



Religious Scriptures in Indonesia focusing on Semantic Studies towards unity

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Abstract

This study is a literature review study of recognized religious scriptures in Indonesia with a focus on semantic studies of the word 'love' words using NVivo 12 Plus software designed specifically to support deep levels of data analysis. The literature search applied the keyword 'love' in Indonesian unless there was no scripture available in Indonesian. This study research ascertained that in all the holy scriptures of recognized religions practicing in Indonesia, the word 'love' was obtainable through a text search using software NVivo 12 Plus. It uncovered that in the Holy Bible the word appears as many as 495 times, in the Holy Qur'an 58 times, in the Vedas 241 times, in the Tripitaka 1705 times, and in Si Shu 571 times. Semantic studies of the word 'love' in the original language of religious scriptures in Indonesia found the words Ahav, Hessed, Agape, and Philia in Christianity, Hubb, Wadda, and Rahmah in Islam, Prema in Hinduism, Metta in Buddhism, and Ren in Confucianism. This study explains that the term 'love' thus exists in every religious scripture in Indonesia and can



be a campaign slogan which could be implemented to increase tolerance between diverse religious communities in Indonesia that are plural and often multicultural and this can hopefully play a huge role in building a sense of religious community in order to increase national unity on the whole. This study explains that 'love' exists in every religious scripture in Indonesia and can be used in any campaigns implemented to increase tolerance and harmony between religiously diverse communities in Indonesia that are considered to be pluralistically inclined. This will support the notion of having a stronger sense of religious harmony in the community so as to increase and promote the notion of national unity through love.

Keywords: religious scriptures, semantics, Indonesia, social cohesion, unity.

Introduction

Indonesia as a religious pluralistic country faces challenges to build harmonious social relations. Diversity identity politics reduces the cohesiveness of national levels that have not been established until now. Poor social cohesion in a divided society is a sign of constitutional problems. First, a reflection on whether the constitutionality is adequate for the creation of a tolerant society, and second, whether the constitutional culture of society can be built as a whole and broadly are important. The plurality of the Indonesian people live co-existing with diverse groups in Pancasila (the official foundational philosophical theory in Indonesia), according to the constitution of the 1945 Indonesian Constitution and its amendments and existing legislation (Susilowati, 2016). Religious pluralism is thus an undeniable condition of Indonesian society, and this condition can be a trigger for conflict, if religion is understood to be limited to personal issues (Alam & Pradhan, 2021). Religion is no longer a social force and no longer influences and shapes the perception of the world, or can overcome all kinds of social problems, but the dilemma for Indonesian people is how it is possible to separate racial, religious and regional problems from the life of the nation. What we must understand now is how to deal with such challenges of religious plurality that could be disruptive (Waluyajati & Nurani, 2016).

Today religious pluralism has become a social fact that afflicts Indonesia, a sovereign state with a population consisting of people from various religious backgrounds. This religious diversity is alleged to have given rise to various kinds of conflicts that claimed many human lives. Based on this phenomenon, experts from various disciplines try to find solutions or approaches to solve the problem. One of the solutions carried out is to apply the theory of religious pluralism which is predicted to be effective enough to reduce conflicts between religious communities (Galston, 1995). This is important in order for religious



people in Indonesia to live together in peace, security, tolerance, and with a sense of mutual respect. Through religious pluralism, it is also hoped that no religious adherent will think that the religion he or she adheres to is the most correct. While other religions are wrong, their followers must repent, otherwise they will be doomed, sent to hell and so on.

At first glance, the idea of religious pluralism seems like a promising solution in order to reconcile religious people, containing noble human hopes and values. But who would have thought, behind it all, that religious pluralism turned out to be not the right solution to reconcile religious people. It is sadly even an enemy to religions at times. Religious pluralism contains many problematic aspects, including inter alia theological problems that materialise (Khaerurrozikin, 2015).

