

RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN THE WORKPLACE: Patterns of Social Interaction of Muslim and Non-Muslim Employees at the University of Madura

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk Mendeskripsikan Moderasi Beragama di Ruang Kerja: pola interaksi sosial antara pegawai Muslim dan non-Muslim di Universitas Madura. Keberagaman agama di lingkungan kerja merupakan realitas sosial yang menuntut terciptanya hubungan yang harmonis melalui sikap toleransi, saling menghormati, dan kerja sama yang berlandaskan nilai-nilai moderasi beragama. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam dan observasi terhadap pegawai Muslim dan non-Muslim serta pihak-pihak yang terkait. Data dianalisis menggunakan teknik reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil Penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pola interaksi sosial antara pegawai Muslim dan non-Muslim di Universitas Madura berlangsung secara asosiatif melalui kerja sama, komunikasi yang terbuka, sikap saling menghargai, dan hubungan profesional yang tidak dipengaruhi oleh perbedaan agama. Implementasi Nilai-Nilai Moderasi beragama tercermin dalam praktik toleransi terhadap pelaksanaan ibadah, penghormatan terhadap hari-hari besar keagamaan, pemberian kesempatan yang setara dalam menjalankan tugas, serta komitmen bersama untuk menjaga suasana kerja yang inklusif dan kondusif. Meskipun terdapat perbedaan keyakinan, potensi konflik dapat diminimalkan melalui budaya Kampus yang menekankan penghormatan terhadap keberagaman, kepemimpinan yang inklusif, serta kesadaran individu untuk menjunjung tinggi nilai kemanusiaan dan profesionalisme. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa moderasi beragama telah menjadi landasan penting dalam membangun interaksi sosial yang harmonis di lingkungan kerja Universitas Madura

Kata kunci: Moderasi Beragama, interaksi sosial, Pegawai Muslim dan Non-Muslim.

Abstract

This study aims to describe Religious Moderation in the Workplace: a pattern of social interaction between Muslim and non-Muslim employees at the University of Madura. Religious diversity in the work environment is a social reality that demands the creation of harmonious relationships through tolerance, mutual respect, and cooperation based on the values of religious moderation. This study uses a qualitative approach. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews and observations of Muslim and non-Muslim employees and related parties. Data were analyzed using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing techniques. The results of the study show that the pattern of social interaction between Muslim and non-Muslim employees at the University of Madura takes place associatively through cooperation, open communication, mutual respect, and professional relationships that are not influenced by religious differences. The implementation of the Values of Religious Moderation is reflected in the practice of tolerance for the implementation of worship, respect for religious holidays, the provision of equal opportunities in carrying out duties, and a joint commitment to maintain an inclusive and conducive work atmosphere. Despite differences in beliefs, the potential for conflict can be minimized through a campus culture that emphasizes respect for diversity, inclusive leadership, and individual awareness to uphold human values and professionalism. This study concludes that religious moderation has become an important foundation in building harmonious social interaction in the work environment of the University of Madura.

Keywords: Religious Moderation, social interaction, Muslim and Non-Muslim Employees.

Introduction

Religious moderation basically prioritizes balance in terms of beliefs, morals, discourse, and actions as religious expressions of individuals or groups (Abror, 2020) Religious attitudes and behaviors based on these balanced values manifest in the form of recognizing and understanding different individuals and groups and respecting pluralism (Yusuf et al., 2022) The above concepts are relevant to be applied in various social spaces, including in the work environment. Workspaces inhabited by individuals with different religious backgrounds require a healthy pattern of social interaction in order to create a conducive, professional, and harmonious work atmosphere. Good social interaction not only supports work effectiveness, but also strengthens solidarity and mutual trust between employees.

The University of Madura, as one of the higher education institutions on Madura Island, is in the midst of the social reality of the Madurese people who are known to be religious and thick with Islamic values. However, as an inclusive academic institution, the work environment at this university is not free from diversity, including the existence of Muslim and non-Muslim employees (Akhyar, 2025) This diversity requires harmonization so that the productivity and vision of the institution can be achieved without being hampered by friction based on religious sentiments (Albana, 2023) On the other hand, the existence of 4 indicators of Religious Moderation, which include national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodation to local wisdom, can usher in a pattern of social interaction that can realize a moderate, inclusive, and open social life (Nasrudin et al., 2024) This is where the importance of actualizing religious moderation as a social glue.

Referring to the description above, this study aims to take an in-depth picture of the pattern of social interaction between Muslim and non-Muslim employees at the University of Madura, as well as how the values of religious moderation are implemented in the daily workspace. This research is important because the issue of intolerance and religion-based conflicts is still a challenge in various social environments, including educational institutions. The presence of religious moderation in the university work environment is expected to be an example of harmonious multicultural living practices (Anzaikhan et al., 2023) In addition, the results of this research can be used as evaluation and recommendation material for educational institutions in building an inclusive, tolerant, and diverse work culture.

