

Developing a Culture of Tolerance Through Islamic Religious Education

*Zainal Abidin Muhja¹, Liza Shahnaz²

¹International Islamic University Malaysia, Jl. Gombak, Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Malaysia

²Universitas Borneo Tarakan, Jl. Amal Lama No.1, Tarakan, North Kalimantan, Indonesia

*zainal.amuhja@live.iium.edu.my

ABSTRACT: *The increasing phenomenon of intolerance in educational environments threatens social harmony in Indonesia's multicultural society. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a strategic role in instilling the values of humanity, tolerance, and peace among people. This study aims to develop and analyse a tolerance-based PAI learning model as a strategy to strengthen the moderate character of students at Madrasah Hurrasul Aqidah, Tarakan. The researcher used a qualitative approach with a case study type. The primary data sources of the study consisted of PAI teachers, the principal, and students. Meanwhile, secondary data sources were obtained from syllabus documents, school archives, and scientific literature related to PAI learning and tolerance education. Data collection techniques included participant observation and semi-structured interviews to explore respondents' perceptions and experiences more flexibly. Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman interactive model through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data validity was tested using source and technique triangulation by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation to ensure data validity and reliability. The model for developing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning based on culture and tolerance involves creating a syllabus that integrates four main pillars of values: peace, inclusivity, wisdom, and pluralism. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of a culture- and tolerance-based syllabus has a positive impact on increasing students' empathy and openness in interacting with friends of different religions. Furthermore, learning strategies involving discussions, simulations, case studies, and contextual learning have proven effective in fostering social empathy, respect for differences, and student discipline and responsibility. The limitation of this study is its limited scope in one location, so the results cannot be generalised widely. Nevertheless, these findings provide an important contribution to strengthening the paradigm of humanistic and multicultural religious education in Indonesia.*

Meningkatnya fenomena intoleransi di lingkungan pendidikan mengancam harmoni sosial di masyarakat multikultural Indonesia. Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) memiliki peran strategis dalam menanamkan nilai-nilai kemanusiaan, toleransi, dan kedamaian antarsesama. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengembangkan dan menganalisis model pembelajaran PAI berbasis

¹  orcid id: <http://orcid.org/0009-0004-0951-825X>

²  orcid id: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6096-4117>

budaya toleransi sebagai strategi penguatan karakter moderat peserta didik di Madrasah Hurrasul Aqidah, Tarakan. Peneliti menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis studi kasus. Sumber data primer penelitian terdiri dari guru PAI, kepala sekolah, dan siswa. Sedangkan sumber data sekunder diperoleh dari dokumen silabus, arsip sekolah, dan literatur ilmiah terkait pembelajaran PAI dan pendidikan toleransi. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi observasi partisipatif dan wawancara semi-terstruktur untuk menggali persepsi dan pengalaman responden secara lebih fleksibel. Analisis data menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman melalui tiga tahap yaitu reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan/verifikasi. Keabsahan data diuji menggunakan triangulasi sumber dan teknik, dengan membandingkan hasil observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi agar data valid dan reliabel. Adapun model pengembangan pembelajaran PAI berbasis budaya dan toleransi dengan membuat silabus yang mengintegrasikan empat pilar nilai utama, yakni: perdamaian, inklusivitas, kearifan, dan pluralisme. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan silabus berbasis budaya dan toleransi memberikan dampak positif terhadap peningkatan sikap empati dan keterbukaan siswa dalam berinteraksi dengan teman berbeda agama. Disisi lain adanya strategi pembelajaran yang melibatkan diskusi, simulasi, studi kasus, dan pembelajaran kontekstual terbukti efektif dalam menumbuhkan empati sosial, penghargaan terhadap perbedaan, serta kedisiplinan dan tanggung jawab siswa. Adapun keterbatasan penelitian ini adalah lingkungannya yang masih terbatas pada satu lokasi sehingga hasilnya belum dapat digeneralisasi secara luas. Namun demikian, temuan ini memberikan kontribusi penting dalam memperkuat paradigma pendidikan agama yang humanis dan multikultural di Indonesia.

Keywords: *Islamic Religious Education, Culture of Religious Tolerance, Humanistic Learning, Social Empathy, Religious Moderation.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known as a multicultural country comprising diverse ethnicities, races, languages, cultures, and religions. This diversity is a social reality that characterises the Indonesian nation and serves as an important foundation for developing national character (Ainna et al., 2019). In this context, plurality is not only a demographic fact but also a cultural richness that demands the ability of every citizen to coexist peacefully despite differences. However, this diversity can trigger potential conflict if not appropriately managed, thus triggering intolerance (Bakır, 2020). Although the value of tolerance has long been part of the nation's philosophy, several studies have shown that its practice in the field demonstrates the phenomenon of intolerance among students, whether in the form of hate speech, discrimination against minority groups, or social exclusivism, thus becoming a serious concern for educational institutions (Wang et al., 2025). Previous studies have shown low levels of positive interfaith interaction in schools, especially in religiously homogeneous areas (Usman & Widyanto, 2019). In fact, previous research has also found that some students hold religious views that tend to be textual and less open to differences (Rahmat et al., 2019). This situation indicates

that the educational process, particularly religious education, has not fully functioned as an effective medium for building a culture of religious tolerance.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, through its Religious Moderation program, emphasises the importance of strengthening the values of tolerance and balance in religious education (Junaedi, 2019). However, various studies indicate that its implementation in schools still faces serious challenges, both in terms of curriculum and teacher preparedness. Many schools lack systematic learning guidelines for integrating the value of religious moderation into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teaching and learning activities (Zakariyah et al., 2022). Thus, the urgency of this research is growing to find effective Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning strategies to foster a culture of religious tolerance in educational environments.

