

# The Education Strategy of Anti-bullying Religious Moderation at School

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**Abstract.** This study explores the role of religious moderation education as a bullying prevention strategy among multireligious school students. The method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach, which involves data mining through observation, interviews, and documentation. The research data was analyzed using data reduction, data display, and a conclusion drawn. Triangulation of sources and methods is used for data verification. The study results show that the bullying prevention strategy based on religious moderation education is carried out through, first, integrating religious moderation education into the educational curriculum. Second, the example of teachers in applying religious moderation. Third, students should be involved in religious moderation promotion activities. By emphasizing the importance of respecting differences, rejecting violence, and building solidarity among students, religious moderation is an effective tool to promote harmony in diversity. Overall, the results of this study support the idea that religious moderation can be a very effective strategy in preventing bullying and creating a safer and more comfortable learning atmosphere for all students.

**Keywords:** *Bullying, Multi-Religious Students, Religious Moderation*

## INTRODUCTION

The increase in cases of violence in the education sector is quite concerning and mainly affects students and adults. (Alimron dkk., 2023). School is where students learn, which is fun and can help them develop positive character. However, school is also a place where bullying behavior occurs, which makes children feel uncomfortable going to school. Bullying is defined as malicious and manipulative behavior that is carried out in disguise. Bullying can take many forms, such as using social media or status updates to make someone feel bad about themselves, ostracizing them from a group, or spreading false rumors about them. Acts of bullying are carried out by perpetrators against victims using terms such as sarcasm, threats, mutual vilification, extortion, insults, and so on. Using terms such as sarcasm, threats, mutual vilification, blackmail, insults, and others as appropriate. Bullying is a common occurrence in school, and many teachers consider it to be a common occurrence (Syavika dkk., 2023). In some cases, teachers themselves are involved in school activities. Bullying can have a detrimental impact on a person's emotional and psychological health.

As a result of this bullying, the victim will become more silent and unwilling to socialize. In addition, the victim of bullying has the potential to become a bully in the future, so it is essential for educators and other members of the community to recognize bullying behavior and implement strategies to stop bullying from occurring. This can support implementing programs that promote positive behavior and communication, provide support and guidance to victims, and address the causes of bullying (Fitria, 2022). The most dangerous type of bullying that occurs among students is verbal bullying. Bullying can hurt students, victim groups, perpetrators, and the school

environment where the incident occurred. Parents and teachers must actively encourage children's development in various areas of intelligence.

Bullying in the school environment must be handled by all parties involved, including Islamic religious education teachers and counselors. In the context of bullying, Islamic religious education teachers can help in explaining, understanding, and educating about religious beliefs that can prevent bullying, such as tolerance, mutual respect, and compassion. In addition, teachers of Islamic religious education can familiarize themselves with, for example, teaching students to be virtuous, greeting them, helping them to remain disciplined and show good behavior, and relating the material taught to character values. Islamic education leaders can help create a safe and healthy learning environment for all students. (Larozza, 2023). This can be achieved by establishing clear rules and regulations regarding behavior, encouraging open communication, and fostering positive relationships among students.

To reduce the possibility of repeating this study with other studies and to find differences from the research we conducted. The first research was from Rita Istik Maliyah et al. This research focuses on one of the efforts to stop bullying in schools by holding a socialization and a declaration to stop bullying at SMP N 1 Wonotunggal. The goal is to make teenagers in Wonotunggal Village understand the problem of bullying. This research was prepared using a qualitative method with a Community Service-Based approach, which includes the initial socialization process, citizen discussion, and social reflection. (Rita Istik Maliyah dkk., 2024) The second research is from Nadya Putri Kartika. This study uses a qualitative method and focuses on Islamic school strategies for improving student morale, especially bullying behavior, with a case study at SMPN 2 Keraton. (Kartika & Astutik, 2024) This research focuses on bullying prevention strategies applied in Islamic schools, while the subsequent research focuses on studying religious moderation as a strategy to prevent bullying in schools.

