
Building Student Tolerance Through A Seminar On Religious Moderation At Mts A. Yani Wonotunggal

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Abstract. *This community service activity at MTs A. Yani Wonotunggal was specifically designed to enhance students' understanding of religious moderation and the importance of tolerance among various religious groups. Recognizing the growing need to develop inclusive and harmonious attitudes, the seminar aimed to build a foundation for social harmony within the school community and more than that. Attended by 60 students, the event featured interactive face-to-face sessions led by Ustadz Yasir, who delivered the materials about religious moderation, its principles, and its application in everyday life. Through these discussions, students were able to gain the key role of respecting religious differences and learned practical ways to apply moderation in their daily activities. The seminar's impact was evident, as students demonstrated an increased awareness of the need for harmony and tolerance. This activity not only deepened their understanding of religious moderation but also contributed significantly to the creation of a more peaceful, respectful, and inclusive environment within the school, fostering long-term positive relationships.*

Keywords: *Religious Moderation, Seminar, Tolerance, Wonotunggal*

1. INTRODUCTION

Tolerance is a fundamental principle essential for fostering peaceful coexistence and mutual respect among individuals within diverse societies (Taiba et al., 2023). In our increasingly globalized world, interactions among people from various backgrounds, cultures, and belief systems are more frequent and complex than ever before. This intensification of cross-cultural interactions highlights the critical importance of tolerance as a cornerstone for maintaining social harmony. Without a commitment to tolerance, societies risk experiencing heightened conflicts and divisions. Tolerance is not merely an ideal but a practical necessity that supports the creation of environments where individuals can coexist harmoniously despite their differences (Nasution et al., 2023).

As one of the countries with the highest level of pluralism in the world (Nugraha, 2020), Indonesia has a high level of complexity due to the diversity of its beliefs, religions, and cultures. In such a diverse society, differences often become triggers for conflict and tension. In fact, differences of opinion in religion often become the cause of conflict and violence. Indonesia, with its diverse tribes, cultures, ethnicities, languages, and religions, is considered a destiny and a blessing from the Almighty God. This diversity, if managed well, can be a positive resource for the progress of the nation, but if not, it can be a negative threat (Sa'diyah et al., 2021).

In line with this complexity, the emergence of extremist acts is one of the most real threats (Borum, 2011). Actions leading to extremism are actually very contrary to the teachings of any religion, including Islam. Lack of in-depth understanding of religious teachings can lead someone to act wrongly. The situation becomes dangerous when such a person feels confident that their actions are right. Seeds of intolerance can actually emerge from a young age, including among students. A survey conducted by the Indonesian Survey Circle shows that as many as 31% of students have intolerant attitudes. This percentage indicates a serious problem that needs to be addressed with the right strategy (Minarni, 2021).

Religious moderation is present as a strategic approach to optimizing religious values in order to build harmony and synergy among religious communities (Rubaidi et al., 2020). Amidst the increasingly complex challenges of globalization, education has a strategic role in instilling the values of tolerance in the younger generation (Azra & Hasan, 2002). Schools as formal educational institutions become important venues in shaping students' characters who appreciate differences, including in the context of religion. Therefore, structured efforts are needed to introduce and promote religious moderation among students (Budiman, 2020).

Mutual respect and the rejection of extremism are both emphasized in religious moderation, as highlighted by Arifand et al. (2023). In the context of education, religious moderation can be implemented through various activities, one of which is a seminar. A religious moderation seminar can be an effective medium for conveying messages of tolerance and educating students about the importance of living side by side in diversity. This seminar also provides a space for students to dialogue and understand differences within a framework of mutual respect (Al Farabi, 2023).

MTs A. Yani Wonotunggal, as a religious-based educational institution, views the importance of holding a religious moderation seminar to encourage tolerance among students. This effort is in line with the school's vision of creating an inclusive and peaceful learning environment. The religious moderation seminar is expected to be a means of strengthening students' understanding of the importance of a moderate attitude in religion, as well as building a collective awareness of the importance of maintaining harmony among religious communities.

Various studies have shown that religious moderation education can have a positive impact on shaping a tolerant attitude among students. Research conducted by Muttaqin (2023) shows that students who receive education on religious moderation tend to have a more open attitude towards religious differences compared to those who do not receive such

education. In addition, seminars like this can also reduce the potential for conflict that may arise due to differences in beliefs among students.

