



**ELEMENTARY** *Islamic Teacher Journal*

E-ISSN : 2503-0256 / ISSN : 2355-0155

Volume 9 Number 2 July - December 2021 (PP. 393-412)

<http://dx.doi.org/10.21043/elementary.v9i2.11692>

Diakses di : <http://journal.iainkudus.ac.id/index.php/elementary>

## **EFFORTS TO DEVELOP RELIGIOUS MODERATION VIA UPIN AND IPIN CARTOON SHOWS**

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### **Abstract**

Amid the threat of radicalism and extremism, it is important to examine how the message of religious moderation is shown in the Upin Ipin children's film media, which is full of moral teachings. This article examines how religious moderation efforts are carried out through the Upin-Ipin film series. Content analysis is used to examine the values of religious moderation messages in the 3 episodes of the Upin Ipin series. The results show that efforts to foster an attitude of religious moderation are carried out through mentoring and concrete examples of parents explaining the meaning of other religious holidays, encouraging empathy by helping people of different religions when they need assistance, teaching flexibility in social life by participating in the joy of celebrating this day. other religions, without abandoning the principles of their religion. So Upin Ipin's spectacle provides teaching on empathy or caring based on humanity, regardless of racial or religious background, not withdrawing

completely, and not approaching by merging with the worship procedures of adherents of other religions.

**Keywords:** Religious Moderation, Upin Ipin Film, Empathy.

### Abstrak

*Di tengah ancaman radikalisme dan ekstremisme, maka penting untuk mengkaji bagaimana pesan moderasi beragama ditampilkan dalam media film anak Upin-Ipin, yang sarat dengan ajaran moral. Artikel ini mengkaji bagaimana upaya-upaya moderasi beragama dilakukan melalui serial film Upin-Ipin. Analisis isi (content analysis) digunakan dalam mengkaji nilai-nilai pesan moderasi beragama dalam 3 episode serial Upin Ipin. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa upaya menumbuhkan sikap moderasi beragama dilakukan melalui pembimbingan dan contoh konkret orang tua dengan menjelaskan makna hari besar agama lain, mendorong sikap empati dengan membantu umat yang berbeda agama ketika mereka sedang membutuhkan bantuan, mengajarkan kelenturan dalam hidup bermasyarakat dengan ikut bergembira atas perayaan hari besar agama lain, tanpa menanggalkan prinsip agama sendiri. Maka tontonan Upin Ipin memberikan pengajaran empati atau peduli atas dasar kemanusiaan, tidak memandang latar belakang ras maupun agama, tidak menarik diri secara total, dan tidak juga mendekat dengan melebur ikut tata cara ibadah pemeluk agama lain.*

**Kata Kunci:** Moderasi Beragama, Film Upin Ipin, Empati

## INTRODUCTION

Children should receive a religious moderation attitude at an early age. In this case, parents have important roles in nurturing children until adolescence. Children's attitudes toward religious moderation influence their environment, experience, and parenting pattern. Parents' responses and attitudes and the environmental factors become the primary information source for children to behave moderately. Children can access information from any sources, such as media and the environment, especially socialization.

Television is an example of accessible mass media for children to obtain any information. The word television is derived from the word tela. It means 'remote or at a distant.' Then, the word vision means to see, watch, look, or observe. Therefore, television means seeing a remote object. This literal meaning fits with



reality because the viewers watch or see a remote object in the television studio. Badjuri explains that television is an audio-visual medium. Thus, viewers do not only watch the displayed figures but also listen to the broadcasted audio. These combinations make viewers understand the content information (Anggraeni, Ira, Tesa Apriani, 2018).

Television shows do not lose their superiorities as information and entertainment sources in this globalization era. Television has some superiorities to other media. For example, moving figures with synchronized audio attract more viewers than radio or printed media. Many television shows are available on television. They can compete and keep their presence with similar media content offered by smartphones or gadgets. Television has many entertainment programs, such as soap operas, movies, music programs, quizzes, talk shows, and cartoons for children. They have a strong quality to distribute news and information, but they also have some weaknesses. For example, no direct feedback from the viewers because television works in one direction. These weaknesses may negatively influence the viewers, especially children, (Sanaky, 2015) explain the reason. When children watch television, they tend to imitate what they watch since they cannot screen the positive and negative behaviors.

