



Religious Moderation from an Islamic Perspective and Its Implementation in Islamic Boarding Schools

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Abstract

Religious moderation is a view that is not too excessive, not radical, and not extreme. Islamic boarding schools are traditional Islamic educational institutions that focus on learning Islam and its application in everyday life, a common view. The method used in this article is a qualitative method, namely interpreting and understanding specific documents or texts. The data sources used are books and scientific journals. This study aims to explain the Islamic perspective on religious moderation and its implementation in Islamic boarding schools. The results show that the values of moderation are actually developed in these Islamic boarding schools, including tawassuth (moderation in worship), i'tidal (justice), tasamuh (tolerance), tawazun (balance), musawah (equality), and shura (deliberation).

Keywords: *Islamic Boarding Schools, Islam Perspective, Religious Moderation.*

PRELIMINARY

Nowadays, religious conflicts often occur. Changes in opinions, views, or interests of citizens are one of the factors that cause religious conflict. Indonesia is a country that holds various diversity including language, culture, ethnicity, and religion. There are six officially accepted religions in Indonesia: Islam, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Despite these religious differences, Indonesia has proven that it can live in harmony. With the existence of religious moderation, differences in Indonesia are considered to be a significant threat that can divide the nation. Complacency and intolerance are conflicts that are difficult to resolve. Therefore, religious moderation is very important because it is to create peace and harmony in life. This attitude is the best strategy to restore the function of religion to its mission of maintaining human dignity.

Religious moderation is a perception or perspective that is not excessive, extreme, or radical. This attitude of religious moderation is crucial and much needed because it can create harmony between religious communities. Implementing a moderate attitude by each individual will minimize or prevent complacency and intolerance. Although diverse Indonesian society expresses opinions, these views are a necessity for all religions. Differences in perspectives, views, and opinions of citizens within a democratic system from various circles actually guarantee religious freedom by practicing their religious teachings. Religious issues can sometimes be very sensitive, so citizens must always be vigilant. Issues related to backgrounds are also a major threat that can divide the nation. Because religion is sensitive, these issues can arise in attitudes of blame, which leads to a reluctance to listen to the opinions of others.

METHOD

The method utilized in this article is a qualitative method, which involves interpreting and understanding specific documents or texts. This study is a library research (Assingkily, 2021), using a critical review approach. The data sources used are books and scientific journals. This analysis utilizes documentation techniques, namely analyzing documents that record past events or incidents related to the

research topic. All documents or texts obtained by the author, both from books and scientific journals, are presented objectively and systematically, thus presenting them as a credible research article.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Islamic Boarding School

Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) are Islamic schools with dormitories and are centered on piety and noble morals, along with their application in daily life. On the other hand, *pesantren* are generally known to the public as educational institutions with a number of advantages in the field of religious education, particularly related to their teaching methods that focus on Islamic texts and direct learning with religious teachers and Muslim scholars. In addition to being centers of Islamic education, *pesantren* also function as organizations that implement the principles of *Rahmatan lil'Alamin* (*Rahmatan lil'Alamin*), such as respecting differences and always maintaining harmony among fellow human beings. This is crucial in creating a peaceful and inclusive society in Indonesia. *Pesantren* have another role beyond being educational institutions, and these institutions uphold the principles of *Rahmatan lil'Alamin*: as community development institutions. *Pesantren* have the ability to develop and advance by strengthening relationships within the surrounding community.

Indonesia is often seen as a shining example of a balanced and adaptive implementation of Islam, formed through the interaction of various social and cultural elements. One element that has a significant influence in this process is the Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*), which not only serves as a center for the transmission of Islamic teachings but also as a medium for instilling values of humanity, harmony, and social virtue. The strategic role of *pesantren* contributes to the perception of Islam in Indonesia as an open religion, respecting diversity, and rejecting extremist attitudes. International recognition of moderate Islam in Indonesia demonstrates that religious practice cannot be separated from the local context of its society, as long as it remains grounded in universal principles such as tolerance, peace, and solidarity. Furthermore, the existence of *pesantren* as religious educational institutions makes a significant contribution to social development and improving the quality of society. Overall, *pesantren* have significant potential for continued growth, supported by their function as educational institutions that grow from the community and their role in shaping the character and ethics of the nation's next generation. Furthermore, the figures of *ulama* (Islamic scholars) born from *pesantren* environments often serve as moral and spiritual role models for the surrounding community (Pangestuti, 2024).

Islamic Perspective on Religious Moderation

Etymologically, moderation comes from the Latin word *moderatio*, meaning neither more nor less (Fatihatushshofwa, 2023). Moderate Islam is characterized by a religious attitude that does not treat religion as something static, but rather as a dynamic one, where followers can appreciate the achievements of previous generations and position themselves as people living in the present. Essentially, moderate Islam is not rigid and can accept the views of others, thus fostering a tolerant attitude in life (Suharto, 2019).

The Islamic view on religious moderation is that Islam is a religion of *rahmatan lil alamin*, meaning mercy for the universe. Religious moderation is known in Islam as the word *wasathan*, which means best, chosen, just, and balanced. *Ummatan wasathan* means being called the best people, the chosen people, the people who are balanced in living their lives, and the people who are just (Hadisi, et al., 2024). In Surah al-Baqarah verse 143, there is a concept of religious moderation, which contains Allah's command to humans to be a people who act justly and are good mediators.

