

## IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT: A COMMUNITY SERVICE STUDY IN THE CONTEXT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

This study discusses the initiatives of Prof. Dr. Moestopo University (Religious) in fostering harmony and tolerance in the campus environment through community service activities conducted by faculty members and administrators. This paper documents concrete efforts to build multicultural awareness and interfaith harmony on campus. The approach taken integrates tolerance values into the curriculum, facilitates interfaith dialogues that provide a platform for exchanging ideas and experiences, constructs places of worship for various religions, strengthening the symbol of diversity, and establishes a safe space for open discussions about religious differences. The results demonstrate an enhanced understanding of different religions, fostering mutual respect, and cultivating inclusive attitudes and empathy. By embracing religious diversity, Prof. Dr. Moestopo University (Religious) becomes a social laboratory supporting peace and harmony in the broader community. This paper presents a model that can be adopted by other higher education institutions to develop an inclusive and supportive atmosphere in embracing religious diversity.

**Keywords:** Tolerance, Implementation, Harmony, Religious, Universitas Prof. Dr. Moestopo (Beragama)

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In this era of globalization, our society is increasingly interconnected through various media and technologies. In this context, higher education institutions play a crucial role in shaping worldviews and societal values. One significant challenge faced by universities is managing religious diversity on campus. In Indonesia, a country with high religious diversity, creating an inclusive and tolerant campus environment is a necessity. Religious tolerance is not only a value that individuals should possess, but it should also be reflected in the policies and practices of higher education institutions.

Religious tolerance involves openness, acceptance, and respect for differences in beliefs and religious practices among individuals or groups. It entails recognizing and respecting the right of each individual to choose and practice their religious beliefs without pressure, discrimination, or violence. Religious tolerance is not just about respecting the existence of different religious beliefs but also involves a deep understanding of the values, traditions, and cultures inherent in each religion.

Religious tolerance encourages respectful and understanding interfaith dialogue, creating a space for learning from differences rather than condemning them. It involves empathy, patience, and understanding of different perspectives and beliefs. Religious tolerance also entails efforts to combat prejudices, stereotypes, and intolerance that may arise due to religious differences.

In the context of higher education, religious tolerance is not only a moral value but also a vital foundation for creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment. By promoting religious tolerance in higher education, students are empowered to understand, appreciate, and celebrate religious diversity, paving the way for interfaith collaboration and building a peaceful and harmonious society. Therefore, understanding and implementing the concept of religious tolerance in the campus environment is a crucial step in building a more tolerant and inclusive society.

Religious tolerance is a fundamental principle in multicultural societies, serving as a crucial foundation for social harmony. In the context of higher education, religious tolerance is not merely a moral value but also an essential prerequisite for students' intellectual and cultural development. According to Rusmiati (2023), tolerance is an open-minded attitude and acceptance of differences among individuals or groups, including religious differences.

Higher education institutions play a central role in fostering a tolerant attitude towards religion. In this context, higher education has a significant role in developing a deep understanding of tolerance values and in developing interfaith

communication skills. Research by Rusmiati (2022) indicates that tolerance and religious harmony are created through moderate understanding in practicing religion, demonstrated by a balanced approach to one's own religious practices (exclusive) and respect for the religious practices of others with different beliefs (inclusive). Balance (moderate attitude) in religious practices avoids excessive extremist attitudes, fanaticism, and revolutionary approaches to religion.

However, to achieve effective religious tolerance, higher education must consider the complexity of social and religious realities. Rusmiati (2023) highlights the importance of understanding internal dynamics within specific religious communities and the role of religious identity in shaping individual attitudes and behaviors. This indicates that higher education needs to develop a sensitive approach to internal differences in religious beliefs.

Moreover, the success of implementing religious tolerance in higher education also depends on institutional support and campus policies. Higher education institutions must have inclusive policies that protect the rights of all religious practitioners while promoting appreciation for religious diversity. In this regard, policies ensuring religious freedom and addressing religion-based discrimination on campus are crucial steps in creating an inclusive learning environment.

By understanding the complexity of religious tolerance and its implications in higher education, community service activities focused on three main aspects: first, integrating religious tolerance values into the curriculum, equipping students with a profound understanding of religious diversity. Second, organizing interfaith dialogues that foster cross-belief understanding through open and respectful conversations. And third, constructing places of worship for various religions within the campus, creating a physical environment that reflects harmony and respect for diversity.

The implementation of religious tolerance in the campus environment of Prof. Dr. Moestopo University (Religious) is a proactive response to the social and religious dynamics in society, affirming the university's commitment to being a pioneer of inclusive education and building a strong foundation for interfaith harmony in Indonesia's diverse society.

