

STRENGTHENING RELIGIOUS MODERATION FOR STUDENTS THROUGH LITERATURE LITERACY PROGRAM

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Abstract

Facts related to religious ways that tend to be radical and extreme can threaten the reason and attitude of the younger generation, including students. Therefore, an innovation study focusses on the positioning of students in order to act as producers against extremist narratives is needed. This can be done with intensive education and mentoring of good and directed writing skills through a literature literacy program with religious moderation perspectives for students. Therefore, this research is aimed to describe the study of innovation through a literature literacy program with religious moderation perspectives at the Darul Ma'arif Cikedung Islamic boarding school, Majalengka. This research is descriptive qualitative research using the case study method. Based on the results of the research, it is found that the understanding of moderation does not have to be conveyed rigidly through classes that tend to be conventional but can also be done through light writing of the literary genre as a form of innovation in the spread of *Islam rahmatan lil alamin*. This is proven by the results obtained by the Darul Ma'arif students who can manifest their moderate understanding through literary works in the form of short stories.

Keywords: *literature literacy; religious moderation; santri*

1. Introduction

Currently, the mainstreaming of the principle of religious moderation is an important key in strengthening the philosophy of the nation "*Bhineka Tunggal Ika*", especially in the younger generation, including students. Therefore, the role of religious educational institutions, such as Islamic boarding schools, becomes very significant to produce a moderate generation. Islamic boarding school itself is the oldest educational institution that has its roots in Islam and Indonesia (indigenous) so that it is very attached to the Indonesian Muslim community. Besides that, according to Anwar (2010), Islamic boarding schools also have a position as *tafaquh fiddin* institutions. If interpreted broadly, the principle of *tafaquh fiddin* attached to Islamic boarding schools is not only to make Islamic boarding schools a place to deepen religious knowledge and other sciences that can provide benefits, but Islamic boarding schools must also be able to instill values that are able to form the character of students. Of the

many values that need to be instilled in every student, one of them is the values of *wasathiyah*. *Wasathiyah* or moderate values, according to Hasanah and Annisa (2021), are oriented to a polite attitude in behaviors, harmonious interaction with all parties, an attitude prioritizing peace and anti-violence in preaching. This becomes an important value that *kiai* must continue to echo his students so that in the future his students will not fall into radicalism and extremists who can damage various human life order. Thus, the role of Islamic boarding schools becomes very strategic in preparing religious moderation agents who will be in direct contact with the community. However, the weakness of many Islamic boarding schools in strengthening the moderate attitude of their students is the teaching methods used that are still conventional. The use of recitation methods or lectures is considered still less effective in educating their students to understand and be able to practice moderate attitudes so that they can become moderation ambassadors that spread friendly Islam and mercy for all (*rahmatan lil alamin*).

Responding to the weakness, it is necessary to conduct innovation studies to strengthen the role of Islamic boarding schools in equipping their students with *wasathiyah* values, so that they do not have radical or liberal attitudes. One of the efforts that can be done is by reinvention of Islamic boarding school literature with religious moderation perspectives. Therefore, this research is aimed to describe an innovation study through a literature literacy program with religious moderation perspectives at the Darul Ma'arif Cikedung Islamic boarding school, Majalengka.

Meanwhile, through this program, it is expected that students not only understand and can practice it for themselves, but also become moderation agents who play an active role in being able to spread *wasathiyah* values to the community through the counter-extremist narratives they make, for example, in the form of literary works, be it short stories, novels, poetry, rhymes, and so on.

2. Literature Review

Based on the review of the previous research, several relevant studies were found, namely:

First, research conducted by Mashur's (2017) on *kiai* leadership in developing character-based education at the Al Urwatul Wutsqo Jombang Islamic Boarding School. This research reveals the types and roles of *kiai* leadership, the patterns of moderate student's character development, as well as character education methods used for moderate student character development through the actualisation of *wasathiyah* values.

