

Perspectives of Non-Moeslim Students on Islamic Education in the Postgraduate Program of University of Muhammadiyah Tangerang

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ABSTRACT

Muhammadiyah College is a private university committed to providing modern and inclusive Islamic education. Islamic education is carried out in the form of Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah learning in class and Islamic seminar activities outside the classroom. This research was conducted at the Muhammadiyah University of Tangerang Postgraduate Program. Active students consist of Muslim and non-Muslim students. This study aims to determine non-Muslim students' perceptions of Islamic education held by the Postgraduate Program at the University of Muhammadiyah Tangerang. This type of research is descriptive and qualitative with observation, interviews and documentation scientifically and naturally. This study's results indicate that non-Muslim students' perceptions toward Islamic education are positive. Non-Muslim students received well the Islamic teaching material presented by the lecturers in the first semester. The perception of non-Muslim students towards Islamic education is a process of building character in accordance with Islamic teachings which are full of peace and uphold human values. In the classroom learning process, three learning models are used, namely learning centered on prepared material, teacher-centered and student-centered. Non-Muslim students feel enthusiastic and comfortable while participating in the Islamic education process because they are treated on the same level as other Muslim students. Non-Muslim students received well the Islamic teaching material presented by the lecturers in the first semester. The perception of non-Muslim students towards Islamic education is a process of building character in accordance with Islamic teachings which are full of peace and uphold human values. In the classroom learning process, three learning models are used, namely learning centered on prepared material, teacher-centered and student-centered. Non-Muslim students feel enthusiastic and comfortable while participating in the Islamic education process because they are treated on the same level as other Muslim students.

Keywords: Non-Muslim, Islamic Education, Muhammadiyah

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A. INTRODUCTION

Education has a very important and strategic position in Islamic teachings (Mukhtarom, 2021). This can be traced from the many verses in the Qur'an which hint at the importance of education, including as mentioned in the Al-Qur'an Luqman [31]: 13 and Al-Mujadilah [58]: 11. In an Islamic perspective, education is an effort to improve the quality of human resources and develop human potential, namely the potential of the mind, body and spirit. Armed with education, humans will be successful in carrying out their duties as servants of Allah and as caliphs of Allah on earth, or in other words education will lead humans to success and safety in this world and in the hereafter.

The word Islam which is integrated with the word education or called Islamic education is the process of educating, teaching, guiding and fostering children or students according to the provisions of Islamic teachings. The word Islam that stands behind the word education is "color", meaning Islam is a characteristic or identity that distinguishes it from other educational concepts other than Islamic education (Tafsir, 2016). These differences can be seen from the sources of education taken and the educational goals to be achieved. Islamic education can also be understood as a type of education that makes Islamic teachings the main knowledge (Saputra, 2018).

One of the educational institutions that is committed to organizing Islamic education is the Muhammadiyah college which has been established in several regions of Indonesia. The latest data from the Muhammadiyah Central Executive shows that there are more than 170 Muhammadiyah tertiary institutions spread across several regions in Indonesia, this data will increase in number as the permits for the establishment of Muhammadiyah tertiary institutions in several regions have not yet been issued. The levels offered range from Diploma, Undergraduate,

Undergraduate, and Undergraduate levels. Not a few Muhammadiyah universities are the main choice of Muslim and non-Muslim communities in continuing their education according to the study program they are interested in.

Muhammadiyah tertiary institution is an inclusive Islamic tertiary institution that is open to anyone, including those who are non-Muslim, to study at Muhammadiyah tertiary institutions. For Muhammadiyah, education is the right of every citizen, and Muhammadiyah tertiary institutions are committed to providing Islamic education that is democratic and humane, uphold human rights values, and does not discriminate against students, including non-Muslim students.

The purpose of this study was to find out the perspectives of non-Muslim students on the practice of Islamic education in one of the Muhammadiyah tertiary institutions, namely the Muhammadiyah University of Tangerang, focusing on the Postgraduate Program. This is very important in order to know the extent to which Islamic education can be positively accepted by non-Muslim students. The practice of Islamic education in Muhammadiyah tertiary institutions is contained in the curriculum in the form of Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah learning. Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyahan materials are given to all students, both Muslims and non-Muslims. Outside the curriculum, the practice of Islamic education is in the form of Islamic education seminars, student discussions about Islam, and other Islamic activities.

B. METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative research type. The steps used are observation, interviews (in-depth interviews), and documentation. By using this type of research, researchers can find out the perspectives of non-Muslim students in depth on Islamic education. The determination of informants in this

study was carried out by means of purposive sampling (Moleong, 2013), namely taking samples from targeted groups and having certain attributes in order to produce an understanding of a topic with accurate results.

C. RESULTS

Muhammadiyah College is a charity business in the field of higher education belonging to the Muhammadiyah organization. Apart from establishing higher education institutions, Muhammadiyah also established educational institutions starting from 1094 elementary schools, 1123 junior high schools, 558 senior high schools, and 554 vocational high schools (Dikdasmen, 2023). This number will continue to increase in line with the needs of the community in several areas. Education for Muhammadiyah is a tool to free this nation from adversity and backwardness. Through progressive education, the Indonesian nation will become a superior and productive nation (Afif, et al, 2022). So far, the Indonesian nation is known as a nation that is not yet developed because it does not yet have many quality human resources. this can be proven by the fact that most people are unable to manage their natural resources optimally and are still dependent on other nations. Therefore, the Indonesian people must be aware that education is the key to rising from all backwardness (Prasetyo, et al, 2022). Extensive natural resources must be balanced with superior human resources so that what is owned by the Indonesian people can also be enjoyed by the Indonesian people.

The education developed by Muhammadiyah is holistic education based on Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah. This model of education seeks to enlighten and foster students' awareness that Allah is the Lord of the universe, guiding students in mastering science, technology, and art. According to Haedar Nashir, the concept of holistic education is a character of

Muhammadiyah education (Suara Muhammadiyah, 2023), and the output of this holistic education is able to produce superior human beings with noble character.

Since its inception in 1912 (PP Muhammadiyah, 2008), Muhammadiyah has developed modern Islamic education that integrates religious knowledge and general knowledge. The concept is the result of deep thought from KH. Ahmad Dahlan as the founder of Muhammadiyah who wants graduates from Muhammadiyah educational institutions to have competence in the fields of general science and religious knowledge. For KH. Ahmad Dahlan, national issues can be overcome through human resources who are strong in faith and excel in the development of science and technology. According to him, the decline of Islamic education so far is due to the perspective that general knowledge is not important, this is a misleading perspective and the cause of a nation's backwardness. Islamic teachings actually do not dichotomize or separate general science and religious knowledge, Both of these sciences have a very useful position for human life. With the provision of general knowledge, humans will prosper in the world, and with the provision of religious knowledge, humans will be safe in the hereafter.

At the tertiary level, Muhammadiyah organizes Muhammadiyah higher education chess dharma as stated in the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership Guidelines Number 02/PED/I.0/B/2012 Concerning Muhammadiyah Higher Education, namely the fields of education, research, community service, as well as Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah. Implementation in the education sector in the form of classroom learning processes and other academic activities such as seminars, workshops and conferences, then implementation in the research sector in the form of research activities carried out by lecturers and students whose output is

in the form of scientific publications in national and international journals and national and international proceedings, then the implementation of community service in the form of carrying out socialization and outreach activities to the community through planning, and implementation in the field of Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah in the form of implementing Islamic education both in the lecture process in the classroom and outside the classroom. The implementation of chess dharma by Muhammadiyah universities is different from public universities which only organize higher education tri dharma, namely education, research and community service. The field of Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah which is held by the Muhammadiyah college is a commitment to organizing Islamic education that integrates religious values with life. The implementation of chess dharma by Muhammadiyah universities is different from public universities which only organize higher education tri dharma, namely education, research and community service. The field of Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah which is held by the Muhammadiyah college is a commitment to organizing Islamic education that integrates religious values with life. The implementation of chess dharma by Muhammadiyah universities is different from public universities which only organize higher education tri dharma, namely education, research and community service. The field of Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah which is held by the Muhammadiyah college is a commitment to organizing Islamic education that integrates religious values with life.

