
Classroom Teachers' Strategies in Instilling the Value of Religious Tolerance Based on Islamic Teachings to Elementary School Students: A Case Study at SD Negeri 006 Bontang Utara

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Abstract

Religious tolerance is a fundamental character value that should be cultivated from elementary education, particularly in Indonesia's multicultural society. This study aims to analyze students' religious tolerance attitudes, identify teachers' strategies for internalizing tolerance values based on Islamic teachings, and examine the challenges and solutions encountered at SD Negeri 006 Bontang Utara. A qualitative descriptive case study approach was employed. Data were collected through participant observation, unstructured interviews, and documentation involving eight informants, including the principal, one Islamic Religious Education teacher, and six classroom teachers. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, while trustworthiness was ensured through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The findings indicate that students generally demonstrate passive tolerance, characterized by religion-based peer grouping and discriminatory behaviors that become more complex across grade levels. Teachers promote tolerance through role modeling, habituation, reflective discussions, project-based learning, heterogeneous grouping, and inclusive prayer activities. However, implementation remains fragmented due to exclusive family influences, limited teaching materials, and inconsistent teacher practices. The study recommends institutional guidelines, professional learning communities, and stronger school-parent collaboration to foster sustainable religious tolerance.

Keywords

Classroom Teacher Strategy; Religious Tolerance; Islamic Teachings; Character Education; Elementary School



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INTRODUCTION

Education is the main instrument in shaping the character and personality of the nation's next generation. In the context of Indonesia as a country with a high level of pluralism, education cannot only be oriented towards achieving cognitive aspects, but must also be able to instill strong character values, especially tolerance, as a foundation for the sustainability of

community life (Wibowo, 2020). Tolerance is one of the important keys in maintaining harmony and unity in the midst of the diversity of ethnicities, religions, races, and cultures that are the main characteristics of the Indonesian nation (Muslich, 2021). Elementary school, as the first level of formal education, has a strategic position in instilling the value of tolerance from an early age, considering that at this age range the child's character is still very easy to form and direct. Classroom teachers, who interact directly and intensively with students throughout the day, bear a great responsibility in integrating the value of tolerance into every learning process, both through teaching methods, examples, and habituation in daily school (Naim, 2021).

Islam as a religion of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* provides a strong theological foundation regarding the importance of tolerance in social life (Nadjib, 2020). The Qur'an explicitly contains a number of verses that teach tolerance towards differences. In QS. Al-Hujurat/49:13, Allah Swt. affirms that human beings were created into nations and tribes to know each other, and that one's glory by His side is solely determined by piety, not by origin, ethnicity, or social status (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2018). Ibn Katsir in his commentary explained that the verse emphasizes the differences between tribes and nations as a means of getting to know each other, not as a basis for degrading each other (Katsir, 2017). In QS. Al-Kafirun/109:6, the principle of freedom of religion is affirmed through the statement "for you is your religion, for me my religion", which by Al-Qurthubi (2018) is interpreted as a strict limit of faith that does not hinder the realization of mutual respect in social relations. Meanwhile, QS. Yunus/10:99 emphasizes that the guidance of faith is the prerogative of Allah SWT and should not be imposed on humans, as interpreted by Ath-Thabari (2019) as a prohibition against all forms of coercion in matters of faith. These three verses, along with their interpretations, show that tolerance is not just a pragmatic social value, but a theological principle that is firmly rooted in Islamic teachings. In addition to the textual foundation, the *sirah* of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also provides concrete examples of the practice of tolerance, among others through the Charter of Medina which regulates relations between religious communities in a fair and equal manner, as well as the Prophet's interaction with neighbors and trading partners of different faiths without compromising the firmness of his personal faith.

