

Improving Students' Religious Tolerance Through Civic Education: A Strategic Approach

Fidah Nurbayti¹ Dona Purnama² Mas Fierna Janvierna Lusie Putri³

Pancasila and Citizenship Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Pamulang, Banten Province, Indonesia^{1,2,3}

Email: fidahbayt33@gmail.com¹ purnamaana663@gmail.com² dosen02649@unpam.ac.id³

Abstract

Indonesia, as a country rich in religious diversity, faces a major challenge due to rising religious intolerance in the education sector. This study explores the issue of religious intolerance in the educational environment and assesses the important role of Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) in building character, with reference to scientific journals and relevant reports. The research findings indicate that religious intolerance in schools is caused by a lack of understanding of Pancasila values, excessive influence of social media, limited interfaith dialogue, and teachers' limited ability to manage diversity. PPKn plays a crucial role in fostering tolerant attitudes through cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. However, traditional teaching methods, which emphasise effective learning models, need to integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor elements. Implementation requires the development of an inclusive curriculum, enhancing teachers' capabilities, creating a supportive school environment, and collaborating with various relevant parties

Keywords: Religious Tolerance, Character Education, Pancasila, Civic Education



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with thousands of islands, which naturally also has a diversity of ethnic groups, cultures, and religions. This is a true reflection of the plurality that enriches the nation. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency, Indonesia recognises six official religions, namely Islam, Protestant Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, along with various local belief systems spread throughout the archipelago. However, the reality is that religious pluralism in Indonesia faces serious challenges in the form of increasing religious intolerance, particularly within the context of education. The educational context is particularly significant because schools serve as the second environment after the family in shaping students' character. Cases of intolerance in schools, such as discrimination against minority students and conflicts between religious groups, indicate that the education system has not yet fully succeeded in internalising values of tolerance.

In this context, Pancasila and Civic Education (PPKn) plays a very important role in shaping students' tolerant character. PPKn is a subject specifically designed to develop students' civic competencies. PPKn has a fundamental mission to build national and civic awareness based on the values of Pancasila. The first principle of Pancasila, 'Belief in One Supreme God,' carries a profound meaning as a strategic tool for character education that can combine cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in fostering tolerance among people of diverse faiths. Effective learning models are urgently needed in the context of improving students' religious tolerance, as Civic Education learning is still dominated by lecture and memorisation methods. These concepts are not yet effective in building students' character, including religious tolerance. Therefore, more interactive, contextual and diversity-oriented methods are needed. The development of a religious tolerance learning model in PPKn must consider students' psychological characteristics, the local socio-cultural context, and the

dynamics of religious diversity within the school environment. An effective learning model should not only focus on transferring knowledge about tolerance but also on developing empathy, intercultural communication skills, and the ability to resolve conflicts constructively.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method for this study adopts a widely recognised literature review strategy, which is also referred to as a bibliographic review. This strategy involves the collection of secondary information, which is obtained from various references such as academic journals, magazines, and reports relevant to the chosen topic. The collected data is then interpreted descriptively and systematically to present the content conveyed. Literature review is an important phase in research, especially in academic settings, where the main objective is to develop theoretical and practical aspects. Researchers involved in literature review strive to establish a strong foundation for formulating theories, conceptual frameworks, and initial assumptions or hypotheses for the study being conducted. Through this process, researchers can categorise, organise, and utilise various relevant references within their field of study. Through literature review, researchers gain a deeper understanding of the issues being researched. This method is applied independently without requiring the presence or involvement of other people, such as interviews, making the process simpler and more efficient. However, the application of this method does not reduce the accuracy of the data obtained by researchers.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Problem of Religious Intolerance in the Context of Education

