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RELIGION AND EDUCATION ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE FORMATION OF SOCIAL IDENTITY

Vira Khairani, Wiana Delviani

Faculty of Usuluddin and Islamic Studies, Study Program of Religious Studies, State Islamic University of North Sumatra, Indonesia
virakhairani47@gmail.com,wianadelviani@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the intricate relationship between religion and education, specifically analyzing the role of religious education in shaping social identity. In contemporary society, where cultural diversity is increasingly prominent, understanding how religious teachings influence individual and collective identities is essential. This study employs a qualitative approach, examining various educational contexts to highlight how religious education fosters moral development, community engagement, and a sense of belonging among students. The research reveals that religious education not only imparts spiritual knowledge but also plays a critical role in instilling values that guide social interactions and ethical decision-making. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of inclusive practices that respect diverse beliefs, thereby promoting social cohesion in multicultural environments.

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INTRODUCTION

Social identity is a fundamental aspect of a person's life, which is formed through interaction with various social and cultural environments. The formation of this identity is influenced by various factors, including culture, norms, and education. In this case, religious education plays an important role in shaping an individual's social identity. Religious education not only teaches religious teachings, but also provides moral and ethical values that serve as guidelines in everyday life.

With religious education, it is expected that students can absorb positive values that will build their character, as well as increase their sense of solidarity and concern for others. In the context of globalization and pluralism today, religious education also plays a role as a tool to instill an attitude of mutual respect and tolerance among adherents of different religions. Therefore, this study aims to examine the role of religious education in the formation of social identity and its impact on the character and social attitudes of students in a diverse society.

Indonesia, known as a country with extraordinary cultural and religious diversity, is a real example of the complex interaction between religious dimensions and social life. With a population of more than 270 million, coming from various tribes, ethnicities, and backgrounds, this country recognizes six official religions, namely Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Around 87% of the population is Muslim, while the rest consists of adherents of other religions. This diversity is one of the characteristics that distinguishes Indonesia from other countries and provides unique social dynamics (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2022).

Indonesia's religious history is rich and varied, influenced by centuries of colonization, trade, and migration. Islam entered Indonesia in the 13th century through traders from Gujarat, India, and flourished, especially in the islands of Java and Sumatra. On the other hand, Hinduism and Buddhism, which entered the archipelago earlier, left a cultural legacy that can still be seen today, especially in Bali. This diversity not only created variations in religious practices, but also in the traditions and values held by the community.

Religion plays a very significant role in the daily lives of Indonesian people. Many people use religion as a moral and ethical guideline in social interactions. Celebrating religious holidays, such as Eid al-Fitr, Christmas, Nyepi, and Waisak, are opportunities to unite communities, strengthen relationships between individuals, and preserve cultural traditions. In addition, religious education is also an important component of the education system, both in public and private educational institutions, which contributes to the formation of the character of the younger generation.

However, amidst diversity and harmony, challenges arise. Inter-religious tensions and differences in views on religious practices sometimes trigger conflicts. In recent years, the issues of intolerance and radicalization have become serious concerns for society and the government. Therefore, it is important to find ways to strengthen tolerance and mutual understanding between religious communities, so that religion in Indonesia remains a source of peace and unity.

This is where the role of religious education is crucial. Religious education not only teaches religious teachings, but also instills the values of tolerance, mutual respect, and openness to differences. With an inclusive approach, this education can help create a more harmonious society, where every individual can celebrate their beliefs without fear of discrimination. Along with the development of the times and advances in technology, the way people understand and practice religion has also changed. Social media and digital platforms have become new means to spread religious teachings, share spiritual experiences, and strengthen communities. However, the use of

this media also presents challenges, such as the spread of inaccurate information and the potential for the spread of extremist ideology. Therefore, efforts are needed to educate the public about the responsible use of media in a religious context.

As a country that carries the motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" (different but still one), Indonesia has great potential to be an example for other countries in terms of harmony between religious communities. By continuing to prioritize dialogue and mutual respect, Indonesian society can show that diversity is not a barrier, but a strength in building a better nation. This research is expected to contribute to the development of policies that support diversity and tolerance, and encourage society to play an active role in creating a harmonious and peaceful environment.

Education plays a crucial role in shaping social identity for both individuals and groups. Through the educational process, a person not only gains academic knowledge, but also values, norms, and attitudes that shape how they understand themselves and the environment around them. In this case, education serves as a link between individuals and communities, as well as the wider culture (Supriyadi, 2019).