Religious diversity is *sunnatullah*, something that is given and also diversity in languages, likes and cultures (Islam, 2020). This is clearly acknowledged by the Qur'an. For this reason, the Qur'an has given guidance to its people in addressing religious diversity in the form of two clear and firm attitudes, namely the exclusive attitude - *al-inghilaq*, in matters that are *aqidah* (belief) and *'ubudiah* (worship) and the inclusive attitude (*al-infitah*) in the interactive social realm. At the applicative level, Islamic teachings derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah have taught its people how to coexist with members of society of different faiths. The Medina Charter is among the historical evidences of how Islam from the beginning wanted inter-religious harmony (Achmad, 2015). In the context of Indonesia, the noble values of the Qur'an can be developed in order to uphold various pillars that need to be mutually agreed upon and actualized to build inter-religious harmony. Among these pillars are the idea to be increasing the right tolerant attitude, respecting each other with a mature attitude in religion, increasing cooperation in matters that are common goals in religion, without having to suspect each other and strengthening the three pillars of statehood, namely Pancasila, Constitution 45 and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Hasan, 2016).

There is an important thing that must be studied in depth when wanting to give birth to a new perspective in religious studies in Indonesia and that is knowledge of the definition of religion and paradigms about religion which are fundamental. Studying religion everywhere is certainly, though not always, influenced by definitions and conceptions of religion. These two things are crucial points in looking at all issues concerning religion and interfaith governance in Indonesia (Asyhari-Afwan, n.d.).

Religion is a tool to improve the quality of human resources. Religion as the target of research studies has been widely carried out by scholars of scientific



disciplines. They conduct research on various aspects of religion, both aspects of ideas and aspects of embodiment in reality. Starting from the beliefs and teachings possessed by a religion to the influence of religion on the lives of people who follow that religion are all important considerations. The religion adopted by an Indonesian man or woman is integrated in them as human beings who become a benchmark on their perspective and this guides their attitudes and behaviours, so that religion plays a central role in life for Indonesian people. Therefore, how all Indonesian people maintain their respective religions will determine their roles as valuable human resources in the sustainability of the nation and the desired unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia (Savana et al., 2020).

The year 2023 is the 78th year that the Indonesian nation can celebrate its independence, but there are still many pressing problems, especially the fact that there is still no unity in the Indonesian nation. The big problems felt are based on religious primordialism. The phenomenon of violence in the name of religion in Indonesia greatly hinders the unity of the nation and the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia. The phenomenon of religious harmony or tolerance in Indonesia however manifests in the form of religious people in Indonesia who can co-exist with various religions living side by side, namely Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Khonghucu (Mansur, 2017). All the religions equally keep their people harmonious, peaceful, affectionate and they generally respect each other. Indonesia can even be an example for the world when it comes to tolerance or harmony that can grow with multi-religions or diversity. Similarly, religious leaders are and can still work hand in hand in creating harmony and greater tolerance in Indonesia.

The following are some things that break the unity of the nation in Indonesia (Nur & Susanto, 2020):

1. *Identity Politics*. Identity politics that occurs in Indonesia can divide the unity of the nation. This occurs when a particular group promotes its group interests excessively, even at the expense of common interests. Identity politics that promote ethnic, religious, racial, and linguistic differences often trigger conflict and weaken national unity.
2. *Radicalism and Extremism*. Radicalism and extremism are attitudes that can divide a nation and break unity while damaging harmony between citizens. When certain individuals or groups promote radical and extreme teachings, it can trigger inter-group conflict and weaken national unity.
3. *Corruption and Inequality*. Social corruption and social inequality are also factors that can divide the unity of the nation. Corruption that occurs within the government can strengthen social inequality and undermine public trust in the government. High social inequality can also trigger

injustice and discontent among the people, thus weakening the unity of the nation.

4. *Intolerance and Discrimination.* Intolerance and discrimination against certain groups are also factors that can divide national unity. When a group experiences discrimination or injustice, it can trigger feelings of dissatisfaction and distrust towards the government or other societies. Intolerance can also fuel inter-group conflict and undermine harmony between citizens.

