

## **MUSLIM TEACHERS WORKING IN CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS: A PORTRAIT OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN MAKASSAR**

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**Abstract.** *Faith-based schools are still debated since it does not teach students pluralism. While in Indonesia, such schools are growing rapidly due to parents' concern about the minimal time for religious study in public schools. In Makassar, Islamic schools are the most significant number, but certain Muslim teachers decide to work in Christian schools. This study focused on exploring their reasons and connecting them to the concept of Religious Moderation issued by The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs. As a qualitative descriptive, this research used a semi-structured interview method to describe the participants' experiences in-depth. The two of four indicators of Religious Moderation, tolerance and national commitment, are the framework for discussing the implementation of Religious Moderation in the schools. The results show that Muslim teachers work in Christian schools because of nothing against Islam, high salary, and teacher capacity building. Moreover, while teaching at this school, participants found their Muslim identities are identified through their Arabic names. However, it does not affect their teaching professionalism. A harmonious relationship is shown between Muslim teachers and Christian students and between Muslim and Christian teachers. They represent a religious tolerance, including allowing Muslim teachers to perform Friday prayers and wishing Christian students and teachers a Merry Christmas. Furthermore, Muslim teachers indicate a national commitment by teaching students professionally regardless of religion as regulated in the basic national consensus of Indonesia, Pancasila. Thus, this faith-based school is critical in supporting the concept of Religious Moderation and plurality in Indonesia.*

**Keywords:** *Muslim teachers; Christian schools; Religious moderation*

### **Introduction**

Indonesia is a multi-religious country with 6 (six) religions: Islam, Protestant, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucian. Such a pluralistic society tends to cause conflict due to the differences of interest. Religion is the most crucial aspect with a powerful influence on the nation and citizens that unintentionally prioritizes the majority over the minority. Thus, religions are regulated and protected by several Indonesian laws to keep life in harmony.<sup>1</sup>

The slogan of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, which means Indonesian people are different but still one, becomes significant in managing the complexity of Indonesian religious diversity. Also, Article 29, paragraph two of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia about the right to religion's freedom states that Indonesia guarantees the independence of each resident to embrace their faith and worship

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<sup>1</sup>Jeanny Dhewayani, "Managing Religious Diversity in Indonesia: Policy and Reality," in *Religion, Public Policy, and Social Transformation in Southeast Asia*, vol. 1, 33 (Basel: Globethics.net, 2016), 71–98.

according to their religion and beliefs. This regulation fosters tolerance among Indonesian people since they have to respect others with different beliefs.

The diversity in religions affects other aspects of Indonesian life, specifically education. Religion has an important role in the national education as written in Law number 20 of 2003, article 3 that the purpose of national education is to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe and fear God Almighty, have a noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become a democratic and responsible citizen. Increasing the faith and piety of students is one of the main concerns in structuring the curriculum.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, religious education is compulsory in public schools, from primary schools to universities.

Moreover, the types of schools in Indonesia are not limited to public and private schools. Faith-based schools are also established and spread throughout Indonesia. Such schools aim to enhance students' religious knowledge and practice since, in public schools, the religious subject is only taught once a week for a limited time. Learn religious subjects only about two hours a week in public schools. As stated previously, this duration tends to be inadequate for reaching national education. Thus, faith-based schools provide a longer time for students to learn about religion.<sup>3</sup>

As the religion with the most prominent followers in Indonesia, Islamic schools are the largest number compared to other faith-based schools. Madrasah and *Pesantren* are examples of Islamic schools. 82.418 Madrasahs are spread all over Indonesia, from primary to high schools. Most of them are private schools, 95,1 %.<sup>4</sup> Christianity, the second largest religion in Indonesia, also has Christian schools. However, the number is still minimal.

In general, faith-based schools only hire teachers of the same religion. Interestingly, last year, a Christian teacher was assigned to teach at Madrasah in Toraja, South Sulawesi. It attracted public attention. Some argued that Madrasah should hire only Islamic teachers, while others believed that it is not a problem as long as the Christian teachers do not teach Islamic subjects. Indeed, the rules require teachers to have an educational background following the subject they teach and are not related to their beliefs.

Toraja is a unique area in South Sulawesi since most of the population is Christian. Employing a Christian teacher in Madrasah is unavoidable. It is in contrast to Makassar, where most people are Muslims. However, the reverse situation still happens in Christian schools in Makassar. Some Islamic teachers are working in Christian schools. It is surprising because Islamic teachers in Makassar have many options to teach in other schools, such as public and private schools, with no basis on

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<sup>2</sup>Republik Indonesia, *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia No 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional* (Jakarta, 2003).

<sup>3</sup>Abd Rouf, "Potret Pendidikan Agama Islam di Sekolah Umum," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam (Journal of Islamic Education Studies)* 3, no. 1 (2015): 187–206, <https://doi.org/10.15642/jpai.2015.3.1.187-206>.

<sup>4</sup>"EMIS | Dashboard | Pendis Kemenag," accessed May 9, 2022, <http://emispendis.kemendiknas.go.id/dashboard/?content=data-statistik>.

religion. Also, they can teach in Madrasah and *Pesantren*. The Indonesian Ministry of Religion (2020) through SINDAK (*Sistem Informasi Data Kristen*) or Christian Data Information System revealed that Makassar only has one Christian foundation.<sup>5</sup> It is a small number compared to the public-Islamic schools.