One of the television programs for children shown in Indonesia is Upin & Ipin animated movie. This movie is made by Malaysia film and aired daily on MNC television. Upin & Ipin attract viewers successfully attract both children, adults, and parents. The movie series has many moral, valuable, and educative messages for children. The movie series also positively influences children's knowledge, language, and religious tolerance. Many children memorize the movie scenes because Upin & Ipin movies are aired three times a day. Based on the primary figures' characters, the target market of the movie series is children. The producer aims to target them because children are susceptible to receiving influential messages from media. It means children can directly absorb anything they watch without any screening. Upin & Ipin movie series use the Malay language that children attempt to imitate. By watching the series, children that watch Upin & Ipin like to use some school stuff, such as stationary, backpack, etc., that have Upin & Ipin figures. Children also like the friendship content of the



series, such as friendship with friends that have different beliefs. Children who watch Upin & Ipin develop religious moderation attitudes from those exposures.

Albert Bandura believes that children learn from their experience and observation, such as observing other people's behaviors or actions. Children attempt to model or imitate these learning styles individually and cognitively. They mimic what other individuals do and adopt the behaviors or actions as their behaviors or actions (Desmita, 2013). From Bandura's explanation, the conclusion is children will model anything presented in Upin & Ipin animated movie series. Then, they will represent the observed actions or behaviors via the children's actions, such as communicating with the Malay language. From the peer-interaction and parenting pattern aspects, the series will make children promote self-direction to do what they want, as shown by the characters of Upin & Ipin. This situation may occur if the children watch the series continuously.

From the explanations, Upin & Ipin's animated movie series facilitates the development of religious moderation for Islamic School learners level, especially for lower graders: first, second, and third graders. Once children are aged 6-9 years old, their characteristics will differ from those younger than those 6-9 years old. Children aged 6-9 years old prefer moving, playing, cooperating, and doing hands-on or direct activities. They also like to imitate what they have been watching and what they think is good. Therefore, children eager to watch the series will develop religious moderation attitudes. The researchers investigated the low graders' religious moderation attitudes in this research. However, these religious moderation attitudes are not something inherited. Therefore, the attitudes must be developed continuously from an early age to prepare for their formal education.

## **METHODS**

This study uses a descriptive approach as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of overall exposure. Thus, this research investigated the statuses of human groups, objects, certain conditions, thoughts, and current investigated phenomenon (Moh. Nazir, 1998). In this case, the research studied efforts to develop religious moderation attitudes shown by Upin & Ipin cartoon



(Sugiyono, 2013) explains the features of qualitative research are: natural and descriptive situations, process-oriented results, inductive analysis, and meaning-oriented process.

The method used in this research is content analysis. The main data source in this study is the Upin and Ipin Cartoon film content from youtube media. The primary data are in the form of storylines, character dialogues, and scenes in the cartoon film Upin and Ipin episodes of “Raya Penuh Makna”, “Gong Xi Fa Cai”, and “Pesta Cahaya”. These videos have good picture quality, clear sound, attractive colors, simple language that is easy for children to understand and there is the content of religious moderation in them. Data collection was taken with the following steps:

1. The author watches through the youtube channel
2. Make a transcript of the film along with the context of the picture when it happened
3. Reading transcripts, making notes as data to be analyzed according to research objectives.
4. Re-watch videos to collect evidence and match the notes

The author analyzes the messages related to the value of religious moderation in the cartoon film Upin-Ipin episodes “Raya Penuh Makna”, “Gong Xi Fa Cai”, and “Pesta Cahaya”. The author describes the data in the form of a complete sequence of events or storylines, identifies the initial stage which is an introduction of the situation, the middle stage where there is a conflict of interest, and the final stage is in the form of solving, making notes on data interpretation based on research objectives, and making conclusions based on interpretation notes.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Developing Religious Moderation With Cartoon Shows**

The presence of Islamic TV shows for children particularly cartoon shows is an interesting and important phenomenon to study. Cartoon show is an



entertainment and a source of religious knowledge for children nowadays. They can learn religion virtually from the shows. Those are more fun. A cartoon show for children consists of two elements. They are illustration elements and text elements (Afif, Y, & Dwijayanto, 2020). Both of them attract children to learn religious values. The illustration elements can be seen in cartoon visuals such as characters, colors, etc. The text elements are dialogues, messages, etc. Cartoon shows for Muslim children can become media to promote preaching. It can construct alternative religious authority to create a new Muslim identity. The millennial generation can use cartoon shows to moderately adapt Islamic values (Lyansari, 2019). So they don't feel patronized. Children sometimes become rebellious when asked to do something or forbidden to do something else.

