

Review of Freedom of Religion or Belief (KBB) in the Implementation of the Inter-Religious Education Model at the Defense University

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Abstract

After the reform era, Indonesia was once known as a tolerant country that was able to combine religion and democracy. However, in the last five years, this image has begun to be doubted in line with the increasing complexity of diversity and the conflicts that have arisen. Indonesia adopts a mono-religious approach in the setting of religious education, but some institutions adopt an inter-religious model. This article compares views on freedom of religion or belief (KBB) with the management of the Religious Education course at the Defense University, which applies an inter-religious model in the Buddhist Religious Education sub-course. The Review on Freedom of Religion or Belief (KBB) in this study sees that this innovation provides new insights and solutions to overcome the challenges faced in the implementation and sustainability of inter-religious education programs. The Defense University can ensure that the inter-religious education programs they run remain effective and sustainable in creating an environment that is inclusive and respects freedom of religion or belief. It is hoped that through this effort, a new generation of leaders who respect diversity and are able to uphold the values of tolerance, harmony and freedom of religion or belief will continue to be born and develop, for the progress and prosperity of the Indonesian nation.

Keywords: *Freedom of Religion or Belief, Inter-Religious Education Model, Defense University of the Republic of Indonesia.*

A. INTRODUCTION

Data from the Directorate General of Population and Civil Registration (Dukcapil) of the Ministry of Home Affairs shows that in June 2021, Indonesia's population will reach 272.23 million people. Of these, 236.53 million people (86.88%) are Muslims, making the majority of Indonesia's population Muslim. In addition, 20.4 million people (7.49%) are Christians, 8.42 million people (3.09%) are Catholics, 4.67 million people (1.71%) are Hindus, 2.04 million people are (0.75%) are Buddhists, 73.02 thousand people (0.03%) are Confucianists, and 102.51 thousand people (0.04%) adhere to religious beliefs. The province with the largest Muslim population in Indonesia is West Java, with 46.3 million people or 97.29% of the total population, followed by East Java with 39.85 million people (97.21%) and Central Java with 36.21

million soul (97.26%). There are 30 provinces where the majority of the population is Muslim, while only 4 provinces have a Muslim population below 50%. Based on data from the Worldpopulationreview, Indonesia is the country with the largest number of Muslims in 2021, namely around 231 million people. Pakistan is in second place with 212.3 million people, and India is in third place with 200 million Muslim people (Kusnandar, 2021).

The era of reform that began during President BJ. Habibie is characterized by openness, including freedom of the press (Baskoro, 2018). In the past, Indonesia was considered a tolerant country where religion and democracy could develop together. However, in recent years, this view has begun to be questioned. Several incidents, such as the burning of a place of worship in Tanjung Balai in 2016 and the mass protests against the former governor of Jakarta, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (BTP) in the same year, show increasing social intolerance in various parts of Indonesia. In addition, according to data from (freedomhouse.org, 2022), transparency has not been fully achieved over the past three years.

Education is one of the important aspects of human life to develop self-potential, grow intelligence, and produce individuals who are qualified and have complete personalities. In the context of a plural and diverse life, education has a strategic role in creating tolerance, mutual respect and inter-religious harmony. Therefore, a review of freedom of religion or belief (KBB) in the implementation of the inter-religious education model at the Defense University is a relevant topic for analysis.

This article discusses the importance of the inter-religious education model in order to promote freedom of religion and belief within the Defense University. In this era of globalization, where the flow of information, technology, and social change is growing rapidly, it is very important to create an educational environment that is inclusive and able to respect the diversity of beliefs. The Defense University as a higher education institution that focuses on aspects of national defense and security, has a strategic role in creating a generation that is able to maintain and fight for the values of tolerance, harmony, and freedom of religion or belief.

