

## ELLA ENGLISH COURSE PARE KEDIRI'S STRATEGY IN SHAPING RELIGIOUS MODERATION VALUES

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### Abstrak

Moderasi beragama adalah sikap keagamaan yang seimbang, toleran, dan menjauhi ekstremisme, yang sangat relevan dalam konteks keragaman sosial dan budaya di Indonesia. Moderasi beragama bukan berarti menyamakan semua agama, melainkan menerima dan menghargai perbedaan, serta menghindari sikap berlebihan (ghuluw) dalam keyakinan dan praktik keagamaan. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengkaji strategi Ella English Course Pare Kediri dalam membentuk nilai moderasi beragama. Metode penelitian yang digunakan untuk mengeksplorasi secara mendalam tentang interaksi sosial di antara siswa yang berasal dari latar belakang agama, budaya, dan daerah yang beragam adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa praktik moderasi agama di Ella English Course Pare Kediri tercermin dalam solidaritas sosial, toleransi, dan interaksi yang harmonis di antara para siswa. Nilai-nilai ini dibangun melalui budaya kelembagaan, pendekatan pembelajaran yang inklusif, serta peran aktif para guru dalam membentuk lingkungan belajar yang terbuka dan damai. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada penguatan pendidikan karakter dan pentingnya lembaga nonformal sebagai agen pembentuk keharmonisan sosial dalam kerangka moderasi agama.

**Kata kunci:** Strategi Pembelajaran, Moderasi Keagamaan

### Abstract

Religious moderation is a religious attitude that is balanced, tolerant, and avoids extremism, which is very relevant in the context of social and cultural diversity in Indonesia. Religious moderation does not mean equalizing all religions, but accepting and appreciating differences, and avoiding excessive attitudes (ghuluw) in religious beliefs and practices. The purpose of this research is to examine Ella English Course Pare Kediri's strategy in shaping the value of religious moderation. The research method used to

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explore in depth about social interactions between students who come from diverse religious, cultural, and regional backgrounds is using descriptive qualitative with data collection conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results showed that the practice of religious moderation at Ella English Course Pare Kediri is reflected in social solidarity, tolerance, and harmonious interactions between students. These values are built through institutional culture, inclusive learning approaches, and the active role of teachers in shaping an open and peaceful learning environment. This research contributes to the strengthening of character education and the importance of non-formal institutions as agents of forming social harmony within the framework of religious moderation.

**Keywords:** Learning Strategy, Religious Moderation

## **A. Pendahuluan**

Pare sub-district, located in Kediri district, East Java, is widely known as “Kampung Inggris” due to its reputation as a thriving English language learning center. Along with the dynamic growth of course institutions in the region, Pare is transforming into an area with an inclusive international atmosphere. This is characterized by the increasing number of students coming not only from various regions in Java, but also from all over Indonesia. The nickname “international area” pinned on Pare is based on the existence of various English language course institutions that offer intensive, innovative and engaging learning methods, thus creating a multicultural and dynamic learning environment. This learning model attracts thousands of students every month, creating a multicultural environment where participants can interact with people from different backgrounds<sup>1</sup>

Customs are an integral part of a society's identity, encompassing values, norms and traditional practices that are passed down from generation to generation. These customs cover various aspects of life, such as traditional ceremonies, religious rituals, language, dances, traditional clothing, and so on. However, with the development of the times, customs are increasingly marginalized and tend to be abandoned by the younger generation, especially in urban areas<sup>2</sup>

Customs are an essential part of culture that contains moral, social and spiritual values that are passed down from generation to generation. These traditions guide people in their daily lives, serve as symbols of identity, and distinguish one cultural group from another. However, in the midst of rapid modernization, globalization, and urbanization, customs are slowly regressing and even disappearing in some regions.

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<sup>1</sup> Teguh Widodo, Nurmalia Dewi, and Dona Sariyani, “Analysis of Local Wisdom Value on Environmental Preservation Value in Arakan Sahur Festival di Kabupaten Tanjung Jabung Barat,” *Jurnal Pustaka*, September 20, 2025, <https://ejournal2.unud.ac.id/index.php/pustaka/article/view/529>.

<sup>2</sup> Intan Permata Sari R, Muhammad Rasyid Ridha, and Nabila Nurul Insani, “The Threat of Regional Language Shift and Its Impact on the Sustainability of Cultural Heritage in the Global Era,” *Writing: Jurnal Penelitian Nusantara*, May 15, 2025, <https://padangjurnal.web.id/index.php/menulis/article/view/236>.

