

## Implementation of Tolerance Character Education: a Comparative Study of Indonesian and Danish Elementary Schools

Erika Prihastanti<sup>1</sup>, Muhamad Taufik Hidayat<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Elementary School Teacher Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Surakarta, Indonesia

### Abstract

*Purpose:* The purpose of this research is to analyse and compare the implementation of tolerance character education, which consists of elements of appreciation and respect, recognising rights, and providing freedom in elementary schools in Indonesia and Denmark.

*Methodology:* This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a comparative literature review design. The methodology involves searching for relevant data sources and sorting the gathered information. Data analysis comprises collecting, reducing, presenting, and drawing conclusions from the data. The author employs various validation techniques to ensure data validity, including check and recheck methods, collaboration with other researchers, and source triangulation.

*Results:* The research findings reveal several key points: (1) in both Indonesia and Denmark, tolerance education is implemented through various methods, including debate learning activities, religious education, students' freedom to celebrate holidays, active group discussions, and role-playing activities. (2) in Indonesia, tolerance is particularly emphasised within citizenship education. Additionally, it is integrated into daily habits such as praying and shaking hands, cultural tourism visits, and literacy activities. (3) conversely, in Denmark, the implementation of tolerance character education places a strong emphasis on direct experiential learning. This involves presenting examples of concrete problems and teaching the concept of *hygge* living, which promotes living together peacefully by engaging in simple activities that foster respect and harmony.

*Applications/Originality/Value:* This research undertakes a comparative analysis of tolerance character education in Indonesian and Danish elementary schools through a literature review study method.

### Introduction Section

Tolerance can be conceptualised as an attitude characterised by understanding and positively embracing diversity. It is demonstrated through one's ability to relate well to others, show mutual respect, and refrain from judging individuals based on their backgrounds. In societal contexts, tolerance fosters a sense of unity, preserves harmony, and cultivates a peaceful and tranquil environment, thereby mitigating conflicts arising from differences. Consequently, tolerance is deemed paramount for fostering a harmonious coexistence.

Conversely, the absence of tolerance can engender divisiveness and catalyse intolerant behaviours. Intolerance breeds societal divisions, exacerbating conflicts between majority and minority groups, often resulting in discriminatory practices. Additionally, prejudiced attitudes may fuel speculation, precipitating social conflicts and issues of racism, ultimately contributing to the proliferation of radicalism.

According to Aeni (2021), fostering a disposition of tolerance as a life asset entails nurturing commendable character and morals and enhancing one's quality within familial and societal spheres. Cultivating tolerance is not merely an innate trait but a developmental process that involves several stages, beginning with reflection, contemplation, evaluation, and discernment of the merits and demerits of one's actions. Establishing a tolerant mindset necessitates the creation of a supportive environment devoid of conflicts or divisions perpetuated by detrimental external influences.

Implementing a tolerant attitude still faces challenges, with many individuals exhibiting intolerant behaviours, including within school environments. Wardah (2023) highlighted that survey data from the SETARA Institute indicates a 5% increase in the active intolerant student group category compared to previous surveys. Concerning the hijab, 61.1% expressed a preference for all female students to wear the hijab at school, while 25.6% regarded religions or beliefs different from their own as heretical. Similarly, research by Bayukarizki (2021) revealed that Presidential Instruction 22 at Wozi Elementary School in Manokwari prohibited female students from wearing the hijab due to the dominance of non-Muslims in the school. Furthermore, data from the Indonesian Survey Institute (2023) indicated that 7.4% of Indonesians harbour dislike towards individuals of Chinese ethnicity. Mandayu (2020) elucidated in his study that differences in backgrounds, such as ethnicity, race, and social class, can contribute to intolerant behaviours.

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\* Corresponding author: [mt.hidayat@ums.ac.id](mailto:mt.hidayat@ums.ac.id)

Additionally, according to Majid (2022), the director of Prevention at the National Counter-Terrorism Agency (BNPT), Ahmad Nurwakhid, reported that 33 million Indonesians are susceptible to radicalism. This corroborates research by Hadisaputra and Amaliasyah (2020), underscoring how intolerance poses a threat and serves as a catalyst for radicalism amid diverse societies. Such behaviours reflect an unwillingness to embrace diversity and demonstrate intolerance towards differences.

