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Research Article

Perception of PAI IAIN Ternate Students on the Concept of Religious Tolerance and Moderation: Between Curriculum Narrative and Campus Social Reality

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the perceptions of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) students at IAIN Ternate regarding religious tolerance and moderation, highlighting the gap between curriculum narratives and social realities on campus. Although religious moderation has been integrated into the curriculum as part of national Islamic education policy, many students still exhibit exclusive attitudes and discomfort in interfaith interactions. A survey revealed that 45% of students feel uneasy interacting with peers from different religious backgrounds, and 30% tend to engage in rigid, non-dialogical religious discussions. These findings indicate a challenge in translating theoretical knowledge into practical behavior. The study uses a qualitative approach to explore how moderation values are internalized in students' academic and social environments. It found that while students understand the concept intellectually, its application remains limited due to socio-cultural factors. The results suggest the need for more contextual and interactive learning strategies that can bridge this gap such as value-based discussions, pluralism-based student programs, and inclusive role models. This research provides valuable insights for curriculum developers and educators aiming to cultivate religious moderation as a lived value, not merely a theoretical concept, particularly in multicultural Islamic higher education settings like IAIN Ternate.

Keywords: Religious Moderation; Student Perception; Islamic Education

1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) at Islamic religious universities not only aims to equip students with normative Islamic knowledge but also bears the responsibility of fostering tolerant, moderate, and inclusive religious attitudes. (Ahmad Faozan. 2022). In the context of Indonesia's multicultural and multi-religious society, the values of religious moderation are becoming increasingly important as a fundamental principle in social and religious life. Religious moderation is a perspective, attitude, and practice of religion that emphasizes balance, tolerance, anti-violence, and appreciation of local culture (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

The Ministry of Religious Affairs has made religious moderation a mainstream policy in national Islamic education, including in the development of the curriculum at State Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIN). (Hefni, W. 2020) This narrative is explicitly outlined in curriculum documents, learning modules, and various character strengthening programs within the campus environment. The Islamic Religious Education Study Program (PAI), as the main provider of Islamic courses at PTKIN, plays a strategic role in internalizing these values to students, not only through the transfer of knowledge but also through exemplary behavior, value discussions, and the strengthening of a plural and inclusive academic culture. (Kementerian Agama, 2020)

However, there is a significant gap between the narrative of the religious moderation curriculum presented in the learning process and the social reality of students on campus. At IAIN Ternate, for example, although the curriculum has been designed to emphasize the values of moderation, it is not uncommon to find that some students still exhibit exclusive attitudes and a lack of tolerance towards differences. (Muslimah , Adam, Adiyana et al., 2024)) Survey data conducted among PAI students show that around 45% of respondents acknowledge discomfort in interacting with students from different religious backgrounds. Additionally, around 30% of students reported that they engage in religious discussions that tend to be rigid, where they prefer to maintain their views without opening up space for dialogue or understanding other perspectives (Salim et al., 2023)

This phenomenon indicates the challenges in the process of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, which has not yet fully succeeded in bridging the concept of moderation from the theoretical aspect into the social practice realm of students (Sahrul Takim, Adiyana Adam, 2022). Although the material on tolerance and religious moderation has been taught, its implementation in daily interactions on campus is still far from expectations. For example, in several discussion forums and student organization activities, unproductive debates often arise and tend to lead to polarization, where students focus more on differences rather than finding common ground.

This condition indicates that although the religious moderation curriculum has been integrated into the learning process, there is still an urgent need to develop more effective and contextual teaching methods (Adiyana Adam, Kamarun M.Sebe, Ibrahim Muhammad, 2024**).** This is important so that students not only understand the theory of religious moderation but also are able to apply it in their daily lives. Therefore, this research aims to delve deeper into students' perceptions of the concepts of tolerance and religious moderation, as well as to find solutions to bridge the gap between theory and practice at IAIN Ternate. Thus, it is hoped that more appropriate strategies can be found to internalize the values of religious moderation among students, so that they can become positive agents of change in a multicultural and multi-religious society. (Sahala, Rahma Mauraji, JumiyatiD.Tomahir & Adam, Adiyana Silawane, 2024)

