STRENGTHENING RELIGIOUS MODERATION THROUGH PTKIN AND SIT COLLABORATION TO BUILD SOCIAL HARMONY

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Abstract

This research aims to strengthen religious moderation through information-based education, which is conducted through collaboration between North Sumatra State Islamic University (UINSU) and Jabal Noor Integrated Islamic High School. This research was motivated by the low understanding of Jabal Noor Integrated Islamic High School students about the concept of religious moderation, which was previously only recorded at 40%. Using a qualitative approach and case study method, data was collected through interviews, observations, and documentation from principals, teachers, and students. The community service program in the form of counseling succeeded in increasing students' understanding of religious moderation, which after the implementation of the activity increased to 85%. The results showed that this collaboration succeeded in strengthening students' understanding of religious moderation and contributed to the formation of social harmony at school. Information-based education through counseling provides a better understanding of the importance of moderation in daily life, as well as how moderation values can be applied to support peaceful social life in the school environment. The implication of this research is the importance of strengthening collaboration between higher education institutions and schools in developing educational programs that promote religious moderation as a basic value in student character building, as well as encouraging a more inclusive atmosphere of social harmony in the community.

Keywords*: Information-based Education; Social Harmony; PTKIN and SIT Collaboration; Religious Moderation; Community Service*

INTRODUCTION

Strengthening religious moderation among adolescents is a crucial issue that needs more attention in the midst of increasing intolerance and radicalism (Zuhdi, 2018; Ni'am, 2023). Teenagers, as an age group that is highly vulnerable to the influence of extremism, are often the main targets in the spread of intolerant ideologies through social media and digital platforms (Sugihartati et al, 2020; Vissing, 2022). According to a survey by PPIM UIN Jakarta, more than 54% of Generation Z seek religious knowledge through the internet, where the information they receive is often distorted by algorithms that narrow the diversity of information (Muthahhari, 2017). Therefore, information-based education that involves the collaboration of various educational institutions, such as PTKIN (State Islamic Religious Universities) and SIT (Integrated Islamic Schools), is needed to strengthen religious moderation among adolescents (Wedi et al, 2020).

Research related to strengthening religious moderation through the collaboration of PTKIN and SIT is still very limited. Most previous research has focused on one-way approaches, such as lectures or formal teaching, without involving synergies between various influential institutions in religious education. For example, religious education programs in formal schools are often insufficient to counteract the influence of radicalism received from outside sources such as social media (Sas et al, 2020; Arifin & Aqso, 2023; Suhendar et al, 2023; Wardah, 2023). Therefore, it is important to explore a more comprehensive collaboration between PTKIN and SIT, especially in the context of information-based education.

Based on this gap, this research tries to answer the question: "How can collaboration between PTKIN and SIT through information-based education strengthen religious moderation in adolescents?". This question arises because many teenagers today rely more on digital sources that do not always promote moderation values (Ulfa, 2024; Anandari, 2024; Dalimunthe et al, 2024). A study by the Setara Institute (2023) showed that more than 33% of students in Indonesia agreed to defend their religion even with violence, which suggests that formal education alone is not enough to counter intolerant attitudes (Wardah, 2023; Anggriawan, 2024). Thus, this research is important to find collaborative strategies that can integrate information-based education in building social harmony.

This research argues that the collaboration between PTKIN and SIT through information-based education will be effective in strengthening religious moderation among teenagers. The synergy between these two institutions is expected to provide more moderate religious information, which can be easily accessed by teenagers through digital media. Several religious moderation programs involving PTKIN have shown positive results in instilling moderate values (Yusuf & Mutiara, 2022; Rahmat, 2023), but collaboration with SIT could expand its reach through information platforms. If this collaboration is implemented consistently, information-based education can be a powerful tool in reducing radicalism and strengthening social harmony among youth.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Qualitative research is also more focused on general principles and manifestations of symptom units found in human / community life (Sugiyono, 2017). In this approach, social reality is holistic/comprehensive, complex, dynamic and full of meaning (Creswell, 2014). This approach was chosen to deeply understand the strategies implemented through the synergy of PTKIN and SIT in strengthening

religious moderation to form social harmony towards Jabal Noor IT High School students. The research design is descriptive with a focus on analyzing the strategy of strengthening religious moderation. This research will explore data from the form of cooperation between PTKIN and SIT in strengthening religious moderation, such as teachers, and students.