Social identity is formed through interactions with various environments, such as family, friends, and educational institutions. In schools, students are exposed to various perspectives and experiences that contribute to their understanding of who they are and their position in society. For example, with a curriculum that includes aspects of history, culture, and local values, students can feel connected to their cultural heritage, which in turn strengthens pride and a sense of belonging to the community (Supriyadi, 2019)

In addition, education also serves to instill values such as tolerance and understanding of differences. In a multicultural society, an inclusive learning approach helps students appreciate different social and cultural backgrounds. By interacting with classmates from different ethnicities, religions, and social classes, students learn to see diversity as a wealth, not as a barrier. This contributes to the formation of a more inclusive and adaptive social identity (Rahmawati, 2020)

However, education can also contribute to the reinforcement of existing stereotypes and social stratification. In some cases, curricula that do not take cultural diversity into account can ignore or even stigmatize certain groups. As a result, this can lead to marginalization and reinforce exclusive social identities. Therefore, it is essential for the education system to reflect diversity and ensure that all perspectives are valued and heard (Suryani, 2019).

Education also plays a significant role in social mobility, where those with access to quality education typically have a better chance of improving their social status. Access to adequate education provides individuals with the opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to compete in the job market, enabling them to secure better jobs and, in turn, improve their economic standing. Inclusive and quality education helps to break down barriers that often prevent certain groups, such as those from low-income backgrounds, from achieving success. Inequality in access to education can create gaps between different social groups, leading to stagnation in social mobility. Therefore, creating a fair and equitable education system is essential to building an

inclusive society, where every individual has the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential. By prioritizing equitable education, we not only help individuals achieve their personal goals, but also contribute to a more just and sustainable society.

In the context of globalization and advances in information technology, new challenges arise regarding education and social identity. Currently, students get information from various sources through social media and digital platforms, which can broaden their horizons. However, this situation can also cause identity confusion, where individuals try to balance the values they receive in the educational environment with external influences that may be contradictory.

Overall, the relationship between education and social identity is very complex and multi-layered. Education not only serves as a means to gain knowledge, but also as an arena for building and strengthening identity. In this context, education plays an important role in shaping how individuals see themselves and how they interact with others in society. Through the process of education, individuals learn about the values, norms, and traditions that exist in their social group. Thus, education becomes one of the main factors that influences how a person's social identity is formed and maintained.

In addition, it is important to develop an education system that is inclusive and responsive to diversity. This diversity includes various aspects, such as culture, ethnicity, religion, and socio-economic background. When education is designed with this diversity in mind, each individual will feel valued and recognized. This will create a positive learning environment, where all students can thrive without feeling marginalized. With the right approach, education can be a unifying force, strengthening identity, and building a more harmonious and respectful society. In a pluralistic society, inclusive education acts as a bridge that connects different groups, allowing them to learn from each other and appreciate the differences that exist.

Religious education is one of the important pillars in the process of forming social identity. Many schools in Indonesia, both public and private, integrate religious education into their curriculum. According to a survey by the Ministry of Education and Culture, around 90% of schools in Indonesia teach religious education subjects. This provides an opportunity for students to understand the moral and ethical values related to their religion, which in turn influences how they interact with others. However, not all educational institutions adopt an inclusive approach, which sometimes leads to polarization and stereotyping.

In addition to formal education, the role of religious communities in shaping social identity is also very significant. Many Indonesians are active in religious activities outside of school hours, such as religious studies, group worship, or social activities organized by mosques, churches, or temples. Data from the Indonesian Survey Institute shows that around 70% of the population is involved in religious activities regularly, which strengthens social ties and group identity. These activities not only provide an understanding of religious teachings, but also teach the values of togetherness and solidarity.

However, challenges arise when religious and community education is unable to embrace all levels of society. Some groups feel marginalized or unrecognized in the educational process, which can trigger social tensions. For example, discrimination against religious minorities or neglect of diversity in the curriculum can reinforce feelings of exclusion. In a survey conducted by the National Alliance, (National Research Center, 2023) around 40% of respondents reported that they had experienced or witnessed religious-based discrimination in the educational context.

Looking at these data and facts, it is clear that religion and education play a central role in the formation of social identity in Indonesia. To achieve a more harmonious society, it is important for all parties—including the government, educational institutions, and communities—to work together to create an inclusive environment. With a sensitive approach to diversity, both in education and in religious activities, Indonesia can strengthen the foundation of tolerance and mutual respect, so that every individual can celebrate their social identity without feeling marginalized.

METHOD

The research method used in this study is the literature review method, which is an approach that focuses on collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing data or information that is already available in various literature sources, such as books, scientific journals, articles, and previous research reports. This method aims to explore and understand various theoretical perspectives and empirical findings related to the research topic comprehensively. In this context, a literature review is conducted to gain a deep understanding of the role of religious education in the formation of social identity and its implications in a multicultural society. A literature review also allows researchers to identify research gaps or aspects that have not been widely discussed, which can then be used as a basis for new contributions in the field being studied.

