

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE Elementary School Teachers' Understanding of Multicultural Education in Yogyakarta

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Abstract

This study is about multicultural education and religious tolerance in the midst of increasing religious intolerance in the educational environment. This study analyses elementary school teachers' understanding of multicultural education and its implementation. The research method is a case study in the city of Yogyakarta, chosen because it is both known as a city of education and because this city has declared it a tolerant city. The results showed that the understanding of elementary school teachers' multicultural education is generally essentialist, but some were constructivist or anti-essentialist. The attitudes and actions of elementary school teachers, both consciously and unconsciously, may also include religious intolerance. One of the factors that distinguishes the content of religious tolerance and intolerance among elementary school teachers is their attitudes and actions towards local cultural principles. The higher the appreciation of local culture, the greater amount of religious tolerance. Further, when appreciation of local cultural traditions is low, it is more likely that a teacher is intolerant of other religions.

[Tulisan ini membahas pendidikan multikultural dan toleransi beragama ditengah meningkatnya intoleransi di lingkungan pendidikan. Fokus tulisan ini adalah pemahaman guru sekolah dasar mengenai pendidikan multikultural dan implementasinya dengan studi kasus di kota Yogyakarta, karena kota

ini adalah kota pendidikan dan mendeklarasikan sebagai kota toleran. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa pemahaman guru sekolah dasar mengenai pendidikan multikultur cenderung esensialis, tapi beberapa yang lain anti esensialis atau konstruktif. Sikap dan perilaku mereka baik sadar atau tidak sadar, mengandung kecenderungan intoleransi. Salah satu faktor yang membedakan muatan toleransi dan intoleransi diantara guru tersebut adalah sikap dan perilaku pada prinsip budaya lokal. Apresiasi tinggi pada budaya lokal adalah terbesar dalam toleransi beragama. Lebih lanjut, jika apresiasi pada tradisi lokal rendah, ini berarti guru tersebut cenderung intoleran pada agama lain.]

Keywords: Multicultural education, religious tolerance and intolerance, diversity, local tradition

A. Introduction

In the last two decades, the issue of strengthening religion-based identity in the dynamics of social and political life in Indonesia has become increasingly important. This tendency results from changes in the political system from the authoritarian New Order era to a democratic political system.¹ A country undergoing a democratic transition logically provides space for free expression by diverse ethnic and religious groups.² The rise of strengthening religious identity has long been awaited by the political Islam movement which was under pressure during the New Order era.³ Sociologically, such development causes a shift from class conflict to identity conflict.⁴

One of the role conflicts in Yogyakarta that has recently occurred is the incidents of intolerance of local beliefs, namely the sea alms

¹ Sugeng Bayu Wahyono, "Kejawanan dan Keislaman: Satu Pertarungan Identitas", *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2001), pp. 41–59.

² For more complete description of ethnic conflicts in Indonesia's democratic transition see Gerry van Klinken, *Communal Violence and Democratization in Indonesia: Small Town Wars* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

³ M.C. Ricklefs, *Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java: A Political, Social, Cultural and Religious History, c. 1930 to the Present* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2012).

⁴ Kimberly A. Maynard, *Healing Communities in Conflict: International Assistance in Complex Emergencies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

ceremony on the Baru beach, Bantul, Jogjakarta, which was damaged by mobs riding motorbikes. The group vandalized these artifacts confused and traumatized residents and the committee who were busy preparing for the sea alms event.⁵ Such strengthening of religion-based identity is also reflected in the dynamics of socio-cultural life in Yogyakarta. Along with the looser space for expression after the end of the New Order, some groups under the pretext of Islamic religious identity have been emboldened. Muhammadiyah, one of the religious organizations that originated in Yogyakarta, is increasingly showing its strength by dominating the education and health sectors. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is also strengthening its role in socio-political life, using the institution of pesantren to propel itself. In addition to the two largest religious organizations, in Yogyakarta, there are also various Islamic educational institutions that run schools from kindergarten to higher education, such as Al Azhar, Budi Mulia, Global Islamic School, and the Integrated Islamic Elementary School.

Meanwhile, since the era of the Dutch East Indies government, the city of Yogyakarta has been a centre for pioneering Christian educational institutions. Several schools managed by Christian foundations, both Catholic and Protestant, have sprung up in Yogyakarta. Some that are quite popular include Bopkri Elementary School (SD), Kalam Kudus Elementary School, Budya Wacana Elementary School, Bopkri Junior High School, Budya Wacana, Pangudi Luhur, and others. At the tertiary educational level in Yogyakarta, there are Atmajaya University, Duta Wacana University, Sanata Dharma University, and others.

In the socio-religious relations that have developed among the people of Yogyakarta, there are also symptoms of the waning of tolerant and egalitarian characteristics. The people of Yogyakarta used to always adhere to the principle of *tepa selira* (tolerance), but now this tolerance appears to be fading. Now in Yogyakarta more and more boarding houses only accept Muslims, and the rejection of prospective non-Muslim boarding houses is clearly displayed in the yards of houses in urban

⁵ “4 Fakta Perusakan Sedekah Laut di Bantul, 9 Orang Diperiksa hingga Makna Sedekah Laut”, KOMPAS.com (15 Oct 2018), <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2018/10/15/18165571/4-fakta-perusakan-sedekah-laut-di-bantul-9-orang-diperiksa-hingga-makna>, accessed 14 Apr 2021.

villages. Some places have even openly called themselves Darul Islam settlements or housing. The social life of the people of Yogyakarta is increasingly insular by the solidifying strong religious identity because Christians have responded with the same tendency toward exclusion. A fertile habitat for the blossoming of tolerance that was previously nurtured by the Javanese spirit and principles such as *tepa selira*, *ajur-ajer*, *lembah-manah*, and *rukun*,⁶ all of which leads to a situation of harmony or a state of *tatatentrem*,⁷ feels increasingly barren. These barriers have also penetrated the transcendental realm, where some residents of Yogyakarta have begun to question that village-based tombs were replaced with religious similarities.

For example, some tombstones displaying crucifixes at the Bethesda Cemetery, in Caturtunggal village, Depok, Yogyakarta, were removed by an unknown vandal.⁸ Christian tombs have also been destroyed in Magelang, Central Java, where as many as twelve tombs were vandalized, and the crucifixes on eleven Christian tombs were destroyed at the Giriloyo Public Cemetery (TPU) in Magelang, Central Java. The vandalism is thought to have been carried out the day after Christmas.⁹ Meanwhile, there have also been incidents of social intolerance in Yogyakarta. Slamet Jumiarto was expelled by residents and village officials of Pleret Bantul Yogyakarta because he is a Christian. In that village, there is a rule that non-Muslims are prohibited from living there. As a result of the regulation, Slamet had to rent a new house somewhere that did not have any regulations like in the Karet hamlet.¹⁰

⁶ Franz Magnis-Suseno, *Etika Jawa: Sebuah Analisa Falsafi tentang Kebijaksanaan Hidup Jawa* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1988).

⁷ P.M. Laksono, *Tradisi dalam Struktur Masyarakat Jawa Kerajaan dan Pedesaan: Alib-ubah Model Berpikir Jawa* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1985).

⁸ “7 Fakta soal Perusakan Nisan Salib di Makam Bethesda di Yogyakarta”, *kumparan* (7 Apr 2019), <https://kumparan.com/tugujogja/7-fakta-soal-perusakan-nisan-salib-di-makam-bethesda-di-yogyakarta-1qq47l5x0Wm>, accessed 4 Dec 2021.

⁹ Mehulika Sitepu, “Lagi, Perusakan Makam: Apakah Ini Tanda Intoleransi?”, *BBC News Indonesia* (3 Jan 2019), <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-46700438>, accessed 12 Dec 2021.

¹⁰ Pradito Rida Pertana, “Perbedaan Agama Membuat Slamet Ditolak Tinggal di Dusun Karet Bantul”, *detiknews* (2 Apr 2019), <https://news.detik.com/berita-jawa-tengah/d-4494241/perbedaan-agama-membuat-slamet-ditolak-tinggal-di-dusun-karet>

An NGO that focuses on advocating for democracy, political freedom, and human rights, the Setara Institute, has concluded that the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) is one of the top 10 provinces with the highest number of cases of intolerance of freedom of religion/belief (KBB) in Indonesia. DIY occupies the sixth position with 37 cases. According to the Research Director of the Setara Institute, Halili, these facts indicate that intolerance in Yogyakarta is real.¹¹ This fact is ironic considering Yogyakarta's declaration as the city of tolerance.

This has also permeated school along with the priyayi santrinizasi of the education bureaucracy. Currently, schools in Yogyakarta are no longer inclusive, with a national perspective, but rather have moved to religious exclusivity. Call it an example of the phenomenon of hijabisasi among school students, who tend to be conditioned by bureaucratic policies.¹² In Kabupaten Gunung Kidul and apparently Kabupaten Bantul as well, schoolchildren are required to wear school uniforms that are marked by religion and no longer refer to plural national values.

