

The Role of Religion in Understanding Global Conflict and Peace: Study on adolescents in one of the Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia

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Article Info

Article history:

Received October 2023

Revised October 2023

Accepted October 2023

Keywords:

Islamic boarding school

Teenagers' perspectives

Religion and peace

International conflict

Religious beliefs

Pro-peace attitudes

ABSTRACT

Within the framework of an Islamic boarding school in Indonesia, this study explores how religion shapes teenagers' perspectives on world violence and peace. 300 individuals were surveyed using a quantitative research design to examine their attitudes toward peace, views of international conflict, and religious beliefs. The findings show that the participants have a strong commitment to Islamic teachings, a sophisticated grasp of international problems, and largely favourable sentiments toward peace initiatives. There is a strong positive correlation between religious beliefs and pro-peace attitudes, according to correlation and regression analyses. These findings have ramifications for educational policies and interfaith activities, as well as providing empirical insights into the conversation on the influence of religion on the viewpoints of adolescents.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The intersection of religion, global conflict and peace is a multi-faceted area with consequences in the broader sphere of international relations. The relationship between religion and global conflict is multifaceted and complex. It is shaped by a variety of factors, including the specific context in which perceptions are constructed, the role of religious and civil authorities, and the effectiveness of interfaith dialog.

One perspective is that religion can be a source of conflict, particularly when radical views are adopted within religious communities. This is often influenced by a post-secular worldview held by non-religious actors. The assumption is that radicalization may lead to violent conflict. This perspective is often shaped by events of the past two decades, with policy attention increasingly spent on policing religious communities perceived to be at risk of adopting radical views [1].

In contrast, there is also a perspective that religion can promote peace and tolerance. For instance, in Cameroon, local NGO staff perceive religion as a promoter of peace, with the country's diverse religious landscape and history of peaceful coexistence offering structures that contain possible tensions between religious groups. Conflicts relating to issues of religion are often explained against a specific contextual backdrop of political instability and socioeconomic hardship [1]. Religious authorities also play a significant role in combating religious extremism and terrorism. For example, in Malaysia, the Islamic religious authorities collaborate with the federal government to combat religious extremism and terrorism. The ideological, theological, and philosophical dimensions of religious extremism and terrorism are dealt with by the Islamic religious authorities of the states [2].

Interfaith dialogue is another important aspect of the relationship between religion and global conflict. It can be an effective instrument for bridging international differences and achieving conflict resolution [3]. For instance, the Universitas Pendidikan

Indonesia Lab School has initiated a concept of religious education and conflict resolution to build a culture of tolerance and interfaith dialogue among Muslim and non-Muslim students [4].

However, it's important to note that the relationship between religion and global conflict is not always straightforward. For example, religious extremism can be reported in the media in a way that leads to misperceptions about certain religions, contributing to social disharmony and the spread of Islamophobia [5].

Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, does offer a unique environment to explore the impact of Islamic teachings on adolescents' perceptions and attitudes towards global issues. Based on the results of existing research, there are several factors that influence the perceptions and attitudes of adolescents in Indonesia towards global issues.

First, knowledge and education play an important role in shaping adolescents' perceptions and attitudes. A study showed that the knowledge of adolescents in Lombok Island about the issue of global warming is positively related to their behavior towards the issue [6]. This shows that education and knowledge about global issues can influence adolescents' attitudes and behaviors.

Secondly, Islamic teachings and values also influence adolescents' perceptions and attitudes. For example, research on the influence of schoolgirls' perception of the jilbab on their motivation to wear the jilbab shows that the perception of the jilbab can influence the motivation to use it [7]. This shows that Islamic teachings and values can influence adolescents' perceptions and attitudes towards certain issues.

Third, the social and cultural environment also plays a role in shaping adolescents' perceptions and attitudes. For example, research on the effect of understanding the adverse effects of smoking on smokers' empathy shows that understanding and knowledge of the adverse effects of smoking can affect smokers' empathy [8]. This shows that the social and

cultural environment can influence adolescents' perceptions and attitudes.

The study's focus on Islamic boarding school permits a thorough examination of the social and educational processes that influence how people's perceptions of war and peace are formed. While the connection between religion and world dynamics is well known, little is known about the precise processes through which religious convictions shape young people's perceptions of world war and peace. This study aims to close this gap by conducting a thorough quantitative analysis of how religion shapes adolescents' attitudes in a chosen Islamic boarding school in Indonesia. Given that adolescence is a formative period of life and is essential for the formation of beliefs and attitudes, focusing on this demographic is deliberate. Future trends in international relations and peacebuilding can be predicted by taking an informed look at how religious practices and teachings shape teenagers' worldviews in response to global challenges.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Religion and Global Conflict

Scholars have long debated the role of religion as both a potential source of conflict and a force for peace. Samuel Huntington's seminal work, "The Clash of Civilizations," postulates that cultural and religious differences will be the primary drivers of conflict in the post-Cold War era. Huntington's thesis, while influential, has faced criticism for oversimplifying the complexities of global relations and neglecting instances where religious diversity contributes to peaceful coexistence [3], [9], [10].

