



Teachers and Multicultural Education: How do Moderate Islamic Teachers Perceive Freedom of Expression and Hate Speech?

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Abstract

Due to the high number of incidents involving the suppression of religious freedom, West Java Province is frequently regarded as the most intolerant province in Indonesia. Islamic religious teachers are among the actors who perpetuate bigotry and commit breaches. This research aims to explore the views of moderate Islamic Religious Education teachers regarding freedom of expression and hate speech on social media, as well as the significance of multicultural education. This descriptive research method is based on data obtained from moderate Islamic religious education teachers in West Java. Data were gathered via in-person interviews, telephone conversations, email, and social media platforms. Moderate Islamic religious teachers in West Java assert that limitations on individuals' freedom of speech may be implemented in order to protect the human rights of others or groups and are enforced following explicit and measurable legal norms. They argue that equitable legal enforcement can effectively address the pervasive dissemination of hate speech on social media. Nevertheless, multicultural education is the most dependable approach for mitigating hate speech, fostering civility, promoting ethical behavior, and safeguarding responsible freedom of expression. The importance of a broader perspective on the religious attitudes and behavior of Islamic teachers is among the important implications of this research. The researchers recommend that religious moderation literacy be continuously internalized and socialized to Islamic religious teachers.

Keywords: Multicultural education, moderate Islamic religious teachers, freedom of expression, hate speech

1. Introduction

The researchers have chosen West Java, Indonesia as the focus of our study, based on the report on the Condition of Freedom of Religion/Belief in Indonesia published by the

Setara Institute. According to the report, West Java has consistently been the top-ranked province for three consecutive years (2018, 2019, and 2020) in terms of experiencing the highest number of occurrences related to breaches of freedom of religion and/or belief. The Setara Institute reported 24 infractions in 2018 (Setara Institute, 2018), 33 breaches in 2019 (Setara Institute, 2019), and 39 violations in 2020 (Setara Institute, 2020). The prevalence of religious-based violence in West Java Province is exemplified by the proliferation of Islamic religious mass organizations with "hardline" inclinations, such as the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) prior to its dissolution, the Indonesian Ulama-Ummat Forum (FUUI), United Muslim Forum (FUIB), and the National Anti-Shia Alliance (ANNAS). While not all of these organizations are headquartered in West Java, some, like FPI and HTI, are national in scope. However, the citizens of this province are well aware of the presence and operations of these groups. Due to the "militant", "frontal", and "violent" nature of these organizations, they frequently engage in verbal and physical attacks against other groups. Consequently, it is not unexpected that their movements and activities frequently come into conflict and clash with other groups (Lestari, 2021). They frequently encounter and single out minority groups such as Ahmadiyah, Shi'a, liberal communities (Farida, 2014), intellectuals, and moderate individuals, along with other minority groups (Woodward et al., 2014). The presence of these radical organizations does not depend on the sheer size of their membership but rather on two key factors that facilitate their growth. Firstly, the dynamics of national political power which has been predominantly controlled by the nationalist-secular faction in recent years. Under such circumstances, engaging in opposition or resistance against the authorities is considered to be a commendable and valorous deed (Hamdi, 2020). Furthermore, there is a notable trend in global politics where political parties and individuals right-wing have garnered substantial support from voters, leading to their electoral victories (Eatwell, 2000; Kehrberg, 2007). This was evident in the United States Election, where Donald Trump, a right-wing figure affiliated with the Republican Party, emerged as the winner of the presidency. The rise in support for various right-wing parties and individuals in Europe and America aligns with the growing influence of anti-immigrant populism (Betz, 2003; Ignazi, 2009), xenophobia (Inglehart & Norris, 2016), and opposition to multiculturalism (Bajrektarevic, 2014; Teasley & Tyson, 2007). Populist right-wing parties in Europe and America have the ability to manipulate the influx of immigrants from the Middle East and Africa. They effectively transform this humanitarian concern into a source of fear by associating it with the Islamization of the West, the potential loss of employment opportunities to immigrants, and the perceived threat to Western values. Consequently, a significant number of residents in numerous European and American nations, particularly young individuals who are still searching for their identity and facing competition in the job market, perceive immigration as a genuine menace.

