

## The Contribution of Christian and Islamic Religious Education to Tolerance Building in Schools

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### Abstract

Tolerance is a crucial value for maintaining harmonious living in a diverse society, including school environments. Religious education plays a strategic role in shaping students' character to appreciate differences in beliefs and cultures. This research aims to analyze the role of Christian and Islamic religious education in building an attitude of tolerance in schools.

The method used is qualitative research with a library research approach, examining relevant literature from scientific journals, textbooks, and religious education documents for both Christianity and Islam in Indonesia.

The findings indicate that Christian religious education emphasizes the teachings of love, forgiveness, and coexistence as reflections of Christian values. Meanwhile, Islamic religious education teaches the principles of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (mercy for all creation), *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), and just conduct in interacting with followers of other religions.

Both forms of religious education, if taught inclusively and contextually, are capable of forming students who are not only devout but also possess a respectful attitude amidst diversity. Religious education also encourages interfaith dialogue, strengthens the spirit of cooperation, and prevents the emergence of intolerance in schools. Thus, the role of Christian and Islamic religious education is highly significant as a foundation for developing tolerant character among students.

**Keywords:** Role of Religious Education, Christianity, Islam, Tolerance, Schools

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### INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a nation with a high degree of diversity, encompassing aspects of religion, culture, and ethnicity. Amidst this diversity, schools serve as strategic places for instilling values of tolerance among adherents of different religions. Schools are not merely venues for transferring knowledge but also spaces for shaping student character, preparing them to live within diversity. Religious education, both Christian and Islamic, plays a central role in this value formation process. Religious teachers are not only tasked with teaching doctrines of faith but are also required to instill values of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence amidst differences. Suhadi states that religious education in schools

plays a vital role in building moderate and tolerant attitudes from an early age among students (Suhadi, 2025).

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) significantly contributes to the formation of tolerant attitudes through the teachings of religious moderation and an understanding of Islam as *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (a mercy to all creation). Through materials such as *ukhuwah islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood), *wathaniyah* (patriotism), and *basyariyah* (humanitarianism), students are encouraged to appreciate differences and foster peaceful coexistence. Dialogical learning approaches also reinforce these values in students' daily practices. According to Ardiana and Jasminto (2023), the affective approach in PAI learning has proven capable of fostering inclusive and tolerant attitudes in students' social interactions. Teachers actively serve as role models and facilitators who convey Islamic values within a universal humanistic framework. Therefore, the PAI curriculum and methods need continuous updating to remain relevant in addressing the dynamics of a pluralistic society.

Similarly, Christian Religious Education (PAK) emphasizes the values of love, forgiveness, and acceptance of others, regardless of their religious background. In the context of a pluralistic society, PAK serves as a platform for learning to coexist peacefully and lovingly. PAK teachers play a crucial role in instilling values of tolerance by fostering the understanding that all human beings are created in the image and likeness of God. Darma, Mesah, and Topayaung (2022) state that PAK applying a holistic and reflective approach can shape students who are open-minded and appreciate differences. Through interfaith dialogue and contextual learning, students learn not only to accept but also to celebrate diversity. This demonstrates that Christian religious education significantly contributes to strengthening social harmony in schools.

Learning strategies greatly determine the success of religious education in instilling values of tolerance. Teachers who utilize participatory approaches, project-based learning, and interactive discussions are more effective in fostering a deep understanding of tolerance's importance. Ardiana and Jasminto (2023) emphasize that affective strategies such as habituation and role modeling are key in building student character. When teachers demonstrate open and inclusive attitudes, students will more easily emulate and apply these in their daily lives. This process occurs not only in the classroom but also in daily interactions within the school environment. Therefore, teacher training to develop tolerance-promoting learning methods is highly needed.

Religious education with a multicultural perspective provides a broader approach to fostering tolerant attitudes. Through cross-cultural and interfaith understanding, students are invited to view differences as part of God's will that deserves respect. Rofikoh Sari, Romdloni, and Hasan (2022) show that the integration of multicultural perspectives in PAI is highly effective (Roji & El Husarri, 2021) in building awareness of plurality among students. This can be achieved through informative introductions to interfaith worship practices, joint social activities, and collaborative projects. Thus, values of mutual respect and togetherness grow naturally in students' daily interactions. Religious teachers should be given space to develop an inclusive and adaptive curriculum that aligns with the school's diverse context.