The literature review process in this study involves several important stages. First, the researcher identifies keywords that are relevant to the research topic, such as "religious education," "social identity," and "multicultural society." These keywords are then used to search for various scientific sources in leading databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and Scopus. After a number of relevant articles and books are obtained, the researcher then makes a selection based on credibility, year of publication, and relevance of the content to the research objectives. The next stage is to conduct a critical analysis of each selected source to find various views, findings, and conclusions that can support the main argument of the study. This analysis is also useful for identifying relationships between different concepts and understanding how existing theories can be integrated into the discussion.

This literature review not only serves as a reference in building a theoretical framework, but also as a comparative material for research results that are in line or contradictory. By reviewing previous studies, researchers can map the development of existing knowledge and clarify the contribution of this study in enriching scientific discussions on religious education and social identity. Through this approach, researchers are expected to be able to present a comprehensive,

thorough, and relevant analysis for the current research context, while also making a significant contribution to the existing literature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The Role of Education in the Formation of National Identity

Education in Indonesia is recognized as one of the key factors in the process of forming a national identity. This identity not only includes historical and cultural aspects, but also includes values, norms, and a collective understanding of who we are as the Indonesian nation. Education plays an important role in internalizing the history of the nation's struggle, introducing nationalist values, and forming characters that reflect the personality of the Indonesian nation (Hidayati, 2021). This process starts from elementary school to higher education, where students not only gain academic knowledge, but also values related to love for the homeland and pride as part of the Indonesian nation.

Through the curriculum designed by the government, education in Indonesia is designed to foster a sense of nationality, tolerance, and unity amidst the diversity of ethnicities, religions, and cultures. National education serves as a tool to strengthen national identity, which is reflected in subjects such as history, Pancasila education, and citizenship (Amir, 2019). Thus, education in Indonesia plays a role in maintaining and preserving the spirit of diversity and avoiding social disintegration amidst the increasingly rapid development of globalization. In this case, the philosophy of education has a significant role in shaping the framework of thinking and behavior of the young generation of Indonesia.

This study aims to further explore how the philosophy of education contributes to the formation of national identity. It is hoped that the results of this study can provide deeper insight into the importance of the role of education in creating a strong and solid identity. The research method used is a literature review method with a qualitative approach. Through a literature review, this study examines in depth various relevant literature and scientific sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of the role of the philosophy of education in the formation of national identity. The findings of this study reveal that the philosophy of education plays an important role in providing a strong basis for thinking for the process of forming a national identity, especially in facing socio-political challenges in the era of globalization and modernization.

The Role of Islamic Education in Social Transformation

Islamic education in Indonesia, especially through traditional institutions such as pesantren and madrasah, has played a very important role in education and social transformation of society. Pesantren, which has become the oldest educational institution in Indonesia, has a vital role in spreading Islamic teachings and shaping the character of Indonesian Muslim society. In the teaching and learning process in pesantren, kyai plays a central role in providing spiritual and intellectual guidance to students. Kyai not only teaches religious knowledge, but also plays a role

as a respected figure in society, whose thoughts often influence the community's views on social and political issues.

In addition to the central role of the kyai, the yellow books used in education in Islamic boarding schools are the main source of traditional Islamic teachings. These books teach various aspects of Islamic law, Sufism, and other sciences, which shape students' understanding of religion and social life (Rahardio, 2019). Through the yellow books, Islamic boarding schools help build social and national awareness among students, which then plays a role in strengthening national awareness and national unity. During the New Order era, when the government focused on development and modernization, a new Muslim group emerged known as the "new santri middle class." This group developed along with modernization in traditional Islamic boarding schools, which brought changes in the way students viewed modernity and their role in society.

The rise of the "new santri middle class" marks a significant social transformation among Indonesian Muslims. This group is not only religiously educated, but also has a more active involvement in various social, economic, and political sectors (Rahmawati, 2020). This shows how Islamic education, especially in Islamic boarding schools, not only functions as an institution of religious education but also as an agent of social change. The modernization of Islamic boarding schools plays an important role in forming a Muslim middle class that is more open to change, but still adheres to religious values.

Discussion

The Growth of Islamic Education in the Era of Democratization

In the era of democratization, Islamic education has experienced significant growth, with various new forms and approaches in religious teaching. Pesantren and madrasah, as the main Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, continue to maintain moderate religious traditions. This approach is recognized as an important foundation for the development of civil society and a distinctive socio-political identity in Indonesia, namely friendly, moderate, and tolerant. This character highlights the differences between Indonesian Muslims and Muslims in other regions, such as the Middle East, which is often considered the center of Islam. This moderation is the characteristic of Islamic education in Indonesia and also supports social diversity in the country.

