



Tolerance in Social Interaction Between Muslims and Christians: A Study in Percut Sei Tuan, Deli Serdang

Dilla Syafitri

Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara

Email: dillasyahfitri37@gmail.com

Abstract

Tolerance is an important aspect of social interaction in a society that has religious diversity. This study explores social interactions between followers of Islam and Christianity in a diverse residential environment. This research aims to understand how the two religious groups build, maintain and manage harmonious social relations and how they face the challenges that arise in this process. This research uses a qualitative approach with participant observation methods and in-depth interviews with community members from both religions. The research results show that tolerance is realized through mutual respect, open dialogue, and cooperation in community activities such as celebrating religious holidays and mutual cooperation. Although there is potential for friction due to differences in beliefs, good communication practices and shared values help minimize conflict and strengthen social relationships. In conclusion, tolerance in social interactions between followers of Islam and Christianity in these places of residence can be achieved through strengthening the values of mutual respect and collective efforts to maintain harmony.

Keywords: *Tolerance, Religious people, Interaction.*

Abstrak: Toleransi merupakan aspek penting dalam interaksi sosial di masyarakat yang memiliki keberagaman agama. Studi ini mengeksplorasi interaksi sosial antara pemeluk agama Islam dan Kristen di suatu lingkungan tempat tinggal yang majemuk. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami bagaimana kedua kelompok agama tersebut membangun, memelihara, dan mengelola hubungan sosial yang harmonis serta bagaimana mereka menghadapi tantangan yang muncul dalam proses tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode observasi partisipatif dan wawancara mendalam dengan masyarakat dari kedua agama. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa toleransi diwujudkan melalui sikap saling menghormati, dialog terbuka, dan kerja sama dalam kegiatan komunitas seperti perayaan hari besar keagamaan dan gotong royong. Meskipun terdapat potensi gesekan akibat perbedaan keyakinan, praktik komunikasi yang baik dan nilai-nilai kebersamaan membantu meminimalkan konflik dan memperkuat hubungan sosial. Kesimpulannya, toleransi dalam interaksi sosial antara pemeluk agama Islam dan Kristen di tempat tinggal tersebut dapat dicapai melalui penguatan nilai-nilai saling menghargai dan usaha kolektif dalam menjaga kerukunan.

Kata Kunci: *Toleransi, Umat Beragama, Interaksi*



INTRODUCTION

One of the big agendas of the life of the nation and state is to maintain the unity and unity of the nation, and build a welfare life with all citizens and religious people. The obstacle that is quite heavy to move in this direction is the problem of national harmony, including interreligious relations and the harmony of religious life. Lately, the values of harmony that are well maintained by the community have begun to erode and deteriorate. The motto of *bhineka Tunggal ika* has begun to fade in the understanding and experience of the community. This can be seen in various conflicts that have occurred in various regions such as the case of Ambon and Papua where there were recent riots, in the name of religion or social conditions that take refuge behind religious symbols (Masyhud, 2022).

The tendency of injustice problems in the economic, political, social, religious, and cultural fields. The peak of all the complexity of the problems that occur in Indonesia, in recent years there have been riots in various regions, which is no less important is the destruction of the harmonization of people's lives that has been formed for a long time. Therefore, as a society that obeys the law and as a society that has religion, it must certainly play a role in maintaining the integrity of the nation and state. Maintaining harmony in life and society, participating in maintaining religious harmony, where we are and anytime (Nufa & Rodiah, 2023).

Religious harmony is one of the important pillars for the realization of harmony, resilience and national unity. Therefore, one of the focuses of religious development is efforts to realize and increase harmony both intra and between religious communities. The government through the Ministry of Religious Affairs has carried out various activities aimed at developing religious harmony in Indonesia. Among them are reharmonization activities and religious anticipation in the area. Increasing understanding of religion with a multicultural perspective. Development of a culture of peace, Participatory Action Research (PAR) for the development of a model of harmony, empowerment of local citizen organizations (Taufiq et al., 2023).

In reality, multicultural society is like a double-edged sword. It will be a force (social capital) as well as a threat that can damage the nation's aggregation. If this diversity is properly cared for and maintained, it will be a blessing that can encourage the nation's creativity, intellectual enrichment, and the development of tolerant attitudes (Iqbal, 2023).

