

## **Comparative Analysis of Religious Moderation and Inclusivity in SMAN 2 and MAN Tanjungpinang**

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### **Abstract**

Indonesia is comprised of diverse tribes, languages, and faiths. While this diversity enhances societal resilience, it also presents obstacles in terms of interreligious and cultural exchanges. The study aims to assess the comprehension and implementation of religious moderation among students at State High School 2 and Madrasah Aliyah State (MAN) Tanjungpinang. The study employs exploratory quantitative methodologies by gathering data using questionnaires that contain statements pertaining to interreligious and multiracial tolerance. The data obtained from the questionnaire is subjected to statistical analysis in order to determine the distribution of replies and to discover any significant differences between the two groups of pupils. Furthermore, in-depth interviews were carried out to offer supplementary background. The findings revealed substantial disparities in students' comprehension and perspectives regarding religious moderation. MAN students exhibit a greater inclination towards inclusivity and acceptance of diversity compared to SMAN 2 pupils. The study determined that the educational setting and the school atmosphere had a significant impact on influencing students' views and behaviors towards ethnic and religious diversity.

**Keywords:** *Religious moderation, tolerance, education, diversity, Tanjungpinang*

### **Abstrak**

Indonesia terdiri dari berbagai suku, bahasa, dan agama yang pada satu sisi memperkuat ketahanan sosial, tetapi di sisi lain juga menimbulkan tantangan dalam interaksi antaragama dan budaya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pemahaman dan penerapan moderasi beragama oleh siswa di SMA Negeri 2 dan Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Tanjungpinang. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif eksploratif dengan mengumpulkan data melalui kuesioner yang mencakup pernyataan-pernyataan terkait toleransi antaragama dan antarsuku. Data dari kuesioner dianalisis secara statistik untuk mengidentifikasi distribusi respons dan perbedaan signifikan antara kedua kelompok siswa. Wawancara mendalam juga dilakukan untuk memberikan konteks tambahan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya perbedaan signifikan dalam pemahaman dan sikap siswa terhadap moderasi beragama. Siswa MAN cenderung lebih inklusif dan menerima keberagaman dibandingkan siswa SMAN 2. Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahwa konteks pendidikan dan lingkungan sekolah memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk sikap dan perilaku siswa terhadap keberagaman etnis dan agama.

**Kata Kunci:** *Moderasi Beragama, Toleransi, Pendidikan, Keragaman, Tanjungpinang*

## **A. Introduction**

Indonesia is renowned for its diverse cultural landscape, showcasing a multitude of tribes, languages, and religions (Hutabarat 2023). This diversity highlights the country's commitment to fostering unity and promoting peaceful coexistence. In addition to its strengths, the nation also encounters significant challenges, especially in the realm of religious relations (Benawa 2020). Religious differences have become a growing source of conflict, both globally and within Indonesia (Altglass 2022; Coşgel, Miceli, and Yıldırım 2023). This emphasizes the urgent requirement for implementing effective strategies to foster harmonious coexistence among different religious communities.

In response to escalating religious tensions, Indonesia has prioritized promoting religious moderation (Aflahah, Nisa, and Aldeia 2023; Subchi et al. 2022). This initiative aims to recalibrate societal norms towards a fairer and more balanced religious outlook, thereby mitigating violent extremism threats to social harmony. The concept of 'moderation,' rooted in the Latin 'moderatio' (to temper excess), is pivotal in maintaining social equilibrium, especially in a multicultural setting like Indonesia where conflict potentials are omnipresent (Idi and Priansyah 2023; Jamaludin 2022; Kementerian Agama RI 2019).

Religious moderation's relevance is not only sociologically significant but also historically anchored (Yuliawati and Asri 2024), as reflected in its integration into the national legal framework through Article 29 of the 1945 Constitution on Religious Freedom. This commitment is further bolstered by strategic national policies, such as the 2020-2024 National Mid-Term Development Plan, which explicitly incorporates religious moderation within broader national development goals to enhance societal harmony.

