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PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION IN RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN MINORITY AREAS IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

Tolerance is a mindset and behavior that forbids prejudice towards various groups or groups within a community. Religions that uphold the authenticity and veracity of Islamic teachings include Islam, which instructs people to constantly respect and tolerate others. One of the cities in Indonesia that the government has named a city of tolerance is Kupang. Kupang is a municipality which is also the capital of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) Province, where the Muslim population, including converts to Islam, is only 5% (minority) among the non-Muslim community. The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of communication in promoting religious tolerance in Indonesian minority communities. The research methodology is interpretive and qualitative. FGD, literature research, in-depth interviews, and observation were the methods utilized to acquire the data. Data analysis method for interactive models. The study's findings indicate that religious tolerance in Kupang is running very well. The relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims is harmonious, helping each other, mutual cooperation, and mutual respect for each community's worship processions and major religious events. Large religious events are mutually supervised and shared equally between Muslims and non-Muslims. Even though Muslims only make up 5% in the Kupang area, this does not mean they are a minority among the majority. However, it cannot be denied that conflicts have occurred due to misunderstandings between Muslims and non-Muslims due to a significant lack of communication. Overall nevertheless, Kupang's tolerance for many religions fosters a safe, peaceful, and harmonious environment.

Key words: persuasive communication, religious tolerance, regions, minorities

INTRODUCTION

East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) has 4,683,827 residents, the majority of whom are Christians. The composition of religious adherents is 1,627,157 Catholics, 2,535,937 Protestants, 423,925 Muslims, and 5,271 Hindus (BPS NTT, 2022). Of the 20 districts and 1 city in NTT, there are 3 city districts that directly border the country of Timor Leste, namely Belu Regency and Rote Ndao Regency, which borders the Timor Sea (Timor Leste). Since 2015, Belu Regency has been divided into Malacca Regency. The composition of the population based on religion in Belu Regency (before it was expanded) was 316,480 Catholics, 25,055 Protestants, 9,716 Muslims and 425 Hindus. Meanwhile, Rote Regency has 112,501 Catholics, 2,033 Protestants, 5,141 Muslims and 75 Hindus. With this Muslim population, Belu Regency has 29 Koran instructors/teachers, four preachers, 30 khatibs and 7 ulama. Discovering the effectiveness of communication in promoting religious tolerance in Indonesia's minority communities is the goal of this study. The urgency of this research, academically, is to examine persuasive communication theory applied in minority areas, especially building relationships and religious tolerance. Meanwhile, the practical urgency is to provide an overview of religious tolerance through interaction and persuasive communication between the Muslim community and converts to Islam and the non-Muslim population.

There are many rumors circulating that Islam is radical, intolerant, and bigoted. Islam is full of violence, so it is far from peaceful. One of the cities in Indonesia that the government has named a city of tolerance is Kupang. Kupang is a municipality which is also the capital of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) Province, where the Muslim population, including converts to Islam, is only 5% (minority) among the non-Muslim community. The city of Kupang is called a city of tolerance because it is known to possess a high threshold for tolerance.

Olson and Zanna define persuasion as a change in attitude resulting from exposure to information from other people. Sedlovskaya et al., wrote that the division of life into public and private spheres is a defining characteristic of modernity [1]. However, this active self-monitoring or concealment affects a large proportion of people with stigmatized identities who may experience negative consequences if the stigma becomes public. A segmented self (as opposed to an integrated self) can threaten one's well-being and is associated with vulnerability to depression. The goal of persuasive communication is to persuade or transform someone's convictions, dispositions, and conduct in order to act as expected by the communicator. Meanwhile, according to Fisher, persuasive communication is a tool to influence society and change the attitudes of its recipients. What needs to be paid attention to in communication is not only the words but also the condition of the communicator himself. According to Larson, persuasive communication means having equal opportunities to influence each other, informing the audience about the purpose of persuasion, and considering the presence of the audience. The term persuasion comes from the Latin word *persuasion*, which means to persuade, invite or seduce. Persuasion can be done rationally and emotionally, usually touching on the affective aspect, namely things related to emotional life, usually touches on the affective aspect, namely things related to a person's emotional life. Through emotional means, a person's aspects of sympathy and empathy can be aroused.

