Is Religious Education with a Multi-Religious Approach at the University Level Possible?

Religious Education (RE) is mandatory at every educational unit, from elementary school to undergraduate programme in Indonesia. It has long been conducted in a mono-religious approach and in a confessional way where students and the teacher/lecturer discuss only one religion and share the same confessional belief. Studies on exposure to other religions in Religious Education at the university level has received little attention. This article will explore to what extent is a new approach in Religious Education at the Higher Education level feasible by looking at the state regulations and the response of students towards a multi-religious approach for the Religious Education at a public university. It will also examine the regulations on Religious Education in Indonesia, the practices of Religious Education at some educational units, and how the students respond to a type of a Religious Education that discusses multiple religions, not only the one that they confess. This research use document studies on Religious Education regulations in the Indonesian context, open-ended exploratory questionnaire, and observation on the Islamic Religious Education classes in a public university. The results show that although the state regulations on Religious Education tend to favour a mono-religious approach, although there is a room for a university to have its own ‘innovations’ because the regulations only state that the ‘students and the teacher must share the same belief’. The exact content and how the learning process should be conducted are not specified. There are varied responses from students as some of them are interested to learn about other religions besides their own and some others prefer to only learn about their own religion in the Religious Education. Thus, there is a potential that Religious Education with a multi-religious approach can be an alternative to the current Religious Education considering there is an increasing need for a mutual understanding between religious communities in Indonesia.