This phenomenon occurs due to changes in people's mindset, increased interest in outside culture, and lack of attention to the importance of maintaining local traditions<sup>3</sup>

The loss of customs not only results in the decline of cultural values in society, but also impacts on identity, sense of community, and social bonds between community members. Young people who are unfamiliar with their local customs have the potential to lose their identity and local wisdom, which can lead to weak social ties and increased cultural homogenization. It is important to study this phenomenon in more depth to understand the root causes of the loss of customs and formulate strategies to preserve the remaining traditions<sup>4</sup>

Pare students come from a variety of cultural backgrounds, which results in a unique and quirky social dynamic. Foreign students and locals have many cultural connections that go beyond individual relationships. By introducing them to new values, international perspectives, and lifestyles that differ from local customs, this situation enhances the social life of the local community. Therefore, Pare is not only a place of formal learning for students, but also a social laboratory where students naturally learn to be more tolerant, become more open to diversity, and become acculturated<sup>5</sup>

Pare's characteristics as a language village that offers an intensive learning environment for English make these conditions even stronger. English is the language used mostly in daily communication in Pare. This pattern of communication does not only occur in the classroom, but also in many aspects of social life, such as talking in stalls, interacting in boarding houses, and taking part in community activities. Therefore, the Pare environment indirectly provides a learning experience similar to an international context. Course participants not only learn the language theoretically, but also learn to use it in real life<sup>6</sup>

In addition, ongoing English-based communication practices encourage course participants to improve their language skills. Participants not only learn to use the language correctly, but they also learn to adjust to cultural changes associated with

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<sup>3</sup> La Basri, Sopia Jamlaay, Putri Ayuniza, Rukmini Hulihulis, and Sertina Mambrasar, "Development and Social Identity: A Review of the Literature on the Interaction Between Modernization and the Preservation of Tradition in Local Communities," *Papua Journal of Sociology (PJS)*, March 31, 2025, <https://ejournal.um-sorong.ac.id/index.php/pjs/article/view/4737>.

<sup>4</sup> Sudarmin Sudarmin and Amaluddin Amaluddin, "Strengthening Religious Moderation through Islamic Religious Education," *Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education*, June 5, 2025, <https://jurnal.yayasanmeisyarainsanmadani.com/index.php/JHUSE/article/view/198>.

<sup>5</sup> Rika Ilma Putri, Mursalim, and Arianto, "Member Adaptation in the Learning Environment in English Village Pare Kediri," *Indonesia Berdaya*, July 28, 2024, <https://ukinstitute.org/journals/ib/article/view/830>.

<sup>6</sup> Topan Kopriansyah, Siti Halidjah, and Hairida Hairida, "Indonesian Language Learning Problems in the Application of Merdeka Belajar to Learners of Ibnu Mas'ud Integrated Islamic Elementary School Singkawang," *Innovative: Journal of Social Science Research*, August 16, 2024, <https://j-innovative.org/index.php/Innovative/article/view/14365>.

language use. This is in line with the idea of language engagement, a learning approach that emphasizes using the targeted language in a real environment, so that the results achieved are more comprehensive and sustainable.

Pare is therefore a place where people from different countries interact with each other and live in a strong English-speaking environment, which makes it a unique place of education. The students not only acquire international communication skills, but they also become more caring, more culturally aware and more tolerant. This situation plays an important role in building a society that is more welcoming, flexible and ready to face global challenges.

Because of all these factors, Pare has grown from a sub-district in Kediri to a region with an international feel. The initiative to make Pare a center for English language education has also contributed to the creation of this area as an international destination in Indonesia<sup>7</sup>

In Pare, religious and cultural diversity is an important part of its social dynamics, especially in the multicultural Kampung Inggris. Thanks to the large number of students coming from different parts of Indonesia and a number of foreign students, Pare has become a melting pot encompassing different religions, cultures, and living habits.

Religious Diversity Students who come to Pare bring a variety of religious backgrounds, such as Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and others. Kampung Inggris provides a space for everyone to learn regardless of religious differences, thus encouraging tolerance and mutual understanding between religious communities. The neighborhood is also supported by places of worship, such as mosques, churches and monasteries, which are accessible to students of different religions. Pare attracts students from various cultures and regions in Indonesia, including from Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Papua, and even from abroad. This creates a space for valuable cultural exchange, where students can get to know each other's local languages, dances, music, food and traditions. These interactions provide new experiences for locals and students alike, broadening their understanding of cultural diversity. English Village in Pare creates a diverse learning environment, where participants are encouraged to understand different perspectives and cultures. This learning process not only involves the English language, but also develops mutual respect and appreciation for other cultures, strengthening a sense of tolerance and unity amidst differences. This diversity also has an impact on the local community in Pare, which is increasingly open to different cultures and religions. The presence of students with various backgrounds teaches residents to be more accepting of diversity as a part of their lives. This diversity