Conceptually, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning has great potential in shaping moderate character and religious awareness. However, learning practices in the field remain normative, textual, and cognitive. Religious education in many schools places greater emphasis on memorisation of teachings and textual understanding, while the humanistic and contextual dimensions are often neglected. Teachers often act as conveyors of dogma, rather than facilitators of value dialogue that can encourage students to understand the universal meaning of Islamic teachings (Arifinsyah et al., 2020). Therefore, religious education has not been an effective strategy for fostering social empathy and awareness of diversity. Previous research has revealed that religious education that does not foster interfaith dialogue can narrow students' perspectives on social and religious diversity (Andrabi, 2020). This poses a significant challenge for developing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning models oriented toward developing a tolerant character. This aligns with Nieto's (2017) opinion, which states that in a multicultural society, education plays a strategic role in instilling values of togetherness, mutual respect, and tolerance across religions to create sustainable social harmony.

This underscores the need for educational strategies that emphasise not only cognitive aspects but also affective and social aspects. Islamic religious education must be directed towards internalising universal humanitarian values derived from the teachings of Islam, which is *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. Learning strategies that emphasise the values of *ta'aruf* (getting to know each other), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *ukhuwah insaniyyah* (human brotherhood) are highly relevant for building a culture of tolerance in schools (Supriyatno & Ubabuddin, 2019). Therefore, it is necessary to design Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning as an educational strategy that not only focuses on mastering teaching materials but also on fostering awareness of diversity as an integral part of faith and morals. In this case, religious education can have a dual function, namely as a medium for spiritual strengthening and as a social foundation for creating a peaceful, inclusive, and civilised society.

Furthermore, religious education continues to face numerous obstacles in fulfilling its mission, particularly in educating the public, specifically preventing adolescents and adults from maladaptive behaviours such as violence, corruption, collusion, and nepotism, which are driven by consumerist, materialistic, and hedonistic lifestyles (Ulfat, 2020). This phenomenon is contrary to the essence of religious education, both Islamic and other religious education, such as Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, and Hinduism, which function as the foundation of societal hopes that can change individuals for the better. In religious learning at school, the burden of religious

education is significant. With only two to three hours allocated per week, parents and the wider community hope that the religious education provided in the classroom will foster a devout generation. In fact, most parents also hope that through the religious education taught in schools, individuals can actively fortify themselves against all negative influences, especially from their environment.

In line with these expectations, Islamic Religious Education should be responsive in offering a curriculum and teaching materials that meet these expectations. The curriculum functions as an organisation for students, organising learning experiences designed and prepared for students as consumers. This is expected to provide students with new experiences that they can later develop in line with their development, complementing their life skills (Ikhwan, 2013). As a tool for achieving educational goals, the curriculum is expected to offer programs to students who will live in a time different from the socio-historical and cultural backgrounds of their parents. Therefore, efforts are needed to build student awareness so they can implement religious tolerance in schools through Islamic religious education. This expectation aligns with the goal of Islamic religious education as a conscious and planned effort to prepare students to recognise, understand, internalise, and believe in, be pious, and develop noble character in practising Islamic teachings derived from the primary sources of the holy book, the Qur'an and the Hadith (Khaidir & Suud, 2020).

Theoretically, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is understood as a process of developing students' personalities so that they become people of faith, noble character, and beneficial to others (Khaidir & Suud, 2020). In the context of learning theory, the value-based learning approach emphasises that education should focus on the internalisation of values, not simply the delivery of information. This aligns with Rogers & Allender's (1983) statement in humanistic learning theory, which adds that learning experiences should foster spiritual and social awareness through self-reflection and empathy. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning ideally integrates religious knowledge with students' social experiences so they can understand Islamic teachings as a religion that spreads peace for all.

Furthermore, the concept of a culture of tolerance in religion refers to attitudes and behaviours that respect differences in beliefs, respect the rights of others, and foster peaceful social interactions. Previous research has also revealed that multicultural education needs to be integrated into the entire learning process so that students become accustomed to dealing with differences in a constructive manner (Gilani et al., 2020). Meanwhile, in Islamic teachings, the concept of tolerance is known as *tasamuh* (community) and *ukhuwah insaniyyah* (unity of brotherhood), which refers to the spirit of respecting fellow human beings without distinction of religion, race, or culture (Supriyatno & Ubabuddin, 2019). Thus, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning oriented towards these values can play a significant role in shaping the tolerant character of students.