The inculcation of the value of tolerance in education also has a strong juridical foundation in the Indonesian legal system. Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2017 concerning the Strengthening of Character Education emphasizes that the value of tolerance is one of the main values that must be integrated in Pancasila-based character education (President of the Republic of Indonesia, 2017). Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Number 21 of 2022 concerning Educational Assessment Standards also emphasizes the importance of assessing the dimensions of student character which include tolerance and global diversity (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). Within the framework of the Independent Curriculum, the global diversity dimension in the Pancasila Student Profile explicitly requires students to have the ability to respect cultural differences,

views, and beliefs, as well as interact openly with others from different backgrounds. Nevertheless, the condition of tolerance in Indonesia shows complex dynamics. Data from the Setara Institute (2022) indicates an increasing trend in cases of intolerance among the younger generation, which is reflected in various cases of discrimination, bullying with SARA nuances, and hate speech, both in the real space and in the digital space.

Normatively (*das sollen*), classroom teachers should have a comprehensive strategy that integrates three domains: cognitive through contextual learning, affective through example, and psychomotor through habituation of tolerant behavior. However, in reality (*das sein*), the practice of instilling tolerance in many elementary schools is still incidental, limited to verbal lectures without consistent habituation, and in some cases exacerbated by the attitude of teachers who are not fully tolerant in their daily interactions with students. The gap between *das sollen* and *das sein* is an important starting point to be studied in depth.

These disparities are becoming increasingly relevant to be studied in areas with heterogeneous community characteristics, such as Bontang City, East Kalimantan. As an industrial city that is a meeting point for various groups from all over Indonesia, Bontang has its own challenges in maintaining harmony between residents with diverse ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. This heterogeneity is also reflected in the composition of students at SD Negeri 006 Bontang Utara, a school located in an area with high population mobility. The researchers' initial observations found that the strategy of instilling tolerance applied by teachers in the school was still varied and not uniform, accompanied by indications of minor cases such as grouping students based on religious background and nuanced mockery of SARA in the context of jokes.

A number of previous studies have examined the theme of religious tolerance in Islamic education at various levels and contexts. Chanif (2024) researched the strategies of Islamic Religious Education teachers in developing the value of tolerance at the junior high school level, finding that teacher examples and habituation are the dominant methods but have not been supported by systematic evaluation. Hakiki et al. (2023) examine the strategies of PAI teachers in fostering students' religious tolerance and emphasize the importance of integrating tolerance values into teaching materials. Ridwan et al. (2023) focus on the role of teachers in PAI learning at the MTs level and highlight limited learning time as the main obstacle. Usman and Widyanto (2019) examined the internalization of tolerance in PAI learning in high school and found that cross-background group discussions were effective in fostering students' empathy. At the elementary school level, Tamaeka (2022) examines the cultivation of tolerance values through character education in general, without specifically delving into the role of classroom teachers and the foundation of Islamic teachings as a frame of reference. In general, these studies have the same tendency, namely positioning Islamic religious education teachers as the sole actor in instilling religious tolerance, while the role of classroom teachers at the elementary school level who interact most intensively with students throughout the day through thematic learning has not received much special attention in the existing literature. From the search, it appears that the study that specifically focuses on the strategies of

classroom teachers not only Islamic Religious Education teachers in instilling religious tolerance based on Islamic teachings at the elementary school level, especially in the context of heterogeneous societies of industrial cities, is still a research gap that needs to be filled. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the role of classroom teachers as a central figure in character formation in elementary schools, the integration of Islamic teachings as the foundation of strategy, the mapping of the escalation of forms of intolerance based on grade levels from grades I to VI, and the heterogeneous sociological context of Bontang City as the background for the research.

