The Role of Confucian Religious Counselors in Increasing Spiritual Faith in Believing in Confucianism Case Study at the Indonesian Confucian Religious Council (MAKIN) Natuna 2022-2024 Period

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of Khonghucu religious counselors at the Indonesian Khonghucu Religious Council (MAKIN) Natuna in enhancing the spiritual faith of followers and fostering interfaith harmony during the 2022-2024 period. Utilizing a descriptive qualitative approach with a survey method, this research involved 45 respondents from the Khonghucu community in Natuna. The findings indicate a significant effectiveness of religious counselors in various aspects: 95.5% of respondents rated the counselors' performance as good or very good, with 95.5% of the community feeling assisted in improving their understanding of teachings, spiritual faith, and the application of these teachings in daily life. The counselors successfully implemented a comprehensive strategy encompassing doctrinal, ethical, and social aspects, emphasizing universal values such as virtue (68.9%), ethics/morality (80%), and harmony (71.1%). MAKIN Natuna also significantly contributed to building interfaith harmony through social activities and active participation in the Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB). The main challenges faced include limitations in human and financial resources (60%), a lack of understanding among the community regarding Khonghucu teachings, and geographical constraints as an archipelagic region. However, MAKIN Natuna has adopted adaptive strategies to address these challenges, including enhancing the quality and intensity of counseling, focusing on teachings relevant to daily life, and collaborating with local government.
INTRODUCTION

Confucianism, as one of the recognized religions in Indonesia, has an important role in fostering people and maintaining harmony between religious communities. The Indonesian Confucian Religious Council (MAKIN) Natuna, located in Natuna Regency, Riau Islands Province, is an important representation of the Confucian community in the region. MAKIN Natuna not only functions as a religious institution, but also plays an active role in building social harmony and strengthening national values in a pluralistic society.

The existence of MAKIN Natuna can be traced back to the establishment of the Fu De Chi Temple, which existed before Indonesian independence. This shows that the Confucian community has long been an integral part of Natuna society. In its development, MAKIN Natuna has not only focused on internal development of Confucian people, but has also been active in activities that reflect the spirit of tolerance and harmony between religious communities. One real example of MAKIN Natuna's active role in building harmony is the activity of distributing free takjil to Muslims who are fasting during the month of Ramadan. In 2023, MAKIN Natuna distributed 600 takjil packages to road users at the Simpang Empat Mesjid Jami Ranai. This activity is not only a social action, but also a manifestation of Confucian teachings on the five social relationships, which emphasize the importance of compassion, justice, and mutual trust in social interactions.

The role of Confucian religious instructors in MAKIN Natuna is also very significant in the internalization of religious teachings and national values to Confucian people. The instructors are not only tasked with conveying religious teachings, but also assisting the government in socializing state policies related to religion to the community. This shows that MAKIN Natuna acts as a bridge between the Confucian community and the government and the wider community.

In a broader context, the existence of MAKIN Natuna and its activities reflect efforts to contextualize Confucian teachings in building nationalist values. Confucian teachings emphasize noble morals, devotion to parents and ancestors, and respect for elders, in line with efforts to strengthen the morals of the younger generation and the integration of ethnic Chinese within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

Thus, MAKIN Natuna not only plays a role in fostering Confucianism internally, but also contributes significantly to building social harmony, strengthening national values, and maintaining harmony between religious communities in Natuna Regency. This role is becoming increasingly important amidst increasingly complex societal challenges and the need to continue to strengthen unity in diversity.

The role of MAKIN Natuna is becoming increasingly significant in the context of strengthening national values and social integration. As part of the Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB), MAKIN Natuna also contributes to building interfaith communication and maintaining social stability. This is becoming increasingly important considering the strategic position of Natuna Regency as a border area that requires strong social cohesion.
Problem Formulation

Based on the background above, the formulation of the problem in this study is:
1. What is the role of Confucian religious instructors in MAKIN Natuna in increasing the spiritual faith of Confucianism?
2. How does MAKIN Natuna contribute to building harmony between religious communities in Natuna Regency?
3. What are the challenges and strategies of MAKIN Natuna in carrying out its role in a pluralistic society?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:
1. To analyze the role of Confucian religious instructors in MAKIN Natuna in increasing the spiritual faith of Confucian people.
2. To evaluate the contribution of MAKIN Natuna in building harmony between religious communities in Natuna Regency.
3. To identify the challenges faced by MAKIN Natuna and the strategies applied in carrying out its role in a pluralistic society.