Developing a culture of tolerance through Islamic religious education is expected to provide a solution to foster mutual respect, appreciation, and a sense of togetherness as a nation, without disturbing each other's beliefs. This aligns with previous studies that revealed that when Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is developed with a dialogical and contextual approach, it can be an effective means of building social harmony and preventing the emergence of exclusive attitudes. However, when Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is conducted in a closed and textual manner, students tend to

understand their religion narrowly, making it difficult to accept differences (Sailirrohmah & Azani, 2025). Therefore, teachers need to be facilitators in the learning process, teaching the importance of openness, empathy, and respect for diversity.

Several previous studies have shown mixed results regarding the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in fostering tolerance. Rosyad's (2020) study highlighted the integration of tolerance values into the Islamic Religious Education curriculum, while Lian et al. (2020) emphasised the importance of teacher role models in fostering students' moderate character. Furthermore, Iwan (2022) found that the implementation of tolerance values in schools is often ceremonial and is unable to address changes in students' attitudes and behaviour. This shows that although several studies discuss the importance of tolerance values in religious education, only a few explore concrete and measurable PAI learning strategies to foster a culture of tolerance.

A culture of tolerance is fostered not only through teaching materials but also through social interactions, role models, and school policies that support inclusivity. This gap underpins this research, as few studies have comprehensively examined Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning as a systemic strategy for fostering a culture of religious tolerance in secondary schools. Therefore, this study seeks to explore in depth how PAI can be formulated into a learning strategy that not only transfers values but also fosters social awareness and tolerant behaviour. Unlike previous research that focused solely on the integration of tolerance values from a moralistic perspective, this study develops an approach that integrates the theories of Islamic religious education, values learning, multicultural education, and the principles of *Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin* (blessing for the universe) into a single, systematic pedagogical design. Thus, this research is expected to provide a new conceptual model for the development of Islamic religious education oriented toward fostering a culture of religious tolerance in schools.

II. METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach using case studies. Qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from individuals and observable behaviour (Creswell, 2019). The location of this research is Madrasah Hurrasul Aqidah, Tarakan City. This location is developing a culture of tolerance through Islamic religious education learning. However, limited human resources create inconsistencies in developing a syllabus program for a culture of tolerance through Islamic religious learning, so there is an urgency to use it as an object of this research to be able to make a significant contribution to the related institution.

To obtain data, the researchers conducted participant observation, focusing on the model, implementation, and evaluation of the development of a culture of tolerance through Islamic religious education learning at Madrasah Hurrasul Aqidah, Tarakan City. During this participant observation, the researchers provided a notebook and a recording device (photo/tape recorder). The notebook was used to record important points encountered during the observations. The recording device (photo/tape recorder) was used to capture moments relevant to the research focus (Bura et al., 2022).

In addition, the researchers conducted unstructured interviews with informants at each of the higher education institutions selected as the research subjects. Informants in this study were religious teachers, vice principals, several alumni, stakeholders, and elements involved in the development of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI)

curriculum. The information gathered from these informants was then developed to develop further a comprehensive (snowball) approach to the model, implementation, and evaluation of the development of a culture of tolerance through Islamic religious education learning in Madrasah Hurrasul Aqidah Tarakan City. The researchers also conducted documentation to supplement the data obtained by recording the history of Madrasah Hurrasul Aqidah Tarakan City, along with the model, implementation, and evaluation of the development of a culture of tolerance through Islamic religious education at the site.

Furthermore, the researchers employed data analysis techniques by organising the data, identifying patterns of relationships and interactions between the data, identifying key points that needed further investigation, and ultimately determining what needed to be reported and communicated to the public. All data from informants, whether through observation, interviews, or documentation, was recorded as carefully as possible and compiled into field notes. As long as the informants did not object, all conversations during the interviews were recorded using a tape recorder. All data was then analysed qualitatively to produce a thick description, taking into account both emic and etic perspectives.

From an analytical perspective, the researchers employed an interactive analysis model encompassing four interrelated components, as described by Huberman and Miles (Miles et al., 2014). This data analysis technique was conducted in three ways: *first*, data reduction; *second*, data display; and *third*, conclusion drawing/verification. The data is reduced, summarised, and the main points are selected, and the focus is on important matters related to the problem. The reduced data provides a sharper picture of the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. Reduction can help researchers provide codes for the required aspects. The patterned data is then focused and arranged systematically, either through determining themes or using graphic or matrix models. Then, through data induction, conclusions are drawn so that the meaning of the data can be found (Huberman, M., & Johnny, 2014). The final step used in analysing the data was to provide suggestions based on the results of the comparisons that had been made

To test the validity of the data, researchers carry out several stages, including: triangulation techniques between data sources, checking the accuracy of information from informants that has been written by researchers in research reports (member check), discussing and conducting seminars with experts or more expert people, including corrections under the guidance of the supervisor. This method will be taken in addition to obtaining more complete evidence, also to check the consistency of actions or expressions of the instruments. Transferability, Dependability to assess the quality of the process taken by researchers, and Confirmability to assess the quality of research results, with the emphasis on whether data and information, as well as interpretations and others, are supported by the material in the audit trail (Creswell, 2019).

