The Integration of Tolerance in Online Learning at Elementary Schools

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Abstract. Tolerance is a necessary character trait for everyone. Tolerance encompasses not only ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity, but also gender, physical appearance, political views, and social differences. Tolerance must be incorporated into the educational curriculum and embedded throughout the learning process, including online learning. The current study aimed to describe the integration of tolerance into online education. This study uses qualitative method. The study was conducted through the distribution of questionnaires, interviews with teachers, and observation of student learning. They are teachers from three cities in East Java, namely Malang, Kediri, and Probolinggo, who were chosen on the basis of their geographical location, cultural affinity, and level of tolerance. The findings indicate that all teachers are aware that one of the character values explicitly mentioned in the curriculum content standards is tolerance. In general, the respondents believe that it is critical to integrate tolerance into learning. According to the respondents, the most critical aspect of tolerance is tolerance for religious and ethnic differences, followed by tolerance for gender, physical condition, economic and social background, and opinions. The majority of teachers only occasionally explicitly incorporate the value of tolerance into their lesson plans. However, when they implement learning, they always keep this aspect of tolerance in mind. They believe that time constraints, internet network limitations, and physical distance all contribute to the difficulty of integrating character values into online learning. Teachers integrate the value of tolerance into their instruction by providing concrete examples, such as greeting students or commenting on their work. In the implementation of learning, the majority of teachers have placed a premium on the formation of heterogeneous groups. According to their experience as educators, certain forms of intolerance are occasionally encountered in schools. As a result, it is critical to incorporate the value of tolerance into the educational process.

Keywords: tolerance, online learning, integration

1 Introduction

Indonesia is an archipelago with a diverse range of cultures, ethnicities, races, religions, and regional languages. For the Indonesian people, this diversity must be a blessing. Thus, tolerance must be ingrained in the national character in order for intolerance to continue to decline. According to The Wahid Institute (Sufanti, Puji Rahmawati, & Sofyan, 2015), each year, Indonesians witness a dozen cases of intolerance. Examples of these intolerance cases include the prohibition on the construction of a pastor's official residence in Aceh Singkil in

September 2020 and the disbandment of the Indonesian Pentecostal Church congregation in Bogor on September 20, 2020. (Tirto, 2020).

Children are also prone to intolerance. According to the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA, 2018), 41.1% of Indonesian students reported having been bullied. According to this data, Indonesia ranks fifth among 78 countries with the most bullied students (Kompas, 2015). According to the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) (KPAI, 2019), bullying was disproportionately prevalent among elementary school (SD) students, accounting for 67% of all cases handled. Bullying behavior is also motivated by a variety of factors, one of which is a sense of social superiority. Bullying victims are members of community groups that are regarded as religiously inferior or are members of ethnic groups that are regarded as inferior (Zakiyah, Humaedi, & Santoso, 2017). This demonstrates that intolerance is a factor in bullying cases.

Tolerance entails being receptive to (appreciating, allowing, allowing) divergent or contradictory stances (opinions, views, beliefs, habits, and behavior, for example) (Kemendikbud, 2020). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines tolerance as "respect for, acceptance of, and appreciation of the world's rich cultural diversity, diverse modes of self-expression, and ways of being human." Tolerance is the ability to live in harmony with one's differences (Khalikin & Fathuri, 2016). Verkuyten and Yogeeswaran (2017, 2016) demonstrate that tolerance is not a simple concept, but a multifaceted one. Tolerance is comprised of three components: objection (one's attitude toward tolerance), acceptance (with regard to one's reaction to the existence of a particular group), and rejection (behavior indicating rejection).

Tolerance, as one of the values emphasized in character education, must be integrated into the learning process. Character education is the responsibility of all teachers in all fields of study under the 2013 curriculum (Santika, 2019:79). The balance of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning is an absolute output in the 2013 Curriculum as part of the nation's character education. This is stated in the 2013 curriculum's objectives, which include four competencies: spiritual attitudes, social attitudes, knowledge, and skills. These four competencies can be acquired through a variety of intracurricular, co-curricular, and/or extracurricular learning experiences.

The value of tolerance is explicitly mentioned as part of social attitudes, which include being honest, disciplined, accountable, caring (tolerance, mutual cooperation), polite, and confident in effectively interacting with the social and natural environment within the scope of association and existence. Tolerance is defined in the Movement for Strengthening Character Education (PPK) as a component of a religious and nationalist attitude that values diversity (Kemendikbud, 2017).