Thus, the implementation of a religious moderation seminar at MTs A. Yani Wonotunggal is a right and strategic step to instill the values of tolerance among students. This article will discuss in depth the implementation of the seminar, its impact on students' tolerant attitudes, and recommendations for the development of similar activities in the future.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is a problem found among students at MTs A. Yani Wonotunggal, which is their low understanding of the importance of religious moderation in daily life. Although the school has provided religious education, there are still students who show a lack of tolerance for differences in beliefs among their peers. This indicates that understanding of religious moderation is not evenly distributed among students, and special efforts are needed to increase awareness and the application of the values of religious moderation in their social interactions.

3. METHOD OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

This activity is part of the Community Service conducted by the Student Community Service (KKN) Post 91 and 92 team from the State Islamic University (UIN) Walisongo Semarang at MTs A. Yani Wonotunggal. This activity was held on August 5, 2024, with the theme "Building Tolerance and Harmony Among Students". It was attended by 60 participants who were students of MTs A. Yani Wonotunggal.

The method used in this activity is the seminar method. A seminar is a form of educational event where participants gather to discuss and learn about specific topics through presentations and interactive sessions. In this seminar, Ustadz Yasir, a local religious figure, served as the primary speaker. He discussed the importance of religious moderation and the role of students in creating a harmonious and tolerant school environment.

Based on the committee's agreement in the community service activities, several main objectives of the seminar were formulated as follows:

- a. Increasing Awareness of Religious Moderation. One of the main objectives of this seminar is to increase students' awareness of the importance of religious moderation as

an effective way to address differences in beliefs and promote peace in a diverse school environment.

- b. **Strengthening Tolerance and Respect Among Students.** This seminar aims to encourage students to be more appreciative and respectful of the religious differences and beliefs among their peers, thereby creating a more inclusive and harmonious school atmosphere.
- c. **Developing Cooperation Among Students from Various Religious Backgrounds.** This activity is expected to open up opportunities for students to build better relationships and cooperation with friends from different religious backgrounds, thus creating synergy in facing common challenges in the school environment.
- d. **Preventing Religious Intolerance.** This seminar aims to increase students' understanding of the dangers of religious intolerance and extremism, and how to prevent it through the approach of religious moderation.
- e. **Enhancing Critical Thinking on Religious Issues.** The seminar seeks to foster critical thinking among students regarding religious issues, helping them analyze and evaluate different perspectives in a thoughtful and respectful manner. This will empower students to engage in constructive discussions and debates that promote a deeper understanding of religious diversity.

The stages of the community service activities can be seen in detail in Table 1.

Table 1. Flowchart of Community Service Activities

No.	Activity	Method	Outcome
1.	Committee Formation	Face-to-face meeting at KKN Post 92, Wonotunggal Village	Formation of a seminar committee structure on religious moderation, including the determination of tasks and responsibilities for each division
2.	Setting the Schedule and Venue for the Activity	Face-to-face meeting at KKN Post 92, Wonotunggal Village	Agreement on the date and venue of the activity
3.	Determining the Speaker and Participants	Face-to-face meeting at KKN Post 92, Wonotunggal Village	Agreement on the speaker and number of participants
4.	Requesting and Corresponding with Relevant Parties	Conventional correspondence	The seminar on religious moderation can be held
5.	Religious Moderation Seminar Activity	Bringing together the speaker and participants in one place	Participants understand the material presented by the speaker

6.	Evaluation	Face-to-face meeting at KKN Post 91, Wonotunggal Village	Sharing the obstacles of the seminar activity
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Interview sessions with seminar participants were conducted after the event. The focus of the interviews was on the material presented and the participants' perceptions of the event.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementation and Flow of the Religious Moderation Seminar

The Religious Moderation Seminar was held on August 5, 2024, at MTs A. Yani Wonotunggal. This activity was part of a community service project involving a religious figure as a resource person. Ustadz Yazir, a local religious leader, was invited to deliver a presentation on religious moderation. The seminar was a collaborative effort between KKN Post 91 and 92 teams from the UIN Walisongo. This community service activity encompassed a variety of activities (see Table 2), but this article will focus specifically on the Religious Moderation Seminar.