Based on the above description, this study aims to: (1) analyze and describe the problem of religious tolerance attitudes in students at SD Negeri 006 Bontang Utara; (2) identify and analyze the form of internalization of religious tolerance attitudes by classroom teachers to students; and (3) evaluate the problems and solutions faced by classroom teachers in the internalization process. This research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of Islamic values-based character education studies in elementary schools, as well as a practical contribution in the form of policy recommendations for schools in designing a more systematic, structured, and sustainable religious tolerance planting program.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design (Creswell, 2021; Yin, 2018). This approach was chosen because the research seeks to understand in depth the complexity of the phenomenon of classroom teachers' strategies in instilling the value of religious tolerance based on Islamic teachings, which is contextual and cannot be reduced to quantitative measurement alone. As emphasized by Sugiyono (2020), qualitative research based on the philosophy of postpositivism, is carried out on natural object conditions, with the researcher acting as a key instrument and data analysis is inductive. The case study design was chosen because it allows researchers to explore a single case unit in depth and holistically by considering the social, cultural, and institutional context that surrounds it (Yin, 2018). The research was carried out at SD Negeri 006 Bontang Utara, Bontang Baru Village, North Bontang District, Bontang City, East Kalimantan, for three months (October 2025–January 2026), with the intensive data collection stage taking place in January–February 2026. This location was chosen based on the researchers' accessibility considerations and the characteristics of students who are heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity, economy, and family religious background, which makes it a relevant context to study the dynamics of religious tolerance cultivation.

The source of research data consists of primary data and secondary data (Sugiyono, 2020). Primary data was obtained through interviews with eight purposively selected informants, namely the principal, one Islamic Religious Education teacher, and six homeroom teachers (grades I to VI), who were selected because they had direct and intensive involvement in the learning process and the formation of students' character. The selection of informants from all levels of grades I to VI is intended so that the research can capture the variation and

escalation of the phenomenon of religious tolerance according to the stage of development of the age of students. Secondary data was obtained from school documents, including teaching modules/lesson plans, educational data, and student data.

The researcher acts as a key instrument (human instrument) as emphasized by Sugiyono (2023), with the assistance of observation guidelines, outline interview guidelines, and documentation tools in the form of field notes and voice recorders. The data collection technique was carried out through triangulation of three methods: (1) participant observation of students' social interaction and classroom teacher's learning practices inside and outside the classroom, which was carried out in several learning sessions and school break times; (2) unstructured interviews to explore informants' in-depth interpretations of the phenomenon being studied (Sugiyono, 2020); and (3) documentation studies on teaching modules, school records, and activity documentation.

Data analysis refers to Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which includes four stages: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification (Sugiyono, 2023). Data reduction is carried out by summarizing, sorting, and focusing data on the main themes of the research, namely the problem of tolerance, the form of internalization by teachers, and the problems and solutions faced. The presentation of data is carried out in the form of narrative descriptions accompanied by direct excerpts of the interview results to facilitate the interpretation of patterns and themes, while the drawing of conclusions is carried out in stages and continues to be verified during the data collection process so that the findings truly represent field conditions.

The validity of the data was tested through four criteria (Moleong, 2023): (1) credibility, through extension of observations, increased diligence, triangulation of sources and techniques, and the use of reference materials in the form of documentation and field notes; (2) transferability, through the preparation of a detailed, systematic, and understandable report so that it can be used as a reference in the context of other schools that have similar characteristics; (3) dependability, through an audit of the research process by the supervisor to ensure consistency between data, analysis, and findings; and (4) confirmability, through retesting the findings of the data and the research process that has been carried out so that the research results are truly sourced from field data and not just the subjective construction of the researcher.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Problem of Religious Tolerance in Students

The results of observations and interviews showed that social relations between students of different religions at SD Negeri 006 Bontang Utara were generally in a condition that the researcher called passive tolerance there was no open conflict, but the attitude of active mutual respect had not grown adequately. The PAI teacher emphasized that the social relationship between students "is still limited to not interfering with each other and has not reached the stage of actively respecting each other", while the principal admitted that "the existing

tolerance is still passive and has not yet become a truly living school culture". This pattern was identified consistently from the early to the high grades, albeit with different intensities and complexities. The homeroom teacher said that first-grade students "tend to choose playmates of the same religion, perhaps because of the influence of parents at home", while the homeroom teacher of grade IIIa observed that what is most worried is "the attitude of silence and not wanting to be in a group with friends of different religions because it is more difficult to detect and more difficult to overcome than open conflicts". This condition confirms that passive tolerance is not just the absence of conflict, but a latent condition that has the potential to harden into social exclusivism if not intervened systemically from an early age.