Benefits of the Research

This research is expected to provide the following benefits:
1. Theoretically, this research can enrich the literature on the role of religious organizations in the context of pluralistic societies in the border regions of Indonesia.
2. Practically, the results of this study can be a reference for MAKIN Natuna and other religious organizations in optimizing their role in fostering people and building social harmony.
3. For local governments, this research can be input in formulating policies related to fostering harmony between religious communities in Natuna Regency.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a survey method through a questionnaire. The aim is to analyze the role of Confucian Religious Counselors in increasing spiritual faith and building harmony between religious communities in the Indonesian Confucian Religious Council (MAKIN) Natuna for the period 2022-2024.

Population and Sample

The population of the study was all Confucians registered at MAKIN Natuna. The sample was taken using a purposive sampling technique, with a total of 50 Confucians who actively participated in MAKIN Natuna activities.
Data Collection
The questionnaire was distributed directly to Confucians and also through Google Form to reach a wider Confucians. The data collection period lasted for 2 months (July-August 2024). In addition to the questionnaire, the researcher also conducted participatory observations and in-depth interviews with several key informants to enrich the data.

Data Analysis
The collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, with the following steps:
1. Reading and understanding all data
2. Coding the answers of Confucians
3. Identifying emerging themes
4. Categorizing these themes
5. Interpreting and describing findings
6. Data Validity

To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses source and method triangulation techniques, as well as member checking with key informants. This research method is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of Confucian Religious Counselors in MAKIN Natuna in improving the spiritual faith of the people and building harmony between religious communities, as well as identifying the factors that influence it. The results of the analysis will be presented in the form of a rich and in-depth descriptive narrative to provide a clear picture of the phenomenon being studied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Confucian Religious Counselors
According to the Indonesian Ministry of Religion, Religious Counselors are those who are given the task, responsibility and authority by the government to carry out religious guidance, development counseling through religious language to target groups"

According to M. Arifin (2009) Religious Counselors are guides to religious communities in the context of mental, moral and devotional development to God Almighty".

A Confucian religious counselor is a Confucian follower who devotes himself to the task of providing mental guidance to the community, most Confucian religious counselors are Confucian clergy, mental guidance includes service to the community, religious teaching includes worship procedures, faith, holy books, places of worship and junzi behavior.

Faith in Confucianism
Faith comes from the word ‘iman’ which means trust or belief related to the religious values that are embraced; namely concerning the sincerity of one’s belief, recognition of its truth, sincerity in practicing it. So ‘faith’ means things related to ‘faith.’

The term and understanding in Confucianism that we translate with the word ‘iman’ is the understanding of the word ‘Sing’ (诚, Cheng). The letter / word ‘Cheng 诚’ according to its origin consists of a series of root words ‘Gan’ (
言, Yan) and ‘Sing’ (成, Cheng). ‘Yan’ means ‘speak / word, kalam’, and ‘Cheng’ means ‘Perfect / Finished’. Therefore, the meaning of ‘Sing’ (诚, Cheng) contains the meaning of ‘perfect inner words and deeds.’ In religious life, we must have ‘Cheng’ or ‘Faith’ in the truth of the religious teachings that we embrace. In the Perfect Middle Book XIX: 18 it is written, "Faith is the Holy Way of Almighty God; trying to obtain Faith, that is the Holy Way of man. Those who obtain Faith are those who, after choosing what is good, then embrace it as firmly as possible." So Faith is an attitude or inner state that is related to the perfection of belief / faith in TIAN, Almighty God. The above understanding shows how absolutely important Faith or 'Cheng' is for the spiritual life of humans as rational beings, who realize that this life is something sacred and noble, as the Word and Gift of Almighty God. So it is written in the Perfect Middle Book XXIV, "Faith must be perfected by oneself and the Holy Path must be walked alone. Faith is the beginning and end of all existence. Without Faith, nothing exists. So a Susilawan glorifies Faith. Faith is not meant to be completed by perfecting oneself, but rather perfecting all existence as well. Love is self-perfection and wisdom is the perfecting of all existence. This is the Virtue of True Character and this is the inner and outer Essence of the Holy Path. So don't neglect it at any time."

It is a very concise verse, in the verse above it is shown how we are obliged to build our life of faith, and how to practice what is our faith. A new religion has meaning in the lives of its adherents, if the adherents truly believe in it. Without it, it would be meaningless. This verse also shows the guidance that religious life is not just about perfecting ourselves, but we must feel responsible for the welfare and happiness of other people, even our entire environment. Each religion has its own basics of faith in guiding and bringing its followers to understand, appreciate the truth of their religion and carry out the commandments of their religion.