Table 2. Schedule of Religious Moderation Seminar

Time	Activity	Description
07.30	Attendance	Participant registration
08.00	Opening	Opening remarks by MC
08.05	“Indonesia Raya” Song	Singing the national anthem
08.10	Speech by the Committee Chairperson	Remarks by the committee chairperson
08.20	Speech by the School Principal	Remarks by the school principal
08.30	Material Presentation	Presentation by Ustadz Yasir
09.15	Q&A Session	Question and answer session with the speaker
09.30	Group Photo	Group photo session

The seminar began with an official opening ceremony led by the master of ceremonies. After the formalities, all participants stood to sing the Indonesian national anthem, make the tone of the event more respectful. Following this, Ali Topan, the Head of the Organizing Committee, gave a brief welcoming speech. The opening was then formally marked by a symbolic remark from the School Principal.

Once the opening was complete, Ustadz Yazir took the stage to deliver his presentation. Using PowerPoint, he shared insights on religious moderation, making the topic accessible and engaging for the students. The visual aids helped to clarify key points, ensuring that the message was well-received by all attendees.



Figure 1. The MC Opening the Religious Moderation Seminar Material Presentation on “Building Tolerance and Harmony Among Students”

Ustadz Yasir began by emphasizing the importance of understanding the concept of religious moderation in everyday life, especially among students. He explained that in the context of religious diversity, religious moderation is not merely a theory but a principle that must be applied to maintain harmony and peace in society. This becomes increasingly important considering the pluralistic school environment where students from various religious backgrounds interact daily.

The first material presented by Ustadz Yasir involved an explanation of the principles of religious moderation in the context of Islam. He explained that religious moderation encompasses attitudes of justice, tolerance, and avoidance of extremism. Ustadz Yasir stressed that moderation is not only about one's attitude towards one's own religious teachings but also about how to respect the beliefs of others. This material was complemented by concrete examples from Islamic teachings that support a moderate attitude.

The second material focused on the practical application of religious moderation in everyday life. Ustadz Yasir discussed how an open-minded and constructive dialogue can bridge religious differences and strengthen harmony in the school environment. This discussion provided students with opportunities to explore how they can apply the values of moderation in their interactions with friends from various religious backgrounds.



Figure 2. Ustadz Yasir Presenting the Material

Ustadz Yasir's presentation provided a comprehensive and practical understanding of the importance of religious moderation in everyday life, particularly in the school environment. Through clear explanations and concrete examples, Ustadz Yasir successfully instilled the values of fairness, tolerance, and anti-extremism in the students. The material was not only theoretical but also emphasized the importance of implementing these values in real actions to create an inclusive and harmonious school environment.

Following the presentation, a Q&A session was held. Students were eager to ask questions about how to apply religious moderation in their everyday lives. This demonstrated that the seminar not only provided theoretical knowledge but also inspired students to think critically and find practical solutions. The discussion helped students realize that religious moderation is a practical skill that can be used to create a more harmonious and inclusive school community.

One of the questions that arose was, "How can we spread the understanding of moderation to people who are completely unfamiliar with the concept of religious moderation?" This question indicates the participants' curiosity about the concrete steps to expand the understanding of religious moderation in communities that may not be familiar with the concept.



Figure 3. Q&A Session Led by Ali Topan

In response to this question, Ustadz Yasir explained several strategies that could be implemented, including the importance of education and open dialogue. He suggested that understanding of religious moderation be introduced through various social activities such as seminars, workshops, and group discussions. In addition, he emphasized the need to involve community leaders and religious leaders to disseminate the message of religious moderation, as they have a significant influence in the community.

Ustadz Yasir also underlined the importance of using social media and digital platforms to spread information about religious moderation. Through engaging and easily accessible educational content, a wider audience can be introduced to the concept of religious moderation. Furthermore, he encouraged participants to take the initiative in

building communities that respect each other and support interreligious dialogue, so that understanding of religious moderation can develop organically in society.

After the Q&A session, the religious moderation seminar at MTs A. Yani Wonotunggal was officially concluded. The host closed the event with a joint prayer, hoping that all the values that had been discussed could be applied in everyday life. Afterwards, the participants, speakers, and committee gathered for a group photo as a souvenir of the seminar. The closing atmosphere was filled with warmth and togetherness, leaving a deep impression of the importance of religious moderation and harmony in the school environment.