Research about cartoon shows can be classified as visual research (Emmison, M., & Smith, 2020). Visual research is not only about the images but also about objects, contexts, and interactions in social and cultural inquiry. It is also with religion and particularly religious moderation. Research about religion in the visual aspect is needed because religion is also a system of symbols. The symbols are more accepted by the children than the arguments through cartoon shows. Children tend to do what they see.

### **General Descriptions of Upin & Ipin Movie**

Upin & Ipin cartoon movie series was successfully aired on September 14, 2007, by Les'Compaque, Malaysia. It is also successfully aired in Indonesia (Nugroho, Amalia, Nugraha, Siregar, 2015). The original creators are Mohd Nizam Abdul Razak, Mohd Sofwan Abdul Karim, and Usamah Zaid. They aimed to provide early childhood education about appreciating and realizing the importance of Ramadhan. The values of religious education are mahdhah worship. There is also the value of respect, peace, tolerance, love, responsibility, cooperation, happiness, honesty, freedom, humility, simplicity, and unity (Mardianto, M., & Harahap, 2022).

Sofwan said that they wanted to examine the local-market interest and acceptability. They also wanted to measure the reaction of the animated movie's capability to tell stories. In the beginning, they did it with five-minute animation





series. They found positive responses and encouraged Les'Compaque to show more episodes following Ramadhan. The series has settings of Malaysia's culture and a small village. Nizam believed these settings would provide strong interest in the International market as the Japanese animated series Doraemon did. After airing, the reputation of Les Compaque got higher both in Malaysia and outside of Malaysia. Some countries even imported the animated series. In Indonesia, MNC television imported and aired the animated series and Turkey via Hilal TV (Alif, 2008).

The researchers also found that some young Indonesian animators also contributed to Upin & Ipin animated series. They were Marsha Chikita Fawzi Putri, Ikang Fawzi, and Marissa Haque. The researchers found that Chikita had lived in Malaysia since the 2000s. Then, Chikita studied at Multi-Media University, Selangor, Malaysia. She explained that the cartoon took the setting of Malaysia, but she did not forget her homeland. Chikita also inserted some of Indonesia's nuances in the animated series. For example, some characters from Jakarta, such as Susanti and Upin & Ipin's friend, have Indonesia's nuances. Chikita created the character of Susanti to be the native Indonesian that speaks the Indonesian language instead of the Malay language. She also displayed Indonesia's traditional products, such as *bak pia* and *semprong* cakes (Eko, 2014).

From its first release, in 2007, until the present day, Upin & Ipin has reached 204 episodes with 11 seasons. Some countries also imported Upin & Ipin, such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Turkey, Brunei, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Southern Korea, and India. However, Indonesia was the primary importer of the animated series. All Indonesian citizens can enjoy Upin & Ipin. It included Javanese people. Upin & Ipin is accessible via television, Internet, and DVD for Javanese. All communities in downtown and suburban could watch Upin & Ipin. The same matter occurs in Rambut Malang hamlet, Dress Kulon village. The citizens could watch the series and become the daily shows for the children. School-aged children usually watch Upin & Ipin animated series after going home from school. Every day, they would watch Upin & Ipin freely because they were alone watching because their parents were working. On the other hand, Upin & Ipin started when the characters went to school.



Upin & Ipin were identical characters born orphaned since they were babies. The characters, Upin & Ipin, had slight birth times. After their parents passed away, the grandmother, Opah, took care of and nurtured them. Upin & Ipin also have an older sister named kak Ros. She also helps Opah to nurture and take care of Upin & Ipin. Upin & Ipin, Opah, and kak Ros live in a village named Durian Runtuh. Upin & Ipin have many friends, Mei Mei, Mail, Ehsan, Jarjit, Fizi, Djul, Ijat, Rajoo, etc. They also have an Indonesian friend named Susanti. She moved from her hometown to Durian Runtuh. Upin & Ipin and friends play and learn together.

Upin & Ipin cartoon influences many regions, including Malaysia and Indonesia. Since its first airing, during Ramadan month, 2007, many viewers liked and appreciated the animated series as “the best animation” at International Film Festival, Kuala Lumpur. On the second airing opportunity, in Ramadan 2008, 1.5 million viewers watched the animated cartoon on TV9. This high-viewer rate made the cartoon worthy of watching after Doraemon.