Conversely, proponents of interfaith dialogue and understanding argue that religions, when interpreted and practiced peacefully, can be instrumental in conflict resolution. The work of John Paul Lederach, a pioneer in conflict transformation, emphasizes the importance of religious leaders and communities in fostering reconciliation and peacebuilding [11]–[13].

2.2 Religion and Peacebuilding

Religious institutions and leaders have played pivotal roles in peacebuilding initiatives worldwide. The interfaith movement, exemplified by organizations like Religions for Peace, seeks to harness the positive potential of religious diversity to address global challenges. Case studies of successful interfaith peacebuilding, such as the work in post-genocide Rwanda, underscore the capacity of religious actors to contribute to healing and reconciliation [14]–[16].

Moreover, studies suggest that individuals with strong religious beliefs may exhibit higher levels of empathy and compassion, attributes that can contribute to a culture of peace. Religious teachings often emphasize values such as justice, forgiveness, and love, providing a moral framework that can be conducive to conflict resolution [17]–[19].

2.3 Adolescents and Religious Development

The adolescent stage is indeed a critical period for the development of beliefs and attitudes, including religious perspectives. Various factors such as educational environments, family structures, and peer interactions play a significant role in shaping these beliefs and attitudes [20], [21].

In the context of Indonesia, Islamic boarding schools, known as Islamic boarding school, are particularly influential in shaping the religious identity and worldview of adolescents. A study on religious moderation in three Islamic boarding schools in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia, found that these institutions foster an attitude of religious moderation among their students. This attitude is constructed from a combination of religious textual-scriptural basis and the performance of rationality (reason). This combination leads to a dialogical pattern of harmony between the text and the context, influencing the behavior and social actions of the community. This attitude of religious moderation can prevent residents of Islamic boarding schools from behaving radically both in attitude and thought. As a result, the outputs of Islamic boarding school can accept

all forms of differences in religion and respect the beliefs believed by others in the community [22].

The study also found that the attitude of religious moderation in the Islamic boarding school emerges in religious behavior that is tolerant and respectful of differences in society. This attitude is crucial in a country like Indonesia, which is home to the largest Muslim population globally and accommodates a variety of religious traditions. The national philosophy, Pancasila, emphasizes unity in diversity, acknowledging the importance of religious pluralism in the Indonesian socio-political fabric [22].

2.4 Research Gaps and Contributions

While the existing literature provides valuable insights into the relationship between religion, conflict, and peace, there is a noticeable gap concerning the specific mechanisms through which religious beliefs influence the perspectives of adolescents on global issues, particularly within the context of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. This research aims to contribute to filling this gap by employing a quantitative approach to systematically analyze the role of religion in shaping the attitudes of adolescents toward global conflict and peace. By focusing on the Indonesian context, this study also aims to enrich the literature on the interplay between Islam, adolescence, and perspectives on global issues.

3. METHODS

This study adopts a quantitative research design to systematically collect and analyze data, aiming to test the research questions in a structured and empirical manner. A cross-sectional survey approach will be applied, providing a picture of the religious beliefs, perceptions of global conflict, and attitudes towards peace of the targeted population.

3.1 Population and Sample Selection

The population under study consists of adolescents enrolled in an Islamic boarding school in Indonesia. A stratified random sampling technique will be used to ensure

representative coverage of the different grade levels in the school. Consent will be obtained from participants and their guardians to ensure ethical considerations, a total of 300 samples are involved in this study.

3.2 Data Collection

Data will be collected through a structured questionnaire designed specifically for this study. The questionnaire will consist of several sections to collect information:

1. Demographic variables: Including age, gender, and education level.
2. Religious beliefs and practices: Measures the depth and observance of Islamic teachings.
3. Perceptions of global conflict: Explores participants' awareness and understanding of global issues.
4. Attitude towards peace initiatives: Investigating their inclination and openness to peacebuilding efforts.

The questionnaires will be pretested for clarity, relevance, and cultural appropriateness. Data collection will be conducted with the help of trained researchers to maintain consistency and reduce bias.

3.3 Instrumentation

The study will use standardized instruments adapted to the cultural and religious context of the study. These instruments include:

1. Religious Belief Scale: Assesses the strength and nature of religious beliefs.
2. Conflict Perception Scale: Measures participants' understanding and interpretation of global conflicts.
3. Peace Attitudes Scale: Measures attitudes towards peace initiatives and activities.

These instruments will be selected or modified based on their proven reliability and validity in previous research.

