

Tolerance Education at Nurul Ummahat Girls' Islamic Boarding School, Kota Gede, Yogyakarta

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Abstract. Tolerance is crucial for maintaining social harmony in Indonesia's diverse society. In the context of interreligious relations, tolerance refers to the respectful acceptance and acknowledgment of various religious beliefs, practices, and traditions of others. This attitude does not develop spontaneously but requires systematic cultivation through educational programs. Islamic boarding schools, such as Nurul Ummahat Putri in Kota Gede, Yogyakarta, play a vital role in fostering a tolerant attitude. This study explores tolerance education at this school using qualitative methods, including interviews with founders, teachers, and students. Findings reveal that Nurul Ummahat Putri promotes tolerance through student interactions and community dialogue, supported by live-in programs, tolerance training, and interfaith activities. The school also engages in community empowerment to foster tolerant behavior. The study concludes that Pesantren Nurul Ummahat Putri significantly enhances tolerance education, thereby supporting the development of positive interreligious relations in Kota Gede, Yogyakarta.

Keywords: Diversity, Religious Education, Islamic Boarding School, Tolerance, Yogyakarta.

1. Introduction

Indonesia is a pluralistic society characterized by its diverse religious landscape, where various religions coexist openly and harmoniously [1; 2]. This religious diversity is an invaluable asset that enriches the nation's cultural heritage and provides numerous benefits. It serves as a significant source of inspiration for consolidating democracy in Indonesia. Each religion promotes teachings that advocate for goodness towards fellow human beings, with a particular emphasis on tolerance and mutual respect among different religious communities. Religion inherently teaches compassion, love, and justice, encouraging adherents to practice kindness and foster an attitude of tolerance and mutual respect [3; 4].

In the realm of religion, individuals discover ultimate truths that are deeply believed and held by each adherent. Religion not only fulfills the existential needs of human life but is fundamentally accepted and trusted as a source of truth. However, it is important to note that religion can also become a source of conflict, potentially threatening the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). Ma'mun [5] posits that a correct understanding of religious pluralism fosters inclusiveness and sensitivity to the diverse and unique aspects of different religions, which can enrich the human pursuit of spiritual and moral well-being. Intolerant attitudes often stem from a lack of deep understanding of religious knowledge. Without a proper grasp of religious pluralism, religion may have a negative impact, leading to inter-religious conflict and national disintegration [6; 7].

Faridah [8] explains that inter-religious conflict is frequently associated with economic injustice and poor management of diversity. Economic disparities can trigger conflicts, especially when intertwined with religious, ethnic, and cultural elements. Nevertheless, maintaining diversity and religiosity within a framework of tolerance and mutual respect is essential. Kamarudin and Sabanur [9] assert that harmonious living in a multi-religious and multicultural society requires the ability to understand and accept differences without seeking dominance over others. Dialogue, mutual respect, and tolerance are crucial for fostering a harmonious environment. Tolerance involves an open attitude towards differences, characterized by mutual respect and acknowledgment of each party's existence. A tolerant attitude can enhance the quality of life even in a society composed of various religions, races, ethnicities, cultures, and groups [10]. In a tolerant society, balance is prioritized, and diversity is viewed as an opportunity for positive synergy rather than a threat [11].

Research conducted by the Center of Strategic and International Studies (South Yogyakarta) indicates that tolerance among religious communities in Indonesia is relatively low. A survey in February 2012, involving 2,223 respondents, revealed that 62.2% of respondents objected to the construction of houses of worship for other religions in their neighborhoods, while only 22.1% did not object. One example is the case of the Indonesian Christian Church (GKI), which faced obstacles in obtaining a construction permit. Additionally, the case of Slamet Jumiarto, a 42-year-old resident who was denied residence in Karet Village, Bantul, Yogyakarta, due to religious differences, highlights the ongoing challenges [12].

The efforts to enhance the values and morals of religious tolerance go beyond merely preaching about tolerance or imparting knowledge about its value. What is crucial is the solid strengthening of students' character. This means that tolerance should not just be an understanding but must be reflected through actions and deeds in real life [13; 14]. The essence of tolerance is rooted in human self-awareness, guided by a true, straightforward, and healthy conscience. Tolerance presupposes a fundamental positive choice for the coexistence among fellow human beings, especially those subjected to oppression, injustice, and arbitrary treatment [15]. This basic attitude embodies a willingness to accept, appreciate, and respect others as human beings, acknowledging their strengths and weaknesses.