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<sup>7</sup> Pipit Nurcahyaningtias, Eka Askafi, and Imam Baehaki, "Community Empowerment through the 'Kampung Inggris Mengajar' Program in Kampung Inggris, Pare District, Kediri Regency," *Autonomy*, May 16, 2024, <https://ejournal.uniska-kediri.ac.id/index.php/otonomi/article/view/5269>.

also has an impact on the local community in Pare, which is increasingly open to different cultures and religions. The presence of students with various backgrounds teaches residents to be more accepting of diversity as part of their daily lives<sup>8</sup>

In addition, local people often come to learn English and interact with students, creating collaborations that enrich the social life of Pare. For overseas students, Pare provides an opportunity to learn English in a very inclusive and friendly environment. They can adapt and experience life in Indonesia while still feeling accepted and valued, thanks to the welcoming attitude of the local community.

With these various aspects of religious and cultural diversity, Pare serves not only as a center for English language education, but also as a multicultural living space that reflects the values of tolerance and unity amidst differences. Despite the growing body of research on religious moderation in Indonesia, most studies have primarily focused on formal educational institutions such as schools and universities. Limited attention has been given to non-formal educational settings, particularly those operating within highly multicultural and semi-international environments such as language course institutions in Kampung Inggris Pare. This gap is significant, considering that such institutions function not only as educational spaces but also as social arenas where intensive intercultural and interreligious interactions occur on a daily basis.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research adopts a qualitative approach using a case study research type. The descriptive method is applied as a way to overcome problems in explaining and writing the core of the theme being studied, as well as the study targets which include educators, students, institutions, communities, and other aspects, based on available data. Based on observations of various situations and events experienced by the current group, descriptive methods are used to describe data about the variables being studied. This method allows the collection of comprehensive information about each variable, according to predetermined categories. The data sources obtained by the researcher include observations, interviews, and documentation conducted at the research site. In this study, the analysis process carried out by researchers included three main steps: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion writing. This study involved a number of informants consisting of students, teachers, and institutional managers who were selected using purposive sampling techniques based on their active involvement in the learning process and social interactions within the institution.

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<sup>8</sup> Asep Rahmatullah, "Experiencing Pluralism in the Interaction of Course Participants in Kampung Inggris, Pare, Kediri," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, November 18, 2022, <https://ejournal.uiidalwa.ac.id/index.php/jpi/article/view/975>.

## **RESULTS**

### **Learning Strategies at Ella English Course**

The findings of this study are categorized into three main themes: (1) institutional strategies in promoting religious moderation, (2) interaction mechanisms among students in a multicultural setting, and (3) the internalization of moderation values in daily social practices. The implementation of religious moderation from the perspective of K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid at Ella English Course Pare contributes significantly to the formation of students' characters and attitudes. Gus Dur's thoughts that emphasize the importance of tolerance, respect for differences, and openness in religion become the main foundation in creating an inclusive and friendly educational environment<sup>9</sup>

One of the most obvious results of implementing religious moderation in this environment is the increased understanding of learners about the importance of respecting differences. Learners become more prepared and open in discussions, not only in academic contexts, but also in daily social interactions. They are guided to avoid judgmental attitudes towards other people's beliefs and realize that differences are valuable assets that must be valued, not something to be feared. This finding is in line with the view of K. H. Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) who emphasized that religion should function as a means to improve human values, not just as a formal label<sup>10</sup>

Dissemination of Inaccurate Information, in today's digital age, incorrect information can spread very quickly. Not all information available is correct. This situation can trigger extreme and radical views, which can threaten religious moderation. Moreover, we are also dealing with people who are easily influenced without checking the truth of the information they receive.

The implementation of religious moderation will be more effective because Ella English Course members are equipped with mutual respect for differences. Various methods can be applied to foster mutual respect, appreciate diversity, and show tolerance. One of the approaches applied is the organization of classes with a heterogeneous composition of participants, without any difference in treatment, thus creating a comfortable and safe learning atmosphere for all members. In addition, through discussion and debate activities as well as English language practice in turns, participants gain experience interacting critically and constructively with fellow members. This process simultaneously builds empathy, compassion and tolerance in a warm and familiar atmosphere.

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<sup>9</sup> Akmal Kamil, Gus Dur, Pluralism, and Religious Moderation (2024), 30.

<sup>10</sup> Nur Kholik, The School of Liberation Education: A Review of Gus Dur's Thought (2020), 2.

