INCLUSIVE RELIGIOUS PARADIGM WITHIN ACADEMIA: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LECTURERS' VIEWPOINTS ON INTERRELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND PLURALISM IN INDONESIA

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Abstract: The belief system of academicians has an impact on how religious education (RE) is carried out in public universities. The ideology of RE lecturers - whether it is moderate, radical, or liberal - is greatly influenced by their own religious beliefs. The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between religious paradigm of religious education lecturers on interreligious tolerance and pluralism in public universities in Indonesia. The study sample comprised 142 lecturers drawn from ten public universities in Indonesia. A mixed method research design guided this study, where qualitative data was used to reinforce or clarify the findings from the quantitative data. The data was statistically assessed using the nonparametric Mann-Whitney U-test to reveal whether the demographic profiles of RE lecturers was related to their religious paradigm regarding the relationship between religion-state, inter-religious relations and intra-religious relations. The study's findings indicate that the lecturer's personal beliefs about religion affect their opinions on the relationship between the state and religion, as well as the relationships within religious groups. Moreover, religious educators have a middling level of comprehension of their religious paradigm. To promote understanding and harmony among the academic community, it is suggested that a platform for religious moderation be established at public colleges where educators and students of various religions can converse and resolve fundamentalism.

Keywords: Religious Paradigm, Religious Education, Pluralism, Interreligious Tolerance, Higher Education

1. INTRODUCTION

Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System states that "every student in each education unit has the right to receive religious education according to the religion he adheres to and is taught by educators of the same religion. This means that at every level of education, both elementary, middle and high levels, students have the right to receive religious education (RE) according to what is adhered to and taught by religious teachers who share the same religion as students (Kosim et al., 2023). Therefore, at all levels of education, including elementary, middle, and high school, students have the right to receive religious education in accordance with their belief system and taught by teachers who follow the same religion.

The need for the current study was felt for many reasons. First and foremost, the widespread understanding of radicalism and intolerance in Indonesia has threatened humanity and social harmony required to establish an inclusive approach. In 2017, the National Counterterrorism Agency *(Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme/BNPT)* and The Nusa Institute conducted a national survey to assess the community's defense against radicalism in 32 provinces of Indonesia. The survey examined factors that could deter radicalism, including

beliefs in law, welfare, defense and security, justice, freedom, religious profile, and local wisdom. Surprisingly, the top five provinces with high and low potential for radicalism differed from previous assumptions. The study found that some previously overlooked provinces, such as Bengkulu (58.58%), Gorontalo (58.48%), South Sulawesi (58.42%), Lampung (58.38%), and North Kalimantan (58.30%), had high potential for radicalism (Siswoyo, 2017).

Secondly, the Setara Institute's research on the tertiary environment revealed that ten state universities including most prestigious universities in Indonesia were exposed to Islamic radicalism (Institute, 2019). This wave of radicalism was brought about by exclusive religious groups such as salafi-wahabi, tarbiyah, and tahririyah (Umami, 2020). To address this issue, there is a need for tolerance and good communication among students, and the importance of religious education is to internalize values of democracy, pluralism, tolerance and more, based on moral values to pave the path for inclusiveness.

Thirdly, and most importantly, it has been noticed that the understanding of religion among students is influenced by lecturers of religion courses, because they are the ones who teach religion courses which are mandatory subjects to teach. The religious perspective oflecturers always plays a role in shaping religious education in tertiary institutions and in instilling moral values and character in the students taking a step towards inclusive approach (Ali et al., 2021). The concern arises when lecturers' religious beliefs start influencing their teaching of conventional religious education, such as Islam, Catholicism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism, and when the teachings of such radical lecturers do not align with the development of moral values that are the goals of religious education; or cultivating individuals who embody godliness, possess moral virtue, and promote peace and harmony among different religious communities (Ghufron et al., 2020; Nafi'a et al., 2022).

Last, but not the least, the Ministry of Education and Minister of Religion have overlapping goals in their policies related to RE. Within public campuses, RE material was usually taught in a separate course, namely the Personality Development Course *(Mata Kuliah Pengembangan Kepribadian/MPK)* which included goals that promoted religion as not only knowledge, but also a source of work ethics and social behavior in creating faithful and pious individuals (Fuadi et al., 2021). However, achieving these goals in RE is difficult due to factors such as the learning model and system for religious courses often lacking debate and arguments, and being doctrinal in nature (Achmad et al., 2023).

Therefore, it is vital to conduct research on the religious beliefs of lecturers who teach RE courses in public tertiary institutions and assess how it impacts their

implementation of RE. This research aims to identify the religious paradigms of the lecturers in religious universities and colleges in Indonesian higher education. Specifically, this study examined the following research questions:

1. What do religious education lecturers think about the connections between religion and the state?

2. What are the perspectives of religious education lecturers regarding interreligious relations?

3. What are the perspectives of religious education lecturers regarding intra-religious relations?

4. How do the demographic characteristics of lecturers relate to their religious paradigm?

This study premised that the factors raised in these research questions influence the lecturers' religious views, which penetrate into the RE they deliver in public universities. Addressing these issues can lead to the improvement of the quality of religious education in public universities. Furthermore, this study contributes to the existing literature on RE and its impact on society. By understanding how RE lecturers develop their religious beliefs and the factors that shape these beliefs, the study can provide insights into the influence of religious education on individuals and communities in terms of interreligious tolerance. Theoretical contribution is seen in the development of new insights and possible reformulations of current theories about the processes involved in the development of religious belief for religious education lecturers.