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Model for Developing a Culture of Tolerance Through Islamic Religious Education Learning

Education is a manifestation of dynamic human culture. Change and development in education should naturally occur in line with changes in cultural life (Anwar, 2018). These educational improvements entail refinements or improvements to the Islamic

religious education curriculum. This is intended to anticipate future needs and challenges by aligning them with societal developments. A model currently being discussed by many experts is Islamic education that fosters a culture of tolerance. This model of developing a culture of tolerance through Islamic religious education is oriented toward the realities of the problems currently facing the Indonesian nation and humanity as a whole. This education was initiated with a strong desire to provide an educational model capable of addressing the challenges of today's society. This is in line with the results of interviews with several teachers and students of Islamic Religious Education at the Hurrasul Aqidah Madrasah in Tarakan City, who stated:

"Here at Madrasah Hurrasul Aqidah, with its relatively high level of heterogeneity, religious tolerance is already well-established. However, strategic steps are still needed to maintain this well-established, tolerant lifestyle." (teacher)

"A culture of religious tolerance fosters mutual respect among adherents of different religions and beliefs. Religious tolerance at Madrasah Hurrasul Aqidah Tarakan City was not specifically developed, but this culture has been well-established for a long time. Teachers and students, with their respective understandings, have always shown respect and appreciation for adherents of their respective religions." (principal of Madrasah Hurrasul Aqidah)

"Thank God, religious tolerance here is excellent, perhaps due to the strong tolerant community climate and the Muslim majority here in Tarakan, North Kalimantan." (teacher)

"In our opinion, the development of religious tolerance has been going well here. Although religious tolerance is not yet a strategic policy within the school program, we can already feel it in the students' daily social context. This is also often conveyed by the principal and teachers, who often advise us always to maintain togetherness and respect each other, even though we have different religions." (student)

Interviews with teachers and students at Madrasah Hurrasul Aqidah indicate that a culture of religious tolerance is well established. Researchers also observed that students demonstrate respect and appreciation for students of different religions. This was evident during the regular morning prayer gatherings at the location, where students appeared to be unobtrusive and engaged in prayers according to their respective religions and beliefs. Furthermore, the public relations officer at Madrasah Hurrasul Aqidah also revealed that students are very harmonious and work well together in class. This is because students have developed a sense of mutual respect and appreciation for themselves.

However, it is important to note that religious tolerance will be disrupted if not anticipated with appropriate strategies. Therefore, it is necessary to plan Islamic Religious Education learning based on a culture of tolerance. With an Islamic Religious Education curriculum that collaborates with a culture of tolerance, it will teach students the meaning of unity and togetherness from an early age. This will foster a strong sense of solidarity to increase social harmony and strengthen relationships between students in a multicultural school environment (Zakariyah et al., 2020). Through a learning process that emphasises values such as mutual respect, empathy, and mutual cooperation, students not only understand the concept of tolerance cognitively but also internalise it in their daily behaviour (Umarova et al., 2019). Therefore, it is important to incorporate cultural values of tolerance into learning materials, especially in religious studies. The model for developing a culture of tolerance in this study was developed in

an applicable manner by inserting cultural values of religious tolerance into indicators in the syllabus. This model stems from the recognition that the religious education process in schools plays a strategic role not only in transferring religious knowledge but also in shaping students' character, enabling them to coexist peacefully in a diverse society.

Field observations by researchers indicate that a culture-based and tolerance-based Islamic Religious Education syllabus is developed by integrating four core value pillars: first, peace, emphasising the principles of compassion and togetherness. Second, inclusivity, emphasising empathy, sympathy, and mutual understanding. Third, wisdom, encompassing solidarity, self-sacrifice, and mutual assistance. Fourth, pluralism, emphasising respect for differences and tolerance. These four values are derived from universal Islamic teachings derived from the Quran and Hadith, as well as local Indonesian cultural values that uphold social harmony (*ukhuwah insaniyyah*). In a pedagogical context, these four value pillars serve as the primary foundation for developing learning objectives, teaching materials, learning methods, and evaluating learning outcomes (Nugroho, 2019). Thus, this model is systematic and operational, and can be directly implemented in classroom learning planning and implementation.

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of a culture-based and tolerance-based syllabus has a positive impact on increasing students' empathy and openness in interacting with peers of different faiths. This indicates a correlation between culturally based learning and increased religious empathy in students. This finding reinforces previous research that confirmed that internalising Islamic values into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) significantly influences the development of students' moderate character (Suryana & Hilmi, 2023). A similar approach also found that developing an Islamic Religious Education curriculum based on humanitarian and diversity values can strengthen students' multicultural awareness (Hifza et al., 2020).