The digital age has facilitated the emergence of polarization and radicalism, where individuals can easily access information that supports extreme and radical views. This condition has the potential to cause a person to become more fanatical in religion and lose moderation. In addition, the lack of a comprehensive understanding of religion also increases the risk of being exposed to extreme and radical teachings. Although easy access to religious information in the digital age provides extensive learning opportunities, not all sources of information can be accounted for accurately and validly. An increasingly complex phenomenon is the influence of social media, which plays a significant role in shaping individual views and attitudes. However, on the other hand, these platforms can also be used to spread extreme and radical views that have the potential to disrupt the implementation of moderation in religious practice<sup>11</sup>

In addition, the implementation of religious moderation also encourages the formation of a sense of solidarity among students. In various joint activities outside the classroom, such as informal discussions, religious activities, and social programs, mutual care and solidarity between individuals are seen. Existing differences are no longer considered as obstacles but rather as instruments that strengthen social relations. Principles such as tolerance, justice, and equality gradually become embedded in students' mindset and behavior. Another impact is the increased analytical awareness of students in understanding religious teachings more critically. Learners no longer view religion in a narrow and literal way, but adopt a more inclusive and human values-oriented understanding. This reflects the views of K. H. Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) who integrates spirituality with humanity, and places ethical and moral principles as the main foundation in religious practice<sup>12</sup>

Overall, the application of religious moderation based on the perspective of K. H. Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) at Ella English Course Pare not only creates a conducive and comfortable learning environment, but also contributes significantly to the formation of the character of students who are inclusive, empathetic, and ready to act as agents of tolerance in society. Thus, this institution not only produces a generation that is skilled in mastering English, but also forms a generation that has social and spiritual strength that is able to strengthen social cohesion in the midst of diversity.

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<sup>11</sup> Asya Fauzul Nahilda, "The Qur'an and Contemporary Issues of Islam, Terrorism and Radicalism," *Journal of Society and Development*, December 29, 2023, <http://www.journal.medpro.my.id/index.php/jsd/article/view/201>.

<sup>12</sup> M Syaifudin and Imam Syafi'i, "Abdurrahman Wahid's Thoughts on Multiculturalism in Islamic Religious Education," *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, June 13, 2025, <https://journal.unpas.ac.id/index.php/pendas/article/view/25103>.

## **Values of Religious Moderation**

The attitude of openness and tolerance in social interaction is an important pillar in the implementation of religious moderation in the educational environment, especially in non-formal institutions such as Ella English Course Pare Kediri. Openness to differences in beliefs and freedom of worship are strong indicators of inclusive and humanist religious moderation practices<sup>13</sup>

In the context of formal or non-formal education, openness and tolerance have a very important role, because the environment is often colored by students from different backgrounds. Therefore, religious moderation is manifested not only by recognizing that there are differences, but also by striving to create a healthy social environment and an environment that allows the growth of mutual respect. This is in line with the thoughts of Gus Dur, Abdurrahman Wahid, who emphasized how important the principle of universal humanity is as the basis of religion and social life. Non-formal education like Ella English Course uses attitudes of openness and tolerance to create a safe and inclusive learning environment. They also serve as social laboratories to teach students about democracy and pluralism. This process shapes characters who are able to live in harmony, defend human values, and are ready to face global dynamics that increasingly demand communication skills across religions and cultures.

In the Ella English Course environment, the religious diversity of students who come from various regions and backgrounds is used as a strength to build social harmony. The managers and teachers show an open attitude towards all religions without showing partiality or exclusivity towards certain groups. This reflects the principle of *tasamuh* (tolerance), which is one of the main values in religious moderation. which emphasizes acceptance of differences, friendship and respect for the religious rights of others<sup>14</sup>This process makes this institution not only a center for language learning but also a place to build a moderate religious character. This institution can be a model for other educational institutions in facing the challenges of diversity in today's global era.

K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) argues that religion should not be used as a tool to limit the living space of others or stop someone from expressing their beliefs. He believes that religion is used to uphold human dignity and build a civilized social order, so universal values such as humanity, justice and peace should always be the top priority in the practice of religious life. Gus Dur's thinking emphasized the importance of

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<sup>13</sup> Fahmi, "Religious Moderation."

<sup>14</sup> Moch Zainal Arifin Hasan and Muhammad Rizal Ansori, "Implications of Learning Ahlusunnah Wal Jama'ah for Strengthening Religious Moderation," *Journal of Contemporary Islamic Education*, January 30, 2024, <https://journal.iaimnumetrolampung.ac.id/index.php/cie/article/view/4363>.

building an inclusive, dialogical and humanist attitude to religion. He also rejected all types of exclusivism and monopoly of truth that could lead to conflict. This approach shows a strong correlation with James A. Banks' theory of multicultural education, which emphasizes how important it is to incorporate the values of pluralism into the curriculum and learning practices to create equality, tolerance and social participation<sup>15</sup>

The principle of human rights stated in the 1945 Constitution Article 28E paragraphs (1) and (2) states that every citizen has the right to embrace religion and worship according to their beliefs, which is one of the basic rights protected by the constitution. This theory is in line with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which stipulates that freedom of religion is an inviolable right. Therefore, protecting freedom of worship in schools, both formally and non-formally, is evidence of the implementation of constitutional values and respect for human dignity.

