

Understanding Religious Moderation Literacy in Students at SMP Negeri 5 Sentani

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Abstract

Understanding religious moderation literacy at SMP Negeri 5 Sentani is an urgent need to anticipate future social challenges. In order to answer this need, a team of lecturers from the STAKPN Sentani Christian Religious Education Department held community service activities with the main aim of increasing understanding of religious moderation literacy among students. This activity proved to be very relevant and effective in addressing the issue of religious moderation in the school. The PkM team succeeded in delivering material regarding the challenges of practicing religious moderation, the role of education in advancing moderation, as well as strategies for increasing religious moderation literacy in a way that was easy for students to understand. As a result, this activity had a significant positive impact on increasing knowledge of religious moderation literacy for students at SMP Negeri 5 Sentani.

Keywords: Literacy, Religious Moderation, Students at SMP Negeri 5 Sentani

INTRODUCTION

Religious moderation is an increasingly important issue in the context of education in Indonesia. In the midst of ethnic, religious and cultural diversity, religious moderation aims to create harmony and peace between religious communities. Religious moderation is a balanced approach to religious practices and beliefs that emphasizes justice, tolerance and mutual respect between different religious communities. This involves maintaining a middle ground, avoiding extremes, and cultivating an environment where diverse religious views can coexist in harmony. This concept is very important in a multicultural society like Indonesia, where it helps uphold the values of tolerance and harmony among various religious groups [1].

The Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia is aggressively campaigning for religious moderation to attract the attention of many parties. Surprisingly, the idea of religious moderation is recognized by all of Indonesia's official religions. If elaborated further, there are at least three main reasons why we need religious moderation based on the records of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, (2019), including: First, one of the essences of the presence of religion is to maintain human dignity as noble creatures created by God, including taking care not to take their lives. That's why every religion

always carries a mission of peace and salvation. To achieve this, religion always presents teachings about balance in various aspects of life; religion also teaches that protecting human life must be a priority; eliminating one life is the same as eliminating the lives of the entire human race. Religious moderation upholds human values.

Second, thousands of years after religions were born, humans have increased and become more diverse, with tribes, nations, various skin colors, spread across various countries and regions. Along with the development and spread of humanity, religion also developed and spread. Religious texts also experience multiple interpretations, truths become numerous; Some religious adherents no longer adhere to the essence and essence of their religious teachings, but are fanatical about their preferred version of the interpretation of the truth, and sometimes interpretations that suit their political interests. So, conflict is inevitable. Such complexity of human life and religion occurs in various parts of the world, not only in Indonesia and Asia, but also in various other parts of the world. This context is what causes the importance of religious moderation, so that human civilization is not destroyed due to religious conflicts.

Third, specifically in the Indonesian context, religious moderation is needed as our cultural strategy in maintaining

Indonesianness. As a very heterogeneous nation, since the beginning the nation's founders have succeeded in inheriting a form of agreement in nation and state, namely Pancasila in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, which has clearly succeeded in uniting all religious, ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups. It is agreed that Indonesia is not a religious state, but also does not separate religion from the daily lives of its citizens. Religious values are maintained, combined with local wisdom and customs, several religious laws are instituted by the state, religious and cultural rituals are intertwined in harmony and peace.

In the educational context, religious moderation is integrated into the curriculum to promote non-violence, egalitarianism, justice, and tolerance, ensuring a respectful and safe environment for all students, regardless of their religious background [2]. At SMP Negeri 5 Sentani, understanding religious moderation literacy is one of the focuses in learning to shape students' characters who are tolerant and respect differences. In the context of SMP Negeri 5 Sentani, the importance of religious moderation literacy lies in efforts to prevent intolerance from an early age. Through activities that prioritize moderation, it is hoped that students can develop an attitude of mutual respect and work together despite different beliefs.

Understanding religious moderation literacy is not only about teaching the values of tolerance, but also involves developing students' critical abilities in assessing the religious information they [3] Kementerian In today's digital era, students are often exposed to misleading or provocative information. Therefore, digital literacy which is in line with religious moderation is the key to learning at SMP Negeri 5 Sentani.