Concept of Confucian Religion 1. Book of Zhongyong (Zi Si) Main Chapter Verse 1

The Word of TIAN (TIAN Ming), the Almighty God, is called True Character (Xing 性). Living according to True Character is called taking the Holy Path (Dao 道). Guidance on the Holy Path, that is called Religion (Jiao 教), 天命之謂性, 率性之謂道, 修道之謂教 Tian Ming Zhi Wei Xing, Shuai Xing Zhi Wei Dao, Xiu Dao Zhi Wei Jiao.

a. The Word of Tian is in the form of Man's True Character (Xing), in the form of the seeds of the virtues of Love (ren), Truth (yi), Morality (li), Wisdom (zhi).

b. According to Mengzi: The Seed of Love is a feeling of pity and not being cruel, the Seed of Truth is a feeling of shame and dislike, the Seed of Morality is a feeling of humility and willingness to give in, the Seed of Wisdom is a feeling of justifying and blaming.

c. Jiao 教 is interpreted as Religion, where Jiao or religion based on the character zhongwen consists of 2 words, namely Xiao 孝 (Lao 老 means Old and Zi 子 child) a child who honors/respects parents. Wen 文 which means Teaching. So Jiao based on the character means teaching about honoring relationships. Honoring the relationship here is associated with glorifying the relationship to Tian
Eight Faiths of Ba Cheng Zhen Gui 八诚箴规

a. The Existence of Almighty God CHENG XIN HUANG TIAN - COMPLETE FAITH BELIEVE IN THE ONE ALMIGHTY GOD

1) Wu Er Wu Yu 无 贰 无虞 Do not be double-minded, do not hesitate
2) Shang Di Lin Ru 上帝 临汝 Almighty God The Most High is with you

The mention in Confucianism written in the Wu Jing book:

a) Shang Tian means Tian the Most High or the One in the Most High Place.
b) Hao Tian means Tian the Most Great or the All-Encompassing.
c) Cang Tian means Tian the Most Holy, the Most Holy, the Most High.
d) Min Tian means Tian the Most Compassionate, the Most Generous, the Most Merciful.
e) Huang Tian means Tian the Almighty, the Most Great, the Most Creator.
f) Shang Di means God, the Creator of the Universe, the Most High, or the One in the Most High Place.

Prophet Kongzi called God with the word Tian (based on the hanzi character consisting of the letters Yi (one) and Da (Great) so Tian is interpreted as one who is the greatest. As the creator (Creator) of the universe. b. The Absolute Value of the Importance of Virtue CHENG ZUN JUE DE 诚 尊 厥德 FULL FAITH UPLOADING VIRTUE 1) Wu Yuan Fu Jie 无远弗届 No long distance is unreachable 2) To Xiang Tian Xin 克享天心 Truly the Heart of God has mercy.

Virtue in Confucianism is contained in the teachings of the 8 Virtues and Virtues

The teachings of the 8 Virtues are known as Ba De (Hauw Filial Ti Humble Tiong True Xin Trustworthy Li Morality Yi Truth Lian Pure heart Chi Know Shame).

The teachings of the 5 Virtues are known as Wu Chang consists of (Ren Love Yi Truth Li Morality Zhi Wisdom Xin can be trusted).

c. The Existence of the Word / Destiny / True Character 天 So know / serve God

d. The existence of spirit (Shen) and life (gui)中节 When (lust) arises, keep it in the middle limit.

Humans have two life forces, namely Physical life force and Spiritual Life Force.

The spiritual life force of humans is known as Xing (True Character) which includes the seeds of virtue (Ren Yi Li Zhi). The Physical Life Force of humans is in the form of Qing (Desire) which includes (Xi Nu Ai Le) Joy, anger, sadness and happiness (Zhongyong Utama verse 4)

a. The Existence of Parental Guardianship over Their Children CHENG YANG XIAO SI 诚养孝思 FULLY FAITH CARING FOR THE AIM OF FITNESS Li Shen Xing Dao 立身行道 Uphold yourself on the Holy Path

Yi Xian Fu Mu 以显父母 In order to honor Father and Mother.
In the Practice of Devotion, there is nothing greater than being respectful and honoring parents. The beginning of Devotion is to care for and maintain all parts of the body as an inheritance from parents. The end of devotion can maintain the good name of parents and then make them proud in the future.

b. The existence of TIAN makes Prophet Confucianism as the Spiritual Bell of CHENG SHUN MU DUO 诚 顺 木 铎 FULLY FAITH FULLY FAITH FULLY FAITH FULLY FAITH FULLY FAITH FOLLOW THE SPIRITUAL BELL

1) Zhi Zun Zhi Sheng 至 尊 至 圣 The Most Honored, the Great Prophet,
2) Yong Bao Tian Ming 永 保 天 命 - The one protected by the Word of God.