2.   THEORETICAL REVIEW

- *Religious Paradigm in Public Life*

Etymologically, the word paradigm comes from the Latin word *paradigma* and has its roots in the Greek language, where "para" means alongside, and *diegma* means exemplary or ideal (Kankam, 2019). In modern usage, a paradigm refers to a particular perspective or way of viewing the world, which serves as a framework for understanding complex or multifaceted problems (Dybicz & Hall, 2021). This perspective is formed through a process of thinking and knowledge reconstruction, resulting in a worldview that shapes one's behavior and actions. Religious views, in particular, are a form of knowledge that is seen as true and influential in shaping the attitudes and actions of individuals and organizations. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritize the correct positioning of religious understanding if progress is to be achieved on both an individual and societal level.

There are three main religious viewpoints: moderate, radical, and liberal. Moderation refers to the state of being balanced, not excessive or lacking. This concept is derived from the Latin word *moderatio,* which is associated with balance and avoiding extremes (Khotimah & Sukron, 2023). In Arabic, the term used for moderation is *wasath* or *wasathiyah,* which conveys the meanings of balance and justice (Putra, 2021). Someone who follows the principle of *wasathiyah* can be called a *washit,* which means mediator or intermediary. In Islamic tradition, the concept of *ummatan wasathan* is used to describe a moderate, exemplary group of Muslims who avoid extremes and do not align with radical or liberal interpretations ofIslam (Davids, 2017).

The second viewpoint is radical. The term radical has roots in Latin, coming from *radix* or *radici* which means having roots root and radicalism (Fautanu, 2022). Some define radical as an attempt to undergo fundamental change or return to original principles, in existing institutions or in political, social, or economic conditions (Choueiri, 2010). The Cambridge English Dictionary perceives radicalism as linked mainly to political activity and defines it as the belief in the need for broad social and political changes, or an extremist approach to political ideology. However, radicalism can also refer to a group, particularly a religious one, using symbols and teachings to gain power and/or modify the existing power structure of a nation through violent or extreme means, aligning with the social facets of political radicalism. According to Wibowo, individuals who are susceptible to religious radicalism exhibit four main traits: intolerance, fanaticism, exclusivity, and a desire for revolution (Wibowo, 2014). Intolerance arises when someone refuses to acknowledge others' beliefs and opinions because they believe their religious teachings are the only correct ones. Fanaticism stems from this intolerance, giving rise to the notion that only one's group has the correct views while other groups are in the wrong (Cavanaugh, 2011).

Exclusivity is characterized by an inclination to distance oneself from mainstream beliefs and practices, while a revolutionary attitude seeks overall change. It is important to note that religious radicalism is not a random occurrence, as Qadir explains that it generally results from misinterpretation of holy text, political (Qodir, 2016), legal, and economic injustices, inadequate law enforcement, and extremist education that prioritizes indoctrination and refuses to accept other viewpoints. In essence, radicalism is present in all religions, including those outside of Islam, as noted by Damayanti (Damayanti, 2015). Examples include the Sicarii of the Zealots, a radical group within Judaism that strongly opposed Roman occupation and adhered strictly to Jewish traditions. Similarly, Hindu and Buddhist radical groups have emerged in India and Myanmar, respectively, committing

violence against minority communities based on religious and political motives. Radical Christian groups such as the Army of God and Ku Klux Klan have also been known to use violence to achieve their goal of building a society based on Christian values.

According to Abdullah, radicalism in Islam emerged in the 20th century in response to an identity crisis resulting from Western colonialism and imperialism in the Middle East and the eroding of religious and moral bonds due to the modernization projects of Western-leaning governments (Abdullah, 2016). To address the resulting chaos of life, a radical movement has emerged calling for a return to pure Islamic teachings. This movement fights against secular regimes and seeks to regulate all aspects of life, including legal, socio-cultural, economic, and international relations norms according to Islamic Sharia. In Indonesia, this radical ideology views Islam as superior to other ideologies and demands the enforcement of Sharia as positive law, through regional regulations and other measures (Abdullah, 2016; Kamil et al., 2007).

Finally, the third approach to religious understanding is known as liberal. This perspective entails several characteristics, such as rejecting God's word, admitting past mistakes and prioritizing human reasoning over divine teachings, denying absolutes about God, promoting religious uncertainty, and endorsing popular religious beliefs and practices. Liberal adherents oppose theocracy and advocate for democracy and equality for women, regardless of religion. They also support freedom of thought and progress (Künkler & Lerner, 2016; Kurzman, 1999).