5. *Lack of awareness of nationalism.* The lack of nationalism awareness among the people can also weaken the unity of the nation. When people do not have a sense of love and pride for the country and Indonesian culture, this can trigger a decrease in the spirit of togetherness and unity in building the nation. In facing the breakdown of national unity, there needs to be efforts from the government and society to prioritize the values of unity and unity, such as tolerance, mutual assistance, and nationalism. This is important to strengthen the sense of community and face the social and political challenges that exist in Indonesia. Love is a universal noble trait that can be the key solution to the potential division of the Indonesian nation caused by religious differences embraced by each of its adherents. Love for and from God Almighty should be a firm basis for all Indonesians to be able to apply just and civilized humanity (Shahbaz et al., 2013). Even for the realization of Indonesian unity, love between religiously diverse children can be a strong bond, which binds all Indonesian children and brings human resource development towards a the desired objective of a just and prosperous society for all Indonesian people.

Until now, there is still a research gap that has not been filled- research on the notion of the word 'love' in the scriptures of religions, especially religions recognized in Indonesia. In fact, love has an extraordinary potential for the Indonesian nation to become a tool for unifying the nation that arises from the heart, so that it can be a very strong motivation, not just a programme, rule, or motto to be adopted. The love that can grow can surely motivate the entire Indonesian nation and will be good a solution to overcome the problem of division that has plagued the Indonesian nation so far, so that the Indonesian nation is free from the shackles of primordialism and thus enabled to achieve its goals. The word 'love' according to the Big Dictionary Indonesian is a noun that means 'feeling' or 'feeling affection for someone or for something' which then means this word can be translated into several verbs namely loving, loving, and pitying (Shapiro & Shapiro, 2017). To love is to give, to love is to love, and to have pity is to have compassion for someone or to something that is all based on sincerity.



Research Methods

The research method in this study was qualitative with literature research approach that used books and other relevant literature such as academic and popular journals materials as the main object. This research produced information in the form of notes and descriptive data contained in the text studied. Descriptive analysis provided clear, objective, systematic, analytical and critical descriptions of love in recognized religions in Indonesia (Idrus, 2021). In this qualitative research, the researchers' did not begin with conducting an extensive literature search and did not use much of the existing literature to background the research before collecting and analyzing data from the research conducted, because the use of literature before the research could hinder progress and paralyze the creativity of researchers in exploring knowledge about the object of research. However, literature searches were still carried out at the beginning of the study to help give at least some good direction or focus on the research to be conducted. The researchers studied the phenomenon of the research in more depth as if it was foreign to them.

Results and Discussion

This study was a literature review study of the literature of recognized religious scriptures in Indonesia with a focus on semantic studies of 'love' words using NVivo 12 Plus software. Thus the literature search used the keyword 'love' in Indonesian unless there was no scripture available in Indonesian. The first step taken was a search for scriptures, especially in pdf form which could be done in text search in the NVivo 12 Plus software. Table 1 contains the scriptures obtained by download with the Google Chrome search engine.

Table 1
Scriptures in PDF Form

Religion	Scriptures	Analyzed Translations
Christian	Bible	New Translation of the Bible
Islamic	Al -Qur'an	Al-Qur'an Ministry of Religion
Hindu	Vedas	Four Vedas
Tripitaka	Buddha	34 books of the Tripitaka
Confucian	Sishu Wujing	Sishu

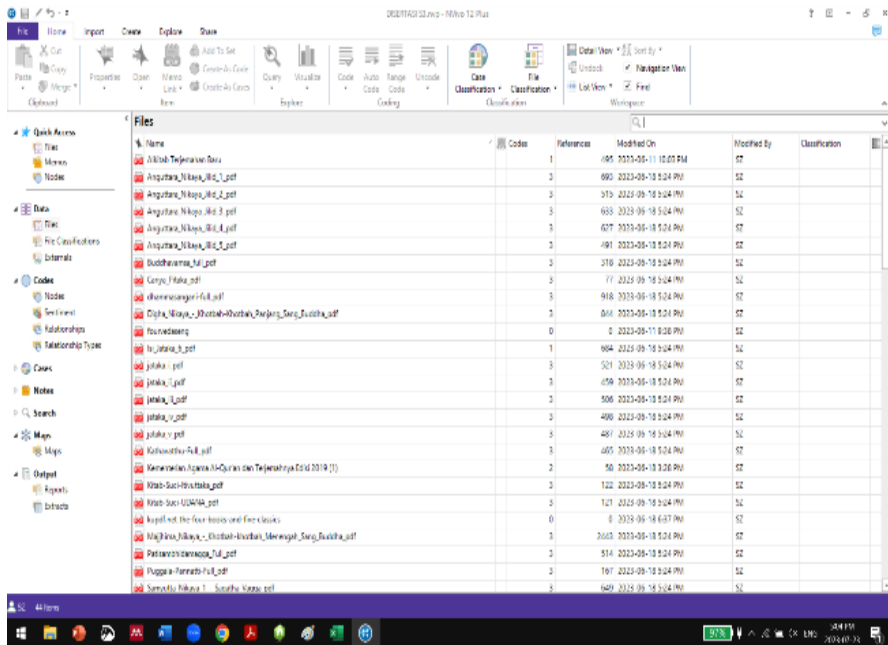
The second step was to import these files into the NVivo 12 Plus software then do a text search with the keyword 'love' for the Vedas because there is no translation in Indonesian in pdf form. Table 2 shows the text search results of each Scripture.