Prophet Confucianism as the spiritual bell of Confucianism, Prophet Confucianism is the reformer and perfeocter of the Ru Jiao teachings, Prophet Confucianism wrote Ru Jiao Jing Shu (Book in Confucianism) one of which is Shi Yi (Ten wings) in one part of the Yijing Book

c. The existence of the Truth of the Holy Scriptures of Si Shu and Wu Jing CHENG QIN JING SHU 诚 钦 经 书 FULL FAITH GLORIOUS TO THE BOOKS OF SI SHU & WU JING 1) Tian Xia Da Jing 天 下 大 经 The Great Holy Scriptures of the World 2) Li Ming Da Dao 立 命 大 道 The Great Principles Uphold the Words of the Book of Wù Jing 五 經 (Five Holy Books) consists of: 1) Book of Shi Jing 詩 經 (Book of Sanjak) 2) Book of Shù Jing 書 經 (Book of Sacred Historical Documents of the Confucian Religion) 3) Book of Yì Jing 易 經 (Book of events with all changes and events) 4) Book of Lì Jing 禮 經 (Book of Morals / Worship) 5) Book of Chūn Qiū Jing 春 秋 經 (Book of Spring and Fall) Previously called 六 經 Liù Jing (Sixth holy book) but one of the books, namely the Book of Yue Jing (Book of Music) was mostly destroyed during the Qin Dynasty 秦 (221 bc - 206 bc) and the rest is not much included as Chapter XVII of the Book of Lì jì 礼记 (Records of Decency). So, now Confucians currently have the Book of Wǔjing 五 錄 (Five Holy Scriptures).

The Book of Sì Shū 四 书 (The Four Holy Books) is the Basic Holy Book which contains the teachings, sayings / Words of the Prophet Kǒng Zǐ 孔子 and was recorded by his students, which consists of:
1) The Book of Dà Xué 大 學 (Great Teachings) which contains teachings for self-cultivation.
2) The Book of Zhōngyōng 中 庸 (Perfect Middle) which contains teachings of faith.
3) The Book of Lún Yǔ 論 語 (Holy Words) which contains the sayings and conversations of the Great Prophet Kǒng Zǐ 孔子 with students or people of that time.
4) The Book of Meng Zǐ 孟 子 written by Meng Zǐ 孟 子 (around 372 - 289 BC) the grandson of the disciple of Zi Si 子思 which contains the teachings of Meng Zǐ 孟 子 to straighten out the teachings of Ru Jiao 儒 教 (Confucianism) from various schools that emerged after the Great Prophet Kong Zǐ 孔子 died.

d. The Existence of the Great Holy Way CHENG XING DA DAO 诚 行 大 道
1. Greetings of Faith

The Confucian faith greeting that is always said on various occasions is 惟德動天 Wéi Dé Dòng Tiān (read: Wéi té tùng Thiên) which means: 'Only God's goodness is pleasing'. Perhaps because they were afraid of mispronouncing, many officials and the wider community only said 'Greetings of Virtue'.

Historical background: The sacred sentence Wéi Dé Dòng Tiān 惟德動天 comes from the Advice of the Prophet Yì 益 to the Holy King Xiàyǔ (夏禹) alias Dà Yǔ (大禹) founder of the Xià 夏朝 Dynasty, the first dynasty in 中国 Zhōngguó (China).

Prophet Yì 益 (23rd / 22nd century BC), a Shèngrén 聖人 (Prophet) who was the Son of Shèngrén 聖人 (Prophet) Gāo Yáo 皋陶 a minister of Justice of His Majesty Yú shùn 虞舜 (2255 BC – 2205 BC) who was the Holy King 圣王 Shèng Wáng was also a Shèngrén 聖人 (Prophet) mentioned in the Confucian Scriptures (Rú Jiào Jīng Shū 儒教經書).

Prophet Yì 益 was also a Minister of His Majesty Yú Shùn 虞舜 then became an advisor to Dà Yǔ 大禹 Yǔ the Great (2205 BC – 2197 BC), the founder of the first dynasty in China, namely the Xia Dynasty 夏朝 (2205 BC – 1766 BC). His Majesty Dà Yǔ 大禹 is a 圣王 Shèng Wáng (Holy King) in the Confucian teachings as written in the Confucian Holy Book. Basis of the Holy Scriptures:

In the Holy Scriptures of Confucianism, the sacred sentence Wéi Dé Dòng Tiān 惟德動天 is found in the Book of Shūjīng (Book of Sacred Historical Documents of Confucianism) II.II.II: 21 which states:

"Thirty days later, the people 三苗 Sān Miáo apparently still went against His Majesty's command. At that time, Prophet Yì 益 came to help Prophet Yǔ 禹 and said: Only goodness is pleasing to God Wéi Dé Dòng Tiān 惟德動天. No distance is beyond the reach of 无远弗届 Wú Yuǎn Fú Jiè. Arrogance invites loss and Humility receives blessings. Thus is always the Holy Way of the Almighty God 天道 Tiān Dào". Next, the greeting of faith 惟德動天 Wéi Dé Dòng Tiān will be answered with the sacred sentence: 咸有一德 Xián Yŏu Yì Dé (read: Sién yŏu ì té) which means 'together we have one thing, namely virtue'.