Meanwhile, the results of a national survey by the Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta 2018, show that opinions among teachers at various levels from kindergarten to high school include high levels of intolerance and radicalism. The result shows that the intolerant opinion is 59.38 percent. This is almost the same as the national figure of 57.03 percent. There are opinions of intolerance and radical opinions of teachers at all levels of education nationally, and the numbers are quite high. However, the intolerant views are different. For DIY, for example, as many as 59.38 percent of teachers support the establishment of an

bantul, accessed 12 Dec 2021.

¹¹ Rio Apinino, "Intoleransi di Yogyakarta Meningkat 5 Tahun Terakhir, Kata Setara", *tirto.id* (25 Nov 2019), <https://tirto.id/intoleransi-di-yogyakarta-meningkat-5-tahun-terakhir-kata-setara-emig>, accessed 12 Dec 2021.

¹² Fauzan, "Polemik 3 Sekolah Negeri, Bikin Aturan Siswa Wajib Berpakaian Muslim", *liputan6.com* (26 Jun 2019), <https://www.liputan6.com/regional/read/3997879/polemik-3-sekolah-negeri-bikin-aturan-siswa-wajib-berpakaian-muslim>, accessed 12 Dec 2021. SD Negeri Karangtengah III Wonosari has issued a circular to every parent whose child will attend school there. Another school is SMP Negeri 8 Yogyakarta, implicitly the religion teacher at the school makes rules that require students to wear Muslim clothing

Islamic State.¹³

The findings of this study are also in line with the results of research by the Alvara Research Center, which found that Indonesian students are increasingly intolerant, and that teachers play a major role in fostering this intolerance, falling into the trap of the ulama and social media.¹⁴ Based on the findings of the previous study, it becomes clear that school institutions have become an arena for the practice of religious intolerance. In addition, the role of the teacher becomes very important and decisive, because culturally there is a growing view that the teacher is a role model for student behaviour, both in the school environment and outside the school. Since teachers who are socio-culturally still a determining factor in controlling social actions in religious life, it is interesting to know how teachers view, understand, and interpret the concept of multicultural education. Regarding multicultural education itself, there are various definitions formulated by several academics from various perspectives.

According to Banks, multicultural education is a set of educational strategies developed to assist teachers in responding to rapidly changing demographics of their students. It provides students with knowledge about the history, cultures, and contributions of diverse groups and it assumes that the future society is pluralistic.¹⁵ Meanwhile, according to Kislev, this method of teaching has been found to be effective in promoting educational achievements among immigrant students.¹⁶ Gay and Ladson-Billings describe the process of adopting a culturally

¹³ Tomi, "Angka Opini Radikal dan Intoleransi Guru di Yogya Cukup Tinggi", *krjogja.com* (7 Feb 2019), <https://www.krjogja.com/berita-lokal/read/403781/angka-opini-radikal-dan-intoleransi-guru-di-yogya-cukup-tinggi>, accessed 12 Dec 2021.

¹⁴ Mehulika Sitepu, "Enam dari sepuluh guru Muslim 'intoleran', kemajemukan harus masuk penilaian akreditasi", *BBC News Indonesia* (18 Oct 2018), <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-45887762>, accessed 12 Dec 2021.

¹⁵ James A. Banks and Cherry A. McGee Banks (eds.), *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004).

¹⁶ Elyakim Kislev, "The Effect of Education Policies on Higher-Education Attainment of Immigrants in Western Europe: A Cross-classified Multilevel Analysis", *Journal of European Social Policy*, vol. 26, no. 2 (2016), pp. 183–99.

responsive pedagogy in which teachers facilitate the adoption process.¹⁷ Nieto stated that multicultural education is “anti-racist education” that is “an important process for all learners.”¹⁸ Jay and Jones define multicultural education as “a general term used to describe a pluralist type of education” in which “its proponents seek all students receiving an education from pre-school to college.”¹⁹ The National Association of Multicultural Education (NAME) describes multicultural education as “a philosophical concept built on the ideals of freedom, justice, equality, and human dignity.” Rhoads defines this as “mainstream multiculturalism.” The attempt to change mono-cultural institutions into multicultural democratic communities treats cultural diversity as a subject matter and not an attempt to reform the ways of thinking and doing in society. Critical multiculturalism emphasizes the very nature of teaching itself. It is not only involved in discussions of the content and the curriculum but also in defining what the relevant knowledge is. Its purpose is to transform educational institutions and organizational structures to reflect diverse cultures and perspectives.²⁰

Ozturgut, after elaborating on various definitions of multicultural education, emphasizes that efforts to redefine it are necessary. There are many views on the advantages and disadvantages of multicultural education because, for Ozturgut the questions are not how it is adopted. The questions are rather whether we understand what multicultural education is and how we take the initiative to incorporate it into the education system when we cannot even define multiculturalism.²¹ Meanwhile, Martins emphasized that “Self-awareness about the existence of prejudices and stereotypes is the first step in being able to interact

¹⁷ Geneva Gay, “The Importance of Multicultural Education”, *Educational Leadership*, vol. 61, no. 4 (2003), pp. 30–5.

¹⁸ Sonia Nieto, *Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education* (New York: Longman, 1992), p. 307.

¹⁹ Gregory Jay and Sandra Elaine Jones, “Whiteness Studies and the Multicultural Literature Classroom”, *MELUS*, vol. 30, no. 2 (2005), pp. 99–121.

²⁰ Robert A. Rhoads, “Critical Multiculturalism, Border Knowledge, and the Canon: Implications for General Education and the Academy”, *Journal of General Education*, vol. 44, no. 4 (1995), pp. 256–73.

²¹ Osman Özturgut, “Understanding Multicultural Education”, *Current Issues in Education*, vol. 14, no. 2 (2011).

positively and learn from others. In this process lies the essence of multicultural learning.”²² As for O’Donnell, he argues that multicultural learning is a way of teaching that promotes the principles of inclusion, diversity, democracy, skill acquisition, inquiry, critical thought, the value of perspectives, and self-reflection.²³

If in multiculturalism the main goal is to celebrate differences, then multicultural education has the same goals and spirit. According to Levinson, the aims and objectives of multicultural education tend to vary among educational philosophers and liberal political theorists. This form of exposure assists children in thinking more critically, as well as encouraging them to have a more open mindset.²⁴ Meanwhile, according to Banks, political theorists advocate a model of multicultural education that warrants social action. Under such a model, teachers serve as agents of such change, promoting relevant democratic values and empowering students to act.²⁵ Levinson details multicultural education’s other gains and goals: promote civic good; rectify historical records; increase self-esteem of non-mainstream students; increase diversified student exposure; preserve minority group culture; foster children’s autonomy; promote social justice and equity; and enable students to succeed economically in an integrated, multicultural world.

New developments in multiculturalism, both theoretical and empirical, have also affected the world of education. Educational institutions that reinforce differences also offer various problems of social wrongs, such as intolerance based on racial, ethnic, and religious differences. Several theories of multicultural education have also emerged following the increasing tendency to make school institutions an arena for strengthening identities based on cultural differences. The response

²² Isabel Ferreira Martins, “Learning to Live Together: The Contribution of intercultural education”, *European Journal of Education*, vol. 43, no. 2 (2008), pp. 197–206.

²³ Carol O’Donnell, “Commentary”, *Teaching Multicultural Literature . Workshop 1* (22 Apr 2019), <https://web.archive.org/web/20190422103450/http://www.learner.org/workshops/tml/workshop1/commentary.html>, accessed 12 Dec 2021.

²⁴ Meira Levinson, “Mapping Multicultural Education”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Education*, ed. by Harvey Siegel (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), chap. 23.

²⁵ James A. Banks and Cherry A. McGee Banks (eds.), *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2010).

to these problems has prompted various research activities resulting in several theories of multicultural education.

According to James Banks²⁶, there are five dimensions in multicultural education including content integration, the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, an equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture and social structure. Although each dimension is conceptually distinct, in practice they overlap and are interrelated. Following Banks' pronouncement, every teacher needs to be aware and understand and have the ability to integrate multiculturalism into every subject.

Various theories put forward by some of these academics can be used to explain and analyse the teacher's understanding of multicultural education related to the issue of religious tolerance and intolerance. Various facts about religious intolerance in Yogyakarta show that the phenomenon of intolerance is still a serious problem. At the same time, educational institutions, which are strategic social institutions, are also an arena for the practice of religious intolerance. Meanwhile, the city of Yogyakarta, with a stated value of tolerance, is increasingly less able to support the lives of diverse people. Likewise, the image of Yogyakarta as the city of tolerance risks being seen²⁷ only as a slogan and without legitimacy. Therefore, it is interesting to study how the dynamics of the social and cultural life of the people of Yogyakarta are related to educational praxis, especially multicultural education.