The same attitude was observable in Indonesia’s citizens toward Upin & Ipin cartoon. The production process of Upin & Ipin in Indonesia receives many compliments from Indonesian critics, such as Fadil Abidin. He explains that the cartoon has many Islamic teachings, such as being tolerant of other believers. The cartoon brings specific features of Malaysians, Chinese, Tamil, and Indonesians. Upin & Ipin also received excellent responses from various countries, such as the Philippines, Singapore, Turkey, Brunei, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Southern Korea, and India. cartoon provides excellent examples for children based on Wikipedia.

### **The General Descriptions of Religious Moderations**

Quraish, cited by (Mohamad Fahri, 2019), explains that religious moderation within the Islamic context is difficult to define. The reason is - the term moderation appears after incidents of radicalism and extremism. The closest definition of religious moderation is used in Al-Qur’an, *wasathiyah*. What refers to ‘to moderate’ or ‘at the middle point.’ This word is also equal to fairness, justice, priority, and ‘best.’ There are three primary keys to implementing





*wasathiyah*. They are correct knowledge, controlled emotion, and alertness. They are important to realize *wasathiyah*.

Komaruddin Hidayat explains religious moderation term exists due to two extreme sides: the right and left extremists. The right-wing extremists only think and focus on the textual meaning to ignore the contextual meaning (Mas'ud, 2019), while the left-wing extremists tend to ignore the text. Therefore, religious moderation is in the middle of both points of view. Religious moderation comprehends the text but connects the text with current reality. In the Islamic education context, religious moderation teaches individuals to be personally pious and to understand religion as an instrument to respect other believers (Akhmadi, 2019)(Agus Akhmadi).

Azyumardi Azra explains that religious moderation in Indonesia is intensively visible to Islamic people. The definition of religious moderation within the Islamic context is *Islam Wasathiyah*. The religious moderation in Indonesia improves with *Islam Wasathiyah*. It means the Indonesian people understand religions without being right or left-wing extremists (Azyurmadi, 2020). The concept of *wasathiyah* has many equivalences, such as *tawassuh* (or being in the middle), *I'tidal* (fair), and *tawazun* (balance). People that apply the *wasathiyah* principle are *wasith* (Sutrisno, 2019). Understanding religious moderation is also observable in Al-Qur'an and Al-Hadith. One of Surah explaining this concept is Al-Baqarah, verse 143 (nurdin, 2021).

Lukman Hakim Sifuddin explains that religious moderation refers to the moderating nature of religion, not religion. It refers to how human interprets and translates religion. For Lukman Hakim Sifuddin, religions always have moderating nature. However, humans understand religions in a limited and relatively narrow manner. Then, religions bring various understandings and interpretations. Therefore, religious moderation is an absolute matter to avoid exaggerating interpretation and understanding of religion from extreme points of view (Haris, 2021). (Darlis, 2017) Explains that the Islamic religion does not require moderation. However, Islamic believers must understand the teachings and implement the teachings within the moderating corridor made by the Islamic religion. There are two important points in Islamic moderation. The first point is fairness. It is a position that is not lame in certain religious contexts. A fair person



sees anything from various objects within the moderating corridor. If the point of view shifts into an extreme point of view, then this fair person will not tolerate it. The second point is balance. Many people interpret religious teachings as human life guidelines (scere world).

Religious moderation should include contextual understanding instead of textual understanding. It means religious moderation in Indonesia deals with the religious understanding to moderate various cultures and customs in Indonesia (Mohamad Fahri, 2019). However, human has limitations in interpreting the teachings. They also do not perfectly interpret the teachings to trigger inconsequential religious interpretations. In national life, religious moderation is strongly connected to togetherness and tolerance. It makes the believers stay in religious corridors and do not go against national values (Akhmadi, 2019).

Religious conflicts occurring in Indonesia are mostly due to exclusive religious attitudes and inter-religion contentions to gain support. Unfortunately, the attitudes and contention only use power to compete instead of tolerance. Thus, it triggers conflicts. In a religious fundamental context, efforts to avoid disharmony require religious moderation or how to implement inclusive Islamic teaching. It means to implement open-minded religious attitudes or called religious moderation.