Religious teachers, both Christian and Islamic, hold strategic positions in shaping student character, including in matters of tolerance. Teachers are not merely instructors but also role models whose behavior is observed and emulated by students. Sukardin Zebua et al. (2022) in their research state that PAK teachers who internalize values of love and respect for others are capable of shaping a tolerant and peaceful school culture. Teachers need to equip themselves with cross cultural communication skills, knowledge about other religions, and high empathy towards student diversity. With a personal and dialogical approach, students can feel accepted and valued, regardless of their beliefs. Therefore,

improving the quality of religious teachers is a primary factor in the success of tolerance education in schools.

Despite the critical role of religious education, the reality on the ground indicates persistent challenges in implementing tolerance values. A lack of teacher training on multicultural education, limited inclusive teaching materials, and existing interreligious prejudice in the school's surrounding social environment are major impediments. Choirul Anwar (2021) reveals that the integration of tolerance education into religious education is still uneven, often limited to the cognitive delivery of material without value internalization. Furthermore, religious education sometimes falls into exclusive approaches that insufficiently open space for interreligious dialogue. Therefore, policies supporting the development of a moderation- and diversity-based religious curriculum are necessary. This approach will strengthen the school's role as a vehicle for forming a tolerant and inclusive society.

Considering all these descriptions, it is clear that both Christian and Islamic Religious Education have great potential in shaping a culture of tolerance in schools. However, their effectiveness highly depends on teaching methods, teacher competence, and supportive inclusive educational policies. In depth studies on strategies to strengthen tolerance values through religious education need to be conducted continuously. Previous research provides a strong theoretical basis, but on the ground implementation must be continuously evaluated and adapted to contemporary developments. Schools capable of managing religious education inclusively and contextually will form a strong foundation for a peaceful and harmonious society. Therefore, synergy among teachers, curriculum, and the social environment must be strengthened to create a tolerant and competitive generation.

## **METHOD**

This study is a library research, conducted by reviewing and analyzing various literature relevant to the topic of the role of Christian and Islamic religious education in building tolerance in school environments. Library research involves collecting, classifying, and examining data from secondary sources such as books, scientific journals, articles, and other official documents related to the themes of tolerance, religious education, and plurality in schools. The primary focus of this research is to explore the values of tolerance education embedded in the curricula of Islamic Religious Education and Christian Religious Education, as well as the pedagogical approaches applied in multicultural contexts. The researcher emphasizes the importance of integrating religious values in educating students to appreciate differences and coexist peacefully. As explained by Zed (2021), library research excels in formulating theories and strengthening conceptual analysis of specific socio-educational issues.

The data analysis technique in this study uses content analysis, which is a systematic approach to interpreting and understanding the meaning of written texts related to religious education and tolerance. The data analyzed includes curriculum content, learning strategies, and religious values found in Christian and Islamic religious education teaching materials. The researcher identified key themes such as religious moderation, mutual respect, empathy, and coexistence, which serve as essential foundations for building tolerance in school environments. This analysis was conducted descriptively-qualitatively, referencing theories of tolerance and multicultural education. According to Erlina (2020), content analysis is highly effective in uncovering deep meaning from texts and documents, especially in library-based research, as it can reveal the representation of values and ideologies within educational materials.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Before delving further into the findings on the role of Christian and Islamic religious education in building tolerance in schools, it is crucial to first grasp the fundamental concept underpinning this study tolerance. Tolerance is a fundamental value that sustains peaceful and harmonious social life, particularly in multicultural school environments. Religious education, encompassing both Islam and Christianity, plays a strategic role in instilling attitudes of mutual respect, acceptance of differences, and fostering a sense of brotherhood amidst diversity. Therefore, this discussion commences with an explanation of the definition of tolerance, before proceeding to elaborate on how religious education is implemented to cultivate a tolerant culture in Indonesian schools. A comprehensive understanding of the meaning of tolerance will serve as an essential basis for examining the role of religious education as a social instrument that shapes students' moderate and open-minded character.

