Spiritual Communication: Implementation of Religious Moderation in Cirebon, Indonesia

Betty Tresnawaty, Enok Risdayah, Rohmanur Aziz

UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, West Java, Indonesia

The Religious Moderation concept in Indonesia is based on written scripts that have been rolling since 2019, this issue is one of the themes promoted by the Ministry of Religion, which is based on the plural and cultural reality of the people of this country. The Wahid Institute informed that 54 percent of cases of intolerance occurred during 2020. This condition can have a positive potential if it is managed properly, on the other hand, it can become a dangerous boomerang if strategic policies do not accompany it. Because it can give rise to radical ideas, which later become an acute disease in society. Intolerance, racism, and other bad behavior are very easy to spread and very easy to follow, someone can even do it without realizing it. In this context, spiritual communication is needed as a policy strategy, to provide mutual understanding to all level of society. Qualitative-descriptive method is used in this research, with literature study, virtual observation and interviews with some informants from Cirebon. The study's findings indicated that religious moderation was implemented using four approaches, namely the linguistic approach, the sociocultural approach, the historical approach, and the traditional approach.

Keywords: spiritual communication, religious moderation, strategic policies

Introduction

The Republic of Indonesia (officially known as *Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia*, NKRI) declared its independence from Dutch colonial rule in 1945. It is a land of abundant fertility and natural beauty, comprising tens of thousands of islands, each with its own distinct language and ethnic group. This diversity has given rise to a pluralistic society, where a wide range of beliefs and cultures coexist. Pluralism presents both opportunities and challenges, particularly in a religiously diverse nation like Indonesia, which is home to both revealed and non-revealed religions, as well as missionary and non-missionary faiths. According to data from the Department of Population and Civil Registration, Ministry of Home Affairs, Indonesia, the majority of the population (86.88%) adheres to Islam, followed by Protestantism (7.49%), Catholicism (3.09%), Hinduism (1.71%), Buddhism (0.75%), and Confucianism (0.03%). Despite these differences, the diverse religious communities are united under the nation's guiding ideology, Pancasila, which promotes harmony and tolerance. Indonesia has flourished as a developing country where followers of different faiths live together in peace, demonstrating that religious diversity can be a source of strength rather than division (Engkizar et al., 2022, p. 113).

Betty Tresnawaty, Ph.D., senior lecturer at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, West Java, Indonesia.
Enok Risdayah, Ph.D., lecturer at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, West Java, Indonesia.
Rohmanur Aziz, Ph.D., lecturer at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, West Java, Indonesia.

Harmony, concord, and peace have been consistently upheld, with several indicators reflecting this, include: First, interfaith prayer gatherings (Observation, March 2022). Second, the formation of a space for dialogue between religious leaders. This dialogue activity was initiated by religious leaders and facilitated by the Religious Harmony Forum (*Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama*, FKUB). The topics discussed were the construction of places of worship, the observance of religious holidays, and regular meetings to strengthen interfaith relations. Third, it works through social activities (Engkizar et al., 2022, p. 116), such as distributing food, clothing, and several other basic needs, for communities affected by disasters, all of which are carried out regardless of religion or ethnicity. Fourth, it is cooperation. Examples of cases occur between Muslims and non-Muslims in the Garut Regency, who carry out the repair and maintenance of waterways together, build places of worship together (Interview, March 2022), help each other in holding certain celebrations, and so on (Observation, March 2022). Fifth, support from community leaders and religious leaders (Engkizar et al., 2022, p. 118). In addition to having the knowledge to manage, guide, and direct the community, the two figures also have the authority to regulate them.

Harmony in Indonesia is fostered not only by adults but also by teenagers, many of whom engage in tangible efforts to uphold the nation's unity. Gayatri Kusumawardhani is a teenager and a student at Regina Pacis High School in Surakarta. She is the head of the first Muslim Intra-School Student Organization (OSIS) in a Catholic school and the founder of the Nawala Project. As chair, of course, she has many responsibilities to run various school programs. There is a beautiful story about tolerance during Gayatri's leadership, one day in the month of Ramadan, a meeting was held between the coaches and OSIS members, during a lunch break, food was served, and Gayatri politely said "I am a Muslim, I am fasting, it is better if the food is given to another". Hearing Gayatri's confession, all the meeting participants, including the mentor teacher, went out of the room to find other place to eat. All of this was done to honor the fasting person, even though this was not what Gayatri expected (Kusumawardhani, 2022). Nawala Project is a reading park for the local community or anyone who needs it. The project was established to improve literacy skills, by distributing thousands of books for use (Kusumawardhani, 2022). Of course, besides Gayatri, many other teenagers have such a role.