Historical background:

The sacred sentence 咸有一德 Xián Yŏu Yì Dé (read: Sién yŏu ì té) comes from the advice of the Prophet Yī Yĭn 伊尹 to King Tài Jiă 太甲, grandson of King Chéng Tāng 成湯 founder of the second dynasty in 中国 Zhōngguó (China), namely Dinas ti Shàng 商朝 (1766 bc - 1122 bc).

Prophet Yī Yĭn 伊尹 (17th century BC) was a minister of King Chéng Tāng 成湯 (1783 BC - 1753 BC) regent (Bǎo hénɡ) 保衡 King Tài Jiă 太甲 grandson of King Chéng Tāng 成湯 a Holy King 圣王 Shèng Wang in Confucian religious beliefs as written in the Confucian holy book. Prophet Yī Yĭn 伊尹 is titled Yuan Sheng 元聖 (Great Perfect Prophet).
Foundation of the Holy Scriptures: In the Holy Book of the Confucian religion, the Book of Shūjīng (Book of Sacred Historical Documents of the Confucian Religion) IV.VI.II:3, it is written: "The king of the Xià 夏 Dynasty was unable to preserve the natural Virtue 德 Dé, and was even negligent towards Almighty God Rokh and oppressing the people. 皇天 Huáng Tiān, God Almighty and Great no longer protects him, so he is searched in thousands of areas, looking for people who are allowed to receive the Word, looking for those with one virtue, who are worthy to be the altar masters of the Rokh 成湯 (Grandfather of King Tài Jiă 太甲) together with the One virtue 咸有一德 Xián Yŏu Yì Dé, was truly pleasing to Tiān 天 (God). The glorious God 天命 Tiānmìng, and became the leader of the nine regions, and changed the first month of the calendar of the Xià 夏 Dynasty (conducting a revolution against the Xià 夏 Dynasty)"

In the beliefs and teachings of Confucianism as written in the series of Confucian Scriptures (Rú Jiào Jīng Shū 儒教經書) there are the Ancient Prophets 圣皇 Shèng Huáng and the Holy King 圣王 Shèng Wáng, as well as Shèngrén 聖人/圣人) Prophets, noble, wise and holy people who were sent down by God in the Confucian religion and are called 孔教聖師 Kǒng Jiàosēng Shī. The two sacred sentences are 惟德動天 Wéi Dé Dòng Tiān (read: Wéi té tùng Thiēn) from the Prophet Yì 益 (23rd / 22nd century BC) and 咸有一德 Xián Yŏu Yì Dé (read: Sién yŏu ì té) from Yuan Shèng 元聖 (Great Perfect Prophet) Yī Yīn 伊尹 (17th century BC), it is estimated that the distance between the two Prophets Shèngrén 聖人/圣人) was 5 (five) centuries or approximately 500 years. So the greeting of faith of Confucian followers is a holy sentence contained in the Book of Shūjīng (Book of Sacred Historical Documents of Confucianism) which is one of the books of Wǔ Jīng 五經 (Five Holy Books), in its historical series up to now around 4200 years. then and this holy sentence is a greeting of faith for Confucians and is believed to be the path to salvation.