In order for the process of Islamic education to run smoothly and with direction, the Central Executive of Muhammadiyah through the Muhammadiyah Higher Education Council in 2013 created a guidebook for Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah Education in Muhammadiyah Higher Education which

contains the main ideas and curriculum of Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah as a reference for Islamic education. (Directorate Council of PP Muhammadiyah, 2013). Broadly speaking, the guidebook states the main materials that must be conveyed by lecturers to students, namely material about humanity and faith, worship material, morals material, mu'amalah material, Muhammadiyah material, and Islamic and scientific material. These materials are taught every semester with a different theme at the undergraduate level. While at the level of strata two to strata three more to the deepening of Islamic teachings. The purpose of Islamic education held by Muhammadiyah universities is to form learning people who are pious, have noble character, are progressive, and excel in science and technology (Achmadi, 2008).

The learning process of Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah is carried out using several learning models, namely subject matter-centered learning models, these models are oriented toward material that has been planned in the lecture syllabus. Then Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah learning can also use the teacher center learning model or a lecturer-centered learning model whose role is active, and student-centered education (student center learning) which requires students to be active during the learning process such as individual or group discussions.

Students who take part in Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah lessons at Muhammadiyah universities are not only Muslim students, but also non-Muslim students such as Christians, Hindus and Buddhists. Non-Muslim students are required to take part in Islamic learning because this learning is included in the curriculum of study programs which have semester credit units with varying amounts starting from one to two semester credit units (Pajarianto, 2020). If students do not follow the learning then the consequence is not graduating from college. Thus

learning Islamic education binds all students, both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Muhammadiyah tertiary institutions realize that students who study are not only from Muslims, but many are also from non-Muslims. There is even a Muhammadiyah college where the majority of students are non-Muslims, this is a phenomenon that does not occur in other Islamic universities. Non-Muslim students in the lecture process interact with Muslim students and receive Islamic education in the form of Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah courses. In addition to getting Islamic courses, non-Muslim students also take part in activities outside of class such as Islamic seminars, social services, and other activities that are integrated with Islam.

The existence of non-Muslim students at Muhammadiyah colleges is actually proof that Muhammadiyah colleges are inclusive and open to anyone who wants to continue on to higher education. There is no discrimination at all for non-Muslim students. Muhammadiyah tertiary institutions embrace all students from different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. In fact, not a few foreign students from various countries continue their education at Muhammadiyah universities according to their own choice.

In practice, Islamic education that is introduced to all students is Islamic teachings that are tolerant, humanist, democratic and just. This is to foster students' understanding and awareness of the importance of mutual respect, respect and cooperation with one another in building the progress of the nation. This is actually Muhammadiyah's attempt to remove the stigma of Islam as an intolerant and radical religion that has been inherent in the views of some non-Muslim communities.

For the Muhammadiyah organization, the tertiary institution created not only functions as a place for education and learning processes, but also functions

as a place for spreading Islamic teachings (Nasution, et al, 2019). Muhammadiyah's missionary commitment is inspired by Al-Qur'an letter Ali Imran verse 104. The practice of Islamic da'wah to Muslim students is more about purifying monotheism from all things that deviate from superstition, bid'ah, and superstition, and invites the experience of teaching Islam has been exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad. Meanwhile, Islamic preaching to non-Muslim students is more about the introduction of Islamic teachings which are rahmatan lil alamin and rectifying some of the perceptions of non-Muslim students who have so far misunderstood Islamic teachings.

This research was conducted at the Muhammadiyah University of Tangerang Postgraduate Program located in Tangerang City, Banten Province. Muhammadiyah University of Tangerang Postgraduate Program is a tertiary institution that is open to anyone who wants to continue their education to the undergraduate level. Non-Muslim students at the undergraduate level are required to attend al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah lectures in the first semester. The Postgraduate Program at the University of Muhammadiyah Tangerang currently has five undergraduate study programs, namely Masters in Management, Masters in Islamic Education, Masters in Accounting, Masters in Law, and Masters in Indonesian Language Education. The campus location is in the center of Tangerang City, precisely on Jl. Pioneers of Independence I / III Cikokol – Tangerang. The travel time for the lecture process at the undergraduate level is for four semesters or two years. Islamic education is held in the form of learning in Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah courses. Outside the curriculum, Islamic education is held in the form of seminars, workshops and discussions with Islamic themes.

In this study, there were several non-Muslim students who were

interviewed in depth regarding their perceptions of Islamic education. This interview is related to the experience of getting Islamic education for students who are still active in college. The main points of the question are about the reasons for non-Muslim students choosing Muhammadiyah tertiary institutions and perceptions of learning Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah. There were three active students who were asked for their views regarding the Al-Islam learning process, namely Helny who is Christian (NIM: 2062101016) who is an active student in the Masters of Accounting Study Program, Ronald Samuel Wisuan who is Christian (NIM: 2274101003) who is an active student of the Master of Law Study Program, and Priska Rufina Sianturi is a Christian (NIM: 2274101004) an active student of the Law Masters Study Program.