This study is to highlight the role of the Nurul Ummahat Putri Islamic Boarding School in enhancing tolerance in Kota Gede, Yogyakarta. Islamic boarding school education is recognized as a distinctive form of religious education in Indonesia and is a popular educational medium for Muslims [16]. In recent developments, Islamic boarding schools have been embraced by various groups, extending their focus beyond religious areas into profane domains. Islamic boarding school education also plays a significant role in weaving together the diverse fabric of Indonesia. Zainab [17] in his study noted that, in general, Islamic boarding schools share a common typology: they are institutions led and managed by a kyai within a complex characterized by the presence of a mosque or surau as the center of teaching and a dormitory for students. These schools provide holistic and integrated education that encompasses not only religion but also social, economic, and political aspects.

Nurul Ummahat Putri Islamic Boarding School is located in Kota Gede, Yogyakarta, a city renowned for its pluralistic nature and diverse predicates, including its history and potential as a city of culture, education, struggle, and tourism. These attributes align with Yogyakarta's development vision (2005-2025), which aims to establish Yogyakarta as a city of quality education, cultural tourism, growth and excellent service, environmental sustainability, and a civil society inspired by the spirit of Mangayu Hayuning Bawana. The boarding school is home to students (santri) from varied backgrounds in terms of origin and language. Students, known for their critical thinking, are seen as agents of change. After graduation, they are expected to

continue the relay of knowledge to society [18]. They have the potential to transform society or become catalysts for change. The central research question of this study is: What are the roles and efforts of tolerance education implemented at Nurul Ummahat Girls' Islamic Boarding School in Kota Gede, Yogyakarta? This research aims to describe how this Islamic boarding school contributes to the development of tolerance education, which impacts the creation of an inclusive and tolerant environment in Yogyakarta.

2. Method and Materials

This study employs both library research and field research methodologies. Library research involves reviewing books, articles, and other writings pertinent to the themes of Islamic boarding schools and tolerance. Most of these sources are published in the last five years. The data collection technique utilized is the reading and recording technique, wherein all significant and relevant information is meticulously documented.

Field research is conducted through observations, interviews, and documentation. The research activity commenced with observations at the Nurul Ummahat Putri Islamic Boarding School in November 2023. The type of observation employed is participatory observation, wherein the researcher is actively involved in various activities alongside the students at the Islamic boarding school, living and interacting with them.

In the same month, structured interviews were conducted to ten students, one teacher and five neighbors. Each respondent was presented with identical questions, and their responses were recorded using a cellphone. Documentation involved collecting all relevant documents pertaining to the establishment, history, and development of the Islamic boarding school. Additionally, documents related to the school's vision, mission, and organizational aspects were gathered.

All collected data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman [19] model analysis technique. The analysis process comprised three main stages: First, data reduction, which involved selecting relevant data and discarding irrelevant information. Second, organizing and arranging the relevant data into discernible patterns to enhance clarity and comprehension. Third, interpreting the data and drawing conclusions based on the analysis results.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Pesantren and Tolerance Education

The term "pesantren" originates from the word "santri" with the prefix "pe" and suffix "an," indicating a place for santri. The word "santri" itself is derived from the syllables "tra," meaning helpful, thus associating santri with individuals of good character. Consequently, "pesantren" is interpreted as a place for the education of virtuous individuals [20]. Harmen and Juita [21] suggest that "santri" is derived from the Sanskrit word "sastri," meaning literate, implying that santri are individuals knowledgeable in religious matters through Arabic texts or at least capable of reading the Quran. Another perspective posits that "santri" originates from the Javanese word "cantrik," referring to individuals who follow their teacher closely to learn specific skills.