This PkM activity seeks to ensure that education in schools can integrate religious moderation which is able to improve the quality of relations between the school community and reduce the potential for intolerance. At SMP Negeri 5 Sentani, religious moderation is expected to be implemented through various extracurricular

activities, class discussions, and group projects that encourage interfaith cooperation and understanding. This is expected to create a conducive and harmonious learning environment.

However, there are challenges in implementing religious moderation literacy in schools. Differences in cultural backgrounds and religious understanding among students and teachers can become obstacles in realizing moderation goals. Therefore, training and professional development for teachers in understanding and teaching religious moderation is very important. Thus, understanding religious moderation literacy at SMP Negeri 5 Sentani is an urgent need to anticipate social challenges in the future. Through a comprehensive and participatory approach, schools are expected to be able to form a young generation who is not only academically intelligent, but also has a tolerant character and respects differences.

The PkM activities carried out by the PAK department lecturer team have the aim of increasing understanding of religious moderation literacy among students at SMP Negeri 5 Sentani. In this context, the PkM team provides material in the form of outreach about religious moderation to students. It is hoped that the results of this PkM will contribute effectively to increasing religious moderation literacy among students at SMP Negeri 5 Sentani.

METHOD

The PkM method was carried out by the Christian Religious Education Department team, STAKPN Sentani for students at SMP Negeri 5 Sentani with the following steps: preparation level, implementation level, and evaluation level [4].

1. Stage of Preparation

PkM Team held surveys and interviews to identify the needs of students at SMP Negeri 5 Sentani regarding understanding religious moderation literacy, as well as the obstacles faced by the students. PkM Team prepares presentation material that includes: (1) Challenges in the practice of religious

moderation; (2) The role of education in promoting moderation is diverse; (3) Strategies to increase religious moderation literacy. The PkM team determines the schedule for implementing activities in accordance with the results of the agreement with the students of SMP Negeri 5 Sentani and ensures there is sufficient time for interaction and discussion.

2. Implementation Level

The activities will take place at SMP Negeri 5 Sentani students on May 5 2024 at 10.00-13.00 WIT involving the PkM team from the PAK department lecturers. The PkM team first provides material to students, after that there is a question-and-answer session so that students can ask questions related to the material presented so that they get answers directly from the PkM team.

3. Evaluation Stage

The PkM team evaluates activities by measuring students' understanding of religious moderation literacy material. The PkM team publishes the results of activities and their benefits, both in the form of reports and articles so that knowledge can be shared with the outside community as shared knowledge and learning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Challenges in the Practice of Religious Moderation

The PkM Team for the Department of Christian Religious Education explains the challenges in practicing religious moderation. The material description includes the practice of religious moderation at SMP Negeri 5 Sentani which faces various complex challenges and requires a comprehensive approach. One of the main challenges is the diversity of students' different backgrounds. Students at SMP Negeri 5 Sentani come from various ethnicities and religions, each of which has different religious understandings and practices. This diversity can be a strength, but it can also be a source of conflict if not managed well.

Apart from that, the lack of digital literacy among students is also a challenge. In the current information era, students are exposed to a variety of information whose truth is sometimes difficult to verify. Information that is provocative or radical can easily affect students' understanding if they do not have good digital literacy skills.

The next challenge is limited resources and facilities at schools. SMP Negeri 5 Sentani, like many other schools in remote areas, often faces limitations in terms of learning support facilities. This includes access to teaching materials that support religious moderation, as well as a lack of facilities for extracurricular activities that can promote cooperation between students from various backgrounds. Furthermore, environmental and family influences also play a major role in shaping students' attitudes and understanding of religious moderation. In some cases, a family environment that is less supportive or even instills intolerant values can hinder the school's efforts to instill the values of moderation. Therefore, the involvement of parents and the community in school programs is very necessary [5].

Apart from that, teachers have a very important role in instilling the values of religious moderation in students. For this reason, teachers need to be equipped with adequate knowledge and skills to be able to teach the concept of religious moderation effectively. Comprehensive knowledge of religious moderation allows teachers to convey material correctly and provide real examples in everyday life. Skills in managing a diverse class are also important so that all students feel valued and heard, thereby creating an inclusive and harmonious learning environment [6].