Scholars such as Mohammad Hashim Kamali and Nurcholis Madjid have variously interpreted moderation. Kamali identifies it as essential for fostering equitable human relations (Harin Hiqmatunnisa 2020; Kamali and Ramadan 2015), while Madjid regards it as a progressive adaptation of religious principles to contemporary societal needs, aimed at enhancing public well-being (Wisdom

2022). Educational systems play a crucial role in disseminating these ideals. The Ministry of Religion has integrated religious moderation into the educational curriculum, shaping the perspectives of the younger generation through diverse courses and modules that cultivate a comprehensive religious understanding and appreciation for diversity (Jamaludin 2022; Mukhibat et al. 2024).

This study investigates how the concept of religious moderation has been absorbed and actualized by students at State High School 2 and Madrasah Aliyah State in Tanjungpinang. It assesses students' understanding of religious moderation, its impact on their social behaviors, and explores differences in its implementation and perception across the educational institutions. The study also aims to offer recommendations for curriculum enhancements to promote effective religious moderation education, ultimately fostering stronger social cohesion and diminishing conflicts in Indonesian schools.

## **B. Method**

This study employed an exploratory quantitative methodology to assess the comprehension and application of religious moderation among high school students in Tanjungpinang. The data was collected primarily through the use of questionnaires. The questionnaire had a set of statements that examined several areas of religious moderation and social interaction within a school setting. It requested respondents evaluate their levels of tolerance, empathy, and attitude towards diversity based on their own experiences. The sample investigation included students from both public schools and religious-based schools, specifically from SMA Negeri 2 and MAN Tanjungpinang, with each school contributing 100 students, enabling a comparative examination between the two groups.

The data collected from the questionnaire was subjected to statistical analysis to identify the distribution of responses and ascertain any significant disparities in attitudes and behavior between the two groups of pupils. Furthermore, a series of comprehensive interviews were carried out with a selection of students chosen at random to provide additional context and

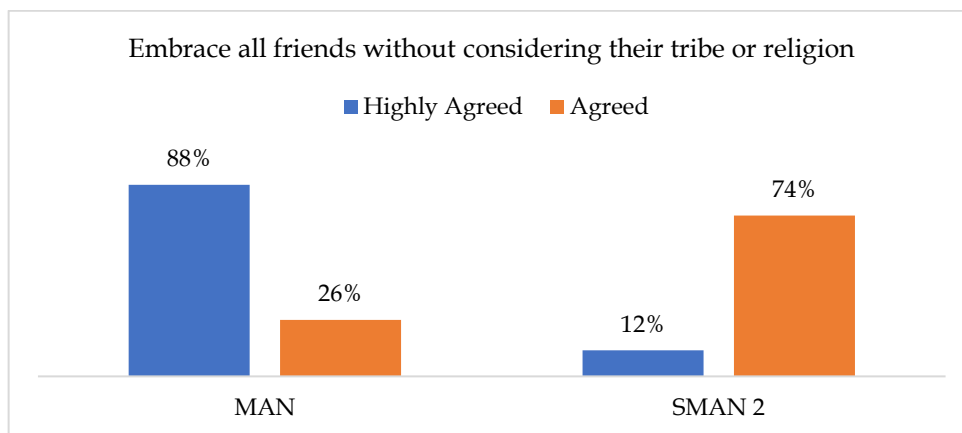
enhance comprehension of the underlying reasons behind their answers. The findings of this analysis are anticipated to offer valuable perspectives for educational stakeholders in developing more efficient initiatives to foster tolerance and enhance collaboration across different religious and cultural backgrounds in school settings.

