

The Implications of Surah Al-Kafirun in The Practice of Inter-Religious Tolerance (a Survey of Students at UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the fundamental values of tolerance of students of UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau in interacting with people of other religions. This study has been conducted with a quantitative approach using a survey method on 100 students of UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau. The results of this study have illustrated that students of UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim have a positive attitude towards people of other religions by 97.5% and the fundamental values that underlie the tolerant attitude between religious communities 53% come from the value of tolerance in Islam, namely Surah Al-Kafirun. The implementation of Surah Al-Kafirun by research respondents has immediately supported the unity of the Indonesian state as regulated in Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, and has inspired the motto of the Indonesian State, namely Bhineka Tunggal Ika.

Keywords: Surah Al-Kafirun; Tolerance; Inter-Religious Community

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tolerance has become a crucial discussion in a plural society that is vulnerable to SARA issues (ethnicity, religion, race, and Inter-Religious relations) (Fitria & Tanggok, 2020; Wijaksono, 2023) such as Indonesia. This relates to fundamental aspects studied in tolerance, namely the theological nature and philosophical foundation held by humans (Nafisi, 2018). As a plural society, Indonesia presents various differences and diversities between communities and requires public awareness to accept and believe in the freedom of every person to practice their beliefs (Fernando, Sarwoprasodjo, Muljono, & Farady, 2023). Tolerance in Indonesia has several fundamental sources, including Pancasila (Fitria & Tanggok, 2020), and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia regarding freedom of religion (Indonesia, 1945). Furthermore, religion is a source of tolerant attitudes that also colors plurality in Indonesia, and it is the responsibility of each religion's adherents (Fitria & Tanggok, 2020).

Faith in the absolute freedom of every human being to believe in something (the concept of divinity) that does not contradict the state and Pancasila can maintain societal harmony (Faizah & Yusrina, 2023).

Furthermore, respecting differences is a principle of Inter-Religious relations beautifully regulated in Islam, as Allah has stated in Surah Al-Kafirun, surah 1-6, which means:

"Say (Muhammad), hey non-believers! I do not worship what you worship, nor do you worship what I worship. I will never be a worshipper of what you worship, and you will never be worshippers of what I worship. To you be your religion, and to me be my religion."

This Surah represents the acknowledgment of Muslim believers toward followers of other religions in the context of pluralism (Ismail, Barnansyah, & Mardhiah, 2023). There is no coercion for those who have embraced a religion to adopt Islam (A. H. Usman, Abdullah, & Azwar, 2023), and there is no compulsion to live one's life according to Islamic teachings. Tolerance in Islam is dynamic (Nurlaila, 2022), meaning it can foster cooperation. This is exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in maintaining good relations with non-Muslims in Medina, where they lived together peacefully. The principle of coexistence, characterized by acceptance and compassion, must be implemented to ensure harmonious Inter-Religious relationships and preserve national unity. Nevertheless, religious conflicts continue to arise due to the rigid attitudes of adherents in practicing their beliefs, both in the wider community and in educational institutions such as universities.

Several studies indicate radical attitudes among students at both Islamic and secular universities in Indonesia (Amin & Kurniawan, 2022; Asriani, 2019; Basri & Dwiningrum, 2019; Hamdi, Mukaffa, & Masrifah, 2019; Khozin, 2013; Sahri, 2016). Radical attitudes that lean toward destructive tendencies indicate a weakness in tolerance towards differences and have the potential to cause social and religious conflicts, both of which have a causal relationship (Hafidzi, 2019). However, tolerance has its limits; it is not intended to undermine one religion in favor of another. Tolerance is aimed at ensuring that everyone can worship peacefully and with tranquility (Hafidzi, 2019). Therefore, it is necessary to examine the sources of tolerance that serve as references, the objectives of tolerance that are implemented, and the forms of tolerance that are manifested. The subjects of this study are the students of UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau.

UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau is a university that upholds diversity. This is manifested by the presence of non-Muslim students across various faculties. Additionally, UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau incorporates an integrated Islamic curriculum that teaches knowledge aligned with Allah's commandments through religious courses. Moreover, UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau is one of the Islamic campuses committed to supporting the

significant agenda of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in implementing religious moderation in Indonesia (Huzaini, 2023; Redaktur, 2023). In an effort to address the phenomenon of radicalized beliefs among students at Islamic universities, this study aims to examine the practice of tolerance values by students at UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau. This study is conducted quantitatively using a survey method targeting the students of UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau. The results of this research illustrate the religious tolerance of students at UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau based on individual perspectives and practices regarding Surah Al-Kafirun.

Previous studies on religious tolerance in higher education include: a survey on diversity in higher education institutions (PPIM UIN Jakarta, 2021), students' perceptions of Inter-Religious tolerance (Rohmah, Noor, & Kosim, 2022), dynamic religious tolerance among Islamic, Christian, and Catholic students at Gadjah Mada University (Distanto & Andayani, 2022), strengthening moderation and tolerance among students through collaborative community service programs (Lintang & Pahrudin, 2023), Inter-Religious tolerance among students (Hasnah, Shasliani, 2023), the implications of tolerance values among students (Muzakki & Santoso, 2023), the implementation of religious tolerance among students (Astuti, Mujahidin, & Manurung, 2024), the application of Inter-Religious tolerance values from a sociology of development perspective within student organizations (Halimah Nur Churil Aini, Meydina Tri Luvianasari, Maris Jennet Landicho, & Nadilla Jennet Agusti, 2024), and the role of citizenship education in fostering tolerance among students (Wenzana et al., 2024).