In order to overcome bullying in schools, teachers face various obstacles. Obstacles to dealing with this include things such as difficulties in controlling student behavior when they are outside school boundaries, a lack of student accountability to school officials or teachers, and varying levels of teacher understanding (Yamada & Setyowati, 2023). It is hoped that, by involving all relevant parties, including Islamic religious education teachers and counseling guidance teachers, bullying in schools can be prevented more effectively and comprehensively so that schools can become a safe and supportive environment for students to learn and develop as well as possible. Based on the description above, this study aims to determine the strategy to prevent bullying of multi-religious students based on religious moderation education at SMP Negeri 1 Gembong, a national standard school in Pati district. Religious moderation education is expected to be a strategy to prevent bullying in schools because its values are very relevant to efforts to create an inclusive, peaceful, and respectful environment. Religious moderation emphasizes the importance of tolerance for differences, be it differences in religion, ethnicity, culture, or outlook on life. When students are taught to accept and appreciate differences, they will be more likely to avoid discriminatory or demeaning behavior, which is the root of many bullying cases.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative research method. Qualitative research is an approach that generates descriptive data in the form of written reports, spoken words, or observed behaviors that can be analyzed (Arikunto, 2014; Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Samsu, 2021) This method was chosen because it allows the researcher to understand the phenomenon being studied by exploring participants' experiences, thoughts, and interactions in a specific context. Moreover, qualitative research provides flexibility in data collection and analysis, making it particularly suitable for investigating complex social and educational issues.

The research design used a case study approach at SMP Negeri 1 Gembong Pati, involving three key informants: an Islamic Studies teacher, a Counseling Guidance teacher, and a Christian

student. This school was selected based on its diverse religious environment, making it a relevant setting for studying the dynamics of interreligious interactions and inclusive educational practices. The three informants were chosen due to their significant roles in the school's education system and their direct experiences with interreligious interactions within the school environment. This study utilizes two types of data sources: primary data and secondary data. Primary data refers to the main data collected directly from the three informants. The primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with the selected informants. These interviews aimed to explore their experiences with interreligious interactions, the policies that promote tolerance, and the challenges encountered in fostering harmony among students of different religious backgrounds. A semi-structured interview allowed flexibility in exploring broader information based on emerging contexts during the research process.

In addition to primary data, this study utilizes secondary data to complement and improve understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Secondary data comprised important documents related to the research theme, such as school curriculum, educational policies on religious diversity, and administrative records supporting the analysis. Documents that reinforce the interview's findings and provide a more comprehensive picture of the policies and practices implemented in schools are selected for analysis. By integrating primary and secondary data, this study aims to achieve a more profound understanding of the role of education in fostering tolerance and religious diversity within the school environment. The data collection techniques employed in this study include observation, interviews, and documentation (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Palinkas dkk., 2015). These techniques were selected to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon by triangulating different data sources. The researcher was directly involved in the research site to gather relevant data and gain firsthand insights into the interactions and experiences of the informants (Abdussamad, 2021). Direct involvement allowed the researcher to observe behaviors, social dynamics, and contextual factors that may not have been fully captured through interviews alone.

Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach to facilitate an in-depth exploration of relevant issues while allowing flexibility for follow-up questions and emerging themes. This approach enabled the researcher to probe deeper into the informants' perspectives, ensuring a more nuanced understanding of their experiences and viewpoints. The interviews focused on key aspects such as the informants' experiences with interreligious interactions, challenges in fostering religious tolerance, and institutional policies related to religious diversity. Each interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim to maintain accuracy and reliability in data analysis. In addition to interviews, documentation analysis was conducted to supplement and validate the findings. Documents such as school policies, curricula, and administrative records related to religious education and diversity were reviewed. These documents provided additional context and background information, enriching the analysis and ensuring a more holistic understanding of the research topic. Data processing is carried out through data reduction, data presentation, and a conclusion drawn (Patton, 2014). This process allows researchers to identify key themes related to the research. The collected data is analyzed using thematic analysis (Tisdell dkk., 2025). The analysis steps include initial coding, grouping the code into themes, and interpreting themes to answer research questions (Huberman & Miles, 2002).

## **FINDINGS**

### **Religion-Based Bullying In Schools**

Religion-based bullying in schools is a form of bullying that targets a person's religious beliefs, practices, or religious identity. This behavior can be in the form of ridicule, insults, verbal harassment, and physical violence. The impact is very detrimental to the victims, ranging from

psychological trauma to learning disorders to social isolation. They may feel afraid, anxious, depressed, and have low self-esteem, making it difficult to concentrate on learning and interacting with their surroundings.

Based on the results of the interview with one of the religion teachers at SMP N 1, Gembong said that:

"Religion-based bullying is very concerning. Students should learn tolerance and mutual respect between religions. Unfortunately, there are still those who consider religion a tool for oppression. I have always emphasized the importance of religious values that teach compassion, tolerance, and peace. However, religious education alone is not enough. There needs to be a concerted effort from all parties to create an inclusive school environment that respects religious differences." (Didik, komunikasi pribadi, 2024).

