

Fostering Religious Tolerance in Early Childhood: The Influence of Parental Role

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ABSTRACT: *Tolerance is needed in a diverse environment with different religions, ethnicities, customs, and cultures. So tolerance requires a culture that is done from an early age. Religion has fundamental values that teach its adherents to respect people of different faiths and beliefs so that it can be used as a guide for parents to provide assistance and develop tolerance at home. This research aims to investigate how the involvement and role of parents in cultivating the value of patience at home; do they provide support or hinder? The location of this research is Luwu Raya, a fertile area in Indonesia. This is qualitative research where the researchers chose 105 parents who had early childhood and lived together at home. Interviews were conducted via telephone, and several statements and questions were provided via Google form. The research analysis found that most of the early childhood children have parents who are still intact, live together and are given assistance that supports the cultivation of tolerance values at home. The religious-based tolerance values instilled are moderate (tawassuth), tolerant (tasamuh), balanced (tawazun), equality (musawah), peace (islah), and fair (i'tidal). In addition, the role of parents is mainly done by setting an example and, to a lesser extent, by applying rules and respect. This support is also related to the teachings of the Islamic religion, which emphasises the enormous responsibility of parents. The role of parents in cultivating the value of tolerance is a distinctive feature of a Muslim family, which strongly emphasises the solid relationship in parenting between parents and their children. This condition must be continued in school institutions and the environment, dramatically determining these efforts.*

Toleransi diperlukan dalam lingkungan yang beragam dengan agama, suku, adat, dan budaya yang berbeda. Maka toleransi memerlukan budaya yang dilakukan sejak dini. Agama memiliki nilai-nilai fundamental yang mengajarkan kepada pemeluknya untuk menghormati orang yang berbeda keyakinan dan keyakinan sehingga dapat dijadikan pedoman bagi orang tua untuk memberikan pendampingan dan mengembangkan toleransi di rumah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana keterlibatan dan peran orang tua dalam penanaman nilai kesabaran di rumah; apakah mereka memberikan dukungan atau menghambat? Lokasi penelitian ini adalah Luwu Raya, salah satu daerah subur di Indonesia. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dimana peneliti memilih 105 orang tua yang memiliki anak usia dini dan tinggal bersama di rumah. Wawancara dilakukan melalui telepon, dan beberapa pernyataan dan pertanyaan diberikan melalui formulir

Google. Analisis penelitian menemukan bahwa sebagian besar anak usia dini memiliki orang tua yang masih utuh, tinggal bersama dan diberikan pendampingan yang mendukung penanaman nilai toleransi di rumah. Nilai-nilai toleransi berbasis agama yang ditanamkan adalah moderat (*tawassuth*), toleran (*tasamuh*), seimbang (*tawazun*), kesetaraan (*musawah*), perdamaian (*islah*), dan adil (*i`tidal*). Selain itu, peran orang tua terutama dilakukan dengan memberi contoh dan, pada tingkat yang lebih rendah, dengan menerapkan aturan dan rasa hormat. Dukungan ini juga terkait dengan ajaran agama Islam yang menekankan tanggung jawab yang sangat besar dari orang tua. Peran orang tua dalam penanaman nilai toleransi merupakan ciri khas keluarga muslim yang sangat menekankan hubungan yang solid dalam pengasuhan antara orang tua dengan anaknya. Kondisi ini harus dilanjutkan di lembaga sekolah dan lingkungan, sangat menentukan upaya tersebut.

Keywords: *Religious Tolerance, Early Childhood, Role of Parents.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Ideally, all religions teach to respect followers of other faiths, work together in building a peaceful and sustainable life, be tolerant, and even build coexistence with each other (Pajarianto, Pribadi, & Sari, 2022), in a multireligious society (Pajarianto & Mahmud, 2019). Religion has a significant influence on society and the socialisation of citizens, both positively and can be damaging if misinterpreted. The ideal of religion was born outside of a human will because it is absolute. Unfortunately, religious intolerance and hatred continue to prevail around the world. How many churches have been burned and bombed, and synagogue congregations, churches and mosques worldwide have been victims of shootings, bombings and arson (Bennett, Gunn, van Beynen, & Morton, 2022).