Religious moderation does not refer to blending the truth or removing the identity of each religion. Religious moderation does not insult the truth, but it has clear attitudes toward certain problems, truth, the law of problems. However, with religious moderation, people will be more open-minded and accept the differences of our people. It has the principle to respect other people's rights as a human and independent community within a nationality framework. Every individual has certain beliefs outside of other people's beliefs or religion. This person must respect and acknowledge the differences. Then, he must remain acting and implementing his religion with religious moderation.

The opposite of moderated understanding is extreme understanding. This understanding emerges in various human life dimensions, including Islamic teaching understanding. The differences may occur in an individual's perspective to encounter life problems. The differences in point of view in



understanding Islamic teaching texts are possibly due to different perceptions to understand the object review. An individual's perception to define an object has some backgrounds, such as social, cultural, education, and personal experience backgrounds, (Nurdin, 2019). Attitudes, extreme understanding, and radicalism almost occur in various fields, including educational institutions and society. The Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia mentions 10 higher educations that have been being exposed to radicalism. The government has applied some countermeasures, but then they do not work (Anwar, 2021).

Therefore, it needs to multicultural understanding improvement about our nation. Then, it is important to instill religious moderation attitudes. All parties must do this action, including the government, national figures, and children as the millennial generation and the future generation. Children should receive religious moderation attitude development. The development includes four stages: 1) using social media technology development to distribute religious moderation information, 2) involving the millennial generation in positive community activity, 3) holding routine dialog in an educational institution, and 4) family education (Chadidjah, 2021) . The development of moderating attitudes for children in the family may include various methods. One of them is providing excellent TV shows, such as Upin & Ipin cartoon movies.

### **Developing Religious Moderation with Upin & Ipin Show for Islamic or General Elementary School-Aged Learners**

The attitude of religious moderation is shown in the episode "Raya Full of Meaning" Season 15 which was released in 2021. On Eid al-Fitr, Upin Ipin's friends came to his house. They come both from Muslims and from adherents of other religions, such as Mei-Mei and Ah Tong the Confucians, Jarjit and Uncle Muthu who are Hindus. Upin and Ipin welcomed their arrival, they ate ketupat together. At the end of the story, they wish a happy Eid. In the episode of Gong Xi Fa Cai, Mei Mei comes with a box of limes to eat with her friends. Mei Mei invited her friends to come to her house on the 2nd day of the Chinese New Year. Mei Mei tells her friends that she is going to her grandmother's house for a big meal. Mei Mei likes to eat *Yee Sang* most when she has a big meal.



Upin and Ipin asked Opah's permission to celebrate the Chinese New Year at Mei Mei's house. Opah agreed to their request. Opah tells Upin & Ipin about the meaning of big meals for the Chinese. During the bustling night market, where people sell Chinese New Year's necessities, Mail joins in selling fireworks. In addition, Uncle Ah Tong told Upin and Ipin why Chinese New Year was so noisy because of the fireworks and all in red color. That's because there is a legend about the giant Nian who likes to eat children. It makes Upin and Ipin feel afraid.

On the first day of the Chinese New Year, Opah told Upin and Ipin to go on a Chinese holiday at Uncle Ah Tong's house. At first, Upin and Ipin were reluctant to go because Uncle Ah Tong did not invite them, but in the end, they left at Opah's request. Upin and Ipin came home with lots of red packets (*angpao*) and show them to Kak Ros. Ehsan called Upin and Ipin and told them that he would wear a Chinese traditional dress when he went to Mei Mei's house tomorrow.

The next day, Upin, Ipin, Jarjit, and Mail went to Mei Mei's house. Tok Dalang, Uncle Muthu, Uncle Ah Tong, Devi, and Susanti also arrived at Mei Mei's house. Then, Ehsan and Fizi also arrived. Ehsan is wearing a gold dress. The episode ends with Tok Dalang, Uncle Ah Tong, Mei Mei's mother, Uncle Muthu, Ehsan, Fizi, Upin, Mei Mei, Ipin, Mail, and Jarjit wishing the viewers a Happy Chinese New Year. In the Deepavali episode, Uncle Muthu is said to be preparing for the Deepavali celebration. He also invited Upin, Ipin, Koh Ah Tong, Datuk Dalang to come to his house. Muthu promised them a special dish for the feast tomorrow.