It is undeniable that in the last few years Indonesia was tested with various problems, issues of violence, issues of intolerance, anti-NKRI issues, and other issues. The Religious Harmony Index (KUB) 2019, released by the Ministry of Religion of Indonesia, reports a national average score of 73.83 percent, indicating that nearly 74 out of 100 Indonesians exhibit tolerance. The Wahid Institute informed that 54 percent of cases of intolerance occurred during 2020. Intolerance means attitudes that forbid others from exercising their rights, such as prohibiting certain ethnic groups from celebrating their big day. In addition to intolerance, and cases of radicalism, 0.4 percent of Indonesian citizens have done it, such as destroying places of worship of other religions, agreeing with the caliphate state, and others. Other data from the Institute for Islamic Studies and Peace Research, were conducted in Jakarta on 100 students of Junior High School and High School, with either the use of violence under the guise of religious justification.

Religious moderation is an approach that aims to find a balanced stance between two opposing and extreme viewpoints. In other words, it avoids being skewed to either the far right or the far left, embodying the concept of "*wasatiyah*", which signifies justice and balance, without leaning towards any extreme (Faris, 1979, p. 108). Further, moderation means reducing violence, avoidance and extremism. In the religion context, moderation means upholding one's own faith with dedication while also respecting and providing room for the

beliefs of others. By embracing religious moderation, individuals contribute to building a society where mutual respect, acceptance, and compassion prevail, ensuring that religious diversity becomes a source of unity rather than division (Ali, 2020, p. 3). The term "moderate" (*wasat*) refers to individuals who consistently adhere to the principles of justice and balance in both their speech and behavior within a diverse society, fostering peace and tolerance without resorting to exclusivism or anarchism (Qaradawi, 2007).

Religious moderation involves demonstrating fair and balanced behavior, remaining open to all, and being willing to collaborate in promoting the welfare of the people. Its core principles include tolerance, openness to diversity, and recognizing and respecting differences as essential. Religious moderation fosters an environment of tolerance, where people can respect differences without resorting to conflict or intolerance. It encourages peaceful coexistence and dialogue among followers of various faiths, creating a harmonious society. Religious moderation reflects a strong commitment to creating a just society that upholds human values, acknowledges diversity as a divine will, and fosters peace. It opposes oppression, marginalization, and injustice, advocating for the proper place of all things and the proportional exercise of rights and obligations (Arifinsyah, Andy, & Damanik, 2020, p. 96).

Rasulullah PBUH, in the context of balance, discourages people from being overly excessive, even in religious practice. He prefers that it is done naturally without any self-imposed force rather than excessively. Whereas in the reality, humans cannot avoid contradicting things. Therefore, *al-Wasathiyyah Islamiyyah* appreciates the elements of *rabbaniyyah* (divinity) and *Insaniyyah* (humanity), combines *maddiyyah* (materialism) and *ruhiyyah* (spiritualism), combines revelation and reason to solve both communal issues (*al-jamāiyyah*) and individual issues (*al-fardiyyah*) (Almu'tasim, 2019, p. 201; Anwar & Haq, 2019, p. 180).

The principles of religious moderation form the foundation of spiritual communication, serving as a means of conveying messages rooted in divine values, through certain channels to obtain solutions, for solving complex and existential human problems (Bedowi, 2020, p. 120). Through this communication, humans can receive wisdom, knowledge as well as healing. Spiritual communication explains that every object (living or inanimate) has a soul, if so then every object needs to be cherished (Sha, 2007, p. 12). Spiritual communication teaches to give love to all beings (Elliott, 2015, p. 52). Spirit or soul is the essence of human beings. Human as a person has five indicators: rationality, self-awareness, intentionality, reflection, and morality. The soul gives man the capacity to live a good life (Salles, 2005, pp. 175, 178). Spiritual communication is essential for enabling an individual to provide exceptional service, characterized by love, care, compassion, sincerity, generosity, integrity, and purity (Sha, 2007, p. 18). Based on the background described above, the research focuses on how to implement the concept of religious moderation in society in Cirebon, Indonesia.