Several studies on tolerance character education have offered insights into Danish and Indonesian contexts. Thobroni et al. (2021) reported that character education in Denmark prioritises the development of personality traits and underscores the significance of children learning to coexist harmoniously and embrace diversity. Furthermore, Sukestiyarno et al. (2019) revealed that Denmark's character education system integrates play-based learning approaches, leveraging curriculum and digital resources.

In the Indonesian context, Zaenuri and Siti Fatonah (2022) proposed adopting tolerance through the *PPKn* (Civic Education) learning process, aligning it with the values enshrined in the Pancasila Principles. Additionally, Risdianto et al. (2020) identified indicators of tolerance competence among students, including the ability to appreciate diversity, give and receive appreciation, recognise tolerant and intolerant behaviours, and resolve conflicts peacefully.

Exploring the scope of tolerance, Bayu et al. (2022) delineated various forms of tolerance, encompassing religious patience, social tolerance, and cultural acceptance. Meanwhile, Hadisaputra and Amaliasyah (2020) categorised the implementation of tolerance education based on performance locations, including schools, youth communities, and families. On the other hand, Komalasari and Saripudin (2017) expounded on the reflective dimensions of tolerance, highlighting themes such as peace and respect for individuals, facilitating opportunities for dismantling stigmas associated with nationality, religion, and inherited traits.

Based on this elucidation, delving deeper into the application of tolerance character education becomes imperative. Further research on tolerance character education in Indonesia and Denmark remains essential. Against this backdrop, this study aims to unveil the implementation of tolerance education in elementary schools across Indonesia and Denmark. The insights gleaned from this research hold significant implications, particularly for educators in Indonesia and beyond, facilitating the discovery of pragmatic solutions to the issues under scrutiny.

## Literature review

### ***Tolerance Character Education***

#### *The Essence of the Concept of Tolerance*

Tolerance embodies respect, acceptance, and appreciation for cultural diversity, manifesting human attitudes and conduct. This disposition is shaped by knowledge, openness, effective communication, and preserving freedom (Abdulatif & Dewi, 2021). Similarly, as posited by Nurdin & Nugroho (2021), tolerance is characterised by an attitude of understanding and positive adaptation, evident in one's ability to foster positive relationships and demonstrate mutual respect, appreciation, and compassion towards others. Conversely, Asminah (2019) defines tolerance as a fusion of cultural, religious, and behavioural elements to combat discrimination against any societal group. Thus, tolerance signifies an ethos of comprehension and acceptance of cultural plurality, demonstrated through mutual respect and care among individuals.

#### *Elements of Tolerance*

Research by Komalasari and Saripudin (2017) delineates the reflective aspects of tolerance, encapsulating peace, openness, and respect for individuals. Yalni and Faisal (2021) further elaborate on tolerance encompassing respect for diverse beliefs, acknowledgement of everyone's rights, acceptance of differences, mindfulness, and sincerity. Abdulatif and Dewi (2021) posit that the essence of tolerance embodies values such as appreciation, respect for others' rights, and the celebration of diversity. Conversely, Hidayah (2021) emphasises the significance of patience as a virtue, advocating for attitudes and behaviours that honour differences in opinion, religion, ethnicity, cultural background, and individual dispositions. Thus, the synthesis of these perspectives underscores the elements of tolerance, which include respect for diversity, acknowledgement of individual rights, fostering peaceful coexistence, and ensuring freedom irrespective of background.

#### *Types of Tolerance*

Effendi et al. (2021) classify tolerance into three distinct types: political, religious, and cultural. Additionally, Bayu et al. (2022) elaborate on the varied forms of tolerance based on their scope, categorising them as religious, social, and cultural. Similarly, Nurdin and Nugroho (2021) assert that the manifestations of tolerance encompass religious and social dimensions. Hence, the types of Tolerance span across religious, cultural, social, and political, as delineated by the research findings.