The faith-based schools begin to accept teachers of different religions. It is because such teachers will not teach religious subjects. They only teach general subjects based on their educational backgrounds and teaching capabilities. Thus, having a different belief will not affect teachers' professionalism.

It is in line with the concept of Religious Moderation introduced by The Ministry of Religion of Indonesia. Religious moderation encourages Indonesian people to have a perspective, attitude, and behaviors that always take the middle position, act reasonably, and not be extreme in religion. In the context of Makassar, where Muslim teachers work in Christian schools, both Muslims and Christians practice religious moderation. They show religious tolerance in the educational environment, which is one of four indicators of religious moderation. Other indicators are national commitment, anti-violence, and accommodating to local culture.

Several works of literature have discussed the implementation of religious moderation in public and religious schools. Religious moderation as a new approach to learning Islamic religious education in schools.<sup>6</sup> Idris et al. identified the implementation of religious moderation values in Islamic education in public school. Such articles focused on the relation between religious moderation and Islamic education in public schools.<sup>7</sup> In addition, Jura researched the role of Christian education in the spirit of religious moderation.<sup>8</sup> Hatmoko and Mariani discussed the relevance of religious moderation to Catholic education.<sup>9</sup>

Such articles evaluated the religious moderation in schools based on one religion. In contrast, religious moderation is not limited to one religion. It includes inter-religious and intra-religious tolerance, which are not highlighted in recent studies.

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<sup>5</sup>“Sistem Informasi Data Kristen,” accessed May 9, 2022, <http://sindak.kemenag.go.id/urusan-agama/yayasan>.

<sup>6</sup>Ulfatul Husna and Muhammad Thohir, “Religious Moderation as a New Approach to Learning Islamic Religious Education in Schools,” *Nadwa: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 14, no. 1 (2020): 199–222, <https://doi.org/10.21580/nw.2020.14.1.5766>.

<sup>7</sup>Muh Idris et al., “The Implementation of Religious Moderation Values in Islamic Education and Character Subject at State Senior High School 9 Manado,” *Academy of Strategic Management Journal*, August 26, 2021, <https://www.abacademies.org/abstract/the-implementation-of-religious-moderation-values-in-islamic-education-and-character-subject-at-state-senior-high-school-12232.html>.

<sup>8</sup>Demisy Jura, “Peran Pendidikan Agama Kristen (PAK) dalam Semangat Moderasi Beragama Demi NKRI,” *Jurnal Dinamika Pendidikan* 13, no. 3 (December 13, 2020): 315–23, <https://doi.org/10.51212/jdp.v13i3.1979>.

<sup>9</sup>Tomas Lastari Hatmoko and Yovita Kurnia Mariani, “Moderasi Beragama dan Relevansinya untuk Pendidikan di Sekolah Katolik,” *JP.AK: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Katolik* 22, no. 1 (April 20, 2022): 81–89, <https://doi.org/10.34150/jpak.v22i1.390>.

Articulating the relation between two religions in an educational context significantly broadens the understanding of religious moderation. Therefore, this research provides the novelty by identifying the portrait of religious moderation in the context of Muslim teachers working in Christian schools. The interaction between two religions (Muslim and Christian) proves that the implementation of religious moderation in religious schools is not merely focused on one religion. It embraces other religions that also promote the practice of religious moderation.

According to the uniqueness of Muslim teachers working in Christian schools, which is still rarely discussed, particularly in the Makassar context, this article focuses on exploring the experience of such teachers. It includes the obstacles they face and the reasons behind their decision. Such information shows the portrait of religious moderation reflected in their daily activities in schools. Furthermore, this article discusses in detail the indicators of religious moderation to explore in-depth the implementation of religious moderation practiced by teachers. Therefore, this study describes the portrait of religious moderation of Muslim teachers working in Christian Schools in Makassar by raising the following research question: 1) Why did Muslim teachers choose to work in Christian schools?; 2) How were Muslim teachers' experiences during teaching in Christian schools?; and 3) How are the portraits of religious moderation practiced in Christian schools?

This article is significant since it describes the implementation of religious moderation by explaining the harmonious life between Muslim and Christian in the context of religious school. It can counter the traditional perspective of religious schools which are defined as schools where plurality is ruled out, students focus only on their religion, and teachers should have the same religion. This article also reveals the critical point of religious moderation in schools, which is cooperating with other religions in educating students as proof of national commitment.

### **Religious-Based Schools**

The religious subject has been taught in public schools for a long time. The curriculum has included religious education as a compulsory subject from primary schools to universities. In Indonesia, teaching religious subjects aims to fulfill spiritual needs as one of the citizens' rights. Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning National Education System, article 12, paragraph (1) a, mandates: "Every student in every educational unit has the right to receive religious education under the religion he adheres to and taught by educators of the same religion."<sup>10</sup> Also, the Government Regulation No. 55 of 2007 concerning Religious Education, article 3 states: "Every educational unit at all lines, levels, and types of education is obliged to provide religious education."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Republik Indonesia, *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia No 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*.

<sup>11</sup>Republik Indonesia, *Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 55 Tahun 2007 tentang Pendidikan Agama dan Keagamaan*, 2007.