This study aims to answer two questions: (1) How elementary school teachers understand multicultural education in the learning process related to the issue of religious tolerance and intolerance and (2) how elementary school teachers implement multicultural education in daily life regarding the practice of religious tolerance and intolerance in Yogyakarta?

As a case study, this research uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study research strategy. A case study, referring to Robert K.

²⁶ James A. Banks, "Multicultural Education: Characteristics and Goals", in *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*, ed. by James A. Banks and Cherry A. McGee Banks (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2010).

²⁷ Yogyakarta city as the city of tolerance was first coined by the Mayor of Yogyakarta, Herry Zudianto together with the Jogja Alliance for Peaceful Indonesia in 2011.

Yin²⁸, is an empirical study that investigates a phenomenon in real-life. This study focuses on the case of teacher activities in understanding and constructing religious-based identities that occur in relation to religious intolerance. The existing data, from observations, interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and document tracking by utilizing sources from the Internet. Online interviews were conducted with 14 subjects, elementary school teachers who teach in several elementary schools chosen for this research. Meanwhile, a one-day FGD was attended by 16 participants, including elementary school teachers and several observers of socio-religious issues. The participants were elementary school teachers from Muhammadiyah Elementary School, Nahdlatul Ulama Elementary School Nogotirto, Bopkri Elementary School, Kanisius Gowongan Elementary School, Mangunan Experimental Kanisius Elementary School, Giwangan Elementary School, and Jogeran Yogyakarta State Elementary School. One of the considerations for choosing a location was the difference in the religious backgrounds based on the foundation that manages them. In addition, some of these schools are equally bound by the national curriculum, which contains lessons on multicultural education.

B. Teachers' Understanding of Multicultural Education

This study uses a qualitative approach, asking about the experiences of elementary school (SD) teachers in understanding multicultural education. Based on their understanding and knowledge, the attitudes of the elementary school teachers toward implementing multicultural education in learning activities at school and the community in their daily lives is vital. It is important to understand that socio-cultural activities in a community as they are implemented in everyday life related to the tasks they carry out. Likewise, the understanding of the concept of multicultural education by elementary school teachers has always been an important factor to see how they implement it in educational activities not only in the school environment but also in society as a socio-cultural environment where religious tolerance is relevant.

Religious tolerance and intolerance of these elementary school

²⁸ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (California: SAGE Publication, 2003).

teachers can be seen in their experiences in their daily activities in social life. Tolerance and intolerance seemed to be revealed when he told his experiences related to the issue of providing religious teachers according to the religion embraced by students, willingness to congratulate on religious holidays, and closeness to local culture, in this case, Javanese culture. The experiences and behaviour of elementary school teachers in religious tolerance were analysed using micro and macro contexts. In the micro context, we see the articulation of the teacher's experience of religious tolerance as reflected in daily events, while in the macro context, we see the teacher's tolerance actions related to various events and issues of tolerance and intolerance on a national and even global scale.

In this study, it was found that elementary school teachers' understanding of multicultural education varied depending on several factors, such as the type of school, the canonical references to the religion they embraced, state ideology, and no less important, local cultural values. Elementary school teachers' understanding of diverse multicultural education also significantly contributes to the formation of their knowledge, attitudes, and actions in implementing religious tolerance, both in their activities at school and in their daily lives. Their understanding, perception, and construction of multicultural education also influence their attitude towards various issues of intolerance in education, such as their unwillingness to congratulate students on holidays of other religions, cynicism towards teachers or students who are not dressed according to religious standards, reacting when some students refuse to play with friends of different religions, and so on.

The type of school influences teachers' understanding of the concept of multicultural education when they formulate their understanding of what multicultural education is. The types of schools here are distinguished according to affiliation with religion, state, and community organizations. Religiously affiliated schools here are only differentiated according to the affiliation of Islam and Christianity. In the city of Yogyakarta, there are 168 elementary schools, both public and private, as seen in the following: Public (90), Islamic religious affiliation (47), Christian religious affiliation (25), Taman Siswa (2), and Other (4).²⁹

²⁹ "Daftar dan Alamat SD di kota Yogyakarta", *temansekolah.com*, <https://temansekolah.com/yogyakarta%20sd.html>, accessed 5 Dec 2021.

The most prevalent are state-owned elementary schools with elementary public schools, followed by elementary schools under Islamic-affiliated foundations elementary schools, then elementary schools under Christian-affiliated foundations. The population in Yogyakarta City, according to 2017 data³⁰, was 422,732 people, and of that number, according to the records of the Population and Civil Registry Office of the Yogyakarta City Government in 2013, around 79 percent are Muslim, 19 percent are Christian, and two percent of other religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. The types of Islamic-affiliated schools include Muhammadiyah Elementary School, Nahdlatul Ulama Elementary School, and Integrated Islamic Elementary School. The elementary schools whose foundations are affiliated with Christianity include Kanisius Elementary School, BOPKRI Elementary School, and Kanisius Experimental Mangunan Elementary School which, although they have been separated from the Christian foundation, still include Kanisius' name. The types of schools formed by community organizations, namely SD Taman Siswa and SD Bhineka Tunggal Ika.

In the view of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), religious teachings in the educational process are based on the teachings of *Alusunnah wal Jamaah*, which contains four principles, namely *tawasuth*, *tawazun*, *tasamuh*, and *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*. Tolerance is based on *tasamuh*, which includes being tolerant of different views, especially in matters of a *furu'iyah* nature, so that feelings of mutual disturbance, mutual hostility, and brotherhood are not created.

On that basis, according to NU elementary school teachers Nuril and Isni, there were no issues if Muslims congratulate people of different religions who are celebrating their holidays, such as Christmas Day for Christians or Nyepi Day for Hindus. NU does not, according to the respondents, allow congratulating followers of other religions is an act of idolatry or even a sin. Anything can be done to everyone, including those of different religions, if it doesn't change *aqidah*, or belief.

The open attitude of the NU Elementary School teachers is also shown in the attitude towards Muslims themselves who are exclusive, such as only accepting Muslim boarding houses, not wanting to go to

³⁰ BPS Kota Yogyakarta, *Kota Yogyakarta dalam Angka* (Yogyakarta: Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Yogyakarta, 2018), p. 76.

hospitals managed by non-Muslim foundations and wanting single-religion cemeteries. In the view of the NU Elementary School teacher, the exclusive attitude of the Muslims themselves is not in accordance with the teachings of NU *Alussunnah wal Jamaah*, which includes tolerance. Although they can understand why exclusionary Muslims are like that, for NU Elementary School teachers, such an attitude is not in accordance with NU values nor with the values of Pancasila, the basic state law of the Republic of Indonesia, which provides for tolerance.

For NU Elementary School teachers, the attitude of some Muslims in Yogyakarta who are not willing to seek treatment at Christian hospitals such as Panti Rapih and Bethesda, for example, was extreme. In NU teachings, for the sake of healing the disease, you don't have to be fanatical, only willing to seek treatment from fellow Muslims or hospitals managed under Islamic foundations such as PKU Muhammadiyah, Islamic Hospitals, and others. For NU residents, healing efforts can occur anywhere, and even in Islamic teachings it is permissible to eat things that are otherwise forbidden for healing efforts, as Nuril said, "Suppose there is a certain sick person whose medicine can only be cured by eating dog meat. Even though dog meat is haram, but if it is for healing purposes and indeed the only way for healing, then eating what is haram is permissible."

Nuril's statement shows that it is permissible for Muslims to seek treatment at medical facilities managed by interfaith foundations. In Nuril and Isni's experience as elementary school teachers at NU, they have also gone to Panti Rapih and Bethesda hospitals, both operated by Christian foundations in Yogyakarta. The two NU elementary school teachers did not agree with the movement in education in Yogyakarta which encouraged Muslims to seek treatment solely at fellow Muslims' hospitals. "This is an extreme act that is intolerant of people of different religions," said Isni.

This tolerant attitude of NU Elementary School teachers was shown when residents of the village near the school died, and some students were invited to express their condolences by attending the homes of grieving residents. When there are specifically religious activities such as mujahadah or sema'an, the teachers and students of SD NU also distribute food from the ceremony to all villagers, including

Christians. “So here we teach students about NU values, in this case, the principle of *tawasuth*, which is not taking extreme positions that are fanatical or liberal, but the middle way,” Isni said.