Table 2
Query Results Love n N Vivo 12 Plus

New Translation Bible	495 references coded [0.02% Coverage]
Al-Qur'an Ministry of Religion	58 references coded [0.01% Coverage]
Four Vedas	241 references coded [0.01% Coverage]
Tripitaka	1705 references coded [0.01% Coverage]
Si Shu	571 references coded [0.03% Coverage]

Figure 1 shows the text search query for each holy book in the NVivo 12 Plus software.

Figure 1
Text Search Love in Scriptures
in the N Vivo 12 Plus



Love is clearly contained in all religious scriptures in Indonesia, as evidenced by the results of text search for the word love through the NVivo 12 Plus software. Unfortunately, what is analyzed is 'love' in translation. While the word in the original language in this study has not been the subject of research. Table 3 shows the original language of each holy book.



Table 3

The Original Language of Religious Scriptures

Scriptures	Native Language
Bible	Hebrew and Greek Bible
Al -Qur'an	Arabic
Vedas	Ancient Sanskrit Vedas
Buddha	Pali Tripitaka
Sishu Wujing	Si shu Wu jing

A semantic study was conducted for the word 'love' in the native language of each of these scriptures, which is shown in table 4.

Table 4

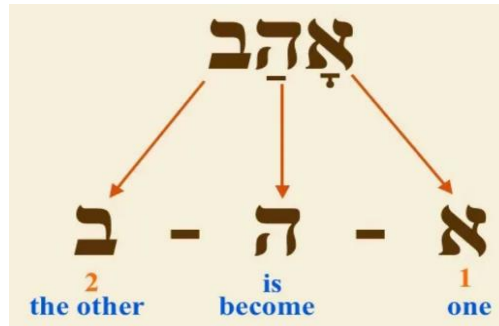
Words of Love in the Original Language of Scripture

Scriptures	Love in the Native Language
Bible	Ahav, Hesed , Agape, Philia
Al-Qur'an	Hubb, Wadda, Rahmah
Veda	Prema
Tripitaka	Metta
Sishu Wujing	Ren, Ai

Love is a translation of the Hebrew verb: אָהַב - 'AHAV, noun: אַהֲבָה - AHAVAH, with definite article: הַאֲהָבָה - HA'AHAVAH. This word is very widely used and is a common word with various meanings according to its level. Deuteronomy 6:5 states, "Love (אָהַבְתָּ - 'AHAV'TA) THE LORD YOUR God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

For the Bible writers, love was not just an intense form of "liking" or a kind of "warm feeling" for others. But the Hebrew word אַהֲבָה - AHAVAH expresses "faithfulness." The root of the word אָהַב - 'AHAV, Alef-He-Bet. In the center of the root is the script ה - He which also refers to the verb: הָיָה - HAYAH, which means: to become, to exist, to exist. In English the verb הָיָה - HAYAH often functions as "to be". The semantics of love in Hebrew are depicted in Figure 2. If we have reached the achievement: when one becomes the other, when two becomes one, you will have a full life.

Figure 2
The Semantics Of Love In Hebrew



The second word of love, *Hesed* (Hebrew: חֶסֶד, romanized as *hesed*), is a Hebrew word meaning kindness or love for neighbor, especially from man's piety toward God and God's love and mercy toward mankind. The term is often used in the Psalms in the latter sense, where it is traditionally translated "loving-kindness" in English translation.

