

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF THE NORTH SUMATRA REGIONAL OFFICE OF THE MINISTRY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS IN SOCIALIZING RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN THE STATE ISLAMIC HIGH SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT OF MEDAN CITY

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the organizational communication of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of North Sumatra in promoting religious moderation in the Madrasah environment. The research method used is qualitative. The research location is the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion, North Sumatra. Determining the subjects in this research was carried out using purposive sampling, where the subjects or sources of information were those who were related and were deemed worthy as research subjects and were also very knowledgeable about the information. The research results show that the development of religious moderation activities in the field has reached a positive stage. The Ministry of Religion team has succeeded in socializing the concept of religious moderation in madrasas, and the response from the madrasas. The madrasah has welcomed the presence of the Ministry of Religion team which plays a role in conveying information related to religious moderation. This positive response shows that organizational communication between the Ministry of Religion and madrasas is effective. The outreach activities carried out by the Ministry of Religion team can be considered a positive step in increasing understanding and awareness among madrasas regarding religious moderation.

Keywords: Communication, Organization, Religious Moderation, Madrasah

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis komunikasi organisasi Kantor Wilayah Kementerian Agama Sumatera Utara dalam menyosialisasikan moderasi beragama di Lingkungan Madrasah. Metode penelitian yang digunakan ialah kualitatif. Adapun yang menjadi lokasi penelitian adalah Kantor Wilayah Kementerian Agama Sumatera Utara. Penentuan subjek di dalam penelitian ini dilakukan secara purposive sampling, dimana subjek atau sumber informasi adalah mereka yang terkait dan memang dipandang layak sebagai subjek penelitian juga sangat mengetahui informasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Perkembangan kegiatan moderasi beragama di lapangan telah mencapai tahap yang positif. Tim Kementerian Agama telah berhasil menyosialisasikan konsep moderasi beragama di madrasah, dan respons dari pihak madrasah. Pihak madrasah telah menerima dengan baik kehadiran tim Kementerian Agama yang berperan dalam menyampaikan informasi terkait moderasi beragama. Adanya respon positif ini menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi organisasi antara Kementerian Agama dan madrasah berjalan efektif. Kegiatan sosialisasi yang dilakukan oleh tim Kementerian Agama dapat dianggap sebagai langkah positif dalam meningkatkan pemahaman dan kesadaran di kalangan madrasah terkait dengan moderasi beragama.

Kata Kunci: Komunikasi, Organisasi, Moderasi Beragama, Madrasah



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INTRODUCTION

In living their daily lives, humans are always faced with the demands to build and establish relationships with one another. Humans, as creatures whose nature is a combination of various individuals, ethnicities, cultures, and religions, are faced with the reality of diversity that characterizes life in this world.^{1,2} Human life as it is depicts the complexity of social relationships formed from a variety of different backgrounds and identities.³ The existence of humans as the embodiment of social beings gives rise to the reality that every individual has needs that need to be met. These needs are not only physical, but also include psychological, social, and spiritual aspects. Moreover, in this competitive world, humans are faced with the challenge of not only meeting basic needs but also achieving a higher existence.

Accepting and appreciating differences is the main foundation in creating healthy and sustainable relationships amidst the diversity of society.⁴ Therefore, in a human way, humans are always faced with the responsibility to manage and establish relationships with others so as not to sink into incompetence and remain able to adapt to the dynamics of life that are constantly changing.⁵ Organizational communication is the process of sending and receiving various organizational messages within an organization, both within formal groups and informal groups within the organization.⁶ Goldhaber defines organizational communication as follows: "organizational communication is the process of creating and exchanging message within a network of interdependent relationships to cope with environmental uncertainty." So in this definition it can be seen that organizational communication is a process of creating and exchanging messages within a network of interdependent relationships to cope with an uncertain or ever-changing environment.

