Student Religious Literacy: A Study of Student Religious Book Preferences State Universities in Indonesia

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan, dan menganalisis: (1) preferensi baca buku keagamaan; (2) literasi agama, faktor-faktor berpengaruh atas kecenderungan preferensi baca buku keagamaan, dan (3) menyusun rekomendasi pengembangan buku keagamaan Perguruan Tinggi Umum Negeri. Penelitian menggunakan metoda survey dan literatur review. Populasi adalah mahasiswa Perguruan Tinggi Umum Negeri di Pulau Jawa, yang beragama Islam, meliputi: DKI Jakarta, Banten, Jawa Barat, Jawa Tengah, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, dan Jawa Timur. Masing-masing provinsi ditetapkan dua Perguruan Tinggi Umum Negeri, kecuali Banten sampel 560 responden, dengan sebaran antara 53-60 responden. Teknik pengumpul data menggunakan literatur review. Hasil penelitian: *Pertama*, Preferensi baca buku keagamaan, berada pada tingkat "sedang", disebabkan sejumlah faktor diantaranya : (1) kesibukan tugas perkulihan yang menyita waktu, (2) motivasi rendah karena persepsi isu agama sebagai "personal rights", (3) lingkungan Pendidikan Agama Islam yang kurang "motivating",*"reinforcing",* (4) ketersediaan buku keagamaan kurang sesuai dengan kebutuhan mahasiswa,dan (5) kurang kondusifnya iklim akademik yang membatasi kebebasan, keluasan baca buku keagamaan. *Kedua,* Literasi agama, dimensi mikro, pada posisi sedang yakni preferensi baca buku agama "cukup" signifikan berpengaruh terhadap pengembangan kemampuan mahasiswa. Kontribusi penelitian: (1) menyediakan peta faktual preferensi buku agama/keagamaan pada generasi milenial di Perguruan Tinggi

Umum Negeri dalam rentang tahun 2018-2022. (2) kebijakan penyusunan, penyediaan buku keagamaan Perguruan Tinggi Umum. Negeri.

Kata Kunci: Literasi Keagamaan, Mahasiswa, Preferensi Buku Keagamaan

Abstract

This study aims to describe and analyze: (1) preference for reading religious books; (2) religious literacy, factors that influence the preference for reading religious books, and (3) formulate recommendations for the development of religious books in State Public Universities. This research used the survey method and literature review. The population is students at State Public Universities in Java, who are Muslims, including: DKI Jakarta, Banten, West Java, Central Java, Yogyakarta Special Region, and East Java. Each province has two State Public Universities, except for Banten, with a sample of 560 respondents, with a distribution of 53-60 respondents. Data collection techniques using literature review. The results of the study: First, the preference for reading religious books is at a „medium" level, due to a number of factors including: (1) time-consuming college assignments, (2) low motivation due to perceptions of religious issues as „personal rights", (3) an Islamic Religious Education environment that is less „motivating", „reinforcing", (4) the availability of religious books is not suitable for students' needs, and (5) the academic climate is less conducive which limits freedom, the breadth of reading religious books. Second, religious literacy, the micro dimension, is in a moderate position, namely the preference for reading religious books „sufficiently"has a significant effect on the development of students' abilities. Research contributions: (1) provide a factual map of preference for religious/religious books in the millennial generation at public universities in the 2018-2022 range. (2) drafting policy, providing religious books for public higher education.

Keywords: Religious Literacy, Religious Book, Preferences, Student

Introduction

Religion plays an important role in people's lives. More than 80% of the world's population of 7.6 billion „recognizes" the existence of Religion. Only 16% of the world's population „denies"or denies the existence and role of Religion. Religion shapes religious behavior on its various dimensions—beliefs, experiences, rituals, knowledge, and its relationship to other dimensions of life (Glock, Charles Y., & Stark, 1996). Indisputably, Religion has a high social significance in (a) saving human beings by formulating life orientations and goals (Otto, 1946), (b) guiding religious experiences, (c) teaching religious rites, traditions, and knowledge, (d) shaping religious relations and communities, (e) acting out the functions of social and prophetic control of Religion, controlling deviant and criminal acts very complex and (f) establishing nationalism and (g) enriching the cultural heritage of the nation.From a macro perspective, the existence of Religion remains „one of the most important issues of the world." Religion is believed to have „transforming & shaping power"