At Ella English Course Pare Kediri, the principle of freedom of worship is implemented in a real way. Learners are given full freedom to worship according to their religion without being hindered by rules or community pressure. According to this practice, the school not only concentrates on students' academic abilities, but also pays attention to students' spiritual needs as an important part of their personal development. For example, Muslim students are given dedicated time to perform prayers without disrupting their classes. Non-Muslim students are also respected to not be required to participate in Islamic faith-based activities, thus creating a fair and inclusive learning environment for everyone<sup>16</sup>

In addition, by implementing this policy, the organization demonstrates its commitment to the principle of religious moderation, which places religious practice in the context of mutual respect and upholding universal human values. Ella English Course succeeds in creating a positive social environment where students learn tolerance and religious freedom in addition to learning a foreign language. This is in line with the ideas of Gus Dur, K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid, about how important it is to maintain religious freedom as part of respect for the civil and political rights of citizens. It is also in line with James A. Banks' theory of multicultural education, which emphasizes how important it is to appreciate diversity in order to achieve social harmony. Therefore, the freedom of worship policy at Ella English Course not only fulfills legal and normative requirements; it also teaches students moral values such as

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<sup>15</sup> Ana Imroatul Mufidata Ana and Addin Arsyadana, "Multicultural Education Management Based on James A. Banks Dimensions: A Case Study of Madrasah Diniyah Nurul Hidayah Nganjuk," *Allimna: Jurnal Pendidikan Profesi Guru*, June 16, 2025, <https://jurnalfaktarbiyah.iainkediri.ac.id/index.php/allimna/article/view/3960>.

<sup>16</sup> Jumadi Jumadi and Muhammad Muzakki, "Analysis of Non-Muslim Students' Perceptions of PAI Subjects at SMK Muhammadiyah Aimas," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, August 26, 2023, <https://e-journal.unimudasorong.ac.id/index.php/jurnalpaida/article/view/1456>.

openness, respect for differences, and the importance of peaceful coexistence in a diverse society. Moreover, this approach affirms the role of non-formal education as a social transformation actor that helps build a civilized, pluralist, and democratic society.

This policy demonstrates the application of the principle of “la ikraha fid din” (no compulsion in religion) as stated in the Qur'an which reads:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ  
الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Meaning:

*There is no compulsion in (embracing) the religion (Islam). Indeed, the right way is clear from the wrong way. Whoever disbelieves in tagut and believes in Allah has indeed held fast to a very strong rope. That will not break. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 256*

This principle is the basis in Islam to respect individual freedom in embracing and practicing their respective beliefs. In the context of the theory of religious pluralism, as explained by John Hick, mutual respect between religious communities does not mean ignoring theological differences, but recognizing the existence of various paths to truth and salvation.

Religious diversity in the classroom does not create barriers, but on the contrary, it creates a welcoming environment that allows students to interact well with each other. Everyone is seen as equal without differentiating based on their religion, which results in a social environment based on mutual respect and openness. This is seen in formal learning processes, group activities and informal interactions outside the classroom. Learners are able to communicate well, cooperate well, and resolve differences of opinion constructively and dialogically. Religious diversity in the classroom does not create barriers, but on the contrary, it creates a friendly environment that allows students to interact well with each other. Everyone is seen as equal without differentiating based on their religion, which results in a social environment based on mutual respect and openness. This is seen in formal learning processes, group activities and informal interactions outside the classroom. Learners are able to communicate well, work well together, and resolve differences of opinion constructively and dialogically<sup>17</sup>

In group learning activities, each member has the opportunity to express their ideas without being hindered by differences in beliefs. Discussions take place objectively by emphasizing learning material rather than identity or religion. Similarly, there is no tendency for religious exclusivity that can cause social distance in informal activities such as daily socializing, eating together, or social activities. This shows that diversity has been managed well, enriching the learning experience and increasing social cohesion among students. This condition is also in accordance with the principle

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<sup>17</sup> Dona Noviani, Daningsih, and Wilis Firmansyah, “Implementation of Cooperative Learning Model in Shaping Social Skills of Students of Class V-A SDN Cilember 01 Bogor,” Indonesian Journal of Community Engagement, September 16, 2024, <https://ojs.penerbit-altafcorp.com/index.php/ijce/article/view/6>.