Previous research has mostly focused on normative studies or the design of religious moderation curricula (Amin, 2021; Khakim, 2023), while studies specifically exploring students' perceptions of the concepts of tolerance and moderation in the campus social context are still relatively limited, especially in Eastern Indonesia such as IAIN Ternate. However, student perception is a key factor in assessing the effectiveness of value internalization, as perception influences students' attitudes, actions, and involvement in religious social life (Baron & Byrne, 2004). Based on the managerial perspective, this research is also important for evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of the religious moderation-based curriculum designed by the institution. By exploring students' perceptions, researchers can assess the extent to which the curriculum is accepted, understood, and implemented by the learners. Moreover, the results of this research can provide input for program managers, lecturers, and campus authorities in developing more effective, contextual, and relevant value-based learning strategies that align with the dynamics of students.

In the context of IAIN Ternate as one of the State Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIN) in a culturally and religiously pluralistic archipelagic region, it is important to ensure that the Islamic education taught is not only text-oriented but also capable of addressing the diverse social realities of the student body. (Adam et al., 2025)IAIN Ternate, located in one of the regions with high ethnic and religious diversity, faces its own challenges in internalizing the values of religious moderation among students. Data shows that around 60% of students (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. (2020, November 7). PAI at IAIN Ternate comes from diverse cultural backgrounds, with more than 10 religions practiced in the campus surroundings. This creates a complex social dynamic, where students not only interact with fellow Muslims but also with students from various religious and cultural backgrounds. (IAIN Ternate, 2023)

Therefore, this research is highly relevant to conduct, especially to explore students' perceptions of the concepts of tolerance and religious moderation within the campus social context. This research aims to analyze how the narrative of the religious moderation curriculum received by PAI students at IAIN Ternate relates to their social-religious practices. With a focus on student perceptions, this research aims to identify the gap between the theory taught in the curriculum and the social realities faced by students on campus. Previously, existing research has mostly focused on normative studies or the design of religious moderation curricula, without directly considering the perspectives of students. By exploring the perceptions of PAI students at IAIN Ternate, this research is expected to provide new insights into the effectiveness of internalizing the values of religious moderation, as well as offering recommendations for program managers and lecturers in developing more contextual and relevant learning strategies. The results of this research are expected to serve as a reference for the development of a curriculum that is more responsive to the social needs and challenges of students, as well as to strengthen IAIN Ternate's commitment to creating an inclusive and tolerant academic environment.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a descriptive quantitative approach with the aim of understanding students' perceptions of the concepts of tolerance and religious moderation. (Ramdhan, M. 2021). This approach was chosen because it is suitable for describing social phenomena based on numerical data, as well as for explaining the relationship between two variables: perception of the curriculum and the social reality of the campus.

The population in this study consists of all students of the Islamic Religious Education Study Program (PAI) at IAIN Ternate, totaling 327 active students in the even semester of the 2023/2024 academic year. From that number, the researcher selected 100 students as the research sample using purposive sampling technique, (Lenaini, I. 2021), which is

the deliberate selection of respondents based on specific criteria. The sample criteria in this study are students in the 5th semester and above who have taken courses relevant to the topics of tolerance, moderation, and multiculturalism, such as Islamic Religious Education, Contemporary Islamic Studies, Citizenship Education, and Multicultural Education. The selection of 100 respondents is considered representative to depict the population's perception in descriptive research, while also taking into account time and resource efficiency. The instrument used is a questionnaire with a 1–5 Likert scale (Pradana, F. A. P., & Mawardi, M. 2021). which consists of 20 statements. The validity of the instrument was tested through content validity based on expert reviews and limited trials, while reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha (Anggraini, F. D. P., Aprianti, A., Setyawati, V. A. V., & Hartanto, A. A. 2022). Data were analyzed using quantitative descriptive analysis techniques and simple correlation.