Such regulations assert that receiving religious education is not merely in public schools. The academic unit embraces many kinds of schools, including private schools. Thus, the number of private and religious schools is increasing every year. Religious-based schools play a significant role in instilling moral values in the students, particularly related to spiritual matters. Although the religious subject is taught in public schools, the studying time is very limited. Learn religious subjects only about two hours a week in public schools.<sup>12</sup>

According to the Government Regulation No. 17 of 2010 concerning Education Management and Organization, Article 189 states that the community can organize community-based education units in formal and/or non-formal education in accordance with the peculiarities of religion, social environment, and culture for the benefit of the community. The exceptions of religion could be the general education organized by certain religious groups. Thus, it is evident that the faith-based schools are legal and aim to fulfill Indonesian citizens' right to religious freedom.<sup>13</sup>

As the largest religion in Indonesia, Islam affects the largest number of Islamic schools. 82.418 Madrasahs are spread all over Indonesia, from primary to high schools. Most of them are private schools, 95,1 %.<sup>14</sup> It is linear with The Indonesian Ministry of Research and Culture data that 83,85% of primary to high school students are Muslim. Other religions also have their own faith-based schools, although the number is small. The number of Indonesian students who are not Muslim is also tiny.

However, every religion has the same opportunity as Islam to build their own faith-based schools, with Christians as an example. The Regulation of The Minister of Religion of The Republic of Indonesia Number 32 of 2019 concerns the Establishment of Christian Religious Education Units. It includes the description of requirements of establishing a Christian school which is administrative, technical, and appropriateness tests.<sup>15</sup> Community needs are the main requirements. It proves that the increasing number of faith-based schools results from the growing community's need for religious education.

Faith-based schools need religious teachers to educate students about religious materials. Such teachers must have the same religion as the religious lesson he teaches. This situation shapes public opinion that, in general, such schools hire only teachers with the same faith as schools. Nevertheless, there is no written rule about this requirement. Indonesian law claims that such a requirement that teachers must have

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<sup>12</sup>Firman Mansir, "Kesejahteraan dan Kualitas Guru Sebagai Ujung Tombak Pendidikan Nasional Era Digital," *Jurnal IKA PGSD (Ikatan Alumni PGSD) UNARS* 8, no. 2 (December 31, 2020): 293–303, <https://doi.org/10.36841/pgsdunars.v8i2.829>.

<sup>13</sup>"PP No. 17 Tahun 2010 Tentang Pengelolaan Dan Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan [JDIH BPK RI]," accessed May 9, 2022, <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Home/Details/5025/pp-no-17-tahun-2010>.

<sup>14</sup>"EMIS | Dashboard | Pendis Kemenag."

<sup>15</sup>"Peraturan Menag No. 13 Tahun 2019 Tentang Majelis Kehormatan Kode Etik Dan Kode Perilaku Pegawai Aparatur Sipil Negara Kementerian Agama [JDIH BPK RI]," accessed May 9, 2022, <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Home/Details/130621/peraturan-menag-no-13-tahun-2019>.

the same faith as schools only apply to religious teachers. Thus, it tends to construct people's mindset that faith-based schools do not practice the plural society since such schools do not collaborate with other religions in educating students. It becomes a problem in religious education because religion teaches students to maintain social relations with everyone, even though they have different beliefs.

### **Teachers' Responsibility**

In Indonesia, teachers play a significant role in enhancing students' capability. Several regulations were issued to select teachers based on their teaching knowledge and skills. In 2021, civil servant teacher applicants must take three tests: administration, basic competence, and field competence.<sup>16</sup> The total of teacher applicants in 2021, particularly in the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, reached 900.000. It is the most significant number during civil servant teacher recruitments in Indonesia. Thus, being a teacher is one of the most demanding jobs in Indonesia.

On the other hand, teachers have a huge responsibility to educate students. The regulation of the National Education Minister of Indonesia No. 16 of 2007 about academic qualifications and teacher competencies states that every teacher must meet the national standards of academic qualification and teacher competence.<sup>17</sup> The academic qualification includes teachers' formal education background and tests of feasibility and equality. The teacher competency standard is developed from four main competencies, namely pedagogic, personality, social, and professional competencies.

The teacher's duties are described in Chapter XI Article 39 Paragraph (2) of Law no. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Article 20 of Law no. 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, and Article 52 of Government Regulation no. 74 of 2008 regarding Teachers, which are planning lessons, implementing a quality learning process, assessing and evaluating learning outcomes, guiding and training students, conducting research and community service, carrying out additional tasks attached to the appropriate main activities, improving and developing academic qualifications and competencies on an ongoing basis.

Teachers' responsibilities are getting heavier in this modern era since the teaching and learning activities should integrate the various types of advanced technology as the learning equipment. Teachers must be technology literate to provide effective and efficient teaching and learning processes as one of the teachers' primary tasks. Therefore, teachers have to develop their teaching knowledge and skills to continue to provide their best performance to students.

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<sup>16</sup>“Pendaftaran Calon Pegawai Negeri Sipil Kementerian Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan RI,” accessed May 9, 2022, <https://cpns.kemdikbud.go.id/>.

<sup>17</sup>Kementrian Pendidikan, “Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional Republik Indonesia No 16 Tahun 2007 tentang Standar Kualifikasi Akademik dan Kompetensi Guru,” n.d., 31.

## **Religious Moderation**

The Indonesian Minister of Religion introduced the concept of Religious Moderation in 2015 as stated by Lukman Hakim Saifuddin in the '*Moderasi Beragama*' book that he almost always inserted religious moderation in every speech, and even asked all ranks in the Ministry of Religion to translate the spirit of religious moderation into every unit policy, especially in strategic programs in 2019. He has declared 2019 as the year of Religious Moderation. The 2020-2024 National Medium-Term Development included religious moderation, which asserts the significance of religious moderation in Indonesia.