3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data will be rigorously analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) statistical software. Analysis will include:

1. Descriptive statistics: Summarizes key features of the data set.
2. Correlation analysis: Examining the relationship between variables, particularly the correlation between religious beliefs and attitudes towards global conflict and peace.
3. Regression analysis: Determining predictors of attitudes towards global conflict and peace, with a focus on the role of religious beliefs.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the quantitative results obtained from the analysis of data collected from 300 adolescents in an Islamic boarding school in Indonesia. The discussion interprets these findings in the broader context of the role of religion in shaping attitudes towards global conflict and peace.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics

The study involved 300 adolescents, with a gender distribution of 70% male and 30% female. The sample was stratified by grade level, to ensure representation from different levels of education. This diverse demographic profile enhances the generalizability of the research findings.

4.2 Religious Beliefs and Practices

The Religious Beliefs scale revealed a strong adherence to Islamic teachings among the participants. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 indicating strong adherence, the average score was 4.23, indicating a high level of commitment to religious beliefs. In addition, 85% of participants reported engaging in daily religious practices, including prayer, reading the Quran, and participation in Islamic rituals.

4.3 Perceptions of Global Conflict

Analysis of the Conflict Perceptions Scale showed varying perspectives among the teens. On a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 indicating a very nuanced understanding of global conflict, the average score was 5.42, indicating a relatively high awareness. This suggests that the religious education received in Islamic boarding school contributes to a more informed and empathetic view of global issues.

4.4 Attitude toward Peace Initiatives

The Peace Attitudes Scale measures participants' attitudes toward peacebuilding initiatives. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 indicating a very positive attitude, the average score was 4.67, indicating a generally favorable disposition towards peace initiatives. 92% of participants expressed a strong inclination to support activities aimed at promoting peace.

4.5 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis explored the relationship between religious beliefs and attitudes toward global conflict and peace. The Pearson correlation coefficient between religious beliefs and attitudes towards peace initiatives was 0.682, indicating a statistically significant positive correlation ($\text{sig} < 0.05$). This suggests that adolescents with stronger religious beliefs are more likely to exhibit favorable attitudes towards peace initiatives.

4.6 Regression Analysis

The regression analysis aimed to identify predictors of attitudes towards global conflict and peace. Although various factors were included in the analysis, strength of religious belief emerged as a significant predictor ($\beta = 0.552$, $\text{sig} < 0.01$). This indicates that, in the context of Islamic boarding school, the intensity of religious beliefs plays an important role in shaping attitudes towards global dynamics.

Discussion

The findings are consistent with previous research, showing how religious instruction can help teenagers develop empathy, compassion, and a predisposition for peace [23]–[25]. The robust association seen between religious convictions and favorable dispositions towards peace initiatives highlights the significant impact of religious education in molding the perspectives of teenagers residing in an Islamic boarding school. The participants' sophisticated comprehension of international conflicts might be ascribed to the religious education curriculum's emphasis on critical thinking. This implies that the combination of religious instruction and analytical abilities

enables teenagers to critically interact with intricate geopolitical realities.

Although the results are particular to the Indonesian Islamic boarding school that was chosen, they have wider ramifications for interfaith activities and educational practices. Educational establishments, especially those with a religious orientation, have the opportunity to utilize the constructive qualities of religious instruction to impart principles that promote harmony and comprehension [26]–[33]. It is critical to recognize the survey's limitations, such as its self-report format and any inherent biases. Subsequent investigations may delve into the enduring effects of religious instruction on young people's civic involvement and offer qualitative perspectives into the real-life encounters of teenagers attending Islamic residential schools.

Implications and Recommendations

The study's findings imply that religious instruction, especially at Islamic boarding schools, can be extremely important in fostering attitudes that promote peace. The ability of religious instruction to promote world peace should be acknowledged by educational policymakers, who should think about incorporating these ideas into more comprehensive curriculum.

Interfaith projects that foster communication between various religious communities have the potential to strengthen the connections between various religious viewpoints. Future studies should examine the long-term effects of religious education on

the worldviews of teenagers and take into account cross-cultural and cross-religious comparisons.

5. CONCLUSION

The study's findings emphasize the critical influence that religious instruction, especially in Islamic boarding schools, has on teenage attitudes regarding world peace and warfare. The participants showed a strong dedication to Islamic principles, which was shown in their sophisticated grasp of world affairs and their largely supportive views toward peace initiatives. The association between religious convictions and pro-peace sentiments emphasizes how religious teachings have the capacity to develop compassion and empathy, which will promote world harmony. The study emphasizes the need for ecumenical endeavors to improve understanding across varied religious communities and proposes implications for educational programs that capitalize on the good potential of religious teachings, while acknowledging the context-specific nature of the findings. To enhance our comprehension of the relationship between religion, education, and attitudes toward global dynamics, future research endeavors may investigate the enduring effects of religious education and delve into the real-life experiences of teenagers in various cultural and religious contexts.

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