



# The Role of Islamic Education in Building Interreligious Tolerance in Indonesia

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**Abstract:** *Islamic education plays a vital role in fostering interreligious tolerance in Indonesia, a country renowned for its immense cultural and religious diversity. This study aims to analyze how Islamic education contributes to the creation of interreligious tolerance through the integration of tolerance values into curricula, teaching methods, and school activities. The research employs a library research methodology by examining various literature sources, including the Qur'an, Hadith, and studies on Islamic education and tolerance. The findings indicate that profound Islamic teachings on pluralism—such as the principle of rahmatan lil 'alamin (mercy to all creation), respect for differences, and the prohibition of religious coercion—provide a strong foundation for building tolerance. Islamic education that incorporates these values into both formal and informal learning processes can help students understand the importance of coexisting harmoniously with people of different faiths. However, challenges such as the politicization of religion and biases against pluralism remain significant obstacles. This study underscores the importance of strengthening multicultural education, providing teacher training, and leveraging technology to support more inclusive and tolerant learning practices. Consequently, Islamic education holds great potential to cultivate a young generation that is tolerant, empathetic, and committed to preserving harmony in a diverse society.*

**Keywords:** *Islamic Education, Interreligious Tolerance, Educational Curriculum, Pluralism, Multicultural Education.*

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity, making it one of the largest examples of pluralism in the world (Nasution, 2017; Nurhayati et al., 2018). In this context, interreligious tolerance is a vital element in maintaining social harmony and preventing horizontal conflicts (Yusuf et al., 2021; Lestari, 2019). As the majority religion, Islam plays a strategic role in promoting values of tolerance through various approaches, one of which is education (Munir et al., 2020). Islamic education, as a means of transforming values and morals, can function to strengthen harmony and view diversity as a shared wealth (Huda et al., 2018; Sari & Adnan, 2022). However, challenges on the ground remain significant. The emergence of various forms of intolerance involving interfaith actors, whether in the form of hate speech, discrimination, or physical conflicts, indicates that efforts to build tolerance are not yet optimal (Ismail & Fauzan,



2021). Cases such as restrictions on freedom of worship, vandalism of places of worship, and stereotypes against minority religious groups highlight the need for more effective educational strategies to address these issues (Basri, 2016; Suharti & Widodo, 2020).

Islamic education not only serves as a means of teaching creed but also as a medium for conveying the universal teachings of Islam, such as justice, compassion, and peace (Fitriani et al., 2020; Halim, 2018). The Qur'an and Hadith contain many teachings that emphasize the importance of respecting differences. For example, in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Kafirun: 6 states, "*For you is your religion, and for me is my religion.*" This verse serves as one of the foundations for respecting religious freedom (Nasution, 2017). Unfortunately, in practice, Islamic education often focuses on ritualistic and dogmatic aspects without providing a deep understanding of how Islam teaches tolerance (Rahmawati et al., 2021; Efendi et al., 2023). This results in some Muslim students or communities not fully understanding how to practice Islamic teachings in the context of diversity (Munir et al., 2020). Islamic education needs to be designed to equip students with social skills such as interfaith dialogue, empathy, and respect for human rights (Huda et al., 2018).

The curriculum of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia has actually included values of tolerance. In the Core Competencies (KI) and Basic Competencies (KD) of PAI subjects, there is material on living in harmony and respecting differences (Sari & Adnan, 2022; Efendi et al., 2023). However, classroom implementation often faces obstacles, both in terms of teaching methods and the availability of learning resources (Yusuf et al., 2021). Teachers, as the main agents in delivering tolerance education, play a very important role (Lestari, 2019; Minarti et al., 2024). However, not all teachers have sufficient understanding of religious pluralism (Ismail & Fauzan, 2021). Many teachers still adhere to traditional paradigms in teaching PAI, so the values of tolerance are not conveyed optimally (Basri, 2016). Therefore, training and professional development are needed for teachers to enable them to integrate tolerance values into the learning process (Rahmawati et al., 2021; Sutrisno et al., 2024).