From the results of interviews with non-Muslim students, there are points of perception on Islamic education as follows:

1. According to Helny, the Postgraduate Program at the University of Muhammadiyah Tangerang is an Islamic tertiary institution that is open to anyone who wants to continue their education to the Masters level. This is the reason for non-Muslim students to continue their education at Muhammadiyah universities. As a minority, non-Muslim students can be accepted and treated the same as other Muslim students in terms of academic services, academic guidance, as well as in other academic activities such as national and international seminars. There is no discriminatory treatment of non-Muslim students, either from campus leaders or from Muslim students. Islamic education in the form of Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah learning is given to non-Muslim students in a

professional and fair manner. The material presented by the lecturers is related to the meaning of Islam, sources of Islamic teachings, characteristics of Islamic teachings, Islamic history, Islamic views on tolerance. Non-Muslim students' perceptions of Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah learning materials are very positive, non-Muslim students gain knowledge of Islamic teachings which are full of messages of peace and tolerance. There is no issue of Islamic teachings which have been considered radical teachings at all.

2. According to Ronald Samuel Wisuan, the reason he chose Muhammadiyah college was because of his desire to deepen Islamic teachings. After attending Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah lectures at the Muhammadiyah college, the understanding gained is that Islamic teachings are democratic and uphold human values. Then the Islamic education material taught is integrated with the values of nationalism, such as material on the importance of maintaining national unity according to Islamic teachings, material on the history of the growth and development of Islamic organizations in Indonesia. According to Ronald, before entering the Muhammadiyah college, he was worried that his beliefs would be intimidated and discriminated against by Muslim lecturers and students. However, what he feared did not happen. In fact the lecturers are very democratic while still respecting religions outside of Islam. The lecturers did not force non-Muslims to embrace Islam, but the lecturers only conveyed the truth from the perspective of Islamic teachings. In class, even though the

majority of students are Muslim, there is no discriminatory treatment of non-Muslim students. All students maintain a harmonious relationship with each other by respecting each other's beliefs.

3. According to Priska Rufina Sianturi, her experience in obtaining Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah materials was something new. Priska knows the consequences of entering Muhammadiyah college will get material related to Islam and Muhammadiyah. Knowledge of Islamic teachings obtained on campus is knowledge of Islamic teachings that teach love, safety, and peace. This is different from the knowledge of Islamic teachings that so far was obtained before attending Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah material which was more of a negative understanding such as radical accusations against Islamic teachings. While participating in the lecture process, Priska felt comfortable associating with Muslim students. The lecturers who are all Muslim do not discriminate against non-Muslim students.

The results of interviews with non-Muslim students can be concluded that the process of Islamic education carried out by Muhammadiyah universities can be well received by non-Muslim students. The perception of non-Muslim students towards Islamic education is positive, they assess the Islamic teachings that are taught more towards moderate Islamic teachings or wasathiyah, one of the characteristics of which is teaching tolerance, mutual respect, and tolerance for differences (Najib, 2020). Before participating in the Islamic learning process on campus, non-Muslim students get Islamic knowledge with negative narratives, such as radical Islam which leads to acts of terror. But

after getting Al-Islam material in class, students discover the true character of Islamic teachings which are full of teachings of goodness, peace and safety.

D. CONCLUSION

Muhammadiyah tertiary institutions are tertiary institutions that are committed to organizing Islamic education, this is stated in the chess dharma of education, namely teaching and education, research, community service, and Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah. Implementation of Islamic education in the Muhammadiyah University Postgraduate Program in the form of Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah learning and outside-class activities such as seminars and Islamic discussions. The learning model uses the subject matter center learning, teacher center learning, and student center learning approaches. The perception of non-Muslim students towards Islamic education is a positive perception, meaning that non-Muslim students can receive Islamic education well. The perception of non-Muslim students towards Islam is that Islamic teachings teach peace, tolerance, and nationalism. According to non-Muslim students, while attending the lectures there was no discrimination from the lecturers in charge of Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah courses. In association on campus, non-Muslim students can be accepted by Muslim students.

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