

Religious Tolerance of the Young Generation: Religious Convergence in Education

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to determine the importance of religious tolerance among the younger generation in Indonesia, focusing on the practice of religious moderation in Dusun Sumberejo, Jombang Regency. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach, observing the interaction between students of Islamic Boarding Schools and church congregations who share physical space. The results showed that character education and empathy play an important role in building attitudes of tolerance between religious communities. Through interfaith training programs, young people are taught to respect differences and contribute to joint activities, which create a harmonious environment. These findings emphasize that religious moderation can be achieved through dialogue, cooperation, and the development of empathy, and is an important step in forming a peaceful and civilized society.

Keywords: Religious Tolerance, Young Generation, Convergence, Religion, Education

Introduction

Religious moderation is a way of seeing, attitude and religious behavior that is recognized and practiced by the majority of the Indonesian population¹. As one of the efforts to realize the implementation of diversity in Indonesia, religious moderation is made a national program². Religious moderation is made a program of the National Long-Term Development Plan (RP JMN)³. The trend of religious moderation is used as an effort to take the middle path (*tawasuth*) in dealing with various diversity issues, both stand-alone or

related to other problems, such as economics, politics, culture and so on.

The current digital era brings conveniences to the public, especially among Indonesian youth. However, behind this convenience, there are also serious impacts, namely the lack of social habits and sensitivity to the surrounding environment for the younger generation. Intolerant, individualistic, and impolite attitudes in speaking will be possessed by the community, especially the nation's generation, due to the lack of wisdom in using social media⁴. When religious moderation is used as a trend in accepting religion in Indonesia, the presence of social media can actually damage

¹ Khairul Amri, "MODERASI BERAGAMA PERSPEKTIF AGAMA-AGAMA DI INDONESIA," *Living Islam: Journal of Islamic Discourses* 4, no. 2 (December 31, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.14421/lijid.v4i2.2909>.

² Jamaluddin Jamaluddin, "IMPLEMENTASI MODERASI BERAGAMA DI TENGAH MULTIKULTURALITAS INDONESIA," *As-Salam: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 7, no. 1 (February 28, 2022): 1–13.

³ Muhammad Zulfikar Yusuf and Destita Mutiara, "Diseminasi Informasi Moderasi Beragama: Analisis Konten Website Kementerian Agama," *Dialog* 45, no. 1 (June 29, 2022): 127–37, <https://doi.org/10.47655/dialog.v45i1.535>.

⁴ Rossy Ayu Sulistianti and Nugraha Sugiarta, "KONSTRUKSI SOSIAL KONSUMEN ONLINE SHOP DI MEDIA SOSIAL TIKTOK (STUDI FENOMENOLOGI TENTANG KONSTRUKSI SOSIAL KONSUMEN GENERASI Z PADA ONLINE SHOP SMILEGODDESS DI MEDIA SOSIAL TIKTOK)," *JISIP (Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Pendidikan)* 6, no. 1 (January 16, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.58258/jisip.v6i1.2861>.

views through the circulation of propaganda content and hate speech⁵.

Global security as a basic need that is very important for the world community today⁶. Realizing this basic need can of course only be realized if people between nations, groups or races live side by side in peace (*peaceful life*)⁷. An inevitability that cannot be denied is the presence of a peaceful and safe life systematically. Indonesia as a country rich in culture, race, language and religion is known as a pluralistic society . Through the motto *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, the existing diversity can be framed in its meaning, namely Different But Still One. However, it cannot be denied that the Indonesian nation is also known as a multicultural country, so it is vulnerable to conflict.

According to Kartono, conflict is a social process that is antagonistic and cannot create harmony between the two parties. Meanwhile, according to Gillin and Gillin, conflict is a social process of individuals or groups who have goals achieved by opposing others through violence. This opinion can be drawn as a common thread, which is that conflict will arise if differences between individuals or groups are resolved through violence. Various types of conflicts have emerged in Indonesia, one of which is inter-religious conflict. The forms of conflict that arise are also diverse, some arise between religions and some arise from certain sects within one religion.