The term "pesantren" is also associated with the word "pondok," which means room, hut, or small house, emphasizing the simplicity of its buildings. "Pondok" is linked to the Arabic

word "Fundūq," meaning a bedroom, guesthouse, simple hotel, or a bamboo residence. Traditionally, pesantren are managed with a dormitory system (pondok), with the kyai as the central figure and the mosque as the institution's focal point. A pesantren as an Islamic educational institution imparting Islamic knowledge, led by a kyai and supported by ustadz (teachers) who employ unique methods and techniques in teaching students [22].

Pesantren education is characterized by two main strengths [23]. First, it possesses a distinctive educational culture that promotes thorough learning, often referred to as the concept of mastery learning. This includes traditional methods such as bandongan and sorogan, which emphasize the quality of material mastery. Second, it benefits from strong community participation, a hallmark of pesantren education. Typically, the establishment of pesantren in Indonesia is driven by the community's demands and needs.

Nadliyah and Jamroh [24] identify five traditions that define pesantren education. First is the teaching of the Yellow Book, a critical element involving the study of classical texts to educate future scholars loyal to traditional Islamic teachings. The study of these classical texts, known as the yellow book, underscores the pesantren's authenticity as an Islamic educational institution. The continued tradition of the yellow book within pesantren intellectualism is attributed to the belief that these texts were authored by scholars with recognized scientific authority and have been preserved through generations.

Second, the Arabic Language Tradition: The Arabic language tradition has flourished within Islamic boarding schools, driven by the practice of kyai writing books in Arabic. This tradition is often linked to the customs of scholars residing in Mecca, who possess strong Arabic language skills.

Third, the Tradition of Rihlah Ilmiah: Rihlah Ilmiah, or the practice of traveling from one country to another, is a well-established tradition aimed at seeking, gaining, deepening, and developing knowledge. This practice often involves prolonged stays in foreign countries, sometimes without returning to one's place of origin.

Fourth, the Tradition of Practicing the Thariqat: The Salafiyah community, nurtured by the Islamic boarding school environment, exemplifies an inseparable unity between piety and morals or religiosity and ethics. In this context, Sufism is seen as integral to the practice of the entire religion. Fifth, the Tradition of Memorization: The method of memorization is typically applied to basic-level teaching materials found in foundational texts, known as matan.

Furthermore, El Amin and Nurhayati [25] identify several basic elements characteristic of Islamic boarding schools:

First, the Existence of a Pondok or Dormitory: A pondok is an essential element in the tradition of Islamic boarding schools. It serves as a dormitory where students live together and study under the guidance of a kyai. Generally, a pondok is a fenced complex that delineates it from the surrounding community.

Second, the Existence of a Mosque: A mosque is an indispensable component of an Islamic boarding school, often functioning as the central building. It serves multiple purposes, primarily as a place for congregational prayers, wirid prayers, and tadarus al-Quran. The mosque is also utilized for educational activities, such as teaching classical religious texts.

Third, the Existence of Students: The term "santri" has two connotations. Firstly, it refers to individuals who adhere to and practice Islamic teachings, often termed "orthodox Muslims." This term contrasts with the "abangan" group, who are more influenced by pre-Islamic Javanese cultural values, especially those originating from Hindu and Buddhist mysticism. Secondly, "santri" denotes individuals studying at Islamic boarding schools [26]. In addition to these external characteristics, Islamic boarding schools possess general traits, such as independence and obedience to the kyai, which is sometimes viewed as a form of veneration [27].

Islamic boarding schools are socio-religious institutions that provide education to Muslims seeking religious knowledge. Their role extends beyond religious instruction, significantly shaping students' character, including fostering tolerance towards individuals of different faiths. Tolerance is the embodiment of belief and experience, where individuals of diverse beliefs coexist harmoniously [28]. According to KH. Salahudin Wahid [29], tolerance is an attitude of mutual respect and cooperation among groups differing in ethnicity, language, political culture, and religion. It entails an open attitude and a willingness to recognize various differences. Forms of tolerance include open-mindedness towards differences, non-discrimination, refraining from imposing beliefs on others, respecting others during worship, and refraining from hatred or harm towards those with differing beliefs or opinions. In the context of tolerance, cruelty, bigotry, and racism are unequivocally unacceptable [30].