The escalating socio-political dynamics in different regions of the world, which progressively marginalize Muslims, contribute to the proliferation of Islamic extremist organizations in numerous nations, including Indonesia. In Indonesia, militant-radical groups frequently align themselves with an anti-Western ideology and exhibit skepticism towards Western values such as democracy, freedom of thought, freedom of expression and opinion, freedom of religion, human rights, gender equality, and other related concepts (Rosada, 2022). Consequently, individuals who actively advocate for democracy and equality frequently find themselves subjected to mistreatment. Even religious teachers who have moderate views frequently fall prey to verbal abuse and derogatory remarks (Husni & Bisri, 2020).

Social media, seen as an increasingly potent tool for communicating messages, disseminating information, and propagating ideas, has become a novel instrument employed by militant-radical factions in many nations, including Indonesia (Lee & Fong, 2021; Postill, 2018; Schmidt, 2021). They utilize social media platforms to generate, disseminate, and propagate diverse manifestations of hate speech, with the intention of inciting, defaming, fostering animosity, instilling fear, and issuing threats towards dissenting groups, all under the guise of exercising freedom of speech and expression (Ludigdo & Mashuri, 2021; Oktavianus & Davidson, 2023).

Hate speech on social media in Indonesia frequently intersects with political and religious matters (Utami & Darmaiza, 2020). Political celebratory occasions, particularly general elections, catalyze the proliferation of hate speech on social media (Musyafak and Ulama'i, 2019). The issue of hate speech on social media is a global concern and is not exclusive to Indonesia. Globally, the proliferation of hate speech is mostly linked to matters concerning migration in economic sectors, refugees, escalating extremism, and xenophobia (Mesa, 2016). Husin *et al.* (2018) found that the rise in hate speech in Indonesia is mostly attributed to factors such as individual psychological states, the social context, technical progress, insufficient societal unity and regulation, and public unawareness. Nevertheless, the issue considered to be the most pivotal in fueling the escalation of hate speech is the surge in religious extremism (Matteo, 2017).

2. Research Methodology

The data for this descriptive study were collected from a sample of moderate Islamic religious teachers (later referred to as moderate religious teachers) in West Java Province, Indonesia. Data were gathered via in-person interviews, telephone conversations, email exchanges, and interactions on social media platforms. The researchers adopted a non-probability sampling technique to select our samples. Out of the 40 Islamic religious teachers that the researchers had initially selected, the researchers handpicked 30 individuals for further in-depth interviews. Out of the whole group of 40 individuals, 30 individuals fulfill the requirements to be considered moderate Islamic teachers, but, in our assessment, the other ten individuals do not match the criteria to be classified as moderate teachers. Moderate Islamic religious teachers are characterized by their moderate and non-extremist perspectives, attitudes, and actions. They prioritize balance, tolerance, peace, and embrace diversity and pluralism. They also exhibit kindness, engage in dialogue, acknowledge and accept democratic principles, and refrain from promoting hatred (Kamali & Ramadan, 2015; Yaakub, 2016). It is important to recognize that these criteria might be highly subjective, nevertheless, it is challenging to exclude subjectivity in qualitative research. The researchers prioritize individuals who emphasize equilibrium, exhibit tolerance, are dedicated to peace, acknowledge diversity and plurality, value virtue, engage in dialogue, accept democratic principles, and reject hatred. It is important to recognize that these criteria might be highly subjective, although it is challenging to eliminate subjectivity in qualitative research.

In order to safeguard the confidentiality of the individuals involved, the researchers employ pseudonyms for each participant in this study (Tilley & Woodthorpe, 2011). Additionally, it seeks to protect their secrecy, as proposed by Saunders *et al.* (2015). Anonymity in qualitative research pertains to the elimination or concealment of participants' names and research sites, as well as the exclusion of any details that could potentially reveal their identities (Tilley & Woodthorpe, 2011, p. 198). While Lahman *et al.* (2015)

recommended that participants have the freedom to select their own pseudonyms, the researchers opted to assign a suitable pseudonym to each participant for the sake of convenience. Qualitative data analysis includes data sorting, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Freedom of Expression Isn't Everything

Religious teachers in West Java Province, Indonesia, generally hold the belief that freedom of expression is a fundamental human right protected by the constitution and laws. According to moderate religious teachers, freedom of expression is an innate right possessed by every individual, irrespective of their race, tribe, religion, ethnicity, gender, education, social standing, and political alignment. According to their perspective, each citizen possesses the entitlement to articulate or communicate their perspectives, opinions, positions, evaluations, and reactions using diverse means of communication and information dissemination, such as vocal expression, written form, audio-visual mediums, and even online social platforms. No moderate religious teacher disputes that freedom of expression is a fundamental human right safeguarded by the constitution and legal system. They refute the notion that freedom of expression is inherent to Western principles and incompatible with the social and cultural standards of Indonesian culture. They advocate for the universality of freedom of expression, without any temporal or spatial constraints. Freedom of expression is a universal right that is innate to every human from birth, and it is not exclusive to any certain culture or community.

