



Perceived as tolerant but intolerant? Evidence from various public elementary schools in Indonesia

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Abstract

This study reveals unintentional intolerance in several elementary schools in Indonesia. It employed a qualitative approach by examining teachers and students. The research was conducted in five elementary schools in Yogyakarta, a province deemed the centre of Indonesian education, tourism, and culture. The data were collected through interviews, observations, and focus group discussions. All data were analysed descriptively from the perspective of tolerance (i.e. belief, public speech, action), to reveal the extent to which tolerance is internalised at the schools. Then, qualitative descriptive data were presented. The study concluded with three points. First, teachers embraced and practised the concept of tolerance in society as it stems from Javanese culture; however, they did not succeed in optimally transforming it at their schools. Second, on some occasions, school representatives unwittingly limited the rights of minority students and undermined the practice of tolerance education due to the effectiveness and efficiency considerations. Third, a deeper understanding of tolerance needs to be strengthened among teachers and school leaders to address the problem. Meaningful communication between teachers and parents also needs to be enhanced. This paper can be considered a study of other multicultural countries facing a similar situation.

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Introduction

Indonesia is a country that contains hundreds of ethnicities. One of its provinces is Yogyakarta. The province has a strong reputation as a barometer

of Indonesian education; its citizens are perceived as tolerant, polite and wise (Khalika, 2019). Many historical heritage sites, combined with a rich culture, make this province one of the favourite tourist destinations and places of study for Indonesians and even foreigners.

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Nonetheless, its good reputation has been questioned lately because several intolerant practices have occurred across the province. Intolerance, in this article's context, is a practice where the institution dominantly by the majority group (Muslims) creates policies that are consciously or unconsciously unfair to minority groups. In the beginning, the authors will provide a social context in the form of a clear example where ordinary people can directly feel the practice of intolerance that occurs. In the next section, which is the central core of this paper, the authors will focus on intolerance in the education sector. Intolerance activities are not directly visible here, even unnoticed by educators. This phenomenon is the main issue discussed in this paper.

The most remarkable event was when a mass-organised Islamist mob disrupted a sea-offering ritual, a thanksgiving for local fisherfolk (DetikNews, 2018). A similar event occurred a year later: a mob disturbed a piodalan ceremony, a Hindu ritual to cleanse sacred places (Kompas, 2019). An incident was also reported in which a Christian artist was rejected from residing in a predominantly Muslim neighbourhood (BBC News, 2019). In addition, part of a grave was cut off as a symbol of reluctance to accept it in a local public cemetery (Putsanra, 2018).

Besides those bold events, there has also been intolerance that did not involve physical activity. For instance, it has become more common to notice boarding house advertisements stating that the owner only accepts tenants from a specific religion, in this context, Islam (Muryana, 2018; UII, 2019). All these examples can be seen as major indications of sectarianism in a society. It is ironic, not only because Indonesia has long claimed to be a multicultural country which has an official tagline "unity in diversity" embodied in Garuda - the country's national emblem, but also because the polarisation can be seen in Yogyakarta, the very centre of Indonesia's barometer of education and culture.

Unfortunately, intolerant activities are also found in the sphere of education. Research shows that some points discussed in some university student organisations promote intolerance (Hamdi, 2023). The intolerant activities are also found in several elementary schools in Yogyakarta province. For example, a scout coach at a public elementary school taught students the slogan, 'Islam yes, kaffir no', where kaffir refers to non-Muslims (Hadi, 2020; Law-justice.co, 2020; Tempo.co, 2020). Another instance of intolerance occurred when a school obliged female students, including non-Muslims, to wear hijabs (KR Jogja, 2019; Vice, 2021).

Those examples indicate that tolerance is weakening in society and at educational institutions. Interestingly, the general public still perceives Yogyakarta as a vibrant region for tolerance and education. Presumably, this is because of its previous long tradition of tolerance stemming from local wisdom, such as *tepa selira* (showing empathy towards others' feelings or situations), *ajur-ajer* (having a dynamic identity that can adapt to any social group in society), *lemah-manah* (humble attitude) and *tata tentrem* (concord which leads to harmony; Wahyono, 2018). Hence, the aforementioned intolerant practices are regarded as an anomaly rather than a current phenomenon that should be expected.

Nonetheless, this study regards all incidents above as serious threats which have been actualised in different forms. Moreover, as seen in the discussion section, this study reveals that some intolerant policies have been practised at various schools without people realising that they infringe on tolerance. Some even claimed that they had performed tolerance by issuing intolerance policies or exercising intolerance practices. However, before discussing the matter further, it is essential to explain: (1) the concept of tolerance; (2) the concept of intolerance (witting or unwitting) and (3) the role of education in promoting tolerance.