of religious moderation, which emphasizes tolerance, mutual respect and appreciation of differences. As a result, religious diversity in the classroom is considered social capital that enriches the learning process and shapes students who are open, inclusive and ready to face the dynamics of a multicultural society<sup>18</sup>

This phenomenon shows that the value of *ukhuwah insaniyah*, or brotherhood of humanity, which has been emphasized for a long time by KH. Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), has been internalized successfully. The concept of *ukhuwah insaniyah* says that all humans, regardless of religion, culture, or ethnicity, are members of a large human family who must respect and protect each other. Gus Dur considered religion as a moral tool to strengthen human relations, not just an exclusive ritual practice. Therefore, religious differences do not necessarily lead to conflict; instead, they should be seen as advantages that can improve social relations. Gus Dur affirmed his commitment to the principle of universal tolerance, which prioritizes human values over natural boundaries, by saying, *"We may have different religions, but we must not be enemies of each other."*

Gus Dur's thinking is found to be relevant in the dynamics of social life in the classroom, where students from various religious backgrounds can interact well without suspicion or exclusive attitudes. The value of *ukhuwah insaniyah* has been institutionalized in people's minds through interactions that occur not only during formal education but also during daily activities. As a result, diversity is seen as an opportunity to build greater solidarity than a threat. This condition shows how Gus Dur's normative concept can be applied in education to create an inclusive and civilized social ecosystem.

Gordon Allport also created an intergroup contact theory that can be used to examine this reality. This theory states that prejudice between different groups can be reduced through good interaction in an equal environment, the existence of common goals, and the support of social norms that support equality. The situation in the classroom showed that these conditions were met. Learners are in the same place, no group dominates them, they work together to achieve the same academic goals, such as mastering a foreign language, and there are good social norms that support an inclusive atmosphere. Therefore, learning results in increased social awareness in addition to academic achievement<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Tri Wahyudi Ramdhan, Saifuddin, and Zainal Arifin, "Multicultural Religious Education: Building Tolerance and Harmony in Diversity," Press STAI Darul Hikmah Bangkalan, January 6, 2025, <http://jurnal.staidhi.com/index.php/presstaidhi/article/view/344>.

<sup>19</sup> Agus Sulthoni Imami, "Integration of Multicultural Islamic Education Values in Foreign Language Institutions at Nurul Jadid Paiton Boarding School," *Jurnal Tinta*, March 5, 2023, <https://ejournal.alqolam.ac.id/index.php/jurnaltinta/article/view/938>.

Education should be linked to human values, according to a combination of Gus Dur's *ukhuwah insaniyah* idea and Allport's intergroup contact theory. Education should not only serve as a source of information, but also as a place to build social character and personality based on gratitude, collaboration and respect for differences. The successful internalization of these values in the classroom environment shows that multicultural education can only be done in an inclusive, dialogical and humanist way.

The principle of religious moderation at Ella English Course Pare Kediri is seen in the daily activities of the institution. One example is equal treatment for distribution of facilities, interaction with teachers, and application of internal regulations. Discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, or social identity does not exist. Every student has the same rights and obligations. This condition shows that the institution has a moderate attitude in balancing religious identity with social diversity. Moderation does not mean eliminating religious identity. Rather, it means addressing differences proportionally so as not to divide society. In reality, the organization has the ability to create an environment where religious principles remain valued, but are not used as a tool to execute them. Learners, for example, remain free to worship according to their own beliefs, but they are not required to do so as part of the general activities of the institution. Thus, personal religious expression and common interests are balanced to create a harmonious learning atmosphere. The multicultural education framework emphasizes the importance of equality of access, participation and treatment in educational spaces to understand this practice theoretically. One important figure in multicultural education, James A. Banks, argues that for every student to feel recognized and valued, educational institutions must avoid institutional discrimination<sup>20</sup>

## DISCUSSION

### Impact of Religious Moderation

According to the view of K. H. Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), the implementation of religious moderation at Ella English Course Pare affects the character and attitude of students. According to Gus Dur, religious moderation is not just a middle stance in understanding religious teachings, but also an approach that emphasizes respect for humanity, universal brotherhood (*ukhuwah insaniyah*), and openness to differences<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Imam Bukhori, "Grounding Multiculturalism," *Humanistika: Jurnal Keislaman*, January 1, 2019, <https://ejournal.unzah.ac.id/index.php/humanistika/article/view/40>.

