

Ethnopedagogy in Shaping the Moderate Character of *Sisya Brahmachari*: A Case Study in Pasraman Saraswati Tri Parartha

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<i>Keywords:</i>	<i>Abstract</i>
Ethnopedagogy, Moderate Character, Sisya, Brahmachari, Pasraman	This research examines how ethnopedagogy and culturally shaped religious moderation differ from formal education's normative and textual approaches to religious character. Specifically, it analyzes how pasraman ethnopedagogy develops moderate character in sisya brahmachari through daily cultural practices rather than doctrinal teaching. Using a qualitative-descriptive method incorporating participatory observation, interviews, ritual documentation, and thematic analysis connected to Bourdieu's habitus theory and Geertzian cultural interpretation, the study hypothesizes that repeated cultural practice in pasraman forms moderates habitus without explicit moderation lessons. Results demonstrate that religious moderation is embodied in body ethics, emotional control, empathy, and collective rites that foster spiritual togetherness (<i>madya</i>), rather than delivered through direct instruction. These insights suggest that Pasraman operates as a silent but effective cultural curriculum, advancing moderate character more effectively than formal education. The article provides a model of ethnopedagogy based on cultural habits as an alternative to current moderation education, arguing for a shift from abstract principles to value internalization through lived culture.

<i>Kata Kunci:</i>	<i>Abstrak</i>
<i>Etnopedagogi, Karakter Moderat, Sisya, Brahmachari, Moderasi Beragama</i>	<i>Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana etno-pedagogi dan moderasi agama yang dibentuk oleh budaya berbeda dari pendekatan normatif dan tekstual pendidikan formal dalam membentuk karakter agama. Secara spesifik, penelitian ini menganalisis bagaimana etnopedagogi pasraman mengembangkan karakter moderat pada sisya brahmachari melalui praktik budaya sehari-hari daripada pengajaran doktrinal. Menggunakan metode kualitatif-deskriptif yang menggabungkan observasi partisipatif, wawancara, dokumentasi ritual, dan analisis tematik yang terhubung dengan teori habitus Bourdieu dan interpretasi budaya</i>

		<i>Geertz, penelitian ini berhipotesis bahwa praktik budaya berulang di pasraman membentuk habitus moderat tanpa pelajaran moderasi yang eksplisit. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa moderasi agama terwujud dalam etika tubuh, pengendalian emosi, empati, dan ritus kolektif yang memupuk kebersamaan spiritual (madya), bukan melalui instruksi langsung. Temuan ini menyarankan bahwa Pasraman beroperasi sebagai kurikulum budaya yang diam namun efektif, mengembangkan karakter moderat lebih efektif daripada pendidikan formal. Artikel ini mengusulkan model etnopedagogi berdasarkan kebiasaan budaya sebagai alternatif bagi pendidikan moderasi saat ini, dengan argumen untuk beralih dari prinsip-prinsip abstrak ke internalisasi nilai melalui budaya yang dijalani.</i>
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INTRODUCTION

The change in the national education paradigm has prompted a shift in focus from cognitive-oriented education to culture and character-based education (Anisaturrizqi et al., 2025; Ponidi, 2021; Prayatni et al., 2025). This shift occurs because formal education is considered not yet fully able to form a personality rooted in local cultural values (Khotinets & Shishova, 2023; Kirkwood et al., 2014; Levine & White, 2017). In this context, ethnopedagogy is present as a critical approach that places culture as a source of knowledge and, at the same time, an instrument of social transformation (Arsaliev, 2016; Sándor, 2019; Selasih & Sudarsana, 2018; Slobodová et al., 2021). Yuliastini et al., (2024) study proves that the cultural practice of trading in Bali functions not only as a traditional game but also as a cultural strategy for instilling character through local economic representation and social interaction.

Culture-based education research finds character develops more through cultural praxis than verbal instruction. Budiarta et al., (2023) reveal that the *Tumpek Wariga* ritual gives students a sense of connection to nature and spirituality, as taught in *Tri Hita Karana*. Culture acts as an educational strategy rooted in communal life.

