**Building Religious Moderation Literacy for Prospective Religious Teachers in Indonesia**

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***ABSTRACT***

This article reports on a qualitative observation on the enactment of religious moderation literacy for prospective Islamic education teachers to attain competencies as tolerant educators through the teaching practices. The process carried out in this study is to build moderate socio-religious literacy through functional and critical literacy learning in the form of the Training of Trainer (ToT) Islamic education tutorial program which is selected in stages. This study involved the repeated recruitment of senior students in group discussions between students. The paper ends with reflection in order to stimulate oneself to think actively and have an awareness of the academic profession as a moderate teacher.

**KEYWORDS:** literacy, religious moderation, Training of Trainer

***Introduction***

The process of learning moderate religious literacy for prospective religious teachers has attracted global scholars’ attentions, such as research carried out by Hannam et al (2020) who observed religious reading skills and functional literacy and research on critical literacy by Moilanen and Sommerseth (2020), which directs the prospective religious teachers in shaping attitudes of religious moderation. In the online form, social media further plays a role in increasing religious literacy by relating this information in promoting online learning communities. With such an open media platform, it requires the involvement of scholars and teachers to play a strategic reinforcing role as agents who promote religious literacy with its various challenges (Henry, 2021). This article reports on learning research that focuses on how prospective religious teachers are equipped with the ability to build their religious moderation through functional and critical literacy learning in the Indonesian context. In Australia, it is not much different from Indonesia on how important socio-religious literacy is in public schools (Davies, 2019). Literacy learning using online tools can improve student competence when compared to a face-to-face approach (Mutula, et al. 2006). In other words, online learning methods provide more benefits than that of offline methods.

***Literature Review***

This study was participated by lecturers from the Islamic education study program at a university in Indonesia. In the online discussion session, three groups of ToT lecturers with 45 prospective student teachers participated in one dialogue. Encapsulated with the topic of religious moderation literacy, the participants were invited to ask and answer questions from one another. In the post-discussion session, the participants were invited to present group reflections that consolidated what was achieved and the conditions of social development, and their observed conditions. Next, they were invited to make a group concept map with the keywords they had discussed about religious moderation literacy. Finally, the participants were asked to voluntarily paint an individual creative picture of their views on religious moderation literacy and a collaborative picture depicting their general thoughts. Discussion dialogues were recorded, and transcript analysis was applied using indicators developed from the three dimensions of student learning constructs described previously. The unit of analysis was enacted in every single message, and each message was coded. To ensure that the code represents the pre-determined Indicator in this study, the discussion was coded by one researcher and checked and verified by another researcher. The artifacts were collected, and a content analysis of the group project artifacts was carried out to investigate how the artifacts were used and how they related to the topic of discussion based on the previously mentioned metacognitive constructs as this is a form of ToT which will then be implemented with further discussion. Meanwhile, in the ToT discussion, the lecturers and their selected senior students conducted the ToT. Furthermore, the 15 students participated in a follow-up discussion with the Islamic education tutorial participants as a manifestation of the actual implementation into 15 groups consisting of 12-15 discussants.

***Results and Discussion***

Religious moderation can be increased by increasing literacy of the sacred texts of each religion's adherents. So that there is an attitude of mutual understanding between one religious community and another. Religious moderation is not mean to shallow a person's belief in his religion but makes a person respect and respect his friends who are from different religions, as now believed by Hasan and Amir. The education process in gains the knowledge, such as when in junior high school and high school becomes very important to be considered by every educational institution. Admiral (2021) in his research states that there are 4 kinds of student-teacher responses to reflective practices in the classroom in secondary education as follows: "Variing", "Getting annoyed", "Solving problems" and "Avoiding" varies along the two underlying dimensions: aversion-approach and calm-agitation. In summary, this reflective practice has a different impact on the way student-teacher approaches, tolerates, avoids or ignores classroom activities.

The concept of problem solving is better than the varied approach. As for the fourth, the concept of avoidance is superior to the concept of avoidance. While the two concepts of the second approach, namely problem solving and avoidance, are the things that are rarely applied. This finding enriches previous research on student-teacher relationships which suggests that they focus on avoidance modes (Gustems-Carnicer, Calderón, and Calderon-Garrido 2019,Admiral 2021). The role of the desert Religious education will determine the moderate attitude or not of every school student. Religious teachers must have pedagogical competence in the field of religious education, and this must be fulfilled by the government and policy makers in the world of education. If not, then the conditions of intolerance, not liking to live in harmony, living in peace will be further away from the lives of the students.

The findings suggest that the participating lecturers enacted religious moderation literacy for prospective religious teachers as tutors for the ToT class in three basic discussion groups. First, after engaging in the ToT discussion and self-reflection, the prospective religious teachers altered their understanding of religious moderation literacy. They engaged in the group discussion with in-depth question and answer sessions. Prior to the in-depth discussion, these tutor candidates were given an intervention by visiting the tolerance village for religious literacy enlightenment, which is a place of four Christian/Catholic churches, four Confucian monasteries, and two mosques. After the visit, a group discussion was held on tolerance and moderation issues. Likewise, the discussion activities amongst tutors and students were carried out. The visits and discussions shed light on a personal experience, such as Hasan (pseudonym), one of the research participants, who shared that: “Starting from the incident before the ToT discussion, the lecturers brought us to observe 5 tolerance villages, which made me astonished to see the facts in several tolerance villages in our area related to life. religion that reflects religious tolerance. For example, when Muslims break their fast, their non-Muslim friends voluntarily provide takjil for Muslims in mosques. Likewise, when a Christian religious event was held at the church, we found out that the worship and prayer processions here were accompanied by Sundanese gamelan music, the gamelan musicians were partly Muslim residents of neighboring churches” (Simbolon2022).

Furthermore, the observation visits were done by the students in the church and the monastery, similar to that of before the ToT enactment. A tense discussion raised as there were students who insisted on the attitude before the visit. In the end, after they were actively discussing and experiencing their inner experiences, Amir (pseudonym), a student participating in one of the groups, shared that: “I have experienced a change. At first, I did not believe that religious differences should be tolerant, because for a long time, I learned from my religious teachers that those outside my religion are infidels and should not be tolerated ,so I keep my distance. After I engaged in the tutorial groups, I realized that living in a multi-religious society entails respecting attitude toward religious difference. So now, I feel the beauty of being moderate in the face of religious differences”. The students were found to share similar perspectives on religious moderation and they did not outweigh the majority beliefs.

***Conclusion***

Religious moderation can be increased by increasing literacy of the sacred texts of each religion's adherents. So that there is an attitude of mutual understanding between one religious community and another. Religious moderation is not meant to shallow a person's belief in his religion but makes a person respect and respect his friends who are from different religions, as now believed by Hasan and Amir. The education process in Where a person gains knowledge, such as when in junior high school and high school becomes very important to be considered by every educational institution. The role of the desert Religious education will determine the moderate attitude or not of every school student. Religious teachers must have pedagogical competence in the field of religious education, and this must be fulfilled by the government and policy makers in the world of education. If not, then the conditions of intolerance, not liking to live in harmony, living in peace will be further away from the lives of the students.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conﬂict of interest was reported by the authors.

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