<sup>21</sup> Kamila Zahrotinnisa, Adrianus Fani, and Subaidi, "Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) and Religious Moderation: Tradition and Modernity in Indonesian Society," *Jurnal Studi Pesantren*, July 3, 2025, <https://ejournal.alqolam.ac.id/index.php/studipesantren/article/view/1677>.

One of the most obvious results of implementing religious moderation in this environment is the increased understanding of learners about the importance of respecting differences. Learners become more prepared and open in discussions, not only in academic contexts, but also in daily social interactions. They are guided to avoid judgmental attitudes towards other people's beliefs and realize that differences are valuable assets that must be valued, not something to be feared. This finding is in line with the view of K. H. Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) who emphasized that religion should function as a means to improve human values, not just as a formal label.

In today's technological era, one of the major challenges in encouraging religious moderation is the spread of misinformation. The presence of digital platforms and social media allows the flow of information to move very quickly, often without any confirmation of the truth. People can easily spread and consume false information or hoaxes that cause provocation, hate speech, or intolerant stories. This can lead to a misunderstanding of religious teachings and encourage some people to take extreme and radical stances that go against the principle of moderation. This phenomenon is increasingly worrying because many people tend to accept information rawly without going through the process of *tabayyun* or clarification. Not many people have good digital and religious literacy, which makes them more vulnerable to manipulation of provocative information. For example, religious issues often polarize the public sphere, creating social distance between different groups. However, building mutual trust and respect between religious communities is an important part of religious moderation. In education, the spread of misinformation can have a direct impact on the character building process of students. Students are easily trapped in the flow of digital radicalism if there is no effort to improve critical literacy<sup>22</sup>

Dissemination of Inaccurate Information, in today's digital age, incorrect information can spread very quickly. Not all information available is correct. This situation can trigger extreme and radical views, which can threaten religious moderation. Moreover, we are also dealing with people who are easily influenced without checking the truth of the information they receive.

The implementation of religious moderation will be more effective because Ella English Course members are equipped with mutual respect for differences. Various methods can be applied to foster mutual respect, appreciate diversity, and show tolerance. One of the approaches applied is the organization of classes with a heterogeneous composition of participants, without any difference in treatment, thus creating a comfortable and safe learning atmosphere for all members. In addition,

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<sup>22</sup> Santa Theresia Br Sipayung, Monalisa Marta Siahaan, and Rince Marpaung, "The Role of Civic Education Subjects in Preventing Non-Violent Radicalism Among Grade VIII Students," *Dharmas Education Journal (DE\_Journal)*, May 10, 2025, [https://ejournal.undhari.ac.id/index.php/de\\_journal/article/view/891](https://ejournal.undhari.ac.id/index.php/de_journal/article/view/891).

through discussion and debate activities as well as English language practice in turns, participants gain experience interacting critically and constructively with fellow members. This process simultaneously builds empathy, compassion and tolerance in a warm and familiar atmosphere.

The digital age has facilitated the emergence of polarization and radicalism, where individuals can easily access information that supports extreme and radical views. This condition has the potential to cause a person to become more fanatical in religion and lose moderation. In addition, the lack of a comprehensive understanding of religion also increases the risk of being exposed to extreme and radical teachings. While easy access to religious information in the digital age provides vast learning opportunities, not all sources of information can be accurately and validly accounted for. An increasingly complex phenomenon is the influence of social media, which plays a significant role in shaping individual views and attitudes. However, on the other hand, this platform can also be used to spread extreme and radical views that have the potential to disrupt the implementation<sup>23</sup> of moderation in religious practice

In addition, the implementation of religious moderation also encourages the formation of a sense of solidarity among students. In various joint activities outside the classroom, such as informal discussions, religious activities, and social programs, there is an attitude of mutual care and solidarity between individuals. Existing differences are no longer considered as obstacles but rather as instruments that strengthen social relations. Principles such as tolerance, justice, and equality gradually become embedded in students' mindset and behavior. Another impact is the increased analytical awareness of students in understanding religious teachings more critically. Learners no longer view religion in a narrow and literal way, but adopt a more inclusive and human values-oriented understanding. This reflects the views of K. H. Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) who integrates spirituality with humanity, and places ethical and moral principles as the main foundation in religious practice.

Overall, the application of religious moderation based on the perspective of K. H. Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) at Ella English Course Pare not only creates a conducive and comfortable learning environment, but also contributes significantly to the formation of the character of students who are inclusive, empathetic, and ready to act as agents of tolerance in society. Thus, this institution not only produces a generation that is skilled in mastering the English language, but also forms a generation that has social and spiritual strength that is able to strengthen social cohesion in the midst of diversity.