Literature Review

Studies on religious moderation have been extensively conducted in Indonesia. Researchers have explored various aspects of this topic, delving into how religious tolerance, inclusivity, and peaceful coexistence are promoted across the country's diverse communities. These investigations often focus on the efforts to balance traditional religious practices with contemporary societal norms, seeking to create a harmonious environment where different religious groups can coexist peacefully. As a result, these research initiatives provide valuable insights into the ongoing efforts to promote religious harmony and counter radicalism in Indonesia. In 2019, the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia published a book titled *Religious Moderation*, followed by another publication on the same topic in 2021.

In addition to the two books, many articles were also published. First article was written by Chadidjah, Kusnayat, Ruswandi, and Arifin with the title "Implementation of Values of Religious Moderation in PAI Learning". The results of the research indicate that the implementation of religious moderation values at the elementary, junior high, and high school levels in 2019 is still carried out utilizing a hidden curriculum, while at the university level the habituation has not been seen (Chadidjah et al., 2021, p. 114). The next article was written by Kamaludin and Purnama, with the title "Religious Moderation Strategy in the Virtual Era and Its Implication in Improving the Quality of Education". The results explain that the application of religious moderation in the educational environment can be done through social media. This strategy provides positive results and helps in achieving educational goals (Kamaludin & Purnama, 2021, p. 205). Another article was written by Nirwana and Darmadali titled "Instilling Religious Moderation Value in ELT through Cross-Cultural Understanding Course". The results of this research explain the application of religious moderation values in general courses through discussions, group presentations, and watching films (Nirwana & Darmadali, 2021, p. 117).

The three articles above are similar to this research, namely discussing religious moderation, especially how to implement it. While the difference lies in the relationship of religious moderation with other variables, this study relates to spiritual communication. As for research on spiritual communication, until now it is still rare to find a book with that title, there is a similar book entitled *Soul Communication: Opening Your Spiritual Channels for Success and Fulfillment*, written by Zhi Gang Sha in 2007. The essence of the book explains that soul communication is the solution to all confusion, despair, and problems faced. Recently, there have been many writings on spiritual communication, one of them is the article entitled "The States of Spiritual Communication (in Part): Exploring the Sharing of Meaning". This article was written by Hochheimer, Huffman, and Lauricella. It emphasizes that spiritual communication is most profound, as it encompasses interpersonal, intrapersonal, and group communication on a transcendent level. This type of communication has the power to nurture relationships and promote mutual understanding, both within individuals and between different spiritual practitioners. By transcending ordinary forms of communication, spiritual communication creates deeper connections that foster a sense of unity and shared purpose, facilitating harmonious interactions and promoting collective growth among those involved (Hochheimer et al., 2016, p. 261).

The next article entitled "Principles of Spiritual Communication based on Religious Evidence in the 'Sound Heart Model'", was written by Minoo Asadzandi. The article explains how the principles of communication in Islamic therapy can also be applied in everyday life, as the principles of communication in religious moderation. The article describes the principles of spiritual communication including addressing individuals with the appropriate titles and offering a warm smile, maintaining dignity and respecting privacy in conversations, initiating therapeutic communication that fosters trust and healing, respects individual beliefs, affirms their faith, and approaches them with a pure and non-judgmental gaze, avoiding whispering and looking with regret about the patient and family, instead promoting empathy, kindness, and compassion, strengthening hope and optimism, and encouraging forgiveness (Asadzandi, 2018, p. 1).

The next article entitled "The Qur'anic Therapeutic Spiritual Communication on the Patient's Spiritual Problems in Nursing Care", was written by Arifin, Suliyono, Ghofur, and Askan. The results of this research show that Qur'ani therapeutic spiritual communication becomes a model for healing the patient's spiritual problems. The delivery of messages containing Qur'anic spirituality by nurses to patients who are strengthened by the ability to express words that are clear, evocative, polite, gentle, helpful, and pleasant, as well as deep

experiences of spiritual healing will be a healing power for patients' spiritual problems. And no less important is the spiritual maturity of nurses which is reflected when providing services to patients in the form of showing an attitude of caring, compassion, listening, sincerity, friendly, smiling, and patient with the patients' condition. Likewise, do not be arrogant, rude, find fault, or indulge in patient disgrace, and the like.