Pesantren, as the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, have great potential in spreading the values of tolerance (Suharti & Widodo, 2020). Many pesantren have adopted inclusive approaches in their education, such as teaching the history of religions, engaging in interfaith dialogues, and studying classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*) that emphasize social justice (Halim, 2018). However, not all pesantren apply this approach (Fitriani et al., 2020; Minarti



et al., 2024). Some pesantren still focus on exclusive approaches that only strengthen Islamic identity without providing room for understanding other religions. Therefore, it is important to encourage pesantren to develop more inclusive educational programs without losing their Islamic characteristics (Nasution, 2017).

Multicultural education has become one relevant strategy for building tolerance (Munir et al., 2020). Through this approach, students are invited to understand and appreciate cultural differences, including religious differences (Huda et al., 2018). In Islamic education, the multicultural approach can be implemented by integrating stories of the Prophet that demonstrate respect for non-Muslims (Rahmawati et al., 2021). Multicultural education can also be applied through extracurricular activities, such as interfaith dialogues, visits to places of worship of other religions, and joint social projects (Fitriani et al., 2020). These activities not only strengthen theoretical understanding but also provide students with practical experiences on how to coexist harmoniously with people of different beliefs (Halim, 2018).

Despite numerous efforts, building tolerance through Islamic education still faces various challenges (Lestari, 2019). One of the main obstacles is the emergence of radical ideologies infiltrating educational institutions (Suharti & Widodo, 2020). These ideologies often teach exclusivity and antipathy toward other religions, which contradicts the values of Islam as a mercy to all creation (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*) (Ismail & Fauzan, 2021). Additionally, the lack of government support in the form of strong policies to promote tolerance education is also a barrier (Basri, 2016). Education policies often focus more on academic aspects than on strengthening character values (Yusuf et al., 2021).

Penelitian ini menjadi penting untuk menggali bagaimana pendidikan Islam dapat secara efektif membangun toleransi antarumat beragama di Indonesia. Dengan memahami faktor-faktor yang mendukung dan menghambat implementasi nilai-nilai toleransi dalam pendidikan Islam, diharapkan dapat ditemukan solusi yang komprehensif dan aplikatif. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga bertujuan untuk memberikan kontribusi bagi pengembangan teori dan praktik pendidikan Islam yang relevan dengan konteks pluralisme di Indonesia. Melalui pendidikan yang berbasis nilai-nilai Islam dan toleransi, diharapkan dapat tercipta generasi yang mampu menjaga keutuhan bangsa di tengah keberagaman.



## **METHOD**

This research uses a library research approach aimed at exploring and analyzing relevant data from various literatures related to the role of Islamic education in building interfaith tolerance in Indonesia. This approach is chosen because of its theoretical and conceptual nature, with the goal of developing a deeper understanding based on reliable sources (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009). Library research allows the researcher to study various perspectives that have been presented in the literature to obtain a more complete and comprehensive view of the topic under investigation (Flick, 2014).

This study is descriptive-analytical in nature. The descriptive approach is used to describe various theories, concepts, and views regarding Islamic education, tolerance, and pluralism (Azra, 2002; Komariyah, 2017). Meanwhile, the analytical approach is applied to interpret and link these concepts to provide a thorough understanding of how Islamic education plays a role in fostering tolerance (Stake, 1995; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Thus, this study not only describes but also analyzes the relationship between Islamic education and the development of interfaith tolerance in Indonesia (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

The data sources in this study are secondary, which include various references relevant to the research topic. These sources include books, journal articles, official documents, and digital sources (Sukardi, 2009). Books serve as the primary literature discussing Islamic education, values of tolerance in Islam, multicultural education, and pluralism theory (Azra, 2002; UNESCO, 2009). Scientific journal articles published by reputable journals are also used as data sources discussing issues related to education, culture, and tolerance (Merriam, 2009). Official documents, such as national education policies and the Islamic religious education (PAI) curriculum, as well as government or organizational reports on interfaith harmony in Indonesia, are also used as data sources (Creswell, 2014). Additionally, online publications from trusted websites relevant to the research topic, such as academic portals or research institutions, are utilized as digital sources (Komariyah, 2017).