## C. Results and Discussion

### 1. Result

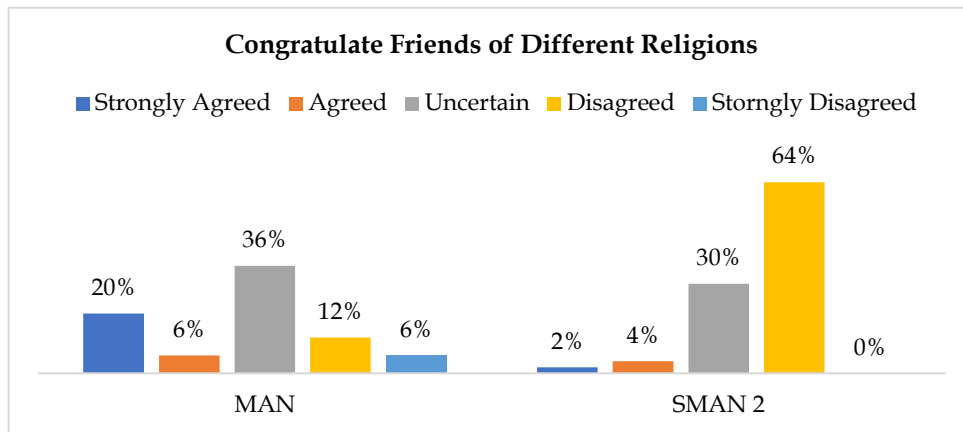
This study aims to evaluate the extent to which the concept of religious moderation has been understood and actualized by students at State Senior High School (SMAN) 2 and State Islamic Senior High School (MAN) in Tanjungpinang. The data collected includes students' responses to various statements related to interfaith and interethnic tolerance. The following are the students' responses to the given statements:

#### *Acceptance of Friends of Different Ethnicities and Religions*



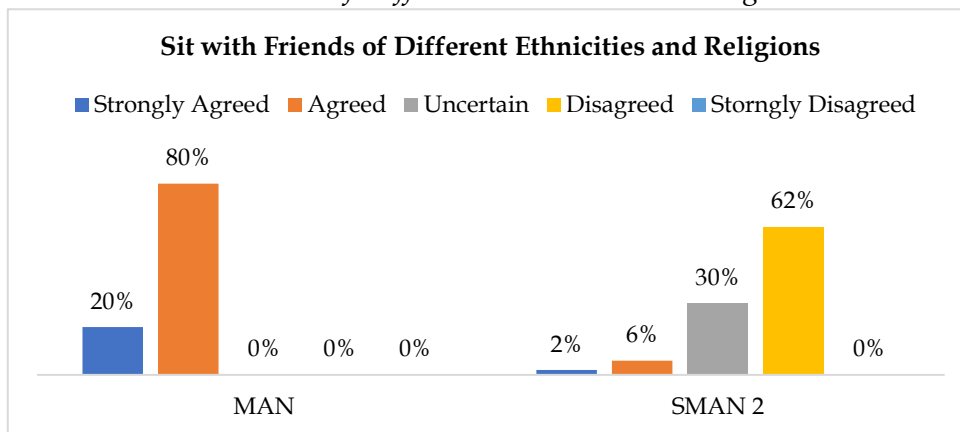
This study discovered that students in MAN and SMAN 2 exhibited disparate levels of acceptance towards friends from diverse tribes and religions. According to the survey conducted at MAN, 88% of students highly agreed and 12% agreed with the statement that they embrace all friends without considering their tribe or religion. In comparison, just 26% of respondents in SMAN 2 strongly agreed, whereas 74% agreed. These findings indicate that students at MAN exhibit a higher inclination towards inclusivity and acceptance of diversity in comparison to students at SMAN 2.