Initial observations at *Pasraman Saraswati Tri Parartha* indicate that education occurs through cultural inheritance rather than school logic. *Sisya* learns by joining *yadnya* activities, singing, *chanting*, and participating in ritual processions under the guidance of an *acarya*, not through text modules. Knowledge is lived and values modeled, not directly taught.

An interview with *Acarya Made Teken* shows that *pasraman* does not directly teach moderation as a state-defined concept. Instead, moderation is practiced by avoiding extremes in attitudes, speech, and actions. *Acarya* says that being moderate means having values and

respecting other people. This attitude is taught by promoting respectful speech, discouraging insults, and emphasizing respect for teachers, others, and the spiritual environment.

Studies over the past decade on *pasraman* mainly address institutional structure, not how cultural pedagogy shapes moderate character. Sudarsana et al., (2022) discusses learning through singing in Hindu early childhood education. Segara, (2016) views *pasraman* as a formal character education institution. These studies do not address how moderation values form through culture and daily habits.

The emptiness of academic studies at this point opens an important space for reading *pasraman* not only as a religious institution but also as an ethnopedagogical space that forms moderate consciousness through cultural praxis (Bhatia, 2012; Chanda, 2025; Sagaram, 2020). Education in *pasraman* not only equips the disciples with the teachings of the *Vedas* but also teaches them how to live as Balinese-Hindu human beings who are neither extreme nor rigid in belief and who remain open to diversity without losing their spiritual roots (Wiguna & Andari, 2025b; Wiguna & Widyasari, 2025). Thus, *pasraman* serves as a cultural laboratory for character formation, a feature absent from modern educational institutions.

This frame of mind emphasizes that religious moderation in the context of *pasraman* is not born from the formal discourse of the state but from traditions, symbolic spaces, and cultural relations that are carried out from generation to generation (Andari et al., 2025; Wiguna & Andari, 2025a). The attitude of not being overly angry, refraining from harsh words, respecting the beliefs of others, and not feeling completely at ease is a manifestation of religious moderation that is lived through culture, not just normative texts.

This study examines how ethnopedagogy operates in *Pasraman Saraswati Tri Parartha*, how religious moderation is practiced, and how culture forms moderate *brahmacari* from within. By analyzing these dynamics, this study positions *pasraman* as a space that resists cognitive, formal education by focusing on local wisdom. From an ethnopedagogic point of view, *Sisya Brahmacari* are cultural subjects who learn by engaging directly in spiritual and social practice guided by an *acarya*. *Sisya* identity means attaching to a tradition of knowledge expressed in body, space, and cultural rites.

METHOD

This research studied the ethnopedagogical process in *Pasraman* as an educational context and the moderate character of *Sisya Brahmacari* as observed social symptoms. *Sisya*, *acarya*, and the *Pasraman Saraswati Tri Parartha* learning environment were directly observed

as cultural subjects. Data were collected through ethnopedagogical observation instruments based on activities like singing, *geguritan*, *yoga*, *yadnya*, social interaction, and communication patterns between *acarya* and *sisya*, along with an open interview guide to elicit narratives on religious moderation from the direct experience of *sisya*, rather than external concepts. All learning activities and rituals were documented with structured notes and audio-visual tools. Data was organized in a thematic matrix to identify links between cultural practices and attitudes such as tolerance, non-violence, respect for differences, and coexistence. To confirm findings, a simple questionnaire checked for consistency between speech and social practice, and results were combined in a thematic-comparative analysis. Data were verified through participant (*acarya-sisya*-parents) and event (rituals-learning activities-informal interactions) triangulation. Replication can begin by entering the pasraman, building ethical ties with *acarya*, conducting participatory observations, recording cultural practices, re-examining actions through reflective interviews, and analyzing if pasraman culture connects to moderate characters in *sisya*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Results

The data processing in this study is carried out in stages and layers to ensure that each field finding is not only recorded descriptively but also analyzed and interpreted in the context of Pasraman culture. All data on interviews with *acarya*, *sisya*, and parents; records of the results of observation of activities such as songs, *yadnya* exercises, social interactions, and pasraman ethical practices; and cultural documents such as rituals, symbolic language, and body expressions during learning activities are first transcribed in their entirety, then entered a manual coding sheet. Each narrative excerpt from the interviews and observational findings is given an initial thematic code, such as *tolerance through culture*, *ritual discipline*, *habitus of respect for acarya*, *anti-violence through language*, and *internalization of values through practice*. These codes are then grouped into the larger themes of ethnopedagogy and moderate character building.

