

## LITERACY CULTURE AS A REINFORCEMENT OF TOLERANCE CHARACTER THROUGH THE STORIES OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD SAW : AN EFFORT TO PROMOTE RELIGIOUS MODERATION AT THE LEVEL OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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**Abstract:** *Literacy programs is a crucial movement education, particularly at the level of elementary school. By reading we gaining new knowledge. Literacy culture can be an effort to strengthen the character of tolerance, especially through stories of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The life stories of Prophet Muhammad SAW offer valuable insights into core values such as mutual respect, honor, and understanding. These stories can be studied through various media, such as books, stories and films. Religious moderation, involving a balanced understanding and practice of faith, is an integral aspect of character development. The promotion of tolerance character through literacy initiatives becomes a key facilitator in achieving this goal. This research adopts the literature research. This Method to comprehensively explore emerging phenomena. The research process entails collecting data and information from diverse sources, including books, journals, notes, articles, and other relevant materials related to the subject under investigation. The research findings indicate that : at the elementary school level, the implementation of literacy programs, such as the "Gerakan Literasi Sekolah" (GLS), encompasses activities like reading and analyzing the stories of Prophet Muhammad SAW. Additionally, students engage in watching films or videos portraying the life of Prophet Muhammad SAW, enabling them to extract value lessons and emulate his character, particularly in interactions with Nasrani and the Quraishy community. Efforts to fortify tolerance character through literacy culture play a pivotal role in helping students internalize and apply these values in their daily lives. This initiative is paramount for fostering a harmonious and peaceful societal coexistence.*

**Keywords:** *literacy culture, character of tolerance, story of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, religious moderation*



## INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the forms of human activity that begins with the actual and moves towards the ideal. The actual concerns the conditions that already exist in the learners in the environment where a learning activity is taking place.<sup>1</sup> Education is experiencing a very great disruption. The role of teachers, who have long been the only centre of knowledge, is shifting away. In the future, the role and presence of teachers in the classroom will become increasingly challenging and require high creativity with the increasing advance of technology.<sup>2</sup>

Education plays a vital role in ensuring the development and continuity of the life of the people concerned. Based on this line of thinking, national education is organized as a conscious effort to enable the Indonesian nation to sustain its life and develop itself continuously from one generation to the next.<sup>3</sup> Education is not possible without the role of teachers. Teachers play a vital role in the world of education. The most important thing that teachers do is to set a good example. Teachers set a good example by their actions in implementing education that focuses on the character development of students. This character development focuses on five main values: religious values, nationalism, independence, cooperation, and integrity.<sup>4</sup>

The world of education must be able to play an active role in preparing educated human resources who are able to face various challenges of life, both local, regional, national, and international. It is not enough to only master theories, but also to be willing and able to apply them in social life. It is not only able to apply the knowledge gained in school/college, but also able to solve various problems faced in everyday life.<sup>5</sup>

## LITERACY CULTURE

Literacy culture is not just an individual's hobby or preference for reading, but an effort to meet the needs of the challenges of the times. Literacy culture is important in creating an intelligent society, which will eventually form a superior and quality nation. Through literacy activities, someone has the knowledge to face the challenges that exist today and the challenges that will come in the future.<sup>6</sup> Literacy School is the ability to access, understand, and use something intelligently through various activities, including

<sup>1</sup> Siti Qoni'ah, “Menumbuhkan Budaya Literasi Sebagai Dimensi Spiritual Melalui Kisah-Kisah Nabi Pada Peserta Didik Di Sekolah Dasar Negeri (SDN) Branta Pesisir,” *Akademika: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 2 (December 2, 2020): 163–76.

<sup>2</sup> Ni Komang Suni Astini, “Pentingnya Literasi Teknologi Informasi Dan Komunikasi Bagi Guru Sekolah Dasar Untuk Menyiapkan Generasi Milenial,” *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Dharma Acarya* 1, no. 1 (August 20, 2019), <https://stahnmpukuturan.ac.id/jurnal/index.php/dharmaacarya/article/view/194>.