A. The Role of Confucian Religious Instructors at MAKIN Natuna in Increasing the Spiritual Faith of Confucians.

Based on the results of a questionnaire conducted on 45 Confucians at MAKIN (Indonesian Confucian Religious Council) Natuna, the role of Confucian religious instructors in increasing the spiritual faith of Confucians can be considered quite significant and effective. The following are some important points that describe this role:
1. Effectiveness in increasing understanding of teachings
   a. 51.1% of Confucians considered the role of Confucian religious instructors very effective in increasing their understanding of Confucian teachings.
   b. 44.4% considered it effective, while only 4.4% were neutral.
2. Increasing spiritual faith
   a. 53.3% of Confucians strongly agreed that Confucian religious instructors had helped increase their spiritual faith.
   b. 42.2% agreed with the statement, indicating a significant positive impact.
3. Application of teachings in daily life
   a. 51.1% of Confucians feel very helped by religious instructors in implementing Confucian teachings in daily life.
   b. 44.4% feel helped, indicating the effectiveness of instructors in guiding religious practices.
4. Increasing understanding of religious aspects
   a. The majority of Confucians feel helped or very helped in increasing their understanding of:
      1) Confucian scriptures (95.6%)
      2) Sacred history in Confucianism (93.3%)
      3) Faith teachings in Confucianism (95.6%)
      4) Worship and prayer rituals (95.6%)
      5) The essence of Confucianism, namely doing good (97.8%)
5. Aspects of teachings emphasized:
   a. Confucian religious instructors emphasize several important aspects in their teachings, including:
      1) Ethics and morals (80% of Confucians)
      2) Harmony and tolerance (71.1%)
      3) Virtue (68.9%)
6. Significant roles of instructors
   Confucians identified the most significant roles that Confucian religious instructors have played, including:
   a. Providing spiritual guidance (77.8%)
   b. Increasing understanding of Confucian teachings (71.1%)
   c. Assisting in the application of teachings in daily life (68.9%)
7. Performance assessment:
   a. 51.1% of Confucians assessed the performance of Confucian religious instructors at MAKIN Natuna as very good.
   b. 44.4% assessed it as good, indicating a high level of satisfaction with the instructor's performance.
8. Confucian assessment
   The average assessment of Confucian people towards Confucian religious instructors is 87.56 on a scale of 100, indicating high appreciation for their role.
9. Multi-Dimensional Effectiveness
   Confucian religious instructors at MAKIN Natuna show high effectiveness in various dimensions:
   a. Increasing Understanding of Teachings
      1) 51.1% of respondents considered the role of instructors very effective
      2) 44.4% considered effective
      This shows that the extension worker has successfully transmitted doctrinal knowledge well.
   a. Strengthening Spiritual Faith
      1) 53.3% strongly agree that extension workers help increase faith
      2) 42.2% agree
This indicates that extension workers not only convey information, but also help internalize spiritual values.

b. Application of Teachings in Life:
1) 51.1% feel very helped in applying daily teachings
2) 44.4% feel helped
This shows the success of extension workers in bridging theory and practice.

1. Comprehensive Counseling Strategy

Confucian religious instructors implement a comprehensive counseling strategy, covering various aspects of the teachings:
   a) Ethics and morals (80% of respondents)
   b) Harmony and tolerance (71.1%)
   c) Virtue (68.9%)
This approach shows that instructors do not only focus on rituals or doctrines, but also on universal values that are relevant to community life.

2. Multifaceted Role

Confucian religious instructors play a variety of roles:
   a) Providing spiritual guidance (77.8%)
   b) Increasing understanding of the teachings (71.1%)
   c) Assisting in the application of the teachings in daily life (68.9%)
This shows that instructors do not only act as teachers, but also as guides and facilitators in the religious life of the community.

3. Impact on Specific Religious Aspects

The extension workers succeeded in increasing the understanding of the community in several specific aspects:
   a) Holy Scriptures (95.6% felt helped)
   b) Sacred history (93.3%)
   c) Faith Teachings (95.6%)
   d) Worship and rituals (95.6%)
   e) The essence of Confucianism (97.8%)
The high percentage indicates the success of the extension workers in providing a holistic understanding of Confucianism.

4. Challenges and Adaptation Strategies

Although the data does not explicitly mention challenges, the high level of satisfaction (95.5% rated performance as good or very good) indicates that the extension workers were able to adapt to the challenges at hand. These may include:
   a) Bridging traditional teachings with a modern context
   b) Dealing with contemporary issues with a Confucian perspective
   c) Maintaining the relevance of teachings in an increasingly secular society

5. Broader Social Implications

The emphasis on harmony and tolerance (71.1%) indicates that Confucian religious instructors also contribute to broader social harmony. This is in line with the role of religious instructors in general in building harmony between religious communities.
In conclusion, the role of Confucian religious instructors in MAKIN Natuna in improving the spiritual faith of Confucian followers has proven to be very positive and effective. The instructors have not only succeeded in improving the doctrinal understanding of the community, but have also helped in the internalization of values and the application of Confucian teachings in everyday life. Their comprehensive approach, which includes ritual, ethical, and social aspects, shows adaptability to the needs of modern people.

The effectiveness of the instructor's role is reflected in the high level of community satisfaction, with an average assessment reaching 87.56 out of 100. This indicates that the strategies implemented are very relevant and successful in fostering and improving the spiritual faith of Confucian followers in Natuna. Confucian religious instructors have provided significant spiritual guidance, helping people face the challenges of everyday life.

However, to maintain this effectiveness in the future, extension workers need to continue to adapt to social changes and contemporary challenges faced by Confucianists in Indonesia. Thus, the role of Confucian extension workers in MAKIN Natuna is not only important in a religious context, but also in helping people face the dynamics of modern life as a whole.