There are several studies that try to integrate tolerance into the learning system, includingresearch by Dianita, Firdaus, and Anwar which tries to integrate the value of tolerance into the subject of wisdom. the result is 1) attitude to each other respect and respect differences, 2) do not cause conflict in the midst of differences, 3) prioritizing amar ma'rūf nahyī munkar, 4) preach without coercion and does no damage, 5) no judging the difference in others, 6) not easily angered and easy to forgive, 7) not easyprovoke or be provoked (2018). Another research is to integrate the value of tolerance into civic education. Citizenship education is considered to play an important role in forming an attitude of tolerance in students (Abdulatif & Dewi, 2021). Both studies were conducted in offline learning while this is a study on the value of tolerance in elementary schools in online learning. Not much research has been done on the integration of the value of tolerance in online learning.

Character education, including tolerance, is also critical in online learning. Despite the fact that learning is based on the concept of 'learning at home', parents continue to rely on teachers regarding character education for their children. According to a survey, the majority of parents believe that character education at home is ineffective without the assistance of a teacher. According to Aji (2020), 164 (92.1%) of 178 parents of kindergarten to high school students were unable to optimally develop their children's character without the assistance of teachers. In education, parents have high expectations of teachers.

It is unavoidable that physical limitations exist in interpersonal relationships in online classrooms, particularly between teachers and students. Online learning is frequently referred to as distance learning because it makes use of the internet network to connect students who are geographically dispersed. Online learning is classified into two types: synchronous (online learning with virtual face-to-face directly between teachers and students) and asynchronous (online learning in which teachers and students interact via media such as email, certain e-learning programs, or whatsapp).

Problem Statement

Physical constraints and time constraints are feared to make it more difficult for teachers to instill positive habits that shape students' character in online learning. Character development is not only about having an understanding of values, but also about their application as a habit. According to Lickona (1992), character education must emphasize the critical nature of the components of good character, specifically moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action.

Research Questions

This study attempted to describe the integration of character education, particularly tolerance, into online learning. The research focused on (1) teachers' perspectives on incorporating tolerance into online instruction and (2) how teachers incorporate tolerance into online instruction.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to provide an overview of the integration of character education, particularly tolerance, into online learning. This study was divided into two focuses: the teacher's perspective on the integration of tolerance and the teacher's approach to integrating tolerance in online learning.

2 Methodology

Qualitative research methods were used to examine elementary school (SD) teachers' perceptions of tolerance and its application in online learning. The research data were compiled from the teachers' perspectives/responses/answers to a variety of questions via questionnaires and interviews submitted via electronic forms or Whats-app application. Thirty public elementary school teachers from three East Java cities were chosen as respondents based on the city's population, geographical location, cultural map, and level of tolerance as published by the Setara Institute (Hutabarat, 2018). Malang, Kediri, and Probolinggo are the three cities chosen.

The questionnaire's questions are as follows. To begin, a series of questions was used to ascertain teachers' perspectives on the importance of integrating tolerance into online learning, the reasons for the importance of integrating tolerance into online learning, instances of

intolerance in schools, and challenges teachers face when integrating tolerance into online learning. Second, the questionnaire questions elicited an approach for incorporating tolerance values into online education. These questions were intended to elicit information about the method by which these teachers integrate tolerance into online learning. Additionally, data were gathered by observing several online learning processes.

3   Findings

The Importance of Integrating Tolerance into Learning

Tolerance, as a component of character values, must be integrated into all areas of study. According to a survey of 30 teachers, the majority of teachers (27 teachers) rated integration as extremely important, while a few (3 teachers) rated it as important. Teachers were recruited from three cities in East Java: Malang, Kediri, and Probolinggo. In general, the differences between cities did not indicate a tendency for teachers to provide inconsistent responses. As a result, the findings are not divided by city.
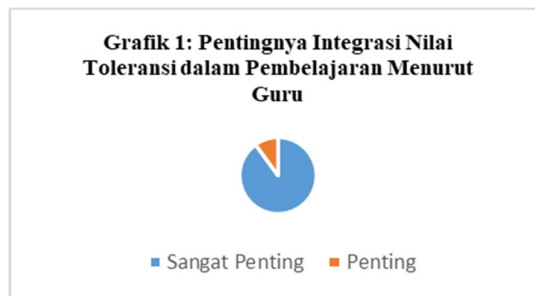

Grafik 1: Pentingnya Integrasi Nilai Toleransi dalam Pembelajaran Menurut Guru

■ Sangat Penting   ■ Penting

Fig 1. The Importance of Tolerance Integration in Learning According to the Teachers