<sup>3</sup> Muhammad Qorib, Mohammad Zaini, *Integrasi Etika Dan Moral Spirit Dan Kedudukannya Dalam Pendidikan Islam* (Jl. Raya Pleret KM 2 Banguntapan Bantul Yogyakarta: Bildung, 2020).

<sup>4</sup> Harli, “Penerapan Nilai-Nilai Religius Dalam Membentuk Sikap Proposal Peserta Didik SMP Negeri 5 Majene” (Parepare, Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Parepare, 2021).

<sup>5</sup> Imam Suyitno, “Pengembangan Pendidikan Karakter Dan Budaya Bangsa Berwawasan Kearifan Lokal,” *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Nur Robi' Zainal Abidin, “Literasi Membaca Sebagai Upaya Pembentuk Karakter Peserta Didik (Jujur Dan Bertanggung jawab),” *Universitas Negeri Semarang*, 2020, 791.



reading, seeing, listening, writing, and/or speaking. Literacy activities are seen as boring activities that require a lot of time and add to the already busy workload of teachers. As a result, literacy activities are only carried out to the extent of reading books as a formality. The importance of building tolerant characters since early childhood is the obligation of educators, considering the great challenges faced by society today. Therefore, this study will explore the role of literacy culture in strengthening tolerant characters through the introduction of the stories of Prophet Muhammad SAW among elementary school students.<sup>7</sup>

Literacy is the ability of an individual to receive, use, and express written text in order to achieve goals according to needs, expand knowledge and potential, and contribute to society.<sup>8</sup> Etymologically, literacy comes from the Latin word "literatus" which means "educated person" or "person who learns". Literacy is also defined as the ability of a person to read and write using existing or modified reading and writing systems. In general, the meaning of literacy is the ability of an individual to manage and understand information when writing or reading. According to the definition above, the word literacy includes knowledge of reading and writing, although literacy has a complex meaning, not only reading and writing, but also includes how to correlate with reading situations, digital writing, and so on. Education Development Center (EDC) states that literacy is an activity that is more than just the ability to read and write. However, literacy is the ability of individuals to use all the potential and skills they have in their lives. With understanding that literacy includes the ability to read words and read the world.<sup>9</sup>

## **TOLERANCE CHARACTER THROUGH THE STORY OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD SAW**

Teachers in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) must respond to the modern era. Education in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) is the first foundation for intellectual, spiritual, and emotional intelligence. In this aspect of intelligence, there are literacy competencies that must be adapted to the teacher's ability. Only teachers who are able to adapt to the modern era can answer these challenges.<sup>10</sup> Tolerance is an attitude and action that respects differences in religion, ethnicity, ethnicity, opinion, attitude, and actions of others who are different from oneself. Tolerance, which is embodied in the attitude of standing on justice and goodness, was shown by Prophet Muhammad SAW when interacting with non-Muslims who were peaceful and did not engage in hostility. Etymologically, tolerance is mentioned in the KBBI as something that is or is characterized by being tolerant (appreciative, allowing, allowing) the establishment (opinion, view, belief, habit, behavior,

<sup>7</sup> Nur Samsiyah, "Pembelajaran Literasi Di Sekolah Dasar Untuk Membangun Karakter Siswa Melalui Penerapan Sistem Among," oktober 2017, 447–48.

<sup>8</sup> Muh Syaqui Malik and Maemunah Maemunah, "Kemampuan Literasi Baca Tulis Anak Usia Dasar (Studi Analisis Perkembangan Bahasa Anak Usia 7-12 Tahun Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) Salafiyah Tajungsari Kecamatan Tlogowungu Kabupaten Pati)," *JIP (Jurnal Ilmiah PGMI)* 6, no. 2 (2020): 195–214, <https://doi.org/10.19109/jip.v6i2.5754>.