A. MAKIN Natuna's Contribution in Building Interfaith Harmony in Natuna Regency

MAKIN (Indonesian Confucian Religious Council) Natuna has made significant contributions in building and maintaining interfaith harmony in Natuna Regency. Some important aspects of their contributions include:

1. Distribution of takjil to Muslims

MAKIN Natuna demonstrated an attitude of tolerance and harmony by distributing 600 takjil packages to Muslims who were fasting at Simpang Empat, Jami Ranai Mosque. This activity reflects a concrete effort in building good relations between religious communities.

2. Participation in the Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB)

MAKIN Natuna plays an active role in the Natuna Regency FKUB, which aims to unite the thoughts of religious leaders and plan activities of religious organizations in Natuna. This involvement shows their commitment to maintaining interfaith harmony at the district level.

3. Positive assessment from the community

Based on the results of the questionnaire, the majority of respondents assessed the role of Confucian religious instructors in building interfaith harmony in Natuna as very important (51.1%) or important (42.2%). This shows that the community recognizes MAKIN Natuna's positive contribution to maintaining interfaith harmony.

4. Effectiveness in increasing understanding of teachings

Most respondents (71.1%) considered the role of Confucian religious instructors to be very effective or effective in increasing understanding of Confucian teachings. A good understanding of one's own religious teachings can contribute to an attitude of tolerance and respect for differences.

1. Emphasis on virtue values
MAKIN Natuna emphasizes aspects of Confucian teachings that support harmony, such as ethics/morals (80%), virtue (71.1%), and harmony (62.2%). Focusing on these universal values helps build a common foundation for harmony between religious communities.

2. Supporting a conducive religious atmosphere
The Head of MAKIN Natuna stated that the religious atmosphere in Natuna Regency is very conducive, with a sense of tolerance that is well maintained. This shows that MAKIN Natuna plays a role in maintaining and promoting a positive climate of harmony.

3. Maintaining the tradition of tolerance
MAKIN Natuna emphasizes the importance of mutual respect, care, and respect between religious communities, which has been a tradition since the time of their ancestors. Efforts to maintain this tradition contribute to the sustainability of interfaith harmony in Natuna.

However, MAKIN Natuna also faces challenges in carrying out its role. Some of the main challenges identified include lack of human resources (60%), lack of facilities (53.3%), and lack of financial support (51.1%). However, the majority of respondents (68.9%) agreed or strongly agreed that MAKIN Natuna has succeeded in overcoming these challenges.

Overall, MAKIN Natuna's contribution to building interfaith harmony in Natuna Regency is considered positive and effective. Through various activities and approaches, they have succeeded in strengthening the foundation of tolerance and harmony in Natuna's multiethnic and multifaith society.

A. Challenges Faced by MAKIN Natuna and Strategies Implemented in Carrying Out Its Role in a Pluralistic Society.

Based on the results of the questionnaire and available information, MAKIN (Indonesian Confucian Religious Council) Natuna faces several challenges and has implemented various strategies in carrying out its role in a pluralistic society:

1. Main Challenges
Limited human and financial resources. This is the biggest challenge faced by MAKIN Natuna according to questionnaire respondents.
Lack of public understanding of Confucian teachings. This shows the need for more efforts in providing education to the wider community.
Geographical constraints. Natuna is an archipelago, which can complicate access and coordination.

a. Potential for conflict or tension between religious communities. As a border area, Natuna has a diversity of religions and cultures that require good management of interfaith relations.

1. Strategies Implemented
a. Improving the quality and intensity of religious counseling. Most respondents (71.1%) considered Confucian religious counselors effective in improving understanding of teachings.
b. Focusing on aspects of teachings that are relevant to daily life. Counselors emphasize ethics/morals, human relations, and virtue.
c. Building harmony between religious communities. 77.8% of respondents considered the role of Confucian religious counselors to be very important in building harmony.

d. Improving understanding of holy books and religious history. The majority of respondents felt helped in understanding these aspects through counseling.

e. Collaboration with local governments. MAKIN Natuna seeks to align its programs with the strategic plans of local governments.

f. Adapting to local challenges. MAKIN Natuna tries to adapt its strategy to local geographic and socio-cultural conditions.

2. Performance Evaluation

Based on respondents' assessments, the performance of MAKIN Natuna and Confucian religious instructors is quite positive

a. 66.7% of respondents assessed MAKIN Natuna's overall performance as good or very good.

b. 71.1% of respondents assessed the performance of Confucian religious instructors as good or very good.

c. The average respondent assessment of Confucian religious instructors was 82.8 out of 100.