Furthermore, they dissent from the notion that freedom of expression is incompatible with Islamic beliefs. According to their perspective, Islamic teachings offer an inclusive and secure environment for individuals to freely articulate their opinions, thoughts, positions, and attitudes. Even one of the participants, FA, said:

Every country should guarantee the freedom of its citizens to express their opinions. The state is not only obliged to protect and guarantee the security and tranquillity of its citizens. The state must also provide full guarantees against any differences of opinion among its citizens.

As per the religious figure, who is also a *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (Religious Junior High School) teacher, he stated that every person must comprehend and acknowledge divergent viewpoints as an integral aspect of the democratic process and societal dynamics, leading toward the envisioned social structure. According to FA,

As a constitutional administrator, it is unacceptable for the government to exercise complete control over public opinion while disregarding the public's voice. The government should act as a mediator and catalyst in any social conflicts that arise. The government must always be prepared to confront opposing opinions within the country, including being open to receiving comments, feedback, recommendations, and criticism from citizens.

HB, a religion teacher at "*Pendidikan Diniyah Formal*" (Formal Religious Education) who specializes in Islamic interpretation and law, links the notion of freedom of expression to the concept of *hurriyyah al-ra'y* in Islamic jurisprudence. According to him, this phrase has its etymological roots in the idea of unrestricted expression of opinion or speech. According to

this moderate religious teacher, the concept of *ra'y* in Islamic intellectual literature can be categorized into three types: commendable *ra'y*, contemptible *ra'y*, and uncertain *ra'y*. The commendable opinions can be categorized as follows: the opinions found in the Koran, the authentic Sunnah, the statements of trusted individuals, the opinions derived from independent reasoning, and the opinions emerging from careful consideration. Disgraceful *ra'yu* (*al-ra'y al-mazmumah*) can be categorized into three types: *bid'ah* or *ra'y* that is harmful and deceptive, *hawâ* or malicious intentions, and *baghy* or infringement of the law. From the standpoint of *ushul al-fiqh*, *ra'yu* is seen as an individual's viewpoint on an issue that is not explicitly addressed in the Koran and the authentic Sunnah of the Prophet. Regarding the concept of *hurriyyah al-ra'y*, HB further stated:

Ra'y is a meticulously crafted proclamation, obtained after a comprehensive examination and carried out with utmost seriousness. Thorough and careful study and research are required to comprehend hurriyyah al-ra'y. Individuals are free to express their opinions as long as they follow legal limitations, avoid blasphemy or slander, and depend on logical, factual, and responsible argumentation.

CS, a religion teacher at a public high school, regards freedom of speech as a vital tool in a democratic nation. He believes that freedom of expression embodies the essence of democracy. According to CS, freedom of expression serves as a tool to achieve the principle of checks and balances within a democratic society. CS further said:

A nation can only create a balance between different sociopolitical forces through healthy opposition if it guarantees freedom of expression. Freedom of speech is a fundamental human right that allows people to freely express their opinions, beliefs, impressions, judgments, attitudes, interpretations, thoughts, answers, estimates, and so on. It includes all types of expression, such as personal, social, economic, political, religious, cultural, and international interactions.

Nevertheless, some participants expressed their belief that certain matters were deemed inappropriate (MS), lacking aesthetic appeal (AN), unsuitable (NJ), unfit (AA), unethical (SL), rude (ET), out of context (KM), and should not be openly communicated or discussed on social media platforms. The topics that individuals believe should not be openly discussed on social media include mental and physical ailments, disabilities or personal restrictions of a physical, cognitive, mental, and emotional nature, an individual's religious or philosophical convictions, ethnic background, race, skin color, and matters concerning the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender/transsexual (LGBT) community. Statements on social media that include sensitive elements such as someone's religious affiliation, ethnic background, or sexual orientation, as well as derogatory terms or discriminatory remarks, are considered unethical, unattractive, impolite, and inappropriate.