Religious moderation can be realized through attitudes such as balance, firmness, tolerance, deliberation, fairness, innovation, prioritization, and civility. Religious moderation, from an Islamic perspective, means understanding religion and worship in a proportional and moderate manner. Islam never teaches crime, violence, radicalism, threats, hatred, or other actions contrary to Islam. Religious moderation places openness and respect for diversity as its primary principles, upholding the value of brotherhood based on humanity. This attitude requires the ability to accept the existence of differences in beliefs in social life. However, religious moderation is not interpreted as justification or recognition of the truth of other religious teachings, but rather merely respect for the right of each individual to practice their beliefs (Febrianti, 2023).

Implementation of Religious Moderation in Islamic Boarding School Environments

The application of the values of religious moderation is crucial in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). As Islamic educational institutions rooted in Indonesia, pesantren play a significant role in shaping Islamic civilization through a global understanding of Islam. Adapting to this context enables the creation of a society and nation that adheres to the principle of ummatan wasathan (a middle-class community). The goal of perfecting superior moral character is an integral component of the mission. Furthermore, pesantren function as institutions dedicated to the dissemination of inclusive and friendly Islamic teachings, while emphasizing their significant role in promoting social change within society.

Islamic educational institutions hold a strategic position as the primary bulwark in efforts to prevent radicalism and terrorism, thus Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) serve as crucial spaces for strengthening religious moderation in Indonesia. The Islamic learning process within Islamic boarding schools significantly plays a role in reducing violent ideologies often perpetrated in the name of religion or national interests. By internalizing the teachings of tolerance, dialogue, and peace, Islamic boarding schools contribute to the development of an inclusive generation capable of living harmoniously within a diverse society. In line with this, studies in the literature examining the dynamics of multiculturalism in Indonesia offer critical thinking structured through a comprehensive analytical framework, anchored in the ideology of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah, which rests on six fundamental principles.

The first, tawasuth, believes in a rational approach. Therefore, the doctrine states that although humans have freedom equal to their desires, God Almighty will control them. They fulfill their obligations, namely upholding God's religion, and humans must remember that God aims to create diversity among humans. Students must also strive optimally to achieve success, while also being aware of success as determined by God.

Achieving success requires not only effort but also human trust and prayer to God. Uncontrolled enthusiasm can lead students to excessive behavior, ultimately leading to radicalism. Second, tawazun (religious tolerance), emphasizes the importance of balance. Students should also avoid extreme behavior, either on the right or left. Students are even considered good and should not overdo their joy or anger. Although considered good by humans, it is not always considered good by God, and vice versa.

Third, I'tidal ensures that students trust each other and that trust is conveyed in a balanced manner. If the world's continuity is rapidly disrupted, not all aspects will operate in balance. Fourth, Tasamuh (respect for tolerance), a person's attitude that reflects their willingness to accept various views or positions, even if they disagree. Human rights and the social order of society are issues related to this tolerance. This attitude makes some students more open to differing views.

The fifth is Musawah, where individuals regardless of gender, race, and ethnicity have equal standing. Through this deliberation, both students from outside Java and those from Java need to develop an attitude of respect for differences. The sixth is shura, which differs from musyawarah, which means mutual explanation or exchange of ideas. This explanation demonstrates the crucial role of musyawarah in Islam.

Critical Review

Arabic sources

In the Qur'an and Hadith, Islamic scholars have classified it under the term wasathan (Al-Baqarah: 143), explaining that Muslims are a middle class and are chosen to be witnesses based on human deeds. According to Yusuf Qaradawi (2017), the unrest among religious groups is caused by excessive religious practices and this problem is also characterized by attitudes, namely rude and harsh attitudes. This occurs because there is no balance, therefore, it shows that there is excessive religious practice.

Javanese Source

The principle of Islamic moderation applied by the Kejawen school is to harmoniously combine Islamic teachings with existing Javanese cultural values. In this sense, religious moderation serves as a guideline for avoiding extremism. One example of religious moderation in Java is the Wali Songo. They spread Islam within local culture, fostering tolerance and avoiding violence. From a justice perspective, the Wali Songo not only maintained balance but also fairly fulfilled the people's rights in economic, educational, cultural, and legal aspects.

English source

According to John Locke, a moderate approach to religion involves a high degree of tolerance toward various religions so that people can live side by side comfortably and peacefully. This approach aims to enable adherents to communicate, interact, and understand each other.

CONCLUSION

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are traditional Islamic educational institutions that focus on Islamic learning by implementing Islamic values and principles in daily life. In addition to being a place to study Islam, Islamic boarding schools also function as institutions that promote the principles of *Rahmatan lil'Alamin* (the mercy for the universe), such as respecting every difference and always maintaining harmony among fellow human beings. Moderation in religion can be demonstrated through attitudes such as balance, firmness, tolerance, deliberation, justice, innovation, prioritization, and civility. Moderation in Islam means a balanced understanding of religion and worship without extremism. These values of moderation are even instilled in Islamic boarding schools, including tawassuth (moderation in worship), tawazun (religious tolerance), i'tidal (justice), tasamuh (tolerance), musawah (community), and shura (community).

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