So with the existence of organizational communication, it can help in the implementation of this research on organizational communication of the North Sumatra Ministry of Religion regional office in socializing religious moderation in the Madrasah environment. PENMA of the North Sumatra Ministry of Religion has a significant role in the organizational structure of the

¹ Indainanto, YI, Dalimunthe, MA, Sazali, H., Rubino, & Kholil, S. (2023). Islamic Communication in Voicing Religious Moderation as an Effort to Prevent Conflicts of Differences in Beliefs. *Pharos Journal of Theology*, 104(4).<https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.104.415>

² Sikumbang, AT, Dalimunthe, MA, Kholil, S., & Nasution, NF (2024). Digital Da'wah

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⁴ Fauzan, I., Arifin, A., Dalimunthe, MA, & Rahmadani, S. (2023). The configuration of ethnic and religious relations towards the 2024 general election: A case study in Medan, Indonesia. *Multidisciplinary Science Journal*, 6(2), 2024006.<https://doi.org/10.31893/multiscience.2024006>

⁵ Rubino, R., Ritonga, AR, Madya, EB & Ritonga, HJ (2023). The Ethics of the Apostle Da'wah in the Qur'an and its Application in Social Media. *Pharos Journal of Theology*, 104(2).https://www.pharosjot.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article_10_vol_104_2_indonesia_correct.pdf

⁶ Fajar, Marhaeni. 2009. *Ilmu Komunikasi Teori dan Praktek*. Yogyakarta Graha Ilmu

Ministry of Religion. As part of this structure, PENMAD is responsible for coaching and guidance in terms of spreading moderate religious values. They are usually at the level of the Regency or City Ministry of Religion Office. In the context of socializing religious moderation in the Madrasah environment, PENMAD has an important responsibility.

The role of effective organizational communication is very important in supporting the success of PENMAD programs, especially in the context of socializing religious moderation. Effective communication allows PENMAD Islam to convey messages about religious moderation clearly, precisely, and persuasively to various stakeholders, including students, teachers, parents, educational institutions, and the general public. Through effective communication, PENMAD can build a strong understanding of the importance of religious moderation and convince various parties of the benefits of implementing these moderation values. Good communication can also help the Head of Islamic Community Guidance to mobilize support and participation from various parties in supporting religious moderation programs. In addition, through effective communication, PENMAD can build good relationships with various stakeholders, including teachers, madrasah staff, educational institutions, and other religious organizations. This good relationship allows for strong cooperation in supporting the implementation of religious moderation programs.

Concrete steps need to be taken to ensure that religious moderation becomes an integral part of the madrasah curriculum and activities.^{7,8} This includes the preparation of in-depth teaching materials on tolerance, interfaith dialogue, and an inclusive understanding of other religious beliefs. In addition, training and coaching are needed for madrasah teachers and educators to understand and implement the values of religious moderation in daily learning. This study has a major contribution in identifying PENMAD's organizational communication strategies and challenges, as well as providing recommendations to improve the effectiveness of religious moderation socialization in the madrasah environment. Through in-depth research, various aspects of organizational communication can be better analyzed, allowing for the development of more appropriate and measurable strategies. Research can help identify effective communication strategies that PENMAD can use in socializing religious moderation in the madrasah environment. This includes research on the types of messages that are most effective in

⁷ Irwan., Desnelita, Y., Susanti, W., Rizal, F., & Ritonga, AR (2023). The Implementation of Collaborative Project Based Learning Model with Inquiry Process using E-Learning in Higher Education. *Educational Administrative Theory and Practice*, 29(1), 90–101. Available at:10.48047/rigeo.11.09.187://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.1051

⁸ Dalimunthe, M.A., Pallathadka, H., Young, I., Devi Manoharmayum, D., Habib Shah, A., Alekseevna Prodanova, N., Elmirezayevich Mamarajabov, M., & Singer, N. (2023). Challenges of Islamic education in the new era of information and communication technologies. *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, 79(1).<https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i1.8608>

conveying religious moderation values, the most appropriate communication channels to use in reaching various stakeholders,⁹ and the most effective communication methods in building good relationships with various related parties.