The practice of religious moderation in schools also requires commitment from all parties involved, including teachers, students, parents and the government. Teachers play an important role as agents of change by teaching the values of

moderation and tolerance in the teaching and learning process. Teachers must develop teaching methods that can integrate these values in the curriculum and students' daily lives. This helps create a learning environment that respects diversity and encourages dialogue between religious communities [7]

Students as direct recipients of the educational process also need to be actively involved in the practice of religious moderation. Through extracurricular activities and class discussions, students can learn to appreciate differences and develop a tolerant attitude towards others. The role of parents is also no less important. Parents need to support and strengthen the values of religious moderation taught at school by implementing them at home, so that there is continuity between education at school and at home. With harmonious collaboration from all parties, a harmonious school environment can be created, and a young generation that is tolerant and appreciates diversity can be well prepared. Religious moderation at SMP Negeri 5 Sentani is a long journey that requires cooperation and commitment from all parties. By continuing to learn and adapt, this school can be an example for other schools in its efforts to create harmony and tolerance in a diverse society.



Figure 1. PkM Team Presents Material About Challenges in Religious Moderation Practices

2. The Role of Education in Promoting Religious Moderation

Education has a central role in advancing religious moderation, namely the process of balancing religious beliefs with human values and tolerance. Through education, the values of moderation can be instilled from an early age, forming

characters that respect differences and promote harmony between religious communities [8] Education that emphasizes religious moderation helps reduce extremism and increase social solidarity, which is especially important in a diverse society like Indonesia [9] [10] Karim In the school context, teachers have a big responsibility in teaching the values of religious moderation. Teachers can use interactive and inclusive teaching methods, inviting students to discuss and share views on the importance of tolerance and harmony. Through an integrated curriculum with the values of moderation, students are taught to respect differences in religion and other people's beliefs, and develop an attitude of mutual respect.

The role of education in advancing religious moderation is to strengthen education and literacy by encouraging inclusive and scientific educational approaches. This education promotes literacy, critical thinking, and evidence-based research, which helps overcome the spread of narrow or extreme understandings regarding religion and science [11] Through education, a person can gain a deeper understanding of religious values, the principles of tolerance, and the importance of respecting differences in beliefs. Thus, awareness of the importance of moderation in religion can be instilled from an early age[12].

Education plays a role in shaping individual character, including values such as tolerance, mutual respect and harmony between religious communities. Through education, individuals can become agents of change who promote moderation in religion. Education can also be a platform for encouraging interfaith dialogue. Through constructive dialogue, individuals can understand, appreciate and celebrate diversity of beliefs. This can help strengthen moderate attitudes in religion. Education can teach the values of pluralism as a foundation for a diverse society. By understanding and appreciating diversity, individuals will be more likely to be

moderate in carrying out their religious beliefs

Education also plays a role in forming a community that supports religious moderation. Through education, individuals can learn to work together, support each other, and strengthen relationships between religious communities in society. So, education has a very significant role in advancing religious moderation by forming individuals who have deep understanding, strong character, and a tolerant attitude towards differences in beliefs. Education plays a crucial role in advancing religious moderation among students at SMP Negeri 5 Sentani. Through a well-designed curriculum, education can instill the values of tolerance, respect for differences, and inclusive attitudes from an early age. This approach not only increases students' understanding of diversity, but also strengthens unity amidst the religious plurality that exists in Indonesia.



Figure 2. Students Pay Attention to the Presentation of Material from the PkM Team

3. Strategies for Increasing Religious Moderation Literacy

Increasing religious moderation literacy requires a comprehensive and strategic approach. First, integrating religious moderation material into the educational curriculum is an important first step. An inclusive curriculum can teach students about the importance of moderation in religion and respect for differences. The material presented must include the history, teachings and practices of various religions, so that students can understand diversity better [13].