Religious intolerance in the context of education has become a serious and worrying problem in Indonesia. The phenomenon of intolerance in the educational environment reflects the failure of the education system to instil the values of diversity that should form the foundation of the Indonesian character. This phenomenon is not only occurring at the university level but has also spread to primary and secondary education levels. Forms of religious intolerance in schools can be observed in various ways, ranging from discrimination against minority students, rejection of religious activities that differ from the majority, to conflicts between student groups based on religious differences. Religious intolerance in schools often begins with seemingly trivial matters, such as differences in worship practices, religious holidays, or the selection of halal food, which can escalate into more serious conflicts. The primary causes of religious intolerance in education can be traced back to various interrelated factors, namely:

- a. First, a lack of understanding of the values of Pancasila as the foundation of national and state life. The lack of religious tolerance among students shows how weak the internalisation of Pancasila values is in everyday life.
- b. Secondly, the influence of social media is unbalanced in presenting information about religious diversity. In today's digital age, students are easily exposed to provocative and intolerant content through social media.
- c. Third, the lack of dialogue and positive interaction between religious groups in the school environment. Many schools still practise indirect segregation based on religion, such as in the formation of study groups or extracurricular activities. The lack of positive interaction between students from different religious backgrounds at school can reinforce negative prejudices and stereotypes, which ultimately lead to intolerance.
- d. Fourth, the weak role of teachers in moderating and facilitating dialogue on diversity. Teachers as learning facilitators often lack the necessary competencies to manage religious

diversity in the classroom. As discussion facilitators, teachers not only provide a space for students to share their understanding and experiences, but also ensure that discussions are conducted in a manner that respects the feelings of all participants (Sukmawati et al., 2025)

Religious intolerance in the context of education has a significant negative impact on the learning process and character development of students. These impacts are not only felt by students who are victims of discrimination but also by the entire school community. The psychological effects experienced by students who are victims of intolerance include reduced motivation to learn, disruptions in identity development, and can even lead to psychological trauma. Additionally, intolerance can worsen social cohesion in schools and hinder the creation of an inclusive and diverse-friendly learning environment.

The Strategic Role of Civic Education in Shaping Tolerant Character

Pancasila and Civic Education (PPKn) has a strategic position in Indonesia's national education system as a subject specifically designed to shape students' character. PPKn is a subject with a specific mission to cultivate citizens of character, namely citizens who understand and are able to exercise their rights and duties to become intelligent, skilled, and principled Indonesian citizens as mandated by Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. In the context of fostering tolerant character, PPKn has an advantage because its curriculum directly relates to the values of Pancasila, particularly the first principle, 'Belief in One Supreme God,' which acknowledges religious diversity within the framework of national unity. As a subject based on Pancasila, PPKn has a moral responsibility to foster religious tolerance among students through an understanding and appreciation of the values of Pancasila. Civics Education has a multidimensional function in religious tolerance education. First, the cognitive function is to provide knowledge and understanding of the concepts of tolerance, religious diversity, and the values of Pancasila that support harmonious life in a pluralistic society. Second, the affective function is to shape positive attitudes and values towards religious diversity. PPKn not only provides knowledge about tolerance but also strives to cultivate empathy, respect, and appreciation for religious differences. Third, the psychomotor function is to develop social skills and the ability to interact positively with individuals from various religious backgrounds. PPKn encourages students to not only understand and appreciate differences but also to be able to collaborate and communicate effectively with people of various religions.

Effective Civic Education learning in shaping tolerant character requires appropriate and innovative strategies. Learning strategies can no longer rely on conventional teacher-centred methods, but must develop a more interactive and student-centred approach. Effective Civic Education learning in shaping tolerant character requires an approach that is able to integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects through interactive and contextual learning methods. Some learning strategies that can be applied include: first, dialogue- and discussion-based learning that allows students to exchange views on religious differences in a respectful and constructive atmosphere. Second, project-based learning that encourages students to collaborate on projects involving religious diversity. Third, service learning that provides students with opportunities to engage in community service activities involving interaction with various religious groups. Despite its strategic role, the implementation of PPKn in religious tolerance education faces various challenges. First, there is the challenge of teacher competence in managing learning related to sensitive issues such as religious differences. Saniah et al. (2025) state that teachers also play a role in developing students' morals, shaping their character, and instilling positive values in learning. Not all PPKn teachers have adequate

competence in managing learning related to religious diversity, so learning often becomes superficial and does not touch on the deeper aspects of character building. Second, the challenge lies in the availability of contextual and relevant teaching materials that align with local diversity conditions. Many PPKn textbooks remain general in nature and do not provide concrete examples of how to apply religious tolerance in the daily lives of students. Third, the challenge lies in the lack of full support from the school environment and community for religious tolerance education.

