

Implementation of Moderate Islamic Education for the NU Millennial Generation in Semat Village, Tahunan, Jepara

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Abstract: This article aims to explore the implementation of moderate Islamic education for the NU millennial generation in Semat Village, Tahunan, Jepara. This study uses a qualitative approach by collecting data through interviews and observations. The results of the study show that the NU millennial generation in Semat Village applies moderate Islamic education through recognition of other parties, respect for the opinions of others, tolerance towards ethnicity, race, culture, and beliefs, and rejecting violence as a way to impose one's will. The theoretical implication of this research is to strengthen the understanding of the importance of moderate Islamic education in maintaining interfaith harmony. However, this study has limitations in generalizing the results only to the context of the Semat Tahunan Jepara Village and limitations in the number of samples. Further research with a wider scope is needed to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the implementation of religious moderation for the NU millennial generation.

Tersedia Online di

http://journal.unublitar.ac.id/pendidikan/index.php/Riset_Konseptual

Sejarah Artikel

Diterima pada : 01-10-2023

Disetujui pada : 20-10-2023

Dipublikasikan pada : 31-10-2023

Kata Kunci:

Islamic Education, Religious Moderation, Millennial Generation, NU.

DOI:

http://doi.org/10.28926/riset_konseptual.v7i4.785

INTRODUCTION

The millennial generation is a segment of society that is the focus of attention in the context of the development of religion and religious life (Hasan, 2018; Iswanto, 2018). The millennial generation plays a crucial role in maintaining and passing on the values of moderate Islamic education which are the main principles of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), a religious organization that has great influence in Indonesia (Salim et al., 2023). The concept of religious moderation involves a balanced approach between religion and world life, emphasizing an inclusive understanding, tolerance and equality in practicing religion (Suryadi, 2022). In the NU context, religious moderation is the main foundation in carrying out Islamic religious teachings that are inclusive and peaceful (Taufiq & Alkholid, 2021).

The millennial generation through membership in the Nahdlatul Ulama Student Association (IPNU) and the Nahdlatul Ulama Student Association (IPPNU) has a crucial role in encouraging religious moderation (Rosyid, 2016). As an influential religious organization, NU is an integral part of Indonesian Muslims who prioritize the principles of brotherhood (*ukhuwwah*), tolerance (*at-tasamuh*), togetherness, and coexistence with citizens of other countries.

IPNU-IPPNU in Semat Village, Tahunan District, Jepara Regency, is a youth organization based on Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah. Its members consist of students in madrasas, schools, and colleges. The role of this organization is very important in gathering, directing, and developing the potential and interests of youth. Therefore, it is crucial for the Jepara Regency IPNU-IPPNU, as the organizational wing of the Nahdlatul Ulama at the student level, to seriously face the challenge of spreading radical teachings among the younger generation.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the implementation of moderate Islamic education for NU students in Semat Tahunan Jepara Village. This research aims to gain an in-depth understanding of how NU students in the village apply the principles of moderation in their daily lives. In addition, this study also aims to identify perceptions among NU students towards the conception of moderate Islamic education.

From the results of tracking the relevant preliminary literature, the researcher found several studies on religious moderation associated with NU. For example, the review from Moh. Bahrudin regarding the history and progress of NU scholars in implementing religious moderation in the Lampung region (Bahrudin, 2022). The conclusion from this study is that the implementation of religious moderation in Lampung is carried out through various channels, with a focus on education as the main target, both in the context of formal and non-formal education. Apart from that, Tariqah assemblies are also an important means of spreading religious moderation to groups of adults and the elderly. Tabligh, lectures, sermons, and da'wah in general are also efforts made by NU *kiai*, *ustaz*, and religious leaders in conveying the message of religious moderation to all levels of society regardless of age. In addition, political channels are also used by NU politicians to strengthen the implementation of religious moderation. In this case, NU politicians who are involved in various political parties play an important role in promoting religious moderation through their influence in the political arena. Overall, this study underscores the importance of cooperation between various pathways and actors in strengthening the implementation of religious moderation in Lampung.

The central role of NU figures in spreading the value of religious moderation has also been proven in other regions. In Jember, for example, preaching of religious moderation by NU religious leaders can be divided into two forms. First, da'wah is carried out through conceptual efforts to understand religious moderation in society, or also known as the cultivation of moderate ideology. This ideology makes Islam a religion that promotes compassion and peace. Second, the preaching of religious moderation is realized through the concept of inclusiveness in religion, which makes this understanding the core of the preaching of religious moderation (Ilaihi & Utami, 2023).

