

**Celebrating Tolerance in Diversity:
A Perspective of Living Values Education (LVE)**

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Abstract

The issue in this research lies in a multicultural society with heterogeneous characteristics, leading to several problems of intolerance and a lack of application of universal values within the community, such as a deficiency in religious community comfort. The objective of this research is to assess the state of religious tolerance in Pelayang Raya Village, Sungai Bungkal, Sungai Penuh City, and the implementation of religious tolerance values in the village, viewed from the perspective of Living Values Education (LVE). The research adopts a qualitative approach with a phenomenological focus. Data collection techniques involve observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis is conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and verification of conclusions. The findings reveal instances of intolerant behavior in the community of Pelayang Raya Village, resulting in issues. The solution lies in the community prioritizing and more actively applying and embodying religious tolerance values, fostering a harmonious, secure, and peaceful community.

Keywords: *Religious Tolerance, Living Values Education, Sungai Penuh*

Introduction

Religion is something that must be understood for the meaning it contains. It is based on a spiritual nature in the form of beliefs, so the strength or fragility of a religion depends on the extent to which those beliefs are embedded (Asir, 2014: 51). Religion prohibits its followers from engaging in violent actions, emphasizing mutual respect for both fellow believers and those of different faiths. Therefore, someone who understands the teachings of their religion correctly will appear as a person with polite, peaceful, tolerant, and compassionate behavior towards others (Hardianti, 2019: 1). Thus, individuals can apply tolerance in their lives.

To create harmony and peace in society, one of the things that must be implemented is religious tolerance. Tolerance among followers of different religions can minimize conflicts. For example, in the city of Padang, conflicts arose, leading to the demonization of Christians and Bethani followers conducting worship activities in hotels or private homes without permission from the Muslim majority in the area. There were also conflicts among Christian groups, and controversial sects like Yehuwa faced rejection from both Muslims and other Christians in 2010 due to alleged forgery of identification documents. Informants in Padang revealed that respect for followers of other religions is essential (Khaliki & Fathuri, 2016: 19).

Based on the events mentioned above, the value of religious tolerance is crucial for all human beings. In the midst of societal disharmony and disputes, these values are believed to unite and break down the barriers that separate individuals. There are four indicators of tolerance: respecting others, accepting differences, respecting others with different backgrounds, not forcing others to conform to our beliefs, and not prohibiting someone from doing something positive (Akhwani & Kurniawan, 2021: 890). These indicators serve as a guide for accurately collecting data in the field.

In this study, the author examines the village of Pelayang Raya, Sungai Bungkal, Sungai Penuh City. Pelayang Raya was chosen due to its strategic location as a multicultural community with a heterogeneous background, leading to frequent disputes. Initial observations on October 31, 2022, revealed issues in implementing tolerance, such as a lack of courtesy when receiving guests or during meetings, including improper dress etiquette. Additionally, some non-Muslim residents struggled to maintain a pleasant cooking aroma, causing discomfort to others.

Therefore, to experience daily peace in a multicultural society, Living Values Education (LVE) provides a perspective that influences community life by emphasizing values. If individuals practice tolerance values, such as respect and affection, positive results will be achieved in a multicultural society. Living Values Education (LVE) is a comprehensive character development program that underlies harmonious relationships among people (Tilman, 2004: xx). LVE is a way to instill values through various learning activities. Character education is essential in the

educational goals, and values need to be lived through activities to become something vibrant and alive (Hidayatullah, 2019: 90).

LVE is also an educational program and facilitator for developing universal values, supporting individuals in various aspects, including peace, freedom, love, care, and unity. Originally developed in 1995 by Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (BKWSU) in India, LVE gained support from UNESCO, with workshops conducted in over 8,000 locations across 88 countries (Rachman, 2019: xvii). In conclusion, the LVE program aims to cultivate individuals with positive values, promoting sovereignty over positive aspects and shaping characters that reflect reasoning, emotions, and moral actions in daily life. This contributes to strengthening, developing, and revitalizing universal values for millennial generations and society in general. Therefore, LVE has a specific goal, which Anees states as "the primary goal of LVE is to facilitate principles for the holistic development of humans by recognizing four dimensions of human formation: physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual" (Badriah, et. al., 2019: 106).

Pelayang Raya village is also a meeting place and settlement for both Muslim and non-Muslim migrants, making it a multicultural community. However, there is a visible lack of religious tolerance among the residents. This issue needs to be anticipated to prevent undesirable events. However, it is not fully conclusive, and further research is needed. Based on the above guidelines, promoting religious tolerance through LVE can make the community more vibrant and help apply universal values, such as tolerance.

Methods

The type of research used is qualitative research. Qualitative research is a method used to study the natural conditions of an object, where the researcher acts as the key instrument, and data sampling is conducted (Sugiyono, 2015: 14). In this scientific work, qualitative research is employed with a phenomenological approach, a method of thinking to acquire knowledge through logical, systematic, critical steps that are not based on preconceived notions, prejudices, or dogma.