Spiritual communication is a similarity between the research being worked on and the three articles above. The difference lies in the relationship of spiritual communication itself, that is, the ongoing research is related to the implementation of religious moderation values. Hochheimer et al.'s writing links it with other communications, and Asadzandi, like Arifin et al., connects it to the health sector.

Method

This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach. In the field, data were gathered through virtual observation and interviews, alongside a literature review as part of the data collection process. The study was conducted in a natural setting, without predefined settings or the use of an initial hypothesis, allowing for an unbiased exploration of the subject. The primary data were collected from members of the Cirebon community who participated in the interviews. These firsthand accounts were essential in understanding the local perspective on the topic under study. By employing these methods, the research aimed to gather detailed and authentic insights into the practices and views of the Cirebon society. The absence of an initial hypothesis allowed for a flexible approach, enabling the research to unfold organically based on the responses and observations made during the process. This methodology facilitated a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the subject, ensuring that the findings reflect the real-world context and experiences of the participants, thereby contributing valuable insights to the field of study. The following is a brief from the interviewed informants (see Table 1).

Table 1

Brief Profile of the Informants

No	Name	Position
1.	Arif Arofah	Public Relations of the Ministry of Religion of Cirebon City
2.	Catur Widyaningsih	Buddhist Religious Instructor, Ministry of Religion, Cirebon City
3.	Made Supartini	Cirebon City Ministry of Religion, Hindu Religious Counselor
4.	Wasi	Islamic Religious Counselor, Ministry of Religion, Cirebon City
5.	AD	Citizen of Cirebon City (30 years old)
6.	RF	Citizen of Cirebon City (40 years old)

This research was conducted through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and literature review as data collection techniques. These methods involved observing, exploring, writing, listening, analyzing, and other sensory activities to gather comprehensive data. The primary objective was to collect relevant information, process it, and then compile it into a report that offers a holistic and integrative perspective. The report provides an adequate description and overview of native speakers' views on the implementation of religious moderation in Cirebon. By incorporating both qualitative and observational methods, the research aimed to capture the nuances of local perspectives and practices. The approach ensures a detailed and well-rounded understanding of religious moderation in the region, reflecting the experiences and insights of those directly involved in or observing the practice. Ultimately, the findings contribute to a broader

comprehension of religious moderation in Cirebon and offer valuable insights for future studies and applications in similar contexts.

Result and Discussion

Religious moderation in Indonesia emerged as a response to various events and understandings contrary to the state's ideology. Narrow religious understanding (for example about the concept of jihad which is misinterpreted) (Saputra, Mubin, Abrori, & Handayani, 2021, p. 282), then gives birth to an inability to accept the reality of difference and diversity. The case of a lecturer at a university who was exposed to radicalism is one example of a shocking incident. Even based on a report from the State Intelligence Agency (BIN), 39 percent of college students are also exposed to radicalism (Sugiarti & Roqib, 2021, p. 120). Coupled with understandings such as the need to establish a caliphate state, Darul Islam, the concept of "*imaamah*", and so on. This kind of understanding occurs both among students and high school students, with an indicator of 17.8 percent of them choosing a state that forms a caliphate over the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

Furthermore, based on data released by the Center of Islamic Study and Society, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta, regarding radicalism in 2018, there were as many as 57.03 percent of teachers, both at the elementary and junior high school levels, who had intolerant views in Indonesia. A teacher's radical opinions can significantly influence students, potentially shaping their perspectives and attitudes towards religion, society, and conflict. When a teacher promotes extreme views, students may adopt these beliefs, which can lead to increased intolerance, division, or even hostility towards those with differing viewpoints. Conversely, if teachers encourage moderation and respect for diversity, students are more likely to develop a balanced, open-minded approach to societal and religious differences. This is in line with data released by the Institute for the Study of Islam and Peace (LaKIP), which states that 48.9 percent of students support radical actions[1]. Radicalism has two forms, namely static and destructive. Static radicalism is in the form of radical understanding or thought, not in the form of real action. Meanwhile, destructive radicalism begins with radical thinking, then transforms into destructive actions, or dangerous activities (Yunanto, 2018, p. 105).