According to legal authorities in Indonesia, the law confirms that religion and religious education adhere to the perspective of a mono-religious education model (Sterkens & Yusuf, 2015). Interestingly, several institutions and universities use the inter-religious model for teaching religion. As was done at the Defense University of the Republic of Indonesia. Under the auspices of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia, the Defense University is a higher education institution that applies an inter-religious education paradigm. In contrast to Malaysia, Pakistan and other countries with one religion. With their diverse populations and secular perspectives, several modern and secular countries embrace an interfaith religious education approach (See also Khairulnizam Mat Karim, Suzy Aziziyana Sail, 2016; Körs & Nagel, 2018; McCowan, 2017; Niemi et al., 2020; Schweitzer, 2022; Slee, 2015). Indonesia has a wide variety of beliefs and religions.

The State Revenue and Expenditure Budget allocates 20% for education. Ministry of religion, in 2021, allocates 55.88 trillion (83.46%) for religion and religious education (S Girivirya, 2022). Budget people who are so prominent often ask whether such a large budget can have a positive impact on Indonesia's progress, especially in building the Indonesian nation and maintaining harmony in the Indonesian government. Indonesia itself adheres to a mono-religious view, which regulates religion and religious education. However, some schools or colleges provide religious education on an interfaith model. In this study, researchers want to see how religious adherents studying at the Defense University perceive their views on freedom of religion or belief using an inter-religious (inter-religious) education model. Furthermore, study program managers manage religious education using this interfaith model.

In this article, the main focus is on the finding that there are rarely universities that provide religious education with a unique inter-religious model. However, there are several universities that apply an inter-religious religious education model, such as the Defense University. In two meetings, students study the values and concepts of Indonesian religions registered at the Ministry of Religion. However, is this inter-religious religious education model compatible with the principles of freedom of religion or belief that have been established by several universities, especially the University of Defense? With the important note that its graduates will later serve a country with diverse religious and philosophical beliefs, Indonesia.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Freedom of Religion or Belief (KBB)

Annex VI, General Comment 22 (1993) The Human Rights Committee, established by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, monitors compliance with Covenant obligations by states parties. The Committee contributes to the development and understanding of international human rights standards by, inter alia, writing "General Comments." This is a commentary on the obligations associated with certain contractual rights and freedoms.

General Comment 22 addresses freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, stating that these rights are "broad and profound." "shall not result in any interference with the enjoyment of any rights under the Covenant, including those under Articles 18 and 27, or in any discrimination against adherents of other religions or non-believers." General Comment 22 addresses freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, stating that these rights are "broad and profound." "shall not result in any interference with the enjoyment of any rights under the Covenant, including those under Articles 18 and 27, or in any discrimination against adherents of other religions or non-believers."

In the Covenant, Article 18 confirms that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including the freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice and to practice it in everyday life. However, such freedoms are subject to legal restrictions necessary to protect the safety, health, public morals or the

fundamental rights of others. States parties to the Covenant are also expected to respect the freedom of parents and guardians to educate their children according to their own beliefs. Meanwhile, Article 27 of the Covenant affirms that persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities shall not be denied the right to recognize and practice their culture, religion or language. This is especially important in countries where ethnic, religious, or linguistic minorities exist, and is important for maintaining harmony and diversity in society.

The fact that a religion is recognized as the state religion or that it is founded does not diminish the enjoyment of any of the rights under the Covenant, including those under Articles 18 and 27, or result in discrimination against adherents of other religions or non-believers (such as atheists, agnostics, deists, spiritualist, and humanist). In particular, measures that discriminate against the latter, such as those that limit eligibility for government services to members of the dominant religion, grant them economic privileges, or impose special restrictions on the practice of other religions, are inconsistent with the prohibition of discrimination. Article 26 guarantees equal protection based on religion or belief. The measures specified in paragraph 2 of article 20 of the Covenant are essential safeguards against violations of the rights of religious minorities and other religious groups to exercise the rights guaranteed in articles 18 and 27, as well as against acts of violence or persecution directed against these groups. The Committee wishes to be informed of the measures taken by the State Party concerned to protect the practice of all religions or beliefs from abuse and adherents from discrimination.