or changeability that can change the ideas, worldviews, culture, social behavior, and order of daily life of its adherents (Yinger, 1960). Religion acts as a function of social and prophetic control of Religion, controlling deviant and criminal acts very complex (Adamczyk, A., Freilich, J.D., Kim, 2017) and building nationalism (Gellner, 1997) as well as enriching the cultural heritage of the nation (Smart, 1989). Religion is a driving force in the development of a nation, especially a nation with a majority religious population. However, at the same time, Religion is suspected of being the „primary cause of violence and global conflicts ". Not only is it an integrating factor, unifying the religious community, but it also has the potential to become a disintegrating factor as a trigger for faith-based social conflicts. Theological differences, rituals, relationship principles, and political affiliations between followers are often the root of political contestation and never-ending social conflict. Religion is often a triggering factor of social conflicts, both internal religious conflicts, between different religions and with the Government in its various modus operandi. Acts of intolerance, discrimination, persecution, paganism, bullying, destruction of houses of worship, ridicule in cyberspace, and other modes of hostile acts are examples of the impact of religious illiteracy. Religion has the potential to become „a potent social force"that encourages war and peace with others (Smart, 1989). Studies in various parts of the world, such as Guiso, Sapienza, and Zingales, prove that Religion is often the cause of political violence in its various forms.

One of the causes of conflictual situations in society is the lack of solid religious literacy. Religious non-literacy is still growing in society. Religious iterations have not been fully cultured. The level of awareness, understanding, interpretation, and social interaction of religious communities is still low, and Literation Keagamaan has not been able to condition the establishment of a unified, dialogical, respectful, harmonious, and peaceful social life system. In contrast, the phenomenon of Religious irritation thrives in various countries. Studies in several multicultural and multireligious countries found low Literation Keagamaan or high and religious irritation which triggered the social conflict.

The phenomenon of religious literation, which is characterized by the development of truth claims, ritual pride, majority arrogance, fanaticism, and social prejudice, nourishes acts of violence, intolerance, antipathy, and demonization of adherents of other religions, such as the tragedy of ethnic cleansing in Myanmar in 2013. On a broad spectrum, religious

literation becomes a disruptive factor for social stability as a prerequisite for determining the success of the nation's development and progress. Therefore, socio-politically, "Battling religious illiteracy," according to Ali Hasani, is a natural necessity to be carried out in the era of strengthening civil society.

Along with the policy of strengthening religious harmony, this study tries to analyze to strengthen religious literacy. To this end, the study of religious literation of the general public college student community became important. It is most important to map out what reading preferences look like to be associated with how literation of students as the nation's next generation and strategic agents of social change. This study aims to describe and analyze: (1) Reading preferences of religious books (2) student religious literacy; and influential factors on students' tendency to read religious books; (3) Develop recommendations for the development of religious books for State Public Universities. It is hoped that the research will be able to provide a factual map of millennial religious/religious book preferences in the *Perguruan Tinggi Umum Negeri* in the 2020-2022 period and contribute as a policy input in the preparation and provision of religious books at the higher educations (Perguruan Tinggi Umum Negeri).

Research Method

The study used the survey method to obtain primary data through several questions to respondents to obtain information from groups representing the population. The study population was *Perguruan Tinggi Umum Negeri* students in Java who are Muslims, including DKI Jakarta, Serang Province, West Java, Central Java, Yogyakarta, and East Java). From each province, two PTUN were determined, except Banten Province, with a sample of 560 respondents, with a distribution between 53-60 people.

Table 1. Research samples

No	Provinsi	PTN	Sum
1	Banten	Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa	61
2	DKI Jakarta	Universitas Indonesia	53
		Universitas Negeri Jakarta	55
3	Jawa Barat	Institut Teknologi Bandung	55
		Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia	58
4	Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta	Universitas Gajah Mada	60
		Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta	59
5	Jawa Tengah	Universitas Diponegoro	58
		Universitas Negeri Semarang	53
6	Jawa Timur	Universitas Airlangga	60
		Universitas Negeri Surabaya	60
	Sum		630

The research uses a "mixed method" approach, with combinative data collection techniques between fieldwork (interviews, discussions, observations, measurements with a scale of scales, documentative studies) and source studies, which are analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