Nevertheless, the perspectives of moderate religious teachers in West Java about the articulation of these delicate matters possess a predominantly moral and ethical character. They have a tendency to select and employ imperative expressions for moral and ethical direction, rather than using terms that imply a legal prohibition, limitation, or constraint. These expressions appear to be more in the form of advice, ideas and invites to utilize social media rather than explicitly prohibiting, restricting, or outright forbidding its use. Modest religious teachers perceive freedom of expression, encompassing social media, as a fundamental and crucial right. Consequently, they advocate for the unrestricted discussion of even controversial topics on social media platforms. While moderate religious teachers in

West Java acknowledge freedom of expression as a fundamental human right, they believe that its exercise should not infringe upon the human rights of others. Freedom of expression must not infringe upon or curtail the human rights of others.

The majority of moderate religious teachers in West Java make a clear distinction between the concepts of freedom of expression and freedom of thought. The implementation of freedom of expression will always have implications and intersect with other people, as it is closely tied to the sharing of opinions, views, impressions, stances, judgments, feelings, attitudes, interpretations, responses, and insights through various media channels, including social media. However, it is not necessary to always communicate or articulate freedom of thought to others. Individuals possess the ability to engage in unrestricted cognitive processes without external observers being privy to their thoughts.

Most interviewees expressed the belief that freedom of thought should be unrestricted and not subject to limitations, with the exception that Muslims should refrain from contemplating the nature and existence of Allah. Nevertheless, the issue would be altered if these opinions were subsequently communicated and articulated to the general public through social media platforms. The majority of participants not only perceive no necessity for imposing limitations on freedom of thought, but Islam itself actively promotes the ongoing contemplation and analysis of many occurrences in the universe. According to them, Islam considers freedom of thought as one of its fundamental religious principles. According to participants, there is a distinction between freedom of thinking and freedom of expression. The exercise of freedom of thought as a fundamental human right typically does not encroach upon the human rights of others. Hence, religious teachers in West Java advocate for unrestricted freedom of opinion. Nevertheless, limitations might be imposed on the right to freedom of speech in order to prevent it from causing disruption, annoyance, harm, fear, intimidation, or posing a danger to individuals or collectives. According to their perspective, the freedom to express oneself should not be abused to disseminate feelings of hatred, anger, intimidation, fear, threats, or terror towards others or specific groups.

Every moderate religious teacher interviewed conveyed their perspectives on the significance of rules and the execution of laws as a means of restricting freedom of expression. Legal regulations are necessary to constrain freedom of speech in order to prevent arbitrary, negligent, and random limitations on this liberty. CS regards the rule of law as the most efficient means for imposing limitations on freedom of expression. The aforementioned perspective was also shared by MAS, a teacher at a State *Madrasah Aliyah* (Religious Higher Secondary School) in Cirebon City; SA, a teacher of religion at a *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* (Religious Elementary School) in Bekasi; ES, a religion teacher at a junior high school in the Kuningan Regency; DAR, a religion teacher at an elementary school in Cirebon Regency. According to MAS, freedom of opinion is not fully unrestricted. According to his perspective, an individual's freedom is constrained by the freedom of others. Therefore, it is crucial to have mutual respect for each other, particularly for those holding divergent opinions. This ensures that conflicts do not undermine unity.

FH, a religious teacher in a school in Indramayu Regency, examines the concept of freedom from two distinct angles: positive freedom and negative freedom. Positive freedom, as defined by him, refers to the freedom that enables an individual to fully develop and realize their potential. From the standpoint of positive freedom, an individual has the ability to transcend their base instincts and desires, as well as overcome issues related to self-

esteem and self-respect, which may lead them to engage in hate speech. According to FH perspective,

The internal presence of rationality and lofty, moral notions can help an individual resist their undesirable inclinations and achieve freedom in a productive way. On the other hand, the characterizes negative freedom as the condition in which people free themselves from all types of limitations, especially those imposed by tradition, ideology, and religious dogma.