According to Aristotle, communication is built by three fundamental elements, namely the person who speaks, the material they produce, and the person who listens. The elements of persuasive communication consist of: 1) **Persuaders**. 2) **Persuadee**. 3) **Perception**. 4) **Persuasive Message**. Message is what the communicator says through words, gestures and tone of voice. It consists of the disposition when speaking, the arguments and considerations used, as well as the material presented. In a narrower context, the choice of words and nonverbal signs, together constitute the presentation/display of the message. In a broad concept, a message is anything that provides understanding to the recipient. So, in this case it includes words, movements, body, tone of voice, the recipient's reaction to the content of the message, the media, the source as a person, to actions and/or non-actions that occur in society. Messages are closely related to the response-stimulus, stimulus-response mechanism. Messages can be dynamic because of active actions from persuaders and persuaders. 5) **Persuasive Channels**. 6) **Feedback and Effects**. Individuals react to form certain attitude patterns [2].

Due to the presence of local wisdom as cultural capital and legacy, religious communities can coexist peacefully. Muslim, Hindu, and Christian religious adherents all hold the same progenitor to be their ancestry. Different religious groups coexist peacefully, even within a single household. Due to the presence of local wisdom as cultural capital and legacy, religious communities can coexist peacefully. Muslim, Hindu, and Christian religious adherents all hold the same progenitor to be their ancestry. Different religious groups coexist peacefully, even within a single household [3]. Hindus use community development initiatives to fortify their religious foundations and raise religious consciousness as part of their institutional strategy for preserving harmony. The research's findings suggest that Hindus should be more conscious of the need to preserve harmony among the variety of populations residing in outlying areas [4]. Science provides the best radar for the most ideal social development, enhanced by the philosophical underpinnings of culture and religion [5].

Rousseau's interpretation of soft power entails winning over the contemporary religious notion of soft power [6]. the idea that ethnic diversity can harm social cohesiveness by conducting an empirical investigation into the body of research on the connection between ethnicity and multiculturalism on a global scale. The analysis focuses on how Canadian society views various ethnic groups in order to gauge the extent of ethnic intolerance [7]. There is harmony and balance between Islam and the Jalawastu heritage. People's everyday lives make this evident. They both adhere to Islamic principles and uphold ancestors' customs. These rituals have endured for a very long time, even in this modern period, since people are loyal to their traditions [8]. Compared to students at Islamic boarding schools, Muslim students attending state schools and madrassas are noticeably more tolerant, and both student groups exhibit equivalent levels of tolerance [9]. Maintaining a multiple culture through multicultural education is crucial to preventing conflicts that cause disagreements and rifts [10].

The construction of mosques was controversial because certain religious and political elites saw mosques as instruments of political domination. After the elites of the New Order endorsed the mosque's construction, the debate diminished [11]. The current state of affairs indicates a loss for the rights of religious and cultural minority

groups. Intercultural competency and local wisdom play a crucial role in fostering tolerance [12]. In many parts of the world, managerial conduct is influenced by religious observance. Certain aspects of the negotiation process benefit from the negotiators' shared religious commitment [13]. In today's socio-scientific discourse, concerns over the effects of cultural ignorance and bigotry are common. Misunderstandings and divisions between individuals from diverse ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural origins arise due to inappropriate socio-political, psychological, and cultural circumstances [14]. The intersection of religion and ethnicity reflects distinct cultural underpinnings and engages in communicative persuasive action. Intersection of religion and ethnicity reflects distinct cultural underpinnings and engages in communicative persuasive action [15]. Due to the delicate and complicated nature of religion, it is crucial to fortify the bonds that exist across religious groups. With radicalism becoming a bigger problem in Indonesia, this contribution is extremely important [16]. Younger generations are devoted to ideals that reject radicalism, and when they are faced with difficult decisions, dissonance arises in their dedication to ideals and group identity [17]. People who feel superior to others often get irritated and try to control the conversation [18].

When the demographics of the target audience fit the message's theme and structure, populist communications will have greater impact. Reading communications phrased in a populist manner as opposed to a pluralist one caused people who were more fearful of social concerns to display more populist sentiments, and populist messaging also led to politicians assigning more blame to themselves [19]. Populist discourse as a framework for identity The spread of populist political discourse is crucial to the emergence of populist beliefs [20]. Based on constructive pluralism, which allows students to respect their views while comprehending, tolerating, and dealing with those who hold different opinions, pluralistic Islamic religious education has grown in Indonesia [21]. Islamic education textbooks have the potential to promote and encourage intolerance among pupils who may misidentify them with Islamic doctrines [22]. Although linguistic similarity is not truly isomorphic to overall similarity assessments, narrative character accents are a powerful indicator of similarity judgments [23]. Studies that look at how religious people's preferences relate to how they deontologically evaluate ethical circumstances. When considering ethical arguments for mitigating the effects of climate change, deontological arguments are generally viewed by religious respondents as more persuasive than utilitarian ones [24]. Given the diversity of religions and beliefs practiced by Indonesian society, tolerance for plurality is essential. Respect for diversity can be fostered through religious education, which can be quite effective. In terms of encouraging respect for plurality and cultivating favorable attitudes in students toward plurality, religion education plays a very high-quality role in higher education. By encouraging them to participate in interfaith discussions or visit sites of worship, lecturers help students develop a greater tolerance for adherents of different religions [25].

