Student Religious Moderation Contest at Indonesian Islamic Universities

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ABSTRACT

Students’ religious attitudes towards the state are still considered low, and there are even some students who refer to the state as toghut. However, the student’s religious moderation is actually the key in realizing tolerance both at the national and international levels. The purpose of this study is to investigate the perspective of the moderate group of students on national commitment in Islamic universities. This study uses a qualitative method of descriptive analysis with data collection techniques in the form of interviews, observations, and document studies. The results showed that religious moderation among students of Islamic Religious Education, Faculty of Islamic Religion, Muhammadiyah University, Jakarta, did not have a negative connotation. Students have a tawasuth attitude that is not extreme left and right and more open in accepting religious arguments.

1. INTRODUCTION

BPS data in 2010 explains that the majority of education in Indonesia is Islam as many as 207.2 million people (87.18 percent) of the population who claim to be Muslim. The second place is filled with Christians with as many as 16.5 million people (6.96 percent), while in the third place, Catholics took the position as many as 6.9 million people (2.91 percent). In the fourth position, Hindus as many as 4 million people (1.69 percent), in fifth place is filled by Buddhists as many as 1.7 million people (0.72 percent), in the sixth place is filled by Confucians as many as 0.11 million people (0.05 percent), and other religions 0.13 percent (Population Census 2010, BPS).

The religious diversity above raises various social problems that can damage the state order. This also happens in universities where students who have different ethnic and cultural backgrounds and from different regions raise an attitude of intolerance and rejection of Pancasila. This is in line with the research of Muhammad, Budi, & Wahid (2018) that Islamic religious teachers reject Pancasila as an Indonesian ideology and consider Indonesia not a form of state that is in accordance with the caliphate; it has a negative stigma.
The perspective of students’ negative stigma towards the state raises religious paradigms and experiences in excessive ways. Understanding and practicing religion according to belief by not blaming and offending other religious beliefs and not even spreading hate speech in the name of religion. So religion is a way to provide direction and guidance based on the Qur’an and Hadith. Student diversity cannot go out and deviate from the rules that have been set. So that religious experience in higher education is very urgent to be implemented (Wahyudin, 2019; Akhmadi. 2019; Sutrisno, 2019).

The implementation of the religious experience of students at Muhammadiyah Universities is the spearhead of educational institutions that contribute to educating the nation and have the task of fostering human beings in moderating student attitudes towards civilization that creates peace in life. However, students often when carrying out religious experiences cannot be separated from ideas that are considered as destroyers in religious practice by blaming other religious beliefs. (Syatar & Rahman, 2020; Harto & Tastin, 2019).

Understanding of student religious moderation is still often considered as a matter of course. However, the student’s religious moderation is actually the key in realizing tolerance both at the national and international levels. Students’ religious attitudes towards the state are still considered low, and there are even some students who refer to the state as taghut. Of course, this kind of religious understanding should not be consumed by students in college (Wibowo, 2019; Hefni, 2020).

A common misconception among students is that adhering to the values of religious moderation and religious tolerance means not providing enlightenment and ignorance of the basic norms that are clearly stated in religious texts, so that in religious life in Indonesia they are classified as non-moderate religious adherents. Often students think that extreme perspectives are considered conservative in following religious teachings. This misunderstanding of the meaning of moderate in religion has an impact on the emergence of extremism, liberalism and intolerance among students who are often reluctant to call it moderate or further associate it with a moderate attitude.

Religious moderation becomes a paradigm of one’s absolute wisdom towards religious experience and religious teachings in carrying out religious routines as a form of religious tolerance that is believed by others by promoting tolerance in differences (Purwanto, 2019; Ramli, 2019). Khotimah (2020) explains that religious moderation is an attitude of absolute belief in the teachings of the religion that is believed and giving space to the religion that is believed by others.

How religious moderation is implemented in a modern country in the contemporary era has caused polemics in many Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Jordan (Ramli, 2019, Ebrahimii, 2021, Gutkowski, 2016). Most of the Islamic communities in these countries, especially those oriented towards moderate Islam or also called Islam Wasatiyah, want Islam to become a religion that is not extreme left and right. (Brewster et all., 2016). The practice of religion, which is predominantly Muslim with various ethnicities and languages, becomes a role model for Islam that secular countries can emulate.