There are a variety of previous research that is correlated with the main discussion of this research, including the Athoillah Islamy Research on Social Interaction Patterns in Religious Moderation in Indonesia (All et al., 2025) This study discusses the relationship between social interaction and religious moderation in a sociological perspective. Gap Reaserch and fundamental

differences from Religious Moderation Research in the workplace: The pattern of social interaction between Muslim and Non-Muslim employees at the University of Madura with the above research lies in the study of the social interaction patterns of Muslim and Non-Muslim employees in the workplace is still few and limited. Therefore, this study has novelty because it combines 3 (three) Aspects at the same time, namely Religious Moderation, Interfaith Social Interaction, and Context of Workspaces in Higher Education.

Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach (Supandi, 2025) The qualitative approach was chosen because the research aims to deeply understand the phenomenon of religious moderation in the social interaction of Muslim and non-Muslim employees in the work environment of the University of Madura. Descriptive research is used to describe the patterns of social interaction, forms of tolerance, cooperation, communication, and the dynamics of relationships between employees of different religions. The research was carried out at the University of Madura. This location was chosen because there is religious diversity in the work environment that allows for social interaction between Muslim and non-Muslim employees in academic and administrative activities. The subjects of the study are Muslim and non-Muslim employees at the University of Madura who are involved in daily work activities. The research informants were selected using the purposive sampling technique, which is the selection of informants based on certain considerations according to the needs of the research

The data sources in this study were obtained directly from the results of interviews and observations (Miles & Huberman, 1994) with Muslim and non-Muslim employees regarding the patterns of social interaction and religious moderation practices in the work environment. The data sources were then analyzed using data reduction techniques, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. Meanwhile, the data collection techniques used in this study were through direct observation of work activities and social interactions between employees within the University of Madura, such as daily communication, teamwork, tolerance, and respect for religious differences, besides that the data collection technique through interviews was carried out in depth to informants (Sugiyono, 2013) research to obtain information about experiences, views, and forms of religious moderation in the work environment.

Research Findings and Discussion**Social Interaction Patterns of Muslim and Non-Muslim Employees and Forms of Religious Moderation**

The reality of Social Life will always be brought together in various aspects of pluralism in existing social life. On the one hand, this plurality can have a positive impact on social life to complement each other. But on the other hand, it does not just trigger the emergence of social interaction conflicts. To solve these problems or potential conflicts that can occur, strategic efforts are needed that can bring together distinctive aspects in order to achieve a harmonious form of social interaction relations. In this context, the attitude of harmony between social life can be realized through the manifestation of pluralism in socio-cultural and religious pluralism (Putri & Fadlullah, 2022)

The relationship of social life between humans, both between individuals or between groups and between individuals and groups, requires diverse patterns of social interaction. In other words, there are certainly various forms of social interaction that can occur or bridge their social life relationships with various interests that are behind them. In this case, there are at least two forms of social interaction patterns in general, namely associative interaction patterns and dissociative interaction patterns. Each of these patterns in their implementation also has their own strategies. Further description, as follows:

Associative Patterns

The existence of associative patterns in the realm of social interaction life praxis will be able to lead humans to the orientation of the realization of a form of social integration (Ependi et al., 2023) Efforts to achieve this orientation, in the realm of application of the associative interaction pattern, can be carried out with various strategies, as follows: First, cooperation. This strategy allows it to be implemented when the condition of the community can realize that it has the same interests, so that they can agree to realize the existence of a form of cooperation to achieve these common goals or interests. This can be passed through various forms of cooperation, such as bargaining, co-optation, coalitions and joint ventures. Second, accommodation. This strategy is a form of adjustment effort between individuals or between individuals and groups, as well as between groups in order to minimize, prevent or overcome tensions and chaos. The accommodation process is divided into several forms, including: (a) *Coercion*, which is accommodation whose process has a form of coercion. (b) *Compromise*, which is accommodation that emphasizes each party involved to reduce its demands. This is oriented in order to achieve a settlement of the occurrence of conflict. (c) *Mediation*, which is an effort to overcome the conflict through the step of asking for help from a

neutral third party. (d) Arbitration, which is an attempt to reach a form of compromise by asking for help from a third party that has been agreed upon by both parties or institutions whose position is more than the parties in conflict (e) Justice, which is an effort to resolve the conflict through the court. (f) *Stalemate*, i.e. each party to which a conflict is occurring has equal power and will try to stop the conflict because each of them is no longer able to advance or retreat. (g) Tolerance, which is an accommodation that is realized without formal approval. (h) Conciliation, which is an effort to bring together various interests of the disputing parties in order to achieve a common consensus (Baidawi et al., 2025) Third, assimilation, which is an effort to minimize various aspects of distinctions that exist in several individuals or groups in people's lives so that there is similarity in attitudes, mentalities, and actions to achieve common interests. Fourth, acculturation. This strategy can be realized when a group of people with a certain culture is faced with a variety of elements from another culture. Then in the course of time, the elements of the foreign culture become able to respond positively in their own culture by not eliminating the personality character from the existing cultural reality.