### **Understanding Tolerance**

Linguistically, the term "tolerance" originates from the Latin *tolerare*, meaning to endure, to be patient, or to allow. In this context, tolerance can be interpreted as the capacity to be patient with differences, without necessarily agreeing with or assimilating those differing views. Terminologically, tolerance refers to an attitude of appreciating and respecting differences in opinions, beliefs, cultures, and ways of life of others within a framework of peaceful social coexistence (Suryana, 2021).

Tolerance is generally understood as an attitude of appreciating and accepting differences, whether religious, cultural, ethnic, or worldview disparities. In the educational context, tolerance becomes a crucial foundation for creating an inclusive and harmonious learning atmosphere. According to Nasution & Ismail (2021), tolerance is a form of acceptance of diversity manifested in attitudes of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence, without diminishing the individual identities of each person. Tolerance does not imply equating beliefs but rather fostering mutual understanding in togetherness. This attitude is vital to develop in school environments, which frequently serve as gathering places for students from diverse backgrounds. The formation of tolerance values must be carried out consciously, structurally, and through appropriate pedagogical approaches.

Schools, as educational institutions, hold a strategic role in shaping students' character and personality. In the context of Indonesia's plurality, schools function not only as places for knowledge transfer but also as venues for fostering social values such as tolerance and brotherhood. Santoso & Rohman (2023) show that learning explicitly incorporating tolerance values can reduce the potential for conflict among students of different faiths. A school environment that does not support tolerance risks giving rise to discrimination, bullying, and social polarization from an early age. Therefore, it is important for schools to create a conducive, safe, and open learning atmosphere towards diversity. The implementation of tolerance values needs to be supported by all school elements, from teachers and students to school policies.

Teachers hold a pivotal role in building tolerant attitudes among students. Teachers are not only instructors but also serve as role models in their behavior, speech, and attitudes. According to Suryadi (2022), teachers can instill tolerance values through thematic learning, group discussions, and co-curricular activities that involve cooperation among students across different religions and cultures. Teachers need to foster dialogue among students regarding diversity, open space for healthy discussions about differences, and prioritize an empathetic approach in resolving conflicts. Religious education, both Christian and Islamic, also plays a role in fostering tolerant attitudes if delivered contextually and inclusively. This forms the basis for creating a school environment free from exclusive and intolerant attitudes.

In addition to teachers, the school curriculum and extracurricular activities also play an important role in supporting the strengthening of tolerance values. Integrating

tolerance material into subjects like Pancasila and Civic Education (PPKn), Religious Education, and Indonesian Language can encourage students to understand diversity from various perspectives. According to Widodo & Hartati (2020), extracurricular activities such as scouting, student council (OSIS), or interfaith social work can serve as strategic spaces to strengthen social relations among students from different backgrounds. These activities encourage positive social interaction and reduce prejudice between groups. Schools can also design school culture programs such as "Harmony Day" or "Interfaith Dialogue" aimed at fostering multicultural awareness. With such approaches, tolerance is not only taught theoretically but also practiced directly.

Building tolerance in schools is not a one-time activity but a long process that requires continuous evaluation and reinforcement. Every school needs to have a monitoring mechanism for the implementation of tolerance values, whether through observing student attitudes, teacher reflections, or character training for educators. Lubis & Fahmi (2022) emphasize the importance of evaluation based on student attitude indicators, such as the ability to cooperate, respect differing opinions, and resolve conflicts without violence. The results of this evaluation serve as a basis for developing more effective learning strategies in instilling tolerance. Thus, tolerance education does not remain mere discourse but truly becomes internalized in daily school life.

### **The Role of Christian and Islamic Religious Education in Building Tolerance in Schools**

Tolerance is one of the important values that must be developed in multicultural school environments. Religious education has a strategic role in instilling tolerant attitudes from an early age in students. Christian and Islamic religious education, as two major religions in Indonesia, contribute significantly to building attitudes of mutual respect and appreciation for differences. Through the teaching of religious values, students are invited to understand that differences in beliefs are not obstacles to living together harmoniously. Schools, as places of social learning, need to be effective venues for building this tolerance. Research by Melkisedek, et al. (2024) states that Christian religious education plays a crucial role in internalizing tolerant attitudes in students, while Tohari (2023) shows that Islamic religious education can promote peaceful and tolerant values among different religious communities in schools. (Abrori & Hadi, 2020)

