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Evaluation of Students' Understanding of Religious Moderation in Supporting Education for Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to evaluate students' understanding of religious moderation and its role in supporting Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Religious moderation is viewed as an essential factor in fostering tolerant attitudes and promoting social, environmental, and economic sustainability. Using a survey approach, this study employs questionnaires to assess students' understanding of religious moderation and their awareness of sustainability, focusing on those enrolled in the Islamic Religion course at Universitas Negeri Surabaya. Descriptive analysis techniques were applied to examine patterns in students' comprehension of religious moderation and their attitudes towards sustainability. The findings from this study are expected to provide insights into students' awareness of sustainability in education and how Islamic religious education can integrate values of religious moderation with ESD principles. This research aims to contribute to the development of Islamic Religion course curriculum that emphasize tolerant religious understanding and continuous sustainability education in higher education.

Keywords: *Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Higher Education, Islamic Religious Education, Religious Moderation, Sustainability Awareness*

1. Introduction

Religious moderation in recent years has become an important issue in religious practice in Indonesia, especially at the higher education level amid increasing intolerance and discrimination [1]. In accordance with the results of a survey conducted by the Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI) in 2022, intolerance towards religious groups or ethnic groups that are disliked still occurs in Indonesian society [2]. The form of intolerance can be in the form of objections when the group builds a place of worship, becomes a public school teacher, holds a religious event, or lives around the community's residence.

Strengthening the value of religious moderation in various places is widely carried out, including in the higher education environment. The establishment of the Religious Moderation and State Defense Group (MBBN) by the

Ministry of Religion through the Sub-Directorate of Islamic Religious Education in Public Universities (PTU) is expected to be one of the ways to realize the strengthening of the MBBN understanding [3]. In addition, the end of activities to strengthen the value of religious moderation in higher education is expected to realize balance, tolerance, and respect for differences, which can help students develop peace and inclusive personalities in a pluralistic society.

In addition to the Griya MBBN, it is also important to instill the value of religious moderation in the learning process, especially in Islamic Religion courses, in the classroom [4]. Islamic religious learning that instills the values of religious moderation is expected to form students as individuals who are able to carry out balanced (moderate) religious practices without neglecting respect for diversity. Religious moderation is seen as a value that needs to be taught and understood deeply by students in higher education.

This is in line with the goals of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to increase students' awareness of global responsibility, social justice, and environmental sustainability. Therefore, linking religious moderation learning with ESD goals can be an effective approach to educate students not only in forming moderate attitudes but also in awareness of the importance of sustainable development.

This study aims to see an overview of students' understanding of religious moderation and awareness of ESD. The results of this research are expected to provide insight for the development of the Islamic Religious MKWK curriculum which not only emphasizes moderate religious understanding but is also able to instill awareness of ESD in students.

2. Methods

This study uses a survey approach [5] to evaluate students' understanding of religious moderation and associate it with awareness of ESD. This research method was chosen because it was appropriate to dig up data from a large number of respondents to get an idea of students' understanding of religious moderation and their awareness of ESD. The population in this study is students of the State University of Surabaya who program Islamic Religion courses, with samples taken by simple random sampling [6] to ensure student representation from various study programs.

Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire distributed online. The questionnaire consisted of statements related to students' understanding of religious moderation and awareness of ESD. Students' understanding of religious moderation and awareness of ESD was measured using a 5-point Likert Scale with criteria of strongly disagreeing to strongly agreeing.

The data was analyzed descriptively to get an overview of the understanding of religious moderation and awareness of ESD. This descriptive data analysis technique was used to identify the percentage and average score of each statement item related to students' understanding of religious moderation and awareness of ESD.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

The questionnaire on the level of understanding of religious moderation and awareness of ESD in students consisted of 15 statements measured using the Likert Scale. Statements 1 to 7 are statements related to students' understanding of religious moderation, while Statements 8 to 15 are statements related to students' awareness of ESD. The following are the results of a questionnaire that has been filled out by 134 students.

Table 1: Percentage of Respondents and Average Score of Each Statement

Statement	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Average Score
Statement 1	72,4	21,6	3,7	0,7	1,5	4,6
Statement 2	84,3	12,7	1,5	0	1,5	4,8
Statement 3	65,7	29,1	4,5	0	0,7	4,6
Statement 4	65,7	23,1	8,2	0,7	2,2	4,5
Statement 5	66,4	26,1	6	0	1,5	4,6
Statement 6	64,9	29,9	3,7	0,7	0,7	4,6
Statement 7	61,2	29,9	7,5	0,7	0,7	4,5
Statement 8	67,2	29,1	2,2	1,5	0	4,6
Statement 9	63,4	30,6	5,2	0,7	0	4,6
Statement 10	55,2	29,9	14,2	0	0,7	4,4
Statement 11	50	38,1	11,2	0,7	0	4,4
Statement 12	52,2	38,1	8,2	1,5	0	4,4
Statement 13	47	32,8	18,7	0,7	0,7	4,2
Statement 14	61,2	29,9	6,7	1,5	0,7	4,5
Statement 15	51,5	32,1	14,9	0,7	0,7	4,3