Second, teacher training is a key factor in the success of religious moderation literacy. Teachers must be

equipped with adequate knowledge and skills to teach the values of moderation. Regular training programs and workshops can help teachers to stay up-to-date with effective teaching methods and raise awareness of the importance of moderation in everyday life [1]

Third, the use of interactive and participatory teaching methods can increase students' understanding of the concept of religious moderation. Group discussions, debates, and collaborative projects can encourage students to interact with different views and develop attitudes of tolerance. This method also helps students to learn actively and critically [14]. Fourth, implementing a holy book literacy program in schools is also important. Reading and understanding scriptures with a moderate perspective can help students to interpret religious teachings in a peaceful and inclusive way. This program can include structured reading, discussion, and reflection on sacred texts.

Fifth, developing relevant and interesting teaching materials is also an important strategy. Textbooks, learning modules and audiovisual materials containing religious moderation messages can be used to support the learning process. These teaching materials must be adapted to the local context and students' needs, so that they are easier to understand and apply [15]. Sixth, collaboration with local communities and religious organizations can strengthen religious moderation literacy programs. Involving religious figures, community leaders and religious organizations in the educational process can provide a broader and deeper perspective. This collaboration can also help overcome resistance that may arise from society [16].

Seventh, utilizing technology and social media to spread the message of religious moderation is also very effective. Digital platforms can be used to share information, hold online discussions, and promote activities that support religious

moderation. This can reach a wider audience and build awareness more quickly [17]. Eighth, regular evaluation and monitoring of the religious moderation literacy program needs to be carried out to ensure its effectiveness. Feedback from students, teachers, and parents can be used to improve the program and adapt it to evolving needs. This evaluation can also help identify new challenges and opportunities in program implementation (Isyara, L. P., et al., 2023).

Ninth, strengthening character through extracurricular activities can also be an effective means of instilling the values of religious moderation. Debate clubs, social activities, and humanitarian projects can give students practical experience to apply the values of moderation in real life. This activity can also increase student involvement and motivate them to participate actively (Anwar, 2022). Lastly, creating a supportive and inclusive school environment is the key to the success of a religious moderation literacy program. Schools must be a safe place for all students, regardless of their religious background. Fair school policies and respect for diversity must be implemented to create a harmonious and understanding learning atmosphere (Wahyudin, 2023).



Figure 3. Students pay close attention to the presentation of material and discuss with each other

During the activity, students at SMP Negeri 5 Sentani participated enthusiastically from start to finish, actively discussing or responding quickly to the material explained by the PkM team. After the activity ended, the PkM team distributed questionnaires to the participants to get feedback regarding their

level of understanding of the material presented.

Based on the evaluation results of PkM activities with the theme "Understanding Religious Moderation Literacy" is very relevant and answers the issue of religious moderation at SMP Negeri 5 Sentani. The knowledge provided by the PkM team in this activity was very useful. The team succeeded in explaining sub-themes regarding challenges in the practice of religious moderation, the role of education in advancing religious moderation, and strategies for increasing religious moderation literacy, so that they could easily understand it. During this activity, the lecture and question and answer methods used were very effective. The question-and-answer segment in this activity is very interactive and makes it easier for students to understand, so that they benefit from the PkM activities carried out by the PAK STAKPN Sentani Department lecturers because they educate students about the importance of religious moderation literacy.



Figure 4. Group photo after PkM activities

CONCLUSION

The PkM activities carried out by a team of lecturers from the STAKPN Sentani Christian Religious Education Department for students at SMP Negeri 5 Sentani had a positive impact on increasing knowledge of religious moderation literacy. This means that this PkM activity has had positive results for students at SMP Negeri 5 Sentani. The PkM team succeeded in providing very relevant material and answering the problem of religious moderation at Sentani State Middle School, which included the diversity of student backgrounds, low digital literacy, limited resources, and the influence of the family environment.

In addition, the team provided students with an understanding that strategies for increasing religious moderation literacy include integration of moderation material in the curriculum, teacher training, interactive teaching methods, use of relevant teaching materials, and collaboration with local communities. Technology and social media can be used to spread messages of religious moderation. Regular evaluations and extracurricular activities as well as an inclusive school environment are also important in instilling the values of religious moderation in students.

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