Religious moderation is a term that represents moderate religious views and knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, ethics, and friendships. The word moderate refers to the phrase *wasatiyyah* (in Arabic). The terminology of the Qur'an uses the words *wasat*, *al-wusta*, *awsat*, *awsatubum*, and *fawasatna*. Such words are also equivalent to *i'tidâl*, *tawâẓun*, and *iqtiṣād*.<sup>18</sup>

Moderation of religious life means practicing fair, middle, and open attitude with anyone and willing to work together in giving the benefit of the people, with the principles that religious moderation shows great determination to build a just society and uphold human values. Religious moderation resists oppression, marginalization, and injustice. Putting something in its place, carrying out its rights and obligations proportionally<sup>19</sup>.

Through the Directorate General of Islamic Education, the Ministry of Religion issued a Circular on October 29, 2019, addressed to all Chancellors and Heads of State Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIN) to establish and organize Religious Moderation Houses. In the form of implementation, each PTKIN established a Moderation House with different work programs but one vision and mission to create a civilized religious space. Strategic steps to strengthen religious moderation in PTKIN include two main points. First, the mainstreaming of religious moderation is implemented in all PTKIN's policy derivatives and is realized by developing critical academic studies and traditions and respecting other groups or opinions. Second, making PTKIN a place for seeding human values, values of religious harmony, and religious moderation.<sup>20</sup>

Some lecturers strengthen religious moderation in their teaching planning, implementation, and evaluation through local wisdom that positively affects students'

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<sup>18</sup>Fadlil Munawwar Manshur and Husni Husni, "Promoting Religious Moderation through Literary-Based Learning: A Quasi-Experimental Study," *International Journal of Advanced Science and Technology* 29, no. 06 (May 20, 2020): 5849–55.

<sup>19</sup>Arifinsyah Arifinsyah, Safria Andy, and Agusman Damanik, "The Urgency of Religious Moderation in Preventing Radicalism in Indonesia," *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 21, no. 1 (April 27, 2020): 91–108, <https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v21i1.2199>.

<sup>20</sup>Wildani Hefni, "Moderasi Beragama Dalam Ruang Digital: Studi Pengarusutamaan Moderasi Beragama Di Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri," *Jurnal Bimas Islam* 13, no. 1 (July 21, 2020): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.37302/jbi.v13i1.182>.

attitude in understanding the religious tolerance in society.<sup>21</sup> Islamic values and local wisdom developed by Islamic Higher Education can spread the spirit of religious moderation. It can be proven by the academic community's ideas, thoughts, and attitudes in recognizing the differences and heterogeneity of various religious discourses in Indonesia.<sup>22</sup> Students, as the agent of change, are expected to promote religious moderation in their institutions and society.

More academic discussion is required in defining religious moderation since it embraces the complexity of thoughts which are different from one expert to others. There is no single definition of religious moderation. However, the fundamental point is the common denominators, such as *Pancasila* and *Undang-Undang Dasar 1945* (Indonesian constitution) as cultural symbols conveying moderation messages. A moderate attitude in Islam is easily manifested when a person has extensive religious knowledge and acts wisely, they resist temptation sincerely, and they acknowledge the existence of other interpretations as long as they are in line with wise values.<sup>23</sup>

The concept of religious moderation aims to maintain religious harmony in Indonesia by encouraging people to be moderate in religion. People are categorized as moderate by four indicators: national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodative to local traditions.<sup>24</sup> National commitment includes the people's loyalty to the basic national consensus. Religious moderation considers practicing the religious teachings the same as carrying out obligations as citizens and vice versa. In religious moderation, tolerance means an attitude to give space and not interfere with other's rights to believe, express their beliefs, and express opinions, even though it is different from what we believe. Tolerance includes inter-religious and intra-religious tolerance.<sup>25</sup>

The third indicator is anti-violence which means anti-radicalism. In religious moderation, radicalism is an ideology that wants to change the social and political system by using violence in the name of religion. Meanwhile, religious practices and behaviours that are accommodative to local culture can be used to see the extent of

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<sup>21</sup>Andi Trisnowali et al., "Al-Islam Learning Development on Local Wisdom Based | International Journal of Asian Education" 3, no. 1 (March 2022): 79–86, <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.46966/ijae.v3i1.281>.

<sup>22</sup>Abdurrohman Kasdi, Umma Farida, and Choirul Mahfud, "Islamic Studies and Local Wisdom at PTKIN in Central Java: Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects of Pioneering Religious Moderation in Indonesia," *HIKMATUNA* 6, no. 1 (June 19, 2020): 51–62, <https://doi.org/10.28918/hikmatuna.v6i1.2618>.

<sup>23</sup>Muhammad Nasir and Muhammad Khairul Rijal, "Keeping the Middle Path: Mainstreaming Religious Moderation through Islamic Higher Education Institutions in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 11, no. 2 (December 8, 2021): 213–41, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v11i2.213-241>.

<sup>24</sup>Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama RI, *Moderasi Beragama*, vol. 1 (Jakarta: Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama, 2019).