Subsequent information from the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), stated that in Malang City (East Java), a kindergarten school prohibited its students from paying respects to the red and white flag, and also prohibited from singing the song "*Padamu Negeri* (To You, Country)" because all that is considered as associating others with God (*mushrik*)[2]. Even in the same province, there were acts of radicalism involving children, this fact was recorded in the bombings at the Indonesia Christian Church (*Gereja Kristen Indonesia*, GKI) Diponegoro, Immaculate Santa Maria Church, Surabaya Central Pentecostal Church (SCPC) Sawahan Congregation, Rusunawa Wonocolo Sidoarjo, and Surabaya Police Headquarters in 2018. The bombers involved children in their actions (Mustamir & Muslimin, 2021, p. 68).

The impact of radicalism in university can lead to polarization and tension among students from different religious or ideological backgrounds. Radical beliefs may foster intolerance, discrimination, and even violence, threatening campus harmony and unity. Furthermore, radicalization can influence students' mindsets, making them more likely to support extremism rather than seeking peaceful solutions. Conversely, promoting moderation and tolerance encourages students to be more open-minded and respectful of differences.

---

[1] https://dakwah.unisnu.ac.id/breaking-chain-radicalism-di-school.

[2] http://www.lipi.go.id/.

The description above shows that there is a need for serious efforts and handling, as well as good cooperation between the government, related institutions, and community support. The government, in this case, the Ministry of Religion, both at the center and in the regions, has taken various concrete actions, one of which is the discourse on religious moderation, which is continuously followed up, from what was originally a concept, then the technical implementation is implemented with detailed regulations. The policy is implemented mainly in the field of education, both formal (such as in schools or madrasas), and informal (such as in Islamic boarding schools or other educational institutions) (Kemenag RI, 2021, p. 106).

The implementation of religious moderation has been carried out by the Ministry of Religion of the City of Cirebon. Based on research conducted by the Fahmina Institute, Cirebon City has contributed to the high level of intolerance and terrorism in West Java. This study shows that 17 cases of intolerance occurred between 2011-2019 and 30 Cirebon residents were arrested by Densus 88 for being involved in terrorist networks in Indonesia. The West Java Terrorism Prevention Coordination Forum (FKPT) also stated that until June 2021, around 320 West Java residents were arrested by Densus 88 for being involved in a terrorist network. Cirebon has a strong potential for conflict between religious communities because, in several sub-districts, there are various places of worship, such as mosques, temples, and churches[3]. This is then a strong reason for choosing the City of Cirebon in this study.

The name Cirebon is based on the Sundanese "*Ci*" and "*Rebon*", which means "*river*" and "*acetes*"; it is so named because in Cirebon, there are rivers in which there are many shrimps. In another opinion, the name Cirebon comes from the word "*Caruban*" which means "*center*". From the *Caruban* word, the pronunciation changes to Cirebon (Segara, 2017, p. 54). This city is located in the East of West Java Province and is on the main route across the Pantura. Geographically, Cirebon City is at a position of 108.33º and 6.41º south latitude on the north coast of the western part of Java Island. The shape of the area extends from west to east about 8 kilometers and from north to south about 11 kilometers, with a height of 5 meters above sea level. The administrative area of Cirebon City is 37.35 km^2 with the following boundaries: North side is Kedung Pane River, West is River Flood Canal, South is Kalijaga River, and East is Java Sea (Archive of Cirebon City Long-Term Development Plan 2005-2025).

The population growth shows a significant increase. The average growth per year is 1.32 percent, with the sex ratio increasing from 96.84 percent to 98.92 percent. The increase in population demands consequences for additional living spaces such as housing, employment, public services, and so on. With a relatively small area, the population density per hectare will increase to 98 people/hectare or an increase of 25 people per hectare. If mapped, the distribution of the population of Cirebon City is more to the south than to the north. This is related to the availability of regional carrying capacity, especially vacant land in the Southern region, which is relatively wider than in the Northern region (Archive of Cirebon City Long-Term Development Plan 2005-2025). The consequences of population growth, as mentioned above, if it is not balanced with the management and provision of the necessities of life, may potentially lead to an unexpected direction. To safeguard and anticipate these unexpected possibilities, the office of the Ministry of Religion of the City of Cirebon made various preparations for the implementation of religious moderation.