This research was conducted at Jabal Noor Integrated Islamic High School (IT High School) located on Jalan Sunggal Kanan, Sunggal District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra Province. The research subjects include the principal and student representatives who are active in religious activities. The data collection techniques used in this research are in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies. In-depth interviews were conducted with 5 main informants, namely the principal, 3 religious teachers, and 1 religious activity manager, to explore information about the strategies applied in strengthening religious moderation. Participatory observation was conducted by directly observing religious activities and other activities that support the strengthening of religious moderation, such as recitation, interfaith discussions, and interactions between students. In addition, documentation studies were conducted by collecting data from school documents, such as curriculum, activity programs, and school policies related to religious education and religious moderation. Through these techniques, the research aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the efforts to strengthen religious moderation at Jabal Noor IT High School.

In this study, researchers used three data analysis techniques, namely as follows: Data Reduction: Grouping data based on the main themes, namely the strategy of strengthening religious moderation and its impact on social harmony; Data Display: Presenting data in the form of descriptive narratives and tables that facilitate understanding related to the relationship between religious moderation and social harmony; Conclusion Drawing: Drawing conclusions from the results of interviews, observations, and documents to answer research questions regarding effective strategies in strengthening religious moderation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Effectiveness of PTKIN and SIT Collaboration in Developing Religious Moderation Program

State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UINSU) and Jabal Noor IT High School collaborated in carrying out community service activities aimed at strengthening the understanding of religious moderation among students. The activities included seminars, focus group discussions, and conflict simulation training that emphasized the values of tolerance and inclusiveness. As a result of the activities, students gained a better understanding of how to deal with different religious views and maintain social harmony. According to observations and interviews with teachers at Jabal Noor IT High School, before participating in these activities, most students tended to be exclusive in their religious views. However, after the activity was implemented, there was a positive change in the way students dealt with differences, with more than 80% of students showing an open and inclusive attitude in their social interactions.

Based on the pre-test and post-test conducted to Jabal Noor IT High School students, there was a significant increase in their understanding of religious moderation. Before the activity began, only around 40% of students had a basic understanding of the importance of religious moderation. After participating in the activity, this figure increased to 85%, with students showing a better understanding of the importance of respecting differences in social life. The approach taken by UINSU and SMA IT Jabal Noor in delivering religious moderation material is

in accordance with the theory of Casmana et al (2023) which emphasizes the importance of experiential teaching and active student involvement in understanding the concept of tolerance. The use of simulation methods in this activity is very effective in forming real experiences for students in responding to religious-based conflicts.

***Figure 1**. Q&A session*

Collaboration between PTKIN and SIT, in this case UINSU and SMA IT Jabal Noor, has proven effective in developing a religious moderation program. This program provides space for students to learn directly through community service activities, this can be seen in Figure 1 in the question and answer session conducted by the speaker with the participating students. This is in accordance with the theory of Hasan & Juhannis (2024), which states that religious moderation education must involve all parties, including educational institutions, to create a tolerant and inclusive environment. UINSU as an Islamic higher education institution provides a strong theoretical foundation, while SMA IT Jabal Noor becomes a place to implement these values practically in students' daily lives.