The study can also help identify challenges faced in PENMAD's organizational communication. These include challenges such as lack of understanding of religious moderation, resistance to change, and limited available resources. By identifying these challenges, PENMAD can develop strategies to overcome them and improve the effectiveness of their communication. The benefits of the study are not only limited to identifying strategies and challenges, but also providing concrete recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the socialization of religious moderation in the madrasah environment. These recommendations can include the development of more interesting and relevant teaching materials, training for teachers in implementing religious moderation in their learning, and the use of more innovative and interactive communication channels. By implementing the recommendations generated from the study, PENMAD can improve their ability to convey messages about religious moderation more effectively, so that they can achieve a greater impact in shaping the attitudes and behavior of madrasah students.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in this study is a qualitative approach. The selection of a qualitative approach is because the research intends to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the research subjects as a whole.¹⁰ Qualitative as a research procedure that produces descriptive data of higher education in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behavior from phenomena that occur. The location of the research is the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of North Sumatra, located on Jalan Gatot Subroto No. 261, Medan City, North Sumatra. Determination of subjects in this study was carried out by purposive sampling,¹¹ where the subject or source of information is someone who is related and is considered worthy as a research subject and also has a very good knowledge of the information.¹² Regarding Organizational Communication of the North Sumatra Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion in Socializing Religious Moderation in Madrasah Environments.

⁹ Rambe,R.F. AL. K., Ritonga, A.R., Dalimunthe,M.A. (2023). Komunikasi Publik Pemerintah Kota Medan Dalam Pengalihan Kewenangan Kebijakan Terkait UU No. 23 tahun 2014. *KomunikA*. 19(01), 39-44. <https://doi.org/10.32734/komunika.v19i01.11411>

¹⁰ Sugiyono. 2013. *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.

¹¹ Herdiansyah. (2010). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*. Jakarta: Cipta Media.

¹² Safidin Azwar. *Metodologi Penelitian*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar. 1998.

Table 1.Research Informants

No.	Name	Position
1.	H. Erwin The cradle Dasopang, M.Si	Head of Madrasah Education Division
2.	Dr. Muhammad Azhari, M.Pd	Madrasah Education Supervisor Analysis
3.	H. Purba, M.Si	Head of Madrasah Education Teacher Team
4.	Reza Faisal, S.Pd., M.PMat	Head of Madrasah MAN 1 Medan
5.	Ahmad Badren Siregar, S.Pd	Representative Head Madrasah Field Academic/Curriculum of MAN 2 Model Medan

Data analysis according to Bogdan & Biklen is an effort made by working with the data obtained, organizing the data, sorting it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for and finding patterns, finding what is important and what is learned, and deciding what can be told to others.¹³ In qualitative research, in order to truly obtain the required data objectively, data validity efforts are very necessary. In this study, in order to obtain data validity, data triangulation was carried out, where the data examination technique utilizes something other than the existing data for checking purposes or as a comparison to existing data. The triangulation technique emphasizes the effectiveness of the process and the expected results. Regulation can be done by testing whether the implementation process and the results of the method used are in accordance with what is expected and also running well.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Organizational Communication of the North Sumatra Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion in Socializing Religious Moderation in Madrasah Environments

The process carried out by the Madrasah Education of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of North Sumatra in implementing the socialization of religious moderation illustrates a systematic and planned effort. One of the steps taken is to form a special team, which is given the responsibility to spread the concept of religious moderation in various schools. This team has flexibility in the division of its members, which sometimes experiences changes in order to carry out socialization.

¹³ Husaini, Usman. (2009). *Metodologi Penelitian Sosial*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.

In addition, the process of receiving the material is also a major focus in the implementation of socialization. The fundamental question of whether the process of delivering the material has been well received by the madrasah environment or is still in the acceptance process is an important consideration. These steps strengthen awareness of the importance of integrating the values of religious moderation in everyday life, which is expected to be the foundation for developing a society that respects and understands religious diversity in Indonesia.¹⁴

Usually in the implementation of the socialization of these materials, the Ministry of Religion often delivers to the madrasah parties in understanding the materials of religious moderation. Because in some of these materials are general titles where the Ministry of Religion expects all parties part of the madrasah, both from the superior structure such as the principal to the staff and teachers in it to the students in the madrasah to understand and be able to apply it in their daily lives so that they can respect each other. Which in the material contains an understanding that must be strengthened that we are a nation rich in many religions in it.