Phenomenology is defined as: 1) subjective experience or phenomenological experience, 2) a study of consciousness from an individual's fundamental perspective (Husserl) (Moleong, 2018: 14). This research was conducted from February 6, 2023, to April 6, 2023, in Pelayang Raya Village, Sungai Bungkal, Sungai Penuh City. Informants in this study include the Village Head, Religious Figures, Traditional Leaders, Educational Figures, and the general community. Data collection methods include participant observation, unstructured interviews, and documentation.

Discussion

Religious Tolerance in the Perspective of Living Values Education (LVE)

Pelayang Raya Village, Sungai Bungkal, Sungai Penuh City, is a village with a multicultural population with differences in ethnicity, cultural customs, race, religion, and more. According to the latest census by the Pelayang Raya Village government in 2022, the population consists of 1,006 males and 1,150 females, with 593 households and a total of 2,156 individuals. The religious distribution in Pelayang Raya Village is as follows:

Table 4.2 Religion in Pelayang Raya Village

No.	Religion	Male	Female
1	Islam	971	1103
2	Christian (Protestant)	20	29
3	Catholic	15	18
Total		1006	1150

Source: *Pelayang Raya Village Archive, 2022*

From the data in the table above, it is evident that the residents of Pelayang Raya Village adhere to not only Islam but also Protestantism and Catholicism, making it a heterogeneous and multicultural population. Based on interview results, it can be concluded that the residents of Pelayang Raya Village fulfill their social responsibilities by assisting and helping each other without considering backgrounds. Socially, the community functions well, and their view of community or organization in the village is positive.

The community of Pelayang Raya Village is harmonious, with no religious blasphemy, no restrictions on worship, no coercion to adopt a particular religion, no alternating religious affiliations, and no forcing others to adhere to one's religion, in accordance with the Quranic principle "*lakum dinukum waliyadin*" (For you is your religion, and for me is my religion). The community demonstrates a good understanding of religious matters.

Interview results indicate that the residents of Pelayang Raya Village strive to live by the values of goodness in a multicultural environment, including aspects of religion, customs, traditions, race, and social groups. The community must uphold

good ethics, including knowing how to speak respectfully, behaving well by adapting to the community while respecting boundaries, not meddling in matters that do not concern them, and learning the science if they want to promote values of goodness. Residents help and attend events such as parties, with Muslims usually taking charge of cooking for non-Muslim celebrations. However, when it comes to ethical behavior, including manners for visiting, dressing, and cooking, non-Muslims have not fully adapted, and the realization of values of goodness is not yet complete.

The community understands and respects each other, and there is no interference during religious events, such as Ramadan or non-Islamic rituals held in homes. During Eid al-Fitr, Muslims invite non-Muslims to join them in meals, fostering a spirit of togetherness. The harmony of a place lies in how its people respond to each other's religious beliefs. The behavior of understanding each other aligns with the principles of religious tolerance, as stated in the journal (Hasyim, 1991: 23-25).

Abu Bakar's theory on the concept of tolerance emphasizes respecting and valuing each other's religions, with no violation of Islamic principles (Bakar, 2015: 2). In religious belief regulations, tolerance is strongly recommended, indicating there is no coercion in practicing religion. Therefore, people of different faiths must respect and value each other (Rahman and Noor, 2020: 16). Looking at the forms of religious tolerance mentioned in the journal (Gunawan, 2015: 5), it aligns with the theory that one form of religious tolerance is to act justly and behave well.

It should provide freedom and grant the rights of people to practice their religion by allowing them to express their religious teachings without interference. Matters of faith should not be played with; for faith to be strong, one must optimistically adhere to the principle "*lakum dinukum waliyadin*." Humans should always maintain and cherish relationships because one of the signs of prosperity and well-being is preserving the bond of brotherhood through continuous connection. Mutual understanding among neighbors, friends, and the community, in general, brings goodness and harmony to society, especially within families and social interactions. Respecting others, their beliefs, and honoring both practitioners and the objects of worship in different religions, including their teachings, are actions that individuals must apply in their daily lives.

There are also some detected problems here related to comfort issues. Thus, there are several problems in society leading to discomfort. In this case, it's about ethics. The lack of etiquette, especially in visiting and dressing, makes the community feel uncomfortable between Muslim and non-Muslim residents. The community has not fully grasped the situations and conditions of those interacting with them. This means that some people have not yet learned to respect and value each other in terms of clothing and dress, whether among Muslims or between Muslims and non-

Muslims, especially when non-Muslims are involved. The community cannot be considered fully understanding of tolerance, as some still do not comprehend how to be good hosts and guests, paying attention to each other's backgrounds.

This demonstrates that there is still intolerance in society, as the principles of religious tolerance require mutual respect and understanding among people of different religions (Hasyim, 1991: 23-25). However, regarding the mentioned lack of tolerance, although it may not be fatal, it needs to be minimized and improved in the future. It is not only different religions; even within the same religion, individuals often blame others and justify themselves more than others.