The third word love in the Bible is the most common word for all forms of love in the Bible's New Testament: αγαπαω - *agapaō* (verb), or αγαπη - *agapē* (noun). The number of times *agape* love is referenced in the Bible varies greatly. This is largely determined by the version of the Bible used. The term *agape* is estimated to appear 115 times in the NASB New Testament Bible translation. *Agape*, which has Greek roots, is said to have been used nearly 106 times in the New Testament, with the book of 1 John marking most of its use.

The Qur'an has 3 different words for love: The first is *Hubb* (حُبّ) or the verb *yuhibbu* يُحِبُّ. These words appear in a variety of contexts to describe the relationship of affection between God and His servants, or between fellow human beings. The word *hubb* (حُبّ) and related words such as *yuhibbu* (يُحِبُّ) and *hubban* (حُبًّا) appear several times in the Quran. Overall, words related to *hubb* appeared about 69 times. It is pure love of the highest order, expecting nothing in return. This kind of love (*hubb*) needs to be developed for God. When a person falls in love with God, he cares about nothing but His Will. His love for God replaces love for everything else. Anyone who is in this kind of love with God is a true believer.

The Qur'an says: "There are some who consider themselves to be opponents of God. They love them as they must love God. But those who believe, love God more than anything..." (2:165). The forms of love mentioned above are purely spiritual in nature. Those who love God, love all of His creation without



expecting anything in return from anyone.

The second word used for love is *Wadda* in Arabic. There is desire, longing and physical attraction in it. This love also desires reciprocity such as love between the opposite sex. "And (one of) His signs that He has created mates for you of your own species so that you may feel comfortable with them. And He has caused mutual affection and tenderness among you..." (30:21)

The third word is *Rahmah* which is a combination of compassion, generosity, tenderness, compassion and compassion. In its highest form, it is the nature of God and it is necessary for all beings to develop this divine nature within themselves.

In the Quran, the word *Rahmah* and words derived from the root of the same word as *Rahim* (رحيم) are often used to refer to the attributes of Allah that reflect His mercy, love, and mercy. The concept of Allah's mercy is very important in the teachings of Islam. The Qur'an tells believers that Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) – a role model for all Muslims – was a combination of all these attributes for all existing beings. (21:107). A mother has *Rahmah* for her children and the Qur'an asks children to show *Rahmah* to their parents. (17:24). Every believer is commanded by the Qur'an to inculcate *Rahmah* in them. "Then let he be among those who believe and exhort one another to be patient and exhort one another to have *Rahmah* (i.e. compassion, generosity, tenderness of affection and compassion towards God's creation)..." (90:17). Thus, love is an integral part of the teachings of Islam.

Love in the original language of the Vedic scriptures i.e. Sanskrit is *prema* (प्रेम). *Prema* is used to express love, affection, or a deep sense of friendship. The word often appears in spiritual and religious contexts, particularly in the Hindu bhakti tradition. However, it is important to note that there are many words in Sanskrit that can express different nuances and aspects of love and compassion. It is very difficult to define the word *Prema* (प्रेम) so far as it differs from person to person. *Prema's* philosophy can be studied in a variety of contexts. All variants of explanation are considered absolute for their exponents. So, it's boring to support any of them. It can be explained in different ways. If you are a religious person, you will consider him equal to gods and goddesses. In such *Prema* the devotees have faith in the existence of the Most High and, therefore, *Prema* is judged as *Adhyatmika Prema* (spiritual love).

Love in the original language of the Pali Tripitaka is *metta* (मत्त). *Mettā* is a term often translated as "loving-kindness" or "affection" in the context of spiritual and Theravada Buddhism. The concept of *mettā* refers to selfless love, kindness, and deep and deep compassion towards all beings. In Buddhism, *mettā* is one



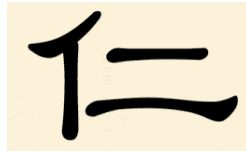
of the four mental qualities referred to as "Brahma-vihara" or "abodes of Brahma" which include *mettā* (love), *karuṇā* (mercy), *muditā* (pleasure in the happiness of others), and *upekkhā* (balance of mind).