Meanwhile, among Muhammadiyah Elementary Schools, understanding cultural education comes directly from the values of Muhammadiyah. Muhammadiyah elementary school teachers understand that multicultural education refers to the values of *kemuhammadiyah*, which are rooted in Islamic teachings, namely *aqidah* and *muamalah*. *Aqidah* regulates the relationship between humans and God, while *muamalah* regulates human relations as stipulated in the Islamic canon. Multicultural education is more related to *muamalah*, as stated by Alief Nur Hidayatullah³¹, a teacher at Muhammadiyah Kalasan Elementary School:

In my elementary school, multicultural education was in the realm of *muamalah* because it was related to human relations or *habluminannas*. Accordingly, the matter of tolerance for people of different religions is a matter of cultural behaviour. As long as it does not change *aqidah* or belief, then it is permissible. In elementary school, I was also instilled the values of Muhammadiyah which include Islamic values, sincerity, *tajdid*, cooperation, and the value of caring. Tolerance is in accordance with the value of cooperation and caring, including working with people of different faiths.

According to the acknowledgment of Muhammadiyah elementary school teachers, as conveyed in FGD by Alief Nurhidayatullah, Akbar Fadilah, and Anggy Synta, multicultural education is delivered to students based on “*kemuhammadiyah*” values, which are combined with Pancasila values, both contained in Pancasila education. However, they admit that imparting and instilling the values of Muhammadiyah in students is more intensive, expressed in teaching students to worship according to Islamic teachings including praying regularly, praying in congregation, and contributing to *infaq*. Meanwhile, citizenship or PPKN subjects are only limited to teaching what has been packaged in the curriculum created by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The higher intensity of *kemuhammadiyah* in civics lessons also propagates religious tolerance.

Meanwhile, elementary schools managed by Christian-affiliated

³¹ Alief Nurhidayatullah, interview (11 Nov 2021).

foundations understand that multicultural education is rooted in the basic values of the teachings of Jesus Christ, particularly loving one another. According to teachers from Christian-affiliated elementary schools, they have continued to teach multicultural education by combining the teachings of love as the main source of Christian values with human values as contained in Pancasila. BOPKRI Elementary School, for example, has been providing multicultural education in Christian religious subjects and civics, to provide students with an understanding of tolerance towards anyone regardless of religious, ethnic, and racial differences, because Indonesia is a country whose existence is supported by the values of diversity. According to Fransisca³², a teacher at Bopkri Elementary School I Gondolayu, Yogyakarta City, an elementary school under the auspices of a Christian religious foundation in providing multicultural education following Christian religious values:

As a school under the management of a Christian foundation, of course, in carrying out multicultural education, we use Christian values that contain tolerance. In our school, we do not discriminate between religions; it is proven that this school also accepts students from various religious backgrounds, not only Christians. In the context of multicultural education, this school always emphasizes for students to have the same attitude towards any religion.

According to the teacher from BOPKRI I Elementary School, the teaching method in Christian religious lessons prioritizes universal values such as love. Through the story method and following the experiences of students in everyday life, the teacher tries to provide an understanding that what students do should be in accordance with the value of love for others. This instruction does not use doctrinal methods that provide various religious canons for students to memorize and understand and then use to guide their attitudes and behaviour. Yuli³³, a Christian religion teacher at BOPKRI Elementary School, reports:

As a Christian religion teacher at SD BOPKRI, I realize that there are Muslim students and Hindu students. Although each religion emphasizes the importance of doctrine, I emphasize more on the attitude of life towards fellow human beings based on universal values such as love. I

³² Fransisca, interview (22 Oct 2021).

³³ Yuli, interview (22 Oct 2021).

mean that students who embrace other religions other than Christianity can know love, which I think the value of love for others also exists in the teachings of other religions. Therefore, my emphasis is on how to build an attitude of life in a situation of diversity. So, I teach more about attitude to life than I teach Christian religious doctrine.

BOPKRI Elementary School is clearly affiliated with a Christian foundation, so most of its students are Protestant Christians, but the school does accept students from various religious backgrounds, even though the number of non-Christian students has decreased in the last 15 years. Fransiska³⁴, a teacher at BOPKRI Elementary School, explains:

We are indeed a school affiliated with a Christian foundation, but we accept students from various religious backgrounds. In Bopkri Elementary School there are also Muslim students, and some are Hindu because their parents are from India. We also accept students from various ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds. In our elementary school, there are also many students from the Batak ethnic group, some from the Chinese, and from the Javanese, with various cultural backgrounds. So, this is a form of multiculturalism in our school.

As for Kanisius Elementary School in Yogyakarta, especially those that are still institutionally bound by the Kanisius Foundation, in principle, understanding multiculturalism education also refers to Christian values, namely love. However, there are some Kanisius Elementary School that institutionally take an autonomous attitude towards the Kanisius foundation. Although they still use the values of love, they also refer to Pancasila values such as monotheism, humanity, unity, and democracy. At Kanisius Gowongan Elementary School, for example, according to the teachers' interviews, character education is more important in inculcating tolerance.

Kanisius Gowongan Elementary School still provides religious education by including it in its curriculum document. Therefore, multicultural education, especially those lessons that instil the value of tolerance, is mostly held through Pancasila and civics education (PPKN) subjects, although religious instruction also discusses the theme of tolerance between religious believers. Kanisius Gowongan Elementary School is not too doctrinal in giving religious lessons, instead promoting

³⁴ Fransiska, interview (22 Oct 2021).

love combined with human values and religiosity as recommended in Pancasila through PPKN subjects.

Meanwhile, Kanisius Experimental Elementary School, Mangunan, in understanding multicultural education, does not refer directly to Christianity but to YB Manungwijaya's teachings on religiosity. The aspect of religiosity, namely substantive and practical religion, is much more emphasized than religious understanding, which is normative, doctrinal, and formalistic. The main reference in understanding and implementing multicultural education at SD Mangunan refers more to religiosity, not religion.

Multicultural education at Mangunan Elementary School is practiced regularly, for example by inviting students to come to the homes of residents who happen to be grieving because a family member has died. Students are invited to pray for the dead according to their respective religions. Likewise, students are taught not to discriminate and especially not to bully children with special needs, for example. According to Paulina³⁵, a teacher at Mangunan Elementary School, Manungnan Elementary School also accepts students with special needs or disabilities. Furthermore, Paulina said the following:

In understanding multicultural education, we refer to what was taught by Father Mangunwijaya who assumes that every child must always have basic capital, namely character, cooperation, orientation, language, and sports. In relation to multicultural education, what is used as the basis is the value of cooperation. However, not only as something cognitive in nature, but multicultural education must also be practiced based on students' experiences.

Kanisius Gowongan Elementary School was founded by the Kanisius foundation, but later separated itself under the auspices of the Basic Education Dinamika Foundation (DED) based on YB Mangunwijaya's teachings of humanism. Since being under the auspices of DED, this school, which previously had only a few students, gradually increased in enrolment and now has an average of around 250 students per year, with 70 percent Christian students and 30 percent non-Christian such as Muslim or Hindu. By not providing religious education, Mangunan Elementary School emphasises character and human values. Religion is

³⁵ Paulina, interview (11 Nov 2021).

considered a private sphere, and thus multicultural education develops, not only cognitively, but also at the practical level, which is implemented by school institutions and students in real life.

In contrast to elementary schools which are managed by religiously affiliated foundations, public elementary schools which fall under government management embrace the values of Pancasila, which are the basis of the Indonesian state, in understanding and implementing multicultural education. In PPKN subjects, teachers emphasize that students should not discriminate between religions. In addition, the students were taught Pancasila lessons to understand that Indonesia consists of various ethnic groups, races, and religions that must respect each other.

The importance of religious tolerance among public elementary schools is also integrated into PPKN subjects. However, in religious lessons, each religion's teacher also recommends students respect people of different religions. At Yogyakarta City State Elementary School, students come from various religious backgrounds. However, most of the students are Muslim because the majority of the population of Yogyakarta is Muslim. Formally and normatively, multicultural education in public elementary schools has been organized as part of PPKN lessons as well as religious lessons.

C. Implementation of Multicultural Education

Elementary school teachers, in addition to being academic citizens within educational institutions, are also members of the community. Viewed from a sociological perspective, the practice of multicultural education by teachers is not only shown in the school environment but also in social life. Implementation of multicultural education among elementary school teachers will be seen in its manifestations in social life related to attitudes and actions of religious tolerance and intolerance in socio-cultural activities, such as congratulating on religious holidays, attitudes toward the existence of Muslim boarding houses, and the attitude of the students and elementary school teachers to local cultural traditions, in this case, the Javanese culture.

Along with strengthening the religious identity of the people of Yogyakarta after the fall of the New Order, this is also evident in the

religious attitudes and actions of elementary school teachers. Elementary school teachers who embrace Islam, for example, show their Islamic identity by wearing Muslim clothing, even though they are teachers in schools that are not managed by Islamic religious foundations, such as state elementary schools. The strengthening of religious identity also affects social communication between religious believers. For example, not all Muslims are willing to offer congratulations on other faiths' religious holidays. For example, during Christian holidays such as Christmas Day, not all Muslims in Yogyakarta congratulate their Christian acquaintances.