There is no precise definition of tolerance, as it has many categories. According to the Global Council of Tolerance and Peace (GCTP, 2017), tolerance is a prerequisite for being human. In line with this opinion, United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 1994) states that tolerance plays a vital role in peace, justice and human rights. It encompasses accepting, respecting, and appreciating differences (Hjerm et al., 2020). It is deemed to be a universal value that regards diversity as the beauty of life, which requires the acknowledgement of human rights, acceptance and appreciation of the variety of cultures and respect for different views and beliefs, including behaviours and practices in a multicultural society (Baklashova et al., 2015). The main aim of tolerance is a safe and peaceful life (Fuad Al Amin & Rosyidi, 2019; Wahyudi et al., 2019). It refers to allowing others to conduct certain activities, embrace different beliefs, etc. However, allowing in here should be seen as the starting point of tolerance because the essence of tolerance constitutes noble values respecting different bodies and ideas and their unique and special characteristics.

Intolerance, therefore, occurs whenever this concept is infringed. Intolerance should be prevented, as it has many detrimental effects, including the disunity of

society (Gischa, 2021; Rapp & Ackermann, 2016). It is noteworthy to underline that intolerance is sometimes practised unwittingly. For instance, religious intolerance can be seen in temples being labelled ‘tourism destinations’ despite their primary function as places of worship (Geraldi, 2019). Another example can be seen whenever television programs tend to accommodate the majority’s interests and ignore those of minorities (Rahayu, 2012). These practices are seemingly deemed normal as they are linked to or justified by financial considerations. The former is accepted because it presumably generates income for stakeholders, while the second is considered acceptable based on the logic of television ratings (and income from advertisement).

Conceptually speaking, education should promote, among other things, human rights, citizenship and multicultural education (O’Grady & Jackson, 2020). The primary purpose of multicultural education is “to change schools so that all students have equal opportunities to learn” (Banks, 2010) so that students will automatically learn the values of tolerance from the educational process they undergo. Banks’ opinion aligns with the idea that education, therefore, plays a strategic role in fostering and promoting tolerance and thus minimising the practice of intolerance. Tolerance education is aimed at broadening perspectives on cultural diversity within the scope of universal human rights and freedoms (Kaztaevna et al., 2015). This idea is in line with the fact that education can change behaviour. This is possible because the education process enables students to learn science, morals, values, ethics, aesthetics, character and manners (Anggraeni et al., 2017).

Legally speaking, the concept mentioned above has also been recognised and embodied in various legal norms, nationally and internationally. At the international level, it can be seen in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states:

‘Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations to maintain peace.’ (United Nations, 2015).

At the national level in Indonesia, a similar norm can be found in Articles 3 and 36 of Law No 20/2003 concerning the National Education System: ‘National Education strives to educate the nation’s life and develop Indonesian people as a whole, meaning people who have faith and devotion to God Almighty and a noble

character, knowledge and skills, a solid and independent personality, social responsibility, and nationalism’ (UU Sisdiknas, 2003).

To encourage tolerance in education, several requirements should be met: openness, knowledge, communication, freedom of thought and conscience (Kaztaevna et al., 2015). Tolerance education should be taught and practised to compromise and respect each other. Thus, they must not confuse tolerance with indifference or a permissive attitude to inhuman actions. Tolerance education is also interrelated with character education. If one value is gained, so are others (Aslan, 2018). In other words, students learn respect, help and collaboration.

The reason why the authors focus on elementary school is because tolerance education should start at an early stage. It may be true that young children lack the intellectual development to learn or apply abstract principles about right and wrong (Yanizon, 2016). However, they already have broad views and embrace diversity (Prasetya, 2017). Every student needs to be given equal opportunities to learn at school. Therefore, it needs to be conceptualised that schools are social systems that can teach the concept of diversity (Banks, 2010). Children in elementary school are eager to play and have boundless curiosity (Hurlock, 1996). Moreover, Piaget underlined that children aged 7 to 12 are at the concrete operational stage of their intellectual or cognitive development. At this stage, they can think about concrete objects logically. They no longer need trial and error as they can think about performing particular activities. They can classify, sort and solve problems without comprehending the principles (Budiningsih, 2005).