Data collection in this study is conducted through documentation methods, which involve searching, reading, and categorizing information from various sources. This process includes several steps, starting with the identification of relevant literature using keywords such as "Islamic education," "religious tolerance," "pluralism," and "multicultural education" (Bogdan & Biklen,



2007). Afterward, source selection is based on credibility, which includes the author's authority, the publisher, and the relevance of the content to the research topic. The filtered data is then organized into appropriate categories, such as Islamic education theory, concepts of tolerance in Islam, multicultural education practices, and challenges in building tolerance (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

Data analysis in this study is conducted using a descriptive-analytical approach with the analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). The analysis process involves several stages. First, data reduction is carried out by grouping and filtering information from relevant literature based on the research focus. Irrelevant data will be discarded to maintain consistency and depth in the analysis. Next, data presentation is done by organizing the data into narratives or tables to facilitate interpretation, such as explanations of tolerance values in Islam or examples of tolerance implementation in Islamic education (Stake, 1995). The final stage is drawing conclusions, which is done by comparing the theories found in the literature with the actual context of Islamic education in Indonesia (Sukardi, 2009). This process aims to generate a comprehensive understanding of the role of Islamic education in building interfaith tolerance.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Islam as the Philosophical Foundation of Tolerance**

Islam as a religion of mercy for all of creation, has a strong philosophical foundation supporting the principle of religious tolerance. Islamic teachings recognize pluralism as part of Allah's will, as reflected in many verses of the Qur'an that underpin this principle. One verse often cited as the philosophical basis for tolerance in Islam is Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 256, which states, "There is no compulsion in religion" (Saeed, 2015). This verse teaches Muslims to accept religious freedom, where each individual has the right to choose their faith and beliefs without pressure from others. This provides a solid foundation for religious tolerance in society. Furthermore, the principle of "rahmatan lil 'alamin" (mercy for all creation) in Islam also emphasizes that the primary mission of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was to bring peace, compassion, and welfare to all of humanity, regardless of religion or belief. As stated in Surah Al-Anbiya, verse 107, "And We have not sent you (Muhammad) except as a mercy to the worlds" (Nasr, 2015). This teaching views all human beings as recipients of Allah's mercy, and Islam encourages harmony despite religious



differences. Therefore, the value of "rahmatan lil 'alamin" teaches that Islam seeks peace not only among Muslims but also among people of different faiths (Chittick, 2015).

The tolerance demonstrated by Islam can clearly be seen in the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). As the primary example for Muslims, Prophet Muhammad consistently showed the importance of mutual respect and prioritizing peace in various situations (Rohman et al., 2023). One of the most famous examples is the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, which occurred in 628 CE. This treaty demonstrated how Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) accepted terms unfavorable to Muslims in order to preserve peace and avoid prolonged conflict. The treaty allowed Muslims to perform the Hajj peacefully, despite previous tensions with the Quraysh. His decision to accept this treaty, even under harsh conditions, reflects the high value Islam places on peace over victory in conflict. Additionally, the Treaty of Medina is another clear example of how Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) prioritized tolerance in his interactions with various tribes, including the Jews. The treaty set out the rights and duties of both Muslims and non-Muslims in Medina, including the guarantee of religious freedom for everyone (Rahman, 2015). This shows that Islam acknowledges and respects religious differences and creates space for others to live in peace. The example set by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) provides guidance for Muslims to maintain unity and harmony amidst diversity (Hassan, 2015).

