

RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN LEARNING AT DARUL HANIFAH KINDERGARTEN GARUT BASED ON SUNDANESE PHILOSOPHY (SILI ASAH, ASIH, DAN ASUH)

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:
Received 15 January 2025
Revised 22 February 2025
Accepted 23 March 2025
Available online 24 April 2025

How to cite:
Ulfah, F., & Pratiwi, S. (2025).
Religious Moderation In
Learning at Darul Hanifah
Kindergarten Garut Based on
Sundanese Philosophy (Sili Asah,
Asih, Dan Asuh). *Journal of
Gender and Social Inclusion in
Muslim Societies*, 6(1), 10–19.

ABSTRACT

Indonesia faces religious intolerance in early childhood education, leading to radicalism. Addressing this issue requires teaching morals and religious moderation, focusing on fairness and justice. The study explores power dynamics in religious moderation at Darul Hanifah kindergarten, utilizing Sundanese philosophy, and proposes a framework for religious moderation learning. A qualitative research design was employed, utilizing focused ethnography to gather in-depth data from 60 children, five teachers, and one principal at Darul Hanifah Kindergarten. Data collection included observations during learning activities and semi-structured interviews to assess the implementation of religious values and their impact on fostering tolerance among students of various religious backgrounds. Findings indicate that the integration of Islamic practices in daily activities is complemented by an acknowledgment of diverse belief systems, promoting an environment of mutual respect. Teachers actively facilitate discussions surrounding religious differences, enabling children to engage harmoniously despite their varied backgrounds. Parents' consent plays a crucial role in the participation of children from minority religions in Islamic practices. The study concludes that early instillation of religious moderation and tolerance is vital in shaping a harmonious society. The practices at Darul Hanifah Kindergarten serve as a model for educational institutions aiming to cultivate inclusive and respectful learning environments, demonstrating that a foundation of moderation can mitigate the risks of radicalism from an early age. Further attention is warranted to enhance the participation of minority students without marginalization.

Keywords : *Diversity; Early Childhood Education; Religious Moderation; Sundanese Philosophy; Tolerance.*

Introduction.

Radicalism is defined as a violent act that causes harm to numerous individuals and is perpetrated by adherents of a specific movement (Wainarisi et al., 2023); (Tanzilulloh, 2021). Instances of radicalism remain prevalent in Indonesia. One reason is that religion is seen as being pushed to the

edges of global politics and domestic problems. As a result, radicalism is often seen as a way to protect religious beliefs (Helmy et al., 2021). This form of radicalism can also arise from excessive ideological fervor, leading to the conviction that a particular group is superior to others (Fahri, 2019); (Pakaya, 2022).

The dissemination of radical ideologies has infiltrated early childhood education (PAUD), with teachers socializing extreme symbols such as weapon replicas and attire commonly associated with perpetrators of radicalism (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019). Furthermore, educational materials can serve as a medium for the propagation of radical ideologies when examples of appropriate attire are referenced (Febryansah, 2021); (Aksa & Nurhayati, 2020).

In Indonesia, religious intolerance poses a significant challenge to the promotion of religious moderation, particularly within the public sphere and educational institutions, with a notable emphasis on early childhood education. Research conducted by the Setara Institute for Democracy indicates that East Java exhibits the highest level of intolerance, with disturbances reported at 50 places of worship in 2022. This increase was substantial, as the number of affected places rose from 16 in 2017 to 50. Furthermore, the rejection of sermons primarily affects East Java, as evidenced by eight documented cases in the province. The Indonesian Human Rights Monitor (Imparsial) reports that intolerance is prevalent in West Java, primarily manifesting in issues related to places of worship and the prohibition of worship

practices that disproportionately affect minority groups. These incidents underscore the necessity for enhanced understanding of and concerted action to address religious intolerance in Indonesia (Ridho, 2020).