Experts in the social sciences who discuss religious moderation such as Yaakub, & Othman (2016), Achilov & Sen (2017) consider religious moderation as the root of the problem. To address this gap in the literature and to have a more nuanced understanding of how Muslims negotiate tensions between religions. In other words, making an explicit distinction between devout Muslims who are moderate and radical Muslims empirically. (Hook et all., 2017)

Religious moderation must provide understanding as a balance of religious attitudes between an individual's religious practice and respect for the religious beliefs of others. Equality or neutrality in practicing religion is no doubt to prevent us from radicalism, extremism, and intolerant religious changes. By being moderated, religion provides an alternative for each individual and group not to blame each other, let alone cause a riot in religion (Hakim, 2019).

Gazali (2013) explained that Islamic universities as a means of religious moderation efforts of students’ attitudes provide comprehensive education. As agents of change, students are required to be able to provide changes in religious moderation in cultural communities. Not only in the campus environment but also in the family and community. Students’ religious moderation is not just a slogan.
but must be implemented in everyday life. Not a few students in higher education become individuals and cause conflicts in the name of religion (Nata, 2013).

Many researches on religious moderation have been carried out, including the results of Kieron O’Hara’s (2009) research “The Devil’s Long Tail: Religious Moderation and Extremism on the Web”. O’Hara revealed that in the context of religious moderation interpreting the long tail theory as a prediction that the Web will become a place for the spread of extreme sects, massive radical groups to develop in new ways. The Web threatens orthodox understanding of the dynamics of religious extremism. It would also undermine the associated idea that group convergence in the middle ground of religious belief develops and is fostered by liberal civic virtues.

Meanwhile & Ramli’s research (2019) explains that religious experiences can run in peace and harmony for the ethnic Chinese Muslim minority in Makassar City. Minority Muslims are used to carrying out religious practices as evidence of religious tolerance by establishing harmonious relations between religious communities. Worship of each religion can run solemnly without any disturbances and conflicts that could offend each religion.

Meanwhile & Yunus’ research (2018) reveals that religious moderation among university students is the object of people acting in the name of religion as a way to recruit students as targets for radicalism and terrorism groups. Students are considered as objects that are very easy to teach with deviant religious ideas. Due to high curiosity and courage among students, radical groups are very easy to use and students’ understanding of religious moderation is minimal.

Although many researches on religious moderation have been carried out, no one has examined the extent to which students’ perspectives on religious moderation in higher education have been carried out through student responses to the Indonesian government. Therefore, research on student movements in the context of attitude responses to the country is very important to do. This research is expected to make a significant contribution in revealing the capacity of students to support or challenge the strengthening of the values of nationalism in Indonesia.

2. METHODS

This research uses descriptive analysis qualitative research. This research was conducted in a period of four months. Within four months the researchers collected data on the findings of religious moderation on student attitudes towards the state. What is the attitude of students towards the state, How do the moderate students view their commitment to nationalism? How are the moderate groups of students with respect to tolerance? Students of the Faculty of Islamic Religion students are considered as students who have a comprehensive understanding of religion based on consideration that students of the Faculty of Islamic Religion students are a representation of moderate students in religious experience. The choice of approach in this research is adjusted to the characteristics of the problem, research objectives and conceptual framework. So the researchers chose the approach that is commonly used, namely the case study (Sugiyono, 2013).

Data collection was obtained from interviews with 10 students consisting of 6 men and 4 women with an average age of 20 years, the Head of the Study Program of Islamic Religious Education at the Faculty of Islamic Religion. Researchers also took data through observations made during lectures and in places where students often had discussions such as canteens and libraries. Meanwhile, documents related to the focus of the research and other supporting aspects, the researchers took from students’ social media, such as; Facebook, Twitter and Instagram were collected according to the research focus. The data analysis technique is carried out through data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions in a circular manner.
3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Moderate Students' Viewpoint Against National Commitment

National insight is a way of looking into and out of the nation in ideological, social, economic, cultural, political and defence and security issues. National insight has three dimensions, namely a sense of nationality, nationalism, and national spirit (Sugiyarto, 2013). A sense of nationality is a high sense of belonging and pride in the culture of one's own nation. Nationalism is related to nationalism which is politically implemented into the 4 pillars of upholding the nation and state, namely Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, and Bhineka Tunggal Ika. The spirit of nationalism (nationalism) is a combination/synergy of a sense of nationality and nationalism. From the spirit of nationalism will flow a sense of social solidarity, a spirit of self-sacrifice, and encourage the growth of the spirit of patriotism (Suprapto, 2010).

