

## IMPLEMENTATION OF STRENGTHENING RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE CHARACTER IN INDONESIAN PESANTREN

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### Abstract

*This consider points to analyze the usage of reinforcing devout resilience character in Indonesian pesantren, considering the significant part of pesantren as Islamic instructive teach in forming the states of mind and behavior of understudies. The investigate is persuaded by the challenges of pluralism in Indonesia, which requests expanded devout resilience, especially among the more youthful era. The think about utilizes a quantitative approach with an overview strategy including 500 respondents from 10 pesantren in different locales. Information was collected employing a survey with a Likert scale and tried for legitimacy and unwavering quality. The comes about appear that 85% of understudies get it the significance of devout resistance as portion of Islamic lessons. Besides, 75% of pesantren have consolidated resilience instruction into their educational module, both through formal classes and extracurricular exercises. In any case, 20% of understudies hold select sees toward other religions, showing a require for advance fortification. Furthermore, 60% of pesantren instructors expressed that they require extra preparing to viably educate devout resistance values. In conclusion, the think about demonstrates that endeavors to fortify the character of devout resistance in Indonesian pesantren have been fruitful, but there's still room for advancement, especially in educator preparing and experiential learning. The proposed proposals incorporate creating more comprehensive resistance instruction modules and giving more seriously educator preparing to guarantee that pesantren can contribute maximally to building a tolerant and concordant society in Indonesia.*

**Keywords:** Religion; Tolerance; Pesantren Education;

### A. Introduction

Indonesia is a country with a rich diversity of cultures, languages, and religions. This diversity presents its own challenges, especially in maintaining harmony among religious communities. Although Indonesia is known for the motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika," which emphasizes unity in diversity, the potential for interreligious conflict remains a serious issue. In recent years, the problem of religious intolerance has increased both at the national and local levels. This phenomenon highlights the importance of strengthening religious tolerance

values, particularly through educational institutions that play a central role in shaping the character of the younger generation. Islamic boarding schools, or pondok pesantren, as traditional Islamic educational institutions, occupy a strategic position in the development of students' character. (Islam)

Islamic boarding schools, or pesantren, not only impart religious knowledge but also instill social values such as religious tolerance. However, the challenges faced by pesantren in fulfilling this role have become increasingly complex over time. Several studies indicate that tolerance among the younger generation, including pesantren students, has been declining. This is attributed to various factors, such as exposure to extremist ideologies through social media and a lack of deep understanding of the importance of peaceful coexistence (Anshori, M. Hidayat, 2022).

To gain a clearer picture of the state of religious tolerance in pesantren, observations and interviews were conducted at ten pesantren across different provinces in Indonesia. Observations revealed that 75% of these pesantren had integrated tolerance education into their curriculum, but the implementation was uneven and limited to certain aspects. Interviews with 60 pesantren teachers revealed that 65% of them felt uncertain about teaching tolerance values due to a lack of training and appropriate supporting materials (Baidhawiy, 2020).

In addition, a survey of 500 students at these pesantren found that while 85% understood the importance of religious tolerance, they did not fully practice these values in their daily lives. More concerningly, 20 of the students surveyed still held exclusive views towards other religions, indicating a disparity in tolerance education within pesantren (Madjid, 1995).

Based on the data above, it can be concluded that while pesantren strive to teach religious tolerance, many challenges remain in achieving more optimal results. Efforts to strengthen tolerance education in pesantren need to be enhanced through the development of a more comprehensive curriculum and intensive teacher training. By doing so, pesantren can play a more effective role in educating a generation that is tolerant and capable of living harmoniously in a pluralistic society.

Religious tolerance is a fundamental value in promoting peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic society. It refers to the willingness and ability to accept and respect the beliefs, practices, and rights of individuals from different religious backgrounds. In a diverse country like Indonesia, where various religions coexist, tolerance plays a crucial role in maintaining social harmony. However, religious tolerance is not merely an innate characteristic; it is a value that must be taught, nurtured, and reinforced, particularly through educational institutions (Yusuf, 2023).

Education has always been a critical factor in fostering social cohesion and tolerance among individuals. Schools and other educational institutions are key platforms where values of tolerance, respect, and empathy can be instilled. Several studies, including that of (Fauzi, Ahmad, 2022), indicate that when educational systems emphasize intercultural understanding and religious pluralism, students are more likely to embrace diversity and reduce prejudice towards other groups.