Educational institutions also frequently experience intolerance. Data derived from research conducted by Setara Institute and Wahid Institute, indicating various manifestations of intolerance in educational settings. These include the prohibition of hijab use in one of the high schools in Bali, the dissemination of a circular from a school principal mandating Muslim uniforms for students, regulations requiring all students to participate in an Easter camp, and instances of bullying against female students who do not wear hijabs (Jamilah, 2021). Not accepting differences in schools needs a lot of attention to stop the cycle of intolerance, which could have adverse effects as kids grow up and interact with more diverse and complicated people. This can be achieved by instilling the understanding that Indonesia is a multicultural country, thereby fostering a high level of tolerance in children (Ibda & Sofanudin, 2023); (Muazzul, 2021).

The existing social phenomenon of intolerance in Indonesia exhibits diverse underlying factors across different regions. In Cilegon, the foundation of intolerance

stems from historical resentment related to the Cilegon riot, during which the recitation of the call to prayer was prohibited. On the other hand, intolerance is caused by many things in the city of Bogor, such as the large and widespread influence of intolerable groups, bad government policies, ineffective law enforcement, and economic differences. Examples of intolerance in society and schools are mostly caused by two types of factors: internal factors, which are beliefs based on how people understand religious teachings, and external factors, which are mental states (like anger, feeling neglected, and feeling under a lot of pressure) that lead to intolerant behavior (Musyahid et al., 2022). Intolerance, in addition to its prevalence in broader society and general education, also manifests in the specific domain of early childhood education (ECE), as evidenced by the refusal to associate with individuals of different religious backgrounds and instances of bullying directed toward minority peers (Rahma & Mahmud, 2022). What makes kids reject friends from different religious backgrounds? It's mostly outside factors, because kids naturally know how to interact with their peers based on their developmental stages during the time of social grouping.

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) serves as a foundational educational phase.

This foundational stage is crucial for shaping the growth and development of young children, establishing the fundamental framework for their future learning achievements. This phase is not constrained by specific age limits, and the learning process is tailored to align with the child's developmental stages (M. A. Hasan & Huda, 2022). From a cognitive perspective, children in this phase are in the preoperational stage, necessitating the presentation of concepts in concrete forms (Ibda & Sofanudin, 2023). Nevertheless, children at this stage can comprehend social, moral, and religious concepts effectively, making it appropriate to introduce these topics through age-appropriate and needs-based methods. Social and religious concepts can be effectively conveyed to children through storytelling techniques, as children in this phase are particularly receptive to narrative-based learning (Yunita, 2022).

The cognitive capacity of children to comprehend social, religious, and moral issues has prompted efforts to instill a moderate understanding of religion and radicalism through various initiatives. These include making it easier to fight radicalism by using the local knowledge and stopping radicalism in early childhood education (PAUD) by teaching morals and

religious moderation (Yahya, 2020); (Halim, 2022).

Religious moderation is about fairness, justice, and the core teachings of Islam. This means that the middle ground is used instead of the extremes on the far right or far left (M. Hasan, 2017). The concept of religious moderation must be instilled in children from an early age, as it can serve as a solution to religious issues and other global challenges (Damanik, 2021).

Method

This research employs a qualitative approach utilizing a focused ethnography research design. This investigation is about putting religious moderation into practice at Darul Hanifah Kindergarten, a school with a lot of students from different religious and belief backgrounds. A qualitative approach is thought to be the best way to go about it. We chose this method because it facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the situation and surroundings. Collecting descriptive data allows for a deeper understanding of the participants' behavior in relation to the studied issues.