Second, research conducted by Ibda and Sofanudin's (2021) on the Ma'arif literacy movement in increasing religious moderation (*Wasatiyyah Islam*). The program carried out by Ibda and Sofanudin in their research is called the Ma'arif Literacy Movement (GLM). This GLM is implemented through Strengthening Character Education (PPK), the basic principles of *Ahluh Sunnah wal Jamaah Annahdliyah*, *Ukhuwah Nahdliyah*, and *Mabadi Khaira Ummah*. From the results of their research, it is stated that the GLM program has succeeded in having an impact on teachers and students so that they are more literate and moderate.

Finally, Prastyo and Inayati's research (2022) regarding the implementation of digital literacy culture to strengthen religious moderation for students at Mahad UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang focusses on forming more moderate religious thoughts and attitudes through training and building a more connected social media network, as well as producing content that narrates religious moderation values through various

platforms. The results show that these methods are able to generate awareness to realize and expand moderation values that are in line with the values of Islamic teachings by utilizing various digital media.

From the three studies, it is known that the goals achieved are the same to strengthen religious moderation, but there are differences in literacy programs carried out to strengthen their moderation. Therefore, the researchers take a research niche by utilizing literature literacy with religious moderation perspectives to be able to strengthen moderate attitudes among students.

3. Research Method

This research used a qualitative approach with a case study method. This is because the researchers describe the findings obtained based on the cases taken, so that the research results can be obtained more specifically according to their circumstances. This research was conducted at Darul Ma'arif Cikedung Islamic Boarding School, Maja District, Majalengka Regency. This Islamic boarding school was chosen as a research place because it is one of the oldest Islamic boarding schools in Majalengka district, West Java. Meanwhile, the data source was obtained from the Islamic boarding schools leaders, the *assatid* council, and also the students. Furthermore, data collection techniques used observation and interviews. Meanwhile, the data analysis technique was carried out through three stages, namely data reduction, data interpretation, and data verification.

4. Discussion

Darul Ma'arif Islamic Boarding School is located in Cikedung hamlet. Cikedung hamlet itself is part of the North Maja village area located in Maja sub-district, Majalengka district. This Darul Ma'arif Islamic Boarding School has several formal educational institutions under its auspices, namely Ma'arif Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), Ma'arif Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), and Darul Ma'arif Vocational High School (SMK). Meanwhile, its non-formal educational institutions include the taklimiyah assembly and the Work Training Centre (BLK). In the Darul Ma'arif Islamic boarding school, there are approximately 300 *santri mukim* (students staying in the boarding school) and 200 *santri non-mukim* (students not staying in the boarding school).

This Islamic boarding school was founded in 1946 by K.H. Abah Mukhlis, and now it is continued by his sons and daughters. The Islamic boarding school model applied by Darul Ma'arif is the *khalafiyah* Islamic boarding school model that combines the teaching of yellow books with common knowledge and other skills. Meanwhile, the types of knowledge and also other skills taught in this Islamic boarding school include martial arts, theatre performance arts, short movie makers, and graphic design.

Furthermore, through the literature literacy program with religious moderation perspectives, students seem to be easier to understand *wasathiyah* values as the basis for religious moderation. Etymologically, the word of '*wasathiyah*' is taken from the word '*wasath*' which means 'something in the middle'. The values of *wasathiyah*, according to Baehaqi (2022), is accentuation of the principles of *tawasuth* (moderate), *tasamuh* (tolerant), *tawazun* (balanced), *I'tidal* (fair), and *iqtishad* (simple). Meanwhile, according to Nur and Lubis (2015), the values of *wasathiyah* possessed by a moderate Muslim have 10 characteristics, namely: a) having an understanding and experience that is not *ifrath* (excessive) and *tafrith* (reduce religious teachings) (*tawasuth*); b) being able to understand and practice religion in a balanced way (*tawazun*); c) being able to