Implementation of Religious Tolerance Values

This study has presented various data on the values of religious tolerance and the application of these values from the perspective of Living Values Education (LVE) in Pelayang Raya Village, Sungai Bungkal, Sungai Penuh City. Based on the explained data and analysis, the findings are discussed in accordance with relevant theories or previous research and are relevant to the research topic. The discussion of the research is conducted using the method technique used and adjusted to the research focus.

In applying religious tolerance values, the community of Pelayang Raya Village is very careful in their interactions and social interactions to minimize misunderstandings between different parties. In their practical applications, their focus is on tolerating each other without disregarding certain limits. As evidence of the community's tolerance, religious freedom is granted for worship and celebration of significant religious events. This aligns with the principles of religious tolerance, emphasizing freedom of religion and granting every individual their rights (Anggraeni & Suhartinah, 2018: 67-68). The research findings and theories are in line with each other.

Technically, the implementation of tolerance attitudes among people of different religions is more related to freedom and the liberty to interpret and express their religious teachings (Sakdiyah, 2022: 16). In matters of worship, there should be no mixing. Islam has its own terminology for tolerance because tolerance does not mean equating all religions in the world. Tolerance in Islam respects followers of other religions without imposing on those of different faiths. It also does not imply adopting their beliefs because, in matters of religion, one cannot accept anything contrary to one's own beliefs. This is clearly emphasized in Surah Al-Kafirun.

The goal of harmony among people of different religions is to strengthen and maintain the bonds of brotherhood, despite differences. Even though diverse, they remain one. Unity and national identity will be preserved and nurtured when personal and group interests are minimized (Hasan, 2019: 89).

Overall, the way religious tolerance is practiced in Pelayang Raya Village is in accordance with religious rules. However, in specific interfaith socialization, there is still some discomfort from Muslim individuals towards non-Muslims. Nevertheless, this does not mean undermining or shaking the foundations of interfaith socialization in Pelayang Raya Village. It requires evaluation and a renewed sense of concern for fellow social beings.

In cultivating an awareness of the importance of goodness and universal values, especially in a multicultural society, the benefits of implementing tolerance in the community are numerous, including:

- a. Strengthening brotherhood
- b. Minimizing conflicts
- c. Creating a united community
- d. Building a prosperous society
- e. Enhancing faith
- f. Providing security for minority religions
- g. Appreciating differences
- h. Developing empathy
- i. Avoiding bullying behavior

Promoting and applying universal values can be explored through various activities, giving everyone the opportunity to apply and express these values in different situations and conditions, enabling them to experience the benefits of these universal values in daily life. In this context, the community applies universal values through social activities. When there is a social event in the village, both specific and general, people collaborate and help each other.

Additionally, during significant events, the community comes together, engages in acts of kindness, and applies universal values in their daily lives. This illustrates that the people of Pelayang Raya Village are open-minded and possess the character to develop harmonious relationships and human connections.

From the above description, according to the concept of Living Values Education (LVE), LVE or LVEP is a comprehensive value and development activity that underlies harmonious relationships between individuals (Tilman, 2004: xx). Based on the values of Living Values Education (LVE) characters in the journal, universal values developed in Living Values Education (LVE) that can be implemented in Indonesia include peace, respect, love, tolerance, honesty, humility, cooperation, happiness, responsibility, simplicity, freedom, and unity (Qadafi, 2020:

128). Therefore, the above description proves that the community is aware of tolerance, and some have embraced universal values, aligning with the basic assumptions of the Living Values Education Program (LVEP): a. Universal values teach respect and honor for each individual. Embracing these values strengthens the well-being of individuals and society as a whole. b. Each student truly pays attention to these values and can create and learn positively when given the opportunity. c. Students strive in an environment based on values, safe with an attitude of mutual respect and affection (Tilman, 2004: xiv).

In conclusion, the meaning of tolerance from the perspective of Living Values Education (LVE) is closely related to behavior. All aspects of life should be value-based. Values that are the foundation for everything will motivate, challenge, be open, flexible, and creative in embodying these values. The community is expected to always uphold and apply universal values, and Living Values Education (LVE) believes that values are not taught but rather captured or felt.

Conclusion

In terms of the condition of religious communities, the entire population of Pelayang Raya Village has adhered to the teachings and regulations of their respective religions that cannot be tolerated. This must be preserved and upheld. Overall, the practice of religious tolerance in Pelayang Raya Village has been successful, aligning with the religious norms. However, concerning socialization among religious communities, especially with non-Muslims, there is still some discomfort felt by Muslim communities. Nevertheless, this does not mean that socialization among religious communities in Pelayang Raya Village should be ignored or undermined.

Further evaluation and increased concern are necessary for relationships among social beings to ensure that Living Values Education (LVE) can continue and be enhanced in the heterogeneous and multicultural community of Pelayang Raya Village. These efforts aim to ensure that the values of tolerance and universal education become integral parts of daily life in Pelayang Raya Village.

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