There are three main approaches in Islamic political thought regarding the connection between religion and the state. The first argues for the unity of religion and the state, where both cannot be separated and the state is seen as a religious institution based on divine sovereignty. This approach is often associated with Islamic fundamentalism and emphasizes the totality of Islam in all aspects of life. The second approach sees religion and the state as interrelated, with each needing the other for development and guidance. This view emphasizes the central position of shari'ah (Islamic law) as a source of legitimacy for political reality such as promoted by Al-Maududi (Al-Maududi, 1967). The third approach is secularistic, rejecting any connection between religion and the state and proposing a complete separation between the two. This view rejects any basis of the state on Islam and its influence on certain forms of government (Zulkifli, 2018).

A prominent Indonesian humanist, Abdurrahman Wahid, believes that incorporating a multicultural perspective in Islamic education will promote diverse and humanizing ideas, encouraging tolerance and harmony in a pluralistic society. Islamic education can foster a sense of mutual love and respect towards all

individuals, regardless of their religious background. Azra categorizes religious thought into extreme exclusivism, moderate exclusivism, and high inclusivism or liberalism (Azra, 2002). Radicalism is characterized by an intolerance towards differing opinions and beliefs, while liberalism values freedom and responsibility (Rachman, 2010). The ideology of liberalism is based on three fundamental values: life, liberty, and property. These values form the basis of several other important values, including the belief in the basic equality of all human beings, which means that despite differences in abilities, everyone should have equal opportunities in political, social, economic, and cultural aspects oflife. In settling problems that arise in political, social, economic, cultural, and state life, it is essential to conduct discussions and seek approval while striving to eliminate individual egoism. The government must obtain approval from those who are governed and should not act according to its own will but must act according to the will of the people. The running of the law is vital, and all laws and regulations made by the government must serve to protect and defend human rights. The concentration of interests should be on the individual, and the state should be viewed as an instrument used for the greater good. From a religious perspective, this study focuses on religious education lecturers' behavior and actions in achieving religious education goals that include faith and devotion to God Almighty, noble character, peaceful inter- and intra-religious relations, and the development of students' ability to understand, live, and practice religious values (Rachman, 2010).

- *Belief System in Religious Education*

Religious education (RE) plays a significant role in shaping social cohesion, fostering interreligious dialogue, and promoting tolerance and pluralism in diverse societies. RE plays a vital role in shaping the moral and ethical development of individuals and communities (Suparjo & Hidayah, 2023). It offers a structured platform for imparting knowledge of religious beliefs, practices, and values, nurturing a deeper understanding of one's faith, and fostering a sense of belonging to a particular religious' tradition. Moreover, religious education provides a framework for individuals to explore the complex and multifaceted aspects of spirituality and morality, contributing to their holistic personal and spiritual growth (Chi-Kin Lee, 2020).

As Putnam and Campbell noted, religious engagement can contribute to social capital and trust within communities, a vital component of social cohesion (Putnam & Campbell, 2012). This association is rooted in social capital theory, which posits that social networks and community bonds are essential for building a

cohesive society. Moreover, Putnam and Campbell emphasized that religious institutions often serve as hubs for community interactions (Putnam & Campbell, 2012), facilitating dialogue and cooperation among individuals of varying backgrounds. The role of religious education in interreligious dialogue is supported by theoretical frameworks such as the Dialogue of Civilizations (Huntington, 2004). This theory underscores the importance of understanding and engaging with diverse religious and cultural traditions to promote peaceful coexistence. Religious education serves as a vehicle for interfaith understanding by exposing students to different belief systems and encouraging respectful conversations. Additionally, King and Boyatzis proposed a pedagogy of dialogue in religious education (King & Boyatzis, 2004), highlighting the potential for constructive dialogues within educational settings. These dialogical approaches align with theoretical models of interfaith dialogue, emphasizing the importance of open, empathetic, and cooperative interactions (Jackson, 2014; Vaishnav, 2019).

The theoretical underpinnings of religious education's contribution to tolerance and pluralism are rooted in concepts like political liberalism and multiculturalism (Kymlicka, 2016; Kymlicka & Wayland, 1996; Rawls, 2020). Tolerance is central to the ideals of political liberalism, which recognizes diverse viewpoints and beliefs within a democratic society. RE can instill these values by promoting respect for differing faiths and worldviews. Multiculturalism theory emphasizes the importance of celebrating diversity and accommodating cultural and religious differences (Kymlicka, 2016; Kymlicka & Wayland, 1996). RE can function as a vehicle for multicultural education, fostering an appreciation for pluralism and encouraging students to embrace a range of cultural and religious perspectives. In addition to these theories, ethical frameworks, such as the ethics of care (Noddings, 2010), offer insights into the moral dimensions of religious education. The ethics of care underscores the significance of empathetic relationships and compassionate interactions. RE can incorporate these ethical principles by promoting care and understanding among individuals of varying religious backgrounds. Ultimately, these theoretical foundations highlight the multifaceted ways in which religious education contributes to social cohesion, interreligious dialogue, and the promotion of tolerance and pluralism within diverse societies.