In qualitative research, several research designs exist; however, this study employs the focused ethnography design, an adaptation of the ethnographic research design. Within the context of ethnographic research, investigators are typically required to spend an extended period in the

research area and originate from different cultures. Conversely, the focused ethnography research design allows researchers to remain in the research area for a shorter duration, collect more data, and share the same culture as the research group. Focused ethnography was selected as the research design because this study examines how religion influences learning at Darul Hanifah Kindergartens, which have a diverse religious and racial background. Focused ethnographic research concentrates on more specific issues or subjects within the same cultural group as the researcher. The study was conducted over a brief period; nevertheless, it thoroughly investigated all of the school's features and aspects, which are considered to support the study of religious moderation in learning. This investigation will focus on the interaction between teachers and students, as well as among students, which encompasses elements of religious moderation, such as tolerance, among others.

In this study, the researcher undertakes several research steps to achieve the research objectives. As a general rule, the research steps are the same as Walcott's: choosing the research design, finding culturally similar groups to study, defining the research problem, gathering data, analyzing data, and writing the research report.

Specific criteria, such as the presence of religious experiences or interactions, determined the research location in this study. Additionally, we selected participants through invitations until no new interpretations emerged from them.

The researcher chose Darul Hanifah Kindergarten, situated in Samarang, Garut Regency, West Java, as the research location. The researcher selected Darul Hanifah Kindergarten due to its richness in religious diversity.

Darul Hanifah Kindergarten has two learning groups: one group, B, with an age range of 5-6 years, and one group, A, with an age range of 4-5 years. The research subjects are 60 children, consisting of 31 boys and 33 girls, as well as five teachers and one principal. All the names of the respondents listed in this study are pseudonyms, as this is one of the strategies to maintain research ethics.

In this study, data collection techniques used observation and interviews. In focused ethnography research, observations are conducted during learning activities, and interviews are conducted with teachers and school principals to help validate the results of the observations when there are multiple perceptions from the observation results. Observations and interviews in focused

ethnography research can be assisted by technology such as video recorders.

In this study, the interviews were conducted semi-structured. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the depth of information through questions that generally move from general to specific and can be opened with informal question forms.

We conducted the interviews at the end of the research, taking into account that the researcher and participants had already gotten to know each other. The participants interviewed were all the teachers and the principal. The researcher conducted the interviews with each participant in turn over the course of one day. The researcher interviewed the principal first, then the teachers. The researcher conducted interviews with each participant only once.

We conducted informal interviews with the children in addition to interviews with teachers and educational staff. Children often approached the researcher, inviting them to chat. The researcher utilized this opportunity to collect data on religious moderation from the children. The informal interview process with the children occurred because they always asked first by inquiring about what the researcher was doing. Then, the researcher informally asked the children about their religious activities. The child did not perceive the interview as an attempt to

gather information about religious moderation.

The interview with the child was not continued when the child said goodbye or simply left the researcher to go back to playing with their friends. The child's informal interview yielded sufficient information for analysis. The researcher also respects the children's rights by not interrupting their activities. The interviews conducted used an interview guide to facilitate the researcher's extracting information and a recorder to store data and ease the researcher's data analysis process. The researcher formulates some of the interview questions below in advance. The researcher uses these questions to guide their exploration of information about religious moderation in early childhood education (PAUD). The questions posed to the respondents evolve according to the situation and conditions. The researcher employed only two open-ended question guides, adapting subsequent questions based on the child's responses. In addition, there are also questions asked without using guidelines. The researcher posed the question to the child as a means of seeking confirmation.

This study employs the grounded theory approach for data analysis. Grounded theory enables researchers to categorize findings in accordance with their research objectives. The data analysis

process involves coding the findings. Grounded theory data analysis, which comprises two phases, can provide support for ethnographic-focused research. The first phase is initial coding, which entails labeling each word, line, or segment of data. The second phase, focused coding, is a selective process that utilizes the most significant and frequently occurring codes to sort, synthesize, integrate, and organize large amounts of data. The researcher identifies significant field notes and interview results prior to initiating the initial coding process. This step facilitates the author's execution of the initial coding process. The author has delineated the process below.