METHOD

A qualitative research methodology is used in this study. Data collection was carried out through focus group discussions, observations and in-depth interviews with two priests in Rote, five congregations, two non-Muslim Malacca residents, and three preachers. Research employing inductive reasoning is known as qualitative data analysis. Data activities are carried out continually until completion, until the data is saturated, according to the interactive model data analysis technique. The data analysis process consists of the following stages: 1) Reduction of Data. In order to clean up the image and facilitate the collection and retrieval of additional data, researchers must compress their data by summarizing, identifying key points, concentrating on what matters, and searching for themes and patterns. 2) Data Display. Examining the data comes next, following data reduction. Data presentation in qualitative research may take the shape of flowcharts, charts, flow descriptions, and other similar visual aids. It will be simpler to comprehend what occurred and plan future work based on the understanding gained by going over the facts. 3) Determining and validating conclusions.

RESEARCH RESULT

Based on observations and in-depth interviews with three preachers, five congregations, two pastors in Rote, and two non-Muslim residents in Malacca, it can be identified that religious harmony and tolerance in Kupang has been going well and is in the tolerant category. Related to the implementation of worship, if any Major Muslim religious events are guarded by police with Christian identities to oversee the implementation of the event. Likewise, vice versa, if there is a Christian event, then Muslim brothers will supervise the implementation of the event. So it can be concluded, each of them maintains each other's comfort in tolerating. For example, during Idhul Adha,

Christians and Catholics also share sacrificial ivory, even eating it together in the homes of Muslims and non-Muslims. This was said by informants, both Muslim and non-Muslim, as a means of strengthening relationships and establishing friendship. So it can be said that the relationship between Christians and Muslims is very close. Distribution of sacrificial animals to non-Muslims during Eid al-Adha, as a bond of love, which can show the high level of tolerance among religious communities in Kupang. In fact, non-Muslim widows are often given rice by Muslims, and vice versa. Religious harmony is very conducive and there is no friction. Muslim residents state that religious life respects each other and Muslims often help and work together in social life. It is proven that every Christmas celebration, Muslim citizens help maintain the safety and comfort of non-Muslim citizens in celebrating the holy night. Muslims always share with non-Muslims fairly and equally.

Even though Muslims are a minority population (only 5%), they do not hesitate to help or donate to non-Muslim families if they experience a disaster or are having an event. Non-Muslims do not feel disturbed by the sound of the call to prayer and the recitation and reading of the holy verses of the Koran using loud speakers. The strains of holy verses and lectures sung by preachers and Muslim congregations are even able to shake the hearts of some non-Muslims who find serenity to be peaceful and comfortable. What's interesting is that it turns out that the sound of the call to prayer, especially the morning call to prayer, according to non-Muslims, actually helps Christians and Catholics to wake up in the morning. So that it can be felt that all Muslims and non-Muslims can live in harmony and respect each other. Through persuasive and assertive communication it can help to build relationships and approach Catholic and Christian religious figures more optimally in order to create empathy and tolerance so that all religious activities can be supported jointly and comprehensively. Even though tolerance has been going well, occasionally there have been conflicts between Muslims and non-Muslims due to lack of communication. For example, when non-Muslims marry Muslims and then convert to Islam, sometimes if it is not communicated well, it will cause family conflict. But such problems can be resolved well when two families sit together to discuss.

CONCLUSION

Religious tolerance in Kupang is going very well. The relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims is harmonious, helping each other, mutual cooperation, and mutual respect for each community's worship processions and major religious events. Large religious events are mutually supervised and shared equally between Muslims and non-Muslims. Even though Muslims only make up 5% in the Kupang area, this does not mean they are a minority among the majority. However, it cannot be denied that conflicts have occurred due to misunderstandings between Muslims and non-Muslims due to a significant lack of communication. However, comprehensively, religious tolerance in Kupang is very conducive and creates an atmosphere of safety, comfort, harmony and tranquility.

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