In this case, the message that will be conveyed by the KEMENAG team is expected to be received by the two madrasahs that are the place of my research. Namely MAN 1 Medan and MAN 2 Model Medan, these two madrasahs are very much expected to be able to receive the messages that will be conveyed by the KEMENAG team, both materials regarding socialization regarding moderation or things related to religious moderation. By being able to accept what is conveyed, we as recipients of the message can forward these useful messages to people who have less understanding of religious moderation. By understanding, we can forward the message to people outside the madrasah which will increase the community's understanding of religious moderation.

The target objectives that will be delivered by the Ministry of Religion will certainly be gradual, as are the targets in the process of delivering material. Certainly in this case the Ministry of Religion will deliver the material later to the madrasah schools where in this study I took two madrasahs as my research materials. Which of the two madrasahs I chose as the place of my research is a madrasah that they have received socialization carried out by the Ministry of Religion for their madrasahs. In this study, the percentage carried out by the Ministry of Religion team in carrying out socialization of religious moderation in madrasahs has almost reached the whole if in percentage it can be said to be 80 to 100 percent, this is part

¹⁴ Dalimunthe, MA, Suhendar, A., Ritonga, AR, Nasution, FA, Nasution, LN, & Batubara, PEO (2024). Effectiveness of waste management site reduce, reuse, recycle program in improving ecological citizenship. IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science, 1352(1), 12040.

of the statement of Mr. H. Erwin Pinayungan Dasopang M.Si who is the head of the madrasah education sector at the Ministry of Religion office, North Sumatra regional office. He is one of the informants of my research. He said that regarding this socialization, it could almost be said that socialization had been carried out and all madrasas had also received the socialization carried out by the Ministry of Religion team in conveying matters regarding religious moderation, especially in the madrasa environment.

In the context of cooperation between the Ministry of Religious Affairs (KEMENAG) and madrasahs, especially in delivering religious moderation materials, there is an expectation that every school, especially madrasahs, can develop a higher moderate attitude. This cooperation is important considering that madrasahs are educational environments that focus on religious learning. Although madrasahs prioritize religious lessons, it is hoped that there will be an attitude of mutual respect among the madrasah community. The importance of this attitude lies in the ability to respect each other, without reducing or changing the love and trust of each individual.

It is important to note that the Ministry of Religious Affairs also has limits in delivering religious moderation materials in accordance with the nature and principles of moderation itself. The cooperation and involvement of both parties, namely the Ministry of Religious Affairs and madrasas, are expected to create an atmosphere of mutual care and support for each other. This collaboration is key to ensuring that the messages to be conveyed through socialization can be conveyed and implemented without any incompatibility or misunderstanding.

The involvement of the Ministry of Religious Affairs is a key factor that forms an integral framework for cooperation in the development of this research. Their role in providing guidance, materials, and support is an element that illustrates the synergy between researchers, madrasas, and government institutions. Overall, this collaborative approach is expected to produce more in-depth research results and have a positive impact on the understanding of religious moderation in both madrasas and, more broadly, in the community. The socialization carried out by the Ministry of Religious Affairs team is more focused on teachers in the madrasa environment. The goal is for these educators to be able to understand and explore the material related to religious moderation better. Along with that, it is expected that if there is a lack of understanding from students regarding the material on religious moderation, teachers can play an active role in providing explanations and answering students' questions. This approach aims to create an interactive and supportive learning environment, where any confusion or lack of understanding can be addressed directly.

Obstacles in Implementing Organizational Communication in Socializing Religious Moderation in Madrasah Environments

In overcoming these barriers, it is important to apply an approach that is sensitive to individual differences and ensures that the message conveyed by the sender can be clearly understood by the recipient. Through awareness of these barriers, we can improve the effectiveness of communication and achieve a deeper understanding between the two parties involved. In terms of socialization, there are usually several obstacles that occur, both in terms of conveying what is to be conveyed or things related to how he conveys it. In this case, what was done by the religious ministry team when conducting socialization to the madrasah environment, especially to the MAN 1 Medan and MAN 2 Model Medan madrasahs, they did it in several ways such as seminars or doing it online. In the case where obstacles occur, it is not about the material but more about the technical system, including unclear microphone sound or poor network usage when delivering material online. But if it's just something like this, the madrasah can overcome it.