The importance of national insight is an obligation for every citizen in the life of the state (Johansson et all., 2018, Nandan & Shefal, 2018). Likewise, students are an important element in the life of the state which must be strengthened so that the harmonization of religious life can be achieved. walk in peace (Brewster & Melanie, 2016, Mietzner et all., 2018) One of the important pillars in national commitment is the student's view of Pancasila.

As stated by Jovando that “views Pancasila as a very good ideology if it is successfully applied in the life of society and the state. Pancasila is the ideological pillar of the Indonesian state, which is the formulation and guideline for the life of the nation and state for all Indonesian people. An ideology that is used as a guide for Indonesian citizens in life, whether socially, in business or even in religious matters” (Student Interview, 2021).

Given that the strategic position of Pancasila as the basis for unifying the Indonesian nation, Pancasila must be maintained and preserved through revitalization and actualization in campus life. (Kristino, 2017), (Fadillah, 2019), Students as future assets must be able to understand the state in national and religious perspectives. Therefore, it is important to provide an understanding that Pancasila is an ideology that cannot be replaced with any ideology. (Rulyansah, 2018, Agus, 2016)

“Pancasila as the state ideology is a non-negotiable agreement with other ideologies. Pancasila is in accordance with the ideology of Indonesia which is diverse in culture and nation. Pancasila adopted the Medina charter, what else needs to be replaced with Pancasila? If you want to change, more precisely, the law becomes state law, applied according to the Qur'an but not in the name of Islam, because matters related to religion are very sensitive in the current era. Although we cannot deny that the majority of citizens in Indonesia are Muslims, but there are also many minorities like other religions. So it is enough with this Pancasila ideology that is able to embrace everything without any envy and envy from one group towards another” (Student Interview, 2021).

Pancasila as the ideology of the Indonesian nation and state developed through a fairly long process. At first, causality stemmed from the values possessed by the Indonesian people, namely in customs, as well as in the religions of the Indonesian nation as the nation's view of life (Surajiyo, 2020). The basic Pancasila as an Indonesian citizen which is ratified by law as the state ideology. The founding consensus of the state agrees that the form of the Indonesian state is the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia and is legitimized through the constitution, sovereignty is in the hands of the people, and the Indonesian state is a state of law. (Anggriawan, 2020).

“The points of Pancasila must be understood by students as practice and experience in living as a state. The first precept, Belief in One Supreme God means that we as Indonesian citizens trust and fear God. Of course, this is adjusted to the religion and beliefs of each person. The second precept, Just and Civilized Humanity. This second precept we as citizens are asked to understand that every human being has the same degree, so we must love each other” (Student Interview, 2021).

“The third precept, Unity of Indonesia means that we must place the unity, unity, and interests of the state from the interests of each. We must have a personality that is willing to sacrifice for the sake of the Indonesian state, love the Indonesian people and the homeland, and be proud of the country. The fourth precept, Democracy Led by Solemnity and Wisdom in Representative Deliberations. This
fourth precept invites us not to impose his will on others and to prioritize the interests of the state and others. The fifth precept, Social Justice for All Indonesian People, the meaning of this precept means developing noble deeds by way of kinship and mutual cooperation, always being fair” (Student Interview, 2021).

Through the provision of student knowledge about the values of Pancasila above, students will easily have an open nature, especially in responding to diversity and differences, especially the student’s national commitment to the state. This is actually one of the essence of religious moderation. For a pluralistic and multicultural society like Indonesia, students' perspective of religious moderation towards the state is very important so that each of them can have a dialogue about diversity, both religions, beliefs, philosophy of life, science, to various local traditions and customs. Religious moderation requires religious people not to confine themselves, not be exclusive (closed), but inclusive (open), merge, adapt, get along with various communities, and always learn besides giving lectures.

**The Attitude of Moderate Students Against Tolerance**

Tolerance is part of the student’s understanding of religious moderation towards the state. Tolerance must be supported by a broad horizon of knowledge, openness, dialogue, freedom of thought and religion. In short, tolerance is equivalent to a positive attitude, and respect for others in the context of using human freedoms as human beings. (Casram, 2016) The importance of the role of students in developing attitudes of religious tolerance in social life is still not in line with the maximum role of universities, to be able to develop attitudes and characters of tolerance towards students. (Tangidy, 2016)

“The agreement respects and provides equal treatment to all campus residents regardless of ethnicity, religion, race, class, social status, economic status, and special abilities. Appreciate all kinds of differences and don’t blaspheme or bring each other down. Differences of opinion on this issue must exist, and respond wisely, such as respecting differences” (Student Interview, 2021).