Religions recognized and developed in Indonesia include Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Freedom to choose a religion that is believed in is a right for the Indonesian people, the State provides

protection for citizens who embrace religion. The guarantee of freedom of religion is contained in Law Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights in several articles. Article 28E paragraph (1) and (2) of the 1945 Constitution also Article 22 paragraph (1) of the Human Rights Law, which determines the freedom to embrace religion or believe in beliefs. Article 28I paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution also Article 4 of the Human Rights Law, concerning the right to religion as one of the Human Rights that may not be reduced under any circumstances. Article 29 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution also Article 22 paragraph (2) of the Human Rights Law, which determines that the State guarantees the freedom of each resident to embrace their respective religion and to worship according to that religion and belief.

Implementation of the 1945 Constitution, the framing of religious moderation plays a role in organizing the religious life of a pluralistic society. The first principle of Pancasila also explains about religiosity, which can be interpreted that Indonesian people are obliged to adhere to religion and have the right to choose the religion they believe in. Based on this, an attitude of tolerance is needed between religious communities so as not to give rise to deep conflict. Awareness of an attitude of tolerance is very much needed in building a peaceful and religious country. Webster's New American Dictionary defines *tolerance as liberty toward the opinions of others, patience with others* . Basically, tolerance is an attitude that gives freedom of opinion to others and is patient in dealing with others. Hailer argues that tolerance is an attitude of consciously recognizing and respecting adherents of other religions.

Indonesia is a country experiencing a crisis of tolerance between religious communities, there have been major conflicts that have emerged since the 90s. Some of these conflicts include; 1) Conflict between Christians and Muslims that occurred in the late 1990s, 2) Conflict that began with the extortion of Muslim youths against Christians in 1999, 3) Conflict that occurred because the Indonesian Gospel Church attacked Muslims and 4) Conflict that occurred from 1979 to 2015, caused by violations of the tolerance pledge between Muslims and Christians. Some of these conflicts

⁵ "Moderasi Beragama_Prof. Dr. K. H. Khairil Anwar, M.Ag..Pdf," accessed November 11, 2024, http://digilib.iain-palangkaraya.ac.id/4763/1/Moderasi%20Beragama_Prof.%20Dr.%20K.%20H.%20Khairil%20Anwar%2C%20M.Ag..pdf.

⁶ Nurhattati Fuad, "Penanaman Toleransi Beragama Pada Anak Melalui Pendidikan," *Societas Dei: Jurnal Agama Dan Masyarakat* 2, no. 1 (October 24, 2017): 252, <https://doi.org/10.33550/sd.v2i1.61>.

⁷ "Merajut Damai Dalam Kebinekaan - Ahmad Nurkholis - Google Buku," accessed November 11, 2024, https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=A0NGDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Mewujudkan+kebutuhan+dasar+ini+tentunya+hanya+bias+diwujudkan+apabila+antara+masyarakat+antarban+gsa,+kelompok+atau+ras+hidup+berdampingan+dengan+damai&ots=PpzJjE5ImT&sig=9jBDBaCi9zpPitXTXrwi0235Bc&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false.

that emerged were caused by excessive aggressive attitudes towards adherents of other religions and the concept of the absoluteness of God that was misunderstood.

In 2023, the Advocacy Coalition for Freedom of Religion or Belief reported that the situation of freedom of religion and belief in Indonesia has not changed significantly. Some of the cases reported include: 1) Rejection of the construction of houses of worship in several areas, 2) Increased reports of blasphemy based on viral videos on social media, and 3) Discrimination against adherents of beliefs. In suppressing inter-religious conflict, an attitude of tolerance is strengthened with empathy. In fact, religious moderation will strengthen in society if it is based on a high sense of empathy. In fact, people who have a high sense of empathy will not be able to hurt others, thus creating a moderate attitude and tolerance.