Tolerance in social interaction is one of the important foundations in building a harmonious society, especially in the midst of a multicultural and multireligious society. The long history of interfaith interaction shows that tolerance is the key to creating positive and peaceful relationships between groups of different faiths. In the market, as a center of economic activity and social interaction, tolerance plays an important role in avoiding conflict and building mutually beneficial relationships. Therefore, it is important to discuss tolerance in social interaction between Muslims and Christians in Percut Sei Tuan, focusing on aspects that allow cooperation, understanding, and harmony.

METHOD

This research was carried out using a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach, because in the research process, the researcher

expects to be able to obtain data from people or actors who are observed both written and oral. Phenomenology is related to the appearance of an object, event or condition according to the observer. Thus, this study is able to reveal information about the process of social interaction of the community (Mandey & Pinatik, 2022). The focus of the research is to find out the forms of religious tolerance and the development of socio-religious education in Hamlet X Percut Sei Tuan Deli Serdang Regency. The location of the research was carried out in Hamlet X Percut Sei Tuan, Percut Sei Tuan District, Deli Serdang Regency, the main reason the researcher chose this place was because of its heterogeneous religious history background and interesting things about its social life. In addition, there has never been a religious conflict in this place, allowing researchers to examine information in depth, and making it easier to obtain data and information. The subject of this study is the local community who is considered able to provide information about the village community.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Tolerance in a Pluralistic Society

Tolerance is a universal value that is very important in building harmony, especially in a pluralistic society. Diversity is an inevitable reality in community life. Each individual has a different background, beliefs, culture, and perspective, which collectively creates a rich mosaic of life. However, this diversity can also be a challenge if not managed wisely. In this situation, tolerance is a bridge that allows differences to coexist peacefully (Rohman, 2022).

Tolerance, in essence, is an attitude of mutual respect and appreciation for differences, without imposing certain beliefs or views on others. In a pluralistic society, this attitude is the foundation for creating a harmonious atmosphere, where each individual feels accepted and respected. Tolerance does not only mean accepting the existence of differences, but also trying to understand and empathize with the experiences and views of others. Thus, tolerance involves the courage to open up to dialogue and diversity of views.

In a society like Indonesia, which consists of hundreds of ethnicities, religions, and cultures, tolerance is one of the irreplaceable principles. The national motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" reflects the spirit of unity in diversity. As a pluralistic country, Indonesia is often an example for the world in terms of how diversity can be a strength when bound by the values of tolerance. However, this does not mean that the journey is without obstacles. Conflicts due to differences in views or identities often arise, especially when prejudice, stereotypes, or discrimination are deeply rooted in society (Christian Samuel Lodoe Haga et al., 2023).

Tolerance also has a strong foundation in religious teachings and local traditions. In Islam, for example, the concept of *tasamuh* or tolerance teaches the importance of peaceful coexistence, despite differences in beliefs. This teaching is reflected in many verses of the Qur'an that emphasize the values of respect for fellow humans, such as QS. Al-Hujurat: 13 which states that humans were created differently in order to know and learn from each other. Similarly, other religions such as Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism also have teachings that emphasize the importance of respecting others regardless of differences (Sukandarman Sukandarman & Ainur Rofiq Sofa, 2024).

Traditional culture in Indonesia also teaches tolerance through values such as mutual cooperation and deliberation. These values not only reflect cooperation between individuals, but also create an atmosphere of mutual respect that is the foundation of community sustainability. For example, in many areas, local customs teach that conflict will only damage social relations, so problem solving is carried out with an inclusive dialogical approach.

However, the practice of tolerance is not always easy to implement. Challenges such as fanaticism, injustice, and lack of education about diversity often hamper efforts to create a harmonious society. Fanaticism can make a person or group feel superior to others, while social and economic injustice often triggers jealousy that can escalate into conflict. To address this, society needs to strengthen awareness of the importance of tolerance through education, dialogue, and policies that support equality.