## 2. METHOD

The community service activity "Building Harmony on Campus: Implementation of Religious Tolerance through Inclusive Curriculum, Interfaith Dialogue, and Construction of Places of Worship at Prof. Dr. Moestopo University (Religious)" was carried out through a carefully designed series of stages to achieve the goal of religious harmony in the campus environment. This method is detailed in the following stages:

- a. Needs Analysis and Planning
  - 1) Identification of Challenges: In-depth analysis of the challenges of religious harmony faced in the campus environment, including potential conflicts and tensions that need to be addressed.
  - 2) Consultation with Stakeholders: Discussions and consultations with students, faculty, staff, and community members to understand their perspectives, gather input, and build collective support.
- b. Implementation of Religious Tolerance Programs
  - 1) Development of Inclusive Curriculum: The teaching team designed an inclusive curriculum module that includes religious tolerance values, developed interactive teaching methods, and integrated religious tolerance materials into existing courses.
  - 2) Interfaith Dialogue: Organizing a series of interfaith dialogues involving students, faculty, and community members to create open discussion spaces, address misconceptions, and strengthen cross-religious understanding.
  - 3) Construction of Places of Worship: Planning and implementing the construction of places of worship representing various religions on campus, involving active participation from students, faculty, and the surrounding community.
- c. Monitoring and Evaluation  
Monitoring and Evaluation: The community service team continuously monitored the progress of activities, collected feedback from participants, and conducted regular evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the implemented activities.
- d. Dissemination of Results and Learning
  - 1) Preparation of Reports and Scientific Articles: Compiling activity reports and scientific articles detailing the results, findings, and lessons learned during the implementation process.

- 2) Dissemination of Results: Organizing dissemination events on campus, seminars, or regional workshops to share the activity results with the academic community and the general public, as well as building collaborations with similar institutions.

By following these stages, the community service activity at Prof. Dr. Moestopo University (Religious) aims to successfully implement religious tolerance effectively and sustainably in the campus environment and the surrounding community.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The implementation of community service activities with the theme of religious tolerance implementation in the campus environment was carried out through three activities: through Inclusive Curriculum, Interfaith Dialogue, and the Construction of Places of Worship at Prof. Dr. Moestopo University (Religious). This activity was conducted with dedication and collaboration among students, faculty, and members of the surrounding community. It has been an inspiring journey that created a campus environment promoting tolerance and diversity.

In the first activity, the Development of Inclusive Curriculum, faculty members, together with experts, designed an inclusive curriculum module that encompassed a profound understanding of religious tolerance. They integrated it into various courses, especially the courses on Religious Education, Pancasila, and Citizenship, and created interactive teaching methods. The selection of content and teaching methods was done carefully to ensure relevance and appeal to students from diverse religious backgrounds.

At the initial stage, the academic team gathered to design an inclusive curriculum that not only taught core subjects but also imparted values of religious tolerance. The materials were taught with a holistic approach, combining theory with real-life case studies and encouraging critical thinking. Teaching was conducted in an environment conducive to dialogue and the exchange of ideas among religions. Faculty members were also trained to create an inclusive classroom environment, facilitate open discussions about different religious beliefs, and support the growth of understanding and appreciation for diversity.

During this activity, a significant improvement in understanding and attitudes towards religious tolerance among participants was observed. The research results showed that most participants gained a better understanding of tolerance principles and developed open attitudes towards religious differences. In-depth interviews also indicated that interfaith dialogue and interfaith communication training helped participants see common values among different religious beliefs.

The integration of religious tolerance values into the curriculum created an inclusive learning environment. Students reported that the materials taught broadened their views on other religions, reduced prejudices, and increased empathy towards different religious beliefs. Faculty members also reported positive changes in student participation and responses to inclusive learning.

The second activity was Interfaith Dialogue. The format of this activity involved regular interfaith discussions on relevant, contemporary topics that captured participants' interest. This dialogue aimed not only to educate participants about the principles of other religions but also to teach them listening skills and open-mindedness.



Figure 1. Interfaith dialogue: enhancing understanding of religious tolerance among faculty members

Faculty members, who also acted as panelists, were selected from various religious beliefs: Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism, to provide their perspectives. The discussions were carefully guided, allowing each participant to speak, ask questions, and share experiences. An open and respectful approach was used to stimulate productive dialogue. These sessions allowed participants to explore similarities and differences among their religious beliefs, celebrate diversity, and respond to differences with deeper understanding.

Interfaith dialogue has become an effective platform for understanding differences and building similarities among participants. These open discussions facilitated the exchange of ideas, countered stereotypes, and built appreciation for religious diversity. This was reflected in the active participation of students in dialogue sessions, expressing their beliefs respectfully, and collaborating on further projects.