Religious education in Indonesia has adopted a unique multifaith approach due to the country's rich religious diversity. With the majority of the population adhering to Islam, Indonesia has striven to accommodate various religious groups, including Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, and others. This inclusive approach is deeply embedded in the national curriculum and is exemplified by subjects like

"Religious Education in Perspective" that teach students about the beliefs, practices, and values of different religions, fostering respect and understanding (Makoyo, 2014; Raihani, 2014). The underlying aim is to instill not only religious knowledge but also the virtues of tolerance, pluralism, and interreligious dialogue, aligning with the nation's foundational Pancasila ideology that upholds the principles of religious diversity and social harmony (Mashuri et al., 2022). The multifaith religious education approach in Indonesia is seen as a means to promote unity and peaceful coexistence among its religiously diverse population. It empowers either educator and students to learn about and appreciate the religious convictions of their fellow citizens and cultivates a sense of shared citizenship. This comprehensive approach to RE has garnered praise for its potential to contribute to interfaith dialogue and understanding, fostering a sense of social cohesion among Indonesia's religiously diverse communities (Parker, 2014).

- *Islamic Fundamentalism and Secularistic Aspects in Indonesian Higher Education*

Fundamentalism and radicalism are two distinct yet closely related ideological constructs that have garnered significant scholarly attention. Fundamentalism is often characterized by a strict adherence to the core tenets of a religious or political belief system. It emphasizes a return to the fundamental or foundational principles of a particular ideology and often rejects modern interpretations or adaptations (Marty & Appleby, 1997). Fundamentalist movements can be found within various religious traditions, such as Christian fundamentalism, Islamic fundamentalism, or Hindu fundamentalism. While not all fundamentalists engage in violent activities, some may become radicalized, pushing their beliefs to extreme and sometimes violent ends (Horgan, 2008). Radicalism, on the other hand, refers to a more encompassing departure from established norms or a willingness to engage in extreme actions, whether they are of a political, religious, or social nature (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). While not all radicals are violent extremists, radicalization is a process that can lead individuals or groups to adopt extremist ideologies and engage in acts of violence, terrorism, or other forms of violent activism. Understanding the interplay between fundamentalism and radicalism is crucial in addressing the complexities of extremism and its impact on society.

Islamic fundamentalism is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon within the Muslim world. Rooted in a desire to return to what are perceived as the foundational and unaltered principles of Islam, Islamic fundamentalism often emphasizes strict adherence to Islamic law (Sharia) and the rejection of modern

interpretations (Gerges, 2009). It can manifest in various forms, from conservative religious movements to radical extremist groups. Not all individuals or organizations associated with Islamic fundamentalism engage in violence or extremist actions. However, Islamic fundamentalism can be a catalyst for radicalization, which can lead to acts of terrorism and violent activism (Wiktorowicz, 2005). Islamic fundamentalism has had a notable impact on education in many Muslim-majority countries. It often involves efforts to promote a strict interpretation of Islamic teachings within the educational system, emphasizing conservative values and traditional religious curricula (Abu-Rabiʿ, 2004). This influence is most evident in the development of Islamic schools (madrasas) that prioritize religious instruction and the propagation of a specific religious ideology. These schools can play a significant role in shaping the religious and moral beliefs of students (Rashid & Riaz, 2022). However, Islamic fundamentalism in education can also be a source of concern, as it may foster intolerance, religious radicalization, and a narrow worldview that limits exposure to diverse perspectives. The influence of Islamic fundamentalism on education varies from one country to another and can lead to debates about the balance between religious instruction and secular subjects within the curriculum.

Indonesia, a country known for its rich religious diversity, upholds the principle of Pancasila as its national ideology. Within Pancasila, one of the fundamental principles is "Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa" (Belief in the One and Only God). This principle reflects a recognition of religious faith but maintains a neutral stance with respect to any particular religion or denomination. It highlights the secularistic aspects of the Indonesian state, as it neither establishes a state religion nor imposes religious dogma on its citizens (Hefner, 2011). The Indonesian government's commitment to this secularism is evident in its policies and constitutional provisions, which aim to ensure the protection and equal treatment of all religious communities within the nation. The secularistic orientation of Pancasila serves to preserve a harmonious and pluralistic society, allowing for the coexistence of various religious traditions. The Indonesian state's approach to religion and state affairs is a reflection of the country's commitment to social cohesion and religious tolerance. This commitment is vital in a nation with a wide range of religious affiliations, from Islam to Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and various indigenous faiths.

However, the challenge lies in creating a system that respects and accommodates religious diversity without promoting any particular faith, a testament to the complex interplay between pluralism and secularism in Indonesian education. Pluralism, reflected in Indonesia's Pancasila ideology, recognizes the

coexistence of multiple religious' traditions within the nation. While Pancasila acknowledges the importance of faith in the lives of its citizens, it also emphasizes a commitment to tolerance and pluralism (Hefner, 2011). In the realm of education, this philosophy has translated into a curriculum that embraces religious education while promoting the values of unity, diversity, and inclusivity. Schools in Indonesia often include subjects on various religions, allowing students to learn about and respect the beliefs of their peers, promoting an environment that celebrates diversity and pluralism (Sari, 2019). In a higher education context, while many lecturers actively advocate for these principles, there can be variations in the interpretation and application of Pancasila's pluralistic principles. Some may focus more on their own faith traditions, potentially limiting exposure to the broader spectrum of religious diversity within the nation. Additionally, the emergence of conservative and fundamentalist movements within the education system has posed challenges to the promotion of pluralism (Kirana, 2018).