## ***Tolerance Factors***

Fithriyana (2020) identifies several factors that influence tolerance, including the stages of individual development, personality type, needs, personal experiences, understanding, and imitation and behaviour. Similarly, Abdulatif and Dewi (2021) highlight that tolerance evolves within religious and cultural diversity, encompassing the associated habits, traditions, or customs. Zaenuri and Siti Fatonah (2022) also elaborate on factors influencing tolerance, such as religion, social norms, education, parenting, and teachers. Thus, the factors shaping tolerance comprise direct experiences and individual understanding, diversity and traditions, education and parental guidance, and psychological aspects.

## ***Cultivating Tolerance***

Cultivating tolerance involves fostering a harmonious environment devoid of external influences that may lead to conflict or division, as noted by Abiyuna (2022). Implementing tolerance in schools can adopt a humanistic approach to accommodate students' diverse differences, as Mumin (2018) proposed. Furthermore, Zaenuri and Siti Fatonah (2022) advocate for instilling tolerance values through the civic education (PPKn) process, which is tailored to the principles of Pancasila. In line with this, Bayu et al. (2022) highlight teachers' role in promoting tolerance by avoiding discrimination among students and encouraging them to practice their religious beliefs freely. Thus, fostering student tolerance involves creating a supportive environment, embracing diversity, aligning education with Pancasila principles, and adopting a humanistic pedagogical approach.

## ***Expert Theory***

In the research "A Theory of Tolerance" by Corneo & Jeanne (2007), the theory posits that tolerance is fostered within a societal framework that promotes symbiotic coexistence. Tolerant individuals embrace diverse values and exhibit a readiness to adapt to change.

## **Method**

### ***Type and Design***

This qualitative descriptive research employs a literature review method, specifically a comparative literature review approach. The study delves into the cultivation of tolerance attitudes within elementary schools, contrasting practices between Indonesia and Denmark. Emphasising the value of tolerance, the research highlights the importance of appreciating and respecting differences, recognising the rights of all individuals, and promoting freedom irrespective of one's background.

### ***Data and Data Sources***

The data utilised in this research comprises secondary sources such as written materials and notes extracted from video clips sourced from online journal articles, website articles, and YouTube videos. The data search was conducted across various platforms, including Scopus, ERIC, Google, and YouTube, and focused on information about tolerance cultivation in Indonesia and Denmark. Scopus and ERIC were selected for their accessibility and credibility. Additionally, Google and YouTube were utilised to broaden the scope of information and enhance the comprehensiveness of the research.

### ***Data collection technique***

#### ***Literature Search***

The research data collection process involved searching literature using various platforms. Firstly, Scopus was utilised with keywords such as "tolerance AND in Danish," "multicultural AND tolerance," "implementation AND tolerance AND Indonesia AND elementary school," and "tolerance AND education AND in AND Indonesian AND primary AND schools." Secondly, ERIC was employed with keywords including "hygge culture in Denmark" and "tolerance implementation in Indonesia." Thirdly, the Google website was explored using keywords like "Understanding tolerance for children in Denmark," "Hygge in Denmark," "Folkestone in Denmark," "primary school website in Denmark," "teachers' efforts to instil an attitude of tolerance in elementary schools," and "tolerance program in elementary schools." Lastly, YouTube was searched using keywords such as "instilling tolerance in Denmark" and "Primary school education in Denmark."

#### ***Data Sorting***

The data sorting process begins by meticulously reviewing the findings obtained through repeated readings, aided by online search engine sites like Google and Google Scholar. Researchers then manually sort the data according to established criteria. These criteria specifically pertain to cultivating an attitude of Tolerance in Indonesia and Denmark.

### **Data Validity**

To validate the data, the author employs several techniques. Firstly, they apply the principle of persistence or check and recheck by repeatedly reviewing the findings. Secondly, they cross-reference their findings with those of other researchers. Additionally, they utilise triangulation of sources by comparing data from various sources such as online journal articles, articles from Google websites, and YouTube videos.

