



Optimizing the role of Islamic education and Tongkonan in strengthening religious harmony in Tana Toraja

Zaenal Muttaqin¹, Muhammad Nasir Mahmud², Darwis Muhdina³,
& Abdul Rahum Razak⁴

^{1,4}Univeritas Muhammadiyah Makassar

^{2,3}Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar

Correspondence Email: zainulmuttaqin869@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Inter-religious relations are an interesting phenomenon for continued study, considering the material is concise and profound concern in every religion. However, in practice, sometimes tensions and conflicts arise between religious communities. This phenomenon is interesting to be reviewed in the process of appreciation and deepening of people in understanding the context of harmony in social life. Islamic education and Tongkonan are two components that become the attraction that creates inter-religious harmony in Tana Toraja. It is interesting to re-examine some things related to the role of education and Tongkonan in fostering religious life in Tana Toraja. This research is qualitative field research with an Islamic education approach. This study found that Islamic education and Tongkonan have a mutually reinforcing bond in fostering harmonious relations between religious adherents in Tana Toraja. The conflict between religious adherents is sporadic in Tana Toraja due to harmony in the kinship bond called Tongkonan.

Keywords: Tongkonan; Islamic education; inter-religious; harmonies relation

1. INTRODUCTION

The Toraja people are referred to by the Bugis as "to riajang," which means people who live in the mountains, while the Luwu call them "to riaja," which means people who live in the West. Some name them the noble "orang toraya." From the myths circulating in the community, Toraja is an autonomous country called 'Tondok Lepongan Bulan' or 'Tana Matarik Allo.' The aristocrats say Toraja comes from the word tau raja, which means people of the king or descendants of the king. In the myth, the Toraja nobles (tana' bulaan) assume that their ancestors are descendants of Puang Matua (supreme god), who was then appointed king in Tondok Lepongan Bulan.(Puspasari Setyaningrum, 2022)

Based on data from the 2020 population census results by the Regional Statistics

Agency of Tana Toraja Regency, Tana Toraja is 280,794 people. The number is then divided into several classification groups based on age; there is 9.41% of Generation Z born in 2013, with an age range of 7 years; 33.69% of Generation Z is calculated to be born between 1997-2012 age range of 8-23 years, 24.13% Millennial Generation born 1981-1996 age range of 24-39 years, 18.7% Generation X born 1965-1980 age range of 40-55 years, 10.70% Baby Boomer born 1946-1964 age range of 55-74 years, 3.09% Pre-Boomer 3.09% born before 1945 age range of 75 years and over. (Statistik, 2022) Analyzed using the theory of Maturation (religious maturity), there is a strong assumption that this area has a high level of harmony, given the dominant distribution of the adult population in this area. This assumption is built on the basis that maturation is highly dependent on the level of achievement in harmony associated with the age of the population. (Sakdiah, 2020)

According to Omar Mohammad Al-Toumy Al-Syaibany, Islamic education is an effort to change the behavior of individuals in their personal lives or their social lives and life in the surrounding world through education. This change is based on Islamic values. (Omar Mohammad Al-Toumy Al-Syaibany, 1979) Ahmad D. Marimba defined education as guidance or conscious leadership by the educator toward the physical and spiritual development of the educated towards forming the primary personality. (Ahmad D. Marimba, 1980) Thus, the definition of Muhammad al-Toumy and D. Marimba can be harmonized into Islamic education as a conscious effort to change the behavior of the educated in personal life and social life towards the formation of the main character. H.M. Arifin emphasizes that Islamic education must be based on religiousness and faith that stands on a comprehensive philosophy of education based on faith. (Arifin, 1993)

Tana Toraja has attracted much attention for its high degree of religious harmony and tolerance, a region famous for its zero cases of violence and conflict between religious adherents. Tongkonan is a unifying institution that binds them in a family kinship. It is important to note that in some regions in Indonesia, heterogeneous communities such as Tana Toraja are prone to inter-religious conflicts. Meanwhile, the Muslim community in Toraja is a minority. This paper will examine how harmony is created and Islamic education's role in Hong Kong.