Theoretically, the development of this model aligns with the concept of a value-based curriculum, where the educational process must build value awareness through direct experience, moral reflection, and social learning (Rogers & Allender, 1983). In the context of Islamic Religious Education, teachers are no longer merely instructors of texts but rather agents of values, guiding students to understand the meaning of diversity as part of Islamic teachings. This approach is also based on the humanistic learning theory developed by Rogers & Allender (1983), which emphasises the importance of learning that humanises people. In this regard, the values of peace and compassion are the foundation for creating a safe learning environment that respects differences.

Conceptually, Islam has provided essential guidance for Muslims to address universal humanitarian issues, namely the reality of human religious plurality, and demands tolerance toward this reality for the sake of achieving peace among humankind (Nurman et al., 2022). Given the crucial role of tolerance in recognising and respecting differences, this attitude also has a theological foundation in Islamic teachings, making it crucial to emphasise it to students through religious education based on a culture of tolerance. Furthermore, the current era is an era of tolerance, where all elements of society are required to be interdependent and share their destiny together to achieve lasting peace.

Over time, with the increasing development of science and technology, society has experienced various changes that schools had never considered. These changes can include shifts in thinking patterns, actions, attitudes, and so on. In this regard,

educational institutions, as an integral part of society, need to respond to these changes. They must be able to adapt to societal conditions. However, changes occurring in society are sometimes unpredictable or impossible to predict. These changes occur accompanied by uncertainty. Therefore, it is interesting to explore Piliang's (1998) perspective in his book on societal change, which explains:

"Modernisation and development in the last two decades have brought our contemporary society into various aspects of new realities of life, such as comfort, pleasure, fascination, perfection of appearance, and freedom of desire. However, modernisation and development have conversely caused us to lose past realities and the wisdom that lies behind them, which are even more valuable for our development as human beings. We see signs of a loss of depth in contemporary society."

This description suggests that contemporary society favours style over meaning. In this context, religious education, as a means of raising awareness among the community, needs to develop an inclusive theology and a culture of tolerance. This is also crucial for fostering religious harmony, which has become a necessity for today's society. One of the roles and functions of religious education is to enhance students' religious understanding within their own religious beliefs and foster openness to learning and an attitude of religious tolerance (Aderibigbe et al., 2023). Furthermore, the inclusive dimension of this development model can be implemented through participatory and dialogical learning methods. As implemented by Islamic Religious Education teachers at Madrasah Hurrasul Aqidah, Tarakan City, using problem-based learning strategies and collaborative discussions to engage students in analysing issues of diversity, discrimination, and tolerance from an Islamic perspective. This approach aligns with previous research that positions students as active subjects in dialogue with their social realities (Chang et al., 2022). In the context of Islamic Religious Education, dialogue serves not only as a means of communication but also as a spiritual medium for developing an open and empathetic religious understanding of differences. Previous research confirms that the interfaith dialogue method in Islamic education is effective in reducing stereotypes and strengthening interfaith awareness among students (Rosidah et al., 2024).

The value of pluralism is central to this entire model. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), pluralism is not understood as religious relativism, but rather as an acknowledgement of the diversity of God's creations, which must be respected. This is implemented at Madrasah Hurrasul Aqidah Tarakan City through a syllabus that includes indicators of respect for differences. In this context, teachers guide students in interpreting Quranic verses (QS. Al-Hujurat: 13 and QS. (Al-Kafirun: 6) About diversity in a modern social context. A hermeneutic approach to these verses provides students with the opportunity to understand that differences are part of the sunnatullah (the law of God), which demands mutual respect. This finding aligns with previous research on Islamic multicultural education, which states that pluralism-based religious education can strengthen social cohesion in a pluralistic society (Jayadi et al., 2022). Therefore, religious education should be able to reflect the issues of pluralism by transmitting values that can foster tolerance, openness, and freedom in the younger generation. In this way, the school environment can serve as an example for students to learn by doing.

Furthermore, through the development of an Islamic Religious Education (PAI) syllabus based on a culture of tolerance, the aims and objectives of education can be used as

alternative solutions to address the aforementioned issues. This is because, in its education, the understanding of Islam that PAI aims to develop is an inclusive understanding and way of thinking. Through well-structured planning, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) based on a culture of tolerance will strive to maintain and foster this inclusive understanding in students. Therefore, students at Madrasah Hurrasul Aqidah Tarakan City are equipped with the fundamentals of wisdom that can support a life of religious tolerance, especially in the context of student behaviour and achievement, both academic and non-academic.

Implementation and Evaluation of PAI Learning in Developing a Culture of Religious Tolerance

Based on observations and interviews conducted by researchers, the overall implementation of Islamic religious education (PAI) based on a culture of tolerance at Madrasah Hurrasul Aqidah, Tarakan City, has been successful, as the principles of Islamic religious education (PAI) based on a culture of tolerance are embedded in the Islamic religious education materials. This is also evident in the students' high motivation and enthusiasm for participating in the lessons. Several students stated that the classroom learning process was enjoyable, with more presentations of case studies and discussions. Furthermore, the implementation of Islamic religious education based on a culture of tolerance at Madrasah Hurrasul Aqidah is also strongly supported by the atmosphere established by the positive tolerance within the school community. Through this learning, students not only learn the concepts of Islamic religious education based on a culture of tolerance but are also encouraged to apply and internalise these concepts in their daily lives.