The young generation of Indonesia carries an important task as the holder of the pillars of the sustainability of a country, therefore they must have an awareness of the importance of tolerance through a high sense of empathy. This study reviews in more depth the importance of providing education to the young generation of Indonesia in accepting religious diversity by fostering an attitude of tolerance and high empathy. A picture of the implementation of tolerance with a high sense of empathy was found in Jombang Regency, namely in Dsn. Sumberejo Babatan Village, Wonosalam District. Where there is a church within one wall with a Boarding School, something that is unique in terms of how students can accept with an open heart the presence of a group of people who have different beliefs from them. In addition, there is a training institution owned by the Boarding School foundation intended for all young people of interfaith communities to gain work training knowledge together. Something that is unique and needs to be studied is the interaction of the community, especially boarding school students with church congregations. Islamic Boarding Schools that make *Tahfidzul Qur'an* their flagship program certainly have busy activities every day, then how do these activities not interfere with Christian religious worship in church.

Various studies have been conducted in Wonosalam District, Jombang related to the practice of religious moderation, but researchers have not found any research in Dsn. Sumberejo, especially the existence of Islamic Boarding Schools with one wall and a church. This phenomenon is worthy of study, the integration of religion with education that is packaged through the acceptance of students and youth of the differences that exist. In addition, how empathy is formed by the caretakers of Islamic Boarding Schools, so that there are no debates and conflicts between students and church congregations.

Materials and Methods

The approach that researchers will use in conducting this research is a qualitative research approach that is carried out directly in the field. Qualitative research is descriptive research and usually uses an inductive approach for analysis. The research process and the use of theoretical frameworks are made in such a way that the focus of the research is consistent with the facts in the field. In addition, the theoretical framework provides an overview of the background of the research and is useful as a source for discussing research findings in the field.

With the aim of knowing the religious tolerance of the young generation in Jombang as a form of religious convergence in education . By using a descriptive qualitative research type, the researcher will conduct research directly by observing the conditions in the institution and inviting informants to provide information related to the conditions of the research object clearly without coercion with the intention of getting good results. The research that the researcher wants to achieve is to better understand the conditions of young people in Dusun Sumberejo, Babatan Village, Wonosalam, Jombang in the practice of religious moderation. In this descriptive qualitative research, the data collected comes from observations, interviews and documentation results in the field.

Results and Discussion

Religious Moderation in Youth

Religious Moderation is now a major focus for the Government of the Republic of Indonesia. On September 25, 2023, President Joko Widodo officially issued Presidential Regulation (Perpres) Number 58 of 2023 concerning Strengthening Religious Moderation. In the regulation, religious moderation is defined according to the formulation set by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag). Article 1 of the Perpres states that Religious Moderation is a way of viewing, attitude, and practice of religion in communal life, which reflects the essence of religious teachings and beliefs that respect human dignity and support the public interest, based on the principles of justice, balance, and compliance with Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia as a mutual agreement.

As an effort to strengthen, religious moderation is now not only the responsibility of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Its implementation will involve all ministries, agencies, and state institutions related to the field of religion, both at the central and regional government levels, and involve the community at the most basic level. All ministries or state institutions will collaborate in a planned, systematic, and sustainable manner through the concept of the Joint Secretariat for Religious Moderation, which functions as a forum to strengthen coordination between ministries or institutions. Funding for this activity will be facilitated through the State Budget (APBN), Regional Budget (APBD), and other legitimate and non-binding sources of funds.

The main objective of the Presidential Decree on Strengthening Religious Moderation is to make the country a fair and friendly place for all Indonesian citizens in living a harmonious, peaceful, and prosperous religious life, while at the same time aligning the relationship between religion and state. The principle of this alignment is so that religious values are not used for political interests. The success of religious moderation is also greatly influenced by political and national practices, where issues of political populism and religion are often interrelated and become part of the political

agenda. In addition, religion is related to public services, which aim to provide services to the community without discrimination, so it is very important to realize fair and balanced public services.

