Implementation of Religious Moderation Education in Strengthening the Religiosity of Elementary School Students: A Study on the Religious Sleman Program

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ABSTRACT

Strengthening religious moderation in basic education is a strategic need amid the increasing phenomenon of religious intolerance and exclusivism in the younger generation. This study aims to analyze the implementation of religious moderation education through the Religious Sleman Program at SD Negeri Model and assess its effectiveness in developing students' religiosity. The research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type. Data was obtained through observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving school principals, interfaith teachers, students, and religious education supervisors. Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman model through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn, with validity tests through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time. The results of the study show that the implementation of religious moderation is carried out through the integration of values in learning, daily religious habits, strengthening inclusive school culture, and interfaith collaboration. The program is effective in shaping students' religiosity that is not only ritualistic, but also reflects a tolerant, empathetic, and respectful attitude toward diversity. The obstacles found include the limited understanding of some teachers about the concept of moderation and the lack of optimal continuous evaluation system. This study concludes that religious moderation education in primary schools plays a significant role in building the religious-moderate character of students and requires strengthening the capacity of educators and sustainable policy support.

1. INTRODUCTION

Religious moderation is one of the national strategic agendas launched by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia in response to the increasing social polarization and symptoms of religion-based intolerance in Indonesia. Religious moderation is not intended to moderate religious teachings, but rather to moderate religious views, attitudes, and practices in order to remain on the principles of justice, balance, and respect for pluralism. In the context of a pluralistic Indonesian nationality, religious moderation is an important foundation in maintaining social cohesion and strengthening commitment to Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. The phenomenon of intolerance that has emerged in recent years shows that exclusivity is not only developing in the public space, but also beginning to touch the educational environment. Various studies show that there is a tendency for some students to be less open to differences in beliefs, both in the form of stereotypes, restrictions on interfaith associations, and an attitude of reluctance to interact equally. This condition is an alarm for the world of education, especially at the elementary school level, because this phase is a crucial stage in the formation of children's character, moral identity, and religious perspective. Elementary schools have a strategic position as a second socialization space after the family. At the developmental stage of 7–12 years old, children are in the phase of forming a concrete understanding of religious and social values. The values instilled at this

stage tend to be firmly attached and become the foundation of attitudes in the future. If religious education only emphasizes cognitive and ritual aspects without balancing the values of tolerance and humanity, then there is the potential for the development of a narrow religious understanding. Therefore, religious moderation education needs to be integrated from an early age in the curriculum, school culture, and daily learning practices.

As a form of implementation of national policies at the regional level, the Sleman Regency Government launched the Sleman Religious Program which aims to build the character of students who are religious and inclusive. This program is designed to integrate the values of religious moderation in the education system through religious habituation, strengthening school culture, and interfaith collaboration. One of the schools that became a pilot in the program was SD Negeri Model Ngemplak, which was designated as a religious moderation school in the Sleman area. As a model school, this institution not only organizes religious learning according to the beliefs of each student, but also builds a school culture that respects diversity. The availability of worship spaces for various religions, the proportionate implementation of religious activities, and interfaith social interaction are part of the educational practices applied. This model shows that religiosity is not understood exclusively, but rather as piety that is in line with the values of tolerance and nationality. However, the implementation of religious moderation education in elementary schools is not without challenges. The difference in the level of teachers' understanding of the concept of moderation, limited resources, and the lack of optimal program evaluation system are factors that need to be studied more deeply. In addition, the effectiveness of the program in developing students' religiosity both in the ritual and social dimensionsneeds to be comprehensively analyzed to ensure that the program does not stop at a purely symbolic or ceremonial level. Based on this background, this study focuses on two main questions: (1) how to implement religious moderation education through the Religious Sleman Program at SD Negeri Model Ngemplak College; and (2) the extent to which the program is effective in developing the religiosity of elementary school students. This research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of the study of religious moderation in primary education, as well as a practical contribution to strengthening the model of moderation schools that can be replicated in various regions in Indonesia.