The perspectives of moderate religious teachers in West Java, who endorse limitations on freedom of speech through this statutory law, align with many regulations concerning freedom of expression, both internationally and domestically. According to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), limitations on freedom of expression are imposed primarily to protect the rights and freedoms of others, and to meet reasonable standards of morality, order, and the overall well-being in a democratic society. This article highlights the requirement for restrictions to be implemented in accordance with legal regulations, align with one of the explicitly stated objectives in the document, and be deemed necessary. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) introduces provisions that provide limitations on fundamental liberty, namely to safeguard the rights or reputation of others, public health, and societal moral standards.

At the national level, limitations on freedom of speech are governed by the constitution of the country. According to Article 28J paragraph (1), individuals are required to uphold the rights of others in the organized existence of society, nation, and state. According to Article 28J paragraph (2), individuals must adhere to legal restrictions while exercising their rights and freedoms. These restrictions are intended to protect the rights and freedoms of others and to meet reasonable demands based on moral, religious, security, and public order considerations in a democratic society. Law Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights also delineates limitations on the exercise of freedom of expression. Article 70 highlights that when exercising their rights and fulfilling their obligations, individuals are required to adhere to the limitations set by the law. This is done to ensure that the rights and freedoms of others are recognized and respected and to meet reasonable requirements based on ethical principles, security, and public order in a democratic society. Article 73 explicitly specifies that the rights and freedoms outlined in this legislation may only be restricted in accordance with the law, with the only purpose of ensuring the acknowledgment and observance of human rights and the fundamental liberties of others, as well as upholding morality, public order, and national interests.

Typically, religious teachers in West Java perceive freedom of expression as freedom that can be restricted, also known as derogable rights (Schüller, 2010), rather than an absolute human right that cannot be restricted, or non-derogable rights (Sudhakar, 2011). The categorization of human rights into derogable rights and non-derogable rights is established by the ICCPR. Non-derogable rights refer to rights that are inherently absolute and cannot be diminished in their realization by states, especially in times of crisis. The non-derogable rights encompass the right to life, the right to be free from any form of torture, the right to be free from any form of slavery, the right to be free from detention due to failure to fulfill an agreement (such as debt and receivable), the right to be free from retroactive criminal decisions, the rights as a legal subject, and the right to freedom of thought, belief, and religion (Fitzpatrick, 1994). Derogable rights refer to rights that the state can diminish or restrict. The derogable rights and freedoms encompass the freedom to peacefully assemble,

the freedom of association which includes the ability to form and join labor unions, and the freedom of expression which encompasses the right to seek, receive, and disseminate information and ideas without any geographical limitations, whether through verbal or written means.

If freedom of expression is unrestricted and absolute, it can potentially impinge upon or jeopardize the human rights of other individuals or groups. Therefore, limitations can be imposed on the right to freedom of speech, which is a fundamental human right. However, these limitations are only permissible through the enactment of laws that seek to ensure the acknowledgment and reverence of the rights and freedoms of others, as well as the fulfillment of justifiable moral, security, and public order concerns within a democratic society.

3.2. The Perils of Hate Speech

Every moderate religious teacher interviewed regarded hate speech as an exceedingly grave issue confronting contemporary society. They are alarmed by the escalating proliferation of hate speech incidents on social media platforms. Hate speech refers to provocative expressions that provoke hatred towards persons or groups based on their ethnicity, religion, religious sect, belief, race, intergroup relations, skin color, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation (Halpern & Aydin, 2020; Pollock et al., 2023). This issue is of the utmost gravity. The contemporary era presents significant challenges for communities and nations, as every individual can communicate their opinions, positions, attitudes, and judgments through social media. Consequently, FA regards hate speech on social media as a significant obstacle to achieving national integration. If not effectively managed, the proliferation of hate speech on social media platforms has the potential to severely damage the social and cultural cohesion of a nation. HB referred to the proliferation of hate speech, particularly on social media platforms, as a peril to the very existence of human civilization. DG, a teacher at a public Islamic institution, perceives the rising instances of hate speech on social media as an aberration in the realm of communication and information technology, which facilitates the swift advancement of social media platforms. NR, a moderate teacher from Cikarang-Bekasi, considers hate speech to be a criminal offense, particularly when it involves insulting, defaming, provoking, inciting, or spreading false information and news. Furthermore, NR believes that any actions that promote or have the potential to cause discriminatory treatment, violence, loss of life, or social clashes and conflicts should be regarded as criminal acts of hate speech. According to CS,

Hate speech can lead to acts of discrimination, violence, or even fatalities if it is not anticipated and appropriately punished under the law. Hate speech can appear in a variety of forms, including political campaigns, speeches, banners, social media posts, public opinion statements, protests, religious lectures, printed and electronic mass media, and pamphlets. It is prohibited not just by law but also by religion, especially if it contains elements of provocation, insults, and harassment.

