sources. This causes, if the values of religious moderation are implemented in the learning process, it will create a generation of plurality that supports the principle of equality and mutual respect for existing differences. Islamic education based on religious moderation currently includes various aspects, including openness to renewal, ease in implementing Islamic teachings, and flexibility (Hidayati et al., 2023).

Educational strategies for instilling religious moderation

In general, social studies teachers have no significant obstacles in integrating religious moderation into lessons because since the establishment of the 2013 curriculum which includes attitude assessment, general subject teachers have been required to incorporate religious elements into learning.

The strategy applied by educators is to adjust the Learning Implementation Plan with the curriculum applied by the school, then look for keywords of the material to be taught with the arguments of the Qur'an and hadith that support the material. The cultivation of religious moderation through the integration of general knowledge with various arguments, both *naqli* and *aqli* arguments can increase the faith and character of students.

Each meeting has three stages of the learning process, namely introduction, core activities, and closing. In the preliminary activities, at this stage, the educator asks each student to pray, then the educator conveys the competencies to be achieved and the benefits in everyday life by linking the competencies that have been learned before. In the core activities, educators apply the discussion method, and



questions and answers in the learning process. At this stage, discussions are held by raising various hot themes that are happening in the community.

Interactive learning approaches, group discussions, collaborative projects, case studies, and simulations are used to actively engage learners in the understanding of religious moderation and encourage them to think critically and understand others' points of view. This creates a tolerant school environment. School policies that promote tolerance, respect differences, and protect religious freedom are consistently implemented. Extracurricular activities, such as interfaith dialog clubs, can also help build interfaith understanding and harmony. Schools should be safe and inclusive places for learners from different religious backgrounds.

At this stage, educators provide quality resources and learning materials that support the integration of religious moderation in social studies subjects such as textbooks, reading materials, videos, and other resources should reflect the diversity of religions, promote objective understanding, and illustrate positive examples of interfaith dialogue and harmony.

The last activity is closing, educators provide an overview and actions that should be taken to maintain tolerance. Educators and learners recognize the importance of understanding different religions, respecting differences, and the importance of interfaith dialogue. The integration of religious moderation also contributes to the formation of attitudes of tolerance, cross-cultural understanding, and interfaith cooperation among learners.

Students in public schools and Islamic schools are students who are Muslim, however, tolerance material is still taught so that students can take appropriate action if they encounter differences in society. Although the Indonesian nation already has a strong foundation, namely the Pancasila ideology, and religion, these two things make it easy to apply religious moderation in the world of education (Bahar, 2022). Educational institutions are seen as a strategic place to cultivate religious moderation (Harmi, 2022). The lesson starts with instilling the concept of tolerance (Tamsir, 2018) and then instilling a religious culture, exemplary, and habituation to create a moderate society (Muliastri et al., 2022).

The integration of religious moderation in social studies subjects can have significant effectiveness in promoting a better understanding of religions in society, reducing interfaith conflicts, and building interfaith harmony.

Here are some reasons why integrating religious moderation in social studies subjects can be effective. First, it increases understanding. By including aspects of religious moderation in social studies subjects, students have the opportunity to learn about the universal values found in every religion. They will learn about the basic principles of these religions, as well as practical ways to apply them in everyday life. This can help improve learners' understanding of religious diversity and reduce negative stereotypes or prejudices against certain religions.

Second, increasing tolerance. The integration of religious moderation in social studies subjects can help build interfaith tolerance among students. They will learn to respect the different religions and beliefs of others and understand that loyalty to a religion does not necessarily mean excluding other religions. Thus, the integration of religious moderation can help reduce interfaith conflicts that often arise due to a lack of understanding and tolerance.

Third, building social harmony. Social studies subjects often discuss social and political issues that can affect inter-religious relations. By incorporating religious moderation, learners will be able to understand the importance of interfaith harmony in building a harmonious society. They will be taught about the



principles of interfaith dialog, peaceful conflict resolution, and the importance of interfaith cooperation in solving complex social problems.

Fourth, it enhances critical thinking. The integration of religious moderation in social studies subjects can also stimulate learners to think critically about their religion and beliefs. They will be invited to question certain aspects of their religion, seek deeper understanding, and compare with other religions. This can help develop learners' critical thinking skills, improve their understanding of religions, and strengthen their own beliefs with a firmer foundation. However, it is also important to note that the effectiveness of integrating religious moderation in social studies subjects may vary depending on the implementation. Good curricula, relevant materials, and inclusive learning approaches are essential to achieve this goal. In addition, support from educators, educational institutions, and communities also plays an important role in creating a supportive environment for the integration of religious moderation.

Conclusion

In general, learners demonstrate religious moderation in daily life by recognizing differences and developing positive relationships with others, regardless of their religion or beliefs. Respecting differences in religions and beliefs by not denigrating other religions, avoiding religious extremism, such as blind fanaticism, maintaining a balance between the life of the world and the hereafter, maintaining a balance between religious rights and obligations, maintaining a balance between religious freedom and social responsibility, and not abusing religious freedom to harm others or society.

The integration of religious moderation in social studies subjects has great potential to increase understanding, tolerance, and interfaith harmony among students. By incorporating aspects of religious moderation, learners can learn universal values in religions and avoid negative prejudice against certain religions. It can also help build better attitudes of tolerance, reduce interfaith conflicts, and promote social harmony in society. In addition, the integration of religious moderation in social studies subjects can encourage learners to think critically about their religion and beliefs and strengthen their beliefs with a firmer foundation. However, to achieve maximum effectiveness, there needs to be good implementation with relevant curriculum, appropriate materials, and inclusive learning approaches. Support from educators, educational institutions, and communities is also an important factor in creating an educational environment that supports the integration of religious moderation. Overall, the integration of religious moderation in social studies subjects has great potential to form a generation that is more understanding, tolerant, and able to establish inter-religious harmony. With a better understanding of religions and the principles of moderation, students can become agents of positive change in building a harmonious and respectful society in diversity.

Therefore, it is important to develop an inclusive curriculum that incorporates aspects of religious moderation thoroughly in social studies subjects. The curriculum should include an understanding of universal values in religions, the principles of interfaith dialogue, and the importance of social harmony. Relevant and contextualized material should also be integrated so that learners can see the relevance and practical benefits of learning. Training for educators is also needed. Educators need to be familiar with the concepts of religious moderation, effective teaching methods, and how to facilitate inclusive and supportive discussions. This training can help educators prepare and deliver materials in ways that are engaging and meaningful for learners.

Involving the community is also important in the integration of religious moderation in social studies subjects. Seminars, workshops, or community events can be organized to discuss the importance of interfaith harmony and the role of schools in shaping inclusive understanding. Parents also need to be educated and supported to support the learning process of religious moderation that takes place in schools. By implementing these suggestions, the integration of religious moderation in social studies subjects can be more effective in forming students who are understanding, tolerant, and able to establish



inter-religious harmony in society. Suggestions for future researchers to research homogeneous schools to see the level of tolerance of students in schools.

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