In Islamic boarding schools, dialogue and tolerance among students are integral aspects of the religious and moral education process. Students are taught to respect differences, treat others with kindness, and practice virtues in their daily lives. Through interactions with fellow students, they learn to apply religious teachings in practical actions and reinforce the moral values promoted in Islam. Islamic boarding schools often provide diverse experiences to students from various cultural, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. This interaction broadens their knowledge horizons and facilitates an exchange of ideas, enriching the students. The interaction among diverse students also nurtures values of tolerance, respect for differences, and a sense of nationalism, thereby creating an inclusive and supportive environment within the boarding schools.

Students who receive religious education in Islamic boarding schools tend to be more open and accepting of differences, both in terms of religious beliefs and backgrounds. They gain a deeper understanding of the significance and importance of religious tolerance and are generally better prepared to navigate differences in their surroundings. Conversely, those who do not experience religious education in Islamic boarding schools may have different perspectives, with some viewing religious differences as taboo or difficult to accept. Generally, students demonstrate an open attitude, tolerance, and pride in the diversity present in Indonesia [18].

Beyond their interactions with each other, students also engage in dialogue with the general public. Such dialogue broadens their understanding of the social, cultural, and political realities of the wider community. They recognize the importance of adaptation and openness when interacting with individuals from various backgrounds and viewpoints. This process strengthens their sense of attachment to the state and nation, making dialogue with the general public a means to reinforce their nationalism and pride in their identity as Indonesian citizens. Consequently, dialogue between students and the general public not only serves to enhance understanding of plurality and diversity but also fosters unity and social integration within a diverse society [22].

In Islamic boarding schools, basic tolerance education is not only delivered through formal classroom instruction but is also embedded in everyday life. Formal tolerance education includes the teaching of Indonesian/citizenship material that has been carefully curated [31]. Nelwan [32] specifically highlights the role of women's Islamic boarding schools in promoting peace and interfaith dialogue. Women, as agents of peace, bring positive dynamics to Islamic boarding schools. In recent decades, women's roles in peace movements and interfaith dialogue have expanded, particularly in academic and activist spaces. Therefore, the presence of female students in Islamic boarding schools not only fosters an inclusive educational environment but also contributes to peace-building and tolerance in society.

The primary characteristic of women's Islamic boarding schools is their emphasis on moderate Islamic teachings. Female students are educated to embody *Tasamuh* or tolerance,

characterized by kindness, gentleness, and forgiveness. In general terms, Tasamuh represents a commendable moral attitude in social interactions, involving mutual respect within the boundaries outlined in Islamic teachings. This Tasamuh attitude is practiced in everyday life, meaning that if an Islamic boarding school neglects this attitude, it overlooks the fundamental teachings of its core values. Additionally, Islamic boarding schools instill a sense of patriotism in their students. This love for the homeland is a manifestation of the teaching "hubbul wathan minal iman," which means that love for the homeland is part of faith.

3.2 Tolerance Education at Nurul Ummahat Girls' Islamic Boarding School in Kota Gede, Yogyakarta

Nurul Ummahat Girls' Islamic Boarding School, established in 1988 by Mr. Kyai Muhaimin, was initially founded to educate the daughters of Ki Mufid Maskot, Sunan Bandaran Seleman, namely Sayati and Umi Rohimah Nafkah, who sought to continue their studies at Cokroaminoto University in Yogyakarta. Over time, the school expanded its mission, admitting female students with a primary focus on memorizing the Al-Quran and studying traditional texts, such as the Yellow Book. As the institution gained recognition, Mr. Kyai, the proprietor, began welcoming individuals from various backgrounds, including different regions, tribes, and religions. This inclusive approach transformed the boarding school into a prominent educational center that produces academically proficient graduates with a profound understanding of humanitarian and social issues, thereby contributing to a harmonious and tolerant society.

In an interview on November 12, 2023, Mr. KH. Abdul Muhaimin articulated the school's vision and mission, encapsulated in three pillars: Modern, Moderate, and Human. The modern pillar emphasizes the incorporation of discourses on gender, democracy, and human rights, aligned with religious interpretations. The moderate principle signifies the school's openness in accepting candidates from diverse backgrounds, including those from the Muhammadiyah sect, exemplifying inclusivity and interfaith harmony. The human pillar reflects the school's commitment to teaching human values to all interested individuals, irrespective of their religious or cultural backgrounds. Consequently, all daily activities are directed towards producing a generation that is academically skilled, possesses a broad understanding of humanitarian and societal issues, and educates students to become positive agents of change in building a harmonious and tolerant society.