<sup>25</sup>Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama RI.

willingness to accept religious practices that accommodate local culture and traditions.<sup>26</sup>

## **Method**

This paper is qualitative research since it aims to explore the experiences of Muslim teachers. Qualitative research is described as interpretive, which means the main focus is on understanding the social world by examining participants' interpretation of it.<sup>27</sup> The interview method was used to generate data for this study. The interview method goes beyond everyday conversation because it involves a professional interaction with a careful questioning and listening approach to obtain thoroughly tested data.<sup>28</sup> Using interviews allowed the researchers to explore in-depth the experience of Muslim teachers. This research used the semi-structured interview method, which allowed the researcher to prepare questions based on the themes that emerged in the literature review. Additionally, semi-structured interviews are flexible, accessible, and intelligible.<sup>29</sup> The participants in this research were three Muslim teachers working in Christian schools in Makassar. They are male and have different backgrounds. One participant is teaching in a different school from the other two participants.

## **Result and Discussion**

Concerning the research questions of this paper, the main aspects of the discussion consisted of the reasons Muslim teachers to decide work in Christian schools, their experiences during working, and the relationship between their experiences and the practice of religious moderation.

### **The reasons Muslim teachers work in Christian schools**

The participants in this research reveal some reasons when choosing Christian schools. Their reasons are nothing against Islam, high salary, and sufficient teachers' capacity building.

### **Nothing against Islam**

The first and foremost reason is that the participants believed teaching in Christian schools does not contradict their religion (Islam). Before joining the schools, they discussed all rules with the school principals and ensured that their job would not

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<sup>26</sup>Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama RI.

<sup>27</sup>Creswell J.W and Creswell J.D, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Great Britain: Sage Publications, 2017).

<sup>28</sup>Kvale S, *Doing Interviews* (Great Britain, 2008).

<sup>29</sup>Sandy Q. Qu and John Dumay, "The Qualitative Research Interview," *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management* 8, no. 3 (January 1, 2011): 238–64, <https://doi.org/10.1108/11766091111162070>.

intersect with the practice of Christian religious teachings. Ainun, as one of the participants, explained that in the process of teacher recruitment, he asked the principals about his responsibility as a teacher in general and a science teacher in particular. The school principals guaranteed the Muslim teachers were not involved in the Christian worship activities at schools.

Moreover, the participants also asked about their prayer times. Another participant, Jamal, argued that he asked about the Midday prayer since it took place during the class hours at school. He said, "I could pray in the teachers' room or any unused spaces at school". It is similar to Ainun's statement that he could pray in the teachers' room, although some teachers are not Muslims. Friday prayer is also all participants' consideration. Fortunately, all Christian schools allow Muslim teachers to do Friday prayer by not giving them a class during Friday prayer. They could carry out their obligations as Muslims. Thus, they decided to work in Christian schools.

It is linear with the decision of The Indonesian Ministry of Religious to place the Christian civil servant teacher in the Madrasah. The main reason is the teacher's task is teaching Geography, which is not related to Islamic teachings. The Christian teacher meets all the requirements and passes the tests, so she deserves to work in the Madrasah. Having a different religion is not a problem if they do not disturb each other's faith.

### **High Salary**

The participants admitted another reason to choose the Christian school is the salary rate. Recently, looking for a job, mainly as a teacher, is not easy. In public schools, teachers' applicants could choose to become civil servants or honorary teachers. Being a civil servant teacher requires long and strict selection. Therefore, those who did not pass the tests would try to be honorary teachers. The requirement process is smaller and less competitive, but the salary is small.

On the other hand, certain private schools offer teachers a high salary rate without a long selection process. The high salary requires the increased capability of teachers. English proficiency is one of the requirements in most private schools since such schools implement the international education concept. The teaching and learning process uses English. Thus, most teachers are master's degrees from overseas universities.

In Makassar, the number of civil servant teacher applicants in 2021 was 2.900 people, a considerable number. Ironically, only 450 applicants passed the first test. About 2.450 unqualified applicants are competing to find a job. One of the requirements is that the applicants used to be honorary teachers, while most are not qualified. Some are trying to be honorary teachers to fulfill the requirements so that they will pass the test the following year. However, the salary of honorary teachers in

Makassar is only Rp 15.000 per hour. Teacher welfare is still considered lacking, particularly among honorary teachers.<sup>30</sup>

Others decide to find private schools with high salaries. Consequently, they will not fulfill the requirements to pass the administration test to be a civil servant teacher in the next year. In Makassar, such private schools are commonly religious-based schools. Concerning the large proportion of Muslims in Makassar, the number of Islamic schools is higher than Christian schools. However, certain Christian schools offer a higher salary for teachers.

Career decision-making becomes critical since it will affect teachers' life. Achim, Badrolhisam, and Zulkipli found that salary and benefits influence the decision of employees.<sup>31</sup> Salary is a continued existence as it contributes to the employees' short-term and long-term financial position.<sup>32</sup> Salary becomes crucial for teachers, particularly for fathers who have to meet all the family needs. Ainun said,

"As a father, I am just being realistic. I need money to fulfill my family's needs, especially my children. I did not choose this school accidentally. I have compared salaries offered in several schools, and I think this Christian school is the best choice".

Everyone needs money, not merely teachers who are the head of the family. Two single participants explained they are highly concerned about the salary rate since they want to save money for their future. They make the best use of their youth, especially in making money. It is related to their long-term financial establishment that they should be prepared as soon as possible.

In addition, salary as a kind of reward positively influences employees' work motivation.<sup>33</sup> Jamal asserts that he heard his friends' experiences who are the honorary teachers. He found that most of his friends were unmotivated in teaching due to the low salary. Jamal clarified,

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<sup>30</sup>Mansir, "Kesejahteraan dan Kualitas Guru Sebagai Ujung Tombak Pendidikan Nasional Era Digital."