Figure 4. Group Photo with Seminar Participants

Impact of the Seminar on Students' Tolerance

The seminar successfully achieved its objective of enhancing students' understanding of religious moderation and promoting tolerance. Ustadz Yasir's explanation of the principles of religious moderation aligns with theories suggesting that a deep understanding of religious teachings can help reduce the potential for conflict and increase social harmony (Hilal, 2023). The emphasis on the importance of moderation in daily life, as highlighted by Ustadz Yasir, is in line with the views of Affandi & Diana (2024), who stated that religious moderation can strengthen relationships between individuals from different backgrounds and reduce the potential for social tension (Affandi & Diana, 2024). The discussions and interactions during the seminar allowed students to better understand how the values of religious moderation can be applied in their context as students, which can lead to a more inclusive and harmonious school environment.

Although the seminar ran smoothly and received a positive response from participants, there were some challenges faced. Some students expressed limited time to delve deeper into the material, and supporting facilities such as the projector screen were too small so that students at the back could not see the PowerPoint material very well. However, the enthusiasm and involvement of students in the discussion indicate that the seminar had a significant impact on their understanding of religious moderation.

Students' Perceptions of the Religious Moderation Seminar

As part of the program evaluation, several students who attended the seminar were interviewed to gather their impressions and understanding after the seminar. One student, Ahmad, said.

"I have a better understanding of religious moderation now. Previously, I thought moderation was just about being in the middle, but now I understand that it is also about respecting differences and maintaining harmony."

The interview with Ahmad showed that the seminar helped clarify the concept of religious moderation, which was previously considered only as a middle position. Ahmad expressed that the seminar broadened his understanding of religious moderation, making it more than just a neutral position. According to him, religious moderation is about respecting differences and maintaining harmony.

This is in line with the seminar's objective of educating students about the basic principles of moderation and an attitude of respecting other beliefs. This understanding is crucial for building an inclusive environment in schools, where students from various religious backgrounds can live together in harmony. Another student, Niswa, added.

"This seminar opened my eyes to the fact that even though we have different religions, we can still respect each other and live side by side in peace. I also came to understand that Islam teaches us to be just and tolerant of all people."

Niswa conveyed that the seminar had given her a new understanding of the application of the principles of religious moderation in the context of everyday life, especially in a pluralistic school environment. She acknowledged that the seminar had broadened her perspective on the importance of living together harmoniously despite differences in beliefs. This indicates that the material presented by Ustadz Yasir was not only theoretically relevant but also highly applicable in real life. Dian, a quite active student in various school activities, shared her perspective.

"This seminar made me rethink how I treat my friends who have different religions. Before, I tended to avoid sensitive topics because I was afraid of making things worse. But now, I feel it's important to stay involved in discussions and try to understand their point of view. I've become more aware that in this way, we can actually become closer and more appreciative of each other."

Dian's story shows how the seminar changed her approach to everyday interactions. Before, she used to steer clear of sensitive topics, but now she understands the value of having those tough conversations. This new attitude helps her connect better with her

classmates and makes the school environment more welcoming for everyone. Dian's move from avoiding difficult topics to actively discussing them highlights how the seminar effectively encouraged open dialogue and mutual respect among students.

This seminar reaffirms the importance of religious moderation as a foundation for creating a harmonious school environment. Through a better understanding of religious teachings and a tolerant attitude, students are expected to play an active role in building harmony in their communities and avoiding extremist attitudes. This activity is an important step in educating the younger generation about the importance of moderation and tolerance in a pluralistic society.

5. CONCLUSION

The seminar on religious moderation held at MTs A. Yani Wonotunggal on August 5, 2024, successfully enhanced students' understanding of the importance of a moderate attitude in daily life. The event, attended by 60 students and led by Ustadz Yasir, a local religious figure, discussed the principles of religious moderation and how to apply them. Through interactive discussions, students not only grasped theoretical concepts but also received practical examples of how to maintain harmony in a diverse environment. This seminar, part of the KKN program by Posko 91 and 92 from UIN Walisongo, aimed to instill values of tolerance among students.

Despite some technical challenges, such as limited facilities, the enthusiasm of the students demonstrated the positive impact of the seminar. Students became more aware of the importance of respecting religious differences and maintaining harmony within the school. Several students expressed that they now understand that religious moderation is not just about being neutral but about respecting differences and the importance of open dialogue. This strengthened the seminar's mission to foster an inclusive and harmonious school environment.

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