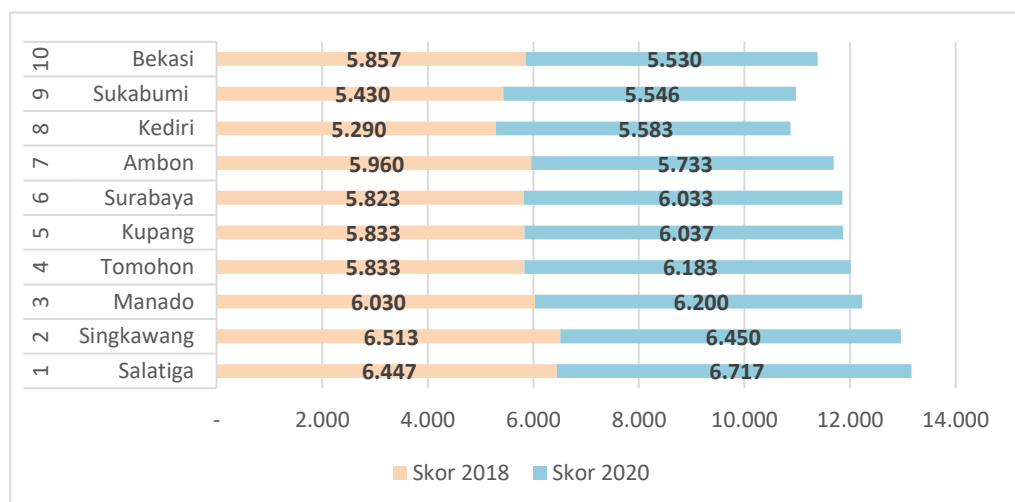


Figure 1. *The score of the Most Tolerant City in Indonesia (Setara, 2018).*

Indonesia has long experience in managing pluralism through cultivating tolerance among its citizens. Figure 1 shows ten cities in Indonesia with the highest tolerance

level in 2020, but several other cities also have problems with patience. This ranking is crucial for directly monitoring people's living conditions, especially tolerance conditions in Indonesia. It indicates that there is a common thread that shows a trend of tolerance, especially at the civil society level, running in place, not even a few who find a decrease in the quality of appreciation and acceptance of pluralism both between religions and within the internal world religion (Setara, 2018). The Legatum Institute, in its 2020 Legatum Prosperity Index report, for example, places Indonesia in 100th position out of 167 countries for the category of Personal Freedom, which measures the protection of fundamental rights, individual freedom and tolerance in society. It requires hard work from all parties so that tolerance becomes an enculturated character from an early age in the household.

This fact must be addressed by strengthening the tolerant character from an early age, which parents carry out at home. The results of a child's education cannot be separated from the efforts of parents and the influence of the home environment (Ikhwan & Jailani, 2014);(Bayat & Madyibi, 2022), school and society (Susilowati et al., 2018). Early childhood is the time frame from conception to eight years of age considered most important for its development (Likhari, Baghel, & Patil, 2022). Early experiences significantly impact a child's developmental trajectory and life destiny (Anderson et al., 2003). This crucial situation is what parents need to pay attention to so that their children grow up to be tolerant of all groups without discrimination of ethnicity, race or religion.

Tolerance education can take advantage of the noble values of religion, which pay great attention to diversity (Ikhwan, 2017). Children are taught how to embrace faith strongly, but on the other hand, they will not be easily influenced by radical teachings, blame others or spread hate speech. In addition to these definitions, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), strengthening the principles of tolerance is respecting, accepting and valuing the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human (Filasofa, Prayogo, & Khasanah, 2021). Parents must make determinations in various ways and interact with children, peers, educators and all components so that children from an early age can implement the tolerant character (Ridwan & Ikhwan, 2021).