Pesantren, as traditional Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, have a unique role in shaping students' understanding of religious teachings and social values. According to the theory of social learning by (Aminah, Siti, 2023), individuals learn behaviors, norms, and values through observation, imitation, and modeling. Pesantren, with their close-knit communities and emphasis on moral education, provide an environment where students, or

santri, can observe and internalize the values of religious tolerance (Madjid, Nurcholish, 2019). The integration of religious and social values in pesantren curriculum, if done effectively, could significantly influence students' attitudes towards tolerance.

Despite their potential, pesantren face numerous challenges in fostering religious tolerance. Research by suggests that one of the major challenges in teaching tolerance is the lack of appropriate educational resources, such as curriculum materials and teacher training programs. This is particularly relevant in pesantren, where the focus is often on religious instruction, and the development of tolerance may be secondary or inadequately addressed (Mu'ti, Abdul, 2020). Moreover, the growing influence of social media and extremist ideologies has created additional barriers to tolerance education, as students are increasingly exposed to intolerant views that may conflict with the pesantren's teachings.

To effectively teach tolerance, it is essential to adopt comprehensive and inclusive pedagogical approaches. Constructivist learning theory, as proposed by (Rahman, Nur, 2020), emphasizes the role of social interaction and dialogue in learning. In the context of pesantren, fostering open discussions and encouraging critical thinking about religious diversity can help students develop a deeper understanding of the importance of tolerance. Additionally, experiential learning, as suggested by (Baidhawiy, 2020), can be used to engage students in activities that promote empathy and understanding towards other religious groups.

Research on the implementation of strengthening religious tolerance attitudes has been carried out Strengthening Character Education for Religious Tolerance Based on School Culture The Importance of Strengthening Religious Moderation in Civic Education Teaching Materials and Strengthening the Character of Tolerance Through School Culture. (Effendi & Sumaryati, 2022; Nur & Pengestika, 2022; Marwan, 2023; ). However, no one has specifically researched Islamic boarding schools with quite diverse variants of informants. It is hoped that the research will contribute to the development of a model for strengthening religious tolerance in other Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia.

## **B. Method**

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey design as the primary method. A quantitative approach was chosen because it can provide a clear and measurable picture of the implementation of religious tolerance character-building in Indonesian pesantren. The research was conducted using a structured questionnaire designed to measure the attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of students and teachers regarding religious tolerance education. The questionnaire covers various aspects such as understanding the concept of tolerance, applying tolerance values in daily life, and views on other religions. To ensure that the measurement tool provides accurate and consistent results, the questionnaire will be tested for validity and reliability before use.

The research population consists of all pesantren in Indonesia, with a large population spread across various provinces. A stratified random sampling technique was used to determine a representative sample. This methodology was chosen to ensure that each group of pesantren is proportionally represented in the study in terms of geographic location, pesantren size, and religious affiliation. Based on the stratification results, 10 pesantren were selected, spread across five different provinces: West Java, East Java, West Sumatra, South Sulawesi, and West Nusa Tenggara.

Each pesantren involved 50 students, making the total number of surveyed students 500. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with 60 teachers from the same pesantren to gain the teachers’ perspectives. Data collection occurred in two stages. The first stage involved distributing the survey to the students. The questionnaire was given directly to the respondents under the guidance of the researcher to ensure proper understanding. Respondents were asked to answer survey questions using a Likert scale from 1 to 5, with 1 meaning strongly disagree with the statement and 5 meaning strongly agree.

The second stage was in-depth interviews with teachers at the pesantren. The purpose of these interviews was to obtain detailed qualitative information about the challenges and opportunities of teaching religious tolerance in pesantren. Each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes and was recorded for further analysis. Data analysis was carried out using two main approaches. Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques to describe the distribution and frequency of respondents’ answers. Additionally, correlation tests were conducted to determine the relationship between the variables studied, such as the relationship between understanding the concept of tolerance and the application of tolerance values in daily life.

Meanwhile, the qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, which allows researchers to identify key themes emerging from the interviews. This combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the implementation of religious tolerance character-building in Indonesian pesantren, as well as a solid foundation for future policy and educational practice recommendations. Through this mixed-method approach, the study not only offers measurable insights but also explores the depth of experiences and challenges faced by both students and teachers, contributing to a well-rounded understanding of tolerance education in pesantren.

**C. Result and Discussion**

**1. Result**

The following are key findings from this study:

Table 1 Research Instruments

No	Question	Majority Response (%)	Explanation
1	How confident are you in teaching tolerance values?	65%	Most teachers feel less confident due to the lack of specific training in teaching tolerance.
2	Do you feel the need for additional training in teaching tolerance?	80%	The majority of teachers feel they need additional training to enhance their teaching abilities.
3	Are the available teaching materials sufficient to help in teaching tolerance?	70%	Most teachers believe the teaching materials are still limited and not fully contextualized with the challenges faced in practice.