3.   METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted at 10 universities of 9 provinces in Indonesia, namely Bogor Agricultural University (IPB- West Java Province), Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB- West Java Province), Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University (Untirta- Banten Province), Diponegoro University (Undip- Central Java Province), State University of Padang (UNP- West Sumatra Province), Airlangga University (Unair- East Java Province), Mataram University (Unram- West Nusa Tenggara Province), Lampung University (Unila- Lampung Province) and State University of Papua (UNP- Papua Province).

The overall objective of this study was to determine the religious tendencies of a group of lecturers and how their views reflected in their teaching of the religious subjects. To achieve this, a survey was conducted using a questionnaire consisting of 15 items. Each item had three options that allowed the respondent to indicate whether they hold moderate, liberal, or radical views on religion. A total of 151 individuals provided responses to the questionnaire, but after verifying the results, nine were found to be incomplete and were removed from the analysis. Therefore, the final sample size was 142. A mixed method research design was utilized in this study, where qualitative data was used to reinforce or clarify the findings from the quantitative data. The mixed method approach, which combined the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods, provided an in-depth understanding of the research topic as well as helped to gather a broader perspective. Cresswell and Plano Clark argue that the mixed method approach provides a consistent and

detailed understanding of particular aspects of research (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The qualitative data provides more detailed information, while the quantitative data provides an overall picture of the subject being studied. This approach is particularly advantageous as it allows for researchers to gather more information and gain better insights by using a wider range of data collection and analysis techniques. Overall, the mixed method approach provides a balanced and comprehensive analysis of research data, creating a more complete understanding of the subject matter. In this study, the quantitative method involved data collection through surveys conducted in natural settings, aimed at describing and identifying the traits of the research subjects. Data collection techniques included questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis on religious profiles of religious education lecturers, implementation of religious education, and interreligious paradigms. The collected data was analyzed by cross-referencing the information gathered through questionnaires, interviews, and document studies.

The study participants comprised lecturers from different religious backgrounds, including 98 Islamic education lecturers, 12 Catholic education lecturers, 16 Protestant education lecturers, 8 Hindu education lecturers, 6 Buddhist education lecturers, 1 Confucian education lecturer and 1 traditional faith lecturer. Moreover, the employment status and highest education attainment of respondents who work as Religious Education lecturers were examined. There were 57 lecturers with permanent employment and civil servant status, 74 with permanent employment but not civil servant status, and 11 with non-permanent employment. With regards to their highest education level, 11 held a bachelor's degree, 78 held a Master's degree, and 53 held a Doctorate degree (Table 1).

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographics	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Religious affiliation	Muslim	98	69.01
	Catholicism	12	8.45
	Protestant	16	11.27
	Hinduism	8	5.63
	Buddhist	6	4.23
	Confucian	1	0.70
	Traditional faith	1	0.70
	Total	142	100
Employment status	Civil servant	56	40.14
	Permanent lecturer	80	52.11
	Non-permanent lecturer	11	7.75
	Total	142	100
Education	Undergraduate	11	7.75
	Master	78	54.93
	Doctor	53	37.32
	Total	142	100

The data was analyzed using the nonparametric Mann-Whitney U-test. This test was used to compare the mean ranks of two independent groups. The findings from Mann-Whitney U-test enabled researchers to explore the differences between the responses of different groups, such as religion, employment status, and education. This is to show that the demographic characteristics of religious education lecturers is related to their religious paradigm regarding the relationship between religion-state, inter-religious relations and intra-religious relations.

4. RESULTS

- *Religious Paradigm of Religious Education Lecturers*

The questionnaire results revealed that none of the participants fell entirely into the categories of moderate, radical, or liberal. Rather, each respondent displayed a preference for at least two paradigms, with the specific paradigms varying depending on the context of the question. After analyzing the total scores, it was found that the majority (93.66%) of respondents had a moderate tendency, while a small percentage (4.23%) displayed a liberal tendency, and even fewer had a radical (0.7%) or balanced trend (1.41%) between the three (Table 2).

Table 2: Religious Paradigm of Religious Education (RE) Lecturers

Subject	Moderate	Radical	Liberal	Neutral	Total
Islam RE	93	1	2	2	98
Catholic RE	12	0	0	0	12
Protestant RE	13	0	3	0	16
Hindu RE	8	0	0	0	8
Buddha RE	5	0	1	0	6
Confucius RE	1	0	0	0	1
Traditional faith RE	1	0	0	0	1
Total	133	1	6	2	142
Percentage	93.66	0.70	4.23	1.41	100