In the midst of these challenges, tolerance must continue to be developed as a collective effort. Through education that instills diversity values, people can better understand the importance of mutual respect. The media also has a big role to play in spreading peaceful messages and reducing divisive narratives. In addition, inclusive and together-oriented leadership is essential to ensure that diversity is not a source of conflict, but a social capital that strengthens the nation. Ultimately, tolerance is the path to peace. In a pluralistic society, tolerance is not only a necessity, but also a moral obligation to maintain the survival of the community. By placing the values of tolerance as a guide, society can make diversity a force that encourages progress and prosperity for all parties (Sutopo, 2021).

The Relationship of Islamic and Christian Tolerance in Percut Sei Tuan

Religious tolerance is an attitude that reflects respect and appreciation for differences in beliefs among religious believers. In a pluralistic society, this attitude is an important foundation for maintaining peace and social harmony. In Hamlet X Percut Sei Tuan, Percut Sei Tuan District, Deli Serdang Regency, religious tolerance is not only an abstract principle, but also manifests itself in the pattern of daily interaction and social relationships. Citizens from various religious backgrounds, especially Islam and Christianity, coexist in harmony, demonstrating that differences in beliefs are not a barrier to creating a peaceful and respectful life.

Tolerance is a value taught in various religious teachings, including Islam and Christianity. In Islam, the concept of tolerance (*tasamuh*) has a strong basis in the Quran and Hadith. One of the verses that is often used as a reference is QS. Al-Kafirun (109:6), which reads, "For you is your religion, and for me is my religion." This verse teaches Muslims to respect the beliefs of others and to coexist peacefully. The Prophet Muhammad PBUH is also known as a figure who upholds the value of tolerance, even in interaction with non-Muslim groups.

On the other hand, Christianity also teaches the importance of love and tolerance, as conveyed in the teachings of Jesus Christ. Matthew 5:44, for example, teaches to "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." This verse shows the importance of being an attitude. These values are the basis for building harmonious relationships in a social environment consisting of various religious backgrounds, such as the market. Markets are not only

places of economic transactions, but also centers of social interaction where people meet, talk, and work together, regardless of their religious background.

Religion is a guideline for mankind to demand the relationship between humans and their gods in accordance with their respective religious beliefs. Humans are also created as perfect creatures and certainly have their own shortcomings and advantages. So that humans are also called social creatures, namely creatures that cannot live alone, and need the help of others. Social interaction is very necessary to realize harmony between religious communities (Arifin, 2021).

In this relationship, individuals or groups work together to interact, either formally or informally, directly or indirectly. Social interaction is a dynamic social relationship concerning relationships between individuals, between groups of local residents. So we can conclude that social interaction is about respecting each other and the existence of reciprocity between individuals, groups and religions (J. R. Sirait & Istinatun, 2022).

In research, it was found that how they maintain a good relationship with each other is by immersing each ego and prioritizing coexistence by continuing to build interaction with each other and being maintained. So that in daily interaction between religious people in Dusun X Percut Sei Tuan likes to help, if there is a difficulty or needs help without being asked by other members of the community to help each other.

In daily life, the people of Dusun X Percut Sei Tuan show a very open attitude towards each other. Residents with diverse faiths are involved in various social activities together, such as community service, celebrations of religious holidays, and humanitarian assistance for residents in need. In these moments, it can be seen that the spirit of togetherness overcomes the potential for conflicts that may arise due to differences. For example, in the celebration of religious holidays, Muslims and Christians often visit each other, give congratulations, and even help prepare for the event. This attitude reflects the collective awareness that diversity is part of their society's identity.

Local culture plays an important role in strengthening tolerance in this hamlet (J. R. Sirait & Istinatun, 2022). The tradition of mutual cooperation, which has been ingrained in the lives of residents, has become a solid link between them. Through this activity, residents work together regardless of religious differences. Gotong royong is not only a symbol of solidarity, but also a tool to strengthen social relations. In each activity, a space is created for interaction, dialogue, and mutual understanding, so that the potential for prejudice or negative stereotypes that may exist can be minimized.

In addition, intensive social interaction is another mechanism that supports the creation of religious tolerance in Hamlet X Percut Sei Tuan. At markets, schools, or community events, residents interact with each other in a warm way. Religious differences have never been a barrier to communication or cooperation. In fact, often the relationships established between residents are so close, that trust and mutual respect grow naturally. This pattern of relationships helps eliminate prejudice that is usually the root of conflict in a less tolerant society (Sihombing, 2021).