*Reluctance to Congratulate Friends of Different Religions*



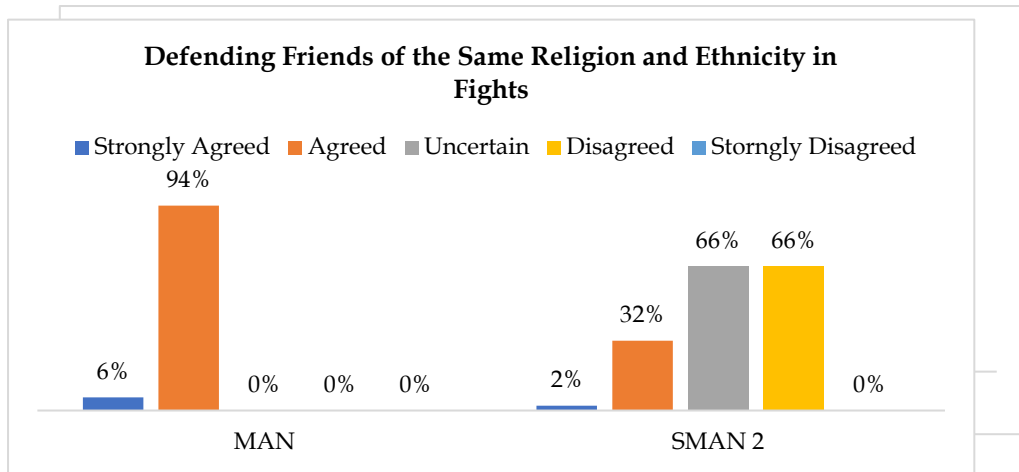
Student perceptions on congratulating friends of different religions varied. At MAN, 20% of students strongly agreed, 6% agreed, 36% were uncertain, 12% disagreed, and 26% strongly disagreed with congratulating friends of different religions. Meanwhile, at SMAN 2, only 2% strongly agreed, 4% agreed, 30% were uncertain, and 64% disagreed. This indicates that students at SMAN 2 are more reluctant to congratulate friends of different religions compared to students at MAN.

*Reluctance to Sit with Friends of Different Ethnicities and Religions*



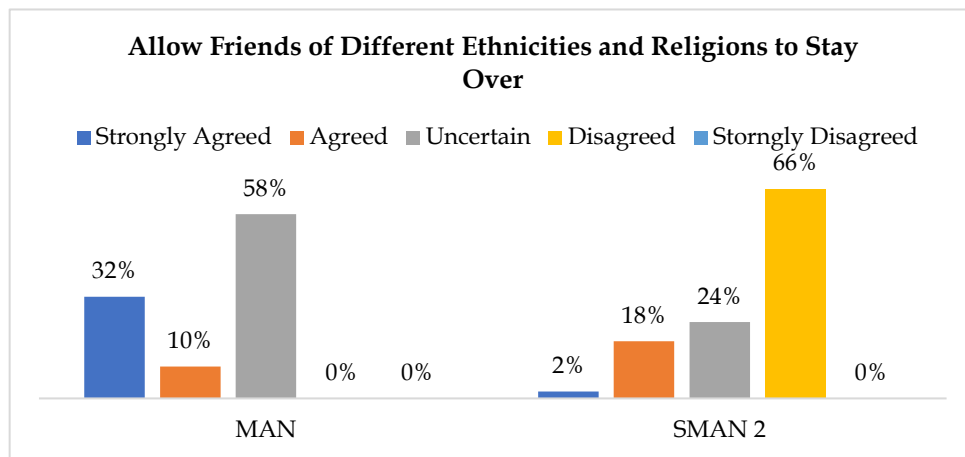
The reluctance to sit with friends of different ethnicities and religions is also reflected in this data. At MAN, 20% of students strongly agreed and 80% agreed to sit with friends of different ethnicities and religions. At SMAN 2, only 2% strongly agreed, 6% agreed, 30% were uncertain, and 62% disagreed. This shows a significant difference in inclusive attitudes between students at the two schools.

*Reluctance to Help Friends of Different Ethnicities and Religions*



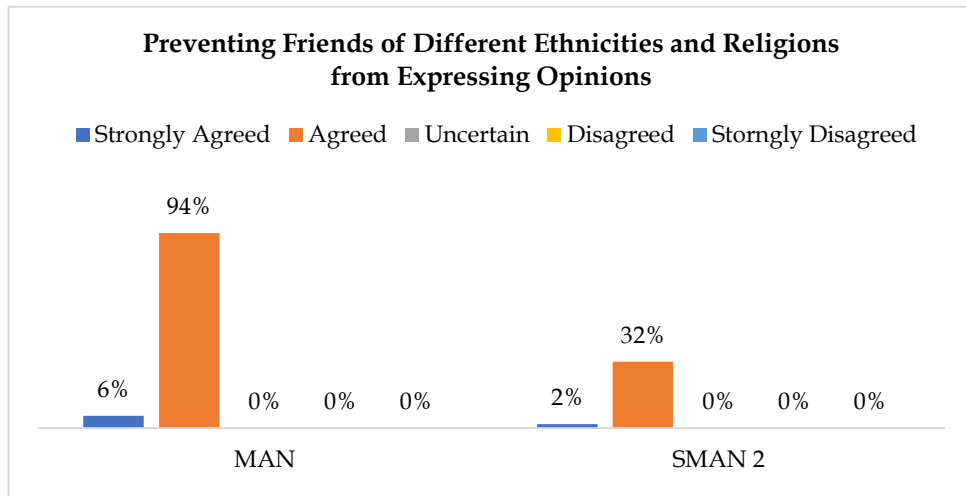
When asked about helping friends of different ethnicities and religions, 12% of students at MAN strongly agreed and 88% agreed. At SMAN 2, 32% strongly agreed and 68% agreed. This data indicates that students at SMAN 2 are more reluctant to help friends of different ethnicities and religions compared to students at MAN.