In Indonesia a country known for its ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity, the application of tolerance principles in Islamic education is essential. Indonesia has a predominantly Muslim population but also has a large number of people from other faiths, such as Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. In this context, Islamic education plays a vital role in teaching tolerance and respecting differences as part of the nation's pluralism. Islamic education based on tolerance values can create a generation that not only understands their own faith deeply but also respects others' rights to choose their religion and beliefs. In Indonesia's Islamic education, the principles of "rahmatan lil 'alamin" and "la ikraha fid din" need to be more intensively applied to foster mutual respect among people of different religions. The Islamic education curriculum should be designed to not only teach religious knowledge deeply but also to instill national values that promote unity and interfaith harmony (Zarabozo, 2015).

Islamic education must facilitate learning that fosters tolerance from an early age. There are several principles that need to be applied in Islamic education to nurture tolerance, including first,



respect for religious freedom. This principle teaches that every individual has the right to choose their religion and beliefs. In the context of Islamic education, this means students should be taught to respect others' right to practice their faith freely. Second, a mindset of acceptance towards differences. In Islamic education, students should be trained to understand that differences should not lead to conflict, but should be embraced with mutual respect. Third, the importance of interfaith dialogue. Islamic education must teach the value of engaging in dialogue with people from different religions to expand understanding and build mutual respect. Interfaith dialogue is an effective way to resolve differences and find common ground that strengthens relationships. Fourth, Islamic education should also teach universal values, such as justice, compassion, and mutual respect. These values transcend religions and cultures, providing a strong foundation for peace. Fifth, character education that emphasizes tolerance. Islamic education should include teachings on good character, such as how to be a tolerant, understanding person capable of adapting to differences. Through character education, students are expected to develop wisdom in dealing with societal differences (Saeed, 2015; Hassan, 2015).

Islam, as a religion of mercy for all creation, has profound philosophical principles supporting religious tolerance. The teachings in the Qur'an and Hadith demonstrate that Islam highly values religious freedom and peaceful coexistence amidst diversity. The tolerance shown by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through historical events such as the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah and the Treaty of Medina provides clear evidence that Islam encourages peace not only among Muslims but with followers of other faiths as well. In the context of Islamic education in Indonesia, applying these principles of tolerance is crucial for producing a generation that understands their own religion and can live harmoniously and respectfully with others, creating a peaceful, harmonious society amid diversity (Chittick, 2015; Zarabozo, 2015).

### **Islamic Education Curriculum as a Tool for Building Tolerance**

The Islamic education curriculum plays a vital role in shaping students' character and personalities, including instilling interfaith tolerance values. Islamic religious education not only teaches religious obligations but also incorporates universal values that are highly relevant in a multicultural society, such as pluralism, justice, and universal brotherhood (Mubin et al., 2020; Halimah, 2014). These values can serve as a strong foundation for fostering mutual respect and harmonious living amid differences. One of the primary goals of the Islamic education curriculum



is to cultivate individuals who not only have a deep understanding of their own religion but also exhibit tolerance toward other religions and beliefs (Rahman, 2012; Zainuddin & Suryana, 2016). The concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (mercy for all of creation) in Islamic teachings, which emphasizes peace, compassion, and justice, can be a central basis in education (Jamal, 2015). The Qur'an contains many verses teaching the importance of coexisting with others without imposing one's will (Al-Baqarah: 256). This value should be an inseparable part of every Islamic religious education (PAI) subject, so students can learn to appreciate pluralism and live in harmony (Muda & Manaf, 2018).

However, the implementation of these values in the Islamic education curriculum often faces challenges. Many teachings are merely normative, meaning they are explained theoretically without being practiced in real life (Suhaili, 2019). This limits students' understanding of how tolerance can be applied in everyday life. Often, the materials delivered are abstract, without providing concrete examples that students can relate to their own experiences (Hasan & Yuliana, 2021). In fact, to foster tolerance, students need to be more engaged in a learning process that allows them to apply these values in real-world situations. Therefore, it is crucial for the Islamic education curriculum to adopt a more contextual and practical approach. One approach that can be implemented is problem-based learning (PBL) or project-based learning (PjBL). This approach encourages students to solve real-world problems related to tolerance issues, such as how to respond to differences in religion, culture, and ethnicity in daily life (Bintoro & Sari, 2022).