Similarly, the Committee requires information on respect for the rights of religious minorities under article 27 in order to evaluate the extent to which States parties have exercised freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief. States parties must also include in their reports information about practices that are punishable as blasphemy under their domestic laws and jurisprudence. Unfortunately, as represented by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, the government does not accommodate the original beliefs of the Archipelago. Since 2016, the government has replaced Religious Education with Religious Education for local students through the Director of Belief in One Almighty God and Traditions at the Directorate General of Culture, Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia.

Human rights cannot be separated from the perspective of the inter-religious education model regarding freedom of religion or belief. Does the Defense University, as a campus under the auspices of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia, incorporate an overview of the Beliefs of Believers who are not registered with the Ministry of Religion into the content structure of the curriculum for religion courses in this state institution? Of course, referring to this (people's) right, religious education must also be implemented on campuses in Indonesia to treat everyone equally.

2. Model of Inter-Religious Education

The inter-religious religious education model provides broad opportunities for students to understand their religion and learn about other religions or beliefs. This supports the friendly concept of equality with diversity. That the relationship of understanding that is interrelated between what a person believes and various beliefs outside of himself is necessary and exists in this world. Moreover, all humans have equality in believing in their religion or beliefs.

Interfaith religious education allows students to deepen their understanding of their own religion and study other religions or beliefs. This approach supports the concepts of inclusivity and equality in diversity. It is important to build connected understanding relationships between individual beliefs and other beliefs in this world. In addition, every individual has the same right to embrace their own religion or belief (Sterkens & Yusuf, 2015).

Interfaith education focuses on the formation of religious identity through dialogue between adherents of various religious traditions. This model aims to build an individual's religious identity (which in Indonesia, mostly corresponds to one's religion) through dialogue with other religious traditions (Yusuf & Sterkens, 2015). The cognitive goal of this model is to critically analyze the beliefs, values, and rituals of a person and of another religion through dialogue. According to (S Girivirya, 2022) academically, the inter-religious education model refers to an educational approach that promotes understanding, tolerance, and dialogue between different religions and beliefs. This model aims to teach students about different religions and belief traditions, as well as develop the communication skills, empathy and critical thinking needed to respect differences and create an inclusive and tolerant environment.

Inter-religious education usually involves open discussion and dialogue between students from various religious backgrounds, as well as the study of sacred texts, rituals, beliefs, and values shared by various religious traditions. This model helps students to understand their own religion better, while also learning about other people's religions and beliefs. The aim is to encourage mutual respect, build better relations between individuals of different beliefs, and reduce prejudice and conflict that may arise due to ignorance or fear of religious differences.

This inter-religious model aims to teach effective communication between individual religions and other religious traditions efficiently. Through dialogue, this model encourages students to think critically about various religions. Students are expected to learn how to engage in dialogue between their religious traditions and those of other religions. According to (S Girivirya, 2022) in terms of attitude, this model seeks to instill mutual respect and a willingness to dialogue with people from various religious backgrounds. Students engage in dialogue with their own religion and other religions in this context.

C. METHOD

This study applies a descriptive qualitative research design, using standard qualitative research methods, including interviews and observations. Qualitative

design in religious research, as described by (Gerrits & Pagliarin, 2021; Kitchener et al., 2002; Patricia Leavy, 2017; Saldaña, 2013), explores the interaction between work and life of five qualitative religious researchers who study culture and religion. This research reveals how the background, experience, and personal values of education management in religion courses that use the inter-religious model.

The implications of this research relate to qualitative research, cultural studies, and religious education (see also Bowie, 2019; Kallioniemi, 2003; Phillips, 2021; Ratcliff, 2009; The, 2019; Von Der Lippe, 2011; Zhao, 2021). Researchers designed semi-structured interviews for study program managers. All interviews were recorded and transcribed prior to analysis. According to (John W. Creswell, 2014; Kosasih, 2018; Latief et al., 2021; Marshall et al., 2009; O'Keefe, 2009; Stake, 2010), interviews and observations provide various perspectives on learning experiences and religious motivation in schools and colleges.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The interfaith religious education model requires a person to accept and respect the perspectives of other religions through dialogue between the religious views studied. Alternately, a religious viewpoint was adopted. Each religion will be studied through a dialectical process of "seeing" and "seeing," "speaking" and "hearing," "internalization" and "clarification" in the dialogue process (Sterkens & Yusuf, 2015). The inter-religious religious education model can reduce prejudice and negative perceptions of other religions. Therefore, applying this model at least starting from high school will create an intellectual understanding of other religions. Religion is studied as a subject in primary and secondary schools and higher education. This model is very suitable for fostering interreligious dialogue. Thus, there is no prejudice that leads to intolerance.