In addition, religion also emphasizes the importance of implementing laws that meet the needs of society and support the common good. Religion provides space to express beliefs in public spaces, while still following existing legal provisions and agreements. This Presidential Decree also emphasizes the essence of religious moderation. First, maintaining the safety of souls; every religious adherent and believer in beliefs is expected to try to prevent actions that can endanger human safety. Second, upholding the values of civilization; every individual must make universal moral principles and religious teachings a way of life, while still adhering to the identity of the Indonesian nation. Third, respecting human dignity; every religious adherent and believer in beliefs must prioritize an attitude of respect for one another, both men and women, based on equal rights and obligations as citizens for the common good.

Fourth, strengthening the value of moderation, every religious adherent and believer is expected to promote and implement moderate religious views, attitudes, and practices. Fifth, realizing peace; every individual must spread virtue and peace, and resolve conflicts with the principles of justice and balance, while adhering to the constitution. Sixth, respecting diversity by maintaining freedom of thought, expression, and religion. Every religious adherent and believer must consider diversity as a gift and be open to differences. Seventh, complying with the commitment of the nation, every individual is expected to make Pancasila the foundation of the state and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia as a guideline in living the life of the nation and state.

Dsn. Babatan Ds. Simberegjo Wonosalam is one of the areas in Jombang Regency that practices religious moderation. The existence of Islamic Boarding Schools that are one wall with the church, the practice of religious moderation has begun to be built among students and youth. Gus Ahmad Basuki as the caretaker of Fattahul Muhibbin

Islamic Boarding School has become a role model for young people of various religions. This charismatic figure who highly upholds the values of Pancasila teaches the practice of religious moderation through aspects of similarity, such as ethics, morality, and universal human values, convergence. His goal is to create an inclusive and harmonious environment among students, Muslim youth and non-Muslim youth. Based on the results of an interview with Gus Bas, the nickname of Gus Ahmad Basuki, that in implementing religious moderation by instilling principles that are in accordance with the Al-Qur'an, Al-Kafirun verse 6. He said that:

“The verse that means For you your religion and for me my religion, is full of educational values, especially in respecting existing differences. I always emphasize that students and youth in the Babatan Village, Simberejo Village to respect, honor, and not argue with other religions because in reality religion is formed from faith. While a person's faith depends on their respective beliefs, so that existing differences must be respected.”

Based on the concept instilled by Gus Bas, in the construction of Islamic Boarding School buildings or repairing facilities in churches, the youth and students will work together without expecting anything in return. The youth fostered by Gus Bas, both Muslim and non-Muslim, will be together in every activity, both at the Boarding School and in the church. Muslim and non-Muslim youth are gathered and fostered by Gus Bas in the Work Training Center (BLK) institution. He does not differentiate between the portion of ability and opportunity for youth to gain knowledge from the institution. So that the togetherness created between students and youth of different religions is clearly harmonious, they live side by side without any attitude of influencing each other to embrace the beliefs they adhere to.

Gus Bas as the caretaker of the Fattahul Muhibbin Islamic Boarding School who shows a charismatic and fair attitude towards all people of different religions. He is an example of a moderate and balanced society because of his fair attitude.

The experience of Dusun Sumberejo provides a reflective lesson, namely that living in a complementary and mutually helpful manner between humans is an aspect that needs to be applied in community life. By realizing the values of complementarity and mutual helpfulness, a safe and peaceful community life will be created. So, the practice of harmony between religious residents in Dusun Sumberejo can be an example for other areas in building a harmonious society, through the spirit of mutual respect, complementarity, and helping each other.⁸

Tolerance between Islamic Boarding School Students and Youth of Different Religions

Etymologically, tolerance comes from Latin, namely *tolerare*, which means to restrain oneself, be patient, respect other people's opinions, and be open-minded towards differences of opinion. While in English, *tolerance* means an attitude of accepting, appreciating, respecting, and acknowledging the differences inherent in each other. Tolerance is considered an absolute requirement in practicing the values of Pancasila and a tool in maintaining good relations between citizens of the Republic of Indonesia. Tolerance, both as an attitude of life and an understanding, must be able to provide practical value in community life that respects and appreciates religious diversity.