The reason for the high proportion of moderate RE lecturers shown in Table I is because all respondents are required to have at least a master's degree, except for non-permanent lecturers who are also religious leaders from various faiths. Islamic religion lecturers are all permanent employees regardless of their status as civil servants or contract lecturers. Additionally, some lecturers who are generally considered liberal may actually have moderate views on certain topics, and those who are considered radical tend to have a mixture of moderate and liberal viewpoints, though their overall radical score may be slightly higher. According to the survey, 139 individuals believe that the relationship between the state and

religion is generally positive, while only 3 believe it is negative or suboptimal. Regarding specific questions on the topic, the results show that 94% of respondents acknowledge the importance of religious institutions to the state, 93% believe that the state can apply religious values and norms to the national system, but only 73% disagree with religion being used as a basis for government decision-making. The results also showed that 74% of respondents opposed the idea of religion becoming the state ideology, compared to 26% who agreed. Those who disagreed argued that the diversity of religions in Indonesia made it difficult to choose one religion as the state ideology as each religion contains values that are essential. Instead, they supported the current state ideology, Pancasila. Regarding religious law becoming positive law, 58% of respondents disagreed while 42% agreed. Those who agreed believed that religious values and principles should be incorporated into the country's laws, especially in matters related to inter-religious relations. However, those who disagreed felt that it would be complicated to create laws based on different religions.
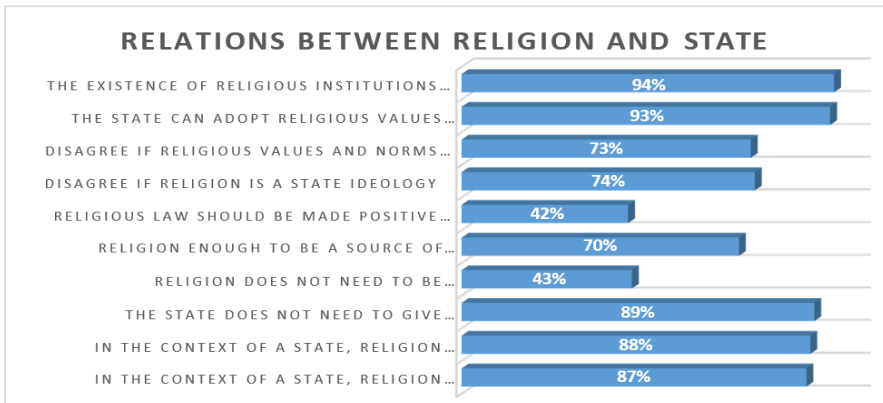

Figure 1: RE Lecturer Viewpoints on Relations between Religion and State

The results as shown in Figure 1 show that 70% of respondents believe that religion provided sufficient moral and ethical guidance, but 30% wanted it to be more involved in activities such as economic development. While 43% of respondents believed that religion did not need to be formalized in national and state affairs, 57% wanted it to be integrated into these aspects of society. Some argue that Indonesia's relationship with religion and the state is intersectional exemplifies this as religion is not entirely separate but not fully integrated into the state's legal system. In practice, religion is prevalent in the national system and public policy making. Indonesia still recognizes the existence of religious-based political parties and mass organizations, but there is a recent change in the political orientation of

the Islamic students in boarding school who support nationalist parties instead of religious ones.

With regard to relations between different religions, 141 participants viewed the overall relationship as positive, with only one respondent expressing a negative opinion. In terms of specific questions related to the relationship between religion and the state, a high percentage of respondents agreed that their religion prohibits coercion of other religions, maintain good relations with people of all religions, respect other religions, and are open to having their religious place of worship visited by members of other religions. In some measures, the findings are consistent with previous research, such as from Sulastri et al., indicating that the mosque leaders in Indonesia believed that transnational ideologies did not align with the principles of Pancasila (Sulastri et al., 2022). The respondents did not support the establishment of an Islamic state or the imposition of Islamic sharia law within the framework of the Indonesian constitution. Additionally, the majority of respondents disagreed with destroying houses of worship of other religions, disturbing the worship of others, and prioritize hiring coworkers of the same religion. However, many respondents believed in the importance of inter-religious dialogue and were willing to help people regardless of their religious affiliation. This information is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: RE Lecturer Viewpoints on Interreligious Relations

Regarding relationships within religions as is depicted in Figure 3, the majority of respondents (141) felt that they were satisfactory, while only one respondent felt that they were not optimal. In terms of specific questions related to the connection between religion and the state, a significant percentage of respondents indicated a positive outlook. Specifically, 96% of respondents reported that they would not expel individuals from different religious groups or sects from their area; 89% of