Religious education based on universal values equips students with the ability to evaluate their behavior towards diversity. According to (Walshe & Teece, 2013), such an evaluation can distinguish between religious expressions that encourage human development and those that hinder it. Moreover, according to this perspective, personal evaluation "begins as an attempt to confront and evaluate religious beliefs and values and becomes a process of self-evaluation." According to him, gaining knowledge from religion requires an objective and subjective evaluation of what one has learned. The ability to critically distinguish and evaluate the truth claims, beliefs and practices of various traditions and religions is an impersonal evaluation. In addition, such personal evaluations may involve applying what students learn from religion to develop a critical worldview.

Before and after the end of the religious education class, the researcher provides an overview of the interfaith model that is currently being applied by Defense University students in class based on the findings of this study. On average, they choose religious education with an interfaith model to familiarize themselves with each other, internalize universal values, and clarify concepts they do not fully understand. As a religious subject, it has the characteristics of the learning domain,

namely affective changes in attitudes that refer to spiritual and social values, as required by the 2013 curriculum. In analyzing the topic "Review of Freedom of Religion or Belief (KBB) in the Implementation of the Inter-Religious at the University of Defense", we can see several academic arguments that support the need for inter-religious education in the context of freedom of religion or belief.

According to several studies, inter-religious education can increase tolerance and mutual understanding between individuals who have different beliefs (Agbaria & Statman, 2022; McCowan, 2017; Mueller, 2005). This is because through inter-religious education, students are given the opportunity to study various religious traditions and beliefs in more depth, so that they can appreciate differences and reduce negative stereotypes that are often attached to certain religious or belief groups (Griggs, 2013). Thus it can foster tolerance and mutual understanding.

Inter-religious education also has the potential to increase social cohesion and unity in diverse societies, as explained by several studies (Muda & Suharyanto, 2020; Sterkens & Yusuf, 2015, 2015; Yousaf & Xiucheng, 2020). Improving social cohesion within the Defense University environment, effective inter-religious education can help create an atmosphere that is conducive to cooperation and mutual support among students and staff from various religious and belief backgrounds.

In the Indonesian context, inter-religious education that is integrated with the values of diversity and Pancasila can strengthen national identity and promote diversity as a wealth that needs to be safeguarded together (Del Castillo et al., 2021; Sulaiman Girivirya, 2023; Niemi et al., 2020 ; Sukdaven, 2018; Ubani et al., 2020). The implementation of the inter-religious education model at the Defense University, as an institution that prepares candidates for national defense and security leaders, will be a good example for other educational institutions in realizing the ideals of diversity and freedom of religion or belief guaranteed by the Constitution to strengthen national identity.

In the current era of globalization, a broad understanding of various religions and beliefs is essential for establishing international cooperation and understanding complex global dynamics (Carmody, 2013; Froese, 2008; Schweitzer, 2022; Sterkens et al., 2015). In the context of the Defense University, the inter-religious education model will equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to face challenges in the field of international defense and security which increasingly require understanding and sensitivity to various beliefs and traditions and can prepare students to face global challenges.

By considering these arguments, implementing an inter-religious education model at the Defense University can be an important and strategic step in creating an inclusive environment, encouraging freedom of religion or belief, and preparing students to face complex global challenges. However, in implementing this inter-religious education model, there are several things that the Defense University needs to pay attention to so that the implementation is effective and achieves the expected goals based on the results of observations and interviews with study program managers.