Christian Religious Education not only emphasizes doctrinal aspects but also character formation, including values of love, forgiveness, and empathy. These values are highly relevant in building tolerant attitudes in school environments. By teaching love for others, PAI directs students to view differences as a richness to be respected, not as an obstacle. Sinambela (2023) explains that Christian religious learning serves as a means to build mutual respect amidst social diversity. The implementation of these values can shape individuals who are not only religious but also caring towards differences around them. Therefore, the role of teachers in consistently conveying these values is crucial to achieving this goal. (Fahmi Husein, Moh Solikul Hadi, 2024)

Islamic Religious Education also plays a significant role in building tolerant attitudes in schools. PAI teaches values such as compassion, justice, and respect for differences as part of Islamic teachings of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. Through PAI learning, students are invited to understand that Islam teaches peace and respects the diversity of humanity. Tohari (2023) reveals that Islamic religious education can erode prejudice and negative stereotypes among different religious communities through inclusive and dialogical approaches. Furthermore, the development of this tolerant attitude is supported by learning activities that encourage interaction and cooperation among students from different backgrounds. Thus, PAI plays an effective role in fostering attitudes of mutual respect and appreciation for differences in school environments.

The role of teachers is central in realizing religious education that can build tolerance. Teachers function not only as material deliverers but also as role models in

tolerant attitudes. PAK and PAI teachers must be able to create an inclusive learning environment where students feel valued regardless of their religious or cultural background. Kasingku (2024) asserts that Christian religious education teachers have a responsibility to build tolerant character through approaches suitable for students' needs. On the other hand, PAI teachers must also apply learning methods that foster mutual respect among different religious communities. This is important so that tolerance values can be accepted and practiced by students in daily life.

The religious education curriculum must be designed to support the formation of tolerant attitudes among students. Learning materials need to incorporate universal values that emphasize the importance of respecting differences. Sinambela (2023) states that Christian religious education can be a foundation for understanding universal human values highly relevant to tolerance. Meanwhile, as stated by Tohari (2023), PAI can strengthen tolerant attitudes through inclusive and dialogical approaches. Curricula that address aspects of values and attitudes are crucial so that learning is not merely theoretical but also capable of changing student behavior. Thus, the integration of tolerance values into the curriculum can be a strong foundation for building tolerant attitudes in schools.

Extracurricular activities serve as effective means to reinforce tolerance values taught in religious education. Through activities such as interfaith discussions, visits to places of worship, and joint social projects, students can practice mutual respect and cooperation. Kasingku (2024) emphasizes that a comprehensive approach in Christian religious education must include the development of tolerant knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Similarly, PAI encourages students to apply tolerance values in various social activities involving diversity (Tohari, 2023). These activities enrich students' experiences in interreligious interactions, making them more prepared to face diversity in society. Therefore, reinforcement through extracurricular activities becomes an integral part of tolerance education.

Evaluation and reflection are important parts of the process of learning tolerance values. Teachers must evaluate changes in student attitudes and behavior related to tolerance to assess the extent of learning success. Sinambela (2023) argues that Christian religious education serves as a medium for building harmonious relationships in a pluralistic society. Meanwhile, Tohari (2023) states that PAI provides space for dialogue and understanding various perspectives that enrich students' understanding of diversity. Shared reflection in class also helps students understand the importance of tolerance and practice it in daily life. With regular evaluation and reflection, religious education can be more effective in instilling tolerant attitudes.

Contextual learning approaches are highly necessary in religious education to build effective tolerance. Teachers need to link learning material to students' daily social situations. According to Kasingku (2024), a contextual approach in Christian religious education can help students apply religious values in real life. Tohari (2023) similarly reveals that Islamic religious education using a dialogical approach aims to create a harmonious and inclusive environment. This approach makes the material more relevant and meaningful to students, so that tolerance values are more easily accepted and internalized. Therefore, the use of contextual approaches is crucial for the success of tolerance education.