The forms of discriminatory behavior identified showed a clear pattern of escalation along the grade level. In the lower class, the form that appears is in the form of verbal ridicule and imitation of the way of worship of friends of different religions accompanied by condescending laughter. The homeroom teacher said that he had witnessed firsthand "a child in my class imitating the worship movements of his friends of different religions while laughing with his friends", who when reprimanded admitted that he was "just joking", even though the expression of the imitated child turned sad and withdrawn from society. In the middle class, the form develops into social exclusion and disregard in the study group. The homeroom teacher explained that in his class there was "a more subtle but more painful form of discrimination, namely that children of different religions are often excluded from group talks", and that their work is "simply ignored by their peers" for no reason that the perpetrator can explain. In the upper class, discrimination has even penetrated into the digital realm. Va's homeroom teacher reported that her students "have started using group chats to spread negative comments about their friends of different religions," including derogatory personal messages related to religious identities that are much more difficult for teachers to supervise because they occur outside the range of direct supervision. The most serious case was found by the homeroom teacher of grade VIb, when a student publicly stated to his friend that "his religion is the wrong religion and will not go to heaven", a statement that made the victim cry and did not go to school for several days, and after tracing the sentence was "exactly the same as what the child's family member said at home".

The pattern of social grouping based on religious similarities was also identified as consistent and repetitive at all grade levels. Observations of participants in the discussion group formation session that were completely left to the students found that of the four spontaneously formed groups, three were homogeneous based on religious similarities, and the only heterogeneous group was formed because one student did not get a place in another group. The homeroom teacher observed this pattern "almost every day" since first grade even though he had never given instructions for religion-based grouping, so he believed that "the pattern had been formed from home before they entered school". The homeroom teacher emphasized that the pattern was "very consistent" from the beginning to the middle of the school year, and what was more worrying was that students "didn't feel that there was anything wrong with the pattern because for them it was normal and normal". The homeroom

teacher even found that the grouping in his class was "so structured and almost never changed", that efforts to break up groups through interfaith collaborative tasks only lasted for a while before "always returning to the original pattern once the assignment was completed". The homeroom teacher of class VIb closed this series of findings by saying that in the sixth grade "social relations between students of different religions have been polarized quite clearly", with a very thin depth of interfaith friendship even though on the surface it seems polite to each other.

All eight informants agreed that the main root of the exclusivity attitude came from family narratives, followed by the influence of peers and digital media as a reinforcing factor. The findings of passive tolerance are in line with the concept put forward by Tillman in the study of value education, which distinguishes between passive tolerance simply the absence of open conflict and active tolerance, which requires openness, empathy, and active appreciation of differences. The condition at SD Negeri 006 Bontang Utara is still at the level of passive tolerance which has the potential to shift to manifest intolerance if it is not immediately intervened systemically. This phenomenon is also correlated with the concept of pseudo-tolerance Verkuyten, which is a condition when a person appears to be tolerant on the surface but still substantially still harbors prejudice and social distance towards different groups. In elementary school-age students, this condition risks crystallizing into permanent prejudice (entrenched prejudice) if not intervened early through meaningful intergroup interaction experiences.