Information:

- Statement 1 : I appreciate differences of opinion in religious matters and understand that Each individual can have a different view.
- Statement 2 : I believe that religious teachings should be used to build peace and tolerance, not conflict.
- Statement 3 : I feel it is important to apply the values of religious moderation in life everyday.
- Statement 4 : I avoid fanatical attitudes that can lead to division or conflict in community.
- Statement 5 : I respect the religious practices of others even though they differ from my beliefs I.
- Statement 6 : I believe that religious moderation can help build relationships which is good in the campus environment and the community.
- Statement 7 : I feel it is important to discuss religion in a polite and open to different perspectives.
- Statement 8 : I realize the importance of preserving the environment as part of the My responsibility as a religious individual.
- Statement 9 : I support the judicious use of resources to maintain sustainability for future generations.
- Statement 10 : I believe that my religious practices support social responsibility, such as helping the underprivileged.
- Statement 11 : I realize that excessive consumptive behavior can be detrimental to the environment and avoid it as much as possible.
- Statement 12 : I strive to reduce waste and support recycling activities as a form of concern for the environment.
- Statement 13 : I feel the need to be involved in social activities that support education

Statement 14	: I believe that religious education should teach educational values sustainability, such as social justice and environmental responsibility.
Statement 15	: I realize that my religious practice should be in harmony with the values of global sustainability.

Referring to Table 1., the results of the study show that the majority of students have a positive view of statements related to religious moderation and awareness of ESD. The highest percentage of "Strongly Agree" was found in Statement 2 and Statement 1 where the percentages were 84.3% and 72.4%, respectively. Both statements are included in the statement category to identify the level of understanding of religious moderation among students. Statements 3 to 7 show an average score of 4.5 and above with more than 50% of students voting "Strongly Agree" on each statement. These results show that students have a good understanding of religious moderation.

While Statement 8 to Statement 15, where the statement relates to students' awareness of ESD, showed an average score of 4.4 out of a total of 8 statements. This average is lower than the average score of 7 statements about students' understanding of religious moderation. Although the percentage of "Strongly Agree" $\geq 50\%$, the respondents who chose the "Neutral" answer can also be said to be many. This can be a clue to the need for strengthening or deepening related to the topic of ESD.

3.2. Discussion

The results of this study show that students' understanding of religious moderation is very positive, especially in terms of respect for differences of opinion and the application of moderation values in daily life. Statement 2, which stated that religion should be used to build peace and tolerance, received a "Strongly Agree" percentage of 84.3%, indicating that the majority of students are aware of the importance of religion as an instrument of peace. Likewise, Statement 1, on respect for differences of view, obtained 72.4% in the "Strongly Agree" category. This high percentage shows students' understanding of the importance of moderation and avoidance of extremism as part of positive religiosity. This is in line with a study that states that religious moderation can strengthen social cohesion and encourage a more harmonious society in the campus environment and the wider community [7], [8].

The high assessment of this statement related to religious moderation shows that the material presented in the Islamic Religion course has succeeded in making students understand the importance of tolerance in religious practice, especially in Indonesia. This value of moderation not only serves as a personal principle but also as an important value in building healthy social interactions. In addition, students seem to already have an understanding that religion is not just a ritual, but must reflect values that balance diversity. These results are supported by research that states that religious moderation is an aspect that can contribute to building collective awareness and preventing conflicts caused by intolerant attitudes [9], [10], [11], [12].

However, even though the understanding of religious moderation is quite high, students' awareness of ESD still needs to be strengthened. The average score on ESD statements was lower than that of religious moderation

comprehension scores, with an average score of 4.4 compared to 4.5 or more on religious moderation statements. This indicates that while students are generally aware of the importance of ESD, a deep understanding of how religion can support sustainability goals is lacking. These findings emphasize the importance of integrating ESD in Islamic religious learning so that students better understand their social and environmental responsibilities as religious individuals [13].

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, the majority of students showed a good understanding of religious moderation, which can be seen from the high percentage of "Strongly Agree" answers to statements related to religious moderation. However, although their awareness of ESD is also quite good, it shows that there is still a need to strengthen understanding and concern for continuing education. The findings of this study emphasize the importance of the role of religious education in strengthening the understanding of religious moderation while expanding awareness of environmental responsibility and social sustainability.

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