Transformation of Civic Education Learning Models in Building Religious Tolerance

Indonesia, as a country rich in religious diversity, faces major challenges in building social harmony. The decline in morality among students in Indonesia is a result of modernisation, where increasingly advanced technology has contributed to a decrease in motivation to study, a lack of social interaction, and a weak awareness of the responsibilities of being a good student, such as fights between students, illegal street racing, and low levels of tolerance among them. Education in Pancasila and Citizenship (PPKn) plays a vital role in fostering tolerance among the younger generation, but the effectiveness of traditional teaching methods in achieving this goal remains questionable. This study assesses the shortcomings of traditional teaching models in developing interfaith tolerance and proposes a conceptual framework for more effective teaching methods by conducting an in-depth analysis of PPKn learning practices that remain teacher-centred, and identifying the need for a paradigm shift in teaching towards student-centred learning that is contextual and interactive based on the latest research findings for the years 2020 to 2025.

- a. **Criticism of Traditional Learning Methods.** The PPKn learning methodology, which is still dominant in Indonesian education, is characterised by a strong focus on the teacher. Research conducted by Afkari (2020) reveals that the model of teaching religious tolerance is limited to the transfer of conceptual knowledge without involving students' direct experiences in situations of diversity. Various studies, both domestic and international, show that Indonesia has long faced problems of crisis and inequality in the learning process. Various factors and other issues contribute to this problem. Education that prioritises lecture-based methods and the repetition of concepts tends to result in superficial understanding regarding tolerance. This aligns with recent research findings indicating that text-based approaches without real-world context are ineffective in fostering empathy and cross-cultural communication skills.
- b. **The Negative Consequences of Traditional Learning.** Conventional learning methods that are boring have a negative impact on students' motivation to learn. Research by Woods and Copur-Genctruk (2024) reveals that learning methods that do not involve active student participation hinder the internalisation of values and the shift in the role of teachers from traditional instructors to supportive facilitators. This situation contradicts the goal of character education, which expects permanent behavioural change. Outdated and boring learning processes negatively impact students' motivation to learn. Research by Kusuma and Rahman (2023) shows that Civic Education (PPKn) that does not involve active student participation hinders the understanding of tolerance values and fails to produce the desired behavioural changes. This situation contradicts the goals of character education, which seeks sustainable behavioural changes. Research by Handayani et al. (2021) highlights that conventional learning methods are unsuccessful in improving the social skills needed in a diverse society. Students do not have the opportunity to practise interfaith communication, resolve conflicts, or build intergroup collaboration. As a result, when faced with diversity in real life, they do not have the skills to respond with tolerance and constructiveness.