After that, the researcher reduced the data by setting aside repetitive narratives or descriptions that did not weigh ethnopedagogical meaning, then built a matrix of relationships between *pasraman* cultural activities and religious moderation indicators. This process is used to determine patterns of connection, for example, *whether the practice of geguritan strengthens social empathy* or *whether the yadnya ritual builds an awareness of harmony and anti-*

extremism. The findings were then interpreted using a narrative-reflective analysis approach, which involves reading cultural actions not only from what the *sisya* did but also from the cultural meaning they derived from that action.

As a validity reinforcement, the researcher matched the results of the observations with the statement of the acarya and the expression of the practice of the *sisya*. Then, the researcher compiled a chart of cultural-value-behavioral relations to show the flow of internalization of the value of moderation through the ethnopedagogy of pasraman. If a visual presentation is required, then the table of analysis results will be displayed not in the form of raw data, but as a thematic table that directly shows the meaning of education, such as the following example:

3.1 Data Analysis Table

Data Code / Query	Field Quotes (Verbatim Teacher / Student)	Description of Cultural Context (Observation Situation)	Ethnopedagogical Meaning (Academic Interpretation)	Religious Moderation Content
Q-A01 (Acarya Interview)	"Moderation is not a theory, but living in harmony, not being rude, and not hurting. We teach children by example, not lectures." (Acarya made Teken.)	It was delivered when the researcher took part in a song practice session, and the children were warned with fine language without punishment.	Values are not taught declaratively but through <i>cultural practice</i> and <i>habitual guidance</i> .	Anti-violence, expression control, peaceful living
Q-O02 (Ritual Observation)	There are no others who preceded each other during prayer; all wait for the signal of the acarya calmly.	Direct observation when the yadnya is together, passive but conscious motion structure	Education in collective discipline occurs through a structured rite rather than through formal instruction.	Spiritual equality, anti-domination, intermediate attitudes
Q-S03 (Statement of Sisya)	"We must not mock friends. If a friend is slow to learn songs, we help, not laugh."	Found during the practice of the poem, the senior sisya confirmed the tone of another sisya.	Empathy-based peer learning occurs, not competition.	Tolerance, solidarity, anti-exclusivism.
Q-O04 (Interaction Observation)	Sisya automatically tides up the place of offering without being ordered during the preparation of the ceremony.	Spontaneous interaction without formal instructions; forming a culture of collective responsibility	The value of cooperation is not learned from books but from the role of culture in rituals.	Collective awareness, cooperation, and social moderation

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Q-A05 (Acarya Interview – Ritual Ethics)	"If you speak carelessly during the ceremony, it is not only disrespectful, but it is also considered disrespectful to the existence of others."	It was said while reprimanding the sisya who spoke loudly while preparing banten.	Pasraman builds a spiritual awareness that words are ethical practices, not just social ethics.	Self-control, spiritual empathy, anti-arrogance.
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(Source: personal data, 2025)

2. Discussion

Pasraman Saraswati Tri Parartha functions as a space for the reproduction of cultural habitus that not only transfers religious teachings but also forms an embodied personality pattern (inherent in the body and practice). If Wiguna & Andari, (2025c) research in Mataram states that teachers' strategies in teaching moderation are carried out through explicit delivery of values in the classroom, then the context of *Tri Parartha* shows that the epistemological contradiction of moderation values is not mentioned but is lived. This is in accordance with Pierre Bourdieu's view that education does not only take place at the level of consciousness but also in the structure of the body (habits) that is built through the repetition of cultural actions (Bates & Connolly, 2023; Brown & Lloyd, 2024; Grenfell, 2004). The disciples learn moderation through body discipline, not textual discourse, when they wait for their turn in the ritual.