Other studies show somewhat different findings. Religious moderation within NU is more effective if delivered by an autonomous body organization such as Fatayat (Nurfritria, 2023) and Muslimat (Syaikhu et al., 2021). Through the role played by the NU Muslimat organization, the process of religious moderation can gradually take root and be able to inhibit the spread of radical ideas. This is due to the fact that Muslimat NU members consist of mothers, who have an important role in building peace and encouraging tolerance, especially in the family context. Likewise with the role of Fatayat NU in Banten Province. Its strategic role in encouraging religious moderation is realized through collaboration with the Indonesian Ministry of Religion, regeneration activities, public dialogue, and studies based on *Aswaja (Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah)*.

The study of religious moderation that specifically links it to the IPNU organization comes from Tri Pujiati and Fina Tri Wahyuni through community service activities in Kajar Village, Dawe, Kudus (Setiyadi & Syahrial, 2022). In conclusion, the younger generation of IPNU and IPPNU have succeeded in strengthening religious moderation by the indicators set by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia. They show a high commitment to nationality, have tolerance for diversity, reject violence and radicalism, and can accommodate local culture in preserving traditions in their environment.

Overall, this research has a distinction when compared with the results of research by previous researchers. This research seeks to broaden our understanding of the implementation of moderate Islamic education at the village level and involve the young generation of NU as the main actor in the process.

This research has high urgency because it is important to understand the implementation of moderate Islamic education among NU students in Semat Tahunan Jepara Village. In an increasingly complex social and religious context, a deep understanding of how the younger generation applies the principles of moderate Islamic education is very important.

This research is also relevant in efforts to strengthen and protect the religious identity of NU students, as well as encourage the development of attitudes of tolerance, inclusivity, and inter-religious harmony. By understanding the perceptions of NU students towards the conception of moderation in religion, this research can provide practical guidance for the development of religious education that is in line with the values of religious moderation.

In addition, the results of this research can make an important contribution to the formation of educational policies and programs aimed at promoting religious moderation among NU students. Through a better understanding of the implementation of moderate Islamic education, concrete steps can be taken to increase awareness and understanding of NU students in maintaining religious harmony, as well as facing the challenges of extremism and radicalism.

METHOD

In the context of this research, a case study was conducted which aims to describe and obtain an in-depth picture of the perceptions of the NU millennial generation towards religious moderation. One of the data collection techniques is observation. Observation is a method used to collect data by observing and systematically recording the phenomena that are the focus of research (Sari et al., 2022). The researcher made observations of the IPNU-IPPNU Trang Semat organization. The purpose of this observation is to observe and record the situation and environmental conditions of the IPNU-IPPNU Semat Tahunan Jepara, the condition of the infrastructure owned by the organization, the number of IPNU-IPPNU members of the Semat Tahunan Jepara, as well as the activities carried out by IPNU-IPPNU members Semat Tahunan Jepara. This observation is used as a method to obtain information about the perceptions of the NU millennial generation towards moderate Islamic education which is the focus of this research.

Researchers also use structured interview techniques, which involve questions that are specifically designed to direct answers in the pattern of questions that have been prepared beforehand. In this case, the interviewer has prepared several complete and detailed questions regarding the perceptions of the NU millennial generation toward religious moderation. Researchers conducted interviews with the chairman of the IPNU-IPPNU Semat and one of the members involved in this study, which focused on the perceptions of the NU millennial generation towards religious moderation. This interview method was used to collect data about the perceptions of the NU millennial generation towards the implementation of moderate Islamic education in the context of the IPNU-IPPNU Semat. The interview informants included: 1) Chair of the IPNU-IPPNU of Semat. Interviews were conducted with the chairman of IPNU-IPPNU Semat to obtain information regarding the IPNU-IPPNU organization and its developments in religious activities such as *tahlilan* and recitation of the Koran. 2) Local NU figures. Selected as interview subjects because of their responsibility in developing regeneration and their influence on the perceptions of the NU millennial generation towards religious moderation. 3) IPNU-IPPNU Secretary. The IPNU-IPPNU secretary of Semat village was chosen as the subject of the interview because he was able to provide accurate and relevant information, and had a direct connection with the events that occurred.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Millennial Generation and Religious Moderation: Theoretical Study

In a theoretical context, the term "millennial" was first introduced by writers William Strauss and Neil Howe. In 1987, they introduced this term when children born that year started to enter the preschool stage. The term "millennial" is then used by the media to identify this group of children connected to the turn of the millennium (Prasasti & Prakoso, 2020). The millennial generation has an important role in voicing messages of religious moderation through social media. As active users of social media, they have the opportunity to take part in religious moderation campaigns using ways that are in line with the times (Elvinaro & Syarif, 2021).