respondents did not view differences in worship practices as showing a lack of comprehension of their beliefs; 96% of respondents expressed a willingness to associate with individuals from diverse socio-religious organizations; 93% of respondents believed that dissimilar religious organizations did not indicate differences in beliefs but only differences in preaching styles; 73% of respondents were in approval of same-religion marriage even if the individuals had differing religious views or belonged to other organizations; 96% of respondents were in favor of collaborative activities among various religious organizations to address social issues; 96% of respondents permitted their families to have friendships with individuals from differing views, religious beliefs, or organizations; 85% of respondents were willing to worship together with individuals of differing religious beliefs or those from different sects/organizations, and 84% of respondents were willing to pray in houses of worship with individuals from diverse religious beliefs, sects, or organizations. Lastly, 84% of respondents responded that they would not limit their children to attend schools belonging to their same religion or organization.
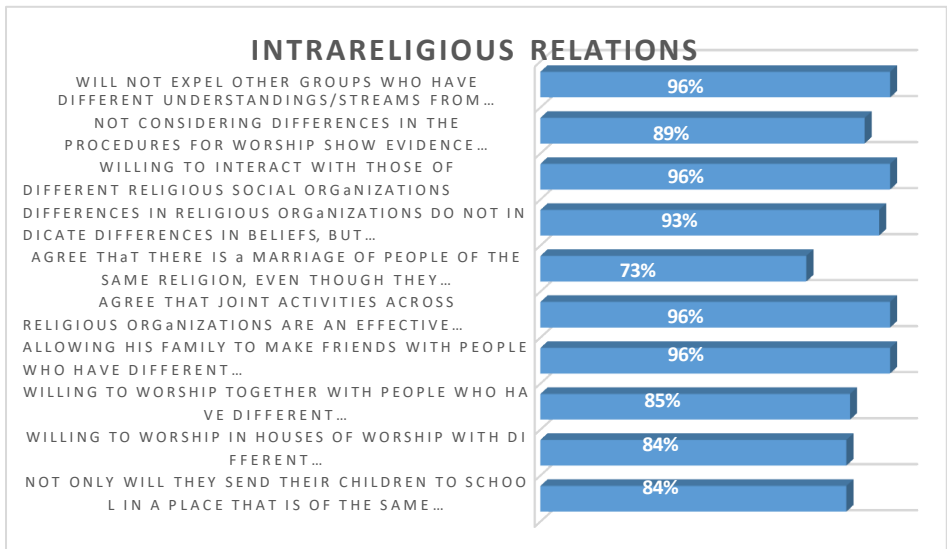

Figure 3: RE Lecturer Viewpoints on Intrareligious Relations

These findings are in line with Afrianty (Afrianty, 2012). on the relationship between Islamic education and youth extremism in Indonesia, which reveal that Islamic education plays a significant role in shaping the mindset of the youth in Indonesia. The study argued that Islamic institutions of higher education in Indonesia have essential role in shaping the moral values, ethics, and religious

knowledge of the Indonesian youth to combat radicalism (Arifin, 2016; Mahfud et al., 2018). The findings also correspond to Had Kusuma and Susilo which propose that the diverse cultural background present in Indonesian society can serve as a robust basis to tackle cultural and religious differences in educational context (Hadi Kusuma & Susilo, 2020). The study results affirm the need for intercultural education and interfaith interactions to counter ethnocentrism (Abu-Nimer & Smith, 2016).

- *Statistical Testing*

The statistical testing as shown in Table 3 showed the Mann-Whitney test which examined whether there were any significant differences between Muslim and Christian respondents regarding their views on three religious factors: religion-state relations, interreligious relations, and intrareligious relations. The test calculated a Z score and a corresponding p-value for each factor to determine the level of statistical significance between the two groups. The results of the Mann-Whitney test in this case suggest that there are no significant differences between Muslim and Christian respondents' views on religion-state relations and interreligious relations, as the p- values for these factors are greater than .05. However, there is a significant difference between the two groups when it comes to intrareligious relations, as evidenced by a p-value of .509. The negative Z scores for all three factors indicate that the Muslim group has higher mean scores than the Christian group.

Table 3: Demographic-related differences of religious paradigm

Demographic Factors	Religion-state relations	Interreligious Relations	Intrareligiom Relations	z (p-value)
	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	
Muslim (n=98)	3.25 (0.66)	1.28 (0.79)	1.68 (0.63)	-0.153 (0.718)
Christian (n=28)	2.73 (0.55)	1.82 (0.61)	2.64 (1.23)	-0.413 (0.509)
Civil servant (n=56)	3.55 (0.15)	2.32 (1.06)	3.53 (0.59)	-0.536 (0.402)
Permanent lecturer (n=80)	1.53 (0.59)	3.45 (0.56)	2.82 (0.77)	-0.746 (0.284)
Non-permanent lecturer (n=ll)	1.14 (0.84)	3.17 (0.82)	4.19 (0.59)	-0.221 (0.787)
Undergraduate (n=ll)	3.25 (0.65)	4.19 (0.57)	1.83 (0.56)	-0.628 (0.459)
Master (n=78)	1.82 (0.65)	1.68 (0.63)	1.68 (0.63)	-0.746 (0.384)
Doctor (n=53)	2.41 (1.08)	2.64 (1.23)	2.70 (1.23)	-0.223 (0.785)

Moreover, the Mann-Whitney test was used to compare the demographic factors, religion-state relations, interreligious relations, and intrareligious relations among lecturers. The test calculated a Z-value and p-value to determine if there is a significant difference between the groups. The results indicate that there was no significant difference between the groups for any of the three variables. Lastly, the Mann-Whitney test was used to compare the three different levels of education (Undergraduate, Master, and Doctor) in terms of their mean scores on three different demographic factors related to religion-state relations, interreligious relations, and intrareligious relations. The resulting Z-value and p-value indicated the degree of difference between the groups and the statistical significance of that difference.