- c. **Conceptual Framework for an Efficient Tolerance Learning Model.** Based on a systematic literature review by Aminah and Sari (2022), the application of student-centred learning in civic education shows significant and positive results in the development of tolerance. An efficient interfaith tolerance learning model must be designed based on four main principles:
 - 1) **Interactivity:** Wulandari's 2021 study revealed that student-centred teaching methods emphasise the importance of active participation by learners and tailor teaching techniques to meet the needs of each individual, which in turn increases engagement in tolerance education.
 - 2) **Contextuality:** The learning process is linked to the reality of diversity among students, as explained in a 2023 study by Nuraini et al. on the application of tolerance values in civic education.
 - 3) **Active Involvement:** Research conducted by Fitriani and Dewi in 2022 on the influence of active learning methods on tolerance emphasises the importance of students' role as active individuals in the learning process.
 - 4) **Reflection:** Critical thinking processes related to learning experiences are key elements for internalising values in student-centred learning environments, as explained in Wahyuni's 2021 study.
- d. **Components of an Integrated Learning Model.** A learning model that supports tolerance must cover three interrelated areas:
 - 1) **Cognitive Component:** Knowledge of tolerance concepts, information about religious diversity, and understanding of the consequences of intolerance. Research by Hasanah and Utomo (2022) shows that the cognitive aspect is the foundation for learning tolerance, which combines information, understanding, and sharp analysis of various phenomena of diversity.
 - 2) **Affective Component:** Development of empathy, appreciation of diversity, and respect for the rights of minority groups through relevant learning experiences. Research by Indrawati (2021) emphasises the importance of the affective component in instilling values of tolerance.
 - 3) **Psychomotor Component:** The ability to communicate across cultures, resolve conflicts, and collaborate between groups is gained through direct experience, Rahayu et al. (2023).
 - 4) **Modern Implementation Strategies**

The implementation of a tolerance education model requires a comprehensive approach that incorporates the latest research findings.

1. **Development of an Inclusive Curriculum:** Incorporating a multi-religious perspective into Civic Education (PPKn) materials using a responsive approach (Suryani dan Fauzi.2023).
2. **Teacher Skill Development:** Training on tolerance education and diversity management with a focus on the teacher's role as a learning facilitator (Marlina.2022)
3. **Creating a Supportive Environment:** Developing an inclusive environment through the use of educational technology that supports student-centred learning (Anggraeni et al, 2021)
4. **Collaboration with Stakeholders:** Cooperation with families, religious communities, and civil society in building an educational ecosystem that supports tolerance. Therefore, tolerance-based learning models require an evaluation system that not only measures cognitive achievement but also changes in students' attitudes and behaviour in the context of diversity.
5. **Assessment System and Continuous Development.** The student-centred approach is gaining recognition, but there are still gaps in studies on its impact. An effective evaluation system

should include formative and summative assessments, self-assessment and peer assessment, as well as long-term evaluation to assess the sustainability of attitude change. The results of this assessment should be used as a basis for continuous improvement and development of learning models. The transformation of the PPKn learning model from a traditional paradigm to a more interactive, contextual, and reflective student-centred learning approach is an urgent need to create effective interfaith tolerance.

A learning model that integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects with a comprehensive implementation approach and is supported by educational technology can be an alternative for developing tolerant attitudes among Indonesia's younger generation. However, the implementation of this model requires the full commitment of all education stakeholders and continuous evaluation to ensure its effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

Indonesia, as a country rich in diversity, faces serious challenges related to religious intolerance, particularly in the world of education. This issue highlights the failure of the education system to instill the values of diversity that should be the nation's potential. The root causes of intolerance in schools can be traced back to several key factors, including a weak understanding of the values of Pancasila, the unbalanced influence of social media, a lack of positive dialogue between religious groups, and limitations in teachers' ability to handle diversity. In this context, the subject of Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) is crucial as a tool for fostering tolerant character. PPKn not only teaches about tolerance but also develops empathy and the ability to interact with people from various religious backgrounds through an approach that encompasses cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. However, traditional teaching methods that still rely on lectures and memorisation are clearly ineffective in achieving these goals. Therefore, there is a need to shift towards student-centred, interactive, and contextual learning methods that also involve direct experiences with diversity. Building effective interfaith tolerance requires a comprehensive approach that includes developing an inclusive curriculum, improving teacher skills, creating a supportive school environment, and collaborating with various parties, such as families and communities. In essence, creating religious tolerance among students requires a fundamental change in the approach to education from simply conveying information to truly appreciating and coexisting with differences.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Afkari, S. (2020). Model Nilai Toleransi Beragama Dalam Proses Pembelajaran di SMAN 8 Kota Batam. Yayasan Salaman Pekanbaru Riau.
- Aminah, S. (2022). Systematic Review: Student-Centered Learning dalam Pembelajaran PPKn untuk Pembentukan Karakter. *Educational Research Journal*, 5(3), 234-248.
- Anggraeni, D. W. (2021). Teknologi Pendidikan dalam Menciptakan Lingkungan Belajar Inklusif. *Educational Technology Review*, 4(2), 78-92.
- Anggraini, R. A. (2024). Upaya Guru PPKn dalam Menanamkan sikap Toleransi Siswa Pasca COVID-19 di SMA Negeri 1 Pancur Batu. *Jurnal Review Pendidikan dan Pengajaran*, 7(4).
- Ari, M. A. (2023). Dampak Penggunaan Media Sosial Terhadap Sikap Toleransi Siswa Di Sma Nation Star Academy Surabaya. *Edu Learning: Journal of Education and Learning*, 2(1), 126-135.
- Che Mat, N. e. (2024). Effectiveness of Practices and Application of Student-Centered Teaching and Learning in Primary Schools: A Systematic Literature Review. *Educational Research*, 16(6).