Through social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube, millennials can easily share their thoughts, ideas and information about religious moderation with thousands of other users. They can use interesting content such as images, videos, and memes to attract young audiences and creatively convey messages of religious moderation. In addition, the millennial generation can also take advantage of interactive features on social media, such as polls or using hashtags, to invite discussion and involve more people in discussing religious moderation. With the power of a broad network and the potential for virality on social media, the millennial generation has great potential to become agents of change in strengthening religious moderation in an increasingly digitally connected society (Hendriani et al., 2021).

The development of digital technology requires awareness in creating, consuming, and disseminating religious moderation content in the digital space. Millennials who are skilled in technology can play an important role in promoting religious moderation literacy in the digital world (Wahyudi & Novita Kurniasih, 2021). This is necessary to maintain tolerance, peace, and harmony in a multicultural society. The presence of religious narratives that spread exclusivism, fanaticism, radicalism, or even terrorism can threaten the essential values of peace. Therefore, the awareness and active involvement of the millennial generation in disseminating religious moderation content is very important to overcome this phenomenon.

Religions teach moderate principles, such as the teachings of *wasathiyah* in Islam which emphasize moderation, fairness, humility, and *istiqamah*. The concept of religious moderation can also be found in Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucian religious traditions. Principles such as tolerance, solidarity, equality, love, and truth form the basis of religious moderation (Nisa et al., 2021). Adherents of Christianity also acknowledge and support the values contained in religious moderation, such as inter-religious tolerance, rejection of violence, the spirit of nationalism, empowerment of local wisdom, and compassion for fellow human beings, which refers to the teachings of Jesus Christ about the law of love. They believe that religious moderation is a reflection of the principles of the Christian religion which teach respect for universal values, solidarity and brotherhood among human beings. In the practice of daily life, adherents of Christianity seek to establish harmonious relations with adherents of other religions, encourage interfaith dialogue, and work together in efforts to build peace, justice and sustainability in society (Prakosa, 2022).

In an Islamic perspective, religious moderation can be realized by introducing moderate Islam through a balanced understanding of prophetic sirahs. In this case, it is important to avoid extreme and exaggerated interpretations of Islam, giving rise to the view that Islam is the only true religion compared to other religions (Mailinda et al., 2022).

Planting the Value of Moderate Islamic Education for the NU Millennial Generation in the Semat Village, Tahunan Jepara

In Semat Village, the NU millennial generation practices moderate Islamic education by showing respect for other parties, accepting other people's opinions well, upholding tolerance for diversity of ethnicity, race, culture, and belief, and rejecting all forms of violence in pursuing their will. They understand the importance of peaceful coexistence with fellow citizens who have differences in terms of religion and belief.

This inclusive attitude and acceptance of diversity is a strong foundation in efforts to build harmonious national unity and integrity.

As a nation's generation, we can see that peace, mutual respect, mutual love, and mutual respect is a very beautiful things to be implemented in a society of various understandings. Because in truth every ideology teaches goodness and peace in human life (Results of interview with Afif Susanto, Chair of IPNU Semat Village, 18 August 2022).

Technically, there are various methods used to instill moderate Islamic education there. Among others:

a. Open Dialog

Carrying out the intended dialogue is holding a conversation between two or more individuals who have different views, with mutual respect's opinions and without reducing the belief in the understandings that are believed by each individual. As explained by the research informant, Ahmad Suroaji, who served as Secretary of IPNU Semat, during the interview session:

Dialogue is carried out to establish friendship by gathering together in one place, and voicing each other's opinions without any sense of dropping and cornering other views. The role of this dialogue is carried out for self-sufficiency so that people are able to understand, that differences are not a bad thing, not a reason for us to be hostile to every different belief that is believed (Results of interview with Ahmad Suroaji, Secretary of IPNU Semat Village, 18 August 2022).