Moderate religious teachers in West Java beliefs consider law enforcement to be a crucial tool in combating the proliferation of hate speech, particularly on social media platforms. Taking legal measures against those who engage in hate speech is a crucial and effective approach to combat the dissemination of hate speech. Additionally, they hold the belief that impartially, transparently, and accurately upholding the legal system may safeguard and strengthen society against the proliferation of hate speech on social media.

Law enforcement officials must possess resolute determination and bravery to apprehend anyone who disseminates hate speech on social media. They assert that the bravery and resoluteness of law enforcement officials are crucial and pressing, given the alarming prevalence of hate speech dissemination on social media. Nevertheless, IGP, CS, ES, DAR, NR, HH, ADAB, BA, JAM, AMT, AK, SP, DZ, MRS, OL, MAS contend that relying just on law enforcement is insufficient to address the proliferation of hate speech on social media.

According to the IGP, relying solely on a legal approach is insufficient in addressing the proliferation of hate speech on social media. He argues that a comprehensive strategy, particularly addressing social, cultural, and educational aspects, is necessary. CS argues that in order to effectively combat hate speech, legal punishment against perpetrators must be complemented by preventive measures such as social action and education. BA asserts that laws pertaining to the implementation of freedom of expression can be enforced by a legal method, yet it is important to note that the legal component is not the sole factor to consider. He asserts that religion serves a crucial function in safeguarding persons from defamation, falsehoods, animosity, and interpersonal conflict. AMT asserts that a purely legalistic approach is insufficient to attain genuine justice, as he contends that not every thief merits incarceration. In addition, he regards religion, moral norms, and ethics as crucial factors in addressing the issue of hate speech proliferation. AK perceives law enforcement as insufficient, particularly due to the judicial system's tendency to oversimplify complex situations. According to him, a comprehensive approach is necessary, which involves examining the underlying cause of the problem, analyzing the current conditions, and considering potential consequences and strategies for addressing them. This will allow for a thorough understanding of the building's condition, achieved through a thoughtful and prudent approach. DZ suggests that addressing the proliferation of hate speech may not solely require a legal response. Meanwhile, employing a legal strategy can indeed serve as a deterrence. Nevertheless, it is imperative to implement religious methodologies, educational initiatives, psychological transformations, exemplary figures, or alternative strategies to effectively curb the proliferation of hate speech in the foreseeable future.

IR, a moderate religious teacher from Sukabumi, likewise harbors doubts over the efficacy of solely relying on legal measures to address the issue of hate speech proliferation. According to IR,

Relying solely on legal concerns can exacerbate the problem since it lacks moral or ethical understanding. There must be a way for spiritual, moral, and conscious contemplation. If people establish the habit of examining their feelings before speaking, the spread of hate speech can be contained and decreased.

MAS argues that relying solely on a legal strategy is insufficient to curb the proliferation of hate speech on social media, particularly when the enforcement of the law exhibits inconsistent application. On one hand, the law exhibits a stringent approach towards the opposing group, whilst, on the other hand, the legislation demonstrates a lenient stance towards one's own group. SA also expressed the same idea that as long as the law remains a "tool" of power and pressure on those in authority, solely focused on maintaining social stability, it becomes unreliable for achieving genuine justice. Consequently, relying on the law to combat the proliferation of hate speech becomes challenging. using social media platforms.

Almost all moderate religious teachers in West Java, who were interviewed, consider relying solely on legal measures to be ineffectual in addressing the spread of hate speech on social media. They argue that hate speech is a multifaceted issue influenced by various complicated factors. SP believes that the dissemination of hate speech should not be solely attributed to the writings or words of the perpetrator. Instead, it should be properly and comprehensively examined. In legal terms, this requires a process of reconstruction when someone transmits hate speech. The evaluation of hate speech expressed by an individual cannot be made in a generalized manner. However, it is crucial to analyze the contextual factors and prevailing environment during the dissemination of such speech. This examination helps determine if the statement or utterance in question meets the criteria for constituting hate speech with criminal implications.