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<sup>23</sup> Hanafi Pelu, Rosmiati, Sulfikar Suaib, and Jais Hamdun Pelu, "The Urgency of Religious Moderation in Religious and State Life," Indonesian Annual Conference Series, May 28, 2025, <https://ojs.literacyinstitute.org/index.php/iacseries/article/view/1877>.

The implementation of religious moderation values in Ella English Course Pare has a significant sociological impact, especially in shaping harmonious and inclusive social interaction patterns in the environment of learner diversity<sup>24</sup>

First, the development of social solidarity among learners is the most obvious impact. Despite coming from different religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, learners are able to establish close relationships and help each other. This is in line with Emile Durkheim's social solidarity theory which states that diversity can be a unifying force if it is bound by the value of tolerance, in this case the values of religious moderation. For example, students at Ella Course are accustomed to showing mutual care, such as buying food, helping friends in difficulty, and taking care of each other's feelings.

Second, the implementation of religious moderation has an impact on the formation of collective awareness of the importance of living peacefully in diversity. This awareness not only grows as a result of the formal learning process, but also from social experiences in daily life in the course environment. This concept is related to Peter L. Berger's sociological ideas regarding the formation of social reality through repeated interactions involving unitary values and norms.

Third, another sociological impact is the formation of an inclusive social identity. Learners no longer identify themselves exclusively by ethnicity or religion, but rather as part of a pluralistic and open learning community. This kind of collective identity helps reduce the potential for conflict and strengthens the spirit of mutual cooperation among learners.

Fourth, the implementation of religious moderation also has a social impact in maintaining social integration in an environment of dynamic globalization and individualism. The attitude of mutual respect and not imposing the will taught at Ella English Course is an important foundation in building a peaceful and harmonious life. This shows how non-formal education can act as an effective agent of social change.

Finally, the practice of religious moderation inspired by the thought of K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid not only forms academically proficient individuals, but also forms individuals who have social sensitivity and moral responsibility towards fellow humans. They are invited to become pioneers of peace in their respective communities, as the values taught by Gus Dur: humanity, diversity, and respect for the rights of others.

Thus, the sociological impact of the implementation of religious moderation at Ella English Course Pare is not only internal in shaping the character of students, but

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<sup>24</sup> Bagus Mahardika, "Implementation of Religious Moderation Values in Islamic Education Subjects as a Basis for Student Character Development at Tumbuh High School," *An-Nidzam: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan dan Studi Islam*, June 30, 2024, <https://ejournal.iainu-kebumen.ac.id/index.php/An-Nidzam/article/view/2018>.

also external in creating a healthy, harmonious and inclusive social climate in a plural environment<sup>25</sup>

From a broader socio-political perspective, the implementation of religious moderation within non-formal educational institutions such as Ella English Course can be understood as a form of micro-level social engineering that contributes to the strengthening of social cohesion and the prevention of identity-based conflicts in plural societies. This finding aligns with James A. Banks' concept of multicultural education, particularly in the dimension of equity pedagogy, where teaching strategies are adapted to facilitate equal participation and learning outcomes for students from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. Furthermore, the internalization of religious moderation values in this context can also be interpreted within the framework of soft security, where social harmony, tolerance, and mutual respect serve as preventive mechanisms against radicalism and social fragmentation in contemporary society.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study contributes theoretically by demonstrating that religious moderation is not only constructed through formal curricula but can also be effectively developed through informal and interaction-based learning environments within non-formal institutions.

Ella English Course Pare Kediri's strategy in shaping the values of Religious Moderation is very strategic. This is done through the exemplary attitude of the teachers, the application of rules that emphasize the principle of peaceful coexistence, and the creation of constructive intercultural and interreligious dialogue spaces. Ella English Course not only functions as a place to learn languages, but also as a social laboratory that strengthens the practice of moderate religious life.

The form of understanding and practice of Religious Moderation that develops at Ella English Course Pare Kediri is realized through various aspects, both in the learning process, social interactions between students, and in non-academic activities that involve a diversity of religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Values such as tolerance, inclusiveness, respect for differences, and cross-identity cooperation are successfully fostered in a dynamic and open learning environment.

Thus, the application of religious moderation at Ella English Course Pare is not only part of character education, but also an important basis in creating social harmony in an environment of Indonesian cultural diversity. This research is expected to provide a scientific contribution to strengthen the discourse of religious moderation in non-formal educational institutions and encourage the emergence of more places of learning that respect human values and tolerance between religious believers.

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<sup>25</sup> Itmamul Fahmi, "Religious Moderation: Building Peaceful and Tolerant Student Characters," *Journal Scientific of Mandalika (JSM)*, February 8, 2025, <https://ojs.cahayamandalika.com/index.php/jomla/article/view/4100>.

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