When the presence of social media on various platforms increasingly has an important role in social communication, it can show who among the citizens is willing to congratulate others on religious holidays. NU Elementary School teachers such as Nuril and Ismi, Kanisius Elementary School teachers such as Fransisca, Ari, and Yuli, Mangunan Elementary School teachers such as Eka and Paulina; and State Elementary School teachers such as Hernani, Ulfa, Usna, and Taufiq, for example, all said that they were willing to congratulate friends of different religions during major religious holidays such as Eid al-Fitr and Christmas. However, they revealed their experiences with social media such as in WhatsApp groups, for example, many Muslim friends are not willing to wish them a Merry Christmas, as stated by Nuril³⁶, an elementary school teacher at NU stated that “[a]s a form of tolerance, I always congratulate my Christian friends when they celebrate Christmas, either directly in my village or through social media. However, I often see Muslim friends who are not willing to wish Christians a Merry Christmas because of their religious beliefs, afraid of sin.”

Nuril's testimony received recognition from Akbar and Alief, teachers at Muhammadiyah Kalasan Elementary School, Yogyakarta. According to Alief, there are indeed many Muhammadiyah followers who are not willing to congratulate Christians on big holidays such as Christmas Day, under the guise of their religious beliefs. Additionally, in Yogyakarta, many Muslim residents, especially puritanical Muslims such as those affiliated with the Social Justice Party (PKS), followers of the Qur'an Tafsir Council (MTA), Tarbiyah sympathizers, and some members of

³⁶ Nuril, interview (21 Oct 2021).

Muhammadiyah, are not willing to wish other a happy birthday and happy new year because they consider them customs of Christians and Westerners.

Less tolerant attitudes and actions, as reflected in the unwillingness to give congratulations on Christmas Day, are even more pronounced among Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools (SD IT) such as SD IT Insan Utama Yogyakarta, SD IT Luqman Al Hakim Yogyakarta, and SD IT Taruna Al Quran Yogyakarta, which have a vision and mission to educate a generation of devout Muslims from an early age. For SD IT Taruna Al Quran Yogyakarta, for example, the formation of a Muslim generation appears in its mission statement: (1) to give birth to a pious young generation, useful and responsible for themselves, family, community and religion, and be tough in facing various challenges of the times'; (2) organizing Islamic education integrally in the spiritual, aqliyah, and physical aspects so that it can deliver a generation of Muslims who have the characteristics of piety, intellectual strength, and excellent physical condition; and (3) organizing basic education that is Islamic and affordable by the community.³⁷

Meanwhile, among non-Muslim residents in Yogyakarta, the habit of congratulating Muslims on Eid al-Fitr is often carried out both in face-to-face communication and through social media. Elementary school teachers who are under the auspices of a Christian foundation always congratulate Muslims, not only on Eid al-Fitr, but also on other major Muslim holidays such as the Islamic New Year, Maulud Nabi, and celebrations of holidays, as stated by Fransisca³⁸ that "My family and I always wish my Muslim friends a happy Eid. I also always recommend to my students to congratulate non-Christians on their big days. For me, congratulating people of different religions is a form of mutual respect and for me, it feels comfortable."

Fransisca's statement above indicates that congratulating Muslims on important days is a manifestation of religious tolerance. It may be the attitude and actions of residents who feel like they are a minority, but the facts show that Yogyakarta residents who are Christians are often

³⁷ *Sekolah Dasar Islam Terpadu Taruna Al Quran*, <https://sdit.taruna-alquran.com/>, accessed 15 Dec 2021..

³⁸ Fransisca, interview (22 Oct 2021).

involved in the celebration of Eid al-Fitr, which they show not only in congratulating them but also in performing various activities including visits and participation in performing arts in commemoration of Eid al-Fitr in the villages, which are the traditions of the people of Yogyakarta.

One issue that often arises in relation to religious tolerance in Yogyakarta is the problem of boarding houses which only accept Muslims. Yogyakarta is a city of education that is a destination for anyone in Indonesia for the pursuit of higher education, so there are many boarding houses scattered in the villages. However, after the New Order, the phenomenon of religious intolerance emerged, because many boarding houses only accepted Muslims. However, some informants in this research, who were themselves Muslims, did not agree with this boarding house policy. Nuril and Isni, NU elementary school teachers, as well as Linda³⁹, an Islamic religion teacher at Kanisius Gowongan Elementary School, do not agree that boarding houses should only accept Muslims, as stated by Nuri that “I’ve seen boarding houses whose fences say they only accept Muslims in several villages in Yogyakarta. Even though that’s their right, I don’t think it’s appropriate and is incompatible with Javanese culture which respects all religions. If I had a boarding house, I wouldn’t do such a thing.”

For non-Muslims, the fact that some boarding houses accept only Muslims is astonishing. Although such a policy may have a specific purpose, non-Muslims cannot understand why such an exclusive attitude exists. “I really can’t understand why I’m only willing to accept only Muslim residents of boarding houses,” said Fransisca⁴⁰, a teacher at SD Bopkri Yogyakarta. “I, as a resident of Yogyakarta, feel uncomfortable when I see a boarding house that only accepts Muslims,” said Ari Widya⁴¹, a teacher at Kanisius Gowongan Elementary School.

In response to various Javanese cultural traditions, elementary school teachers differ according to the understanding when referring to the canons of each religion. All teachers from elementary schools that are affiliated with Christianity stated that there was no problem with various Javanese cultural traditions, which still contained mythology. In

³⁹ Linda, interview (21 Oct 2021).

⁴⁰ Fransisca, interview (22 Oct 2021).

⁴¹ Ari Widya, interview (22 Oct 2021).

fact, most of them still participate various Javanese rituals at birth, such as brokohan and selapanan. Meanwhile, rituals and commemorating the day of death, such as those at seven days, 40 days, 100 days, and 1000 days since the death of a family member are still carried out, as stated by Ari Widya⁴², a Gowongan Elementary School teacher:

My house happens to be in a village on the outskirts of Yogyakarta, I often receive brokohan from neighbours when a family member gives birth to a child. I do not question such a tradition and I even think it is a good tradition because it preserves Javanese culture. When I gave birth, I also followed the brokohan tradition like that.

Navi⁴³, an elementary school teacher at Kanisius Mangunan, said that at his school he strongly recommends respect local traditions, especially Javanese cultural traditions. In one learning activity, students were introduced to various Javanese cultural traditions, such as the Javanese principle that all religions are good, and introduced various ritual traditions related to farming communities. Paulina said that in the learning process, students were invited to go outside the classroom to see how the process of planting rice was carried out by farmers. Then students are introduced to various Javanese peasant rituals such as the wiwit ceremony or the moment when farmers start planting rice.

Meanwhile, in Muhammadiyah Elementary School, the attitude towards local culture is somewhat different, especially regarding Javanese cultural traditions. Muhammadiyah schools do not recommend performing Javanese rituals related to the ceremony of the moments of birth or death. Likewise, the school does not introduce various types of Javanese mythological rituals related to the traditions of Javanese farming communities. Only Javanese arts are still introduced, such as gamelan, or Javanese musical instruments, and shadow puppets. In Muhammadiyah Elementary School, the emphasis is on *kemuhammadiyahan* values, which substantively clash with various expressions of Javanese rituals. As Alief stated, the value of *kemuhammadiyahan* must be followed by teachers and students within the Muhammadiyah school institution environment. Therefore, Muhammadiyah residents do not perform rituals at birth or death as in Javanese cultural tradition.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Navi, interview (11 Nov 2021).

The moderate position is indeed one of the characteristics of NU, both in the political and socio-cultural realms. This moderate attitude is also applied by NU residents to the values and practices of local Javanese culture, which still contains mysticism, mythology, and sacralization. In terms of mythology about Javanese rituals at death, such as those occurring seven days, 40 days, 100 days, and 1000 days after death, for example, NU elementary school teachers are tolerant and even participate in it. Such moments in the tradition of NU residents are used for *tahlilan*, which is a ritual of salvation carried out to honour and pray for the dead, as stated by Nuril⁴⁴:

The tahlilan on the day of death, 7 days, 40 days, 100 days, and 1000 days was indeed taught by Kyai, the founder of NU, Hasyim Asy'ari. Therefore, the ritual does not conflict with Islamic teachings. Indeed, there are some Muslims who say it is bid'ah, but for NU's teaching, there are two kinds of bid'ah, namely the bad one and the good one. So, the ritual according to the NU Kyai is a good heresy.