2. METHODS

This research uses a sociological approach to Islamic education. The data used are field data sourced from in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. This research aims to understand the truth of social phenomena (Miftakhuddin, 2020), so this type of research is qualitative. Data analysis is based on inductive and deductive analysis or vice versa, with validation using triangulation in testing interview data through observation or documentation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For the Torajans, the tongkonan is a customary institution representing a family in a fellowship. The fellowship allows people to choose and embrace religion based on their

beliefs to live in harmony in the spirit of tolerance. Tongkonan is not always in the form of a traditional Torajan house but rather in a traditional institution where Torajans can carry out traditional ceremonies of festivity (*rambu solo*) and traditional ceremonies of grief (*rambu tuka*). (Allo, 2023) Their tolerance is practiced through actions to create harmony between religious adherents by participating in various religious activities; even in the establishment of houses of worship, they participate as a manifestation of open tolerance. Open tolerance, as stated by Susan Mendus, means that adherents of a religion do not only behave passively and do not interfere with other religions but participate and mingle with other religions in matters other than belief. (Susan Mendus, 1989)

Arifuddin, Head of Islamic Community Guidance at the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Tana Toraja, explained that Islamic education is one of the strong magnets in restructuring the understanding of the Toraja people to live in harmony. This is inseparable from the function of religious instructors in direct contact with the community. The task of Islamic religious instructors is to approach Torajans who do not undergo formal education to understand the meaning of living in religious harmony. To carry out this function, they need the help of tongkonan as their penetration tool to instill religious understanding in the Toraja people, who are Muslims. Islamic contents about religious harmony, tolerance, and mutual respect's religion are conveyed through a non-formal approach with the help of tongkonan institutions. That is why tongkonan's existence is very important for them, considering that tongkonan has transformed into their media in their duties. (Arifuddin, 2023)

Islamic education is a process of guidance by adults consciously towards children to be better able to live according to the demands of the times. As a guidance process, education is an activity carried out in a well-planned and Systematic manner. A culprit is a person or an institution (institution) known as the family as informal education, a school or madrasah as a formal educational institution, and majlis ta'lim and other activities in the community as non-formal education. The object is students who need guidance or coaching. This activity is carried out based on the guide's goal or coaching in a particular way in a particular situation and environment. (Barni, 2008) From an individual perspective, education is an effort to develop individual skills, whereas, from a societal perspective, education is the inheritance of cultural values. Thus, education carries two essential obligations: improving individual skills and preserving cultural values. Humans, as cultured beings, are, in fact, the creators of culture itself. (Wahyudi, 2022).

The convergence of Islamic education and the traditional tongkonan architecture in fostering religious consciousness characterized by harmony and tolerance occurs within the realm of non-formal education facilitated through tongkonan-based media. Tongkonan architecture has evolved into a medium for disseminating moral messages inherited from the Toraja people's ancestors. At the same time, Islamic religious educators contribute by reinforcing the virtuous principles of religion through the framework of harmony and tolerance (Junaedi, 2017). The moral messages conveyed through tongkonan, such as *siangga* (mutual respect), *sikamali* (mutual longing), *siangkaran* (mutual assistance), *sipakaborok* (mutual love), and *sitaratte* (equality without

discrimination), serve as manifestations of local wisdom, collectively fabricating an atmosphere of peaceful coexistence (Allo, 2023)

CONCLUSION

In a broad sense, Islamic education has a vital role in fostering religious harmony in Tana Toraja. Local wisdom and Islamic education values have merged into a customary product passed down from generation to generation and well preserved by a family order called Tongkonan. Tongkonan can be interpreted as a formal institution by including traditional houses, tools, and community structures in its constituent components. It can also mean a traditional institution without including the Toraja traditional house as a symbol of greatness. Tongkonan has become the center of local wisdom manufacturing, manifested in the form of noble messages about harmony and tolerance or taglines that reflect love and mutual respect among residents in Tongkonan. Islamic education has taken a role in the form of a non-formal approach to residents through the interweaving of Islamic religious leaders to unite the ancestral messages in the tongkonan with Islamic teachings.

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