Ressearch Finding

Respondent Profile

Three focuses were presented in the discussion of the findings: (1) the respondents' description, (2) the level of reading preferences of students' religious books, and (3) the religious literacy of students as a direct or indirect impact of the tendency to religious book preferences. The respondents to this study *were Perguruan Tinggi Umum Negeri* students with a sample of 630, with a composition of 62% women and 38% men. Of this number, most (70% have a high school / vocational background, 17.2% are from Madrasah Aliyah, and the remaining 13% come from Pesantren. From their fields of study, respondents in the social-humanities field (68%) and 32% from natural science & technology (*natural and technology*). Judging from the involvement or participation in extra-campus organizational activities, it is indicated that it is almost balanced, where 59% are active, and 41% are inactive for several reasons, such as concentration. The extra-campus organizations of interest are the Islamic Student Association (HMI) which is of interest to 39.2%; the Indonesian Islamic Student Movement (PMII), as much as 32.5%; the Indonesian Student Association (IMM), 15%; the Indonesian Muslim Student Committee (KAMMI) 10% and the Indonesian National Student Movement (GMNI) 3.3% of the total respondents, although they (66.2%) admitted to being inactive and 33.8% claimed to be active in the implementation of its programs. In total, it can be seen in the diagram below.

Religious and Student Book Preferences

Data shows that most (52%) students prefer reading printed and online religious books, then printed books (28.3%) and 19.4% reading online. They mostly (53.3 %) read original books and translations, 24.3 % like original works, and 22.4 % like translations. The fields of study that students like are the fields of History (28%), Islamic Culture (21%), and practical worship guides (13%). While the books are thoughtfully categorized, namely Islamic Philosophy, Islamic Economics, and Islamic Politics, respectively 9.5%, 9%, 7.9%,

and like other fields by 12%.Furthermore, a large section (41%) reads diverse books to expand Islamic insights, and 22% like to read. Meanwhile, to improve the quality of worship by 16%, fulfilling college assignments by 15.5%, and 4.3% answered following the trend. Judging from the reading intensity, it turns out that only 3.4% of them read books to more than four books a month. Most 88% only read 1-2 books, and readers 3-4 open 8.5%. The low intensity of reading religious books in *Perguruan Tinggi Umum Negeri* students is caused by several factors, including (a) low motivation to read religious books because of the perception of religious issues as "*personal rights*" (b) more interest in learning Religion through more exciting and practical videos to be followed (c) busy study tasks that take up time, so they do not have the opportunity to read religious books, (d) an Islamic education environment that lacks „motivating," „reinforcing" (e) inadequate availability of religious books (inadequate to the real needs of students, (f) less conducive academic climate- which limits the freedom and breadth of reading religious books. Furthermore, 36% of students obtained books by borrowing. bought 39.9% and 27% by way of obtaining other unexplained objects, and mostly read religious books in Indonesian (76%), the remaining 11.5% in Arabic and 8.4% in English. The religious books that students read can be seen in the chart below. remaining 11.5% in Arabic and 8.4% in English. The religious books that students read can be seen in the chart below.way of obtaining other unexplained, and mostly read religious books in Indonesian (76%), the remaining 11.5% in Arabic, and 8.4% in English. The religious books that students read can be seen in the chart below.

Judging from the personal message, the preferred religious understanding in the books read, students are moderate (26%), fundamentalist (24.8), liberal (14%), and the remaining 35%. Interest in religious beliefs was self-choice (62.6%), the influence of others (7.1%), organizational demands (3.4%) and *trend* factors 6.2%, and various factors 20.7%. Therefore, they felt the need for guidance from other parties in studying Religion, especially from lecturers (29.3%), discussions in study groups (23.6%), with peers 18.5%, and 10.9% self-study. However, whatever how a religious person is obtained, they show the high need for religious books that suit the preferences of current and future students. The need for scientific and religious books, especially those related to their study programs, is needed by most students (26.9%), then popular religious books (24.6%), worship manuals (22.4%), and Islamic politics (17%, and others 9.1%). The details of these data can be seen in the chart below.

Student Religious Literacy

Reading books can change readers' thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and motor behaviors (Homes et al., 2013), shape changes in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in various aspects of life (Green & Brock, 2000) and form powerful cognitive abilities (Hoover et al., 2011), including narratives of everyday life (Mazzocco et al.). So how does religious book preference impact students' religious literacy levels? Religious Literacy (LA), as previously operationally restricted, concerns the possession of (a) knowledge and understanding of Religion and its practical disclosure, (b) awareness of Religion and its differences and practical implications, and (c) critical awareness of interpreting and taking part effectively to address the problems facing Religion together. To measure Religious Literacy (LA), an attitude measurement (Likert Scale) measures students' attitudes, opinions, or perceptions of the phenomenon of religious literacy and the relationship with religious book reading preferences.