A concept currently widely discussed by many experts is a pluralism-based curriculum. Awareness of pluralism is an inevitability that every student must recognise. This awareness does not arise spontaneously, but instead undergoes a very long process, as a reality of comprehensive understanding in viewing a phenomenon (Baker et al., 2021). The concept of Islamic religious education based on a culture of tolerance is education oriented to the reality of the problems currently facing the Indonesian nation and humanity as a whole. Islamic education based on a culture of tolerance was initiated with great enthusiasm to provide an educational model capable of addressing the challenges of today's society. Given this reality, it is important to initiate education based on a culture of tolerance by highlighting several characteristics. First, educational institutions must have the character of an inclusive institution. This means that in addition to emphasising science and technology, educational institutions must also strive to instil religious values supported by multicultural values in their learning process.

Second, educational institutions must also have the character of an education based on a culture of tolerance. This means that the education provided to students does not create a single understanding, but also an understanding of the reality of religion. Third, educational institutions must have the character of an educational institution that brings a democratic system to life in education (Hermino & Arifin, 2020). The education system provides students with the freedom to express their opinions responsibly, enabling them to be interactive in their learning, which impacts academic achievement.

Furthermore, schools also facilitate the development of cultural values of tolerance. This is supported by findings where several teachers revealed that the school's Madrasah Hurrasul Aqidah provides opportunities for all members of the community to speak out

or criticise on any topic, provided they do so responsibly and respectfully. This democratic system will undoubtedly educate students about the social reality of differing perspectives and opinions. To realise the ideal of intelligent education, educational institutions need to implement a teaching system oriented toward instilling an awareness of pluralism in life. Several educational programs are highly strategic in fostering this awareness, including school education that equips students with a framework that enables them to organise and understand the knowledge gained from their environment. Besides that, it is important to consider the curriculum as a process. There are four things that teachers need to pay attention to in developing the curriculum as a process, namely: the position of students as learning subjects, how students learn, the cultural environment of students as a source of learning for students, and the students' personalities.

In this descriptive context, the educational curriculum includes several subjects such as tolerance, themes on ethno-cultural and religious differences, democracy and plurality, universal humanity and other relevant subjects. In the process of learning Islamic Religious Education based on a culture of tolerance, observation at Madrasah Hurrasul Aqidah, Tarakan City continues to experience improvements in terms of adaptive behaviour and student motivation. Students feel that the Islamic Religious Education material, based on a culture of tolerance, provides an understanding that supports their previous knowledge. This is evident from the results of observations that show students appear enthusiastic about participating in the learning process, and students are able to create and solve cases given by their teacher. A good learning process in the classroom will have implications for student behaviour, both in and outside the classroom. A good understanding of the values of a culture of tolerance leads students to act in accordance with religious teachings by upholding universal principles. This is supported by data on student behaviour results, which can be seen in the table below:

Table 1. Student Behavioural Data in Participating in Islamic Religious Education Learning

No	Student Behaviour Indicators	Achievement (%)
1	Students' courage in asking questions and expressing opinions about multicultural values.	62,5%
2	Encouragement and enthusiasm in participating in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning based on a culture of religious tolerance.	79%
3	Student interaction in participating in group discussions	75%
4	The relationship between students and teachers during learning activities.	75%
5	Student relationships with other students during learning (in group work).	87,5%
6	Participation in learning (paying attention, participating in group activities, and always following the teacher's instructions).	79%
Mean		76,3%

Table 2. Student Motivation Results

No	Rated aspect	Achievement (%)
1	Interest	97%
2	Attention	70%
3	Discipline	65%
Mean		77%

The implementation of Islamic Religious Education learning based on a culture of religious tolerance in this study demonstrated significant results in improving student behaviour and participation, as shown in Table 1, with an average achievement of 76.3%. This demonstrates that the learning model, designed through discussion strategies, simulations, case studies, and contextual learning, can develop an understanding of the values of tolerance and encourage behavioural changes toward a more inclusive and collaborative direction. This learning emphasises an interactive and reflective process, where students not only cognitively receive religious material but also internalise its values in social and spiritual behaviour. Observations and interviews confirmed that students behaved well, not disrupting their peers of different religions while praying or worshipping according to their respective beliefs. This demonstrated students' ability to appreciate, respect, and maintain religious tolerance at school. The learning process also went well, demonstrating the ability to express opinions, encouragement in learning, student interaction, and student participation in learning.

Student behaviour indicators during discussions proved effective in improving student social interaction, as reflected in the social interaction indicator of 75% and the inter-student relationship indicator of 87.5%. Group discussions provide a space for students to express their views, listen to their peers' perspectives, and learn to appreciate differing arguments in a scientific setting. This aligns with Freire's (2020) dialogical theory, which emphasises that education should be a space for dialogue, not a one-sided transfer of knowledge. Through discussions, students learn to practice the values of pluralism and empathy, as explained in previous studies that interactive discussions in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) can foster awareness of diversity and erode exclusive attitudes in religious understanding (Mulya & Aditomo, 2019).