The religious differences believed by the Indonesian people are an inevitable phenomenon, therefore instilling an attitude of mutual respect, honor, and acceptance of differences is a must. Religious tolerance in this study means an attitude of recognizing and accepting the diversity of beliefs and freedom of expression between religious adherents. Tolerance is very important in a diverse society, such as Indonesia, where there are various religions and beliefs. With tolerance, conflicts that may arise due to differences in beliefs can be minimized. A tolerant society tends to be more stable, peaceful, and harmonious, because each individual feels valued and accepted. In a

⁸Rahmah, LA, & Amaludin, A. (2021). *Implementation of Social Interaction between Communities Through Religious Moderation and Tolerance in Gentasari Village, Kroya District, Cilacap Regency*. To Maega: Journal of Community Service, 4(3), 341. <https://doi.org/10.35914/tomaega.v4i3.860>

global context, tolerance also contributes to world peace by reducing tensions between different groups.

Education plays a crucial role in instilling values of tolerance. Inclusive curriculum and character education can teach to appreciate differences and understand others' perspectives. Programs that involve interfaith dialogue, interfaith social activities, and experiential learning can help students develop empathy and openness to differences.

Religious leaders and figures have a great responsibility in promoting tolerance. They can be role models in demonstrating mutual respect and spreading the message of peace. By utilizing their platforms, religious figures can educate people about the importance of living side by side and working together for the common good, and responding wisely to issues of intolerance.

The building of the Islamic Boarding School and the church that form one wall as a silent witness that tolerance between religious communities there is very good. Gus Bas as the most respected community figure among young people of different religions and among students, always reminds of the importance of tolerance. The form of tolerance reflected in the lives of young people of different religions and students from the spirit of respect, mutual respect, and cooperation between residents, certainly has a positive impact on the lives of residents. In daily activities, especially during religious holidays, the people of Dusun Sumberejo show efforts to maintain religious moderation through actions of helping each other and working together to make religious activities a success, regardless of religion. This attitude and action are real forms of commitment to continue to maintain the positive traditions that already exist in their environment. So that there are no conflicts, conflicts, and damage to worship facilities, both Islamic Boarding Schools and churches.

In Sumberejo Hamlet, Babatan Wonosalam Village, the attitude of tolerance among the youth is a form of inner attitude or the fruit of thought from the will of each individual to live in harmony and foster a sense of mutual security in everyday life. Tolerance is not only a theoretical concept, but is manifested in real life practices. In a year, there

are two major celebrations carried out by Muslims and Christians. This shows the diversity and differences in religious traditions in society. Although there are differences in religious traditions, society continues to strive to maintain tolerance and harmony in life. The attitude of tolerance that exists is the result of the desire of society to respect each other and create harmony in life together.

So, tolerance among young people is not just a concept, but is manifested in real practice, including in responding to differences in religious traditions. This shows the community's commitment to maintaining a sense of mutual security and harmonious life. When Christians celebrate Christmas, Islamic boarding school students and Muslim youth provide assistance in the form of security and cooking food. There are several times during the Christmas celebration when Gus Basuki gives a lecture on the importance of maintaining tolerance. While during the celebration of Islamic holidays, Christian youth provide food or participate in enlivening the event. It is not uncommon for church congregations to give gifts of clothing or other items to Islamic boarding school students during the Eid al-Fitr celebration.

Efforts to maintain the sustainability of religious moderation in Dusun Sumberejo, Babatan Village, Wonosalam can be done by consistently maintaining an attitude of mutual respect and appreciation between religious communities. This is important so that there are no conflicts related to religious differences. In addition, it is necessary to always strengthen the bonds of brotherhood between each other in order to minimize and prevent the possibility of conflicts related to religion. By strengthening the bonds of brotherhood, it is hoped that it can strengthen harmony between religious communities.