Interviews with religious teachers show that the practice of religion-based intolerance among students is particularly concerning. He highlighted that although religious education has taught the values of compassion, tolerance, and peace, there are still students who use religion as an excuse to look down on others. According to him, religious education alone is insufficient to overcome this problem. Synergy from all parties in the school environment is needed to create an inclusive atmosphere and mutual respect for religious differences.

In addition, the researcher also interviewed Mrs. as a counseling guidance teacher at SMP N 1 Gembong. Based on the interview with Mrs. L, the definition of religion-based bullying is as follows:

"As a BK teacher, I often deal with bullying cases, including those based on religion. Usually, victims feel depressed, scared, and uncomfortable at school. They feel excluded and not accepted. I always try to provide assistance and support to the victims and help them overcome the trauma they experienced. In addition, I also make preventive efforts by providing education about tolerance and anti-bullying to all students." (Listiyorini, komunikasi pribadi, 2024).

The interview provided information that religion-based bullying is a serious problem that must be addressed holistically. Emotional support, trauma recovery, and education on tolerance values are the main strategies BK teachers use in dealing with this case. This interview also shows the importance of Counseling Guidance teachers in creating a safe, comfortable, and respectful school environment.

The results of interviews with students from minority religious backgrounds say that:

"I was once a victim of bullying because my religion was a minority among my classmates. They used to nudge my religion. I had felt very depressed and uncomfortable at school. I was afraid to report to the teacher for fear of being ridiculed. However, for now, I feel good with the help of the BK teachers. I hope everyone can respect each other and not use religion as an excuse to oppress others." (Riski, komunikasi pribadi, 2024)

These student statements reinforce the picture that religion-based bullying has a huge emotional impact, especially for students who come from minority groups. However, these interviews also show that school support, especially teachers, can be a significant recovery factor. In addition, the hope from the victims that there will be no more discrimination based on religion is an important note in building a culture of tolerance in schools.

### **Religious Moderation as a Solution to Bullying**

Religious moderation is an important concept that can effectively overcome religion-based bullying in schools (Masturin, 2023). From the perspective of religious teachers, religious moderation can be applied in various aspects of learning and interaction in the school environment. Based on the results of the interview with Mr. Didik, he said:

"Religious moderation, for me, is not just a concept, but also an urgent need in schools," said Pak Didik, a senior teacher who has served in education for decades. "In this digital era, information is easily accessible, including information that is sometimes misleading and triggers intolerance. Religion-based bullying often arises from a lack of understanding of other religions, so students are easily influenced by misinformation and labeling other religions as threats."

"As a teacher, I see religious moderation as an effective solution to overcome bullying in schools," he continued. "Religious moderation teaches us to respect differences, understand that every religion has the same noble values, and build interfaith dialogue to resolve conflicts peacefully. By applying the values of religious moderation, we can create an inclusive and tolerant school environment, where all students feel safe and comfortable learning."

"I always emphasize the importance of religious moderation in every subject I teach," said Mr. Didik. "For example, when discussing history, I always associate it with the history of interreligious tolerance in Indonesia. Regarding moral values, I always emphasize respecting others' beliefs. I also invite students to discuss and share experiences about their respective religions actively." (Didik, komunikasi pribadi, 2024).

### **Implementation of Religious Moderation**

Based on the results of an in-depth interview with Didik, an Islamic religion teacher at school, it was revealed that religious moderation is an important and urgent approach in education, especially in forming a safe and tolerant school environment. In his view, religious moderation cannot be considered a mere theoretical concept. However, it must be understood as a fundamental need amid the rapid flow of information in the current digital era.

According to him, students today are very easily exposed to various content that contains intolerant or even extremist narratives through social media and other online platforms. This has the potential to foster prejudice against other religious groups, which in turn can be the seeds of faith-based bullying behavior in the school environment. Therefore, Pak Didik believes that religious moderation can be a preventive solution to this phenomenon.

Didik explained that moderation values, such as respect for differences, recognition of noble values in all religions, and the skill of resolving conflicts through peaceful dialogue, are the main pillars of religious education that he implements. For him, religious teaching should form the character of students who are tolerant, open, and able to coexist in diversity.