### **Data analysis**

As Huberman and Miles (1994) outlined, the data analysis process involves several stages: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. Initially, the author gathered data from various sources, including written materials and video clips. Subsequently, the data was reduced by summarising and highlighting key elements relevant to the comparative analysis. The factors under investigation encompassed attitudes of respect for differences, recognition of rights, and provision of freedom irrespective of background. Following data reduction, the results were presented by categorising them into a table format using an Excel file. Finally, conclusions were drawn by comparing the similarities and differences in tolerance elements between Indonesia and Denmark, as illustrated in the table and providing a succinct overview of the comparative findings.

## **Discussion Result**

Cultivating tolerance character education in Indonesia and Denmark has several similarities and differences. The comparison results can be seen in [Table 1](#).

**Table 1.** Comparison Results of Cultivating Tolerance in Indonesia and Denmark.

<b>Elements Researched</b>	<b>Tolerance Education in Indonesia</b>	<b>Tolerance Education in Denmark</b>
Value & Respect Differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lessons on the themes of respect, courtesy, and good listening</li> <li>- Drama performance program</li> <li>- With a handshake habituation program</li> <li>- With a sports week program</li> <li>- With religious learning</li> <li>- Through the habit of praying together every day</li> <li>- With a class outing at a cultural venue</li> <li>- By learning debate</li> <li>- Teachers motivate to appreciate their friends' abilities</li> <li>- With discussion (cooperative learning)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- With debate meetings with politicians</li> <li>- Taught how to ask questions well and politely</li> <li>- Learning the topic "Campaign for Diversity."</li> <li>- Emphasise the rules of order</li> <li>- With religious learning</li> <li>- Through role-play and discussions about racism</li> <li>- Taught the concept of hygge living</li> <li>- Through empathy classes</li> <li>- students who work in groups are given challenges</li> <li>- Teaching children to recognise and accept emotions</li> </ul>
Recognising Everyone's Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using character film media</li> <li>- Teachers emphasise the principle of equality in teaching children</li> <li>- With a literacy culture</li> <li>- Through the Indonesian National Week program</li> <li>- Students display typical religious holiday celebrations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- With "Dilemma Games" or making decisions</li> <li>- With anti-bullying strategies</li> <li>- With the "Rights Week" program from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)</li> <li>- Students are taught social skills not to discriminate against friends</li> <li>- Students are taught the laws of Jante</li> <li>- Children are taught empathy</li> </ul>

	- With multicultural education	- With an after-school program
	- By taking part in big holiday celebrations	- Through health and sexuality education
Providing	- With a charity raising program	
Freedom	- Collaborative learning	- Freedom to celebrate religious holidays, cultural festivals
Regardless of	- Freedom to showcase talent	- Collaborative learning
Background	- With painting and decorating activities together in class	- Freedom to dress comfortably while at school
	- With extracurricular activities	- With debate meetings with politicians
	- By learning debate	

### ***Cultivating Tolerance in Indonesia***

In Jakarta elementary schools, several methods are employed to foster respect for surrounding cultures. For instance, class outings to cultural sites are organised to instil an appreciation for diverse cultural heritage (Rachmadtullah et al., 2020). Additionally, at Mempawah Regency Elementary School, students learn to respect differences of opinion through debate lessons, with teachers motivated to encourage this mindset (Rachmadtullah et al., 2020).

Instilling an attitude of recognising everyone's rights in elementary school children is approached through various criteria. At SD Jakarta, character education incorporates character film media, such as "Upin & Ipin," to impart important values (Zakiah et al., 2023). Secondly, at Purba Adhi Sutha Elementary School in Purbalingga, teachers emphasise equality in teaching regular and special needs children (Harnum & Widiastuti, 2019). Thirdly, at Nangheledei Elementary School in Sikka, students are taught the right to peace through a culture of literacy (Hero, 2021). Lastly, SDS Kupu-Kupu in Jakarta recognises the right to showcase cultural identity through programs such as the Indonesian National Week and religious holiday celebrations (Sdskupukupu, 2022).