Results and Discussions

Religious Moderation in Learning at Darul Hanifah Kindergarten Garut Based on Sundanese Philosophy (Sili Asah, Asih, dan Asuh).

Religious moderation necessitates inculcation from an early age, as children, being social entities, are capable of comprehending social issues that are sometimes considered beyond their cognitive capacity (Jamaluddin, 2021); (Putra, 2021). Based on this understanding, this research can be conducted at the early childhood education level with children aged 4-6 years at Darul Hanifah Kindergarten Garut. This kindergarten is a

general educational institution; however, due to the predominantly Muslim surrounding community, the learning process incorporates numerous Islamic values. Nevertheless, in actuality, the student body comprises not only those of Muslim faith but also adherents of other religions, including those from belief system backgrounds.

In previous years, numerous students from non-Muslim backgrounds, including Christians and followers of other belief systems, attended this kindergarten. (Sunda Wiwitan). During the 2023-2024 academic year, the school enrolls three children with Sunda Wiwitan beliefs. The group consists of two male and one female student. Two are in Group B, and one is in Group A. The learning process proceeds in accordance with early childhood education principles (PAUD). We stimulate and facilitate five developmental areas, including religious and moral values.

Efforts to stimulate and facilitate these aspects are implemented through habitual practices such as reading Iqra, engaging in prayer before and after activities, practicing ablution and prayer, and participating in other religious activities (Rosyada, 2022); (Alfazri, 2021). Islam bases all these religious activities on habituation and religious practices (Fuadi, 2022); (Jamaluddin, 2021). The majority of

teachers and students identify as Muslims, leading to the adoption of this approach. Additionally, there is a dearth of teachers from other belief backgrounds, which may create the perception that minority children are being marginalized (Ali, 2021); (Adiko et al., 2021); (Sriyanti, 2021).

When it comes to habituation and learning religious practices, children from the Sunda Wiwitan belief system often follow a series of Islamic-based habits. The educator implements this approach after obtaining parental consent. During the new student admission process (PPDB), communication occurred between parents and the educational institution. The school articulated that all learning processes pertaining to habituation and religious practices conform to Islamic principles. The researcher obtained this information by conducting interviews with the educators.

The researchers observed that Islamic principles underpin the entire learning process, which includes prayers, prayer practices, and daily behaviors rooted in Islamic teachings. The internalization of Islamic etiquette in daily life is not solely implemented through practices or directives conveyed by the instructor but also through the recitation of hadiths or Islamic sayings, such as "do not eat while standing." The school administration had previously communicated with the students'

parents regarding the Islamic-based learning process that their children were following. We established the agreement informally, which constituted a verbal agreement without written documentation. Nevertheless, the educator consistently inquires whether the child wishes to participate in activities such as prayer and refrains from coercion.

The instructor also introduced to the students the concept that not all children are Muslim, acknowledging the existence of other belief systems. The instructor conveyed this information prior to the prayer practice sessions. The instructor's intention was to preempt potential inquiries from children regarding the non-participation of some of their peers in prayer activities. However, children adhering to different belief systems occasionally participate in the prayer practice activities. The instructor and other children do not view this as unusual, given that they have previously communicated the existence of differences. The children consistently interact in all activities, and the existing differences do not become a topic of discourse among them. They engage and interact naturally, unimpeded by the differences present within the group. This harmonious environment is attributable to the instructor's efforts in cultivating a sense of tolerance among the children, enabling

them to coexist harmoniously despite their differences.

Conclusions

We need to instill religious moderation from an early age to shape a tolerant and harmonious character in diversity. Darul Hanifah Kindergarten Garut serves as an example of implementing religious moderation based on Sundanese philosophy (Sili Asih, Asah, Asuh). Although the majority of students and teachers are Muslim, there are students from the Sunda Wiwitan belief system who participate in Islamic-based activities with parental approval. This shows an effort to foster tolerance and respect for differences. However, further attention is necessary to address the potential marginalization of minority students.

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