These findings can be understood more deeply through Kohlberg's moral developmental theory framework, which places elementary school-age learners on a conventional stage their behavior is strongly influenced by the norms of the group and the closest authority figures, especially parents. When the norms in the student's immediate environment contain exclusive values, intolerant behavior becomes a response that is considered reasonable and morally valid by the child, so they generally do not feel guilty for their exclusive attitude. This is consistent with the finding that a first-grader refused to hold hands with a friend of different religions because "his mother said he shouldn't hold hands with people of different religions because he could be affected later" an innocent answer that suggests this attitude does not grow out of the child's own consciousness, but is the result of direct transmission from family socialization. This pattern of exclusion based on religious identity can also be explained through Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory, which asserts that individuals tend to categorize themselves into social groups (in-groups) and define their identity based on membership of that group, thus inherently resulting in favoritism towards fellow group members and prejudice against out-groups.

The emergence of religion-based discrimination through digital media in high-class students is a finding that deserves special attention, considering that elementary schools in general do not have adequate digital literacy programs to anticipate this risk. This phenomenon is relevant to Findahl and Davidsson's warning that children who are exposed to personally and repetitively exclusive content without adult supervision are at risk of

developing deeper attitudes of intolerance. Turkle's phenomenon of filter bubbles in which algorithms present content that reinforces existing beliefs also interacts with peer conforming pressures, so that narrow religious content is consumed collectively in homogeneous groups and reinforces intolerance in multiple ways. These findings confirm the urgency of integrating tolerance-based digital citizenship education into the primary school curriculum, in line with UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy guidelines (2019).

Overall, the problem of religious tolerance in SD Negeri 006 Bontang Utara cannot be understood solely as an internal social problem of the school, but is directly related to the achievement of national education goals as mandated by Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which directs education to the formation of democratic and responsible citizens. These findings confirm the need for a whole-school approach that integrates the cultivation of tolerance into school culture, curriculum design, learning methods, and overall assessment systems, accompanied by active family involvement as the most dominant factor in shaping student attitudes.

Forms of Internalization of Religious Tolerance by Classroom Teachers

The results of the study show that the internalization of religious tolerance by classroom teachers has taken place through various approaches that are tailored to the development stage of students, although the implementation is still individual and has not been coordinated in the overall school policy. A study of the teaching module document found that the value of religious tolerance has not been explicitly listed as a separate learning goal, but is only implicitly contained in the elements of the Pancasila Student Profile in the global diversity dimension. The homeroom teacher admitted honestly that "in the first grade teaching module that I compiled, I have not explicitly included the value of religious tolerance as a separate goal", although in practice the message of tolerance is still inserted orally. Classroom homeroom teachers have begun to list these goals more explicitly in their teaching modules, but admit their implementation in the classroom "has not always been consistent due to time constraints and dense curriculum targets". This condition shows that the integration of tolerance values in learning planning is still administrative and has not been reduced to concrete and measurable learning activities at all grade levels.

At the level of learning strategies, classroom teachers apply an approach that is tailored to the level of development of students. In the lower classes, exemplary and daily habits predominate. The homeroom teacher explained that "the main strategy I applied in this first class was direct example because children this small find it easier to imitate what they see than to understand long explanations", accompanied by simple stories of interfaith friendships. The homeroom teacher of class IIa implemented daily habits in the form of greeting each other without picking and active assistance for students who seemed alone because of different religions, with the belief that "a consistent small habit is more effective than a long explanation that is only once". In the middle class, reflective discussion began to be applied. Homeroom teacher IIIa used simple case-based classroom discussions as the primary medium, while

homeroom teacher IVa emphasized the importance of hands-on experience through "heterogeneous project groups and assigned tasks that require them to be interdependent with each other", as learners "more easily appreciate differences when they have already experienced the real benefits of working together". In the high grade, value-based learning and cross-subject projects are implemented. Teacher Va opened an open dialogue room because he found that intolerance at this age "often does not come from hatred but from ignorance and misunderstanding", while homeroom teacher of class VIb integrates the theme of tolerance into various subjects from interfaith figures in social studies to reading texts with the theme of diversity in Bahasa Indonesia so that "the message of tolerance does not feel like a lecture in itself but a natural part of every learning process". This pattern of strategy development is consistent with Bandura's theory of social learning, which asserts that early childhood learns more through observation and imitation of models than verbal instruction, while the use of open dialogue in the upper classroom reflects Vygotsky's constructivist principle that meaningful value understanding is formed through active and reflective social interaction.