Harmony in Hamlet X Percut Sei Tuan is also inseparable from the role of local leaders, both religious leaders and community leaders. They actively encourage citizens to practice tolerance in their daily lives. Through religious lectures, community meetings, and interfaith dialogue, they provide an

understanding that every religion teaches universal values such as compassion, justice, and peace. This effort helps build awareness that differences in beliefs should not be an excuse to divide, but rather an opportunity to learn and complement each other.

Dusun X Percut Sei Tuan is a clear example of how religious tolerance can be implemented in community life. This success not only creates peace, but also builds a strong social foundation to face various challenges in the future. By continuing to maintain the spirit of mutual respect, strengthening the tradition of mutual cooperation, and increasing interfaith understanding, the people of Dusun X Percut Sei Tuan have shown that harmony is not impossible in the midst of differences. Through these practices, they provide valuable lessons for other societies about the importance of tolerance in creating harmony in the midst of diversity (Khoiruzzadi & Dwi Tresnani, 2022).

One way to strengthen brotherhood and tolerance between religious communities is to have good communication between fellow Muslims and Catholic Christians in Hamlet X Percut Sei Tuan, because good interaction will make the atmosphere of tolerance more conducive and reduce conflicts between communities. In different religious environments, harmonious relationships bring a variety of benefits that not only strengthen relationships between individuals, but also contribute to the well-being of society as a whole. First, harmonious relationships can create mutual trust and reduce the sense of potential conflicts arising from differences in trust. Second, we can learn from each other knowledge about various religions. Third, it can also encourage interfaith collaboration in carrying out various social activities (Alvridho Prayoga et al., 2021).

Forms of Interaction of Islamic and Christian Tolerance in Percut Sei Tuan

Religious tolerance in Hamlet X Percut Sei has a form of tolerance interaction that has been analyzed which is tolerance through social awareness. In the social and cultural context, harmony between religions is one of the important indicators in creating a harmonious and comfortable environment for all members of the community (M. Sirait & Simbolon, 2023). In this regard, the local community has a deep understanding of the importance of maintaining harmony as a foundation in building a life full of tolerance and mutual respect. This perspective is in line with various social theories that emphasize that common prosperity can be achieved through practices of solidarity and harmony between individuals in society. One of the ways used to strengthen harmony is through local culture that prioritizes the values of mutual cooperation and togetherness.

In addition, daily interactions between residents from various religions also enrich the existing social dynamics (Anandari & Afriyanto, 2022). When citizens interact with each other in routine activities such as work, shopping, or participating in other social events, the intensity of this interaction helps to create closer relationships and reduces the likelihood of prejudice or negative stereotypes against other religions. This interaction shows that in daily life, religious differences are not something that prevents the establishment of positive social relationships. In fact, the more frequent these social and humane interactions, the stronger the sense of mutual

understanding and respect develops, which in turn fosters a higher attitude of tolerance among the community (Yasin & Herman Saputra, 2021).

Local culture plays a very important role in shaping patterns of social interaction among members of society. The tradition of mutual cooperation, which is the cultural heritage of the Indonesian nation, teaches the importance of helping each other regardless of differences in background, both religious, ethnic, and social status (Khoir & Anshory, 2023). This emphasis on togetherness in local culture provides a strong foundation for strengthening interfaith relationships. For example, in many communities in Indonesia, activities such as community service, celebration of public holidays, or other social activities often involve various religious groups together. This not only strengthens social bonds but also shows how local culture can function as a bridge in overcoming potential differences.

CONCLUSIONS

Tolerance between religious communities in Hamlet X Percut Sei Tuan, Percut Sei Tuan District, Deli Serdang Regency, is well established through harmonious social interaction between Muslims and Christians. The local community respects and appreciates differences in beliefs, which is reflected in the attitude of helping each other and maintaining harmony in daily life. Factors that support the creation of this tolerance include social awareness, local culture that emphasizes mutual cooperation, and the intensity of interaction between residents that reduces prejudice. This research emphasizes that good communication and cooperation in various social activities can strengthen interfaith relationships, as well as contribute to the welfare of society as a whole. Thus, religious tolerance is not only important for maintaining peace, but also as a foundation in building a harmonious society in the midst of diversity.

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