In this approach, students are given the opportunity to work on projects or engage in discussions that involve diverse groups with different backgrounds. For example, they can participate in social activities involving various religious groups, such as building mutual understanding about tolerance through interfaith dialogues, collaborating on social projects, or engaging in interfaith religious activities. Such projects give students a space to learn directly about the challenges and importance of tolerance in everyday life, as well as how they can contribute to creating a more inclusive and peaceful society (Al-Amin, 2017). Besides developing a more practical curriculum, the role of teachers in instilling tolerance values is also crucial. Teachers, as facilitators of education, not only convey the material but also create an inclusive learning environment that respects differences (Suhaili, 2019). Teachers can model tolerance by respecting



the opinions and beliefs of students, encouraging active discussions, and sharing views on how to live harmoniously with people from different religions, cultures, and backgrounds.

Teachers can also use media and technology to introduce tolerance values to students. For example, by using films, stories, or teaching materials that depict religious harmony and positive examples of diversity. This way, students can more easily understand and appreciate the importance of tolerance in social life. Additionally, teachers can organize group discussions that allow students to exchange ideas and perspectives on tolerance and practical ways to apply it in daily life (Zainuddin & Suryana, 2016). Although the Islamic education curriculum already incorporates tolerance values, the greatest challenge in its implementation is the perception or intolerant attitudes that may have already been internalized in society (Sholeh et al., 2024). Some students may grow up in environments that do not support tolerance, such as in areas with strong religious or cultural homogeneity, making it difficult for them to accept and appreciate differences (Mubin et al., 2020). Furthermore, another challenge is the influence of narrow or extreme religious interpretations that may shape students' views on tolerance (Hasan & Yuliana, 2021).

To overcome these challenges, the development of the Islamic education curriculum needs to be continuous, involving various parties, including scholars, academics, and the community, in designing content that is relevant to contemporary challenges (Muda & Manaf, 2018; Munif et al., 2023). One solution is to integrate tolerance education not only in PAI but also in other subjects, such as Civic Education, so that students can see the relevance of tolerance values in various aspects of life. The Islamic education curriculum plays a critical role in building a tolerant society, especially in the multicultural context of Indonesia (Bintoro & Sari, 2022). Therefore, the curriculum must adopt more practical and contextual approaches, such as problem-based learning and project-based learning, which can engage students directly in the practice of tolerance. In addition, the role of teachers in creating an inclusive learning environment that respects differences is essential. Despite the challenges in its implementation, with collective efforts from various parties, Islamic education can be an effective means of instilling tolerance values and creating a generation ready to live harmoniously amidst diversity (Jamal, 2015; Al-Amin, 2017).

### **The Role of Teachers as Agents of Tolerance**

Teachers play a crucial role in education, not only as instructors delivering subject matter but also as social change agents, particularly in fostering tolerance among students. Tolerance is



an essential attitude to cultivate from an early age, especially in a country with cultural and religious diversity like Indonesia. As change agents, teachers not only transmit knowledge but also serve as exemplars of the application of tolerant values. Studies show that teachers who possess a deep understanding of religious pluralism are more effective at imparting and instilling tolerance in their students (Miftah & Fadillah, 2020; Kasim & Wahyudi, 2017). Teachers who embrace and apply principles of tolerance—such as mutual respect and acceptance of differences—are more successful in creating inclusive and harmonious learning environments (Sari & Pramudianto, 2016; Rahmawati & Yusuf, 2019).