put something in its place (*i'tidal*); d) being able to recognize and respect differences (*tasamuh*); e) being not discriminatory/egalitarian (*musawah*); f) being able to solve problems for consensus and benefits (*shura*); g) being able to prioritise reformative principles while still based on *al-muhafazhah 'ala al-qadimi al-shalih wa al-akhdzu bi al-jadidi al-ashlah* (preserving old traditions that are still relevant and applying new things that are more relevant) (*islah*); h) having the ability to make priority scales (*aulawiyah*); i) having an open attitude to innovate and follow the development (*tathawwur wa ibtikar*); and j) having noble characters, has good character, identity, and integrity as *khairu ummah* (*tahadhdhur*). By strengthening these *wasathiyah* values, students are able to become even more moderate people because of the stronger understanding of the importance of moderate attitudes in the midst of the onslaught of various extremist and radical ideas, so that in the future they can become moderation ambassadors who are able to spread friendly Islam as exemplified by Rasulullah Saw.

In addition, with the existence of a literature literacy program with religious moderation perspectives, students also have an understanding of the basics of writing literary works, so that they are able to produce a literary work in the form of short story books with the theme of religious moderation. The literacy program provided was carried out through: a) intensive theoretical training and writing practice of literary works; b) continuous intensive mentoring and guidance; and c) writing assistance, editing, publishing, and printing. Regarding the strategy carried out for this literature literacy program with religious moderation, it is based on the curriculum that has been prepared as follows: a) giving introductory materials; b) giving assignment; c) deepening the material (enrichment); d) pre-monitoring, editing, and evaluating; e) post-monitoring, editing, and evaluating.

The first stage is the giving an introductory material. The students were given the material on an ascetic to be a writer, religious moderation perspectives, and tips on writing literary works. The material about an ascetic to be a writer was given to provide an understanding of the benefits and advantages of being a writer, motivation to have the eagerness to write and to become a writer, and tips on becoming a productive and working students. Furthermore, the material on religious moderation perspectives aims to strengthen students' understanding of the importance of having a *wasathiyah* attitude based on the theological basis in the Qur'an sura Al Baqarah verse 143, "Thus We have appointed you a middle nation, the fragment of the verse can be interpreted that the cultivation of *wasathiyah* values is very important because the best people are those in the middle (*ummatan wasathan*). In addition, the last material given was about tips for writing literary works, especially about short stories. Through the material, an understanding of what a short story is, its intrinsic characteristics and elements were given, as well as the steps to write a short story.

The second stage is giving an assignment. After being given introductory material, the students were assigned to the brainstorm the theme. After deepening the material, the students were given the task to finalize the theme, to make a mind map, to develop a story based on the mind map, and to write the draft.

The third stage is the deepening of the material. This stage aims to provide an understanding of the problem identification process by identifying the potential problems that have been experienced or in the surrounding environment, and the use of spelling in accordance with writing rules.

The fourth stage is pre-monitoring, editing, and evaluating. In this stage, the students and trainers analyzed the work that had been made, both in terms of writing

and content. Then an improvement note was made to complete the weaknesses and correct the mistakes.

The fifth is post-monitoring, editing, and evaluating. Students and trainers checked and re-checked short stories that had been improved based on the results of reviews in pre-monitoring, editing, and evaluating, stage. Then a final review and analysis was done in terms of the content and writing.

The last stage is the publication stage. Short stories that had been successfully written were then compiled to become a book.

Based on these stages, the innovation study that had been carried out at the Darul Ma'arif Islamic Boarding School through a literature literacy program with religious moderation perspectives seems to be quite effective in providing education to students about religious moderation. In fact, students can become moderation agents through the counter-extremist narratives they make in the form of short stories in the short story anthology book that they managed to publish with the title "Moderation Message from Santri".

5. Conclusion

The literature literacy program with religious moderation that was carried out at the Darul Ma'arif Islamic boarding school has become one of the studies of innovation in strengthening a moderate attitude towards students. In addition, through the innovation study, the students also have literary writing skills. The work they write contains *wasathiyah* values that can be disseminated to the public. Therefore, even though in the future students cannot all become *ustad*, they can still share a message of moderation through their writings.

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