Disassociative Patterns

In contrast to the associative interaction pattern as described earlier, the existence of a dissociative pattern in human social interaction relations can lead to the orientation of the occurrence of forms of division and separation. The existence of this dissociative pattern in the realm of practice can be found in 3 models of social interaction strategies. First, competition, which is the individual effort of a person or social group to obtain a victory or a result that is carried out competitively. Second, contravention, which is a form of competition and conflict (conflict) (Yunus, 2014) Third, conflict, which is the process of social interaction between individuals or certain groups of society in the form of gaps or disputes triggered by differences in understanding and fundamental interests.

The factors that can give birth to a conflict in social interaction include. First, ethnocentrism. The existence of this factor is in the form of an assessment that positions the group itself as the center of everything. Meanwhile, other groups will always be compared and occupied with the standards of the group they follow. Second, stereotypes. This factor is in the form of beliefs that generalize, demean, or exaggerate the existence of a certain ethnic group. In practice, this stereotype bravado can trigger the occurrence of a form of individual identification on the basis of members of a certain group and also assess the individual's self. Second, prejudice. This factor is in the form of resistance to all evidence that can potentially shift its existence, thus causing negative thoughts in other individuals or groups that do not suit them (Hariyanto, 2016)

The associative and dissociative interaction patterns that have been described at length above will be an analytical theory in identifying the existence of the dimensions of social interaction patterns in the four indicators of religious moderation that are the object of the core discussion of this research.

The results of the study show that the pattern of social interaction between Muslim and non-Muslim employees at the University of Madura takes place associatively through cooperation, open communication, mutual respect, and professional relationships that are not influenced by religious differences. The implementation of the Values of Religious Moderation is reflected in the practice of tolerance for the implementation of worship, respect for religious holidays, equal opportunities in carrying out duties, and a shared commitment to maintain an inclusive and conducive work atmosphere. Despite differences in beliefs, the potential for conflict can be minimized through a campus culture that emphasizes respect for diversity, inclusive leadership, and individual awareness to uphold human values and professionalism. The pattern of social interaction between employees is formed through formal work relationships and informal social relationships. Formal interactions occur in meetings, work coordination, administrative services, and other institutional activities. In these interactions, employees show professionalism and help each other in completing tasks. Meanwhile, in terms of employees, they also establish social relationships such as chatting during breaks, eating together, and helping each other in personal and social activities

The implementation and form of Religious Moderation in the workplace Based on the results of interviews and observations, religious moderation in the work environment of the University of Madura can be seen through mutual respect between Muslim and non-Muslim employees. Employees show an open attitude to differences of belief and do not impose religious views on colleagues. Some of the implementations of religious moderation found include:

Tolerance Between Employees

Muslim and non-Muslim employees respect each other in carrying out their respective worship. When Muslim employees perform prayers, non-Muslim employees give them the opportunity and respect the time of worship. Conversely, Muslim employees also respect the religious holidays of non-Muslim employees (Abror, 2020)

Cooperation in Institutional Activities

Work interaction shows good cooperation regardless of religion. Employees together complete administrative work, academic activities, and campus programs professionally.

Inclusive Communication

In daily communication, employees use polite language and avoid discussions that have the potential to cause religious conflicts. This creates a comfortable and harmonious work atmosphere.

Respect for Differences

Employees understand that religious differences are part of social diversity in the campus environment. The attitude of respecting differences is seen in social relationships that remain close despite having different beliefs.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research on Religious Moderation in the Workplace: Social Interaction Patterns of Muslim and Non-Muslim Employees at the University of Madura, it can be concluded that the pattern of social interaction between Muslim and non-Muslim employees at the University of Madura takes place in a harmonious, associative, and professional manner. The interaction that exists is not based on differences in religious identity, but on the same purpose as part of a higher education institution. This form of interaction can be seen in cooperation between employees, open communication, mutual assistance in carrying out tasks, and an attitude of mutual respect for each other's rights and beliefs. Religious differences are not an obstacle in building social relationships and effective work relationships.

The implementation of religious moderation values in daily work dynamics is reflected through the practice of tolerance, respect for the freedom to exercise worship, respect for the celebration of religious holidays, and equal treatment without discrimination in the division of duties and opportunities to participate in institutional activities. Values such as tolerance (*tasamuh*), balance (*tawazun*), justice (*i'tidal*), and deliberation (*syura*) are the foundation for building an inclusive and conducive work culture. This condition is supported by an organizational culture that upholds professionalism, inclusive leadership, and the awareness of all employees to maintain harmony in the work environment.

Thus, religious moderation at the University of Madura is not only understood as a normative concept, but has been implemented in daily work life practices through social interaction that respects each other and respects diversity. The application of these values contributes to the creation of a peaceful work environment, strengthens social cohesion between employees, and improves the effectiveness and quality of organizational performance. The findings of this study show that a work environment that prioritizes religious moderation can be a model in building harmonious social relations in a pluralistic society.

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