<sup>9</sup> Rifqi Thoriq Ubaydillah, "Revitalisasi Budaya Literasi Bagi Guru PAI," *Jurnal Andi Djemma | Jurnal Pendidikan* 5, no. 1 (February 5, 2022): 21–28, <https://doi.org/10.35914/jad.v5i1.769>.

<sup>10</sup> Hamidulloh Ibdia, "Penguatan Literasi Baru Pada Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Dalam Menjawab Tantangan Era Revolusi Industri 4.0," *Journal of Research and Thought on Islamic Education (JRTIE)* 1 (September 20, 2018): 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.24260/jrtie.v1i1.1064>.



and so on) that is different or contrary to one's own establishment. Tolerance is defined terminologically by Abu A'la Maududi, which is an attitude of respecting the beliefs and actions of others even if those things are wrong in our view. We do not use violence or coercion to change their beliefs, or by preventing them from doing something.<sup>11</sup>

Stories that contain wisdom are very effective in attracting children's attention and stimulating their brains to work well, even this method is considered the best of other ways to influence children's learning patterns. Because by listening to stories, students will feel happy while absorbing the values of Islamic religious education without feeling forced.<sup>12</sup> Storytelling can reveal events that contain values of moral, spiritual, and social education for students, both stories of goodness and tyranny, or also physical-spiritual imbalance, material spiritual that can paralyze the spirit of children. By listening to a story, the sensitivity of the soul and feelings of the students can be awakened. Providing stimuli to students with storytelling automatically encourages students to do good, and can form noble morals and build spirituality. By introducing religious literacy through stories of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, we can help children understand the importance of respecting differences and living life with an open attitude towards various beliefs. The hope for us is to be able to shape the character of tolerance from an early age.

## RELIGIOUS MODERATION

In the context of Islamic teachings and values, the discourse of Religious Moderation is not fundamentally a spirit that grows and appears later. This reasoning and discourse is not because it is a new solution to the problem of tolerance and heterogeneity, for example. It is important to realize that the values and perspectives of Religious Moderation are inherent in the person of Prophet Muhammad SAW, in his teachings, measurable in his attitude, and reflected in his actions.<sup>13</sup> Moderation in religion is a way of thinking and behaving in a firm manner in appreciating and addressing differences in religious diversity, as well as differences in race, ethnicity, culture, customs, and ethics in order to maintain unity among religious people and preserve national unity. The values of religious moderation are justice, balance, goodness, wisdom, perseverance, and tolerance. Therefore, these values of religious moderation must be applied from early childhood education through Islamic religious education.<sup>14</sup>

The moderate view of the Prophet Muhammad SAW was tested by the attitude of resistance, slander, and ridicule of those who disagreed. However, in the face of all these negative actions, the Prophet Muhammad SAW remained gentle. This attitude aroused the sympathy and desire of non-Muslim groups to enter Islam. In addition, this nature of the Prophet can make the non-Muslim groups in Medina listen to the calls of goodness

<sup>11</sup> Mohammad Fuad Al Amin Mohammad Rosyidi, “Konsep Toleransi Dalam Islam Dan Implementasinya Di Masyarakat Indonesia,” *Jurnal Madaniyah*, Agustus 2019, 296.

<sup>12</sup> Syahraini Tambak, “Metode Bercerita dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam,” *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam Al-Thariqah* 1, no. 1 (January 1, 1970): 1–26, [https://doi.org/10.25299/althariqah.2016.vol1\(1\).614](https://doi.org/10.25299/althariqah.2016.vol1(1).614).

<sup>13</sup> Kemenag, “Nabi Muhammad, Teladan dan Motivator Moderasi Beragama,” <https://kemenag.go.id>, accessed November 17, 2023, <https://kemenag.go.id/opini/nabi-muhammad-teladan-dan-motivator-moderasi-beragama-l63jcx>.