Meanwhile, multicultural education in relation to religious tolerance is a problem, and there is a tendency for public elementary school teachers to be less tolerant. Almost all public elementary schools in Yogyakarta have Islamic prayer rooms constructed with state funds. Some public elementary schools do not have a library but do have a prayer room, and for those with a library it may be smaller than the prayer room. Meanwhile, at every public elementary school in Yogyakarta, places of worship for non-Muslims are unavailable. The nuances of Islam in educational institutions with state status, as felt in the state elementary school environment in Yogyakarta, cannot be separated from the increasing strengthening of Islamic-based identities in various government agencies in Yogyakarta.

The national discourse experienced a period of receding along with the increasing Islamic discourse, which continued to strengthen in the public-school environment. Obedience to Islamic worship has always been a dominant discourse in the behaviour of State Elementary School teachers. Of course, such a situation also affects student behaviour, as reflected in student uniforms that feel more Islamic, such as male students having to wear long pants and long sleeves and female students

⁴⁴ Nuril, interview (21 Oct 2021).

wearing the hijab. The atmosphere in the state school environment, with its stronger Islamic identity, continues to this day, as stated by Hernani Linda⁴⁵, a teacher at Giwangan State Elementary School:

Indeed, there is no regulation from the government that requires female students to wear the hijab. However, because the standard of competence in Islamic religious education also concerns student behaviour as shown in their clothes, wearing the hijab then becomes a kind of obligatory for female students. If you don't wear the hijab, it can result in reducing the value in Islamic religious lessons.

The teacher also said that at Giwangan State Elementary School, practicing sacrifice is mandatory by means of regular fees to buy animal sacrifices collectively at Eid al-Adha. Hernani also said that there is a kind of obligation for students to participate in *infaq* as part of the competency indicators for Islamic religious education. This indicates that the influence of Islamic religious teachers is dominant in shaping Islamic identity over the influence of school principals in shaping diverse national characters. When Rahmana, a Giwangan Elementary School teacher, was asked in an FGD why she did not conduct a saving activity but instead *infaq*, she said that there was no saving activity. There was an *infaq* activity, because it was a program of learning activities from Islamic religious teachers. All these anecdotes show that the strengthening of Islamic religious identity in public schools is stronger than activities that seek to build a national identity based on the values of diversity. Of course, the situation becomes problematic when it comes to multiculturalism education.

At first glance in the practice of socio-cultural life, acts of intolerance are more often carried out by teachers and school institutions from among Muslims. However, there are also acts of religious intolerance from non-Muslims, for example, related to the issue of providing religious teachers. For example, because BOPKRI Elementary School is affiliated with a Protestant Christian foundation, it still follows several policies that may present problems for building religious diversity and tolerance. For example, at BOPKRI Elementary School, although its students come from various religious backgrounds, up to now they have not provided religious teachers according to the religion the students

⁴⁵ Linda, interview (21 Nov 2021).

embrace. Accordingly, all BOPKRI Elementary School students are required to take Christian religious lessons taught by Christian religious teachers. “This is a policy of the foundation, so all students must take Christian religious lessons,” said Fransisca.⁴⁶

Such policies were then also ‘brought back’ by basic education institutions under Muhammadiyah. So far, no policy provides religious teachers according to what their students embrace. If there are students of other religions besides Islam, those students must follow Islamic religious lessons. The level of resistance of Muhammadiyah against Christians in the Yogyakarta area is indeed higher than that of NU. Research by Alwi Shihab⁴⁷ has shown that the birth of Muhammadiyah, which was founded in Yogyakarta by Ahmad Dahlan, was mainly to stem the implicit flow of Christianity caused by the Dutch colonial government through modern educational institutions. Therefore, Dahlan tried to anticipate and prevent Christianization in a way like the Dutch strategy, by building competing modern educational institutions. Regarding the absence of teachers of other religions in religiously affiliated school institutions, Kanisius Gowongan Elementary School did take an interesting approach. Although this elementary school still uses the name Kanisius, institutionally it is not closely tied to the Kanisius Christian Protestant foundation. Since 2017, it has provided religious teachers according to the religion of the students. Kanisius Gowongan Elementary School provides teachers of Islam, Hinduism, and Catholic Christianity because the students are diverse. This action is of course not always allowed by Christian foundations, so institutionally, Kanisius Elementary School has distinguished itself from Christian foundations and is trying to be autonomous, as noted by Ari, a Kanisius Elementary School teacher:

Since 2017, our elementary school has provided religious teachers according to what the students want because institutionally we are no longer under a Christian foundation even though we still use the name Kanisius Elementary School. Since then, the students at our elementary school have become more diverse, and there are more and more Muslim

⁴⁶ Fransisca, interview.

⁴⁷ Alwi Shihab, *Membendung Arus: Respon Gerakan Muhammadiyah Terhadap Penetrasi Misi Kristen di Indonesia* (Bandung: Mizan, 1998).

students here, and there are also Hindus.⁴⁸

Since Kanisius Gowongan Elementary School provides religious teachers according to what the students want, more and more students come from different religious backgrounds. Ari said that since 2003 Kanisius Gowongan Elementary School has lost track of students, though only Christian residents tend to send their children to the school. This situation has an impact on school management because of course it makes it increasingly difficult to maintain adequate facilities and teacher welfare due to the weakening of the economic base, all of which ultimately affect the quality of learning. According to Ari, this elementary school is in the middle of Gowongan village, where the majority of its citizens are Muslims. Therefore, he and his friends struggled to make sure that this school was attractive to the villagers. “We strive to be an inclusive school, promoting diversity, but while respecting the diverse beliefs of students. Be inclusive so that the community members believe in this school,” said Ari.

Kanisius Gowongan Elementary School’s work to be more inclusive, have been received positively by the people of Yogyakarta, especially in Gowongan village. Accordingly, this SD is responding to the strengthening of religious identity by appearing more inclusive and promoting diversity. Ari and his friends lay the foundations for understanding multiculturalism in their students by building an open, Javanese and Indonesian identity. The values of diversity and multiculturalism, according to Ari, are manifested in the curriculum, textbooks, and report cards of student learning evaluation results, which include a column for religious lessons according to what students embrace. “We always introduce to the students that the people of Yogyakarta are diverse, and we must respect each other. Likewise, we also continue to provide students with an understanding that Indonesia is a country whose existence is supported by the value of diversity, *Bhinika Tunggal Ika* as stated in Pancasila, the symbol of our country,” said Ari.

Oki Linda⁴⁹, an Islamic religion teacher at Kanisius Gowongan Elementary School, admitted that at first, she was very surprised, even half not believing that a school using the name Kanisius recruited her

⁴⁸ Ari Widya, interview (21 Oct 2021).

⁴⁹ Linda, interview (21 Oct 2021).

as an Islamic teacher. According to Linda, what Kanisius Elementary School did was a form of real multiculturalism and religious tolerance education, providing religious teachers according to what the students embraced. Meanwhile, according to Linda, there has never been an elementary school managed by an Islamic-affiliated foundation, because she taught at a Muhammadiyah elementary school in Yogyakarta. Linda recounted her experience as follows:

I teach Islam at Kanisius Elementary School, I think it is something extraordinary, this is a real form of multicultural education, practicing mutual respect between religions by providing religious teachers according to the religion the students embrace. I am here teaching Islam, of course, I also teach students how to read the Qur'an.

What Linda said indicated that Kanisius Gowongan Elementary School practiced religious tolerance. When hearing students reading the Qur'an in a classroom located in Kanisius Elementary School, it may sound strange, but it is embraced. Meanwhile, in an elementary school managed by an Islamic-affiliated foundation in Yogyakarta, until now there has never been a Christian student reading the Bible, for example, because as Linda said when she taught religion at a Muhammadiyah elementary school, she did not provide a religious teacher in accordance with the religion of the students.

Meanwhile, at Kanisius Experimental Elementary School, Mangunan, there has never been a problem regarding the provision of religious teachers for their students, because even though this elementary school has an implicit Christian mission, it does not provide religious lessons in its curriculum. This elementary school only teaches character to its students; there are no school uniforms, no fences, and no religious lessons. The concept of inclusive basic education comes from YB Mangunwijaya's idea of humanist education that always sided with the poor and valued diversity. Although in general this elementary school is not much different from other elementary schools, several things distinguish it, including the absence of religious lessons, only faith communication, as explained by Paulina Navi, a teacher at SD Mangunan:

Faith communication focuses on exploring the values of a belief that exists in each religion, such as love, mutual respect, love for the environment, and mutual respect. One of our methods in implementing multiculturalism

education is the story method. Students are given the opportunity to tell stories about real experiences, and from there they are invited to discuss following their world. Faith communication teaches basic human attitudes to communicate in a balanced way with fellow humans, nature, and God, to create harmony. But all of that in our elementary school is not just memorized but practiced in everyday life.⁵⁰

According to Navi's statement, Mangunan Elementary School's multiculturalism education does not only provide cognitive knowledge to students but also puts it into practice. Additionally, multicultural education uses student-centred learning by incorporating students' stories about their daily activities related to tolerance. The lessons address not only tolerance of fellow humans, but how to manage social relationships in harmony when communicating with fellow humans, nature, and God. The principle of balance and harmony indicates that Mangunan Elementary School emphasizes substance more than formalism in developing multicultural education in relation to religious tolerance. That is why Mangunan Elementary School took a bold step by not providing religious lessons in the teaching and learning process, but by teaching faith communication.