So in this case, between the two parties, namely the KEMENAG team and the two madrasahs, namely the Medan Model, they can establish good cooperation during the socialization. So that later the results of the socialization that took place would not have any obstacles from any party. And finally the ongoing socialization can have a positive impact on both parties. Which with such a thing can run well and there are no obstacles. Therefore, if there are no obstacles, the material that is delivered can be accepted in the madrasah environment and they will understand and learn more about understanding religious moderation in the madrasah environment.

If viewed as a whole, what happens in the implementation of socialization regarding the process that occurs in the field, sometimes there are several things that become obstacles that occur between the message sender and the message recipient. Where here the message sender is a team from the Ministry of Religion and the message recipient is all madrasah schools, especially the two madrasahs that are the place of my research, namely MAN 1 Medan and MAN 2 Model Medan. The obstacles that occur are only technical, not regarding the material presented. It's just like a lack of focus in listening if socialization is carried out in the field or things when online such as connections and other technical matters. Although there are several understandings that must be mastered or more precisely understand and be able to apply them.

In this obstacle, it is almost the same as the previous physical obstacle. It's just that in this obstacle, it is more about us who have received the information conveyed during the socialization, but how do we concentrate ourselves in understanding the materials on

understanding religious moderation, which by understanding we can apply and pass on what we have understood to people whose understanding is still lacking in understanding religious moderation. This is very much needed to be implemented in the madrasah environment. So that they can develop an understanding of religious moderation.

In the implementation of socialization delivery, there are several factors that may cause obstacles, especially when the activity is carried out online. Several obstacles that often arise involve aspects of the network and preparation of tools to support online socialization activities. These kinds of obstacles can provide their own challenges, especially when delivered to teachers in madrasahs.

When socialization activities are carried out online, network problems are one of the main obstacles. Sometimes, limited internet access or unstable connections can hinder the smooth process of delivering messages.¹⁵ In addition, the preparation of tools to support online activities is also an important aspect, where not all teachers or socialization participants have adequate devices or internet connections.¹⁶ At the implementation stage in the field, the obstacles that arise focus on linguistic aspects, especially when the message is delivered to students in madrasahs. The density of the crowd or the presence in an open place can create unbalanced conditions, so that the voice and message delivered become less clear. The success of delivering a message depends on the extent to which the message can be understood well by the entire auditorium present.

The importance of ensuring harmony of voice and place and the use of clear language are key points to overcome these obstacles. Efforts to improve broadcasting technology, crowd management, and clarity in delivering messages in open spaces will contribute significantly to the effectiveness of socialization. Thus, overcoming these obstacles can increase the understanding and impact of religious moderation messages delivered to teachers and students in madrasahs.

Solution to Overcome Barriers to Organizational Communication in Socializing Religious Moderation in Madrasah Environments

The efforts made by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in preparing the socialization materials thoroughly can include the arrangement of themes that are appropriate and relevant to the madrasah context. Thus, the socialization participants are expected to be able to slowly

¹⁵ Ritonga, A., Dalimunthe, M., Veronica, A., Ginting, L. (2023). The Effectiveness of Social Media As A Promotional Medium Of The University Of North Sumatra (USU) Library. *Talenta Conference Series: Local Wisdom, Social, and Arts (LWSA)* 6 (3), 16-20.

¹⁶ Dalimunthe, M. A. (2018). Implikasi Internet Sebagai Media Interaktif dalam Membangun Citra Aktor Politik. *Al-MUNZIR*, 10(2), 268-281.

accept and understand the issues of religious moderation that are taught. The importance of this process of mutual acceptance and understanding creates a harmonious relationship between the two parties, where the rights and obligations of each party can be carried out. The results are expected to be implemented in everyday life, especially in the madrasah environment, as a real effort to practice the values of religious moderation together.