The view of the differences in schools of thought in Islam, especially the Indonesian people, basically must make Rasulullah SAW a role model, especially in the moral attitude of life as a person who is honest, sincere, patient, tough, trustworthy, compassionate, obedient to worship, does good deeds and has noble character and of course, the essence of The difference is aimed at seeking the pleasure of Allah. The difference in Islamic schools of thought in Indonesian society is a blessing that exists. Does not make the problem of the difference between these schools. The existence of this difference is like the colors that adorn our lives in religion and nation.

The emergence of intolerance among students is due to a lack of understanding of religion. (Maarif, 2019). Students’ intolerance is an inseparable part of society. Intolerance that occurs in society is a concern that needs to be resolved. As intellectuals, students can of course sort out problems objectively and critically. (Kurniawan, 2021). Especially the attitude of students in responding to religious conflicts.

Students are not willing to despise religion, even like anything Islam is blasphemed still is the true religion and Allah himself does not need creatures to defend him. Islam teaches to firmly defend the religious belief itself. Not taking action against religious blasphemy and believing that the punishment will apply even if not directly, there is no need for a stupid fanatic defence. Not willing. Because when someone insults my religion, that person has violated someone's religious rights and that is a violation.

Students have idealistic thoughts, namely having strong and solid beliefs about the problems and problems that are being faced, handled and whose influence will be implanted and students are figures who are considered as the new generation to continue, continue or replace leaders in the future (Azmi & Kumala, 2019). For students who tend to think liberally, religion is still a necessity and a guide that will lead people to a better life. The general assumption that liberal thinking students usually ignore or demean religion is not at all proven in this study (Aryani, 2016).

Tolerance in the context of religious moderation among students faces serious challenges from various Muslim groups. The challenges do not only come from students who do not agree with religious tolerance but also from students who claim to be intolerant (Menchik, 2019). Moderate Muslim tolerance finds a clear pattern of concepts that co-opt religion as part of the national...
development agenda to protect the country from religious interpretations that can weaken religious moderation (Mandaville & Hamid (2018). Scholars have pointed out that even in seemingly tolerant, secular Muslim-majority countries, religious language is routinely used by the state, and religion serves as a general rule in everyday life.

When referring to even the most acclaimed secularist states such as Turkey Atatürk sees student religious tolerance as something related to the state, as being administered and deployed against opponents in an almost constant battle for control of the public sphere. The fact of the new and increasingly powerful centralized state is that radical students in the classical Islamic tradition emphasized the autonomy of the class clergy as a check on executive authority. (Ramlee et all., 2019)

In the era of disruption of technology and information as it is today, when students experience a flood of information, the principle of fairness and balance in religious tolerance can actually be used as a useful value for managing information and minimizing hoaxes; Religious moderation teaches lessons to think and act wisely, not fanatical or blindly obsessed with one person's or group's religious views, without considering the religious views of other people or groups.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion of the research, it can be concluded that the student's religious moderation reveals that the attitude of students of Islamic Religious Education at the Faculty of Islamic Religion, University of Muhammadiyah Jakarta, towards the State does not have a negative connotation. Students have a tawassuth attitude that is not extreme left and right and more open in accepting religious arguments. This conclusion is evidenced by the findings. First. The perspective of the moderate group of students towards national commitment in the perspective of religious moderation has a positive understanding by understanding Pancasila as the nation's view of life which means that all activities of the daily life of the Indonesian people must be in accordance with Pancasila. Second, the moderate attitude of students towards tolerance in the state is proven by respecting and giving equal treatment to all campus residents regardless of ethnicity, religion, race, class, social status, economic status, and distinctive abilities. The form of student tolerance can be seen from the wisdom in differences of opinion in the practice of understanding religion. The tolerance attitude of students is also shown in understanding the differences in the sects adopted in Indonesian society. This research has limitations in data collection, so research on religious moderation is very interesting to be researched and developed more broadly, especially not only for students but also lecturers and university leaders.

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Ide melompat, tidak ada koherensi dari paragraf sebelumnya ke paragraf berikutnya. Silahkan buatkan kalimat penghubung yang koheren.


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