*Reluctance to Allow Friends of Different Ethnicities and Religions to Stay Over*



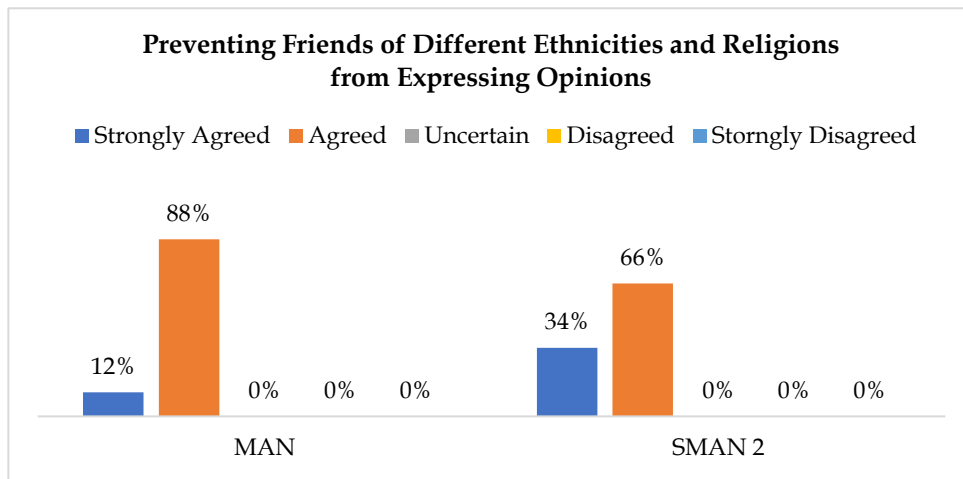
For the statement about allowing friends of different ethnicities and religions to stay over, 32% of students at MAN strongly agreed, 10% agreed, and 58% were uncertain. Meanwhile, at SMAN 2, 2% strongly agreed, 18% agreed, 24% were uncertain, and 66% disagreed. This shows that students at SMAN 2 are generally more closed off regarding allowing friends of different ethnicities and religions to stay over at their homes.

*Defending Friends of the Same Religion and Ethnicity in Fights*



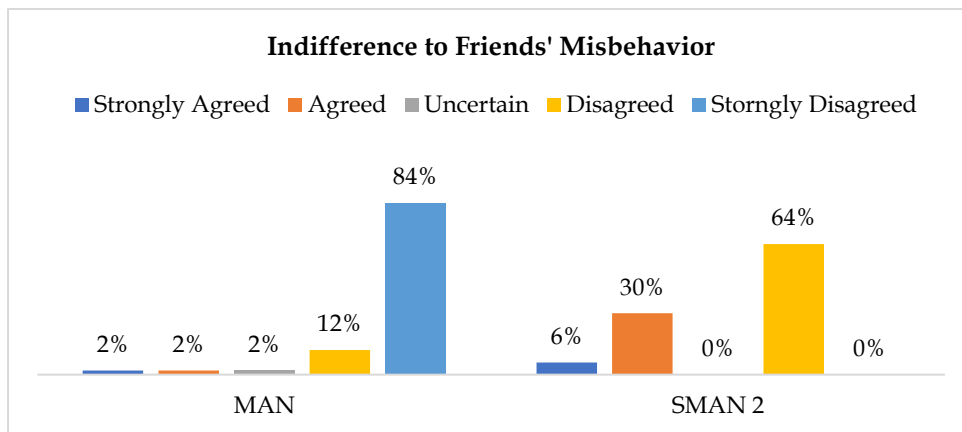
At MAN, 6% of students strongly agreed and 94% agreed to defend friends of the same religion and ethnicity in fights. At SMAN 2, only 2% strongly agreed, 32% agreed, and 66% were uncertain. This shows that students at MAN are more likely to defend friends of the same religion and ethnicity in conflict situations.