The question is whether the role of parents in cultivating the character of tolerance supports or hinders it. The results of previous research found that spiritual development, including patience, is positively correlated with the psychological health of early childhood. The family is one of the contributing factors because children learn all actions and behaviours from their families, including walking, talking, self-confidence and morality (Akrim & Junaidi, 2021), so they can control their emotions and make sound decisions (Chang, Knobf, Oh, & Funk, 2019). Some research results also show that early childhood is the right time to provide a foundation for religious and moral values regarding religious moderation (Azizah, 2022), and education is the most appropriate instrument for teaching the importance of tolerance and moderation (Amala, Reswari, & Iftitah, 2022). In addition, natural and cultural resources, including religion, can be identified and used in an integrated manner (Zama & Mashiya, 2022). The role of parents is directed at developing values, attitudes and behaviour consistently and continuously (Tabroni & Rahmania, 2022). It is a manifestation of the part of parents to pay attention to all aspects of their child's development, both physically and spiritually.

After finding gaps in previous research, the researchers focused on the role of parents in tolerance education, which is predicted to support or hinder. One of the causes of parents experiencing fatigue in educating their children is perfectionism (Kawamoto, Furutani, & Alimardani, 2018), which ultimately causes obstacles in education. Knowledge, attitudes, and tolerant behaviour are essential to study because religious conflicts will last longer and be more challenging to overcome (Deitch, 2022), but can be reduced by increasing belief in God and religion (Elizabeth Barnes, Supriya, Zheng, Roberts, & Brownell, 2021). Thus, the cultivation of a tolerant character towards early childhood will be the future of religious peace in the future.

This research aims to identify and explore; (a) parental involvement in introducing the value of tolerance to early childhood, (b) the role of parents in forming tolerance in early childhood, and (c) the role of parents in shaping tolerant behaviour in early childhood. It is crucial and exciting because Indonesian people emphasise the importance of faith in God. 96% of the population believes that belief in God is necessary for cultivating good morality and values (Tamir, Connaughton, & Salazar, 2020), and emphasises the ideological principles applied to the administration of the state (Mu'ti & Burhani, 2019). Thus, this research is very strategic in reinforcing inter-religious harmony in a country known as a megadiversity. Indonesia has a track record of maintaining balance despite the differences among its people. However, many practices of intolerance still occur and require the participation of all parties to resolve them.

II. METHOD

This research is part of a roadmap carried out by a research team independently, which aims to evaluate the role of parents in growing, maintaining and developing a tolerant character in early childhood. The data source in this study is the subject from which the data can be obtained (Arikunto, 2017);(Ikhwan, 2021). Informants were also identified using purposive and snowball sampling. The purpose of this sample is due to the location where it can be reached. The number set is 105 households, with the criteria selected from parents who have early childhood. They will be given a list of questions describing how to introduce tolerance, shape attitudes, and cultivate tolerant behaviour. The sample of this research is the Moeslem family in Palopo City.

This research was conducted in Palopo City, a small part of Indonesia, a developing country commonly called a megadiversity with diverse biodiversity, ethnicity, and religion (Von Rintelen, Arida, & Häuser, 2017). It has thousands of tribes and ethnic groups, hundreds of languages, various religions, and a level of pluralism in all its dimensions (Pajarianto, 2022). Informants from different regions use smartphones to fill out a list of questions or statements sent by researchers. Researchers collected data through semi-structured telephone and written interviews using Google Forms. The interviews were then grouped according to the theme, transcribed, and coded.