The attitude of mutual support and working together in the implementation of interfaith activities must also be actively implemented. This aims to create a peaceful environment rich in tolerance values. Efforts to maintain religious moderation in the area are carried out through three things: 1) maintaining an attitude of mutual respect and appreciation, 2) strengthening the

bonds of brotherhood between religious communities, and 3) supporting each other and working together in interfaith activities. This is done to create a peaceful and tolerant environment.

The main factor that makes the sense of tolerance very strong in Dusun Sumberejo, Babatan Village, Wonosalam is the effort to deepen the religious knowledge embraced by each individual. For example, in Islam there is a teaching that reads "for you your religion and for me my religion". By practicing this teaching, Muslims in the hamlet accept the religious differences around them with open hearts. The same thing also applies to adherents of other religions. When non-Muslims see students at the Pondok who wear the hijab, even though it is different from their religion, they understand it because they understand that each religion has its own teachings that must be respected.

The people of Sumberejo Hamlet strongly believe that all religions teach tolerance and accept differences, especially in community life. This belief further strengthens the sense of tolerance that exists in the area. The main factor that makes tolerance strong in this hamlet is each individual's deep understanding of their religious teachings, which then encourages them to respect each other's differences in beliefs in community life.

The role of the Sumberejo Hamlet Government, Babatan Wonosalam Village is very important in maintaining harmony between religious communities in the area. Some roles that can be carried out include, 1) Leading the development of harmony between religious communities; 2) Being a glue for internal relations between religious communities; 3) Resolving problems that occur between communities; and 4) Acting as a motivator and mediator in various conditions that have the potential to cause conflict.

By carrying out these roles, the Hamlet Government is expected to be able to maintain and improve harmony between religious communities. In addition to the role of the government, the figure of Gus Bas is a role model for the Community in the Sumberejo Hamlet, Babatan Wonosalam Village, especially for Muslim and non-Muslim communities. His charismatic figure

and high insight can embrace all communities across religions in an attitude of high tolerance.

Islam has guaranteed freedom of religion, there is no compulsion in religion. History records that tolerance and love of peace are the glorious heritage of Islamic civilization in the past. Therefore, there should be no more efforts to force others to follow our beliefs, because this is an attitude that is contrary to history. Religious tolerance in Islam does not mean merging or exchanging beliefs between different religious groups. Tolerance here is more about the understanding of mu'amalah (social interaction), namely the existence of shared boundaries that must be respected and must not be violated. The essence of tolerance is when each party is able to control themselves, giving space to respect each other's uniqueness without feeling disturbed or threatened by their beliefs and rights.

Tolerance must be instilled with correct understanding and full awareness, not through deception, coercion, or intimidation. In this context, the Qur'an emphasizes that there should be no coercion in religion (*la ikraha fi al-din*). Religion should be based on the shahada, which is a sincere confession based on correct understanding. In addition, Islam encourages its followers to do good to everyone regardless of differences in religion or belief. There is not a single verse of the Qur'an or the Sunnah of the Prophet that teaches to hate or criticize people of different religions. From a religious perspective, attacking or intimidating people who do not share the same faith is a sin. The desire to spread understanding or religion must be done with compassion and an open attitude, not with anger, hatred, or tempting promises.

The success of the Prophet Muhammad's preaching was determined by his tolerant attitude towards those who did not believe. Islam came as a blessing for the entire universe. The command to war in Islam aims to create peace, namely when the rights of a Muslim are violated, not to force others to become Muslims. In the context of tolerance, we must respect and honor each other's understanding and views. Even though we are convinced of the misunderstanding or religion of others, we have no right to hate or scold them. There is no right for

someone to punish others for their misunderstanding or religious beliefs. The task of an 'alim in Islam is only to convey and remind as long as the warning is still beneficial to the person concerned. If not, then the concept in the verse "*Lakum diinukum waliyadin*" applies.