*Preventing Friends of Different Ethnicities and Religions from Expressing Opinions*



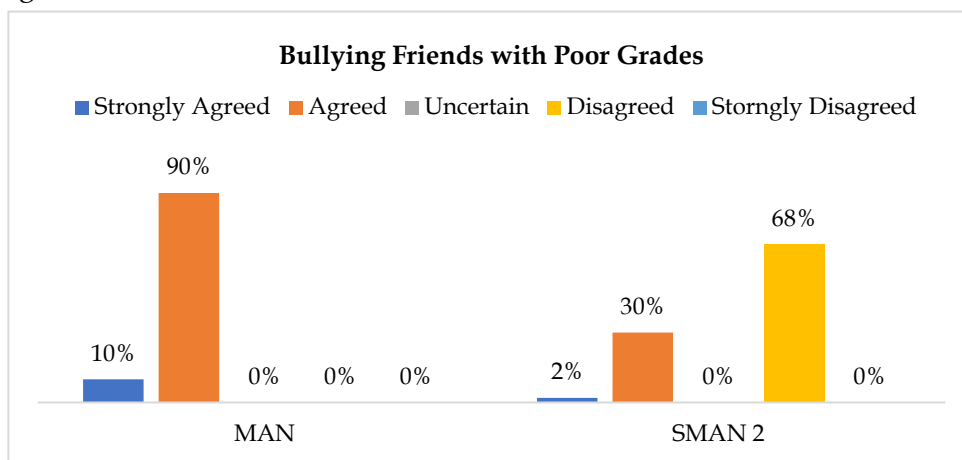
For the statement about preventing friends of different ethnicities and religions from expressing opinions, 12% of students at MAN strongly agreed and 88% agreed. At SMAN 2, 34% strongly agreed and 66% agreed. This data shows a significant difference in terms of freedom of expression among students at the two schools.

*Indifference to Friends' Misbehavior*



At MAN, 2% of students strongly agreed, 2% agreed, 2% were uncertain, 12% disagreed, and 82% strongly disagreed with being indifferent to friends' misbehavior. At SMAN 2, 6% strongly agreed, 30% agreed, and 64% disagreed. This indicates that students at MAN tend to be more concerned with their friends' behavior compared to students at SMAN 2.

*Bullying Friends with Poor Grades*



At MAN, 10% of students strongly agreed and 90% agreed with bullying friends who get poor grades. At SMAN 2, only 2% strongly agreed, 30% agreed, and 68% disagreed. This shows that students at SMAN 2 are less likely to engage in bullying compared to students at MAN.

**2. Discussion**

This study examines the understanding and application of religious moderation among senior high school students at SMAN 2 and MAN Tanjungpinang. We conducted a survey assessing student responses to statements regarding tolerance



across different faiths and races. The results showed that 88% of MAN students strongly embraced friends of various nationalities and religions, compared to only 26% at SMAN 2. This suggests that MAN students are generally more inclusive.

Additionally, the willingness to engage in celebratory actions for friends of different religions and to assist peers from diverse backgrounds varies significantly between the schools. For instance, only 2% of SMAN 2 students, versus 20% of MAN students, strongly congratulated friends of different faiths. Similar trends were observed in social mingling and willingness to help, with MAN students displaying greater inclusivity.