The findings of this interview are reinforced through observational data, where the researcher directly witnessed the learning process in the classroom. In one Islamic Religious Education lesson, Pak Didik raised the theme "Tolerance between Religions in Indonesian History" and facilitated open discussions between students from various religious backgrounds. He encouraged students to share their views freely, but still respect each other. In the discussion, students appeared comfortable expressing their opinions and showing mutual respect. This shows that Pak Didik's approach is not only theoretical, but also implemented in real learning activities in the classroom.

In addition, learning documents such as Learning Implementation Plans (RPP) and student portfolio records show the explicit integration of religious moderation values. The RPP document contains basic competencies that relate religious materials to the application of the values of tolerance, dialogue between religious communities, and respect for differences. In fact, in the reflective tasks given to students, narratives showed understanding and acceptance of religious diversity in schools.

Through an inclusive and dialogical learning approach, Pak Didik hopes that the values of religious moderation can be internalized in students' daily lives, not only in the academic context. The ultimate goal is to build a school culture free from discrimination and religion-based violence

and to foster a generation that can live in harmony in a multicultural society like Indonesia. (Didik, komunikasi pribadi, 2024).

## **DISCUSSION**

Islam treats all religions equally, and this is by the basic principles of Islam, which are egalitarian and do not discriminate against other religions (Partono & Falah, 2023). And the first principle discussed is *tasamuh* (tolerance), which is based on the above Islamic principles, and can be applied if there is already a stable and tolerable way of life among all Indonesians (Fahri & Zainuri, 2019). It will also help maintain stability among all Indonesians and prevent harmony among them. The word "moderation" comes from the Latin "moderation", which means "no excess and no shortage" (Saifudin, 2019). The word contains the meaning of self-mastery of the attitude of weakness and excess. In the Great Dictionary of Indonesian, "moderate" refers to two concepts: reducing violence and avoiding extremes. In contrast, "moderate" refers to actions that consistently highlight extreme and decisive actions towards the Center (Nurdin, 2021).

One of the most important factors in maintaining the integrity of the nation and the sovereignty of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia is harmony among others (Syarif dkk., 2024). One of the issues that often arises related to harmony is bullying (Rusydi & Zolehah, 2018). Bullying itself is the use of force to make a person or group of people feel uncomfortable, either verbally, physically, or psychologically, so that the victim feels hurt, traumatized, and cannot function normally (Andriyani dkk., 2024). Religion-based bullying is a type of bullying among students that is carried out by making fun of friends with different religious beliefs by using unpleasant terms or designations (Naufal & Maksum, 2024). The perpetrator, who is also a student, even threatened his classmates because of their different religions. In addition, there are faith-based friendships, which make them unwilling to accept friends of different religions. Not understanding the religion and beliefs of others who have different religious rituals and beliefs is the source of this intolerance (Teressa dkk., 2024). Additionally, it is crucial to take precautions to reduce cases of religion-based bullying among the community and students. If not treated immediately, bullying behavior can hurt the victim in the future and become a habit.

Religious teachers have an important role in preventing and overcoming religion-based bullying. (Salim dkk., 2025). They can teach the values of tolerance, mutual respect, and respect for religious differences through a religious lesson curriculum. Religious teachers can also be a place to vent for students who experience religion-based bullying, provide moral support, and help them cope with trauma (Bakung, 2024). They can help students understand that religious differences are not a reason to insult or oppress each other. Religious moderation is not just an abstract concept, but an urgent need in the digital era, given the rapid flow of information that is sometimes misleading and can trigger intolerance among students. Religious moderation teaches universal values such as respect for differences, recognition of the noble values of all religions, and conflict resolution through peaceful dialogue. This approach is directly related to Multicultural Education (Banks, 2019) This emphasizes the importance of strengthening inclusive attitudes in a pluralistic learning environment.

BK teachers are also important in creating a safe and inclusive school environment. They can detect potential religion-based bullying early by paying attention to student behavior and interactions between them. BK teachers can intervene in cases of religion-based bullying by providing counseling to the students involved, both victims and perpetrators. They can help students understand the impact of bullying and find solutions to overcome the problem. (Gantari dkk., 2023). BK teachers can also help students build confidence and the ability to deal with bullying situations.