2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type of research. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research aims to understand in depth the process of implementing religious moderation education and the dynamics that occur in the school environment. Descriptive research is used to describe the phenomenon systematically, factually, and accurately regarding the implementation of the Sleman Religius Program in the context of basic education. The research was carried out at SD Negeri Model Ngemplak which was designated as a pilot school for religious moderation in Sleman Regency. This location was chosen purposively because it has characteristics that are relevant to the focus of the research, namely the religious diversity of students and the active implementation of moderation programs.
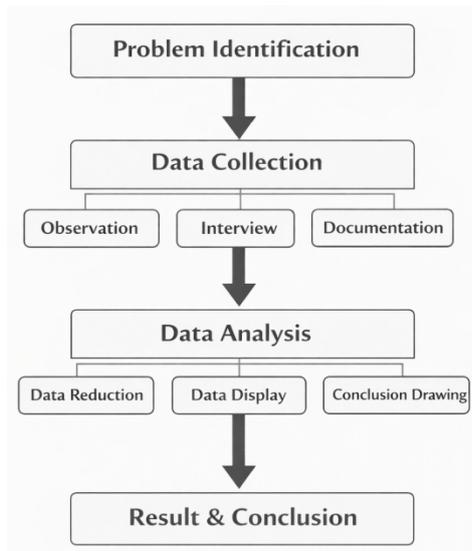
Figure 1. Research Methods

The research informants were determined using purposive sampling techniques by considering direct involvement in the implementation of the program. Informants include: 1) The principal is in charge of the school's internal policies. 2) Religious Education Teachers (Islamic, Christian, Catholic, and Hindu). 3) High grade students (classes V and VI). 4) Religious Education Supervisor from related agencies. The selection of informants aims to obtain comprehensive data from various perspectives. And the research stages are carried out systematically starting from pre-field to the preparation of reports. The stages of the research include: 1) Problem Identification. The researcher conducted a preliminary study to understand the condition of the school and formulate the focus of the research. 2) Data Collection. Data was collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. 3) Data Analysis. The data is analyzed gradually through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. 4) Results and Conclusions. The researcher compiles the findings of the study and draws conclusions based on the analysis.

Observations were carried out directly on learning activities, religious habits, social interaction of interfaith students, and school culture that reflected the value of religious moderation. Observation was moderately participatory, where researchers were involved in a limited way without interfering with school activities; Then the interview was conducted in depth using semi-structured guidelines. Questions are focused on: Teachers' understanding of religious moderation; Program implementation strategy; The impact of the program on student religiosity; Supporting and inhibiting factors; and documentation includes: lesson plans and teaching modules; Schoolwork program; Photos of religious activities; Decree letter and charter of moderation schools; This document is used to strengthen the validity of observation and interview data. Data analysis using the Miles and Huberman interactive model consists of three stages: Data Reduction. The data obtained were selected, focused, and simplified according to the research theme; Data Presentation. The data is organized in the form of a descriptive narrative, table, or matrix for easy understanding; Conclusion. Conclusions are drawn gradually and verified continuously throughout the research process. The validity of the data was tested through triangulation techniques, namely: Source Triangulation: comparing information from principals, teachers, and students; Triangulation Technique: comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation; Time Triangulation: performing data collection at different times to ensure consistency of information. The research is carried out by maintaining the principles of academic ethics, including: Obtain official permission from the school;

Maintain the confidentiality of the identity of the informant; Using data is only for scientific purposes. Overall, this research method is designed to obtain a comprehensive picture of the implementation and effectiveness of religious moderation education in the Religious Sleman Program in elementary schools.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Overview of the Implementation of the Sleman Religius Program

The implementation of religious moderation education at SD Negeri Model Ngemplak is carried out through the Sleman Religius Program which was developed as a model of a moderation school at the elementary education level. This school has the characteristics of religious diversity that is quite representative, with Muslim, Christian, Catholic, and Hindu students. This diversity is a strategic social context in strengthening the value of religious moderation. Structurally, the school has integrated the values of moderation in planning documents such as the school's vision-mission, annual work program, and learning tools. Culturally, the implementation of the program is seen in religious habituation, the provision of interfaith worship facilities, and inclusive social interaction. The results of the study show that the implementation of the program is not ceremonial, but is internalized in the daily practice of school residents.