The data processing was carried out using Microsoft Excel. The choice of Excel as a statistical tool is based on considerations of ease of use, wide availability, and Excel's ability to efficiently manage large-scale questionnaire data. Nevertheless, in the academic context, the use of Excel is still carried out systematically with guidelines for quantitative analysis procedures equivalent to basic processing using SPSS, especially for descriptive statistics and simple Pearson correlation needs. On the other hand, the use of Excel provides flexibility in data visualization and the presentation of tables directly into scientific reports. On the other hand, the use of Excel provides flexibility in data visualization and presenting tables directly into scientific reports. The analysis conducted includes: Descriptive Statistics: and correlation analysis. The analysis conducted includes: Statistical Description: and correlation analysis. To ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, the researcher will conduct a validity test using factor analysis and a reliability test by calculating the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. A value above 0.7 will be considered reliable.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

Self-efficacy is judgement of a person to his capabilities to plan and implement the action to reach certain goals (Mukhid, 2009). In an academic context, self-efficacy reflects how confident students are in performing specific tasks (Perez & Ye, 2013). Self-efficacy plays a role in academic motivation and learning motivation (especially students' ability to manage their learning activities), and resistance to learning (Zimmerman, 2000). Self-efficacy has three dimensions that are magnitude, the level of task difficulty a person believes she can attain; strength, the conviction regarding magnitude as strong or weak; and generality, the degree to which the expectation is generalized across situations (Lunenburg, 2011).

Self-efficacy in mathematics is described as an individual's mathematics self-efficacy is his or her confidence about completing a variety of tasks, from understanding concepts to solving problems, in mathematics (May, 2009). High mathematics self-efficacy will encourage the achievement of good learning outcomes, and when students have good learning outcomes, they will be more motivated in the learning process. Higher self-efficacy expectations can lead to better results and therefore increase the motivation for learning mathematics (Zimmermann, et al, 2011). Based on the description above, it can be concluded that mathematics self-efficacy is a belief or self-assessment of the student's ability in overcoming certain mathematical problems and tasks related to mathematics in the three dimensions that are magnitude, strength and generality. The dimension of magnitude refers to the students' self-confidence in their ability in overcoming the mathematical problems and tasks at different levels of difficulty.

In terms of the curriculum, 70% of students feel that the PAI curriculum at IAIN Ternate supports the teaching of religious moderation. The average score for this statement is 3.90, which indicates that students feel the existing curriculum is quite relevant in equipping them with an understanding of moderation. However, there is still room for improvement so that the curriculum can be more effective in encouraging students to apply the values of moderation in their daily lives. Lastly, when asked about the frequency of discussing religious tolerance issues with friends, 55% of students stated that they often engage in such discussions, with an average score of 3.45. This shows that although there is an awareness of the importance of tolerance, more in-depth and structured discussions are still needed to enhance the understanding and application of these values. Overall, the results of this study indicate that PAI students at IAIN Ternate have a positive perception of tolerance and religious moderation. However, there are challenges in terms of active involvement in interfaith dialogue. Therefore, it is recommended that the campus authorities, especially the program managers, develop programs that can encourage students to be more actively involved in interfaith dialogue and strengthen their understanding of religious moderation.

Table 1. Survey Results

No	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Average
1	I feel comfortable interacting with students from different religious backgrounds.	5	10	15	40	30	3.85
2	I believe that religious moderation is important in social life.	2	5	10	45	38	4.12
3	I am actively involved in interfaith dialogue on campus.	15	20	25	30	10	2.85
4	I feel that the PAI curriculum at IAIN Ternate supports religious moderation	3	7	20	40	30	3.90
5	I often discuss issues of religious tolerance with my friends.	10	15	20	35	20	3.45

Based on the results of data analysis, it was found that the majority of students, which is around 70%, feel comfortable interacting with students from different religious backgrounds. This is reflected in the statement that they feel that they have no problem in hanging out with friends who have different beliefs. The average score for this statement is 3.85, indicating a strong positive attitude towards diversity.