In addition to being instructors, teachers also function as role models. Students often observe and emulate their teachers' behavior, meaning that the tolerance exhibited by educators can significantly influence how students develop their attitudes (Hidayati & Triyono, 2021). In Islamic education, for example, tolerance can be demonstrated through respect for religious, ethnic, and social differences, as taught in the Qur'an and Hadith (Sholeh et al., 2024). Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) himself is an exemplary model in this regard, consistently maintaining positive relationships with people of different beliefs and cultures. Teachers who emulate this example can inspire students to apply similar attitudes in their daily lives (Purnama & Sulastri, 2017).

Therefore, it is important for teachers to develop a broad understanding of religious and cultural pluralism. Teachers who comprehend the value of respecting differences in religion and culture will find it easier to teach tolerance to students (Zulkarnain, 2018; Sholeh et al., 2024). Effective teaching of tolerance requires not only theoretical knowledge but also concrete practices, where teachers create opportunities for students to understand and appreciate one another's differences (Agustin & Manullang, 2020). However, many teachers still lack a deep understanding of pluralism. Multicultural education, which emphasizes the importance of recognizing diversity in society, is often neglected in teacher training programs (Setiawan & Widodo, 2017).

A lack of deep understanding of religious and cultural pluralism can hinder teachers from effectively teaching tolerance. As a result, students may only understand tolerance as a normative concept without being able to apply it in their lives (Baharuddin & Kurniawati, 2021). Continuous teacher training is therefore essential to ensure that teachers have sufficient knowledge of multicultural education and can integrate tolerance values into their teaching. This training may cover various aspects, such as strategies for addressing classroom conflicts involving cultural or



religious differences and techniques for teaching students how to appreciate those differences (Miftah & Fadillah, 2020).

This training can also address classroom management techniques that support inclusivity, such as creating a safe environment where students from various backgrounds can speak, share experiences, and interact without fear of judgment or discrimination. Through this approach, teachers become not only knowledge transmitters but also mentors who foster a harmonious atmosphere that promotes tolerance both inside and outside the classroom. In addition to formal training, teachers should also be involved in developing activities that promote harmony and mutual respect among students (Kasim & Wahyudi, 2017). Activities like group discussions, cross-cultural collaborative projects, and events involving various religious and cultural groups can serve as effective means to teach tolerance directly (Sari & Pramudianto, 2016).

Teachers can also develop activities that encourage students to understand that differences are natural and not something to be feared or avoided. In these activities, students are given the opportunity to interact and collaborate with peers from different backgrounds, allowing them to learn how to respond to differences with openness and mutual respect (Hidayati & Triyono, 2021). Through direct experience in these activities, students will better understand the meaning of tolerance and how to apply this principle in daily life. These activities not only introduce the concept of tolerance theoretically but also provide practical experiences that help students become more open-minded and caring toward differences (Setiawan & Widodo, 2017).

The teacher's role as an agent of tolerance is vital in creating a harmonious society, particularly in Indonesia, which is rich in cultural and religious diversity. Teachers are tasked not only with imparting knowledge but also with setting an example in applying tolerance values and engaging students in learning experiences that encourage them to appreciate differences. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to have a deep understanding of religious and cultural pluralism and to receive continuous training in multicultural education. Furthermore, developing activities that promote harmony among students is equally important (Sholeh et al., 2023; Syafi'i et al., 2024). Through this approach, teachers can act as change agents who instill tolerance in students' hearts and prepare them to live together in diversity.

### **Tolerance Practices in Islamic Schools**



Islamic schools in Indonesia, both formal and non-formal, play a crucial role in promoting tolerance values among students. While the primary focus of Islamic education is to shape good character based on religious teachings, many Islamic schools also integrate tolerance education, particularly in the context of religious and cultural diversity in Indonesia (Ibnu et al., 2023). In this regard, several initiatives and programs have been developed to encourage tolerance among students, including interfaith dialogues, cross-cultural visits, and extracurricular activities (Fata, 2018; Abdurrahman, 2020; Budi, 2019).