3.2 Integration of Moderation Values in Learning

Religious Education teachers prepare lesson plans that contain the values of tolerance, national commitment, and anti-violence. In PAI learning, for example, the material on ukhuwah Islamiyah is associated with ukhuwah insaniyah (brotherhood of humanity). Meanwhile, in the learning of Christianity, Catholicism, and Hinduism, teachers also emphasize the teachings of love, peace, and respect for others. The value of moderation is not only conveyed in the form of normative lectures, but through contextual discussions, simple case studies, and reflections on everyday behaviors. The approach used is dialogical and participatory. Teachers encourage students to share their experiences about diversity in their environment. In practice, teachers avoid theological comparisons that have the potential to lead to exclusivism, and instead emphasize the commonality of universal values such as honesty, discipline, and mutual respect. This is in line with the principles of religious moderation proclaimed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, namely a commitment to nationality, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodation to local culture.

3.3 Daily Religious Habituation as an Internalization Strategy

One of the main findings of the study is the strong role of habituation in shaping students' moderate religiosity. The school organizes morning prayer activities according to their respective religions separately but equally. On the commemoration of religious holidays, schools provide a space for appreciation without forcing interfaith participation in the ritual aspect, but in the social and togetherness aspect. The availability of worship spaces for various religions is a symbol as well as a real practice of respect for religious rights. Teachers are key actors in internalizing the value of moderation. The harmonious interaction of interfaith teachers in front of students provides implicit learning about tolerance. This example is more effective than theoretically delivering material. These findings suggest that moderation education at primary school age is more effective through concrete habituation than abstract cognitive approaches.

3.4 Inclusive School Culture

An inclusive school culture can be seen from the following indicators: There is no social segregation based on religion; Students are free to make friends without restrictions on religious

identity; No religious-based bullying practices were found; Teachers provide quick responses to potential minor conflicts related to differences. The school's social environment becomes a real coexistence practice space. The value of moderation is not only a slogan, but a common social norm.

3.5 Program Effectiveness in Developing Students' Religiosity

Students' religiosity is analyzed in two dimensions: ritual piety and social piety. Students showed increased discipline in worship according to their respective religions. They understand the ordinances of worship better and show awareness to carry them out independently. However, what distinguishes it from conventional religious approaches is that there is no attitude of feeling the most correct or demeaning of other beliefs. The most significant developments are seen in the social aspects, namely: Students are willing to work in interfaith groups; Students do not disturb friends who are worshipping; Students understand that religious differences are part of the life of the nation. This shows that the growing religiosity is inclusive and contextual.

3.5 Implementation Supporting Factors

Some of the key supporting factors include: Principal's Leadership, The principal has a strong commitment to strengthening religious moderation and actively building interfaith coordination; Interfaith Teacher Collaboration, Religious teachers work synergistically in arranging joint activities. Local Government Support, The Sleman Religius program provides policy legitimacy and assistance to schools.

3.6 Inhibiting Factors

Although effective, the study found several obstacles: Not all teachers understand religious moderation conceptually deeply; Program evaluation does not yet have standardized standard instruments; Limited further training related to tolerance education. These barriers suggest that program sustainability requires systemic reinforcement, not just individual initiatives.

3.8 Theoretis Analysis

From the perspective of policy implementation theory, the success of a program is influenced by clear communication, the availability of resources, the disposition of implementers, and a supportive organizational structure. The implementation in this school shows that the dispositional factor (commitment of teachers and principals) is the main key to success. From the perspective of child development, the approach of concrete habituation is in accordance with the stage of moral development of elementary school students who are still in the concrete-operational phase. Therefore, the strategies used are psychopedagogically relevant.