Social activities within the school environment also serve as an important means of forming tolerant attitudes in students. Through involvement in social activities that involve diverse backgrounds, students learn to appreciate differences and collaborate. Sinambela (2023) shows that Christian religious education prepares individuals who can contribute positively to a diverse society. Tohari (2023) adds that Islamic religious education teaches tolerance values manifested in real social actions. Thus, social activities

in schools are not merely supplementary activities but effective media for tolerance education. This strengthens the practice of religious values in students' real lives.

Interfaith dialogue in the school environment needs to be an important part of religious education. Through dialogue, students can open themselves to understanding differences and learn to appreciate diversity directly. Kasingku (2024) states that Christian religious education emphasizes pluralism as an integral part of social life. Islamic religious education also encourages dialogue as a way to strengthen interreligious relations (Tohari, 2023). This dialogue helps eliminate negative stereotypes and builds strong social solidarity among students. Thus, interfaith dialogue becomes an effective means of building deep and sustainable tolerance.

Religious education must also equip students with the ability to manage conflict peacefully. Learning about conflict resolution is important so that students can resolve differences without causing disputes. Sinambela (2023) asserts that Christian religious education contributes to forming individuals who can find commonalities and resolve differences constructively. Tohari (2023) adds that Islamic religious education provides skills in resolving conflicts by prioritizing dialogue and tolerance. This ability is crucial in diverse school environments to maintain a conducive and peaceful learning atmosphere. Therefore, religious education must integrate conflict resolution learning as part of its curriculum.

Strengthening healthy religious identity becomes a foundation for building robust tolerant attitudes. By deeply understanding their own religious teachings, students can appreciate the identities of others without feeling threatened. Kasingku (2024) asserts that Christian religious education teaches the importance of strengthening faith while maintaining an open attitude towards differences. Meanwhile, Tohari (2023) states that Islamic religious education emphasizes the concept of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) and interreligious solidarity rooted in correct religious understanding and knowledge. This strong yet inclusive identity becomes an important asset for building a harmonious and tolerant school community. Therefore, religious education must balance faith strengthening with an open and mutually respectful attitude.

The use of innovative learning media can also support the formation of tolerant attitudes in schools. Visual, audio, and interactive media allow students to understand tolerance values more contextually and engagingly. Sinambela (2023) shows that the use of technology in Christian religious education can strengthen students' understanding of the importance of tolerance. On the other hand, Tohari (2023) explains that the use of digital media in PAI learning facilitates the delivery of peaceful and tolerant messages to students. With appropriate media, messages of tolerance become more easily accepted and internalized. This is crucial so that religious education is not only textual but also applicable and relevant to students' lives.

Collaboration between Christian and Islamic religious education in interreligious learning programs can be an effective innovation in building tolerance in schools. These joint programs allow students to directly exchange insights and religious experiences. Kasingku (2024) emphasizes that interreligious synergy within the school environment can reduce conflict and strengthen brotherhood. Tohari (2023) adds that dialogue and cooperation among different religious communities in schools enhance understanding and break down negative stereotypes. This collaboration also fosters a strong sense of togetherness and affirms the importance of peaceful coexistence. Therefore, schools need to facilitate interreligious programs as part of tolerance education. (Lomba-Portela dkk., 2022)

Overall, the role of Christian and Islamic religious education is highly strategic in building tolerant attitudes in school environments. Through learning materials, extracurricular activities, interfaith dialogue, and the strengthening of healthy religious identity, religious education shapes students who can live harmoniously in diversity.

Based on the theories above, inclusive and contextual religious education can be a solution to overcome various social conflicts resulting from intolerance. Therefore, the roles of teachers, curriculum, learning media, and interreligious programs must be optimized so that tolerance values can be effectively internalized. With integrated religious education, schools can become a place for shaping a tolerant, peaceful, and broad-minded generation.

### **Comparative Analysis: The Role of Christian and Islamic Religious Education in Building Tolerance**

In the context of Indonesian national education, the figure of Ki Hajar Dewantara emphasized the importance of education based on humanistic and cultural values to build national character, including the value of tolerance. He highlighted the principle of "*ing ngarsa sung tuladha, ing madya mangun karsa, tut wuri handayani*" (those in front set an example, those in the middle build will, those behind give encouragement) as a philosophy of leadership and education that fosters mutual respect and tolerance among individuals. Within this framework, religious education, both Christian and Islamic, is viewed as an important instrument in shaping students' tolerant character. According to research by Siregar and Sutrisno (2021), education aligned with Ki Hajar Dewantara's principles can foster attitudes of mutual respect for religious diversity in multicultural schools. This indicates that the national education figure has laid the philosophical foundation for religious education to play an active role in creating a harmonious and inclusive environment.