The Ministry of Religion of the City of Cirebon, in applying the concept of religious moderation, carries out in various ways, including first, through language jargon that is easy to understand. For example, conveyed

---

[3] https://fahmina.or.id/.

through several keywords: "work like a train", "be one in line", and "harmony". The three sentences have philosophical meanings. "Work like a train", have a locomotive (meaning because you have a leader, then obey the leader), run simultaneously and in rhythm, time discipline, free of obstacles (meaning, in doing something, it is possible to find various obstacles, don't give up when you encounter obstacles, spirit and move on). The second jargon, "be one in line", one of Islam's teachings is prayer, a good prayer is done together by closing the ranks. For the Ministry of Religion, it is important to work together, to be firm in determination, to have no doubts, and to carry out the mandate as well as possible (Interview with Arif, Public Relations of the Ministry of Religion of Cirebon City, 27-10-2022). The third jargon is "harmony", this is the most familiar word, especially in Cirebon society, generally in Indonesian society. Derived from the word "*rukun*", which means principles, pillars, or precepts, it also means a state of living in harmony or an association based on mutual help and friendship (Poerwadarmita, 1980, p. 106). Living in harmony means living with love and mutual love for one another, being generous and considerate. In the category of social sciences, harmony means integration or unity. In English, harmony is the same as concord, meaning that there is a harmonious social situation, there is compatibility, and there is no dispute (Bawa, 2018, p. 5). In harmony theology, there are three forms of harmony, namely: religious harmony in one religious community, harmony of the people between different religious communities, and religious harmony with the government.

Furthermore, the second way to implement religious moderation carried out by the Ministry of Religion of the City of Cirebon is through religious instructors. These extension workers move down to the grassroots level. The concept of religious moderation is embedded in various religious activities. For the Muslim population, it is inserted through recitation in the mosque or majlis ta'lim. A simple example is the obligation of ablution before praying. The procedure for ablution or prayer is sometimes different from one Muslim to another; this difference is because it follows one of the schools of thought. Indonesia itself generally follows four schools of thought. These differences in procedures have the potential to cause conflict; this is where it is important to respect the decisions of others (Interview, 29-10-2022).

Likewise, Hindus, who usually hold joint prayer activities at Pure, carry out during the full moon, at the close of the moon, and at other times, which can be up to five times a month regularly. The joint prayer activity was attended by Hindus of all ages, men, and women who gathered, prayed, and performed rituals together. After praying together, a discourse dharma event is usually held which is filled by the instructor and the Pandita (pedanda) in turn. The event only lasts about 15 to 20 minutes. It was in this event that the principles of religious moderation were conveyed.

In addition to dharma discourse, moderation is taught specifically to the younger generation once a week, namely at pasraman or Sunday school events, where teenagers are introduced to mutual respect, and helping each other, regardless of their religion, etc. Furthermore, religious moderation is often conveyed on religious holidays (Interview with Supartini, 28-10-2022). If analyzed, there are many similarities between Hindu teachings and the principles of moderation itself, for example, the principle of national commitment is the same as Wisesa in Hinduism, while the principle of non-violence is the same as the teachings of ahimsa and so on.

Furthermore, other extension workers have different ways of implementing religious moderation. It is carried out in collaboration with the guidance and counseling team consisting of the temple administrators. With the target of the younger generation as agents of tolerance, they were chosen because they are the next generation who will maintain the integrity of the next nation. WhatsApp is used to socialize as social media.

This is in line with the current situation when social media has become a part of everyday life. As an agent of tolerance, it is conveyed to young people, that they should not spread hatred, and must be selective in receiving information, if there is bad information, then explore the extent of the truth, keep learning a lot and always be careful, both in speech and in action. This is the material that is usually delivered via WhatsApp, by extension workers to them (Interview with Catur Widyaningsih, 28-10-2022).

In addition to the above, an extension program is also a dialogue about inter-religious harmony, which is also supported by the Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB). It was there that leaders from various religions and their people talked and discussed various things that were happening in the community. Other programs are through sports activities, for example, the "Religious Harmony Walk" activity is held. At the event all people with different religious, cultural, social, and educational backgrounds were present, joining in one rhythm, harmony.