One way to teach tolerance in Islamic schools is through interfaith dialogues. This activity involves students from different religious backgrounds discussing universal human values, such as peace, compassion, and justice. Such dialogues not only provide students with an opportunity to understand the beliefs of others but also introduce the concept that, despite religious differences, fundamental life principles such as mutual respect and peaceful coexistence apply to all (Mulyani & Ali, 2017; Sukma, 2018).

Cross-cultural visits are also an effective method for promoting tolerance in Islamic schools. One common activity is visiting places of worship of other religions, such as churches or temples, which not only introduces students to different worship practices but also the cultures associated with them. These visits allow students to see firsthand how other religions are practiced, as well as increase their awareness of the diversity present in society (Prasetyo, 2022; Hidayati & Wahyudin, 2021). Such steps are essential in reducing negative prejudices and stereotypes toward other religions. In many schools, these visits are organized as part of broader educational programs aimed at opening students' minds to the importance of living in a pluralistic society.

Furthermore, extracurricular activities in Islamic schools are often utilized to explore social issues, including tolerance. Debate clubs, theater, and other arts-related activities are frequently used as tools to train students in expressing their opinions openly while respecting differing views. Through debates, students can learn how to respond to different perspectives, while theater activities help them develop empathy and understanding of diverse social conditions (Budi, 2019; Nugroho & Siregar, 2019; Prapai et al., 2024). These programs provide students with practical spaces to practice tolerance outside the formal curriculum context.

However, the effectiveness of these practices greatly depends on strong support from school management, teachers, and parents. Schools, as educational institutions, must provide the



necessary facilities and resources to support these programs. Teachers, as agents of change, need to be equipped with a good understanding of multicultural education and tolerance, as well as how to implement them in everyday classroom practice (Sukma, 2018; Zhao et al., 2024). Parents also play a significant role in supporting the development of tolerance values outside of school by setting direct examples in daily life. One of the main challenges is ensuring that these activities are not merely symbolic but truly make a positive impact on students' attitudes and behaviors toward differences (Abdurrahman, 2020; Prasetyo, 2022). Therefore, consistent and objective evaluation is crucial to measure how much these activities can change students' views on diversity. Such evaluations can be carried out through surveys, group discussions, or even observations of interactions among students outside of formal activities (Hidayati & Wahyudin, 2021; Romlah et al., 2024).

Tolerance practices in Islamic schools in Indonesia have started to develop and show positive impacts. Programs like interfaith dialogues, cross-cultural visits, and extracurricular activities can serve as effective means to instill tolerance values in students. However, the success of these programs greatly depends on the support of all involved parties, from school management to parents. With proper evaluation and strong commitment, Islamic schools can continue to play a role in shaping a generation that is more tolerant and open to differences (Nugroho & Siregar, 2019; Fata, 2018).

### **Social Implications of Tolerance Education**

Tolerance-based Islamic education carries broad implications, not only for the development of individual students but also for society as a whole. In an educational context, tolerance teaches students not only to accept differences but also to respect and collaborate with individuals who have differing views, beliefs, and backgrounds. This is highly relevant in Indonesia, a country rich in cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity. Tolerance education has the potential to create a younger generation that is more open, empathetic, and capable of facing global challenges that involve diverse social and cultural dynamics.

When students are taught to respect and value religious, ethnic, and cultural differences, they develop into more empathetic individuals. Empathy—the ability to understand and share the feelings of others—is vital in fostering harmonious and respectful relationships. In tolerance education, students not only learn about their own religious teachings but also understand that



every religion has noble values that can complement one another. The Islamic concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (mercy for all the worlds) encourages Muslims to maintain good relationships not just with fellow Muslims but also with people of other faiths (Nasr, 2002; Ahmad, 2017; Madjid, 2019).

This approach prevents students from falling into negative stereotypes or prejudices against other groups. It encourages openness to differences and helps them develop essential social skills, such as effective communication, cooperation, and constructive conflict resolution. In Indonesia's highly diverse context, tolerance education can serve as a cornerstone in maintaining national unity. With over 300 ethnic groups and various religions and traditions, Indonesia's diversity is both a cultural wealth and a challenge if not well-managed. Education that teaches tolerance and mutual respect is a critical tool in managing this diversity (Setyawan, 2020; Mulyadi, 2016).