Instilling an attitude of giving freedom regardless of background to elementary school children is approached through various criteria. Firstly, at the Republic of Indonesia Christian Education Agency (BOPKRI) Elementary School in Yogyakarta, students understand freedom regardless of background through Multicultural Education (Wahyono et al., 2022). Secondly, at Nangheledei Elementary School in Sikka, students are taught the freedom to participate in religious holiday celebrations (Hero, 2021). Thirdly, SDS Kupu-Kupu in Jakarta allows students to assist with charity-raising programs and display their talents through art day programs (Sdskupukupu, 2022). Fourthly, at a Private Elementary School in Bandung, freedom is promoted equally through collaborative learning (Al-Ansori, 2018). Fifthly, at Purba Adhi Sutha Elementary School in Purbalingga, students can display their talents through end-of-year art activities (Harnum & Widiastuti, 2019). Sixthly, at Jakarta Elementary School, students have the freedom of choice with extracurricular activities (Juwita et al., 2018). Lastly, at Mempawah Regency Elementary School, freedom of opinion is taught through debate lessons (Rachmadtullah et al., 2020).

### ***The Cultivation of Tolerance in Denmark***

Instilling an attitude of respect for differences in elementary school children is approached through various criteria:

1. At Øresund International Primary School in Copenhagen, students learn respect through activities such as "debate meetings with politicians," showing respect for older individuals by asking questions kindly, and participating in learning sessions on the topic of "campaign for diversity" (Ois, 2017).
2. At Jinnah International Primary School in Copenhagen, respect is emphasised through adherence to rules of order, and students receive education about religion from grades 1-9 (Jinnahskole, 2019).
3. In Danish schools, students are taught to respect others through role-play lessons and discussions about racism, as Vertelyte and Staunæs (2021) highlighted.
4. Children in Denmark learn to respect themselves and others through *hygge* living, as Nielsen & Ma (2021) noted.
5. Schools in Denmark introduce appreciation for differences through empathy classes, as observed on the Morning Future website (Morningfuture, 2019).
6. Danish children are taught to respect their boundaries by working in groups and recognising and accepting their genuine emotions, according to Alexander & Sandahl (2020).

Instilling an attitude of recognising everyone's rights in elementary school children involves several criteria:

1. At Øresund International Primary School in Copenhagen, students learn to recognise the right to choose through "Dilemma Games" or decision-making exercises (Ois, 2017).
2. As highlighted on its website, Sankt Petri Elementary School emphasises children's rights to a bullying-free childhood through anti-bullying strategies (Sanktpetriskole, 2020).
3. Waldorf International Elementary School teaches students to recognise culture through programs like "UNICEF Rights Week" (Byenssteinerskole, 2019).

4. Students are introduced to remember everyone's rights without discrimination through social skills development, according to Rudan (2019).
5. Children in Denmark are taught to recognise other people's rights through the law of Jante, which emphasises that a person must not consider themselves superior to others, as Nielsen & Ma (2021) noted.
6. Children in Denmark are taught the right to receive equal treatment through an empathetic attitude, with the belief that all family members have the right to be heard, according to Alexander & Sandahl (2020).

Instilling an attitude of giving freedom regardless of background to elementary school children entails several criteria:

1. At Waldorf International Elementary School in Copenhagen, students can choose and engage in activities within the after-school program (Byenssteinerskole, 2019).
2. Jinnah International Primary School teaches students freedom regardless of background through Health and Sexuality Education, where they learn about the impact of lifestyle and gender welfare and are given the freedom to participate in celebrating religious holidays and cultural festivals in Denmark (Jinnahskole, 2019).
3. Øresund International Primary School in Copenhagen instils freedom of opinion in students through activities like "debate meetings with politicians" (Ois, 2017).
4. As highlighted on the Morningfuture website (2019), schools in Denmark provide the freedom to receive equal learning guidance through collaborative learning, which brings together children with various strengths and weaknesses.
5. According to Dalida (2022), students in Denmark can dress comfortably at school, indicating freedom in expressing themselves through attire.