He ran into Opah who came home from the shop. Muthu invites Opah to come to his house tomorrow to celebrate Deepavali. With a friendly smile, Opah says "Congratulations Deepavali" and promises that she will come tomorrow. One day before the Holy Day, uncle Muthu's old wagon tires rolled off, a pile of food and holiday supplies fell scattered. The old lamps made of ceramic as fixtures for tomorrow's sparkling light were shattered undeniably. Uncle Muthu is gloomy, annoyed, angry, and sad.

Upin and Ipin who witnessed the unfortunate incident then rushed to tell Opah. Opah tells how important the light of the lamp is to Hindu society in conjunction with Deepavali, it symbolizes "life, goodness, victory, and joy", hence



the meaning of Deepavali is a celebration of light. Upin Ipin, then, complained to Datuk Dalang and Koh Ah Tong. Koh Ah Tong as a collector of used goods has millions of solutions to this problem. Rare items in the form of handsome ceramics for lamps are not difficult for him to find.

Upon and Ipin came with a surprise in the form of beautiful ceramics from Koh Ah Tong. Glittering light, lamps, happiness, joy, and prosperity burst into uncle Muthu. In the evening, Upin and Ipin and their friends went to Muthu's house to celebrate Deepavali. Muthu's yard already has many ponds. Tok Dalang, Ah Tong and others are there too. Datuk Dalang, Koh Ah Tong, Opah, Kak Ros, Upin, Ipin, and friends as well as all the residents of Kampung Durian Runtuh seemed present and rejoicing in the songs and dances performed by Uncle Muthu and his son Devi. Upin, Ipin, Datuk Dalang who is a Muslim, and Koh Ah Tong who is a Confucianist did not hesitate to help Muthu to celebrate the festive holiday which has a spiritual symbol of "the victory of light over darkness, and good over evil".

Religious moderation attitude in Upin & Ipin includes religious, social, and cultural values. The content materials of Upin & Ipin make the cartoon could develop children's religious moderation. Some contained values in Upin & Ipin for children are religious, social, and cultural values (Fahrudin). The religious value deals with god-fearing, faith, and generosity. The researchers found the values in Upin & Ipin animated movie series. For example, the characters of Upin & Ipin always diligently prayed and worshiped five times. They also did Ramadhan fasting, recited *Al-Qur'an*, and did charity to people in need. All of them prove that Upin & Ipin have many values of god-fearing, faith, and generosity.

Upin & Ipin's animated series also have social matter content, such as harmony. The animated series describe Upin & Ipin to have many close friends, such as Ehsan, Fizi, Jarjit, Susanti, Mail, Mei-mei, Devi, Rajoo, Ijat, Dzul, Tok Dalang, Uncle Muthu, and Uncle Ah Tong. They have different backgrounds, nationalities, and religions. For example, Susanti is a Muslim from Indonesia. Uncle Muthu, Rajoo, Jarjit, and Devi are Indian offspring that live in Durian Runtuh village. Their religion is Hindu. Ah, Tong and Meimei are Tionghoa offspring with different beliefs as Upin & Ipin have. Although they have different beliefs, they live in harmony and are tolerant of other believers. Thus, the animated



series of Upin & Ipin teach the viewers about religious moderation values, such as being tolerant and keeping harmony. This finding is in line with Lukman Hakim Saifuddin. In the Islamic education context, religious moderation teaches individuals to be personally pious and understand religion as an instrument to respect other believers.

The second value is obedience as a social value. Upin & Ipin are orphans. Their parents passed away when they were babies. They live with their grandmother and their older sister, Opah and Ros. Upin & Ipin always obey their grandmother and older sister as if they were Upin & Ipin's parents. This attitude shows the obedience of Upin & Ipin.

The third value is politeness. Upin & Ipin always speak and behave politely toward older people in the animated stories. For example, when they run into Tok Dalang. They always greet Tok Dalang. If they run into their friends or people they know about - they also greet them. Upin & Ipin always ask permission and tell their Opah when they go to school. They also shake Opah's hand and kiss her hand. The fourth value deals with being humble and loyal. Upin & Ipin are humble and loyal characters. They are always feeling grateful and never envy other people. Upin & Ipin also build excellent and harmonic relationships with people. For example, when their friend, Ijat is in sorrow due to a fire in his house. Upin & Ipin initiate to take donations from all villagers. Then, they handed it to Ijaz so that Ijat could go back to school. This attitude shows the obedience of Upin & Ipin have high loyalty.