Data analysis was carried out using ongoing research since data collection began. The analytical approach used is the Discovering Cultural Themes model for understanding the typical symptoms of the previous analysis. This analysis collects themes, cultural focus, values, and symbols in each domain (Spradley, 2016). The research data were analysed in 3 stages, namely data reduction, data display and data presentation, regarding the data analysis theory of Miles and Huberman's model. Triangulation is carried out by adding the parts to detect the data or comparing the data obtained from

each information source. Data analysis co-occurs with the data collection process with the suggested flow, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions or verification (Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, 2014).

Data reduction is used to select data according to the needs of researchers. Presentation of data is carried out after the stages of data reduction, and sorting have been completed. Furthermore, verification and drawing conclusions that are relevant to the research theme are carried out. Meanwhile, conceptualisation, categorisation, and description were developed based on incidents obtained in the field. This study, including its methodology, was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Muhammadiyah University of Banjarmasin, 304/UMB/KE/XI/2022. Ethical permission was given to informants based on consent, anonymity and confidentiality. To protect their identity, they are assigned a code and initials.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Tolerance, in simple terms, is the attitude of appreciating or respecting differences between groups or individuals, especially in a country whose people are diverse in ethnicity, religion, race, and ethnicity. Instilling tolerant behaviour is not easy, especially if it is not done in a planned manner and from an early age. Many ways can be applied to cultivate an attitude of tolerance in all groups of people. The point is the awareness that difference is God's gift to the universe. By developing a culture of tolerance, conflicts and divisions between individuals and groups will be minimised to maintain the unity and integrity of the Indonesian nation. The choice is to cultivate the value of tolerance from an early age in the household.

The demographics of informants are from families who currently have early childhood and live together at home. From the distribution of statements and questions via the Google form, 105 families were filled out completely and correctly, then grouped and analysed based on predetermined themes.

Table 1. Parents' Educational Level

Parents Education	N	%
Elementary School	-	-
Junior High School	-	-
Senior High School	8	7
Diploma	14	13
Undergraduate	62	56
Postgraduate (Magister)	17	15
Postgraduate (Doctoral)	9	8
Total	110	100

In Table 1, the educational level of the most dominant parents is undergraduate, as many as 62 people (56%), and the least are parents with high school qualifications, as many as 8 people (7%). In this data, there are also parents with doctoral qualifications of 9 people (8%), masters of 17 people (15%), and diplomas of 14 people (13%). Several studies have found that the level of education will impact the parents' ability to collaborate in an early childhood education environment by holding parenting education activities, holding children's growth days, and having a close relationship with childcare (Winarti, 2019);(Maryam, 2018);(Hariawan, Ulfatin, AY, & Arifin, 2019). Even in different cultural contexts, individual integration into society is essential (Hakyemez-Paul, Pihlaja, & Silvennoinen, 2020). In the above

demographics, parents' educational level is relatively high because the majority are university graduates who certainly have gained knowledge and experience in managing resources with characteristics that are not much different from their families.

Table 2. Parents Occupation

Parents Occupation	N	%
Civil Servant	67	64
Private Employee	17	16
Entrepreneur	14	13
Housewife	7	7
Total	105	100

In Table 2, parents' work in early childhood also varies, where the highest are civil servants, with 71 people (65%), and the lowest are homemakers, with 7 people (6%). Meanwhile, 17 people (15%) were private employees, and 15 entrepreneurs (14%) were self-employed. Parents' work also needs attention because each job will have consequences for early childhood care. Income and education are significant risk factors for child development in low-income groups (Rai & Tiwari, 2018). They are related to the development of children's reasoning skills (Mikus, Tieben, & Schober, 2021). So in early childhood education, it is necessary to consider the financing structure to achieve equality (Zhou, Jiang, & Zhang, 2022). Parents' work will also determine the model and approach to educating children, and the outcome is the attitude and behaviour of early childhood.

Early Childhood Demographics

Informants were asked about gender, age, parental status, and the child's domicile. This section is intended to form a profile of young children who are requested directly by their parents. By understanding how much influence the home environment has on a child's life, both parents must prepare the child, protect him from humiliation, and direct him so that the spirit of religion and glory grows in his soul. Parents (father and mother) are responsible for the child's education. Table 1 describes the profiles compiled from 106 children obtained from both parents.