In the practice of tolerance, it is certainly necessary to instill an attitude of empathy towards all elements of society. Empathy is a person's ability to understand the circumstances of others through feelings and thoughts, and to convey that understanding without losing one's identity. In other words, empathy is the capacity to put oneself in the perspective of others without being influenced by their emotions or reactions. A person who has empathy is generally able to accept and listen to other people's views well and is sensitive to other people's feelings. Although there are three factors that influence the level of empathy, namely the tendency of individuals to be more empathetic to people who are similar to them, the tendency to empathize with people who suffer due to external factors, and increased empathy by focusing on the feelings of people in need rather than objective facts.

Empathy is a very important ability in social interactions, as it helps individuals understand and feel what others are experiencing. It involves two key aspects: understanding and communication. A deep understanding of the feelings and thoughts of others allows one to communicate in a more effective and sensitive way. In addition, empathy also serves to strengthen relationships between individuals, because people who are empathetic tend to listen and accept other people's points of view better. There are several factors that influence the ability to empathize, such as similarities with others and the context of the suffering experienced. For example, a person is more likely to feel empathy for someone who is experiencing difficulties due to unexpected things, compared to those who may be considered to be experiencing difficulties due to personal choices. By understanding and improving empathy, individuals can build more solid and supportive relationships in society.

The formation of empathy among young people is a must in Ds. Babatan Wonosalam Jombang, Gus

Bas as one of the religious leaders who is quite respected by the entire community highly prioritizes character education. According to him, fostering empathy can increase the practice of tolerance among young people in Dusun Sumberejo, Babatan Wonosalam Village. The media in instilling empathy through educational facilities packaged in the Fattahul Muhibbin Job Training Center (BLK). The foundation managed by Gus Bas accommodates young men and women, both Muslim and Christian, who are both given training in developing the skills they have. The interaction between young people in BLK is not just sharing knowledge, but deeper with mutual respect and helping each other so that a feeling of "*tepo seliro*" is created. The feelings that grow in the hearts of each young person are used as well as possible in framing religious moderation by Gus Bas.

Cosmologist and philosopher Karlina Supelli argues that to truly understand the experiences of others, we must be grounded in the value of humanity, which recognizes each individual as a person. While tolerance is important, without empathy, the concept can fall into a paradigm that dehumanizes others. The ability to empathize and feel the experiences of others should go beyond the principle of tolerance. Empathy does not depend on shared cultural or racial backgrounds; it grows from the human heart because of the shared human nature.

The manifestation of empathy is seen during the celebration of Muslim and Christian holidays, during the celebration of Eid al-Fitr, Christian religious leaders invite their followers to join in the celebration by maintaining security and order and providing new clothes and food. Likewise, during Christian celebrations, Muslim youths secure the solemnity of their worship and then eat together. Christians serve halal food, even in the slaughter of animals it is handed over to the Islamic Boarding School so that it can be enjoyed together. This attitude of mutual respect and appreciation for other religions is applied in education at BLK and Fattahul Muhibbin Islamic Boarding School. In fostering empathy among youth and students, Gus Bas uses the exemplary method, because this is a form of education that is concrete and quickly

understood by the community, especially youth and students.

The exemplary method is a way of internalizing values by providing concrete examples to the community, especially the youth. In the context of education, the importance of providing this example is highly emphasized, because the behavior of religious figures often receives special attention from their communities. One of the Islamic religious figures in Sumberejo Hamlet, Babatan Village, Wonosalam, explained the method applied to internalize empathy:

“As a religious figure, having good morals is very important because our actions will be emulated by society. Therefore, I always try to show good behavior, such as speaking politely, respecting others even though they have different beliefs, helping each other, and not demeaning other religions. The most important thing is to set an example so that society will respect each other's beliefs, considering that in Dusun Sumberejo, Babatan Village, Wonosalam, there are various religions that are practiced.”