The diversity of the Indonesian nation, which requires tolerance at all levels of society, is the primary reason teachers emphasize the importance of tolerance education from an early age. Several of these teachers have stated that (1) tolerance is critical for establishing unity; (2) tolerance is the foundation for living a peaceful and prosperous life; (3) because we live in a country with a great deal of diversity in terms of religion, culture, characteristics, ethnicity, and race, it is critical to instill the principle of tolerance in students from an early age; and (4) tolerance should be maintained in order to preserve the brotherhood's integrity, regardless of differences. A slightly different response was given by a teacher who viewed tolerance through the lens of social media's rapid development. According to the teacher, tolerance had begun to dwindle as a result of the development of social media, making it critical to instill an attitude of tolerance in students at school.

The teachers determined that behaviors associated with tolerance at school, such as greeting, assisting, sharing, collaborating, making friends with anyone, and empathizing, were still evident in students' daily activities. However, some teachers believe that student-to-student discussions still require training. Since disagreements of opinion are common in everyday life, students must be taught to resolve them through discussion and to formulate the outcome of the discussion as a joint decision.

According to the respondents, the most critical aspect of tolerance that should be developed is religious tolerance. Twenty-three teachers stated that education for religious tolerance was the most critical component of tolerance education. The following aspect is tolerance for ethnic distinctions. Five teachers ranked gender tolerance as the most critical aspect of tolerance education for children. Apart from religion and gender, two teachers prioritized other aspects of tolerance education over religion and gender. The teachers viewed intolerance based on different religious and ethnic backgrounds as a serious issue that threatens society's harmony, if not the very existence of the nation. Religion and ethnicity encompass sizable segments of society, and thus must be a primary focus of tolerance education.

Some of the teachers emphasized gender differences over other distinctions because they believed that gender is the fundamental identity of every person. According to one of the teachers, the differences between boys and girls have existed since the child was born. Gender differences must be addressed in tolerance education in order to achieve gender equality. The teacher's ranking of the most critical aspects of tolerance in character education is depicted in Figure 2.

Fig 2. The Most Important Aspects of Tolerance in Children's Education According to the Teachers

The majority of teachers admitted to encountering instances of intolerance at school. The teachers continued to notice students' negative attitudes toward students of different ethnic groups. Among the incidents that one of the teachers encountered was the use of an accent in a unique indigenous language as a source of jokes or ridicule. Another teacher observed a child addressing a friend using his tribal name. Indeed, schools in East Java educate students from a variety of ethnic groups, although the majority are of Javanese origin. East Java is a hub of industry, education, and commerce, making it a popular destination for immigrants (AntaraNews, 2018).

East Java is Indonesia's second most populous province. East Java is primarily populated by Javanese. However, the ethnic composition of the population in East Java's cities is quite diverse. The Javanese tribe that inhabits East Java is divided into several sub-tribes and occupies nearly all of the island. The Madurese live on the island of Madura and in the Horseshoe region, particularly along the island's northern and southern coasts. The Madurese are even the majority in some areas of the Horseshoe. Horseshoe is the name given to the eastern region of East Java Province, which consists of seven regions (Banyuwangi, Bondowoso, Jember, Lumajang, Pasuruan, Situbondo, and Probolinggo). The Madurese, on the other hand, are scattered

throughout almost all of East Java (jatimprov.go.id, 2015; merdeka.com, 2020). Additionally, a teacher mentioned that she once encountered a student who interrogated another student who participated in religious celebrations other than their own. Nonetheless, the teacher believes that this can be overcome by instilling in students an understanding that attitudes and views toward participation in other religious events vary by individual.

Gender can also serve as a catalyst for bullying. The majority of teachers ranked gender as the third most important factor in tolerance education, behind religion and ethnicity. Gender is the distinction between human social roles according to sociocultural context (Fujiati, 2014). Disparities in gender perceptions in the school environment can result in bullying. Bullying motivated by gender, as mentioned by the teacher in the questionnaire, included a tendency to assign leadership roles to men and secretary roles to women when students divided group assignments.

Another incident that the teacher encountered was a male student being teased while sweeping the classroom. This means that the gendered division of labor remains firmly entrenched in some children's circles. Similarly, there is still an assumption that men and women are better separated in their relationships. This study discovered that grouping according to gender was still prevalent. The teacher reasoned that such group division was more effective because the students cooperated better than they did when they were in a mixed-gender group. In terms of gender, another teacher encountered another incident of bullying involving a boy and a girl who were friends. They were rumored to be dating, which created a stir when the bullied child became enraged. This is consistent with Zahro, Witjoro, and Sidyawati's (2020) argument that it is critical to develop gender responsive lesson plans in order to overcome the pervasive gender stereotypes in schools that affect the learning process.