Religious Book Preferences with Student Life

To find out how the implications of religious book preferences on students' happiness were, several statements were submitted on whether the religious books read by students contributed to: (1) encouraging political participation, (2) mobilizing social care, (3) strengthening religious beliefs, (4) improving the quality of worship, (4) building an attitude of religious tolerance, (4) forming social wisdom, (5) fostering a multicultural attitude, and (6) creating peace. Based on the results of the Yang-Assessment conducted through a limited scale of attitudes and interviews, the following findings are known: As many as 14.2% stated that the preference for religious books to be read strongly influenced life. Meanwhile, 25.4% said they were adherent to life, and the rest considered reading religious books to have a low influence on their lives.

Book Preferences and Student Political Participation

Students' religious book preferences contribute to student participation rates in political activities. Data shows that most students (37.4%) feel that reading religious books has a significant effect on political interest and participation—in the sense of keeping abreast of the political situation and discussing them with other enthusiasts. Only 23% of students felt that the preference for religious books read was very significant (high) in their influence on

their political interests and participation. The rest (28.6%) stated that the preference for religious books read had a low influence on their political interests and participation.

Book Preferences and Student Social Concerns

Social sensitivity is the most crucial part of measuring a person's religious literacy level (student). The higher the student's participation rate in religious activities, even though it is different from the religion he or she embraces, the higher the level of religious literacy. It was shown that most (42.4%) felt that understanding the religious books read had a moderate (sufficient) effect on the increasing level of social care, for example, participating in solving community problems. Only 17.4% expressed a high propriety of reading books towards their social concerns. Then, 40.2% of respondents thought reading religious books had little effect on their level of social sensitivity.

Preference Books and Religious Knowledge

Books are a medium of communication (means of communication) and, at the same time, „message content " (message content). Thus, increasing religious knowledge is one of the purposes of reading religious books to facilitate the growth of religious literacy, namely increasing awareness and awareness to practice their knowledge in the context of social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions of life. The more religious books read, the higher the literacy rate. Most, or nearly 80% of students, feel that reading religious books increases religious knowledge. 17.7% rated it as sufficient to increase religious knowledge, while only 2% did not know whether or not to contribute to improving the quality of religious knowledge.

Students' Book Preferences and Religious Beliefs

Doctrinally, strengthening religious beliefs is the main goal and target of implementing religious education, including cultivating interest in reading religious books. The LA, which is characterized by the level of (i) religious understanding it embraces, and (ii) the level of awareness of diversity and differences in religious beliefs, makes the question of how far the referencer reads religious books contributes to the strengthening of the religious beliefs he embraces. It is indicated that 42.9% said that reading religious books is exceptionally influential in strengthening students' religious beliefs, even 36.6% stated that

it strongly influences strengthening religious beliefs. Only 20% rated religious reading books as having little effect on increasing readers religious beliefs.

Book Preferences and Quality of Student Worship

Religious Education, in general, and strengthening the reading preferences of religious books, in practical terms, aims to improve the quality of worship so that students have an understanding and skills to carry out their worship correctly and well. From the assessment results, almost 70% rated religious reading books as having a high effect on improving the quality of student worship, and 25.6% stated that it was influential in improving the quality of worship. In comparison, 4% rated less or no effect on improving the quality of student worship.

Book Preferences and Attitudes of Religious Tolerance

Idio-doctrinaire and idio-political religious tolerance are significant elements in fostering religious harmony and peaceful life and reducing faith-based conflicts. Strengthening LA builds awareness of differences and diversity of reality, especially Religion. Does reading religious books, as a process of communicating the values embodied in religious teachings, have an impact on building a tolerant attitude towards adherents of different religions? It is known that 79% think that reading diverse books impacts tolerant attitudes toward adherents of different religions. Only less than 20% perceived otherwise and believed it had no impact on the level of religious tolerance.