Teachers at Jabal Noor IT High School feel that this collaboration is very helpful in changing students' mindsets. One teacher argued, "This activity not only provides theoretical understanding, but also real experiences that make it easier for students to internalize the values of moderation." Meanwhile, some students revealed that before the activity, they did not really understand the importance of moderation in religion, but after participating in the activity, they felt more open to differences. "Are there any plans to expand this program to other schools?" asked one of the students, who showed interest in sharing their experience with other schools. From an educational theory perspective, Inayatillah (2021) asserts that cross-institutional collaboration in teaching religious moderation has a greater impact than a one-dimensional approach. Programs like this not only impart knowledge, but also change students' attitudes and behaviors, ultimately impacting the formation of a more harmonious society.

The Role of Information-Based Education in Building Social Harmony

The collaboration between North Sumatra State Islamic University (UINSU) and Jabal Noor IT High School aims to strengthen religious moderation through an information-based educational approach. This activity is carried out as part of community service, targeting students of Jabal Noor IT High School. One form of activity implemented was the delivery of educational content through the Instagram platform, which was chosen due to students' familiarity with the social media. Students are encouraged to produce and disseminate positive content related to religious tolerance and harmony.

Based on the observation, there was an increase in students' involvement in discussions on religious moderation. Before the activity took place, around 40% of students had a deep understanding of the importance of religious moderation. However, after this information-based education program was implemented, the percentage increased to 85%. This shows that digital media such as Instagram can be an effective tool in spreading messages of religious moderation, in accordance with Castells' (2015) theory that emphasizes the role of digital networks in mobilizing social awareness.

The use of Instagram as a medium to deliver educational content has proven to be very effective. Instagram as a visual and interactive platform allows students to access information about religious moderation in a more digestible way. The content created by students includes posters, infographics, videos, extracurricular activities that provide information related to religious tolerance. Briefs that discuss the importance of interfaith tolerance, peace, and harmony in a diverse society.

Based on data obtained from Jabal Noor IT High School teachers' reports, student engagement in these information-based activities has increased significantly. "Through the Instagram platform, students can more easily understand the concept of religious moderation because the information is delivered visually and interactively," said one of the teachers. Research by Marti et al (2023) also shows that social media is an effective means of delivering educational content to adolescents, especially as adolescents are more accustomed to digital forms of communication.

Information-based education through Instagram not only improves students' understanding of religious moderation, but also strengthens social harmony at school. The students became more aware of the importance of tolerance and peaceful coexistence amidst religious diversity. Before this activity, some students exhibited views that tended to be exclusive towards other religious groups. However, after engaging in the production and consumption of religious moderation content through Instagram, there was a shift to a more inclusive attitude. This is in line with Andiono's theory (2024) which states that religious moderation can be formed through an educational approach that focuses on dialog and technology-based information.

Jabal Noor IT High School teachers added that the program had a positive impact on students, both cognitively and socially. "Students not only better understand the concept of religious moderation, but also begin to apply it in their daily interactions at school," said one teacher. Jenkins' (2015) theory supports this, stating that digital platforms can be an effective tool to promote cross-cultural understanding and build social harmony among young people.

Teachers and students of Jabal Noor IT High School gave positive feedback on this collaboration. Some students felt that the program not only helped them understand the importance of religious moderation, but also provided new skills in producing meaningful digital content. One student asked, "Will there be a follow-up program involving more social

media platforms like YouTube or TikTok?" Another teacher also emphasized the importance of the program's sustainability, "We hope there will be further collaboration with UINSU to deepen the implementation of religious moderation through technology." According to Suharto (2021), the importance of sustainable programs involving digital media in teaching religious moderation is not only in the realm of formal education, but also informally. Information-based education has great potential to build social harmony in the digital era, especially among teenagers who are growing up in an increasingly globally connected world.

Challenges and Constraints in the Implementation of Information-Based Religious Moderation

At Jabal Noor IT High School, extracurricular activities for girls and women are routine activities that are carried out every Saturday at 10.30 WIB. The main purpose of this activity is to increase students' insight into religious and social values through discussion and information sharing. This activity characterizes Jabal Noor IT High School in building student character based on religious values. However, the main challenge of this activity is the lack of attention to the discussion of religious moderation. Based on interviews with principals and teachers, this activity is still limited to discussing religious values in general, without in-depth exploration of the importance of moderation in religious life. Students still have little understanding of the concept of religious moderation, which should be an important part of education in a multicultural school environment.