The data indicates a stark contrast in the levels of tolerance and acceptance between the two schools. While 100% of MAN students were open to helping friends from different backgrounds, only 32% of SMAN 2 students strongly agreed with this sentiment. Concerning overnight stays, only 2% of SMAN 2 students were very receptive, as opposed to 32% from MAN.

These findings underscore the impact of educational environments on student attitudes towards ethnic and religious diversity, highlighting the importance of integrating religious moderation into the educational framework. Indonesia, being one of the world's most diverse countries, can benefit from such educational reforms to prevent radicalization and promote a respectful coexistence. To foster a culture of tolerance and inclusivity, Indonesian schools should consider the following strategies:

- Integrated Curriculum: Religious moderation should be included across all subjects, not limited to religious education, so children acquire these values in various contexts (Fauzan and . 2024; Umiarso and Muhammad Qorib 2022; Zuhdi 2018).
- Teacher Training: Conduct workshops for teachers on how to teach religious moderation in the classroom and handle sensitive conversations, fostering open debate and tolerance (Huda 2024).
- Extracurricular Activities: Implement out-of-school activities that promote religious moderation, such as multi-faith discussion groups, community service projects, and arts projects involving students from various backgrounds (Musyahid and Kolis 2023).

- Codes of Conduct: Introduce codes of conduct that enshrine tolerance while banning intolerant or discriminatory behaviors, ensuring a safe space for all children within the school (White 2021).

Training in religious moderation is intended to prevent harmful behaviors and lay a firm foundation for social harmony and convergence among various cultures. Improved teaching quality within schools could inspire a generation of young people who are not only more tolerant but also take active steps towards building a peaceful and inclusive society. This investment is of strategic value for Indonesia's future, aiming to become a harmonious and progressive society.

This study also highlights the low conception and application of tolerance and acceptance of diversity among students between SMAN 2 and MAN in Tanjungpinang. While pointing to the immediate impact of schooling, these differences also provide insight into how religious moderation principles cohere and diverge throughout an educational trajectory. The comparison is particularly fascinating when considering the dispositions of students towards more ordinary social activities. MAN students are more oriented towards inclusivity, with 20% strongly agreeing they enjoy clapping for friends of different faiths. In contrast, only 2% of students at SMAN 2 express that kind of attitude. In social activities such as sitting together or helping friends of different backgrounds, SMAN 2 often appears less open than MAN community members.

The importance of the school setting in influencing religious moderation among students is reinforced by these differences. MAN, which is more inclusive, could use a comprehensive approach to educate about religious moderation ideals. This might mean more frequent and deeper interactions between students of different backgrounds and encouraging teachers to foster dialogue. Conversely, SMAN 2 should evaluate its curriculum or teaching strategies to strengthen religious moderation principles. It is crucial to acknowledge that promoting religious moderation education is not solely the duty of schools. It requires support from broader educational policies, community empowerment, and initiatives to enable teachers and pupils. Indonesian schools should implement a holistic approach towards moderating religion to help create a tolerant and inclusive society, reducing the likelihood of conflicts arising from religious and ethnic disparities.

#### **D. Conclusion**

This research shows the importance of religious moderation in Indonesia's education system to encourage inclusion and tolerance among students. Based on data analysis from students at SMAN 2 and MAN Tanjungpinang, significant differences were found in their acceptance and behavior towards friends from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Students at MAN have a higher inclination towards inclusiveness and acceptance of diversity compared to students at SMAN 2. This is seen in various aspects, such as the reception of friends from different tribes and religions, the desire to congratulate friends of different faiths, the willingness to sit with friends from various backgrounds, as well as the readiness to help and allow friends from a different background to stay in their homes.

These findings indicate that the educational context and the school environment play an important role in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors towards ethnic and religious diversity. Effective religious moderation education in schools can help prevent radicalization and extremism, as well as promote harmonious coexistence in diverse societies such as Indonesia. Investment in religious moderation education is a strategic step for Indonesia's future. With a comprehensive approach and support from a broader education policy, schools in Indonesia can create a more tolerant and active young generation in order to build peaceful and inclusive societies. This research has made an important contribution to understanding how education can be used as a tool to increase tolerance and reduce religious and ethnic conflicts in Indonesia.

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