Table 3. Early Childhood Characteristics

Aspect	Category	N	%
Children Gender	Male	55	52
	Female	50	48
Children Age	4 years old	43	41
	5 years old	23	22
	6 years old	39	37
Parents Marital Status	Lengkap	98	93
	Widow-Widower	7	7
Children Living With Their Parents	Yes	105	100
	No	-	-

In Table 3, 55 (52%) of the early childhood children were male, and 50 people (48%) were female. Parents were asked to provide age information for their children, and as many as 43 (41%) were four years old, 23 (22%) were five years old, and 39 (37%) were six years old. Meanwhile, 98 (93%) of the parent's marital status was complete, consisting of husband and wife, while 7 people (7%) were widows or widowers, either divorced or one of their spouses died. Then as many as 105 (100%) of these early childhood children live with both parents. This data illustrates that most of the

children in this study still have complete parents and live with both parents. Psychologically it will significantly impact the growth and development of the soul in early childhood.

Cultivating Tolerance in Early Childhood

Indonesia is trying to eradicate radicalism, excessive religious fanaticism and intolerance everywhere (Tyas & Naibaho, 2020). So the efforts of parents in educating children's character are needed using conditioning, followed by rules. At the same time, other ways, such as giving advice, and less done by parents. It is achievable because more parents imitate what their parents have done so far (Syuraini, Wahid, Azizah, & Pamungkas, 2018), which will lead to cultivating virtue values in early childhood (Jaedun & Manaf, 2020).

Table 4. Tolerance Cultivation

Tolerance Cultivation From Religion	Scale					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Parents are moderate (tawassuth) in educating their children	5	8	9	71	12	105
Parents are tolerant (tasamuh) of children's choices	-	11	13	20	61	105
Parents provide balanced education, physical-spiritual, physical-nonphysical (tawazun)	-	-	-	14	91	105
Parents let their children mingle with all ethnicities and religions (musawah)	3	7	5	56	34	105
Parents give encouragement to make peace (islah) if children have problems	-	-	-	78	27	105
Parents allow children to share toys or food with friends (I'tidal)	-	-	-	7	98	105

The descriptive results are shown in Table 4. Most parents do it often or very often (score 4-5) in cultivating the value of tolerance, and a small number of parents have never done it (score 1-2). Thus, parents have support for efforts to cultivate the value of tolerance at home. Statement number 6 has the highest score in developing the deal of patience. Parents permit their children to share food or toys with their friends. It embodies the importance of justice/I'tidal, which upholds a sense of justice. It is supported by the results of previous research, which found that when recess arrived at school, one of the early childhood children brought his food and offered it to his friends (Sumadi, Yetti, Yufiarti, & Wuryani, 2019). Some parents stated emphatically that they liked it when their children adapted to sharing food or toys with their friends (MA, SM, SW, GF; interview by phone, 29 September 2022).

What these parents did, reflected their support for some of the attitudes needed in cultivating tolerance. Parents provide support and condition so that their children are fair, prioritise peace, and foster tolerance with affection among children in their association. Of course, what parents do is adjusted to the child's growth and development level so that parents' instructions and guidance can touch their knowledge, attitudes and behaviour.

Dominant Aspects of Cultivating Tolerance

Cultivating the value of tolerance for early childhood requires different instruments and treatment from other age groups. The early childhood age group requires modelling that can be seen and implemented (Widodo et al., 2020), because models that can set an example can foster a caring attitude (Marshall, Caldwell, & Foster,

2011). Cultivation requires a container and a conducive environment, so their religious teachings influence children's reasoning, attitudes, and behaviour in viewing other people. So parents must be a model that children can emulate in applying the value of tolerance in the household. The following are the dominant aspects carried out by parents in cultivating the importance of patience.