Having said the above, children in elementary schools have the potential to learn and understand tolerance, but they still need support from adults. It is important to remember that a school is a social system where each variable is closely related and mutually supportive, such as the relationship between students, teachers, and parents (Banks, 2010). Their teachers and parents should give this support. Teachers play an essential role in teaching tolerance, starting in elementary school. The learning process begins in the first grade. In higher grades, more material should be taught. However, the learning processes of tolerance should be contextualised; from the pupils’ perspective, meeting for many hours is only meaningful if the content is contextualised. Hence, the learning process should not only teach the definition of tolerance but also make students appreciate, respect, and practice the diversity of thoughts and beliefs.

The role of parents is also pivotal; they should not neglect their duty to teach their children values (Riamin, 2016). They should not think their obligation has been met if they send their children to prestigious schools to support their intellectual and character development (Zeuny, 2019). Parents should realise that home is their children's first school and parents are their first teachers. As a founding father in Indonesian education, Ki Hajar Dewantara, said, 'Every place is a school, and everyone is a teacher' (Aji, 2020). Therefore, parents should lead their children to choose the right path and become role models of good behaviour through their acts (Suriyachinnavar, 2016; United Nations, 2015).

Methodology

This qualitative research examined tolerance education in public elementary schools in the Special Province of Yogyakarta. The province consists of one city (Yogyakarta) and four regencies (Sleman, Bantul, Gunung Kidul, and Kulon Progo). This research was conducted in two schools in Yogyakarta city and one school in each regency: Sleman, Bantul and Gunung Kidul. An in-depth analysis was conducted to shed light on problems and provide solutions. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and focus group discussions.

Interviews were conducted with one teacher and seven students in each school. Therefore, we interviewed five teachers and 35 students from all schools. The teachers involved were in charge of the class, while the seven students involved were selected using random sampling. The interviews were the most crucial data collection method, primarily to obtain in-depth information related to tolerance in schools. Therefore, in-depth interviews were chosen to understand the phenomenon of tolerance education in elementary schools fully.

Observations were conducted in the five schools involved. The objective of the observations was to cross-check the information provided by teachers and students. Observations also aimed to see the tolerance education process carried out by teachers and its impact on students. Observations were carried out in the learning process and outside the learning process.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted with 20 teachers from ten elementary schools across the Special Province of Yogyakarta. They were different from the five schools observed earlier. These ten schools were selected through purposive sampling because of their similar characteristics. The aim of conducting FGDs was to see confirmation of the initial hypotheses from the results of observations and interviews that had been conducted, as well as to find out whether other schools also experienced similar things.

All data were analysed descriptively from the perspective of tolerance (i.e. belief, public speech, act; Witenberg, 2019), to reveal the extent to which tolerance is internalised at the schools. Then, qualitative descriptive data were presented. In qualitative research, data analysis involves organising data to comprehend definitions, patterns, themes, categories and regularity (Cohen et al., 2007). Data were analysed during and after the data collection process. Therefore, they could be compiled systematically, and the interpretation and analysis could be structured and comprehensive. It is relevant to mention that in Indonesia, research does not need to be approved by any review board. However, the authors obtained permits from the schools, the university affiliated with the authors, and the government of the Special Province of Yogyakarta before the research was carried out. Moreover, the authors communicated the research result to the five schools involved in interviews and observations. The authors also sent the report to the university. The authors used pseudonyms to protect the respondent on the research result and the report.

Table 1 Data on research subjects

No	Public school name*	Location (city/regency)	Total students (est)	Number of non-Muslim Students	Number of non-Muslim Teachers
1.	AA Elementary School	Yogyakarta	240	None	None
2.	AB Elementary School	Yogyakarta	250	Six students	One teacher
3.	AC Elementary School	Sleman	240	None	None
4.	AD Elementary School	Bantul	290	Two students	None
5.	AE Elementary School	Gunung Kidul	210	One student	None

Note: * To maintain the reputation and credibility of the institutions and informants in this study, all the schools and teachers are kept anonymous. Therefore, in what follow, we will use pseudonyms.

Results

The prevailing local wisdom considerably influences teachers' understanding of tolerance. Culture includes the general customs, beliefs and worldviews of a particular group and influences their behaviour (Patimah, 2019). Culture and religion are considered significant factors in building nationalism and unity (Peng et al., 2019). In their interviews, the teachers in this study admitted that the local culture influences how they perceive tolerance and tolerant attitudes. According to them, all people of Yogyakarta should hold Javanese values, such as *tepa selira* (showing empathy towards others' feelings or situations). They believe diversity has been a part of their lives since long ago.