- Diana, F. (2022). Pentingnya konseling lintas agama dan budaya dalam menjaga budaya toleransi di sekolah. *Jurnal Al-Irsyad: Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Islam*, 4(1), 63-76.
- Fitriani, A. (2022). Pengaruh Metode Pembelajaran Aktif terhadap Pembentukan Sikap Toleransi Siswa. *Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan*, 9(3), 178-192.
- Garcia-Penalvo, F. (2023). How are we doing with student-centered learning facilitated by educational technologies? *Education and Information Technologies*, 28(8), 9755-9780.
- Handayani, T. S. (2021). Pengembangan Keterampilan Sosial Melalui Pembelajaran PPKn Berbasis Multikultural. *Jurnal Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan*, 6(2), 89-102.
- Hassan, M. (2023). Student-centered Approach in Teaching and Learning: What Does It Really Mean? *International Journal of Educational Research*, 10(1), 15-32.
- Kusuma, W. (2023). Pengaruh Pembelajaran Partisipatif terhadap Motivasi dan Internalisasi Nilai Toleransi. *Indonesian Journal of Civic Education*, 7(1), 23-35.
- Nuraini, F. H. (2023). Kontekstualisasi Nilai Toleransi dalam Pembelajaran PPKn di Era Digital. *Journal of Civic Education Research*, 4(1), 112-126.
- Pratama, R. S. (2022). Analisis Model Pembelajaran Konvensional PPKn dalam Membentuk Sikap Toleransi Siswa. *Jurnal Civic: Media Kajian Kewarganegaraan*, 19(1), 45-58.
- Saniah, S. H. (2025). Penguatan sikap toleransi di SMK Bina Putra Kabupaten Bandung Barat. *MORES; Jurnal Pendidikan Hukum, Politik, dan Kewarganegaraan*, 7(1), 33-44.
- Sari, D. (2021). Impelementasi Pembelajaran Toleransi Beragama dalam Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan. *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*, 11(2), 156-170.
- Sukmawati, B. H. (2025). Peran guru PPKn dalam menginternalisasi nilai toleransi beragama di SMPN 2 Sekongkang. *JPG: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru*, 6(2), 220-229.
- Vipul Bhardwaj, S. Z. (2025). Redefining learning: student-centered strategies for academic and personal growth. *Frontiers in Education*.
- Wahyuni, E. (2021). Refleksi Kritis dalam Pembelajaran Toleransi: Sebuah Pendekatan Student-Centered. *Jurnal Refleksi Edukatif*, 11(1), 45-59.
- Woods, A. &-G. (2024). Redefining Learning: student-centered strategies for academic and personal growth. *Frontiers in Education*, 10.
- Wulandari, D. (2021). Efektivitas Learner-Centered Teaching dalam Pembelajaran Toleransi Beragama. *Jurnal Pendidikan Multikultural*, 8(2), 67-81.