Pasraman culture acts as a living text, continuously interpreted by the *sisya* through symbols and rites. As Clifford Geertz describes, culture is not just a tradition but a social interpretive system. In the process of learning poems, *tat twam asi* is not taught as a philosophical sentence that must be memorized but appears in a simple gesture: helping a friend who is in the wrong tone without embarrassment (Riady, 2021; Syarifah & Mushtoha, 2019; Tsuroya, 2020). This action shows that reading culture is like reading a text, where *empathy* is not just a word but *a metaphor that is manifested in deeds*. Yuliastini et al., (2024) research on trading only stops at cultural preservation as an educational game, while this study further finds that culture in *pasraman* maintains and fosters socially moderate awareness through aesthetic and spiritual experiences.

The educational praxis in *pasraman* proves Tilaar's idea that true education is a cultural process, not an administrative and curricular one (Arsaliev, 2016b; Hidayati, 2016; Momongan, 2024; Sadewo, 2024). Tilaar stated that education must return to its cultural roots, but this study

found that pasraman had done so long before the state's education policy was based on local wisdom. *Pasraman* does not follow the formal curriculum of the Ministry of Religion but runs an *"unwritten cultural curriculum"* that is more effective in forming a moderate character. At this point, this study offers a critical reading that the religious moderation education initiated by the state finds its ideal form not in schools, but in traditional pasraman.

The process of internalizing the value of moderation through body language, rites, and cultural aesthetics demonstrates that Balinese ethnopedagogy functions as an organic mechanism of character formation, contrasting with the normative learning model encountered in many previous studies. Budiarta et al., (2023) research on Tumpek Wariga positions ethnopedagogy as cultural integration in schools, whereas this study demonstrates that pasraman does not integrate culture into education; rather, the entire educational process is culture itself. Thus, the paradigm is reversed: it is not culture that enters education, it is education that is in culture.

When the acarya rebukes the sisya in subtle language and calls the act of speaking carelessly *"disrespecting the existence of others,"* then religious moderation is interpreted not only as social tolerance but as a spiritual recognition of the existence of other beings in the Balinese-Hindu cosmos. This is what distinguishes this research from Segara, (2016), who still examines pasraman within the framework of moral formation through subject matter. This research confirms that pasraman does not teach morality but forms an ontological awareness that living together means maintaining the rhythm of universal harmony. In this framework, moderation is not policy but the cosmology of life.

Thus, the structure of moderation in pasraman cannot be interpreted as a *"value program"* but as an expression of cultural habitus that transforms into social ethics. The awareness of not yelling, not dominating, not showing superiority, and not embarrassing friends is not the result of formal teaching materials but of *"embodied pedagogy."* This is the most significant novelty of this study: *religious moderation is not born from lectures but from cultural repetition that changes the way bodies and emotions interact with social reality.*

Previous research examined religious moderation as a product of normative learning strategies. This study demonstrates that moderation can emerge organically through pasraman ethnopedagogy, which functions as a silent curriculum. In this approach, the body, rites, and communal relations serve as the primary medium for forming a moderate character.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that *Pasraman Saraswati Tri Parartha* cultivates the moderate character of sisya brahmacari through ethnopedagogy, which functions as a silent cultural curriculum rather than relying on verbal delivery of values or normative instructions. It utilizes cultural practices such as yadnya rites, song practice, language control, and empathy in communal interactions to internalize values, ensuring that religious moderation is experienced not merely as a discourse but as a habitus embedded in the body, emotions, and spiritual consciousness of *the sisya*. These findings show a reversal of the educational paradigm, from moderation as a concept to moderation as a cultural experience, and this makes a new contribution to the study of Hindu education and the study of religious moderation based on local wisdom.

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