The teachers were also concerned about the disparity in students' economic backgrounds. At one school, a teacher discovered that students gravitate toward certain children, specifically those from wealthy families. Another teacher observed students mockingly mentioning their parents' work during fights. One teacher stated that it was difficult to instill self-confidence in children from disadvantaged families due to their peers' lack of acceptance. Additionally, some students were observed to make 'you are stupid' jokes when a child was unable to read or complete the teacher's assignments. Some teachers also have encountered children who struggle with apologizing or forgiving. According to one teacher, when children fight constantly, it takes a long time for them to forgive one another.

Teachers'' encounters with intolerance incidents demonstrate that differences in a variety of ways cannot be avoided in everyday interactions. Tolerance for these distinctions must be reinforced in children. Supriati (2018) asserts that respecting friends who hold divergent views, accepting agreements despite their disagreements, accepting the shortcomings of others, forgiving others' mistakes, being able and willing to work with anyone who has a diverse range of backgrounds, views, and beliefs, and refraining from imposing one's own views or beliefs on others, are all significant indicators of being tolerant.

While some teachers observed instances of intolerance among students, they also observed activities demonstrating tolerance in schools, such as greeting one another, assisting one another, sharing, collaborating, making friends with anyone, and empathizing. The majority of teachers believed that, on the whole, students retained a high level of tolerance. Tolerance, however, must be continually fostered and ingrained through education and daily life at home. To support tolerance education in schools, there is a need for learning media and innovative strategies that can train tolerance.

Approaches to Integrating Tolerance into Learning

Character education is a responsibility of teachers, as mandated by the 2013 Curriculum, which explicitly includes religious and social attitudes as fundamental competencies that must serve as a reference point for learning in schools, in addition to basic knowledge and skills competencies. Tolerance, which is a component of religious and social attitudes, must be integrated into education.

The majority of teachers admitted that they did not always incorporate character values into their lesson plans. Only eight teachers reported explicitly including the values of tolerance in their lesson plans. However, all teachers stated that they have always emphasized the importance of tolerance during the educational process. Character values are frequently incorporated into lesson plans in accordance with the characteristics of Basic Competence (KD). For instance, if KD is associated with energy, the lesson plans will feature thrifty, disciplined, and caring characters. On the other hand, tolerance values are incorporated into lessons on harmony, friendship, and diversity.

Online education does not distinguish between general principles of learning. Online learning in Indonesia is recommended in line with the stipulation of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. Although learning takes place online, the curriculum referenced is still current. As a result, tolerance education must be integrated into the educational process.

According to the teachers who provided the research data, online learning made it more difficult for them to conduct tolerance education. One of the reasons for the impediment to tolerance education in online learning is their area's limited internet network. The teacher facilitates online learning through the use of Whats-app, google meet, and google classroom. For online learning, all teachers have a @guru.sd.learning.id account. Students who are unable to access online learning are visited at home by the teacher. If teachers are unable to visit students, parents are responsible for retrieving learning modules from school.

The teachers perceived that the limitations of interaction in cyberspace and the time constraints associated with online learning are the primary impediments to tolerance education in online learning. Due to the limitations, the teachers incorporated tolerance by providing direct examples, such as greeting students, inquiring how they are, and paying equal attention to all students. This is still possible in online learning, particularly during the initial stages of learning and assignment discussion. Another strategy that the teachers used to incorporate the values of tolerance into their lessons is to select media stories and images that depict a harmonious life or tolerant behavior.

The majority of teachers stated that there were sufficient media and educational resources that emphasized tolerance. Only three teachers believed that media and educational resources promoting tolerance were still lacking. This is in contrast to the findings of Zahro, Eliyanah, and Ahmadi (2020), who assert that children's folklore stories must still incorporate gender equality values.

However, most teachers believed that students would have difficulty accessing these learning resources because they are only available in the form of e-books. According to the teachers, printed books are still more appropriate than e-books for children. The teachers hope that the number of educational media in the form of tolerance-themed stories will increase and become more diverse, making them more accessible to students.

4 Conclusion

Integrating tolerance values into classroom instruction is a challenging task for teachers, even more so in a pandemic situation. Online learning necessitates adaptation. Tolerance-based education is still difficult to implement in online learning. This is due to a variety of factors, from the limited space available for online education to signal limitations. As a result, an innovative strategy and the acquisition of media or educational resources are required to incorporate tolerance into online education.

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