Moreover, it has been commonly known that the Javanese people, especially those who live in Yogyakarta, have a term called '*ngewongke wong*', which can be meant to humanise others. It is deemed a way of life that the Javanese must follow to obtain similar dignified treatment from others. The people of Yogyakarta generally believe that they will get the same kindness from others for every good deed they give to others.

The above point of view is strengthened by the interview with a Javanese sociologist, Wahyono. He explained that the Javanese people adhere to the philosophical values of what the-called *tepa selira* (empathy for what other people feel), *ujar ujer* (can place oneself in all class groups), and are *lemah-manah* (humble, treat everyone equally). These three values lead the Javanese people to have a tolerant attitude towards others. If everyone adhered to Javanese philosophy and wisdom, the diversity in society would not lead to any problems; it would be seen as a reality that should be accepted.

The interviews with all the teachers involved in this study showed that the teachers could explain well the philosophy of tolerance in Javanese culture and show their attitudes in dealing with differences that occurred in society. One of the teachers explained that the Yogyakarta Javanese environment was already rich with diversity, both in terms of religious diversity and ethnic diversity. Many inhabitants from other provinces (other tribes) have mingled and merged into the local community, so there is no need to worry about the differences. Another teacher also added that he believed the practising of '*ngewongke uwong*' would benefit him. When he can treat others well, the kindness will return to him, and vice versa ('karma'). These teachers also showed that they have never questioned religious differences in their social interaction.

All the teachers interviewed also claimed that no intolerant practices occur at their schools. Based on their view, tolerance is practised there, as all teachers and students respect and appreciate each other. Mr Jacko (pseudonym, from AC Elementary School) affirmed this by saying:

'I think there is no intolerance here as we never have a problem with diversity. It can be seen in how students treat their fellow students with special needs. Our type of school is also an inclusive one. The ordinary students – even the most delinquent ones – tend to avoid quarrelling with – and attempt to proceed in a calm manner – to the special needs students. Once, the researchers asked them why. They said they pitied the children with special needs; they are already unfortunate, so it is better not to quarrel with them.'

It is worth noting to underline a statement made by Mrs Amel from AA Elementary School. She illustrated concrete examples of tolerance education at her school. Mrs Amel, whose students are all Muslims, said: 'If all students in a class practise the same religion, we do not need those examples. They must be tolerant because they have the same religion.'

Besides, it is interesting to highlight the result of our focus group discussion. A teacher from AD Elementary School said: 'In our school, the students are used to being tolerant. Tolerance is not peculiar. It takes its natural course. For example, every Friday, there is an Islamic extracurricular program. The students contribute their pocket money to *infaq* (a Muslim obligation to spend some of their wealth to do good). The non-Muslim students also contribute through their initiative. When we said they did not have to donate, they said their parents had asked them to.' Interestingly, other teachers also confirmed the statement from the AD Elementary School teacher by saying that similar events occur at their schools.

The discussion on the FGD also revealed the practice of tolerance in schools. All the teachers affiliated with AB, AD and AE elementary schools explained that the Muslim religious holidays are celebrated, but those of minorities are not celebrated due to their 'small number'. The teachers greet and congratulate minority students (and minority teachers) in person, but the schools do not celebrate them officially. The teachers argued that they do not intend to prevent minority students from celebrating their religious holidays; they are not being intolerant. Instead, religious holidays are not celebrated

due to the considerations of effectiveness and efficiency. The holidays usually celebrated at school are Maulid Nabi – the Islamic celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday – and Eid al-Adha, the feast of sacrifice.

Regarding this issue, Mrs Ismi from AB Elementary School (Yogyakarta) added:

'There are few Christian and Catholic students at our school, so there is no Christmas celebration. However, they celebrate it at Yogyakarta Education Office. The Muslim teachers accompany them there using teachers' motorbikes.' (n.b. The teachers personally own the bikes due to the lack of school facilities.)

Responding to the discussion, Mrs Sini from AE Elementary School provide similar illustration by saying:

'As the Catholic student is a minority at my school, he usually stays in the class and joins the Islamic education class. It is permitted as long as they do not interrupt the other Muslim students (i.e. play or make noise). He is free not to join but prefers to join on his initiative. There is a class on Catholic education. However, as he is alone, the class has to be conducted with other Catholic students from several other schools.' (n.b. This means he joins a Catholic class at a different place and time, as agreed upon by the Catholic teacher and the participants - Catholic students from different schools.)