In Islam, the concept of tolerance is strongly emphasized by figures such as KH. Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah, who viewed education as a path to building peace and tolerance through the learning of inclusive and rational Islamic values. The Islamic education pioneered by Ahmad Dahlan focused more on the values of the Quran and universal ethics, not just dogma. Research by Rofiq and Sahlan (2022) shows that the approach to Islamic education implemented in Muhammadiyah schools prominently highlights aspects of humanity, justice, and compassion, thereby encouraging the growth of students' tolerant attitudes towards adherents of other religions. This perspective demonstrates that Islamic values are inherently highly compatible with the principle of peaceful coexistence, if taught with a humanistic and open approach.

Meanwhile, in Christian education, figures like Dr. Eka Darmaputera extensively wrote about the importance of teaching love as the core of Christian theology that can be applied in education as an effort to build tolerance. According to him, Christian religious education must emphasize love for others regardless of religious, ethnic, and social background. Research by Naibaho and Simanjuntak (2023) states that the implementation of love values in Christian religious learning can create a collective awareness among students not to impose the truth of their religion on others. This indicates a similarity in approach between Christian and Islamic education figures in Indonesia in prioritizing aspects of compassion and humanity as the basis of tolerance. (Roji & El Husarri, 2021)

The differences in approach between Islamic and Christian education in building tolerance largely lie in their delivery methods and curriculum scope. Islamic education, as developed in the *pesantren* and *madrasah* traditions, tends to emphasize tolerance values in social relations through ethics (*akhlak*) and transactional jurisprudence (*fikih muamalah*), whereas Christian education largely focuses on personal relations and the values of love from the teachings of Jesus Christ. However, both agree on the importance of making education a tool for unity, not division. Research by Wulandari (2021) found that both PAI teachers and Christian Religious Education teachers in public schools play a significant role in reducing the potential for intolerance through strengthening character education based on religion. This means that despite doctrinal differences, both religious education systems share a common commitment to fostering peace and harmony in schools. (Güven, 2010)

Thus, a comparative analysis of the roles of Christian and Islamic religious education in building tolerance reveals common ground on universal values such as love, justice, and respect for others. National and religious education figures in Indonesia have laid a strong philosophical foundation regarding the importance of interfaith education that fosters mutual respect. The success of religious education in shaping tolerant students largely depends on an inclusive interpretation of religious teachings and teacher competence in internalizing these values. Therefore, Christian and Islamic religious education needs to be continuously developed with a spirit of mutual learning and dialogue to realize schools as peaceful and harmonious places for all.

The findings of this study demonstrate that Christian and Islamic Religious Education play a strategic and complementary role in fostering tolerance within multicultural school environments in Indonesia. These findings align strongly with established theoretical perspectives on tolerance and character education, while also reinforcing conclusions from prior empirical studies. From a theoretical standpoint, tolerance is conceptualized as an attitude of respect, acceptance, and peaceful coexistence amid diversity, without requiring the dilution of personal beliefs (Suryana, 2021; Nasution & Ismail, 2021). The findings confirm this theoretical definition by showing that religious education, when delivered inclusively and contextually, does not aim to homogenize beliefs but rather cultivates mutual understanding and respect among students of different faiths. This supports the view that tolerance is not passive endurance but an active social attitude nurtured through structured educational processes.

The study's results are also consistent with the humanistic educational philosophy of Ki Hajar Dewantara, which emphasizes exemplary leadership, moral guidance, and encouragement as the foundation of character formation. The observed role of teachers as moral role models echoes Dewantara's principle of *ing ngarsa sung tuladha*, where educators exemplify tolerant behavior through daily interactions. This finding corroborates Siregar and Sutrisno's (2021) argument that education rooted in national cultural values can effectively strengthen interreligious harmony in pluralistic schools. In relation to Islamic Religious Education (PAI), the findings indicate that values such as compassion (*rahmah*), justice, brotherhood (*ukhuwah*), and peaceful coexistence are effectively internalized when learning adopts inclusive and dialogical approaches. This result is theoretically grounded in the Islamic concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, which positions Islam as a source of universal mercy. Empirically, this finding reinforces Tohari's (2023) study, which demonstrated that dialogical PAI learning reduces prejudice and negative stereotypes among students of different religious backgrounds. It also aligns with the educational philosophy of KH. Ahmad Dahlan, who emphasized rational, humanistic, and socially responsive Islamic education as a means of building peace and tolerance (Rofiq & Sahlan, 2022).