Book Preferences and Social Wisdom

One of the functions of Religion is to form unity and communication among citizens, even though they are different religions. Association is the primary teaching of Islam. Through the book, it is hoped that communicative social values are based on mutual respect between each other, even though different religions are embraced. Fewer than 20 respondents said reading religious books had no significant effect in shaping communication patterns. In contrast, nearly 80% think reading religious books contributes strongly to shaping good communication patterns- wise, wise, communicative, and reciprocal.

Book Preferences and Multicultural Attitudes

The development of multicultural attitudes is a global and national inevitability, especially for plural societies (UNO, 2004). Cultural development (awareness, way of thinking, *mindset*, value attitudes, and multicultural norms needs to be developed thoughtfully together (NIC,2005) to build a balanced, harmonious, functional, and systemic order of life (Yusuf, 2017). One approach to strengthening multicultural attitudes includes developing diversity literature as a material for cultivation. 68.5% of students rated reading religious books as strongly influencing the formation of student multicultural attitudes. While 26.9% stated that cujup influenced the formation of multicultural behavior, only 3.8% rated reading religious books as lacking or even had no effect on the formation of their multicultural attitudes.

Book Preferences and Student Peace

Islam encourages and develops harmony in *religious life (religious harmony)* and a pattern of peaceful *co-existence* (Muthalifi, 2016) Peace is formed in an atmosphere of tolerance, harmonious relationships, freedom from feuds, *orderliness*, and the absence of violence in its various forms—psychological, social, and structural (Yusuf, 2012). Through the cultivation of reading religious books, it is hoped that a peaceful conditioning behavior will be built in the diversity of people's lives. The survey results showed that most (42.2%) indicated that reading religious books could create peace. There were even (26%) who felt that reading religious books strongly influenced the formation of conditions of peace. Only less than 4% rated a less or no effect of reading religious books on the realization of conditions of peace along with the many acts of violence and terrorism in all regions of Indonesia, the position of Indonesian muslims is in the spotlight. Even the issue of violence and terrorism has become a psychological pressure itself, not only for non-muslims but also for muslims themselves.

This psychological pressure, directly and indirectly, impacts political choices when elections are held. Parties labeled as Islamic or considered to have sociological and sociological ties with Islam are abandoned mainly by their constituents by voting or swinging to secular parties. Quantitatively, the number of votes of both inclusive and Islamist Islamic parties continued to decline. In the 2019 elections, the votes of Islamic and inclusive parties were 13.52% and 16.53%, respectively, and the rest were for the secular, inclusive parties. If compared with the votes of the secular, inclusive party, the number of

votes of the secular party is greater than the votes of the Islamic party. Although Indonesian Muslims are prominent, Muslim voters do not all choose the Islamic party. The comparison of the votes of the pro-pluralism party is far greater than the votes of the Islamist party. This condition can be interpreted that supporting a parliamentary majority vote is not possible to encourage the establishment of the Khilafah Islamiyah, which means replacing the ideology of Pancasila. With the solidity of Pancasila as the basis of the Indonesian state, tolerance and freedom as a symbol of pluralism are still maintained. If pluralism continues to occur, democracy also remains safe.

Conclusion

The reading preferences of students' religious books are at a "moderate" level. Several factors cause this condition, including (1) the busyness of time-consuming lecture tasks, (2) low motivation due to the perception of religious issues as "personal rights," (3) the PAI environment that is less "motivating," "reinforcing," (4) the availability of religious books is not by the needs of students, (5) the lack of conducive academic climate—which limits freedom, breadth of reading religious books.

In the micro dimension, students' religious literacy tends to be in a moderate position, where the reading preferences of "sufficient" religious books significantly affect the development of student abilities. This condition is caused by: (1) coaching patterns / PAI that tend to be oriented towards mastery of practical religious materials, (2) belief and the perception that "religious education" is not the final target of cultivation, (3) student efforts to maintain previous habits. On the macro dimensions attributed to broad contexts (social, political, ideological, and cultural), LA students are at a moderate level in the sense of moderate Islamic electoral tendencies. The preference for reading religious books affects social care, social wisdom, strengthening tolerance, multicultural attitudes, and the desire to live in peace. This condition tends to be caused by (a) the "grand design" of the national policy of "moderation" of religious life in Indonesia for the stability of the Republic of Indonesia, (b) the implementation of the Campus Religious Education (PAI) system, (c) the growth of religious awareness as a *personal right*, (d) the growth of pragmatic life attitudes, (f) the fear of stigmatization with idio-political nuances.

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