D. Local Cultural Factors

At the level of understanding of multicultural education, this study found that there are variations on the normative system, originating from both religious teachings and Pancasila values. Elementary school teachers' understanding of multicultural education is related to the type of school institution. Elementary school teachers who are institutionally affiliated with religious foundations understand multicultural education as more essentialist, referring to the values of their respective religious beliefs. Elementary school teachers who have institutionally separated themselves from their religious foundations understand that multicultural education is more open and constructivist by daring to become agencies that interpret religious canons dynamically and contextually. Meanwhile, elementary school teachers who are under state management or at public elementary schools refer more to the values of Pancasila. Thus, elementary school teachers who are under Islamic foundations such as

⁵⁰ Navi, interview (11 Nov 2021).

Muhammadiyah Elementary School, Islam Terpadu Elementary School, and NU Elementary School, as well as elementary schools under Christian foundations such as Bopkri Elementary School, understand multicultural education more in line with the view of essentialist culture. Meanwhile, the teachers at the Experimental Elementary School in Mangunan and Kanisius Gowongan Elementary School in understanding multicultural education as more constructivist or, following the term used by Barker⁵¹, anti-essentialist. The configuration of the identity construction of elementary school teachers affects the characteristics of these elementary school teachers' practice multicultural education related to religious tolerance.

Bikhu Parekh⁵² has promoted an idea of multiculturalism that has been quite influential in the study of political science and sociology. According to Parekh, there are five variants of multiculturalism: (1) associationism, multiculturalism that is reflected in a society consisting of various cultural groups, each group living autonomously with each other carrying out minimal interaction; (2) accommodative, manifested in people who have a dominant culture, but are open to adjustments and to accommodating the wishes of minority cultures. Here the dominant culture group provides opportunities for the minority cultural groups to develop themselves, while the minority cultural groups are also willing to adapt to the dominant culture, as seen in British and French society; (3) automatic, meaning a pluralistic society with the main cultural groups trying to achieve equality and an autonomous life in a political framework that is collectively acceptable. In this type of multicultural society, minority groups usually want equal access to education and are allowed to develop their own cultures; (4) interactive, meaning a pluralistic society with cultural groups not paying much attention to autonomous cultural life, instead demanding the creation of a collective culture that reflects and affirms their distinctive perspective; and (5) cosmopolitan, which is a type of multicultural society that tries to eliminate the old culture from each group and build a new culture. In this type of society,

⁵¹ Chris Barker and Emma A. Jane, *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2016).

⁵² Bhikhu C. Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

each group is free to engage in intercultural experiments and at the same time develop their own culture. The proponents of this multiculturalism are diasporic intellectuals and liberal groups who tend toward post-modernism and view culture as a resource that they can choose and take freely. Following Parehk's argument, elementary school teachers tend to believe that people who want to build a school environment and Yogyakarta society in general are more likely to want an automatic type of multicultural society. Most of the people of Yogyakarta are Muslim, so the teachers and elementary school students are also mostly Muslim. At the level of understanding, teachers in elementary schools under Islamic foundations and public elementary schools, in general, try to achieve equality. Meanwhile, elementary school teachers under the Christian foundations realized that as minority groups, they wanted an atmosphere of equal education and developed their culture.

However, when viewed in detail, there are variants among the views of elementary school teachers who refer to their religious teachings. The views of Muhammadiyah Elementary School teachers and, of course, Islam Terpadu Elementary School still want an interactive cultural type of society. While the NU Elementary School teachers want an accommodating type of multicultural society, the Christian Elementary School teachers want an *automatic* type of multicultural society. Mangunan Christian Elementary School desires a cosmopolitan type of multicultural society. Differences in typological variants like that also affect the attitudes and actions of religious tolerance in social relations in Yogyakarta.

The Mangunan Experimental Elementary School, for example, in providing multicultural education places more emphasis on practice. The teachers continue to try to provide understanding to students about the importance of maintaining diversity by instilling democratic values such as mutual respect, cooperation, and self-reflection that humans cannot live alone. Such values are not taught through religious subjects but through the communication of faith. The teachers of Mangunan Elementary School have realized that it is not enough to admit that there are religious differences, but that each party of different religions must communicate with each other. In other words, pluralism alone is not enough, and a multiculturalist approach is needed. Such a principle agrees

with O'Donnell⁵³ who argues, it is a way of teaching that promotes the principles of inclusion, diversity, democracy, the value of perspectives, and self-reflection. This fact indicates that at the level of understanding, in general, elementary school teachers from various types of schools desire to celebrate religious differences, in accordance with what Barker⁵⁴ said that “multiculturalism aims to celebrate difference, for example, in the teaching of multi-faith religious education.”

In general, elementary school teachers' understanding and implementation of multicultural education has the same goal: to make students aware of differences, reinforce that Indonesia is a diverse country, help students think more critically, introduce students to how to think openly, and encourage them to have a more creative way of thinking. Even though the level of inclusiveness varies among the elementary school teachers according to the type of school institution background, implicitly these teachers already have a goal when teaching multicultural education to students, which is to open students' ways of thinking about the importance of diversity. This fact, when viewed through the lens of Levinson's theory⁵⁵, indicates that the goals of multicultural education set by the elementary school teachers are generally in accordance with the views of educational philosophers. Regarding the purpose of multicultural education, the educational philosopher argues for the preservation of the minority group culture, by fostering children's development of autonomy and introducing them to new and different ideas. This form of exposure assists children in thinking more critically, as well as encouraging a more open mindset.

New developments in multiculturalism, both theoretical and empirical phenomena, also affect the world of education. Educational institutions that allow efforts to spread ideas that reinforce differences also offer various problems of social wrongs, such as intolerance based on racial, ethnic, or religious differences. Several theories of multicultural education have also emerged following the increasing tendency to make school institutions an arena for strengthening identities based on cultural differences. Responses to these problems has prompted various research

⁵³ Carol O'Donnell, “Commentary”.

⁵⁴ Barker and Jane, *Cultural Studies*.

⁵⁵ Levinson, “*Mapping Multicultural Education*”.

activities resulting in several theories of multicultural education.

Meanwhile, views of liberal political theorists emphasize that the purpose of multicultural education is not to generate ideas but action. As stated by Banks⁵⁶, political theorists advocate a model of multicultural education warranting social action. Hence, students are equipped with the knowledge, values, and skills necessary to participate in societal changes, resulting in justice for otherwise victimized and excluded ethnic groups. To achieve such goals, the role of the teacher becomes very important. When viewed from this perspective, the goals of multicultural education to be achieved by elementary school teachers, in general, have not reached this level.

Even in everyday life, the elementary school teachers admit that in Yogyakarta there are still intolerant views and practices, especially religious intolerance. Even though teachers and students understand the concept and purpose of multicultural education, it is quite difficult to enact at the practical level in the life of the people of Yogyakarta. Examples of religious intolerance in Yogyakarta society include Muslim-only boarding houses, the suggestion that schools only belong to one Muslim institution, refusal to congratulate people of different religions when celebrating religious holidays, and even vandalism of non-Muslim graves. Meanwhile, there are still many elementary schools under the auspices of Islamic foundations and Christian foundations that do not provide religious teachers according to what their students embrace.

However, some elementary school teachers are trying to achieve the goal of multicultural education following the arguments of liberal political theorists, as was done at Kanisius Experimental Elementary School, Mangunan, and Kanisius Gowongan Elementary School. The two elementary schools teach multicultural education not only at the level of ideas but also at the practical level by carrying out various real activities. The inculcation of diversity values is implemented through mutual respect and appreciation in social activities, such as inviting students to death rituals in the villages regardless of religious, ethnic, and racial background, including students in commemorating religious holidays like Eid al-Fitr and Natal celebrations, and observing the *wiwit* ritual when farmers plant rice in the fields as a form of respect

⁵⁶ Banks, "Multicultural Education: Characteristics and Goals".

for marginalized farming communities.