<sup>31</sup>Nur`ain Achim, Nur Badrolhisam, and Nurfitriah Zulkipli, "Employee Career Decision Making: The Influence Of Salary And Benefits, Work Environment And Job Security" 7 (December 1, 2019): 41–50.

<sup>32</sup>Lei Wen et al., "Public Accounting vs. Private Accounting, Career Choice of Accounting Students in China," *Journal of Accounting in Emerging Economies* 8 (December 19, 2017): 00–00, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JAEE-09-2016-0080>.

<sup>33</sup>Muhammad Hasmi Abu Hassan Asaari, Nasina Mat Desa, and Loganathan Subramaniam, "Influence of Salary, Promotion, and Recognition toward Work Motivation among Government Trade Agency Employees," *International Journal of Business and Management* 14, no. 4 (March 8, 2019): 48, <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v14n4p48>.

"I believe that the salary is directly proportional to work motivation, as experienced by my friends who are the honorary teachers. I chose the high salary rate as one of the triggers to teach with professionalism and high enthusiasm".

Therefore, salary becomes the crucial reason for teachers, particularly the participants, to choose Christian schools as the workplace. They need money to continue life. The head of the family has to meet the family's needs. Similarly, the singles have to plan their financial establishment by saving money as a youth. Also, salary contributes to work motivation. The participant assumes that the high salary rate positively influences teaching enthusiasm, which leads to teaching professionalism.

### **Teacher Capacity Building**

Another reason for choosing a Christian school as a workplace is sufficient teacher capacity building. Ainun asserted that teachers are offered several programs of capacity building in the school to increase their knowledge and skills of teachers. Such programs include workshops and seminars in Makassar and other provinces. All paid for by the school.

Improving the capacity of teachers is significant since the demand for quality education is increasing every time. Today, the mastery of technology becomes crucial for teachers because technology is integrated into teaching and learning activities. Qualified, competent, and professional teachers are needed because the students are much more diverse, the subject matter is more complex, the standard of the learning process is increased, and the demands for the achievement of students' thinking abilities are higher.<sup>34</sup> Such changing system requires teachers to keep learning all the time.

During the Covid-19, about 45 million students are studying online, which requires all teachers in Indonesia to use technology in their teaching practice.<sup>35</sup> Ironically, most teachers have low performance in using technology since they are old and do not have laptops.<sup>36</sup> Some teachers are not ready to face this technology era. Thus, they need capacity building for particular competencies related to the industrial revolution era.

The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (2019) provides *Pengembangan Keprofesian Berkelanjutan* (PKB), or Development of Sustainable Profession, for teachers to support teachers in developing their teaching knowledge and skills. Regulation of the Minister for Empowerment of State Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform No. 16 of 2009 concerning Teacher's Functional Positions and

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<sup>34</sup>Riskha Nur Fitriyah, "Pengembangan Kompetensi Guru di Era Revolusi Industri 4.0 Melalui Pendidikan dan Pelatihan," *Proceeding SENDI\_U*, July 24, 2019, 359–64.

<sup>35</sup>Nadia Fairuza Azzahra, "Mengkaji Hambatan Pembelajaran Jarak Jauh Di Indonesia Di Masa Pandemi Covid-19," *Center for Indonesian Policy Studies*, May 7, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.35497/309163>.

<sup>36</sup>Evi Surahman, Rustan Santaria, and Edi Indra Setiawan, "Tantangan Pembelajaran Daring di Indonesia," *Kelola: Journal of Islamic Education Management* 5, no. 2 (November 16, 2020): 89–98, <https://doi.org/10.24256/kelola.v5i2.1397>.

Credit Scores includes teachers' self-development through attending functional training and carrying out collective teacher activities. However, only a few teachers implement such education and training programs. most teachers still use monotonous teaching after attending such a program.<sup>37</sup>

Moreover, in many schools, such high pressure experienced by teachers is not accompanied by adequate facilities. Being a participant in the workshops and seminars requires money. In some schools, only a few selected teachers are sent to such capacity-building programs since the school's funds are limited. Other teachers have to wait their turn indefinitely. Thus, applying to a school that provides sufficient capacity building for teachers is critical.

Ainun found that he could increase his teaching capacity at the school since he gained various knowledge and skills by attending specific capacity-building programs. It embraces his technological mastery, which is also one of his hobbies. Ainun confirmed:

"Now, I could provide several science games for my students. Such games make it easier for students to understand the learning material since it is displayed in attractive learning media. I thank this school for supporting me in improving my skills in the field that I am interested in and currently much needed by teachers today."

Therefore, the benefits offered by schools, particularly teacher capacity-building, are significant for teachers. Recently, teachers have faced a pandemic, an unpredictable situation that requires teachers to boost their capability to integrate technology into their teaching practice. Only teachers with sufficient skills can meet such demands. Attending various capacity-building programs will be very helpful for teachers, especially programs covered by the school.

### **The experiences of Muslim teachers**

During working in Christian schools, participants have a lot of experiences. The most exciting point is the Muslim identity.

### **Muslim Identities**

Working in Christian schools brings Muslim teachers to certain situations that show their Muslim identities. Discussing the term 'Muslim identities' is challenging since it requires a complex understanding. Islam consists of various groups or communities who have constructed identities for themselves based on their understanding.<sup>38</sup>

Using an Arabic name is one of the Muslim identities. Kuipers and Askuri (2017) point out that using Arabic names is growing rapidly in Indonesia due to an

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<sup>37</sup>Sri Haryati, "Strategi Pengembangan Keprofesian Berkelanjutan (PKB)" 1 (2021): 6.