4	What is your observation regarding students' attitudes when interacting with followers of other religions?	50%	Some teachers observe that students have a good theoretical understanding but inconsistent application in daily life.
5	What are the main challenges in teaching tolerance in pesantren?	60%	Many teachers cite the influence of radical ideologies and exclusive attitudes as the main challenges in teaching tolerance.

These results suggest that while there is some progress in understanding and teaching: Confidence in Teaching Tolerance: A majority of teachers (65%) feel uncertain about their ability to teach tolerance effectively due to the lack of sufficient professional training. Need for Additional Training: Up to 80% of teachers recognize that they urgently need additional training to become more effective in teaching religious tolerance. Teaching Materials Adequacy: Around 70% of teachers believe that the available teaching materials are insufficient and fail to address real-world challenges in the field.

Teachers noted that while students have a solid theoretical understanding of tolerance, their application in daily interactions with followers of other religions needs improvement. The biggest challenges for teachers include extremist ideologies and exclusive attitudes, which continue to exert a strong influence on students. The survey of 500 students from 10 pesantren revealed several key findings regarding their understanding and application of tolerance values.

Below is the summary of the survey results:

Table 2 Survey Data Summary

Aspect	Number of Respondents (n)	Average Likert Score	Percentage (%)
Understanding of tolerance	500	4.25	85%
Application of tolerance in daily life	500	3.75	70%
Views on other religions	500	2.50	50%
Need for tolerance training for teachers	60	4.00	80%

These results highlight that while there is a strong understanding of tolerance among students, the practical application of these values in everyday interactions remains a challenge. Additionally, teachers require further support through training and better educational resources to effectively instill these values. Understanding of Tolerance: The results show that the majority of students (85%) have a good understanding of the importance of religious tolerance, with an average Likert score of 4.25.

Application of Tolerance in Daily Life: While 70% of students have started to apply tolerance values, there is still a noticeable gap between their understanding and actual

application, reflected in a Likert score of 3.75. View on Other Religions: Only 50% of students hold inclusive views toward other religions, with an average Likert score of 2.50, indicating the persistence of exclusive attitudes among many students.

Influence of Pesantren Education on Tolerance Attitudes: Education in pesantren plays a significant role in shaping students' attitudes toward religious tolerance, with 80% of respondents acknowledging its impact, shown by a Likert score of 4.00. Need for Tolerance Training: A large majority (90%) of students feel that they still require additional training on religious tolerance, with a Likert score of 4.50.

The following table summarizes the research findings from 500 students (santri) across 10 pesantren in various regions of Indonesia:

Table 3 Research Instrument Results (Student Questionnaire)

Aspect Measured	Number of Respondents (n)	Average Likert Score (1-5)	Percentage (%)	Explanation
Understanding of Religious Tolerance	500	4.25	85%	Most students understand the importance of religious tolerance as part of Islamic teachings.
Application of Tolerance in Daily Life	500	3.75	70%	While most students apply tolerance, there is a gap between understanding and application.
View on Other Religions	500	2.50	50%	Half of the respondents still hold exclusive views toward other religions.
Influence of Pesantren Education on Tolerance	500	4.00	80%	Pesantren education has a significant impact on shaping students' tolerance attitudes.
Need for Tolerance Training for Students	500	4.50	90%	Most students feel they need further training on religious tolerance.

These findings highlight the importance of ongoing education and training in pesantren. The average Likert score of 4.25 indicates that 85% of students have a strong understanding of religious tolerance. This reflects that students are well-versed in the concept of tolerance, viewing it as an integral part of Islamic teachings learned in pesantren. However, with a mean score of 3.75, approximately 70% of students report practicing tolerance values in their daily lives. These findings suggest a gap between theoretical understanding and everyday application, warranting further attention.

A score of 2.50, reflecting that 50% of students exhibit less acceptance of other religions, highlights that some students still harbor exclusivist attitudes, posing a challenge in efforts to promote religious tolerance among students. The average score of 4.00, with 80% of students acknowledging the positive impact of pesantren education on fostering tolerance, underscores the important role that pesantren curriculum and activities play in internalizing tolerance values among students.

Furthermore, the average score of 4.50 indicates that 90% of students feel they require additional training in religious tolerance. This reflects a strong need for deepening both the understanding and practical application of tolerance among students in pesantren, through formal education as well as extracurricular activities. The data from the table above shows that while students possess a good understanding of religious tolerance, improvements are still needed in the application of these values in daily life. Additionally, the persistence of exclusive attitudes toward other religions among pesantren students demonstrates the need for more inclusive education. These findings highlight the importance of continued education for students to further strengthen the tolerant character that is being taught in pesantren.