Amidst this growth, Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia continue to develop and adapt to modernization, without sacrificing the religious values they adhere to. This shows flexibility in facing changing times, where religious education remains relevant amidst dynamic social, political, and economic developments. This growth also allows Islamic boarding schools to accommodate various more inclusive religious approaches, so that they are able to attract the younger generation to continue to make Islamic boarding schools a place to deepen their religious knowledge while building their social identity.

However, not all Islamic boarding schools adhere to the same approach. There are a small number of Islamic boarding schools that are considered to promote religious chauvinism through the spread of a narrower interpretation of Islam. These Islamic boarding schools tend to provide a

more exclusive framework of thinking to their students, which in some cases can lead to radical actions or advocate calls for 'jihad'. In this context, it is important to pay attention to the dynamics of Islamic education so that the role of moderation that has been carried out by the majority of Islamic boarding schools is not eroded by extreme teachings.

Religion and Social Identity

Religion plays a significant role in shaping individual and group identities in a variety of ways. Through its teachings and practices, religion influences how individuals view themselves and their relationships with others. This identity is made up of elements such as beliefs, values, and traditions, which contribute to an individual's interactions within a broader social context.

One mechanism by which religion shapes identity is through religious practices and rituals that strengthen solidarity. Activities such as celebrating religious holidays, collective worship, and religious-based social activities create bonds among members of a community. Through these interactions, individuals feel a deep sense of connectedness, which in turn builds a collective identity. This not only influences their view of themselves, but also shapes how they perceive people outside their community. (Amir, 2019)

In addition, religious identity is often integrated with moral values contained in sacred texts. Religious education plays an important role in providing a deep understanding of religious teachings, which are then reflected in everyday behavior. For example, values such as tolerance and compassion taught in various religions can shape the interactions of their followers with individuals from different backgrounds.

Religion also serves as a tool for social mobilization. Many religious organizations use religious identity to rally support among their members. In certain situations, religious symbols are often used in social movements to attract attention and motivate collective action. For example, in times of humanitarian crisis, many religious organizations carry out solidarity actions, emphasizing religious values such as caring for others.

Religion-based mass mobilization is also often seen in the political realm. Many political movements adopt religious narratives to support their agendas. In some countries, religious identity is used as a basis for gaining voter support. Political campaigns that emphasize religious values often succeed in attracting votes from religious communities. However, the use of religion in the context of mobilization does not always have a positive impact. Sometimes religious identity can exacerbate divisions in society, especially when differences in beliefs arise (Iskandar, 2021). When religious groups feel threatened, they tend to be more reactive, which can trigger conflict. Therefore, understanding the context of the use of religion as a mobilization tool is very important.

Interaction of Nationalism and Religious Identity

Nationalism often influences how religious identity is understood and felt by individuals in various countries, including Indonesia. In many countries, especially in the Middle East, religious identity serves as the main foundation for national identity. In this context, religious symbols are often combined with national symbols to create a narrative that combines religious

and nationalistic values. Religion and nationalism become two entities that support each other in building national solidarity among citizens.

However, while religion and nationalism can go hand in hand, the relationship between the two is not always positive. In diverse societies, conflict can arise when one religious group feels that their national identity is threatened by the presence of another group. This situation often causes significant social tension, especially when religious symbols are used to polarize society based on differences in belief. When nationalism is too strongly associated with one religion, religious minorities often feel marginalized, which can ultimately lead to open conflict.

Therefore, it is important for the state to wisely manage religious diversity in society. In the context of Indonesia, which has a population with diverse religious backgrounds, managing this diversity is crucial to maintaining social harmony. The government needs to ensure that policies related to religion and nationalism do not discriminate against certain religious groups, so that the existing diversity can be a source of strength for the state, not a source of conflict.

Religious movements often emerge in response to social and political changes influenced by nationalism. In the face of modernization and secularization, many movements seek to maintain their religious values, often seeing modernity as a threat to tradition (Anwar, 2021). Efforts to restore religious values to everyday life are one of their main focuses. Conversely, there are also religious movements that utilize national symbols to strengthen their legitimacy. In this context, they seek to show that their religious values are in line with national interests. With this approach, the movement can attract wider support from people who, although not entirely religious, have a strong sense of national pride (Rudianto, 2018)

Globalization and cultural exchange also influence religious identity. In this digital age, information can spread quickly, changing the way individuals understand their religion. Many individuals and groups seek to find a balance between religious and global identities, which can lead to a reinterpretation of existing beliefs. In the context of social change, the relationship between religion, identity, and collective action can also be seen in current social movements. Many movements fighting for social justice or environmental issues often use a faith-based approach to gain attention. In this context, religious values are used as a basis for fighting for broader goals, such as human rights and environmental protection.