Third, the implementation of religious moderation in Cirebon City through a traditional approach. The people of Cirebon from the past until now, have understood that their social, cultural, and religious life is an acculturation of three cultures: Arabic, Chinese and Indian. Differences are usually understood as a reality that occurs in everyday life, working together with neighbors of different religions is common, always being tolerant, respecting each other, and supporting harmony (Interview, 27-10-2022).

The principles of religious moderation, which include love for the homeland, tolerance, anti-violence (radicalism), and acknowledgment of local culture, are deeply embedded in the values of spiritual communication. This form of communication places a strong emphasis on love and compassion, grounded in the belief that all beings possess souls. A good soul, within this framework, is defined as one that serves others with the utmost care and consideration, actively contributing to the well-being of society through acts of kindness, empathy, and understanding. Such a soul seeks to foster harmony, peace, and unity among individuals, transcending differences to promote mutual respect and cooperation. This aligns closely with the core principles of religious moderation, as it encourages individuals to embrace inclusivity, tolerance, and a commitment to peaceful coexistence, helping to build a more compassionate and balanced society.

In contrast, a lower state of being is marked by actions that cause harm or perpetuate negativity, often stemming from a lack of compassion, empathy, and respect for others. Such behaviors reflect a self-centered mindset that fails to recognize the interconnectedness of all people. Spiritual communication, on the other hand, aims to uplift individuals by encouraging them to rise above their selfish desires and embrace a path of service, integrity, and respect for the diversity of human experiences. By fostering these values, spiritual communication helps guide individuals towards a higher state of consciousness, where their actions contribute positively to the well-being of others and the broader community. By fostering these values, religious moderation promotes a cohesive and peaceful society, where differences are respected, and unity is achieved through mutual understanding and cooperation. This approach not only strengthens individual character but also contributes to the broader goal of national harmony and stability.

Conclusions

Implementing an attitude of religious moderation, especially in the City of Cirebon, is pursued through various ways and approaches. These approaches include: first, the linguistic approach. Among ordinary people, the word religious moderation is still a taboo word or quite scary, for that it is necessary to find a word that hits the hearts of the people. Second, the socio-cultural approach. By deploying religious counselors, they can reach down to the grassroots. Third, the historical approach. By understanding the origins of the people of the City of

Cirebon, who interact a lot with foreign cultures, and are accustomed to working with various ethnicities, the values of religious moderation are easily internalized in their lives. Fourth, the interaction and communication skills of stakeholders, particularly religious instructors, play a crucial role in ensuring the successful implementation of religious moderation. Their ability to effectively engage with individuals and communities, while conveying messages of tolerance, understanding, and respect, is essential in promoting a more inclusive and harmonious environment. Religious instructors, through their effective communication, can help bridge gaps between different belief systems, encourage mutual respect, and foster peaceful coexistence.

Acknowledgments

References

Ali, N. (2020). Measuring religious moderation among Muslim students at public colleges in Kalimantan facing disruption era. *INFERENSI: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan, 14*(1), 1-24.

Almu'tasim, A. (2019). Berkaca NU dan Muhammadiyah dalam Mewujudkan Nilai-Nilai Moderasi Islam di Indonesia. *TARBIYA ISLAMIA: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Keislaman, 8*(2), 199-212.

Al-Qaradhawi, Y. (2007). *Kalimat fi al-Wasatiyyah al-Islamiyyah wa mu'alimuha*. Kuwait: Al-Markaz al-'Alami li al-Wasatiyyah.

Anwar, F., & Haq, I. (2019). Religious moderation campaign through social media at multicultural communities. *KURIOSITAS: Media Komunikasi Sosial dan Keagamaan, 12*(2), 177-187.

Arifin, M. Z., Suliyono, S., Ghofur, A., & Askan, F. (2022). The Qur'anic therapeutic spiritual communication on the patient's spiritual problems in nursing care. *Jurnal At-Tibyan: Jurnal Ilmu Alqur'an dan Tafsir, 7*(1), 77-100.

Arifinsyah, A., Andy, S., & Damanik, A. (2020). The urgency of religious moderation in preventing radicalism in Indonesia. *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin, 21*(1), 91-108.

Arsip. (n.d.). *Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Panjang Kota Cirebon 2005-2025.*

Asadzandi, M. (2018). Principles of spiritual communication based on religious evidence in the "Sound Heart Model". *Journal of Medicine and Therapeutics, 2*(3), 1-5.

Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI. (2021). *Religious moderation.* Jakarta: Kementerian Agama RI.

Bawa, D. L. (2018). Membumikan Teologi Kerukunan (Mengkomunikasikan Makna Rukun Dan Konsep Tri Kerukunan). *Jurnal Al-Nashihah, 2*(1), 1-12.

Bedowi, T. (2020). Kecerdasan Komunikasi Spiritual dalam Upaya Membangun Perdamaian dan Toleransi Beragama. *El Madani: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi Islam, 1*(02), 105-122.

Chadidjah, S., Kusnayat, A., Ruswandi, U., & Arifin, B. S. (2021). Implementation of values of religious moderation in PAI learning: Analysis of basic, middle and higher education. *Al-Hasanah: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam, 6*(1), 114-124.

Elliott, M. (2015). *The prospect of knowing now.* Virginia: Megan Elliott.

Engkizar, E., Kaputra, S., Mutathahirin, M., Syafril, S., Arifin, Z., & Kamaluddin, M. (2022). Model for preventing inter-religious conflict community activity based. *Harmoni, 21*(1), 110-129.

Faris, A. I. (1979). *Mu'jam Maqayis al-Lughah.* Beirut: Dar al-Fikr.

Hochheimer, J. L., Huffman, T., & Lauricella, S. (2016). The states of spiritual communication (in part): Exploring the sharing of meaning. In M. de Souza, J. Bone, and J. Watson (Eds.), *Spirituality across disciplines: Research and practice* (pp. 259-271). Springer Cham.

Kamaludin, F. S., & Purnama, T. S. (2021). Religious moderation strategy in the virtual era and its implication in improving the quality of education. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam, 7*(2), 205-216.

Kemenag RI. (2021). *Moderasi Beragama*. Jakarta: Kemenag RI.

Kementerian Agama RI. (2020). *Keputusan Direktur Jenderal Pendidikan Islam Nomor 7272 Tahun 2019 Tentang Pedoman Implementasi Moderasi Beragama Pada Pendidikan Islam*.

Mustamir, A. K., & Muslimin, M. (2021). Resistensi Kepemimpinan Perempuan Eks-Hizbut Tahrir Dalam Lembaga Pendidikan Dasar Islam Di Kota Kediri. *IJouGS: Indonesian Journal of Gender Studies, 1*(2), 67-80.

Nirwana, N., & Darmadali, W. S. (2021). Instilling religious moderation value in ELT through cross-cultural understanding course. *Elsya: Journal of English Language Studies, 3*(2), 117-125.

Poerwadarmita, W. (1980). *Kamus Umum Bahasa Indonesia.* Jakarta: Balai Pustaka.

Qaradawi, Y. (2007). *Fiqih Maqashid Syariah*. Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar.

Rachman, B. M. (2017). *Teologi Pluralisme: Tantangan Bagi Agama-Agama.* Bandung: Pascasarjana UIN Sunan Gunung Jati.

Risdayah, E., Setiawan, A. I., & Aziz, R. (2021). *Pengantar Studi Islam.* Bandung: Rosda.

Salles, R. E. (2005). *Metaphysics, soul, and ethics in ancient thought*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Saputra, M. N. A., Mubin, M. N., Abrori, A. M., & Handayani, R. (2021). Deradikalisasi Paham Radikal di Indonesia: Penguatan Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam Berbasis Moderasi. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam Al-Thariqah, 6*(2), 282-296.

Segara, N. B. (2017). Kajian Nilai Pada Toponimi Di Wilayah Kota Cirebon Sebagai Potensi Sumber Belajar Geografi. *Jurnal Geografi: Media Informasi Pengembangan dan Profesi Kegeografian, 14*(1), 54-67.

Sha, Z. G. (2007). *Soul communication: Opening your spiritual channels for success and fulfillment.* USA: Heaven's Library Publication Corp.

Sugiarti, I., & Roqib, M. (2021). Diseminasi Pendidikan Moderasi Islam pada Mahasiswa: Strategi Menangkal Radikalisme di Perguruan Tinggi Umum. *Potret Pemikiran, 25*(2), 119-139.

Yunanto, S. (2018). *Islam Radikal versus Islam Moderat.* Jakarta: Media Pressindo.