The third activity was the Construction of Places of Worship. One of the most concrete steps in building harmony was the construction of places of worship for various religions within the campus. The place of worship built in 2023 was a Hindu temple (Pura) located on Campus III UPDM (Religious) at Jalan Swadarma Raya No. 54 Ulujami, South Jakarta. This place of worship involved architects and representatives from Hindu religious leaders. The construction plan was meticulously prepared, taking into account the unique needs of the respective religions.



Figure 2. Temple Inauguration: Hindu Place of Worship

This project engaged students, faculty, and members of the surrounding community who came together to plan and build places of worship representing different religious beliefs. This process involved close collaboration with architects and religious leaders. In designing and constructing places of worship, artistic considerations, architecture, and religious values were carefully respected. This construction was not just about creating physical buildings but also connecting the hearts and minds of people from various religious backgrounds.

The construction of places of worship for various religious beliefs created a physical space that reflected tolerance and respect for diversity. These places of worship have become places to meet, pray, and celebrate religious festivals together. Both students and faculty members felt that the existence of these places of worship instilled a sense of pride and changed their perceptions to be more conducive to religious harmony on campus.



Figure 3. Hindu Worship Activity, UPDM (B) Faculty Members

During and after the implementation of activities, continuous monitoring of participants' attitudes and behaviors was conducted. Surveys, interviews, and observations were used to collect data that were analyzed comprehensively.

During the Monitoring and Evaluation stage, the Community Service Team regularly monitored activity progress through direct observation, evaluation of discussion sessions, and interaction with participants. Data on participation levels, understanding, and participant responses were collected regularly. Likewise, during the Impact Evaluation stage, the Community Service Team conducted evaluations by comparing data before and after the activity. Surveys and interviews were used to measure changes in participants' attitudes, understanding, and participation after attending the activities.

With the careful implementation of these stages, the "Building Harmony on Campus" activities at Prof. Dr. Moestopo University (Religious) have successfully created an environment that promotes religious tolerance, interfaith dialogue, and mutual respect among students, faculty, and the surrounding community.

Although there have been achievements, there are still challenges to overcome, including expanding participant participation, supporting sustainable interfaith cooperation, and integrating religious tolerance values into all aspects of campus life. Opportunities in the future involve developing advanced programs, conducting further research, and collaborating with other institutions to expand the positive impact of these activities in the wider community.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The community engagement activity on the Implementation of Religious Tolerance in Campus Environment: A Community Engagement Study in the Context of Higher Education has created a profound positive impact in shaping an inclusive campus environment and strengthening harmony among various religious beliefs. Through a holistic and collaborative approach, this activity has yielded several significant outcomes:

- 1) **Increased Understanding and Awareness:** Participants in this activity experienced a significant improvement in understanding the values of religious tolerance. They now perceive the diversity of religious beliefs as a richness,

not a barrier. They understand that harmony is not just about respecting differences but also celebrating and enriching life experiences through open dialogue and unconditional acceptance.

- 2) Changes in Attitudes and Behavior: Throughout the implementation of the activity, participants underwent striking changes in attitude. They developed tolerance, empathy, and respect for different religious beliefs. Interfaith interactions and active participation in the construction of places of worship overcame prejudice, broadened minds, and fostered unity among participants.
- 3) Building a Physical Environment Representing Harmony: The construction of places of worship for various religious beliefs within the campus has become a tangible symbol of harmony. These buildings serve not only as places of worship but also as spaces of harmony, where students, faculty, and the community can gather, learn from one another, and appreciate religious diversity.
- 4) Sustainable Learning: The success of this activity is not limited to its execution but extends to a sustainable learning process that has commenced. The success of this activity has inspired the university to integrate the approach of religious tolerance into the curriculum, expand interfaith dialogues to the wider community, and continue inclusive project developments.

With these achievements, this activity has not only brought positive changes in participants' understanding and attitudes but has also laid a strong foundation to reinforce religious harmony within the campus environment and extend it to the broader society. The spirit of collaboration, tolerance, and appreciation for diversity will continue to drive the university and the surrounding community toward building a harmonious and inclusive society in the future.

The outcomes of this initiative provide a direction for other higher education institutions to adopt similar strategies in creating an inclusive environment that values diversity. These implications extend to the societal level, inspiring interfaith dialogues beyond the campus and strengthening the foundation of harmony within the entire community.

In conclusion, this activity not only instigated tangible changes in participants' perceptions and behaviors but also reaffirmed the university's commitment to bolster religious tolerance and weave harmony amid the complexities of a diverse society. The concrete steps taken in this initiative provide a strong foundation for broader social changes, building bridges between different religious beliefs, and emphasizing the importance of harmony in realizing a peaceful and inclusive society.

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