Opening up space for dialogue has important benefits in reducing prejudice and preventing the emergence of feelings of hatred against other groups. Through dialogue, each group can understand each other and gain a broader perspective on the views, values, and beliefs held by others. By building a better understanding, they can overcome negative prejudice and develop a more inclusive and respectful attitude. Dialogue can also strengthen relations between individuals and groups, thereby creating a more harmonious and peaceful environment (Sutrisno, 2019).

b. Socialization of Inter-Religious Harmony

From the results of researchers' observations conducted on August 25 2022, it was clear that the IPNU-IPPNU administrators of Semat Village were active in conducting outreach related to the vision of harmony in society. Socialization plays an important role in active participation in society, where individuals jointly contribute to creating harmony in social life by prioritizing collaboration rather than egoism. Through socialization, the community can maintain the stability of harmony in various existing understandings. Socialization interactions also play a role in strengthening community harmony, by facilitating good interactions between individuals who have differences. In this context, the millennial generation is taught that differences are not a problem or a reason to avoid social interactions between individuals and communities.

Socialization activities have an important purpose as a medium to increase awareness of tolerance and build inclusive theology. In this context, socialization aims to strengthen understanding and awareness of the importance of harmonizing religions in society. Through socialization activities, people are encouraged to broaden their perspectives and build an inclusive attitude towards various beliefs and beliefs. Thus, socialization plays a role in building a strong foundation to ensure harmonious relations between religions and maintain peace in religious life (Sarifah & Barus, 2019).

c. Regular Study of Religious and National Social Activities

The administrators of the IPNU-IPPNU Branch of Semat Village routinely hold studies on religion and national values in order to broaden understanding and strengthen relations between adherents of different faiths. These studies become an arena for gaining new insights and deepening understanding of religion and national values which form the basis of religious life. In addition, not only are routine studies carried out, but the people in Semat Village are also active in carrying out social activities. This shows their commitment to building social relationships that are inclusive and contribute positively to society. These social activities cover various forms such as social service, fundraising for charity activities, and participation in community empowerment programs. Thus, through religious studies and social activities, the administrators of the IPNU-IPPNU of Semat Village encourage the creation of harmony, mutual understanding and concern for each other within the framework of moderate Islamic education. As stated by Ustazah Wahba the following:

Every month, we carry out routine studies with the aim of communicating with each other, strengthening brotherly relations. In these routine reviews, everyone can voice their opinion, express the problems they face, and find solutions together. Whenever we do regular studies, the goal is to meet and get to know each other, regardless of our differences in understanding. In this study, no ideology is emphasized or ended, but we accommodate all understandings and accept all existing opinions (Results of interview with Ustazah Wahba, NU figure in Semat Village, 25 August 2022).

In Islam, the ideas of nationality, religion and local traditions do not conflict with each other (Muhajarah, 2022). For example, in the concept of a state proclaimed by the Prophet Muhammad based on the Medina Charter, there was recognition and protection of various tribes, religions, and local traditions that existed in Medina society at that time. The Prophet Muhammad built unity and oneness between Muslims and non-Muslims in Medina with the principles of justice, mutual respect, and cooperation for the common good. In this context, it appears that religion and local traditions can coexist with the notion of nationality so that there is no conflict between the two.

CONCLUSION

In this article, we have discussed the implementation of moderate Islamic education for the NU millennial generation in Semat Village, Tahunan, Jepara. The research and observations made show that the NU millennial generation in Semat Village have adopted moderate Islamic educational values in their daily lives. Through socialization, dialogue, studies, and participation in the IPNU-IPPNU organization, the millennial generation has succeeded in strengthening their understanding of religious moderation and implementing it well. They show tolerance, respect differences, and reject violence in practicing religion. They also play an active role in maintaining inter-religious harmony in Semat Village, by conducting social activities and routine studies to strengthen ties between religious communities. Overall, this article describes how the NU millennial generation in Semat Tahunan Village, Jepara, has succeeded in implementing and strengthening moderate Islamic education in their lives. This implementation does not only have an impact on individuals, but also on the surrounding community by creating harmony and inter-religious harmony.

The theoretical implication of implementing moderate Islamic education for the NU millennial generation in Jepara's Semat Tahunan Village is that the concept of

moderate Islamic education can become a strong foundation for building religious harmony and harmony among religious believers. This research provides a deeper understanding of how the millennial generation can internalize the values of moderate Islamic education in their daily lives. Several limitations need to be considered in this study. First, this research was conducted in Semat Tahunan Jepara Village, so the generalization of the findings only applies to that context. The results of this study may not be directly applicable to the NU community in other locations or to the millennial generation from different religious and cultural backgrounds. Second, data collection in this study is based on interviews and observations. There is a possibility of subjectivity bias in the interpretation of data by researchers or informants.

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