The two most prominent and consistent forms of internalization applied at all grade levels are the formation of heterogeneous interfaith study groups and inclusive management of joint prayer. The homeroom teacher explained that the formation of heterogeneous study groups was deliberately implemented "so that students are used to interacting and collaborating with friends from different backgrounds", although it was acknowledged that students still seemed awkward in the early stages of its implementation so that they needed intensive teacher assistance. This strategy is in line with Allport's Contact Hypothesis, which states that bias between groups can be significantly reduced through quality direct contact under conditions of equality, shared goals, and interdependence. Teachers reported an organic growth of openness and even interfaith friendship from this strategy, although the impact did not fully persist outside the context of group assignments, as found in homeroom teachers who found that friendship groups returned to a homogeneous pattern once collaborative assignments were completed.

The management of joint prayer is carried out by inviting each student to pray according to their respective beliefs simultaneously in a silent atmosphere, without appointing one prayer leader from a particular religion. This daily practice consistently sends a message of appreciation for religious differences, in line with Banks' principle of religious pluralism in education, that schools should be spaces where every religious identity is given equal recognition and respect. However, the researcher's observation noted that teachers have not provided explicit explanations to students about the meaning of the diversity of ways of praying, so this moment has not been used optimally as a means of value education.

PAI teachers make a distinctive contribution by linking tolerance directly to religious foundations, emphasizing to students that "respecting followers of other religions is part of the teachings of Islam itself and not something that is contrary to it", referring to the example of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who coexisted peacefully with people of different faiths. This approach based on the Prophet's postulate and example

makes the message of tolerance more acceptable to Muslim students because it is conveyed as an integral part of their own religious identity, not as a secular value separate from religious teachings. The principal also encourages example as the main strategy at the institutional level and strives for school activities to be designed to bring together students from various religious backgrounds in a positive and collaborative atmosphere, because they believe that "a culture of tolerance cannot be built only in the classroom but must be the breath of all school life".

On a more concrete level, a number of teachers initiated creative programs outside of school hours, such as "Friends of Interfaith Faith," cultural visits to places of worship, and "Diversity Festival," which according to the principal "have proven to have a significant impact on students' attitudes." However, due to their individual initiative-dependent nature, the reach of these programs is limited to only certain classes and is not evenly distributed to all students. The collective awareness of all classroom teachers, PAI teachers, and principals of the importance of instilling tolerance from an early age is in line with Lickona's view that the internalization of character values in schools requires the commitment of all school residents, not just the task of one subject or one particular teacher. However, without coordination and binding policies, uneven program impacts become inevitable. This condition reflects the absence of what Fullan calls institutional capacity for change the institutional capacity of schools to organize, coordinate, and institutionalize good educational innovations so that they can be enjoyed by all students equally and sustainably. The variation in the integration of tolerance values in the teacher-to-teacher teaching module also confirms Tyler's view in classical curriculum theory that educational goals that are not formulated in an operationally and measurable manner tend not to be realized consistently in real learning practice.

Problems and Solutions Faced by Classroom Teachers

This study identifies three main problems that are interrelated in efforts to internalize religious tolerance, namely the strong influence of the exclusive family, the limitations of teaching materials and contextual media, and the inconsistency in the application of the value of tolerance between teachers. The most dominant and fundamental problem is the influence of the exclusive family environment in shaping students' intolerance attitudes since before they enter school. All informants, from homeroom teachers in grades I to VI, PAI teachers, to school principals, consistently reported experiences of dealing with students who carried explicit prohibitions from parents to associate closely with friends of different religions. The homeroom teacher of grade IIIa was even "very surprised when a third-grader confidently declared in front of the class that friends of different religions would not go to heaven", which after investigation turned out to be in the child's home that a very exclusive religious view was routinely taught. The homeroom teacher found a student who refused to sit on a bench with a friend of different religions because "his father forbade him to be too close to people of different religions because he was afraid that his child would be influenced and leave his religion". The most severe case was found by the homeroom teacher of grade VIIb, when a