Table 5. Tolerance Cultivation Dominant Aspects

Aspect	N	%
Exemplary in the family environment	84	80
Application of the rules	5	5
Cultivating respect	16	15
Total	105	100

In Table 5, the dominant aspect carried out by parents in cultivating the value of tolerance is through example by 84 (80%), developing respect by 16 (15%) and applying rules by 5 parents (5%). Following the results of previous research, exemplary occupies the most significant portion for parents to educate their children about the value of tolerance. A good style in several studies can support autonomy and provide intelligence and emotional intelligence (Pynn, Dunn, & Holt, 2019). The family must be the first institution to assume this role (Miftahurrohmah, Hariri, Rini, & Rohmatillah, 2021);(NM, SA, PT, AM; interview by phone, 04 October 2022).

The informants in this study are all Muslims who have and live with early childhood in their families. Where parenting patterns in Muslim families emphasise guidance and direction with a complete understanding of what children do, gently and lovingly (Thaib & Syah, 2019), and have a strong relationship (Meron, 2021), until they are at the marriage level. Parents are fully responsible for fulfilling physical needs and cultivating good values from their culture and religion. This fact cannot be generalised because there are still many cases related to low tolerance, which results from a long process of education in the household.

Fulfilment of physical and mental aspects in the household is expected to provide a conducive climate for developing tolerance values in children. One of the causes of intolerance involving young people is a matter of immature mental readiness, so young people are affected by religious discourse conveyed by new people through indoctrination. In this context, the role of parents is needed to carry out mental-spiritual maturation from an early age so that children become critical of new knowledge and adapt to the times without becoming intolerant. Moderation and tolerance are cultivated in early childhood so they are not exposed to radical ideas. It is because children who are accustomed to behaving in a respectful and peace-loving manner will have a positive impact on their children later in adulthood (Amala et al., 2022). That will lead to the harmonisation process can be carried out in all spaces including in educational institutions and households containing early childhood (Fajriyah & Riswandi, 2022).

This study's results provide essential information to revitalise the role of parents in early childhood in Luwu Region. The pattern of education which has been imbued so far needs to be revised to be more participatory so that early childhood can increase their critical thinking to receive and filter information from outside. With this support, the culture of tolerance based on religious values can work and give hope for a tolerant and peaceful world order.

IV. CONCLUSION

Analysis of research data found that the role of parents in cultivating tolerance was quite supportive by enabling tolerance values contained in attitudes of moderation (*tawassuth*), tolerance (*tasamuh*), balance (*tawazun*), equality (*musawah*), peace (*islah*), and fairness (*i'tidal*). The most dominant role is exemplary, followed by respect and setting rules for early childhood in their homes. This condition is a distinct characteristic of a Muslim family, which places a strong emphasis on the solid relationship in upbringing between parents and their children. They realise that the household is where parents give freedom and guidance to children. Parents give a lot of input and direction on what children do. Parents are objective and concerned and have control over their children's behaviour. In many ways, parents often dialogue and consult with children about various decisions. Children who are accustomed to democratic parenting will have a beneficial effect. Among them, children will feel happy, have self-control and self-confidence, be able to cope with stress, have the desire to excel and communicate with friends and adults.

In parenting, parents should be wise and prudent, not extreme towards any existing parenting style, in the sense of being able to provide care according to what the child is doing and what the parents expect. Children raised and cared for in a democratic parenting style will grow and develop well. All the potential that children have can be designed optimally. The positive impact that will arise is the realisation of a good social order, mutual respect, mutual affection, mutual love, and a society that is open, positive-minded, honest and has good tolerance.

Furthermore, as Explained in the result discussion, Moderation and tolerance are cultivated in early childhood so they are not exposed to radical ideas. It is because children who are accustomed to behaving in a respectful and peace-loving manner will positively impact their children later in adulthood. That will lead to the harmonisation process can be carried out in all spaces, including in educational institutions and households containing early childhood.

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