Besides interviewing and conducting FGD with the teachers, the authors also conducted observations and interviews with the students. It showed that the students needed help understanding what tolerance meant. They regarded that tolerance as not disturbing friends who were being prayed. Moreover, it also revealed that parents rarely engage in tolerance issues at school. The communication between schools and parents is somewhat limited. Almost all schools in this study have adopted the same strategy for communication with parents. They have parent-teacher forums via WhatsApp groups to discuss general issues. In addition, there are physical meetings in which teachers give parents the students' semester final report. There are also school committee meetings; however, they do not involve all parents but rather their representatives. Other personal meetings are conducted incidentally (i.e. if a student repeatedly commits serious offences, his or her parents are invited to the school to discuss the matter).

Based on the author's observations, whether meaningful communication between teachers and

parents occurs is questionable. During the time when parents dropped off and picked up their children, for instance, communication was so limited. Students who live near their school even go by themselves. This observation was also confirmed by the author's interviews with numerous students. They confirm that their parents are hardly involved in the learning process at school. A student from AB Elementary School once said: 'My mom only comes here to receive my school report. She may deliver and pick me up, but only at the school gate. Sometimes my dad does.' This indicates a lack of communication between parents and teachers, whereas communication is pivotal in shaping education values and providing the practice of tolerance.

Discussion

The above results show that the teachers have some problems actualising how tolerance should be practised in the schools and how to internalise the positive cultural values they have embraced in the learning process. Moreover, the intolerance was practised unwittingly without the teachers realising it.

Mrs Amel's of the AA elementary school Mrs Amel of the AA elementary school said that if the students in a class were all Muslim, she did not need to provide examples of tolerance during the teaching processes. Her explanation above reflects a narrow view of tolerance education. Tolerance should be contextualised in terms of students' life beyond the classroom. Despite the homogeneous class, tolerance should still be taught. This is logical because, after the students finish their studies and leave school, they will live in a heterogeneous society. Thus, education shall prepare them to adapt to heterogeneity instead of homogeneity.

The situation illustrated by the teacher at AD elementary school where non-Muslim conduct Friday charity (*infaq*) indicates that the teacher does not fully or sufficiently comprehend tolerance and its practice at schools. Instead, they practise unintentional intolerance. The AD school indirectly made a policy to guide minority groups to follow the majority group's activity. Conceptually, unintentional intolerance stems from an 'exaggerated sense of self-worth and pride, whether personal, national or religious' (UNESCO, 2021). Schools should realise that individuals follow the crowd to be socially accepted or the so-called social conformity (Asch, 2012). Minority students may be uncomfortable if they do not join the majority's events or follow school policies, as it will reaffirm their minority status.

Hence, *infaq* should only be practised by Muslim students; the schools should intervene for pupils practising social conformity by prohibiting them from participating in *infaq*. If the school aims to train the students to share and care for others, the activity should be labelled 'student charity'. The action will allow the students to do good without exclusively linking it to a specific religious concept. It may be true that engaging minority students in majority students' activities (Muslim practice of giving) would enable minority students to learn from the majority. This would educate them to be tolerant and considerate of others who differ. However, this approach should be implemented the other way around. Muslim students should also be guided to participate in other religious activities. Otherwise, the school policy can be considered unfair or practice unintentional intolerance.

The situations wherein elementary schools of AB, AD, and AE do not conduct minority religious celebrations and non-Muslim students have their religion classes with students outside their schools indicate decisions based on efficiency. This is not ideal, as decisions should be made from the perspective of promoting tolerance and diversity. In the framework of tolerance, diversity necessitates equality, respect and recognition (Maussen & Bader, 2012). This means that there are no majorities or minorities; everyone deserves equal treatment and recognition regardless of their thoughts or feelings (Balint, 2010). Moreover, as previous research suggests, one of the essential factors in learning, shaping and practising tolerance is religious tradition (Mather & Tranby, 2014). Hence, non-Muslim students should be able to learn about their religions at school. Schools should also organise religious celebrations regardless of the number of students who embrace those beliefs, and all students should participate. Schools must explain that attending and enlivening religious celebrations differ from believing in that religion. In the context of Indonesia, which officially recognises six religions (Islam, Christian, Catholic, Hindu, Buddhism, and Confucianism), every religion has the same right to be respected and valued. Indonesia's founding parents have agreed not to make Indonesia a religious country; instead, it has become a secular country that absorbs common spiritual beliefs from religions (Latif, 2015). Therefore, the number of students is irrelevant as: (1) these are public schools and therefore have no justification only to celebrate a particular religion and (2) schools should not only consider the current situation in schools but also prepare their pupils to face the diversity of society.