These studies provide insights into perceptions, applications, and reinforcement of tolerance values in higher education institutions. While they are aligned in focus, this study differs by examining the implications of Surah Al-Kafirun in the practice of Inter-Religious tolerance among students at UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau. This study illustrates the application of fundamental tolerance values among students based on Islamic principles in maintaining relationships with followers of other religions. The findings of this research can reinforce the values of religious moderation for Islamic universities as institutions guided by Islamic principles.

2. METHODS

This study was conducted using a quantitative approach through a cross-sectional survey method, which is carried out at a single point in time and with a single focus (Nofianty & Qomariah, 2017). The survey method was used to quickly, logically, and systematically gather data on the implications of

Surah Al-Kafirun in the practice of Inter-Religious tolerance among students at UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau (Maidiana, 2021). The research team surveyed 100 Islamic students selected randomly using an open questionnaire, developing specific indicators of religious moderation focused on the practice of tolerance values among different faiths. The analysis of the questionnaire data will be presented descriptively through achievement diagrams. The questionnaire is designed to reveal the tolerance values practiced by students, including: interactions between students and followers of other religions, students' attitudes toward followers of other religions, and the fundamental values underlying students' positive attitudes toward adherents of different faiths.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Student Interactions with Followers of Other Religions

Based on the analysis of the survey questionnaire, an overview of student interactions with followers of other religions is presented as follows:

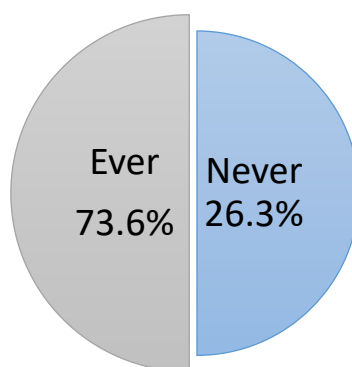


Figure 1. Percentage of Student Interactions Among Religions

The data on student interactions with followers of other religions was collected to analyze the level of confidence in the practice of the fundamental values of tolerance that were revealed. It can be seen that 73.6% of the 100 respondents from UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau have interacted with followers of other religions, indicating that they have practiced religious tolerance. This is further illustrated as follows.

Students' Attitudes Toward Followers of Other Religions

Based on the analysis of the questionnaire, the attitudes of students at UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau toward followers of other religions can be described as follows:

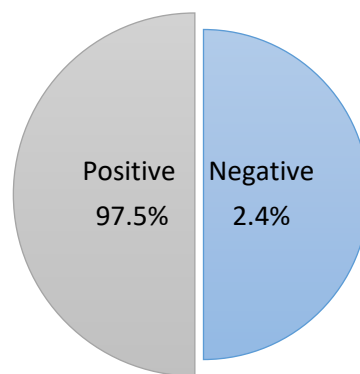


Figure 2. Percentage of Students' Attitudes Toward Inter-Religious Relations

This data was collected to illustrate the attitudes of students at UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau toward followers of other religions. The data shows that 97.5% of the students at UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau have a positive attitude toward followers of other religions. The demonstrated attitude of tolerance truly reflects their stance in interacting with one another.

Overview of the Fundamental Foundations Underlying Students' Positive Attitudes Toward Adherents of Other Religions

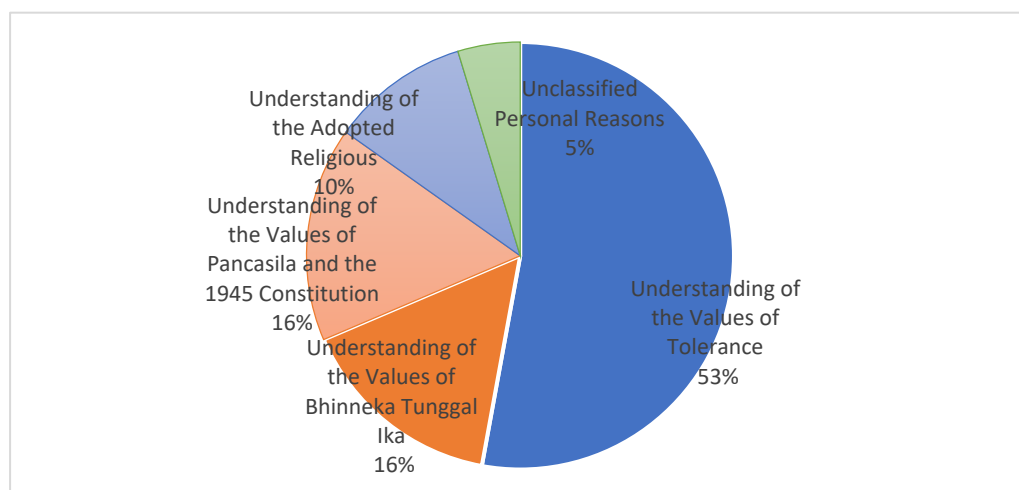


Figure 3.3 Fundamental Foundations of Students' Positive Attitudes

Based on Figure 3.3, it can be seen that out of 100 surveyed students, 53% affirm that the values of tolerance taught by the state and religion serve as a fundamental foundation for interacting with followers of other religions. The results of the survey indicate several keywords that suggest the fundamental

foundation for students at UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim is Surah Al-Kafirun, expressed through the following statements:

"Because for you is your religion, and for me is my religion." (NA) "I feel that we are the same; the only difference is the God we worship—he worships his God, and we worship ours." (UW) "For you is your religion, and for me is my religion." (RH) "Because we can respect each other when practicing our respective religions, in accordance with 'for you is your religion, and for me is my religion.'" (PP) "Because we live in a very vast world, so it feels inappropriate to have a negative attitude; we need to coexist—difference is beautiful, he with his religion, and we with ours." (LRZ) "The people who have different religions from me never speak strangely about Islam, so I also refrain from speaking strangely about their religions; my religion is for me, and their religion is for them." (SN) "We should respect each other; practice our own religions and not disturb one another." (AA) "Because we can respect each other when practicing our respective religions." (PP)

Islam has taught tolerance since its inception, as exemplified in Surah Al-Kafirun, which is the most frequently mentioned foundation in this survey. Surah Al-Kafirun was revealed in the context of the confusion experienced by the polytheistic society of Mecca regarding which God to worship. On one hand, they believed in the existence of the God worshipped by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), but on the other hand, they worshipped many idols. They were confused and ultimately approached the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), inviting him to alternate in worshipping all the gods of that time. This led to the revelation of Surah Al-Kafirun (Surahman, Sunarya, & Yuniartin, 2022; D. H. Usman & Fath, 2020).

The meaning of Surah Al-Kafirun according to Sayyid Qutb serves as an affirmation of monotheism, providing education about the unshakeable strength of faith that must be deeply embedded in the heart (D. H. Usman & Fath, 2020). Additionally, Surah Al-Kafirun serves as a foundation for the attitude of tolerance among Muslims, allowing followers of other religions the space to practice their worship according to their beliefs (Surahman et al., 2022). In line with Surah Al-Kafirun, tolerance is also mentioned in Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 256, as conveyed in the following translation:

"There is no compulsion in religion, for the truth stands out clearly from falsehood. So whoever renounces false gods and believes in Allah has certainly grasped the firmest, unfaltering handhold. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing." (Al-Baqarah 256)

Based on Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 256, Allah emphasizes that there is no compulsion for those who already have a religion to enter Islam. Therefore,

Islamic preaching is presented in the form of inviting people back to the truth, but not in the form of coercion.

The understanding of tolerance among students at UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau is largely colored by the belief that every person is free to determine their own faith and has the right to worship according to their beliefs, in accordance with Surah Al-Kafirun. Additionally, students at UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim reject hostility towards followers of other religions due to their strong sense of pluralism. This indicates that tolerance in Islam is in line with Indonesia's motto of unity, "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika," which means "Unity in Diversity." Students participating in this survey are aware that Indonesia is built on differences that should be approached with high appreciation and understanding, as expressed in the following statements:

"Because as fellow citizens of Indonesia, we must practice tolerance and respect one another, including towards communities of different religions." (DAP)

"Because Indonesia has several different religions and ethnicities." (NS) "I maintain a positive attitude because humans are born with many differences,

from skin color to gender and others. Therefore, it is only natural for us to accept these differences." (ZAR) "Because we must be tolerant and respect religions

that are different from ours." (YA) "Because we live in a democratic country with diverse ethnic groups and religions. Moreover, we have Pancasila as the

state ideology, the 1945 Constitution as the foundation of the state, and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika as a unifying principle of this diversity." (PP) "Because we each

have our own beliefs, and regarding this religiosity, it is already stated in Pancasila; every religion should embody a tolerant attitude." (PR)

The statements from the respondents above indicate that they understand that tolerance is not only the implementation of Islamic teachings but also the embodiment of Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, and a part of the diversity that must be preserved as a unity of the Indonesian nation. It is evident that the respondents in this study do not hold intolerant or radical attitudes towards followers of other religions. The implementation of Surah Al-Kafirun in the lives of students can thereby contribute to the formation and strengthening of the unity and integrity of a sovereign, just, and prosperous Indonesia.

4. CONCLUSION

The students of UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim who participated in this study demonstrate a positive attitude towards followers of other religions, with

97.5% expressing such sentiments. The fundamental values underlying their Inter-Religious tolerance, with 53%, stem from the values of tolerance in Islam as reflected in Surah Al-Kafirun. The implementation of Surah Al-Kafirun by the respondents directly supports the unity and integrity of the Indonesian nation, as outlined in Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, and embodies the national motto of Indonesia, "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika."

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