Metta comes from the root word *mida* (love) generally interpreted as love; either as friendship, warm affection, friendliness, goodwill, benevolence, loving-kindness. Although these words are considered the best translation, they cannot express the full meaning of *mettā*. In the Tipitaka, the word *metta* appears several times. *Metta* is a Pali term meaning "compassion" or "loving-kindness". This is one of the four mental attitudes (brahmavihara) advocated in Buddhism. In particular, the word *metta* appears in one of the parts of the Tipitaka known as the "Metta Sutta" (Sn 1.8) or "Sutta of Compassion". This sutta is a direct teaching from Buddha on the importance of developing universal compassion for all beings.

The Buddha explained in the Mettasutta: "Let one develop a mind of infinite love towards all beings – upward, downward, acrossward without hindrance, free from hatred, free from hostility. Ketika berdiri, berjalan, Sitting or lying down, as long as he is awake, he should develop this attention in love. This is called His Royal Highness living here." The verse indicates that *mettā* should be practiced to all beings wherever and whenever. By living with love, one is said to live by way of Noble Life (*Brahmavihāra*). *Metta* is true love or the desire to bring prosperity and goodness to all beings. It is not the usual, worldly, emotional, sentimental kind of love. In essence *Mettā* is a mental state without hatred, and it is the opposite of hatred (sin).

Love in the original language of the Sishu Wujing scriptures, which is ancient Chinese, is *Ren*. *Ren* (Chinese: 仁) is a Confucian virtue teaching that indicates the good qualities or deeds of a virtuous human being regardless of himself or herself. The word love (*Ren*) consists of the letter two (er) and the letter man (ren) combined into *Ren* (love). It is a symbol consisting of 2 components joined together: the left component 亻 symbolizes humans, where all characters containing the 亻 script are judging from the meaning of the word must be related to humans. It is opposite the character 二 (er) which not only represents a component of 仁 (ren), but itself is also an independent script, as illustrated in Figure 3. Philosophically it can be interpreted: if two people meet there must be good communication.

Figure 3 Ren : Love in Chinese



In Old Chinese, the second word close to the meaning of "love" was "愛" (ài). Ài is used to express deep love, affection, or affection. It is an important word in the Chinese tradition and has a broad meaning, encompassing love in romantic relationships, affection in the family, friendship, and love for fellow human beings in general. The word remains in use in modern Chinese with similar pronunciation and writing.

Conclusion

Love is the main theme in every single major world religion and in each and every faith it is far more than just a sentiment. It's the 'currency' of every believer's relationship with the divine and with other human beings expressed through caring actions. Religions present people with a truly unified vision of reality because God is indeed one and the reality which He created requires love which drives unity and truth. Love should make all citizens keen to be there for someone else and to support them in their needs and help them grow in life. Love helps us make a difference in someone's life irrespective of their religious background. Love must make all share in and care about another person's happiness and challenges other than their own.

This study ascertained that in all the holy books of the major global recognized religions in Indonesia, the word 'love' was found throughout the various texts when using search software NVivo 12 Plus. It was found in the Bible as many as 495 times, in the Holy Qur'an 58 times, in the Vedas 241 times, in the Tripitaka 1705 times, and in Sishu 571 time. Semantic studies of the word love in the original language of religious scriptures in Indonesia found the words *Ahav*, *Hesed*, *Agape*, and *Philia*, *Agape*, in Christianity, *Hubb*, *Wadda*, and *Rahmah* in Islam, *Prema* in Hinduism, *Metta* in Buddhism, and *Ren* in Confucianism as being significant words used.

This study explains that love exists in every religious scripture in Indonesia and can be used in any campaigns implemented to increase tolerance and harmony between religiously diverse communities in Indonesia that are considered to be plural and this will promote greater religious harmony in the community so as to increase and promote the notion of national unity. Thus by focusing on the similarities such as love, rather than on the differences among the various



religions, Indonesians can find common ground and work towards a more harmonious future in love. Through especially love, including greater understanding, respect for one another's diversity, and benevolence, the diverse and multi-cultural and multi-faith people of Indonesia can achieve true unity and make the nation a better place for all who live in it. Interfaith dialogue based on love is in urgent need globally and religions need to educate and help their followers spread a sense of goodwill and love towards a better world for all future generations.

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