The authors regard the policies mentioned by Mrs Ismi of the AB elementary school as unintentional

policy that tends to accommodate the majority's interests and ignore those of minorities. It may be true that the efforts of teachers and the Education Office should be appreciated. Such indicated that the teachers practise (and therefore indirectly teach) religious tolerance to the students. Nonetheless, this practice still has a downside. There was a lost opportunity for tolerance education because a collaborative endeavour turned into an individual one. As a result, effective tolerance education only occurred between the students and the teachers accompanying them. A natural process of tolerance education among interfaith students and teachers did not occur. Conceptually speaking, intergroup interactions would be more effective in tackling prejudice and forging positive intergroup relations than individual interactions (Beelmann & Heinemann, 2014).

Similarly to that, the information given by Mrs Sini of the AE elementary school shows that minority students cannot study their religions at their schools. They must learn outside, and this can be seen as a confirmation that they are minorities who do not have equal access and rights as the majority, so they have to go to a specific place to access their right. The authors understand the limitation of human resources and/or the consideration of effectiveness and efficiency. However, this situation shall be seen as a problem rather than as an example of the practice of tolerance, albeit unwittingly.

This unintentional intolerance should be given more attention. There can only be tolerance education if tolerance is fully comprehended. Education about tolerance should be practised in daily life and manifested, among other things, in public speaking and concrete actions (Witenberg, 2019). It should not merely comprise teaching the curriculum. Students need concrete examples of how adults speak and act, particularly teachers and parents.

To address the above situations, teaching and practising tolerance shall be strengthened. The two main actors here are teachers and parents. However, as shown above, there needs to be more awareness and communication between teachers and parents. Teachers and parents do not attempt to establish good personal communication, so there is no coordination and continuity in values teaching. These two main players should communicate well to ensure that children learn effectively for their development and growth (Nurjanah, 2015; Schussler, 2003). The communication between teachers and parents shall not be about the students' subjects or grades at school. It should also be about how to respect minority students' religious beliefs in schools.

Teachers are school role models, shaping children's values (Tamm et al., 2020). The interaction between teachers and students in this context is not only about the frequency of the teachers' communication with the students but also about the quality of the interaction that has occurred. Moreover, in dialogic learning, teachers are indirectly required to continue improving the quality of interaction with their students (Aguilera-Jiménez et al., 2020). The value of tolerance can be integrated into learning materials in the learning process. One that can be considered such is non-Muslim students helping Muslim students by making *ketupat* decorations for the Eid al-Fitr celebration (*ketupat* is a symbol of food that is often eaten during the celebration of Eid al-Fitr in Indonesia). Another example is that non-Christian students can play egg finding and colouring along with the Christian students in the context of Easter celebrations. On Chinese New Year, non-Confucian students can help Confucian students prepare the red lanterns.

Like the teachers, parents should be role models and shape their children's values at home. Parents are the first educators at home who nurture their children to become tolerant or intolerant; they should teach them to deal with diversity (Desideria, 2017). Parents play a central role in nurturing their children (Bakry, 2005), besides their other parts in social life and education. They also play the most crucial role in their children's religious education (Mangunwijaya, 1986). Good communication between school and parents/guardians can establish mutual trust and understanding (Sylaj, 2021), which can help parents educate their children continuously (and make continuous progress). Hence, they become competent and develop good character (Jailani, 2014). Building good character is not entirely the responsibility of teachers in schools; parents need to understand that they have more responsibility to make good character of their children. The synergy of tolerance education that the students obtain at home, school, and in the community will significantly impact the development of students' attitudes and character.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings of this research confirm that teachers' practices of tolerance and attitudes towards diversity are influenced by prevailing Javanese local wisdom. Nonetheless, although some teachers' initiatives can be appreciated as evidence of adhering to the concept of tolerance, criticism and suggestions can still be addressed.

It is found that any teacher who holds a perspective that if all the students belong to the same religion, it is pointless to discuss tolerance in class. They also considered that if only a few students have different beliefs, conducting religious celebrations in their schools is ineffective or inefficient. These points reveal that albeit the schools claimed that they had practised tolerance, they actually do not fully embrace the value of diversity or practise tolerance.

This study suggests the necessity for strengthening the teachers' understanding of tolerance. The school policies should be reformulated based on the concepts of equality and engagement rather than considerations of effectiveness and efficiency. This study also suggests fostering the understanding of tolerance by conducting meaningful communication between parents and teachers.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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