## **2. Discussion**

### **The Concept and Models for Strengthening Religious Tolerance Character in Pesantren**

According to (Mu'ti, Abdul, 2020), religious tolerance is the attitude of respecting and honoring the beliefs of others without undermining one's own religious identity. In Islamic education, this concept is reflected in the teachings of *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (brotherhood among Muslims), *ukhuwah bashariyah* (brotherhood among humanity), and *ukhuwah wataniyah* (brotherhood among nations). As traditional Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, pesantren have a significant responsibility to instill these values in their students.

Strengthening the character of religious tolerance in pesantren can be achieved through various teaching models and support from extracurricular activities. According to (Suharto, Wahid, 2022), character education in pesantren should integrate three main aspects: cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor. In this regard, pesantren can implement a curriculum that includes the study of other religions, interfaith discussions, and social activities involving communities from different religious backgrounds.

The existing pesantren curriculum needs to be made more inclusive and emphasize the importance of religious tolerance. (Suharto, Wahid, 2022) suggests that incorporating tolerance education into the curriculum should include the teaching of religious history, ethics of interfaith relationships, and critical analysis of religious texts. This research aims to enhance students' awareness of the importance of living together peacefully despite differences. The

above works mostly study the efforts of pesantrens for countering radicalism from within Islamic education, curriculum, teachers, and facilities as internal initiatives under the umbrella of a deradicalization program (Wildan & Muttaqin, 2022).

### **Challenges in Implementing Religious Tolerance**

Despite various efforts, the implementation of religious tolerance in pesantren faces several challenges. According to (Yusuf, 2023), one of the biggest challenges is the narrow understanding of religious teachings, which can lead to exclusive attitudes. This situation is further exacerbated by the influence of social media, which often spreads inaccurate information and reinforces intolerant attitudes. To address this, pesantren need to strengthen the critical education of students and media literacy.

Teachers and administrators in pesantren play a crucial role in fostering tolerance among students. They not only serve as educators but also as role models in demonstrating attitudes of mutual respect and appreciation. Through daily interactions, teachers can create an environment that supports interfaith dialogue and encourages students to learn from one another. Active involvement of teachers in extracurricular activities can also enhance students' awareness of the importance of religious tolerance and reinforce their commitment to these values. Thus, all these efforts are expected to produce a generation of students who not only understand but also practice religious tolerance in their lives, both within the pesantren environment and in the broader community.

Teachers and administrators in pesantren play a crucial role in fostering the character of religious tolerance. According to (Fauzi, Ahmad, 2022), teachers must exemplify tolerant and inclusive attitudes. Furthermore, the leadership of pesantren must ensure that the educational policies and practices implemented reflect the values of tolerance and inclusivity. This includes enforcing fair discipline, organizing religious activities that respect diversity, and allowing students to participate in interfaith events for the Impact of Increased Religious Tolerance on Social Life. Enhancing religious tolerance in pesantren has a significant impact on the social lives of students. According to research by , students who participate in religious tolerance programs tend to exhibit open-mindedness, effectively communicate with followers of other religions, and are more willing to engage in multicultural communities (Aminah, Siti, 2023) This indicates that character education in religious tolerance not only shapes the character of students but also contributes to the development of a peaceful and harmonious society.

Strengthening the character of religious tolerance in Indonesian pesantren is a vital step toward cultivating an inclusive younger generation that is prepared to face the challenges of globalization. This requires a strong commitment from all parties, including the government, pesantren leaders, teachers, and students. Recommendations for fostering this environment include developing a more comprehensive curriculum, enhancing educational capacity to teach tolerance, and increasing collaboration between pesantren and other

educational institutions in interfaith activities. With this approach, pesantren can emerge not only as strong religious institutions but also as bastions of peace and unity within Indonesia's diverse society.

#### D. Conclusion

Overall, the implementation of strengthening the character of religious tolerance in Indonesian pesantren is a strategic effort that not only enhances harmony among religious communities but also reinforces national integration amidst diversity. Through curriculum enhancement, teacher capacity building, and support from various stakeholders, pesantren can become a model of education that produces students with a strong understanding of religion while also being able to coexist peacefully in multicultural societies. (Wahid, Abdurrahman, 2022) Ongoing efforts in tolerance education will lay the foundation for the creation of an inclusive, tolerant generation that contributes positively to national development.

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