Furthermore, tolerance education can strengthen intergroup solidarity in Indonesia (Sholeh et al., 2023). When young generations understand that differences do not hinder living together, they are more likely to collaborate in various fields, whether in education, economics, social, or politics. By embedding tolerance values in education, youth will contribute to the formation of a more peaceful and prosperous society, even with deep-seated differences (Wijayanti, 2020; Muslim, 2018).

Tolerance education does not only involve formal education but also influences broader social life. Students who are well-educated in tolerance are more likely to be accepted in heterogeneous social environments. They can become agents of change, fostering harmonious intergroup relations. By understanding differences, they can not only avoid conflicts but also become leaders capable of uniting various groups for common progress (Ahmad, 2021; Putra, 2019).

Tolerance-based education, particularly from an Islamic perspective, also teaches that every individual, regardless of their background, deserves respect and fair treatment. This encourages students to not only live for themselves but also for the greater good, working towards a peaceful, inclusive, and socially just society. On a larger scale, tolerance education can improve the quality of social and political life in Indonesia. Societies accustomed to tolerance tend to be more stable socially and politically. When tolerance values are applied in education, students grow into responsible citizens who are sensitive to social issues, not only concerned with their own groups



but also with the welfare of others, becoming more active in achieving social justice (Gusman, 2017; Taufik, 2022).

In the political realm, tolerance education can reduce divisions that often arise due to religious or ethnic differences. Students who are taught in the spirit of tolerance are more likely to be informed voters who support policies that emphasize national unity. In this way, tolerance education impacts not only individuals but also the overall progress of the nation (Hasyim, 2020; Adli, 2021).

Tolerance-based Islamic education not only shapes individuals who are open and empathetic but also strengthens the character of the Indonesian nation. Education that teaches the importance of respecting differences and building harmonious relationships will create a generation that is wiser in facing complex social challenges. With strong character, the younger generation will be better equipped to face the challenges of globalization and rapid social change while preserving their identity as part of a pluralistic Indonesian society (Rahman, 2019; Aziz, 2022).

In conclusion, tolerance education can be a key factor in forming a society that is not only intellectually bright but also emotionally and socially mature, supporting a peaceful, prosperous, and united Indonesia. The social implications of Islamic tolerance-based education are profound, benefiting individuals, society, and the nation. By teaching tolerance values from an early age, we not only create open and empathetic individuals but also strengthen national unity. Therefore, tolerance education must be continuously developed and implemented at all educational levels to create a generation capable of living harmoniously in diversity and contributing to the betterment of the nation.

## **CONCLUSION**

Islamic education plays a strategic role in building interfaith tolerance in Indonesia. The teachings of Islam inherently contain values of tolerance, such as respect for differences, the principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (mercy for all the worlds), and the prohibition of coercion in religion. These values are reflected in the Qur'an and Hadith and exemplified by the life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In practice, Islamic education in Indonesia has integrated tolerance values through the curriculum, school activities, and various programs that promote cross-cultural



dialogue and interfaith cooperation. Programs such as interfaith dialogues, cross-cultural visits, and extracurricular activities serve as effective media for instilling tolerance values in students.

However, the implementation of tolerance education still faces challenges, such as the politicization of religion, biased understandings of pluralism, and limited training for educators. Therefore, a more structured and sustainable approach is needed, such as strengthening multicultural education, teacher training, and the use of technology in teaching. Islamic education has great potential to create a generation that is tolerant, open-minded, and capable of maintaining harmony in diversity. Efforts to strengthen tolerance education through the integration of Islamic values must be continuously supported by all parties, including educators, the government, and society. Thus, Islamic education can significantly contribute to creating a peaceful and united Indonesian society in diversity.

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