Despite facing various challenges, MAKIN Natuna has shown significant efforts in carrying out its role. The strategies implemented tend to be effective in increasing understanding of Confucian teachings and building harmony between religious communities. However, there is still room for improvement, especially in overcoming resource limitations and expanding the reach of its programs.

In the future, MAKIN Natuna needs to continue to adapt to socio-cultural developments, increase collaboration with various parties, and optimize the use of technology to overcome geographical constraints. Thus, MAKIN Natuna can be more effective in carrying out its role in the midst of a diverse society in this strategic border region.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis of the role of Confucian religious instructors at the Indonesian Confucian Religious Council (MAKIN) Natuna for the 2022-2024 period, the following are the conclusions and suggestions that can be conveyed:

1. Effectiveness of the Role of Confucian Religious Instructors

Confucian religious instructors at MAKIN Natuna have shown a very effective role in increasing the spiritual faith of Confucian people. This is reflected in:

95.5% of respondents rated the performance of the extension workers as good or very good

a. 95.5% of the congregation felt helped in improving their understanding of Confucian teachings

b. 95.5% of the congregation felt helped in improving their spiritual faith

c. 95.5% of the congregation felt helped in applying the teachings in daily life
The extension workers successfully implemented a comprehensive approach that included doctrinal, ethical, and social aspects, and were able to adapt to the needs of modern people.

1. MAKIN Natuna's Contribution in Building Harmony

MAKIN Natuna has made a significant contribution in building and maintaining harmony between religious communities in Natuna Regency, through:
   a. Distribution of takjil to Muslims
   b. Active participation in the Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB)
   c. Emphasis on universal values such as ethics, morals, and virtues
   d. Maintaining the long-standing tradition of tolerance

The majority of respondents (93.3%) considered MAKIN Natuna's role in building harmony between religious communities as important or very important.

2. Challenges and Adaptation Strategies

MAKIN Natuna faces several major challenges, including:
   a. Limited human and financial resources
   b. Lack of public understanding of Confucian teachings
   c. Geographical constraints as an archipelago

However, MAKIN Natuna has implemented adaptive strategies to overcome these challenges, such as:
   a. Improving the quality and intensity of religious counseling
   b. Focusing on aspects of teachings that are relevant to daily life
   c. Collaboration with local governments and other organizations
   d. Adaptation to local conditions

3. Wider Social Impact

MAKIN Natuna's role is not only significant in a religious context, but also contributes to:
   a. Strengthening national values
   b. Social integration in border areas
   c. Building social harmony in a pluralistic society

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Increasing Human Resource Capacity
   a. Conducting regular training for Confucian religious instructors
   b. Recruiting and developing the younger generation to become religious instructors
   c. Developing a mentoring program between senior and junior instructors

2. Optimizing the Use of Technology
   a. Utilizing digital platforms to reach people spread across the archipelago
   b. Developing online educational content about Confucian teachings
   c. Using social media to increase the involvement of the younger generation

3. Strengthening Cross-Sectoral Cooperation
   a. Increasing collaboration with local governments in social development programs
   b. Expanding cooperation networks with other religious organizations
c. Involving MAKIN Natuna in regional development planning, especially related to social and religious issues
1. Community-Based Program Development
a. Designing programs that involve communities across religions
b. Holding social and cultural activities that promote shared values
c. Establishing interfaith dialogue forums at the grassroots level
2. Increasing Religious Literacy
a. Developing a more comprehensive and contextual extension curriculum
b. Publishing educational materials on Confucian teachings that are easy to understand
c. Holding open seminars and workshops to increase public understanding of Confucianism
3. Strengthening Advocacy and Policy
a. Increasing MAKIN Natuna's involvement in the policy-making process at the regional level
b. Advocating for policies that support harmony between religious communities
c. Actively participate in policy formulation forums related to religious life
4. Continuous Evaluation and Monitoring
a. Develop a more measurable performance evaluation system for religious instructors
b. Conduct regular surveys to assess the impact of MAKIN Natuna programs
c. Hold an annual reflection forum to evaluate achievements and plan future strategies

By implementing the above suggestions, it is hoped that MAKIN Natuna can further increase the effectiveness of its role in fostering Confucianism and contribute to the development of social harmony in Natuna Regency. This in turn will strengthen Natuna's position as a border region that has strong social cohesion and become a model of interfaith harmony in Indonesia.

FURTHER STUDY
This research still has limitations, so it is necessary to carry out further research related to the topic of The Role of Confucian Religious Counselors in Increasing Spiritual Faith in Believing in Confucianism Case Study at the Indonesian Confucian Religious Council (MAKIN) Natuna 2022-2024 Period in order to improve this research and add insight to readers.
REFERENCES