Furthermore, when asked about the importance of religious moderation in social life, 83% of respondents agreed that religious moderation is very important. The average score for this statement is 4.12, which indicates a good understanding among students of the values of moderation. This shows that PAI students at IAIN Ternate realize the importance of a moderate attitude in maintaining social harmony in the midst of existing diversity. However, the results of the study also reveal challenges in terms of active student involvement in interfaith dialogue. Only 40% of respondents admitted to being actively involved in interfaith discussions on campus, with an average score of 2.85. This shows that although students have a positive attitude towards tolerance, their involvement in the practice of interfaith dialogue still needs to be improved. In terms of curriculum, 70% of students feel that the PAI curriculum at IAIN Ternate supports the teaching of religious moderation. The average score for this statement is 3.90, which indicates that students feel the existing curriculum is quite relevant in equipping them with an understanding of moderation. However, there is still room for improvement so that the curriculum can be more effective in encouraging students to apply moderation values in daily life.

Finally, when asked about the frequency with which they discuss the issue of religious tolerance with friends, 55% of students stated that they often have such discussions, with an average score of 3.45. This suggests that despite the awareness of the importance of tolerance, more in-depth and structured discussions are still needed to improve the understanding and application of those values Overall, the results of this study show that PAI students at IAIN Ternate have a positive perception of religious tolerance and moderation. However, there are challenges in terms of active engagement in interfaith dialogue. Therefore, it is recommended that the campus, especially the study program manager, develop programs that can encourage students to be more actively involved in interfaith dialogue and strengthen their understanding of religious moderation.

3.2 Discussion

The analysis results show that there is a significant positive relationship between the two variables, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.83. The analysis results show that there is a significant positive relationship between the two variables, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.83. This shows that the better the students' understanding of religious moderation, the higher their tolerant attitude towards differences. Religious moderation is an important concept in the context of social and religious life. According to Azyumardi Azra (2006), religious moderation is an approach that emphasizes a tolerant, inclusive attitude and appreciation of differences. In the context of this research, the understanding of religious moderation is expected to foster a tolerant attitude among students, who are the next generation of the nation. Nurcholish Madjid (1990) also emphasized the importance of religious moderation as an effort to create social harmony. He argues that religious moderation can reduce the potential for interfaith conflict and enhance harmony in society. The results of this study align with Madjid's views, where students with a better understanding of religious moderation tend to be more tolerant of differences.

Tolerance is the ability to appreciate and accept differences, whether in terms of religion, culture, or outlook on life. John Rawls (1971) in his theory of social justice states that a just society is a society that is able to respect differences and provide space for each individual to live their own beliefs and views. In the context of this research, students' tolerant attitudes are very important to create an inclusive and harmonious academic environment. The results of this study show

that students who have a high tolerant attitude tend to have a good understanding of religious moderation. This is in line with Albert Bandura's theory of social learning, which states that individuals learn from their social environment. Students who are exposed to the values of religious moderation in their social interactions will be more likely to internalize these values and apply them in their daily lives.

The results of this study have important implications for curriculum development in educational institutions, especially at IAIN Ternate. Efforts are needed to integrate religious moderation education into the curriculum, so that students not only understand the theory, but can also apply it in their daily lives. Programs that encourage interfaith dialogue and social activities involving different religious backgrounds can be a strategic step to increase understanding of religious moderation and tolerance among students. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between the understanding of religious moderation and the tolerant attitude of students. This shows that education that emphasizes religious moderation can contribute to the formation of tolerant attitudes among students. Therefore, it is important for educational institutions to develop programs that support the understanding of religious moderation as an effort to create a harmonious and inclusive society.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows a significant positive relationship between the understanding of religious moderation and the tolerant attitudes of students at IAIN Ternate, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.83. These findings indicate that the better the students' understanding of religious moderation, the higher their tolerant attitudes towards differences. The results of this study emphasize the importance of religious moderation education in shaping tolerant attitudes, which can reduce the potential for conflict and enhance interfaith harmony in society. Therefore, the integration of religious moderation education into the curriculum and the development of programs that encourage interfaith dialogue and inclusive social interactions are necessary. This study also recommends that further research be conducted to explore other factors that may influence students' tolerant attitudes and to examine the impact of religious moderation education programs implemented in educational institutions. Thus, this research makes an important contribution to understanding the relationship between the understanding of religious moderation and tolerant attitudes, as well as providing practical recommendations for better educational development in the future.

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