sixth-grade student uttered a sentence rejecting interfaith friendship that was "exactly the same word for word" as his parents' statement when invited to discuss at school. This phenomenon can be explained through Berger and Luckmann's theory of primary socialization, which asserts that the values instilled in primary socialization in the family are accepted by children as a taken-for-granted reality, so changing them through school intervention requires a much greater and sustained effort. PAI teachers convey this dilemmatic situation clearly: some parents, when invited to discuss at school, actually maintain their exclusive views by claiming religious foundations, so that teachers are in a position to straighten out students' attitudes without clashing with their family's beliefs. The principal emphasized that this pattern is "very consistent", because the attitude shown by children at school "exactly reflects the views and values held by their families", making it the biggest challenge for the school because the school cannot change family values but still has to provide a broader perspective to students without clashing them with their own parents.

The second problem is the limitation of teaching materials and learning media that are explicitly and contextually designed to instill religious tolerance according to the level of cognitive development of students at each grade level. The available textbooks only contain the value of tolerance in general without touching the context of religious diversity specifically, and no additional learning media such as videos, posters, or accompanying reading materials were found that explicitly contained religious tolerance content that is contextual to the real conditions of students. This condition is in line with Tyler's view that educational goals without the support of adequate learning resources tend not to be optimally realized in practice.

The third problem, the inconsistency of the application of tolerance values between teachers, proved to be destructive because the already critical high-grade students quickly detected the gap between the messages taught by the teacher in the classroom and the behavior that other teachers practiced outside the classroom, thus lowering their trust in the message of tolerance itself in line with Bandura's assertion that consistency between verbal messages and model behavior messages is a key prerequisite for effectiveness value learning. This condition is exacerbated by the finding that until this study was carried out, there has never been a forum, special meeting, or written agreement between teachers that explicitly discusses and sets common standards in instilling religious tolerance consistently throughout the school environment. The homeroom teacher emphasized that the theme of tolerance "sometimes appears at first glance in public meetings but is never discussed in depth to produce a concrete and binding agreement", while the homeroom teacher of grade IIIa considers this condition "very urgent because without good coordination each teacher walks alone and the message received by students becomes inconsistent".

In response to these three problems, classroom teachers have developed three forms of self-directed solutions. First, communication and collaboration with parents through class conversation groups, liaison books, personal approaches, and parent meeting forums. The homeroom teacher of grade IIIa has invited several parents from various religions to share

positive stories in class as resource persons, although he acknowledged that "parental involvement is still very limited and not all parents are willing to attend when invited, especially parents whose religious views are quite exclusive". The most effective approach is the PAI teacher, who uses the moment of the parent meeting to convey the evidence and hadith about the importance of tolerance, with the aim that the exclusive parent can see that "religious tolerance is a religious commandment and not something that is contrary to it" an approach that has been recognized as effective because some parents who were initially skeptical became more open after hearing the religious foundation. The principal acknowledged that parental involvement efforts at the institutional level "are still reactive and not proactive" because schools only contact parents when problems have already occurred, rather than as part of a planned prevention program.