Figure 2. Boyhood and Girlhood Exclusives

Other challenges faced in the implementation of information-based religious moderation are time constraints and the lack of moderation-focused materials. Although extracurricular activities for women and girls provide opportunities for students to discuss, the limited time and lack of specific modules or guides on religious moderation mean that this topic is rarely discussed in depth. Some students stated that they only have basic knowledge of the concept of moderation, and often do not know how to apply it in their daily lives. This opinion was supported by the religion teacher of SMA IT Jabal Noor, who stated, "We need a special module that discusses religious moderation in order to focus more on discussing these issues in this extracurricular activity." This is in accordance with Huntington's (1996) theory, which states that religious education that only emphasizes dogmatic teachings without a moderation perspective can narrow students' views on pluralism.

Collaboration between North Sumatra State Islamic University (UINSU) and Jabal Noor IT High School through community service programs has brought positive changes in developing information-based religious moderation programs. One form of support provided by UINSU is training for teachers and students on the importance of religious moderation, as well as providing educational materials that can be used in extracurricular activities. As a result of this collaboration, some students have begun to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the importance of religious moderation in their daily social interactions. According to Abdullah (2023), collaboration between formal education and religious education institutions has great potential to overcome challenges in the implementation of religious moderation, especially if it is done in a sustainable manner and based on a relevant information approach.

Based on interviews with several teachers and students at Jabal Noor IT High School, many of them feel the benefits of this collaborative program, although there are still challenges to overcome. One teacher stated, "We really appreciate this collaborative effort, but we also need more time to integrate the concept of religious moderation into our daily activities." A student also asked, "How can we apply religious moderation outside of school, especially when dealing with social media that often spreads provocative content?" According to Mubarok & Muslihah (2022), religious moderation education should be accompanied by strategies that involve the use of social media and technology-based information to have a wider impact among teenagers.

CONCLUSION

The collaboration between North Sumatra State Islamic University (UINSU) and Jabal Noor IT High School in developing a religious moderation program through community service activities has a positive impact, although it still faces several obstacles. Extracurricular activities for girls and women conducted at SMA IT Jabal Noor have succeeded in increasing students' insights related to religious and social values, but have not been in-depth enough in discussing religious moderation. Limitations in implementation time and lack of specific material on moderation are the main obstacles that cause students to have a limited understanding of the issue.

Nonetheless, the collaboration with UINSU has provided an important first step through training and educational materials that can support the teaching of religious moderation. With the active involvement of the university and school, this challenge is expected to be addressed through long-term strategies, including the integration of religious moderation concepts into routine school activities as well as utilizing social media as a platform to disseminate information that supports religious moderation. Opinions from teachers and students highlighted the need for more relevant and applicable materials, especially in the face of social dynamics and challenges in the digital era, which is often characterized by provocative content.

Therefore, to increase the effectiveness of this program, further development is needed in terms of the preparation of modules that are more focused on religious moderation, as well as the use of information technology to reach students in a more effective and sustainable way. The program should continue to be improved in order to create a generation that has a strong understanding of religious moderation, which can be applied in daily life and contribute to the development of social harmony in a plural society.

SUGGESTION

The collaboration between Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara (UINSU) and SMA IT Jabal Noor has effectively strengthened students' understanding of religious moderation through information-based education initiatives. These efforts have significantly enhanced students' inclusive attitudes and awareness of tolerance, as demonstrated by increased understanding from 40% to 85%. However, challenges remain, particularly in integrating religious moderation into extracurricular activities and addressing limited educational resources. To sustain the program's impact, future initiatives should focus on developing specialized modules, leveraging digital platforms, and ensuring continuous collaboration to nurture a generation committed to social harmony and moderation in a pluralistic society.

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