According to the majority of participants, the issue of freedom of expression and hate speech on social media is a complex problem. Freedom of expression allows citizens to openly express their opinions, stances, attitudes, judgments, and responses in the public sphere. However, it is important to note that this freedom can potentially infringe upon the human rights of others. The participants assert that the only solution to this predicament is the implementation of unambiguous legal regulations that are devoid of any ambiguity and are enforced impartially. Participants have reported that the Indonesian government has established various laws and regulations to govern freedom of expression and hate speech. These include the Criminal Code (KUHP), Law Number 12 of 2005 on the Ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Law Number 39 of 1999 on Human Rights, Law Number 40 of 1999 on the Press, Law Number 32 of 2002 on Broadcasting, Law Number 11 of 2008 on Information and Electronic Transactions, Law Number 33 of 2009 on Film, Law Number 19 of 2016 on Amendments to Law Number 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions, and Circular Letter from the Chief of Police Number SE/06/X/2015 on Handling Hate Speech. From a regulatory standpoint, the issue of freedom of expression and the dissemination of hate speech on social media is unambiguous and comprehensive. Nevertheless, certain individuals have raised concerns over the implementation of these rules and regulations. MAS exhibits a propensity for being incisive when dealing with adversaries, however lacks subtlety when interacting with allies and one's own faction. In the context of SA language, the law serves as a mechanism of authority and a method of exerting pressure, with the only objective of establishing social stability.

Legal regulations that lack open, clear, honest, and equitable enforcement will inevitably erode citizens' confidence in the law and its enforcers. This circumstance will further propagate hate speech. Certain moderate religious scholars perceive law enforcement in Indonesia as embodying the ideals of transparency, fairness, and impartiality. However, other moderate religious teachers express apprehension that law enforcement endeavors have not been optimal and may appear to be discriminatory. This circumstance is one of the factors that contribute to the persistent prevalence of hate speech on social media.

3.3. Multicultural Education: Alternatives to Law Enforcement

The conflict between the rights of citizens to freely express their thoughts and the proliferation of hate speech on social media is a challenge for social and political science experts in devising alternative approaches and remedies. Several religious teachers in West Java fail to offer effective remedies that can reconcile these two conflicting challenges. When

the legal system and its enforcement have failed to establish a harmonious equilibrium between freedom of speech and the dissemination of hate speech, certain moderate religious teachers propose methods for cultivating individuality and moral conduct. IR provides character education as a viable and sustainable option. SP and BA, offering religious education and moral (*akhlaq*) education. DZ provides religious instruction, promotes a transformative change in mindset, and offers exemplary individuals as models to emulate. AK and IGP provide a comprehensive approach that encompasses cultural, social, and educational aspects. CS provides a wide range of educational, social, political, and religious perspectives. SA adopts a humanistic perspective, specifically one that perceives reality as being imbued with interpersonal connections. HH prioritizes education that fosters the internalization of the prophetic values of the Prophet Muhammad and promotes spiritual growth among Muslims.

Several other participants depended on multicultural education. The most rational, well-founded, methodical, and enduring solution they provide is multicultural education. FA, HB, DG, MS, ES, DJ, and NZ, among others, provide multicultural education as a viable option for fostering a developed democratic culture, upholding the principles of free speech, and curbing the dissemination of hate speech. According to their perspective, multicultural education is seen to have the capacity to curb the dissemination of hate speech due to various factors. According to DG,

Educational institutions have not completely eliminated biases based on religion, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, and other characteristics. By implementing multicultural education, educational institutions and communities can position themselves as advocates for inclusive intercultural awareness, free of discriminatory policies, acts of violence, cultural-religious-ethnic prejudice, and stereotypes.