<sup>38</sup>Aaron W. Hughes, *Muslim Identities: An Introduction to Islam* (Columbia University Press, 2013).

Islamization argument.<sup>39</sup> Ainun and Akhmad admitted that their names reflect their religion highly. He believes that everyone will know they are Muslim when they introduce their names. However, the students and their parents never questioned their religion. Ainun assumed that it was not their business, so they did not care about the teachers' religion. Ainun argued:

"My students never discuss my religion. Their parents also do the same thing. In several meetings with students' parents, their topic is never about my religion. Nevertheless, I believe they know I am Muslim since they give me a parcel when Eid".

Such an explanation confirms that all parties understand the roles of teachers without connecting it to the teachers' religion. On the other hand, having an Arabic name does not show the high religious visibility of Muslims. Identities of Muslims also include wearing certain Muslim clothes. The Muslim men wear songkok or skull caps, and the women wear hijab. For men, wearing skull caps is not compulsory. In contrast, women must wear a hijab.

All participants in this study are men. They confirmed that the Christian schools in Makassar do not allow teachers who have different religions to wear their religious clothes. It means that Muslim women are not allowed to wear hijab if they want to be Christian school teachers.

This regulation is quite acceptable for the participants since they understand that Christian schools are faith-based schools where students are taught Christian religious materials with a larger portion than in public schools. Then, the implementation of Christian teaching in the school environment must be promoted to the students. Allowing Muslim teachers to wear Muslim clothes could spark the curiosity of students. Akhmad confirmed:

"During the interview test, I asked the interviewer about wearing a skullcap in the school since I am used to doing that in my daily life. He suggested not to wear it because it could raise the curiosity of students".

In addition, all participants clarified that Muslim women teachers could wear hijab in school. However, the hijab is worn like a scarf and does not cover the entire hair and neck. This Christian school has Muslim women teachers, although there are only a few. Some do not wear hijab, and others wear the hijab like a scarf as arranged. Thus, the Muslim identities of teachers will not be a problem if it is only about teachers' Arabic names. However, when it comes to religious visibility, the Christian school has certain rules to maintain a conducive learning atmosphere at school. Religious visibility

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<sup>39</sup>Joel Kuipers and Askuri, "Islamization and Identity in Indonesia: The Case of Arabic Names in Java," *Indonesia* 2017 (April 1, 2017): 25, <https://doi.org/10.5728/indonesia.103.0025>.

means being religiously visible in a society, specifically as a visible Muslim.<sup>40</sup> Wearing certain Muslim clothes at schools, such as a hijab and skullcap, will make Muslim teachers have a different appearance from the students. Then, students' curiosity will bring them to some unsuitable questions for their age.

### **Portrait of Religious Moderation**

During teaching in the Christian school, all participants found that unconsciously, they implement the Religious Moderation, particularly tolerance and national commitment.

### **Tolerance**

Tolerance is respecting and allowing other paradigms which are different from personal religion. Religious tolerance as a patient attitude and refraining from disturbing and not insulting faiths or beliefs and worship of other religions.<sup>41</sup> Recently, intolerant actions have occurred in Indonesia, which are always based on a certain religion, particularly Islam as the majority.<sup>42</sup> Thus, religious tolerance is significant in preventing intolerant actions that hamper the harmony between religions.

The Indonesian Ministry of Religion Affairs strengthens the importance of religious tolerance by putting it as one of four indicators of religious moderation. Moreover, religious moderation is a key to achieving tolerance and harmony at the local, national, and international levels. Considering that Indonesia is a democratic country, religious tolerance is critical in encouraging Indonesian people to hold back their opinions and accept others' opinions.

On the other hand, a faith-based school is an educational environment that often invites society's scepticism about its ability to teach students pluralism. It is contrary to the concept of religious tolerance. The learning environment, especially school, is expected to educate children without focusing on one religion. Such schools tend to cause conflict between parents' rights and children's rights in deciding their education. It is quite the same as the condition in Indonesia.<sup>43</sup> Some parents believe that the best school for their children is faith-based schools since they think religious education is essential for their children's future. In comparison, others presume that children have the right to know and learn various religions to open their mindset regarding pluralism in society.

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<sup>40</sup>Val Colic-Peisker, Masha Mikola, and Karien Dekker, "Religious Visibility: Perceptions and Experiences of Residents in Two Muslim Concentration Suburbs in Melbourne, Australia," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42 (January 31, 2019): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2018.1557729>.

<sup>41</sup>Karin Sporre, "Value Conflicts and Faith Based Schools – In Contemporary Sweden," *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society* 26 (January 1, 2013): 175–91, <https://doi.org/10.18261/ISSN1890-7008-2013-02-05>.

<sup>42</sup>Dwi Ananta Devi, *Toleransi Beragama* (Alprin, 2020).

<sup>43</sup>Sporre, "Value Conflicts and Faith Based Schools – In Contemporary Sweden."