Furthermore, simulation strategies are used to contextualise the values of tolerance in real-life practices. Social activity simulations organised by schools, including interfaith cooperation activities, structured group discussions, and role-playing exercises on conflict resolution and cross-cultural issues, enable students to directly experience and internalise the values of peace, compassion, and solidarity. The percentage of student behaviour indicators for participation in learning reached a reasonably high level (79%). This percentage indicates that simulations increase students' emotional and social engagement. This aligns with experiential learning theory, which states that learning becomes meaningful when students directly experience the social and moral context of the material being studied (Morris, 2020). This is in line with previous research showing that a simulative approach in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning can strengthen social empathy and a sense of responsibility among students regarding differences (Baker et al., 2021).

Meanwhile, the implementation of case studies is a strategic step in developing students' critical thinking skills and social ethics in understanding complex religious realities. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at Madrasah Hurrasul Aqidah Tarakan City, presented actual cases of social conflict, intolerance, and discrimination occurring in the community for students to analyse and resolve together. Through case studies, students learned to apply Islamic principles of tolerance, justice, and brotherhood in real-life contexts. The relatively high percentage of students' behaviour in the motivation and enthusiasm for learning indicator (79%) indicates that students perceived Islamic Religious Education learning to be more relevant and applicable. Vygotsky's (1987) social constructivist theory supports this, asserting that knowledge is constructed through social interaction and authentic experiences. This finding is in line with

previous research, which states that case study-based learning in a multicultural context increases moral awareness and conflict resolution skills among students (Purwasih, 2019).

The final approach, contextual learning, plays a significant role in fostering students' awareness that Islamic religious values are inseparable from social and cultural life. The application of the principle of "learning in real context" ensures that tolerance material is not only understood theoretically but also internalised through real-life activities such as cross-class collaboration and social visits. The results of 75–87.5% in the social interaction and cooperation indicators indicate that contextual learning successfully fosters the values of solidarity, empathy, and mutual assistance, which are core to a culture of tolerance. This finding reinforces the research of Saihu & Aziz (2020) that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning integrated with local cultural contexts can foster social sensitivity and enhance cohesion among students of different religious and ethnic backgrounds.

The findings on student motivation indicate that the implementation of a culture- and tolerance-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning model has a strong influence on increasing student interest in learning. However, improvements in attention and discipline are still needed. The interest indicator reached 97%, indicating high student enthusiasm for learning activities that emphasise cultural values and tolerance. This aligns with Deci & Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, which states that intrinsic interest grows when students perceive learning as relevant to their social lives and personal values. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, based on culture and tolerance, provides a real-world context through cross-cultural discussions, diversity case studies, and collaborative learning, which enhances students' emotional engagement. These results support previous findings that a contextual approach in PAI can foster a passion for learning and an open attitude toward the values of religious pluralism (Sailirrohmah & Azani, 2025).

Meanwhile, the attention/focus and concentration indicators, with a percentage of 70%, indicate that most students paid attention to learning activities effectively, but a small number remained unfocused. This could be due to the variety of methods used by teachers and the level of relevance of the material to students' experiences. According to the ARCS (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction) Motivation Model developed by Keller (1987), attention can be increased through three approaches: perceptual arousal (capturing initial interest), inquiry arousal (cultivating curiosity), and variability (using diverse methods). Therefore, these results indicate the need to increase the variety of learning strategies, such as simulations, educational games, or reflective activities, to ensure consistent student attention throughout the learning process. Research by Ijudin et al., (2022) supports this by showing that the use of active learning methods in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) can increase student attention by up to 20% compared to conventional lecture methods.

Discipline, with a percentage of 65%, is the lowest indicator among the three aspects. This indicates that although students have a high interest, discipline in following learning rules still needs to be strengthened. According to Bandura (1986), Social Learning theory, disciplined behaviour can be developed through modelling and social reinforcement. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) based on culture and tolerance, teachers need to exemplify discipline and moral responsibility so that students can emulate these behaviours. This aligns with previous research that also found that

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning that emphasises role models and the instilling of religious character values significantly improves student discipline in secondary schools (Achadah et al., 2022).

Overall, the data in the table above indicate that a culture- and tolerance-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning model is efficacious in improving student learning behaviour and motivation, particularly in terms of interest and active social interaction. The high level of learning interest reflects the success of a values-based approach that is relevant to students' social and cultural contexts. However, attention and discipline still need to be strengthened through more interactive, reflective, and role-model-based learning strategies. These results reinforce Biantoro's (2019) view that religious education in Indonesia must be developed as a humanisation process, fostering moral and social awareness in students amidst the nation's plurality.