<sup>14</sup> Tri Retno Khalistha Sari, “Sipemas - Sistem Informasi Pengabdian Masyarakat,” 2022, <https://sipemas.uin-malang.ac.id/blog/penanaman-moderasi-beragama-terhadap-anak-usia-dini>.



and peace that he conveyed.<sup>15</sup> The integration of religious moderation in education is a long-term strategic plan in an effort to build the mental and character of the nation's children. This is because building mental and character must be started from an early age and implemented systematically. In addition, the integration of religious moderation also plays a role as a shield to prevent the spread of extremist and intolerant ideas, especially in education.<sup>16</sup>

## **RESEACH METHOD**

Research is an important part of knowledge that plays a vital role in the development of science. Science is constantly evolving, in line with the development of human civilization. As long as humans continue to live and develop on this earth, there will be many new phenomena that will occur. The method of this article uses library research, a data collection method that involves understanding and studying theories from various literature related to the research. There are four stages of library research: preparing the necessary tools, preparing a working bibliography, organizing time, and reading and taking notes on research materials. Data collection is done by searching for and constructing sources from various sources such as books, journals, and existing research.<sup>17</sup>

Although research and library studies/library research can be said to be similar, there are some key differences. Library studies is another term for literature review, literature survey, theoretical study, theoretical foundation, literature review, and theoretical review. Library research is a type of research that is conducted solely based on written works, including research results that have been or have not been published.<sup>18</sup>

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After learning the importance of literacy culture in the world of education, especially elementary education. Then the effort to implement the school literacy program began to be widely practiced in various forms of activities. This activity is usually referred to as the School Literacy Movement (GLS). This movement contains a variety of activities that can be done by students and teachers for the ongoing literacy activities that have been promoted. The School Literacy Movement (GLS) is a comprehensive effort that involves all school members (teachers, students, parents/guardians) and the community, as part of the education ecosystem. The School Literacy Movement (GLS) aims to improve literacy culture in schools through various activities that can improve reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. Here are some examples of School Literacy Movement (GLS) activities that can be done at school:

- a. 15-minute reading habit before class starts

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<sup>15</sup> Kemenag, "Nabi Muhammad, Teladan dan Motivator Moderasi Beragama."

<sup>16</sup> Ahmad Qowamu Asshidiqi et al., "Analisis Implementasi Nilai-nilai Moderasi Beragama di SDIT Cendekia Kabupaten Purwakarta" 14 (2023).

<sup>17</sup> Muhammad Rijal Fadli, "Memahami desain metode penelitian kualitatif," *Humanika* 21, no. 1 (2021): 54.

<sup>18</sup> Melfianora, "Penulisan Karya Tulis Ilmiah Dengan Studi Literatur," n.d., 3.



This activity is a basic activity in the School Literacy Movement (GLS). Schools can provide interesting and relevant reading materials that are tailored to the interests of students. Teachers can also provide examples and motivation to students to encourage them to read regularly. In the context of this study, the implementation of literacy culture aims to strengthen one of the characters of students, namely tolerance. Therefore, it is advisable that the books provided in the class reading corner that are accessible to students are books about the stories of Prophet Muhammad SAW. This is so that students can gain a deeper understanding of the character of our Prophet so that they can take lessons from Prophet Muhammad SAW and make Prophet Muhammad SAW a role model.

b. Telling Story

Storytelling can be done by teachers, students, or parents. This activity can help students develop their listening, understanding, and expression skills through language. The stories that are used can be in the form of the Prophet's biography or the like. For example, a teacher tells the story of the Prophet Muhammad's prophethood and his very good nature (he never retaliates against those who hurt him). This teaches us that we must respect other religious people, and that the important thing is to maintain harmony, tranquility, and peace.

c. Creative Writing Activities

Creative writing activities can be in the form of writing poetry, short stories, essays, or other written works. These activities can help students develop critical thinking and creative skills. In these activities, students can be asked to retell or rewrite things related to the tolerance of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

d. Technology-based literacy activities

Technology-based literacy activities can include reading digital books, watching educational videos, or attending literacy webinars. These activities can help students develop their literacy skills in the digital age.