In contrast, the results of this study show that tolerance is built between Muslim teachers and Christian students. It shows that Muslims and Christians have a good relationship. Also, it indicates the practice of religious tolerance. Religions moderation highlights two kinds of religious tolerance, which are interreligious and intrareligious tolerance. This case reflects more on interreligious tolerance, such as the willingness to discuss, cooperate, and interact with other religions' followers. During the Eid al-Fitr, most students congratulate their Muslim teachers. Moreover, some parents give parcels to Muslim teachers. Similarly, Muslim teachers also give students a merry Christmas. Ainun explained:

"In the Eid al-Fitr, I got lots of congratulations for my students. I also got some parcels from their parents as a gift celebrating Eid". Jamal also argued that he gave his students a merry Christmas at Christmas.

Jamal argued:

"I grew up in a family with some Christians, so I used to give them a merry Christmas. I also practiced it in this Christian school. I think it is a kind of the tolerance in religion at school".

Such argument proves that the family background influences the decision of Muslim teachers in treating people of other religions. Jamal has some Christian family members, so giving a merry Christmas is part of his culture.

Moreover, the Muslim men teachers could perform Friday prayer since they are not assigned to teach during that hour. They also could pray in the teachers' room. Akhmad asserted that although this school does not provide a particular prayer room for Muslim teachers, he and other Muslim teachers could pray in the teachers' room. Although some teachers are not Muslim, they always try to keep calm in the teachers' room when Muslim teachers pray. This attitude describes that tolerance is not merely built between teachers and students. Tolerance is also established between Muslim teachers and other teachers of different religions.

Another interesting point is this Christian school accepts two Muslim students. As a school that focuses on Christian teaching, allowing Muslim students to learn at this school is quite challenging. Akhmad explained:

"The Muslim students are allowed to study at this school, but they have to learn Islamic study in another place since this school only provides Christian teaching".

Any worries about the incapability of Faith-based schools in teaching pluralism to students do not occur in this Christian school. In contrast, Christians treat Muslims politely and courteously as the majority. Muslim teachers also respect the Christian. Although this school only educates students about Christianity, students could learn the pluralism in society through Muslim teachers and students.

The concept of religious moderation is implemented by students and teachers in this school, particularly the tolerance indicator. Such an attitude expands the opportunities for collaboration between religions, even at faith-based schools. Everyone could take a role in building a community according to their expertise regardless of religious differences.

### **National Commitment**

Religious moderation defines the national commitment as a person's religious perspective, attitude, and practice that affect his loyalty to the Indonesian basic national consensus, particularly Pancasila as the national ideology.<sup>44</sup> Such a concept highlights that practicing religious teachings is the same as carrying out obligations as citizens, as carrying out obligations as citizens is the practice of religious teachings. Thus, national commitment becomes one of the indicators of religious moderation.

According to participants' experience, particularly the reasons they are working in Christian schools, national commitment is applied. Muslim teachers work in such schools because they believe that this job does not conflict with Islamic teachings. Being a teacher in a Christian school is the same as being a teacher in other schools. Their obligation is to educate students based on their educational background. Ainun teaches science, Akhmad teaches English, and Jamal teaches Bahasa. They do not touch the Christian teachings and still carry out their obligation as Muslims.

Such teachers' professionalism is in accordance with the practice of Pancasila values, which are the national ideology of Indonesia. The implementation of the first precept of Pancasila, which is believing in the one and only God, could be seen in the harmonious relationship between Muslims and Christians at the school. They respect each other and are moderate in religion. Therefore, they are loyal to the Indonesian basic national consensus.

### **Conclusion**

Muslim teachers working in Christian schools are still rare in Indonesia, particularly in Makassar, since Islam is the majority. Various public and private schools, including Islamic schools, are spread across various regions in Makassar, while the number of Christian schools is still minimal. Regarding such a situation, deciding to teach in a Christian school is an interesting decision for Muslim teachers. Thus, exploring their reasons and experiences, specifically related to religious moderation, is significant.

All participants admitted three main reasons, which are nothing against Islam, high salary, and teacher capacity building which are offered by the school. Moreover, their working experiences in Christian schools reveal their Muslim identities. It embraces their Arabic names, such as Ainun and Akhmad, which are growing rapidly

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<sup>44</sup>Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama RI, *Moderasi Beragama*.

in Indonesia as an effect of an Islamization argument. Such identity does not affect their working professionalism.

The concept of religious moderation is implemented at this faith-based school, specifically the indicators of tolerance and national commitment. Muslim teachers and Christian students establish a harmonious relationship due to their religious tolerance. Also, Muslim teachers carry out their responsibilities professionally as regulated in applicable laws, particularly in Pancasila, as the basic national consensus of Indonesia. Therefore, this research highlights the significance of faith-based schools in promoting plurality in Indonesia and supporting the implementation of Religion Moderation.

This research implies each person's critical role in implementing religious moderation, particularly in school as a place to learn. It is not merely the responsibility of religious education teachers. Every teacher, regardless of religion, is a role model for students, so they have to behave fairly based on students' capabilities, not their religion. Cooperating with other religions will help achieve the national goal of educating the nation.

The traditional perspective of religious schools is no longer compatible with the development of the education system that puts forward an open mind for any positive change. Several religious schools are suitable for plurality in Indonesia. It collaborates with teachers without considering their religions but focusing on their teaching capabilities.

However, it can be denied that traditional religious schools are still extant. This research is on a small scale, only studying one city in Indonesia. The diversity in Indonesia, including culture, thoughts, and beliefs, tends to understand the concept of religious moderation from a narrow and rigid perspective. Thus, this research result is expected to be a model of implementing religious moderation in a flexible way which can be adapted in other schools to maximize the benefits of religious moderation in the education context.

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