As per the FA, hate speech refers to the act of expressing derogatory, harassing, harmful, blasphemous, offensive, humiliating, or demeaning remarks towards an individual or a group of people. This behavior is generally a result of the perpetrators and those who propagate it lacking multicultural understanding. According to his perspective, multicultural education is thought to provide pupils with the necessary information, understanding, and consciousness to coexist in a diverse society. From HB standpoint, multicultural education aims to provide students with opportunities to acknowledge and value their own cultural history, while also showing respect for and acknowledging the cultures of others. In addition, he holds the belief that multicultural education is intended to provide students with the capacity to confront and manage challenges stemming from the cultural variety within society, such as addressing the issue of hate speech dissemination. MS also believes that multicultural education may provide students with the necessary skills to effectively navigate the overwhelming amount of information available on social media platforms. This education aims to enhance students' abilities to discern, filter, and share messages and information in a more informed and thoughtful manner. According to ES, multicultural education can shield kids from abhorrent characteristics and principles throughout their engagement with diverse groups.

In addition, DJ believes that multicultural education can stimulate the inclination and enthusiasm to engage in the establishment of connections that encompass a wide range of viewpoints and a diversity of views towards intergroup friendships, as well as the acknowledgment of multiple sources of identity. NZ also voiced a somewhat similar

perspective. He asserts that multicultural education has the potential to inspire pupils to actively engage in interacting with individuals from diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds. He believes that multicultural education will provide pupils with the necessary abilities to resolve conflicts that frequently arise from ethnic, religious, and cultural disparities.

Multicultural education offers an alternative approach to fostering a mature and civilized culture with high ethical standards. It aims to promote not only the right to freedom of expression but also the wise utilization of social media for searching, sharing, and disseminating messages and information. Scholars have identified this approach as a reasonable, realistic, and sustainable long-term solution (Alt & Raichel, 2020; Kuppens, Ibrahim, & Langer, 2020; Wahyono, Budiningsih, Suyantingsih, & Rahmadonna, 2022). Implementing fair regulations and effective law enforcement to encourage multicultural education is a valuable resource in safeguarding society against the dissemination of hate speech (Bailey, Bordogna, Harvey, Jones, & Walton, 2021).

More precisely, religious teachers in West Java who hold moderate views do not provide curriculum concepts and tactics for multicultural education in order to foster a community that is conscious and accepting of many cultures. Nevertheless, when queried about the necessity of incorporating multicultural education issues into the school curriculum, the majority of participants responded that it was unnecessary. The incorporation of multicultural education is feasible across all academic disciplines and educational levels. Thus, in their view, it is imperative for every teacher to possess multicultural competency, which encompasses the necessary qualities, capabilities, proficiencies, and aptitude to comprehend and address the challenges arising from ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. Teachers must possess a comprehensive understanding of multiculturalism, along with the necessary abilities, perspectives, and values, in order to effectively include multicultural education in their curriculum (Alazzi, 2017). Put simply, teachers must possess multicultural knowledge, awareness, and abilities to effectively include multicultural education in their disciplines.

In addition to possessing multicultural competency, teachers must also possess the capacity to cultivate active, innovative, creative, effective, and enjoyable learning methodologies in order to ensure the successful internalization of multicultural values in each student throughout multicultural education activities. Teachers must possess an open and adaptable mindset when it comes to managing student diversity. They should be capable of comprehending variations in students' learning styles and be willing to embrace differences in disciplines, backgrounds, race, and gender. Teachers should also demonstrate respect and appreciation for minority students, be willing to collaborate with various stakeholders, and have a forward-thinking approach. Additionally, they should be attuned to students' ethnic behavior and exhibit sensitivity and tolerance towards differences in perspectives, beliefs, and religions.

4. Conclusion

It is crucial to building a broader perspective in reading Islamic religious teachers attitudes and behavior. Internalizing and socializing religious moderation literacy continuously among Islamic religious teachers is also important. The researchers hold this perspective due to the positive implications of the research findings. Respect for and protection of the right to free speech is an admirable quality and an essential indicator of a

democratic society. In West Java, moderate Islamic religious teachers hold that restrictions on free speech can be put in place to protect the rights of other people or groups, and that these restrictions can only be enforced when there are clear legal mandates to do so. Also, they think that basic rights shouldn't be used to spread hate speech and other types of enmity, especially on social media. They contend that laws and enforcement mechanisms that protect equality and justice can successfully address the spread of hate speech on social media. No amount of regulation or policing can stop the spread of hate speech, though. Social, educational, familial, cultural, and religious factors must all be included in a comprehensive plan. In order to build a modern, civilized society that respects individual liberty, encourages open dialogue, and discourages bigotry, multicultural education is essential. This kind of instruction can be easily integrated into any course of study at any school.

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