In addition to handling victims, Counseling Guidance teachers also carry out preventive efforts through counseling and education about tolerance and anti-bullying to students. This strategy reflects the application of a psychopedagogic approach. (Coloroso, 2003) Where bullying cases are handled comprehensively through curative (victim recovery) and preventive (prevention through education) approaches, in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory, Counseling Guidance teachers are within the scope of microsystems that play a direct role in the formation of a learning environment that supports students' social-emotional development. The existence of BK teachers as companions and educators is one of the important factors in creating a school as a safe and inclusive place (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Although education and madrassas play an important role in forming a child's personality, parents and family also play an important role in building a child's personality. The good or bad personality of children in the future is determined mainly by religious education and parental guidance. Because the family is a *madrasatul ula*, children learn in the family environment before learning from others. All family actions, especially those of parents, will be role models for their children (Partono, 2020). Students also have an important role in preventing and overcoming faith-based bullying. They can report incidents of bullying to teachers, parents, or authorities. Students can also support friends who are victims of bullying by providing moral support and helping them to report incidents. Students can be agents of change by promoting tolerance, mutual respect, and respect for religious differences in the school environment. (Nasution, 2024) They can invite friends to be kind to everyone, regardless of religion.

Efforts to prevent religion-based bullying in schools can be carried out through education, socialization, coaching, collaboration, and social media monitoring. Education on tolerance and respect for religious differences should be integrated into the curriculum of religious studies and other subjects. Socialization about religion-based bullying must be carried out to all school residents, including students, teachers, and staff. Coaching for students who have the potential to commit religion-based bullying is also important. Collaboration between religious teachers, BK teachers, parents, and authorities is essential to prevent and address faith-based bullying. (Fatimah dkk., 2024). Monitoring students' social media is also important to prevent religion-based cyberbullying.

By working together, all parties can create a safe, inclusive, and respectful school environment that respects religious diversity. Schools should be safe and comfortable places for all students, regardless of their religion. Religious moderation is an important concept that can be an effective solution to overcome religion-based bullying in schools. First, teachers can integrate the values of religious moderation in the curriculum of religious lessons and other subjects. They can teach students about the importance of tolerance, mutual respect, and respect for religious differences. Teachers can provide concrete examples of how religious differences can be a source of power and wealth, not an excuse to oppress each other (Sunardi & Jamiludin, 2024). They can invite students to understand that each religion has noble values that can be learned and applied daily.

Second, teachers can be an example for students in practicing religious moderation. They can show an attitude of tolerance and respect towards all students, regardless of their religion. Teachers can create an inclusive and welcoming classroom atmosphere for all students, making them feel comfortable and safe to learn and interact with others. (Yudin, 2024). Teachers can also be mediators in resolving conflicts related to religious differences between students. Third, teachers can involve students in activities that promote religious moderation. They can invite students to participate in interfaith activities like dialogue, cultural exhibitions, or joint social activities. These activities can help students better understand and appreciate religious differences and build positive relationships between students from different religious backgrounds (Al Hafidz, 2024).

Carrying out or implementing means giving a person the means to do something; it has a practical effect (influences something). According to the implementation strategy, general moderation is currently a typical governance process that can be explained at the program level. Furthermore, the implementation of general moderation will be more closely related to how a teacher teaches and provides moderation educational materials. (Lessy dkk., 2022). The methods mentioned above will make it easier for students to understand and absorb learning materials related to facilities, so that at the end of the learning process, the purpose of religious moderation education can be discussed with students and implemented in daily life.

Implementing religious moderation in schools does not stop at internal school activities. The school is also actively collaborating with various religious institutions to increase understanding of religious moderation. The school also actively participates in activities organized by religious institutions, such as seminars, workshops, and discussions on religious moderation (Nur Fadillah Tanjung et al., 2024). The implementation of religious moderation in schools is very urgent, especially in terms of preventing religion-based bullying. To prevent radicalism and intolerance in the student body, which often acts as a bullying environment, moderation involves teaching tolerance, acknowledging differences, and respecting the opinions of others (Ma'arif dkk., 2024). By understanding the concept of religious moderation, students can learn to be patient, empathetic, and mature in the face of differences. As a result, an inclusive school environment is created that is free from bullying based on religion.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that religious moderation education can be a bullying prevention strategy for multireligious students. Applying religious moderation values, such as tolerance, mutual respect, and respect for differences, has proven effective in creating an inclusive and safe school environment for all students. Religious moderation education is carried out through three activities. First, religious moderation should be integrated into the educational curriculum in schools. Second, teachers are role models for students in practicing the values of religious moderation, and third, they involve students in activities that promote the values of religious moderation. The recommendations are to strengthen character education programs based on religious moderation in schools, involve teachers and parents' active role in instilling tolerance values, and build open communication between multi-religious students. Thus, schools can create a more harmonious school culture and prevent bullying based on religion.

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