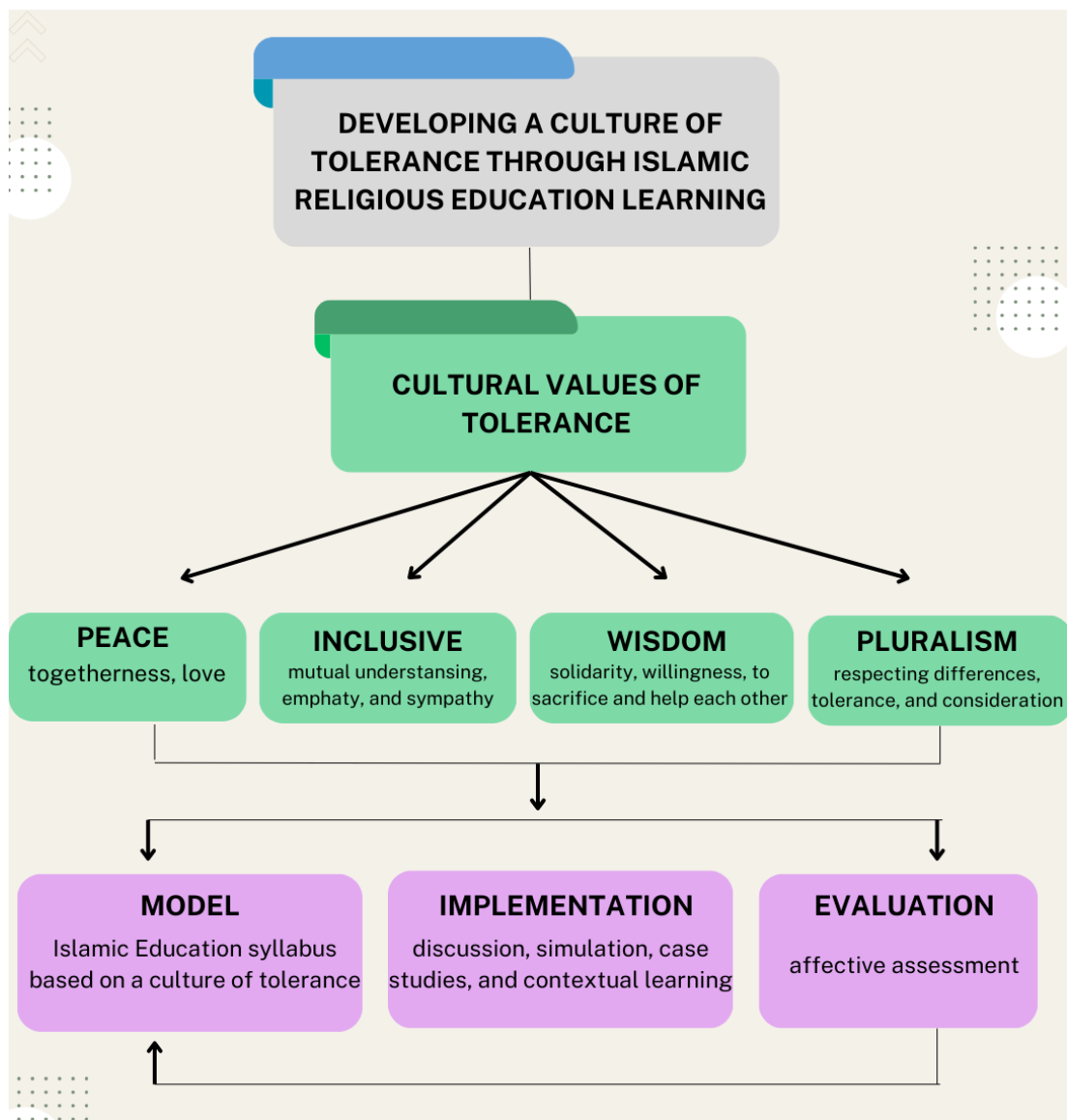


Figure 1. Islamic Education Learning Based on a Culture of Tolerance.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the research conducted, it can be concluded that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning based on a culture of tolerance is effective in developing the values of peace, inclusivity, wisdom, and pluralism in the school environment. Through the implementation of discussion strategies, simulations, case studies, and contextual learning, students not only understand religious concepts cognitively but are also able to internalise the value of tolerance in everyday social behaviour. The results of the study showed a significant increase in student learning behaviour and motivation, with an average achievement of 76.3% in behaviour and 77% in motivation, especially in the aspects of interest and social interaction. These findings strengthen the humanistic and experiential learning theory that emphasises the importance of direct experience and social relevance in the learning process. Thus, PAI learning oriented on a culture of tolerance is proven to be able to shape religious students, have moderate character, be empathetic, and be able to live harmoniously in a multicultural society. Furthermore, the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) based on a culture of tolerance plays a crucial role in fostering moral awareness, social empathy, and respect for interfaith differences. The contextual and reflective learning process enables students to be more active, open, and responsible in interacting with their social environment. However, aspects of attention and discipline still need to be improved through teacher role models and more creative method variations. Therefore, this learning model can be an effective strategy for strengthening religious moderation in schools and supporting the realisation of social harmony amidst Indonesia's diversity.

VI. REFERENCES

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