Implementing good time management and coordination between the two parties. The cooperation between the Ministry of Religious Affairs team, the two madrasahs (MAN 1 Medan and MAN 2 Model Medan), and this research was well established. There was a strong synergy between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the two madrasahs that were the informants of the research. The sustainability of this relationship was further strengthened by the existence of a well-arranged socialization schedule in both madrasahs. Routine socialization scheduled in each madrasah created an organized framework. Each madrasah got a turn or a certain time to receive a socialization visit from the Ministry of Religious Affairs team. With this scheduling, the socialization process became more structured and could take place effectively between the two madrasahs. In this context, it was just a matter of waiting for the arrival of the team from the Ministry of Religious Affairs to carry out socialization in the madrasahs. The willingness of the madrasahs to accept and participate in the socialization was the result of the direction that had been conveyed to each madrasah by the Ministry of Religious Affairs team. The existence of good coordination between the related parties ensured that all parties were ready and willing to carry out the socialization in accordance with the instructions that had been given. Through this good cooperation, it is expected that the socialization in both madrasahs can run smoothly and provide a positive impact on the understanding of religious moderation. The well-established cooperation can be the foundation for the sustainability of positive interactions in the future, which can ultimately strengthen the understanding and application of the values of religious moderation in the madrasah environment.

Conducting pre- and post-socialization evaluations, Activities that began early on related to the religious moderation program are government initiatives that have been implemented through the Ministry of Religion. The main objective of this program is to ensure that the materials presented to the community, especially in the madrasa environment, can be clearly understood without any confusion or misunderstanding. From the beginning, the implementation of socialization activities has been well designed and implemented. Previously, perhaps many people, especially in the madrasa environment, did not fully understand or even did not know what was meant by religious moderation and the reasons behind its existence. The socialization that was carried out has succeeded in providing a good

understanding through the delivery of straightforward and clear materials.

This is the key to providing knowledge to people in the madrasa environment about religious moderation. Through the ongoing socialization process, a good understanding of the concept of moderation, the purpose of its existence, and its importance in living a religious life can be accessed by all parties involved. Socialization not only explains what religious moderation is, but also explains why religious moderation needs to be adopted in everyday life. With this socialization, various questions and doubts that may arise in the hearts of the community, especially in the madrasa environment, can be answered and resolved. Therefore, the continuation of this socialization activity is expected to continue to provide additional understanding and knowledge about religious moderation to the entire community in the madrasa environment.

CONCLUSION

The development of religious moderation activities in the field has reached a positive stage. The Ministry of Religious Affairs team has succeeded in socializing the concept of religious moderation in madrasas, and the response from the madrasas, especially MAN 1 Medan and MAN 2 Model Medan which are the focus of the research, has indicated that they have received the socialization well. The socialization of religious moderation carried out by the Ministry of Religious Affairs team to the two madrasas has been received positively. The madrasas have received the presence of the Ministry of Religious Affairs team who play a role in conveying information related to religious moderation. This positive response shows that organizational communication between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and madrasas is running effectively. The socialization activities carried out by the Ministry of Religious Affairs team can be considered a positive step in increasing understanding and awareness among madrasas regarding religious moderation. The two madrasas that were the location of the research, namely MAN 1 Medan and MAN 2 Model Medan, have been proven to have received the efforts of the Ministry of Religious Affairs team in spreading the concept of religious moderation in the madrasa environment. Thus, it can be concluded that the results of the field research show that organizational communication between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and madrasas has gone well, especially in terms of socializing religious moderation. Awareness and acceptance of the concept of religious moderation in the madrasah environment can be considered as a positive indicator of effective communication efforts. As a suggestion for madrasahs, especially MAN 1 Medan and MAN 2 Model Medan, it is hoped that they will continue to implement and internalize the values of religious moderation. Reminding each other and collaborating in implementing religious moderation in the madrasah environment is

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the key to the success of the socialization. That way, the efforts of the Ministry of Religion in socializing religious moderation will not be in vain and can grow into a culture that continues to be applied in madrasahs, both inside and outside the educational environment.

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