At Nurul Ummahat Girls' Islamic Boarding School, the practice of diversity is integral to the educational experience. The school provides students with opportunities to engage in various activities that promote an understanding of religious tolerance. This includes participation in live-in programs and interfaith interactions, allowing students to learn about and appreciate differing beliefs. Students are also actively involved in social and religious activities outside the school, such as assisting with church cleaning during Christmas celebrations and participating in community independence day events. These engagements not only broaden students' understanding of religious tolerance but also strengthen social ties and foster harmony among different religious communities.

The school's commitment to promoting tolerance and harmony is further evidenced through its community empowerment activities, which aim to instill tolerant attitudes and behaviors. Aulia, in an interview on November 16, 2023, stated, "While at this boarding school, we were given the opportunity to participate in tolerance activities, such as live-in programs at boarding schools of various religions. One notable activity was hosting the interfaith community SRILI (Srikandi Interfaith)." This sentiment was echoed by Khotimatul Khusna, who, in an

interview on November 17, 2023, recounted, "The boarding school truly encourages participation in such initiatives. For instance, we helped clean a church in Prenggan on December 24, 2023, in preparation for Christmas, and on December 25, we distributed free meals to the congregation." Furthermore, Atikah Rahmaningtyas, in an interview on November 19, 2023, highlighted, "The boarding school actively supports positive student activities, such as organizing training sessions and workshops focused on capacity building in tolerance, interfaith dialogue, peaceful conflict resolution, and the role of boarding schools in promoting tolerance and human rights."

Second, the Emphasis on Interfaith Human Interaction at Nurul Ummahat Girls' Islamic Boarding School. Nurul Ummahat Girls' Islamic Boarding School places significant emphasis on the importance of interfaith human interaction to foster understanding and mutual respect. Before integrating into a religiously pluralistic society, students are prepared to adopt a pluralist mindset and attitude. They learn to accept differences, appreciate diversity, and maintain harmony with one another. Dialogue becomes a platform for students to exchange experiences, build camaraderie, and strengthen social relationships.

The interactions among students create an environment conducive to learning and personal growth, helping to shape their character. This includes developing social attitudes, the courage to speak, and the ability to listen and understand others' perspectives. In an interview on November 14, 2023, Atikah Rahmaningtyas noted, "Pesantren Nurul Ummahat teaches in practical terms what religious tolerance is. For example, the boarding school happily accepts non-Muslim female students from East Nusa Tenggara Province to live and interact directly with the students. The school also frequently accepts female students from various campuses in Yogyakarta, such as those from UKDW (Duta Wacana Christian University), for internships."

The respondent's statement was corroborated by observations of farewells at the boarding school. The values of religious tolerance learned at the school become the foundation for interacting with the wider community and serve as guidelines in daily life. This is particularly evident during community service activities, such as the real work lecture (KKN) activities. Students generally do not experience difficulties in these activities and view interactions with different groups as opportunities to learn about and understand Indonesia's diversity. Each dialogue provides new insights into the diverse values, traditions, and perspectives present in society. Encounters with different communities enrich their understanding of cultural diversity, fostering an open attitude, tolerance, and a sense of pride in the nation's cultural richness.

Nurul Ummayah Islamic Boarding School frequently organizes activities related to religious tolerance, both among Muslims and interfaith. The school actively holds various training sessions, workshops, and other activities focusing on capacity building in terms of tolerance, interfaith dialogue, and peaceful conflict resolution. Additionally, the school hosts numerous discussion forums among religious communities, which serve as platforms to share understanding, experiences, and strengthen interfaith relationships. Such interfaith discussions are concrete steps towards improving understanding and practice of religious tolerance in a diverse society. Consequently, through these activities, Islamic boarding schools play an effective role in building a tolerant and harmonious society in Kota Gede, Yogyakarta.