Aside from the activities mentioned above, schools can also develop other literacy activities that suit the school's needs and conditions. The crucial aspect is that these activities should be able to capture students' interests and enhance their literacy skills. Meanwhile, regarding tolerance, a tolerant attitude is one of the important traits that every individual should possess. Tolerance is defined as the attitude of respecting and appreciating differences, be it in religion, ethnicity, race, culture, or opinions.

The story of Prophet Muhammad SAW is a rich source of tolerance values. In his narrative, Prophet Muhammad SAW consistently exhibited a tolerant attitude towards those who differed from him. He never imposed his religion on others; instead, he always offered protection and assistance to those in need, regardless of their religious, ethnic, racial, or cultural differences.

Based on research findings, it has been discovered that literacy culture can be utilized as a reinforcement of tolerance character through the story of Prophet Muhammad SAW in the following ways:

a. The understanding of tolerance

The story of Prophet Muhammad SAW can help students understand the values of tolerance taught by Islam. By reading the story of Prophet Muhammad SAW, students will learn how he consistently demonstrated a tolerant attitude

towards those who differed from him. Among these attitudes, Prophet Muhammad SAW showed tolerance towards people of other faiths by allowing them to practice their own beliefs. When he governed in Medina, he acknowledged the rights of the Jewish and Christian communities and provided protection for them.

b. Fostering empathy and sympathy

The story of Prophet Muhammad SAW can help students develop empathy and sympathy towards those who are different from them. By reading the story of Prophet Muhammad SAW, students will understand that every individual deserves respect and appreciation, regardless of their religious, ethnic, racial, or cultural differences. An example of Prophet Muhammad's SAW attitude is his consistent display of empathy towards the less fortunate, such as the poor, orphans, and marginalized individuals in society. He encouraged his followers to provide assistance and protection to these individuals, ensuring their rights were upheld. Additionally, there are records indicating that Prophet Muhammad SAW showed sympathy and compassion towards members of other religious communities who were experiencing hardship or in need. He offered aid and support to them without considering their beliefs.

c. Shaping an attitude of tolerance

The story of Prophet Muhammad SAW can help students in cultivating an attitude of tolerance towards those who are different from them. By reading the story of Prophet Muhammad SAW, students will learn to appreciate differences and avoid a judgmental attitude. For instance, Prophet Muhammad SAW frequently engaged in dialogue with leaders and members of other religious communities. He showed respect and listened attentively to their perspectives without attempting to impose or undermine their beliefs.

By consistently and continuously implementing the School Literacy Movement (GLS) aimed at reinforcing tolerance character through the stories of Prophet Muhammad SAW, it is hoped that students can develop a high level of tolerance. This will have a positive impact on efforts to harmonize religious moderation in our primary education system. Consequently, it will lead to the creation of a peaceful, harmonious, and tranquil society in the future.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Based on research findings, it can be concluded that a literacy culture through the stories of Prophet Muhammad SAW can be one of the efforts to strengthen tolerance character. By reading the stories of Prophet Muhammad SAW, students can understand tolerance values, develop empathy and sympathy, and form an attitude of tolerance towards those who are different from them. Here are some recommendations for implementing the School Literacy Movement (GLS) in schools :

a. Engage all school community members

The School Literacy Movement (GLS) activities should involve all members of the school community, including students, teachers, principals, educational staff, school supervisors, School Committees, parents/guardians, academics, publishers, mass media, community leaders, business entities, and other stakeholders.

b. Start with simple things



Avoid forcing complex literacy activities initially. Begin with simple initiatives, such as encouraging a 15-minute reading habit before classes start.

c. Make literacy activities engaging and enjoyable

Literacy activities should be interesting and enjoyable to actively involve students. Utilize various creative and innovative media and methods.

d. Conduct regular evaluations

Perform periodic evaluations to assess the effectiveness of literacy activities that have been implemented. Evaluations can be conducted using various instruments, such as questionnaires, interviews, or observations.

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The Stories of Prophet Muhammad SAW : an Effort to Promote  
Religious Moderation at The Level of Elementary School**

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**Halaman 184**