The Defense University must develop a curriculum and teaching materials that are balanced and fair, covering various religious traditions and beliefs that exist in Indonesia. This teaching material should not only focus on theological aspects, but also cover history, culture, and ethics related to the religion and belief in question. In the learning process, lecturers and teaching staff must use methods that are inclusive and respect diversity, such as group discussions, case studies, and collaborative projects that involve students from various religious and belief backgrounds (Nweke, 2017; Shaver et al., 2016).

The Defense University needs to provide adequate facilities and support for students and staff to carry out worship and religious activities according to their respective beliefs. This includes the provision of inclusive and accessible prayer spaces, as well as support for student and staff organized religious activities. In addition to knowledge about religion and belief, inter-religious education at the Defense University must also emphasize the importance of character education and noble values which include tolerance, empathy and mutual respect, so that students can internalize these values and apply them in everyday life.

To ensure the effectiveness of the inter-religious education model, the Defense University needs to conduct regular evaluations and research, including gathering feedback from students, staff and other stakeholders. The results of this evaluation and research can then be used to improve the inter-religious education model and overcome the challenges and obstacles it faces. By paying attention to these aspects, the implementation of the inter-religious education model at the Defense University is expected to create a generation that is able to maintain and fight for the values of tolerance, harmony, and freedom of religion or belief in an increasingly plural and religious society.

Furthermore, after paying attention to the important aspects of implementing the inter-religious education model at the Defense University, the next step is to develop cooperation between the university, government, and the community in an effort to deal with challenges that may arise in the implementation of this educational model.

Collaboration with religious institutions and faith communities is needed. The Defense University can collaborate with religious institutions and faith communities to hold seminars, workshops and other activities related to inter-religious education. This will enable a wider exchange of knowledge and experience, as well as provide opportunities for students and staff to interact with practitioners of different religions and beliefs.

The government, both at the central and regional levels, has an important role in supporting the implementation of the inter-religious education model at the Defense University. Such support can be in the form of funding, supervision, and policies that facilitate freedom of religion or belief in the educational context, requiring the involvement of the government and stakeholders. Apart from that is to gather community support. Educating the public about the importance of inter-religious education and freedom of religion or belief can help create a conducive

environment for the implementation of this model at the Defense University. Broad community support will be a strong foundation for the success and sustainability of inter-religious education programs.

The Defense University can collaborate with international organizations that have missions and goals that are in line with inter-religious education, such as UNESCO and the Forum for Interreligious Dialogue. This cooperation can include student and staff exchanges, organizing international conferences, and developing joint research and publications.

Continuous evaluation and adjustment: Over time, the Defense University will need to continue to evaluate and adapt the inter-religious education model it employs, taking into account the social, political and cultural changes that are taking place. This is important so that this educational model remains relevant and effective in achieving its goals. By integrating these efforts, the Defense University will be better prepared to face the challenges that may arise as the implementation of the inter-religious education model is implemented. As a result, it is hoped that a new generation that is able to uphold the values of tolerance, harmony, and freedom of religion or belief will continue to grow, face global challenges, and contribute to the development of a more inclusive and harmonious nation.

E. CONCLUSION

The Defense University needs to prioritize the success and sustainability of inter-religious education programs as part of their long-term commitment. The Defense University must regularly monitor and report on the progress and achievements of the inter-religious education program. This reporting is important for assessing program effectiveness and identifying areas that require improvement or adjustment. Effective dissemination of inter-religious education programs to prospective students, lecturers, and the wider community is very important to increase awareness and understanding of the importance of freedom of religion or belief and inter-religious education.

The Defense University must continue to invest time and resources in developing the capacity of lecturers and staff regarding inter-religious education, including training, workshops and knowledge exchange with other institutions that have similar programs. Defense University alumni who have undergone an inter-religious education program have an important role in promoting the success and sustainability of this program. They can become good ambassadors and sources of inspiration for the next generation, as well as help develop networks of cooperation and collaboration in various sectors related to freedom of religion or belief.

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