Nusaptorini, a resident of Kota Gede, expressed her views on Nurul Ummahat Islamic Boarding School in an interview on November 29, 2023. She stated, "As far as I am aware, Nurul Ummahat Putri Islamic Boarding School plays a significant role in enhancing religious tolerance in Kota Gede. The school has demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting interfaith tolerance, particularly under the leadership of Mr. Kyai Muhaimin. This Islamic boarding school exemplifies fostering harmony among religious communities and has made a

positive contribution to strengthening tolerance in a society of diverse religions in Kota Gede, Yogyakarta."

Muji Asih, the RT head in the Kota Gede area, added in an interview on November 29, 2023, "The impact of the Islamic boarding school on the surrounding community has been very positive. There have been no conflicts, and the atmosphere around the school is peaceful. However, the boarding school faces challenges in promoting religious tolerance, often receiving stigma or negative comments due to its openness in accepting anyone who visits. We cannot deny that some individuals remain highly fanatical about their religion."

Fourth, Religious Education and the Curriculum at Nurul Ummahat Girls' Islamic Boarding School. The religious education and overall curriculum at Nurul Ummahat Girls' Islamic Boarding School effectively facilitate students' understanding of the concept of religious tolerance and its application in daily life. The school's approach to religious education extends beyond theoretical instruction, incorporating practical examples through direct teaching and the actions of caregivers and the school environment. This comprehensive educational experience prepares students to engage with a religiously diverse society, fostering attitudes of tolerance and respect for differences.

Evidence indicates that students receiving religious education at this Islamic boarding school tend to be more open and accepting of differences in religious beliefs and backgrounds. They develop a deeper understanding of the significance and importance of religious tolerance and are generally better equipped to handle diversity in their surroundings. Conversely, individuals without this educational experience may view religious differences as taboo or difficult to accept, highlighting the positive impact of religious education at Islamic boarding schools on social engagement.

In an interview on November 18, 2023, Fahimah Qurrotayun, Minhatul Mulia, and Anastasia Amalia stated, "Concrete steps taken by Islamic boarding schools to more effectively enhance understanding and practice of religious tolerance in Kota Gede, Yogyakarta, involve integrating interfaith activities directly into the school curriculum." The researcher's observations confirm that the inculcation of tolerance values is achieved through activities such as interfaith dialogue, visits to diverse places of worship, and collaborative social projects with other religious communities. Additionally, religious education at this school is not only theoretical but is also practically demonstrated by caregivers through concrete examples of practicing religious tolerance. This experiential learning is particularly beneficial during activities like KKN (real work lectures), where students apply their understanding of religious tolerance in diverse community settings.

Fifth, Exemplifying Religious Tolerance through Practice. The caregivers at Nurul Ummahat Girls' Islamic Boarding School exemplify the importance of religious tolerance through their involvement in various activities and programs. Students are not only provided with a deep understanding of the significance of religious tolerance and diversity but are also presented with living examples of tolerant behavior. For instance, the school accepts non-Muslim students to live and interact with the Muslim students and warmly welcomes guests from diverse religious backgrounds. The open and inclusive attitude modeled by the school's leaders, such as Mr. Kyai Muhaimin, significantly enhances students' comprehension of religious tolerance.

4. Conclusion

The vision, mission, goals, and historical development of the Nurul Ummahat Putri Islamic Boarding School in Kota Gede, Yogyakarta, are directed towards cultivating students who excel in religious knowledge and embody a tolerant character. Beyond their Islamic studies,

students are provided with numerous opportunities to engage in various interfaith activities, both within the boarding school and the broader community. They are encouraged and guided by the school caregivers to adopt an open mindset, accepting non-Muslim students to live and interact with them directly, and welcoming guests from diverse religious backgrounds in a friendly and respectful manner. Students are also motivated to promote the values of diversity through interfaith discussion forums, serving as platforms to share understanding and experiences and to strengthen interfaith relationships.

Through this comprehensive approach, Islamic boarding schools transcend their role as mere educational institutions, becoming active agents of transformation in fostering an inclusive and harmonious society in Kota Gede, Yogyakarta. Thus, the Nurul Ummahat Putri Islamic Boarding School has significantly contributed to building a tolerant and harmonious society, especially in religious contexts, in Kota Gede, Yogyakarta.

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