5. DISCUSSION

The research discovered that religious educators in Indonesian higher education exhibit diverse perspectives regarding the interaction of religion and the state, as well as relations within and among different religious communities. The predominant paradigm embraced by these educators is characterized by moderate viewpoints, emphasizing the value of respecting and embracing diversity in both religious beliefs and various facets of life. The religious orientation of these educators tends to be moderate, underscoring the significance of skillfully managing religious diversity, continually fostering harmonious interreligious relations, prioritizing the substance over symbolic aspects of religious practices, and nurturing a mutually supportive relationship between religion and the state. Within higher education, religious educators place a strong emphasis on robust instruction, aiming to effectively impart the secularistic ideals of Indonesia as a countermeasure against religious fundamentalism. Additionally, they focus on promoting positive interreligious and intra-religious relations among students and cultivating a deep understanding of Indonesia's diverse population, emphasizing the importance of intercultural comprehension.

Lecturers responsible for religious education express a positive perspective on the current state of relations between the government and religion, diverse religious groups, and even intra-religious interactions. This favorable outlook is primarily attributed to the educators' maturity and high intellectual capacity, enabling them to keenly observe religious dynamics, both within their own religious community and within the academic environment of tertiary institutions. As a recommendation, collaborative efforts are deemed necessary to foster interreligious pluralism in tertiary institutions and religious educational establishments. Such

efforts should encompass not only Islamic universities and colleges but also extend to other religious educational institutions, including Catholic, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucianism religious colleges. Lastly, it is essential to establish and nurture a platform for religious moderation within public colleges. This initiative serves as a medium for dialogue between lecturers and students of diverse religious backgrounds, aiming to eliminate misunderstandings and promote harmony throughout the academic community. This study contributes to enrich existing literature on interreligious tolerance by identifying the personality factors of religious educators regarding religious paradigm and religious diversity. The study offers insights into the role of religious education and cross-cultural understanding in promoting interreligious tolerance within academia.

Finally, the research recognizes the potential of religious education lecturers to influence the social identities and perceptions of their students within the context of interreligious relations. By examining the perspectives of these educators, the study contributes to the theoretical discourse on how education can be leveraged to promote interfaith dialogue and peaceful coexistence in multicultural societies like Indonesia.

6.   CONCLUSION

This research on religious education lecturers' paradigm in Indonesia is grounded in established theoretical frameworks that emphasize the pivotal role of education in fostering secularistic notion between religion and state, interreligious and intrareligious understanding and harmony within diverse societies. The research aligns with social identity theory, as posited by Tajfel and Turner, provides a foundation for understanding the dynamics of intergroup relations, including those between religious groups (Turner & Tajfel, 2010). This theory suggests that individuals derive their identity from their group memberships, and that intergroup interactions can lead to either positive intergroup relations or tensions. The findings also underscore the importance of intercultural education in enhancing cultural and religious understanding. Additionally, as advocated by Byram, intercultural education aims to develop individuals' competence in understanding, respecting (Byram, 2020), and appreciating cultural and religious differences. It recognizes that educational environments play a pivotal role in shaping individuals' attitudes and worldviews. In this context, religious education lecturers are central figures who can mold students' perspectives on interreligious relations. The research results regarding the perspectives of religious education lecturers on religion-state relations in Indonesia hold profound significance. Indonesia's unique and complex religious

landscape, characterized by diverse faith traditions, warrants an in-depth understanding of how educators tasked with imparting religious knowledge and values navigate the delicate balance between religious pluralism and state governance. Indonesia's diverse religious landscape, featuring a wide range of faith traditions, has made it a crucial context for understanding how educators who instruct on various religions perceive and promote interreligious understanding. These results contribute to the existing academic discourse on the multifaceted relationship between religion and the state, particularly in a pluralistic context like Indonesia. They offer a nuanced perspective on how religious education can be leveraged to promote social cohesion and peaceful coexistence among diverse religious communities, aligning with the nation's foundational philosophy of Pancasila (Hefner, 2011). The findings provide valuable insights into the educators' roles as both transmitters of faith and agents of fostering tolerance and interreligious dialogue; their roles in fostering respect, dialogue, and harmonious coexistence among adherents of different religious faiths. This knowledge enriches the academic discourse on interreligious relations and contributes to understanding the impact of religious education in a pluralistic society. Furthermore, it aids in comprehending the role of religious educators in advancing the principles of Pancasila, which prioritizes religious diversity and unity, and their influence on shaping future generations' attitudes towards interfaith relationships (Hefner, 2011).

Lastly, the research results investigating the perspectives of religious education lecturers on intra-religious relations in Indonesia have notable significance for academic inquiry and practical applications. Intra-religious relations refer to the interactions, dynamics, and relationships within a specific religious tradition, community, or denomination. Unlike inter-religious relations, which involve interactions between different religious groups or traditions, intra-religious relations focus on the relationships and dialogues among individuals or subgroups within the same religious faith. Indonesia's religious diversity extends not only to interfaith interactions but also within each religious tradition, where varying sects, denominations, and interpretations exist. Understanding the views and attitudes of religious education lecturers on intra- religious relations can offer crucial insights into how religious identity, theological diversity, and religious harmony are perceived and taught. Practically spealking, these findings hold practical importance as they can help to formultate educational strategies, curriculum development, and initiatives aimed at promoting intra-religious dialogue, understanding, and cooperation within the diverse religious landscape of the nation. This research can

also enrich the scholarly discourse on intra-religious dynamics, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of religious pluralism in Indonesia

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