Tolerance connotes patience, forbearance, and impartiality, as well as open-mindedness. In early childhood, possessing tolerance would refer to children's burgeoning awareness of themselves in relation to others, and the capability to accept appearance and behavior different from one's own. It may be that teaching tolerance for very young children essentially sets the stage for a more developed understanding of tolerance and justice to grow as children move on to elementary school and beyond (Zakin, 2012). The religious moderation attitude is visible in the learning process from early childhood age until adult age. Environment, experience, and parenting patterns significantly influence religious moderation attitudes. Parents' attitudes, responses, and environment become excellent information sources for children to behave moderately. Therefore,





children with negative and deviating parenting patterns have low support for excellent attitude development. A positive attitude has some indicators, such as cheerful, discipline, optimism, and sociability. On the other hand, negative attitudes will have negative impacts on children. The indicators are mischief, disobedience, silencer, having difficulty speaking, and pessimistic attitude. Religious moderation is visible in the learning process from early childhood until adult age. Environment, experience, and parenting patterns significantly influence religious moderation attitudes.

John Piaget explains that elementary school-aged children are still in the concrete operational stage, from 7 until 12 years old. Children in this period begin to understand logical oration from concrete objects. They also can understand other people's points of view. They are sensitive to criticisms from the surrounding people. Children in this stage are also vulnerable to imitating how their idols behave. Albert Bandura also explains that this developmental phase includes imitative action from children. Children will model anything they learn from their observations (Yasa,G.P.P.A., & Santosa, 2018) .

The notion shows that elementary school-aged children easily imitate what they see. When they watch Upin & Ipin cartoons continuously for a long period, they will imitate a character from Upin & Ipin. When children idolize a character, they will put their efforts to be equal to their idol. Thus, when they watch Upin & Ipin, children will try to model the idolized characters in Upin & Ipin. They begin to imitate the idolized characters' speeches, dressing styles, and thinking patterns (Kusuma A., 2010) .

Upin & Ipin cartoon facilitates children's religious moderation, especially for children in the first, second, and third grades of elementary school. For them, Upin & Ipin are their favorite animated series. The cartoon is very popular for children because Upin & Ipin's animated series have mild daily-life plots in a real society. The mild plots present an actual village setting. The plots also talk about children's lives, such as studying, playing, school, and socializing. Upin & Ipin's cartoon has a more cheerful nuance than other cartoons. Most cartoons talk about superheroes with fighting scenes. Thus, they are irrelevant because elementary school-aged children will imitate the scenes and the characters.



Upin & Ipin animated series has many cultural values and differences in their characters. For example, Malay, India, Indonesia, and Tionghoa cultures go harmonious based on their portions. Indonesians, especially the people of Pontianak, have used Malaysian culture as a model for character education for their children (Kurniawan, S., & Miftah, 2021). One of the character education is exemplary values. And those are also can be found in every culture. Upin & Ipin animated series has influenced children's language and behavior in Bali (Eko, 2014). The researcher did not find a dominating cultural value in the animated series. Thus, they can achieve cultural harmony.

Upin & Ipin animated series also have various characters, languages, sex types, and religions. The differences and diversities are packaged into an interesting and qualified cartoon to watch. The animated series has many positive values to develop religious moderation in children.

The interview results with first, second, and third graders that lived in Megawon Indah, Kudus Regency, randomly showed that children with a long time of watching the cartoon developed positive religious moderation. The researchers found the children imitated the actions of Upin & Ipin and their friends. The realizations were self-directedness, optimism, sociability, self-respect, and excellent self-adaptation in environments. The finding proved that Upin & Ipin's show could develop religious moderation in first, second, and third graders of Islamic and general elementary schools.

The animated series could be an entertaining and educative medium for children because they have positive values to develop children's religious moderation attitude. The educative values include fasting, respecting older people, helping each other, reciting *Al-Qur'an*, respecting parents, creating friendships, and respecting tribal, racial, and religious differences. Upin & Ipin animated series have colorful designs that make children interested in the mild plots. The plots bring children real-world experiences for them.

## CONCLUSION

From the explanation of this research, Upin & Ipin could develop religious moderation attitudes in Islamic or general elementary schools. The children



watching Upin & Ipin liked to imitate the behaviors of Upin & Ipin since they had many religious moderations. For example, the characters were religiously, socially, and culturally tolerant. They did not see other religions, races, and cultures differently. They respected each other, so their behaviors and attitudes could lead to religious moderation. This attitude could be imitated by the children that watched the animated series.



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