### ***Differences & Similarities in Cultivating Tolerance in Indonesia & Denmark***

#### ***Aspects of respect and appreciation***

Some similarities in the aspects of respect and appreciation between Indonesia and Denmark include:

1. Teaching students to communicate respectfully with older individuals by asking polite questions and being attentive listeners.
2. Emphasising the importance of respecting friends through role-play activities.
3. Both countries incorporate religious education into the curriculum.
4. Implementing debate learning to foster an appreciation for differing opinions among students.
5. Utilising group discussions or cooperative learning methods to encourage mutual respect among students.

On the other hand, some differences in the aspects of respect and appreciation between Indonesia and Denmark are:

1. In Indonesia, respect and tolerance are taught through cultural practices such as handshaking and praying, while in Denmark, Hygge living promotes respect and comfort through simple actions.
2. Indonesia emphasises respect for culture through storytelling and cultural outings, whereas Denmark focuses on diversity campaigns to promote respect regarding gender and sexuality.
3. Teachers in Indonesia motivate students to respect their peers' abilities, while in Denmark, empathy classes are used to cultivate respect through active listening.
4. In Indonesia, respect for individuals regardless of age is fostered through sports week teamwork, while in Denmark, the emphasis is on respecting people regardless of their background through the enforcement of rules.

#### ***The aspect of recognising everyone's rights***

Some similarities in recognising everyone's rights between Indonesia and Denmark are:

1. Both countries emphasise teaching social skills to students, promoting equality to prevent discrimination and ensuring that everyone has the right to receive the same level of learning guidance.
2. Students in both Indonesia and Denmark learn about their cultural rights through dedicated programs such as National Week and Rights Week.

However, there are several differences in the aspect of recognising everyone's rights:

1. In Indonesia, students learn to recognise the rights of individual choices through activities celebrating religious holidays, while in Denmark, they engage in "dilemma games" to practice decision-making.
2. Indonesian students are taught to recognise the right to peaceful school life through film characters and shared literacy culture. In contrast, Danish schools implement anti-bullying strategies, empathetic learning, and teach the Jante law to prevent a superiority complex.

### *Aspects provide freedom regardless of background.*

Some similarities in providing freedom regardless of background between Indonesian and Danish schools include:

1. Both actively celebrate various religious holidays to demonstrate the freedom for students to participate in activities related to different religions, regardless of their background.
2. Teachers in both countries implement collaborative learning approaches, allowing students from diverse backgrounds to receive equal learning guidance.
3. Students in both Indonesia and Denmark are encouraged to express their opinions freely through debate learning activities.

However, there are several differences in this aspect:

1. In Indonesia, multicultural learning promotes freedom regardless of location, while in Denmark, Health and Sexuality Education focuses on lifestyle impacts, living conditions, and rights, emphasising health and gender welfare.
2. Indonesian students showcase their talents and engage in charity-raising programs, while Danish students are free to dress as they please, including not wearing uniforms.
3. In Indonesia, students engage in extracurricular activities and class decoration projects, while in Denmark, students have after-school programs to exercise their freedom.

## **Conclusion**

This research provides valuable insights into implementing tolerance education in Indonesia and Denmark, focusing on respect and appreciation, recognising everyone's rights, and providing freedom regardless of background. However, it also acknowledges several limitations that future research could address. Firstly, relying on data sources primarily from Google and YouTube websites may limit the depth and breadth of the information gathered. Future studies could benefit from accessing more data sources, including academic databases and government reports. Secondly, focusing only on three aspects of tolerance education may overlook other important dimensions. Future research could explore additional elements of tolerance to provide a more comprehensive understanding of its implementation in different contexts. Lastly, the language barrier, particularly in accessing Danish-language sources, may have restricted the scope of the study. Future research could involve language experts or collaborate with researchers fluent in Danish to overcome this limitation and provide a more nuanced analysis. In light of these limitations, the research suggests two practical recommendations. Firstly, policymakers in Indonesia could consider developing specific policies aligned with the UNICEF Children's Rights Convention to promote tolerance education in schools. Secondly, elementary school teachers could enhance character education by incorporating more direct learning approaches and fostering empathy through simple yet impactful activities.

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