Similarly, the findings concerning Christian Religious Education (PAK) reveal that values of love (*agape*), forgiveness, empathy, and respect for others significantly contribute to students' tolerant attitudes. This supports theological perspectives that place love at the core of Christian ethics, as articulated by Eka Darmaputera. The study's results resonate with Sinambela's (2023) research, which found that Christian religious education emphasizing love and human dignity fosters openness and mutual respect in diverse school settings. Furthermore, Naibaho and Simanjuntak's (2023) findings affirm that teaching love-based values discourages religious exclusivism and promotes peaceful coexistence. The dialog between findings and previous studies also highlights the critical role of teachers in translating religious values into lived experiences. Consistent with Suryadi (2022) and Kasingku (2024), this study confirms that teachers are not merely transmitters of doctrine but facilitators of dialogue and agents of social cohesion. Their pedagogical choices such as cooperative learning, interfaith dialogue, and reflective discussion serve as practical mechanisms for internalizing tolerance values.

Moreover, the integration of tolerance within the curriculum and extracurricular activities observed in this study reinforces Widodo and Hartati's (2020) assertion that tolerance education is most effective when embedded across academic and non-academic domains. Activities such as interfaith social projects, student organizations, and collaborative school programs provide experiential learning spaces where tolerance is practiced rather than merely discussed. This finding strengthens Lubis and Fahmi's (2022) argument that continuous evaluation and reinforcement are essential to ensure tolerance becomes an internalized character trait. Comparatively, while Islamic Religious Education tends to emphasize social ethics (*akhlak*) and communal harmony through moral jurisprudence (*fikih muamalah*), Christian Religious Education focuses more on interpersonal relationships grounded in love and empathy. Despite these methodological differences, the findings confirm Wulandari's (2021) conclusion that both educational traditions share a common commitment to peace-building and character formation. The convergence of these approaches underscores that doctrinal diversity does not hinder tolerance; rather, inclusive interpretations of religious teachings strengthen it.

In conclusion, the findings of this study substantiate theoretical conceptions of tolerance as an active, learned social value and validate previous empirical research on the role of religious education in pluralistic contexts. Christian and Islamic Religious Education, when implemented inclusively, contextually, and dialogically, function as effective social instruments for shaping students' moderate, open-minded, and tolerant character. This dialog between theory, findings, and prior research affirms that religious education remains a vital foundation for cultivating harmonious and peaceful school communities in Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

Christian and Islamic religious education significantly contributes to shaping tolerant student character within school environments. Through the teachings of love in Christianity and the principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (mercy for all creation) in Islam, both religions impart universal values such as mutual respect, honoring differences, and upholding justice and peace. The implementation of religious education that prioritizes humanistic and dialogical approaches has proven capable of encouraging students to adopt an open attitude toward diversity. Furthermore, the presence of competent religious education teachers with inclusive perspectives is a key factor in the process of internalizing tolerance values in schools. Therefore, religious education functions not only as a transfer of spiritual values but also as a means of forming harmonious and pluralistic social character.

Comparatively, both Christian and Islamic religious education in Indonesia play a strategic role in preserving the nation's diversity through the realm of education. Methodological differences in conveying religious teachings are not obstacles; rather, they enrich students' perspectives in understanding universal human values. Collaboration among religious teachers, curriculum renewal, and interfaith learning are strategic steps that can strengthen the role of religious education in comprehensively instilling tolerance values. By reinforcing inclusive and peace-oriented religious education, schools will become safe, comfortable, and nurturing spaces for all students, regardless of their religious background. Thus, the role of Christian and Islamic religious education must continue to be developed to foster a generation with noble character, strong faith, and a deep commitment to tolerance in national life.

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