3.9 Social and Educational Implications

This research shows that elementary schools can be social laboratories for religious moderation. If this model is replicated systematically, then basic education has the potential to become a preventive bulwark against radicalism and intolerance in the future. This program proves that religiosity and tolerance are not two opposing concepts, but can grow simultaneously through the right educational design. Overall, the results of the study confirm that the implementation of religious moderation education in SD Negeri Model Ngemplak through the Sleman Religius Program is effective in shaping students' religiosity that holistically integrates individual piety and social piety within the framework of nationality.
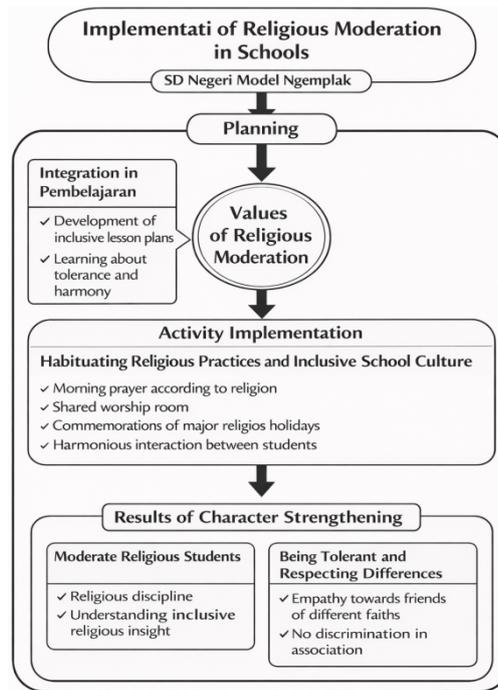
Figure 2. Implementation of Religious Moderation in Schools

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of religious moderation education through the Religious Sleman Program at SD Negeri Model Ngemplak runs in a systematic, integrated, and effective manner in shaping the religiosity of moderate students. Religious moderation is not only understood as a normative concept, but is internalized in school planning systems, learning practices, religious habits, and inclusive social culture. Substantively, the implementation of the program is carried out through three main strategies. First, the integration of moderation values in the curriculum and learning tools. Religious teachers develop lesson plans that contain indicators of tolerance, national commitment, and respect for differences. A dialogical and participatory pedagogical approach allows students to understand the value of diversity in a concrete and contextual way. Second, strengthening daily religious habits. The practice of prayer according to each religion, the provision of interfaith worship spaces, and the commemoration of inclusive religious holidays are effective means of internalizing values. This habituation shows that religious identity can grow without having to negate the beliefs of others.

Third, the formation of an inclusive school culture as a hidden curriculum. Harmonious social interaction, the absence of religious segregation in school activities, and the example of interfaith teachers play a big role in building students' awareness that differences are a social reality that must be respected. In terms of effectiveness, this program has been proven to be able to develop students' religiosity in two dimensions at once, namely ritual piety and social piety. Students show an increase in worship discipline, understanding of religious teachings, and awareness of carrying out religious obligations independently. At the same time, students show a tolerant, empathetic, and non-discriminatory attitude towards friends of different religions. This shows that the religiosity that is formed is integrative and inclusive, not exclusive or sectarian. The success of the implementation is influenced by several key factors, namely inclusive leadership of school principals, collaboration of interfaith teachers, and regional policy support within the framework of the Sleman Religius

program. However, the study also found several challenges, such as the uneven conceptual understanding of religious moderation among educators and the lack of optimal program evaluation system based on standardized instruments. Theoretically, the findings of this study strengthen the view that character education based on religious moderation is effectively applied at the elementary school level because it is in accordance with the stage of children's moral development that is still concrete-operational. Practically, the model applied at SD Negeri Model Ngemplak can be used as a reference for other schools in developing religious education that is in line with the principles of nationality and diversity. Thus, it can be emphasized that religious moderation education in elementary schools has a strategic role as a preventive measure against intolerance and radicalism in the future. Strengthening teacher capacity, developing a continuous evaluation system, and contextual replication of models in various regions are the main recommendations to ensure the sustainability and development of programs nationally.

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