The two schools also live up to the value of autonomy and open-mindedness as the goals of multicultural education by separating themselves institutionally from the foundation, but retaining one Christian idea, namely instilling the value of love in an atmosphere of diversity. Mangunan Elementary School does not include religious subjects in its curriculum, replacing them with faith communication subjects. Through faith communication lessons, there are more opportunities to provide a more substantial multicultural education. In other words, faith communication subjects teach students about religiosity and not just religion, in the sense that studying religiosity is more substantive, going beyond just understanding and practicing religion formally and attaching importance to the form and symbolic aspects. This fact accords with the goals of multicultural education, which focuses on shaping the character of students in ways such as encouraging a democratic spirit, valuing good citizenship, respecting minority cultures, and being sensitive to inequality and injustice as stated by Levinson.

This fact also approaches several notions of multicultural education that emphasize plurality and inclusiveness, as defined by Banks⁵⁷, who emphasizes that multicultural education helps teachers to develop a future pluralistic society, or Jay and Jones⁵⁸, who emphasize the importance of pluralistic education. It is also in accordance with what O'Donnell⁵⁹ said which emphasized that multicultural education is a way of learning that develops the principles of inclusion, diversity, and democracy. However, some theories about multicultural education still do not consider aspects of local cultural values and locality. Javanese culture has several values that contain religious tolerance, and at the same time can be a locality⁶⁰

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Jay and Jones, "Whiteness Studies and the Multicultural Literature Classroom".

⁵⁹ Carol O'Donnell, "Commentary".

⁶⁰ locality here is not about stories about local people, and things related to them, but how the objectivity and collective meanings of locality (or locality) as categories of identity are constructed. Here, subjectivity is more defined as changing subject positions. It could be a dominant position, and sometimes a subordinate position will want to fight domination, depending on the power relations that play around it. A more complete discussion can be read from Ahmad Baso, *Plesetan Lokalitas: Politik Pribumisasi Islam* (Jakarta: Asia Foundation & Desantara, 2002).

with the cultural resources to continue to negotiate with major narratives, such as religion and modernization. Every religion that enters Javanese society is always negotiated with Javanese local values.

As Franz Magnis-Suseno said, Javanese culture has the ability to allow itself to be flooded by cultural waves that come from outside, and in that flood maintains its authenticity. Javanese culture actually finds itself and develops its uniqueness not in isolation, but in the process of digesting cultural inputs from outside. Hinduism and Buddhism were once embraced, but eventually became “jaded.” Islam entered Java, but Javanese culture increasingly found its identity.⁶¹ Meanwhile, Ignas Kleden said that every culture needs to resist change and maintain its identity. While on the other hand, culture also needs various levels to accept change, and develop its identity.⁶²

As the findings of this study also found that although in general, especially at the level of understanding, elementary school teachers have a multicultural spirit, in some cases the curriculum of religious tolerance and intolerance shows variations between one elementary school teacher and another in accordance with the type of school institution. One factor that distinguishes the content of religious tolerance and intolerance among elementary school teachers is their attitude and actions towards the principles of Javanese culture. Elementary school teachers who agree with and even practice Javanese cultural principles such as the principle of tolerance in social interactions, the assumption that all religions are good, and mythological rituals such as commemorating birthdays and deaths, are proven to have greater religious tolerance. The higher the appreciation of Javanese culture, the greater the religious tolerance. On the other hand, if the appreciation of local Javanese cultural traditions is low, the more likely a person or institution is to carry out acts of religious intolerance. The facts show that even though they are under a Christian religious spirit, the teachers of Experimental Elementary School, Mangunan, and Kanisius Gowongan Elementary School are more tolerant in religion than Bopkri Elementary School teachers because

⁶¹ The ability of Javanese culture to maintain its identity can be read in Magnis-Suseno, *Etika Jawa*.

⁶² Ignas Kleden, *Sikap Ilmiah dan Kritik Kebudayaan* (Jakarta: Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial, 1987), p. 169.

Mangunan Elementary School, and Kanisius Gowongan Elementary School are more accommodating and appreciative of Javanese cultural traditions. Likewise, among school institutions under Islamic foundations, NU Elementary School teachers are more religiously tolerant than Muhammadiyah Elementary and Integrated Islamic Elementary School teachers, because NU school institutions are indeed more accommodating and appreciative of Javanese cultural traditions.

At the same time, at the practical level, religion shows an ambiguous face, sometimes showing what Gregory Baum⁶³ calls liberating features but also presenting enslaving or subjecting aspects.³³ Following this thesis, a hypothetical statement can be made that the more normative-ritualistic oriented religion is, the more it requires submission. On the other hand, as Wahyono⁶⁴ argues, the more religion opens itself to be understood historically from the perspective of science, the more its liberation character will open.⁶⁵ A similar view was also expressed by Amin Abdullah⁶⁶ who said that understanding religion can come from a historical perspective, in the sense that religion cannot be separated from history (historiography) and human life. Religion is strung together by the context of the lives of its adherents, and because of that, access to human understanding of the transcendental reality of religion, the normative dimension of religion, will never be exactly what God wants. Therefore, intolerance is very high if there are “religious” people who claim to be the only owners of truth. An inclusive understanding of religion will encourage religion to accommodate democracy and recognition of local culture. In other words, a dialectical, inclusive, and substantive understanding of religion will be able to make religion one of the components of a multiculturalism-based society.

⁶³ Gregory Baum, *Agama dalam Bayang-bayang Relativisme: Sebuah Analisis Sosiologi Pengetahuan tentang Sintesa Kebenaran Historis-Normatif*, trans. by Ahmad Murtajib Chaeri and Masyhuri Arow (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1999).

⁶⁴ Sugeng Bayu Wahyono, “Disintegration from Within and Open Indonesian Identity”, *Antropologi Indonesia*, vol. 41, no. 1 (2020), pp. 5–22.

⁶⁵ Amid the widespread view increase of cultural essentialism, Indonesia is threatened with disintegration from within, which is marked by identity conflicts. Ibid.

⁶⁶ M. Amin Abdullah, *Studi Agama: Normativitas atau Historisitas?* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1996).

E. Concluding Remarks

Elementary school teachers' understanding of multicultural education is largely essentialist, and some have constructivist or anti-essentialist understandings. Elementary school teachers have the imagination to develop multiculturalism in the school environment and Yogyakarta society in general. Most elementary school teachers admit that at the practical level there are still many acts of religious intolerance committed by some residents of the Yogyakarta community. In such a reality, the attitudes and actions of elementary school teachers, both consciously and unconsciously, are also carried over to acts of religious tolerance or intolerance. One of the factors that distinguishes the content of religious tolerance and intolerance among elementary school teachers is their attitude and actions towards the principles of Javanese culture. The higher the appreciation of local culture, the greater the religious tolerance. On the other hand, if the appreciation of local cultural traditions is low, the more likely an institution or group is to carry out acts of religious intolerance.

Elementary school teachers' understanding of multicultural education is more or less related to the type of school institution in which they work. Elementary school teachers who work in religiously affiliated school institutions tend to be essentialist, referring to the dogmas of their respective religions. This essentialist type of elementary school teacher tends to distinguish between religious and cultural beliefs, so they have the potential to behave intolerantly. As for elementary school teachers who work in school institutions that separate themselves from religious foundations, the view of multiculturalism education tends to be more constructivist, or in Barker's terms anti-cultural essentialism, so that they have the potential to be tolerant of religious activities.

However, at least at the level of comprehension, most elementary school teachers desire to celebrate differences as Barker says that multiculturalism aims to celebrate difference. Elementary school teachers can develop multiculturalism in the school environment and Yogyakarta society in general. Following the argument of Parehk, most primary school teachers in a multicultural society should automatically pursue multiculturalism, which describes a plural society with major cultural groups trying to bring about equality and wanting

to live autonomously in a collective political framework all find acceptable. However, when viewed in detail, there are variations among the views of elementary school teachers who refer to their religious teachings. The views of Muhammadiyah Elementary School teachers, and of course Islam Terpadu Elementary School, are aligned with an interactive society. The NU Elementary School teachers want an accommodating society. The Mangunan Christian Elementary School faculty wants a cosmopolitan society. Differences in typological variants like that also affect both attitudes and actions of religious tolerance and intolerance in social relations in Yogyakarta.

Elementary school teachers, to understand and implement multicultural education, have a goal to be achieved, namely celebrating differences both in the school environment and in the Yogyakarta community in general. However, if viewed in detail, there are those whose goals are oriented to developing ideas and those who are oriented to practice.

Most elementary school teachers admit that at the practical level there is still religious intolerance by some residents of Yogyakarta. Against such a reality, the attitudes and actions of elementary school teachers, both consciously and unconsciously, are also carried over to acts of religious intolerance. Therefore, among elementary school teachers, the content of tolerance and intolerance is different.

One factor that distinguishes the content of religious tolerance and intolerance among elementary school teachers is their attitude and actions towards Javanese culture. The higher the appreciation of Javanese culture, the higher the religious tolerance. On the other hand, if the appreciation of local Javanese cultural traditions is low, the more likely a teacher is to carry out acts of religious intolerance.

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