The interplay between religion, identity, and collective action is a complex and interrelated theme. On the one hand, religion can serve as a unifying force, but on the other hand, it can also be a source of conflict. Therefore, it is important to understand how these elements influence each other in order to understand broader social dynamics. In the context of research, it is important to explore more deeply how religious movements adapt their strategies in response to social and political change. By understanding this, we can gain better insight into how religion will continue to shape identity and social action in the future.

The process of forming social identity in society is influenced by two important aspects, namely religion and education. Religion functions as a moral and ethical guideline, providing

direction for individuals in interacting with others and forming values that are considered good and right. With a religious basis, individuals can understand the prevailing social norms and behave according to the expectations of society. On the other hand, education plays a crucial role in expanding the knowledge needed to understand the position of individuals in society. Through education, individuals not only gain information and skills, but also build an understanding of the diversity and social complexity that exists. These two elements complement each other; religion provides a moral foundation, while education provides tools for critical thinking and adapting to the environment. The combination of the two contributes to the development of character and social identity, creating individuals who not only recognize their identity, but also understand their role and responsibilities in the wider community.

Religion is often the main foundation in the identification process. Religious teachings teach individuals about important values such as compassion, tolerance, and justice. In addition, religious practices, such as worship and celebrations, create a sense of solidarity among members of the community. This in turn strengthens the social identity that binds individuals in a moral bond (Rahardio, 2019). Education also plays a vital role in shaping identity. With education, individuals not only gain academic knowledge but are also taught the humanitarian and cultural values that exist in society. Through quality education, individuals can develop critical thinking, which allows them to reflect on their position in a broader social context (Firdaus, 2021).

Religious education, in particular, serves as a bridge between belief and knowledge. In this education, students are taught to study religious teachings and apply them in their daily lives. This not only strengthens religious identity, but also forms the character of individuals who are responsible for society. Religion and education also play a role in facilitating interactions between individuals from different backgrounds. In a diverse society, religious values can be the basis for building mutual respect. Inclusive education, which teaches diversity, helps individuals understand that differences in belief are not barriers, but things to be appreciated.

However, there are challenges in integrating religion and education in the formation of social identity. Sometimes, differences in interpretation of religious teachings can trigger conflict, especially in a pluralistic society. Therefore, educational institutions need to provide space for constructive dialogue and discussion so that individuals can appreciate different views. Findings show that societies that successfully integrate religion and education tend to have a stronger social identity. When individuals feel connected to shared values and understand their role, they are more likely to contribute positively. This solid social identity serves as a buffer against potential conflict, encouraging solidarity and collaboration.

Cooperation between educational institutions and religious communities is also very important in creating an environment that supports the formation of social identity. Educational programs that emphasize religious values can help students understand themselves and their position in society, strengthening social networks and support among community members.

The process of forming social identity through religion and education is a collaborative effort involving many parties. When these two elements function harmoniously, the result is a more empowered and just society, able to appreciate diversity. Thus, the social identity that is formed not only strengthens relationships within the community, but also supports peace and social stability as a whole.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, education and religion in Indonesia serve as important pillars in the formation of social and national identity. Both act not only as instruments for transferring knowledge, but also as media for building character and values that are very necessary in a pluralistic society. In this context, a holistic philosophy of education becomes very relevant, because it combines academic aspects with deep moral and ethical development. Education that is oriented towards noble values, especially in Islamic educational environments such as Islamic boarding schools, can form individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have a moderate and tolerant attitude towards differences.

However, the challenges faced in this process cannot be ignored. Differences in interpretation of religious teachings can be a source of conflict, so creating a space for dialogue in education is crucial. This dialogue is not only important for reducing tensions, but also for creating a deeper understanding of the various perspectives that exist in society. Thus, education must facilitate inclusive learning, where differences are valued and used as a source of strength, not division.

Ultimately, good integration between education and religion has the potential to create a more cohesive and empowered society. A society that understands and appreciates shared values, as well as the role of each in the social context, will be more likely to contribute positively to stability and peace. The process of forming a social identity that involves collaboration from various parties not only supports diversity, but also affirms a commitment to social justice. By prioritizing the synergy between education and religion, Indonesia can move towards a more harmonious future, where every individual feels valued and empowered in this dynamic society.

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