In fact, without the creation of empathy, there will be no attitude of moderation and practice of tolerance, because someone who has empathy in themselves will not be able to hurt others. Religious moderation will be strengthened in society, especially young people today, if each individual is able to have high empathy and accept diversity. That way, empathy can foster harmony, peace, and tolerance in young Indonesians, especially in the practice of religious moderation.

Religious Convergence in Education

Education is very important in forming an attitude of tolerance through high empathy, the role of education as a medium in integrating the values of tolerance and interfaith teaching certainly aims to increase understanding of diversity. The educational process is not only about how someone learns and understands the material they teach, but also how education can open the minds of the younger generation in accepting diversity.

Islamic Boarding School as one of the non-formal educational institutions that accommodate students in receiving learning and emphasize the interaction process. Religious convergence refers to

the process in which various religious traditions and practices interact, influence each other, and adapt in a particular context. Islamic boarding schools as Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia have an important role in shaping the character and religious understanding of students. Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia generally have unique characteristics, where they not only function as educational institutions, but also as a place to live for students. In this context, PP Fattahul Muhibbin is one of the Islamic boarding schools that adopts an inclusive educational approach, which includes teachings from various religious traditions. This creates space for students to understand and appreciate differences in religious practices.

From the results of interviews with the caretakers of the Islamic boarding school, it was revealed that they strive to create a harmonious environment where students can learn about various religious perspectives. The location of the Islamic boarding school which is on the same wall as the church building will automatically affect the students' acceptance of other religions. The caretakers emphasize the importance of tolerance and mutual respect between religious communities as part of character education. This shows that the Islamic boarding school plays a role as a bridge in reducing inter-religious tensions and promoting interfaith dialogue. Although initially many of the guardians of the students did not accept the existence of the church, through a deep approach, a harmonious atmosphere was finally created in the environment of the boarding school and the church.

The learning methods applied in Islamic boarding schools also show religious convergence. In teaching the yellow book, for example, students are not only taught classical texts from one school of thought, but are also introduced to thoughts from other schools of thought. This allows them to develop a more comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings. Likewise at the Fattahul Muhibbin Wonosalam Islamic Boarding School, where the profile of its graduates is students who memorize the Qur'an and understand the yellow book, which is not only in terms of learning but religious convergence is directly felt by the

students. Having direct contact with church congregations makes them better understand and respect the existing religiosity.

Islamic boarding schools also show efforts to integrate universal values into their curriculum. Values such as justice, compassion, and social awareness are taught as part of religious education. Interviews with students indicate that they feel inspired to apply these values in their daily lives. Most students stated that they have been involved in various social activities aimed at helping the surrounding community. These activities include providing security when Christians celebrate holidays, working with local youth to help build church buildings or facilities, and for female students helping to cook food to be served to the entire community involved in church activities.

One of the important findings of this study is that there is a real effort to build good relations between Islamic boarding schools and non-Muslim communities. Through this activity, students learn to appreciate differences and build solidarity with members of other communities. The results of interviews with community leaders indicate that this collaboration has helped create an atmosphere of mutual understanding and tolerance in the area. This shows that Islamic boarding schools can play a role as agents of change in promoting harmony between religious communities.

Overall, Islamic Boarding Schools play an important role in the process of religious convergence in education. Through an inclusive approach, interactive learning methods, and integration of universal values, Islamic Boarding Schools have succeeded in creating a space for students to understand and appreciate diversity in religious practices. Despite the challenges faced, efforts to build good relationships between religious communities and utilize information technology show great potential in promoting dialogue and tolerance.

Conclusions

Religious tolerance among the younger generation is greatly influenced by education and empathy. Positive interactions between students and church

congregations in Dusun Sumberejo create a real example of how diversity can be managed well. Through training and joint activities, the younger generation learns to respect differences and build harmony. Therefore, it is important for the government and society to continue to support programs that promote religious moderation and tolerance, in order to create a more inclusive and harmonious society.

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