Second, the development of self-teaching media in the form of illustrated stories, case modules based on real events in the classroom, documentary videos, inspirational books, and religious comic strips. The IVa homemaker compiled a real-life situation-based case module in his own classroom under a pseudonym, which proved "very effective because the children felt the case was real". Teacher Va recorded a short video containing testimonies from Bontang community leaders from various religions about the experience of peaceful coexistence, while the homeroom teacher of class VIb wrote a booklet containing inspirational stories of interfaith national figures which were then also requested by other class teachers as additional teaching materials. PAI teachers designed comic strips depicting the Prophet and his companions interacting respectfully with neighbors of different religions, so that Muslim students "become more motivated to be tolerant when they see that their own Prophet is the ultimate example of religious tolerance". These initiatives are a manifestation of teacher agency as conceptualized by Priestley, Biesta, and Robinson, namely the ability of teachers to act proactively and innovatively in response to structural limitations for the benefit of students. The principal appreciated the initiative and acknowledged that the teachers' work was "actually of very good quality and worthy of documentation", but the absence of systematic documentation caused the works to be used only to a limited extent by individual teachers without becoming a collective learning asset of the school.

Third, efforts to strengthen collaboration between teachers through school forums, although the informant's admission shows that this kind of forum has never explicitly discussed and agreed on common standards. The homeroom teacher proposed the need for "a workshop or joint training for all teachers on effective strategies for internalizing religious tolerance so that there is a common vision", while the homeroom teacher of class IIIa proposed a special meeting agenda at least once per semester that resulted in a written agreement on teacher behavior standards in the context of religious diversity.

These three solutions, however creative and dedicated, are still partial, reactive, and highly dependent on individual teacher initiative without the support of systematic school policies. The absence of a Professional Learning Community that allows teachers to build a shared vision and agree on standards of attitude in the context of religious diversity is the most

fundamental systemic weakness, which leaves all individual initiatives to run in isolation without producing meaningful collective impact. These findings affirm the importance of strong principal leadership in three strategic steps: forming a professional learning community between teachers that focuses on religious tolerance, developing an institutionally endorsed religious tolerance guide as a common reference for all school residents, and integrating the religious tolerance program as a flagship program in the school's annual work plan that is equipped with measurable targets, indicators, and evaluation mechanisms and accountable.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes three main findings. First, the problem of religious tolerance attitudes in students at SD Negeri 006 Bontang Utara is characterized by a condition of passive tolerance, with an exclusive grouping pattern based on religious similarity that is consistent at all grade levels and increasingly rooted as students age, accompanied by an escalation of forms of discrimination from verbal ridicule in low grades to digital bullying in high grades. where the family factor proved to be the most dominant determinant. Second, the internalization of religious tolerance by classroom teachers has been implemented through an approach tailored to the level of development of students example and habituation in the lower grades, contextual discussions and heterogeneous study groups in the middle grades, and value-based learning and projects in the upper classes including inclusive management of joint prayer, although the implementation is still individual and institutionally uncoordinated. Third, classroom teachers face three main obstacles in the internalization process, namely the strong influence of exclusive families, the limitations of teaching materials and contextual media, and the inconsistency in the application of the value of tolerance between teachers due to the absence of common policies and standards at the school level, which teachers respond to through communication with parents, the development of independent teaching media, and efforts to strengthen collaboration between teachers which are still partial and reactive.

Theoretically, these findings enrich the study of Islamic values-based character education in elementary schools by showing how the concept of passive-active tolerance, primary socialization theory, *social identity theory*, Kohlberg's theory of moral development, and *contact hypothesis* are intertwined in explaining the dynamics of instilling religious tolerance in elementary school-age students in a heterogeneous society. Practically, this study recommends that schools immediately elevate positive initiatives that have grown individually into binding institutional policies, through the formation of professional learning communities between teachers, the preparation of institutionally authorized religious tolerance guidelines, the strengthening of structured collaboration with parents, and the support of the Education Office in the provision of contextual teaching materials and pedagogical training for teachers. With these steps, the internalization of religious tolerance is expected to no longer depend on the luck of students to get teachers with high initiative, but rather to become a right that is systemically guaranteed by the culture and school

policies as a whole. Follow-up research with a quantitative or mixed-methods approach on a broader scale is suggested to test the generalization of these findings in the context of other elementary schools with different sociological characteristics, including longitudinal studies to measure the effectiveness of tolerance-based digital literacy programs for high-grade learners.

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