

Internalization of *Tasamuh* (Tolerance) Values in Educational Interactions: A Thematic Study of Religious Freedom Verses

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the internalization of the value of *tasamuh* (tolerance) in the educational interaction between teacher and student through a thematic interpretation approach to the verse *لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ* (QS. Al-Baqarah: 256). The background of this research is based on the importance of education as a means of forming tolerant character in a pluralistic society, and there are still challenges in the implementation of tolerance values in the school environment. The method used is a qualitative approach with the *maudhu'iy* (thematic) *tafsir* method, through the analysis of relevant Qur'anic verses, classical and contemporary interpretations, and tolerance education literature. The results of the study show that the verse *لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ* contains the principle of religious freedom which is the theological foundation for the development of tolerance in education. The internalization of *tasamuh* values can be carried out through an approach that integrates cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects, with teachers playing the role of facilitators and role models. Implementation strategies include interactive dialogue, experiential learning, positive reinforcement, and value reflection. The application of this pedagogical model has been proven to be able to create an inclusive, harmonious classroom environment, and support the moral and social development of students.

1. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of religious and belief diversity in various parts of the world, including in Indonesia, continues to be a central issue in social and educational dynamics. Education as a social institution plays a crucial role in shaping the attitudes and character of the younger generation, not only in the cognitive aspect, but also in the moral and social aspects, such as tolerance for religious and religious diversity. Schools and madrasas, as the main educational interaction spaces, face great challenges in instilling the values of tolerance in a meaningful way in the midst of a plurality of students from diverse religious, cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. Although Indonesia is known as a country with high diversity, the findings of various surveys and studies show that there are challenges that still need to be overcome in internalizing tolerant attitudes in the educational environment. According to the 2025 Muslim Religious Life Quality Index survey, although the level of religious tolerance among the young generation (Gen Z) is recorded high with an index of 79.65, the phenomenon of intolerance is still an issue that needs serious attention from policymakers and education practitioners. The survey noted that Gen Z has a tendency to reject the practice of persecution or the dissolution of other parties' religious activities, but the strengthening of the value of tolerance still needs to be integrated more systematically in the formal and informal learning process in schools. In the context of formal education, teachers play a central role as facilitators of tolerance values. Research by Marulloh & Susilo (2025) shows that the role of teachers in fostering

students' attitudes of religious tolerance is the key to overcoming the increasing incidence of intolerance, discrimination, and religion-based bullying in the school environment.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers and ethics are considered the spearhead in forming a tolerant attitude, even though they are still faced with implementation obstacles and obstacles in practice in the classroom. The results of similar research by Hikmah & Muizzuddin (2025) and Afifah & Dacholfany (2022) confirm that the strategy of internalizing tolerance through dialogue, example, and direct experience has proven effective in increasing mutual respect between students. In addition, the study of tolerance education emphasizes that the internalization of tolerance values should not only be oriented to cognitive understanding, but must also penetrate the affective realm and practical behavior in students' social interactions (Akbar et al., 2025). Research by Kurniawan & Kuswanto (2026) shows that learning based on reflection of experiences, dialogue, and teacher examples can increase the internalization of the value of tolerance in the context of formal education. The problem of tolerance in the educational space is also related to the moral and identity challenges of students. Data on the tolerance survey of high school students according to the SETARA Institute (2023) shows that although the majority of students (70.2%) show a tolerant attitude, there are variations in perceptions of national and religious values outside the formal context that indicate the need for a more holistic approach to value education. Tamaeka et al. (2022) added that internalizing tolerance through learning PPKn is also effective in forming an attitude of respecting differences from an early age. The global context also shows that tolerance education is a universal issue in the modern world of education. Various contemporary educational studies emphasize that education must facilitate a space for dialogue and respect for pluralism, including the principles of religious freedom and respect for differences as part of human rights (Maksum et al., 2025). In this context, religious education and values are the main field of learning tolerance because they play a role in the formation of ethical attitudes that respect the rights and freedoms of others. The sentence *لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ* ("There is no coercion in religion") from the Qur'anic hermeneutic perspective provides an important theological foundation for instilling the values of tolerance, particularly in the ethics of teacher-pupil educational interaction. Mulyani's research (2023) shows that this verse can be translated into learning practices to foster awareness of respecting religious freedom, preventing discrimination, and building an inclusive classroom atmosphere. If the challenge of internalizing the value of tolerance is not taken seriously, the impact can extend to the social and cultural realms.

A lack of respect for religious freedom in schools can reinforce exclusivity, create conflicts between students, and undermine a peaceful and inclusive learning climate. Its long-term impacts include increased social conflict, social fragmentation, and weakening of intergroup cohesion in a pluralistic society. This shows the urgency of in-depth research into how the value of tolerance, especially those rooted in the principle of *لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ*, can be effectively internalized in everyday educational interactions. Thus, this research is important because it tries to fill the gap of understanding and practice about how the values of religious freedom and tolerance can be internalized conceptually and operationally in the world of education. This research aims to make an empirical and conceptual contribution to the discourse on tolerance education, as well as provide a fundamental application model for teachers and students in building a harmonious and inclusive learning environment.

2. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of library research. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research focuses on understanding the meaning, value, and interpretation of the concept of *tasamuh* (tolerance) in the Qur'an, especially related to religious freedom. This research also uses the thematic interpretation method (*maudhu'i*), which is a method of interpreting the Qur'an by collecting verses that have a certain theme, then analyzed comprehensively to get a complete understanding (Al-Farmawi, 1994). Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from various literature relevant to the research, such as classical and contemporary tafsir books, including Tafsir Ibn Katsir and Tafsir Al-Misbah by Quraish Shihab, as well as books and scientific journals that discuss Islamic education, tolerance, and educational interaction. This secondary data serves as a support as well as a comparison in the analysis process in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding (Moleong, 2017). The data analysis in this study uses a content analysis method with a thematic interpretation approach. The analysis process is carried out by studying the verses that have been collected, then interpreting them by referring to various authoritative books of interpretation. The researcher seeks to understand the meaning of the verse not only textually, but also contextually. The content analysis method was chosen because it was able to provide a systematic understanding of the meaning of the text and allow researchers to draw conclusions that are relevant to the focus of the research (Krippendorff, 2004). In addition, the researcher also persevered in observation by reading and reviewing data sources repeatedly, as well as using adequate references that are relevant to the research topic. This effort is carried out to increase the validity and reliability of research results (Sugiyono, 2019).

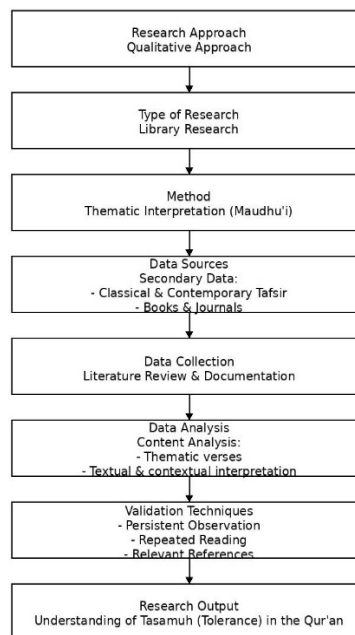


Figure 1. Method Stages

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Presentation of verses and analysis (reasonable, asbabun nuzul, and opinion of mufassir)

a. Verses Studied

Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 256

“لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ۚ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ”

(“Tidak ada paksaan dalam agama; sesungguhnya telah jelas jalan yang benar dari jalan yang salah...”)

This verse is the main basis for the concept of religious freedom and tolerance in social interactions, including the educational context. The following is an integration verse as a thematic derivative of Al-Baqarah 2:256:

1. Al-Fatihah 1:7

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

“(Yaitu) jalan orang-orang yang telah Engkau beri nikmat kepadanya; bukan (jalan) mereka yang dimurkai dan bukan (pula jalan) mereka yang sesat.”

This verse affirms the principle of freedom of belief: humans are given the choice to follow the right or wrong path based on personal awareness, not coercion from any party.

The Derivative Explanation is: Conscious choice: Al-Fatihah 1:7 emphasizes prayer asking for guidance to "the path of the blessed", which shows that the path of truth is something to be realized and chosen for oneself; Consistency with Al-Baqarah 2:256: The principle of no coercion in faith is reflected here, because choosing the right path is a personal decision based on knowledge and awareness and Educational relevance: In the context of learning, this verse teaches that students should be given the freedom to understand, reflect, and choose good values, not be forced to follow a belief or behavior. The teacher acts as a guide and role model, not a controller of the moral choices or faith of the students.

2. Al-Baqarah 2:62

... إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَى وَالصَّابِئِينَ

“Sesungguhnya orang-orang yang beriman, orang-orang Yahudi, Nasrani, dan Shabi’in...”

Derivative: This verse goes on to explain that whoever among them believes in Allah, the next day, and does righteous deeds, then they will be rewarded by the sight of their Lord. Its meaning affirms the principle of tolerance and respect for differences of belief, that goodness and sincere faith are judged by Allah, not just religious labels.

3. Ali Imran 3:64

... قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ

Katakanlah: ‘Wahai Ahli Kitab! Marilah (kita) menuju kepada satu kalimat yang sama antara kami dan kamu...’

Derivatives: Its meaning emphasizes peaceful dialogue and agreement on basic values between Muslims and the People of the Book (Jews and Christians), without coercion, as the principle of tolerance and mutually respectful communication.

4. Al-An'am 6:108

...وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ

Derivative: The meaning emphasizes the prohibition of insulting the beliefs of others, as a principle of tolerance and mutual respect in social and educational interactions.

5. Al-Ma'idah 5:2

...وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ

Derivatives: Its meaning emphasizes the principle of cooperation for good and away from cooperation in evil, which is relevant to building harmonious and inclusive social interactions, including in the context of education.

6. Yunus 10:99

...وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَأَمَرْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلَّهُمْ

Derivative: The meaning affirms the freedom of faith of each individual, that faith is a personal choice, not something that can be forced.

7. Al-Kahf 18:29

...وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ فَمَن شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِن وَمَن شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ

Derivative: Meaning affirms the freedom of the individual in accepting or rejecting faith, according to the principle of no coercion in religion.

8. Al-Kafirun 109:6

لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ

Derivative: The meaning affirms the principle of tolerance and respect for differences of belief, that everyone is free to practice their religion without coercion.

9. Al-Hajj 22:40

...وَلَوْلَا دَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ

Derivatives: The meaning affirms Allah's protection of places of worship and religious freedom, so that the houses of worship of all religions are kept from damage due to human enmity.

10. Al-Mumtahanah 60:8

...لَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ

Derivatives: Its meaning emphasizes the principles of kindness and justice towards people who live in peace, as part of tolerance and harmonious social interaction.

b. Reasonable (Contextual Relationship of Sentences)

Relationship to the previous verse: Verse *لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ* (QS. Al-Baqarah: 256) is closely related to the Verse of the Chair (QS. Al-Baqarah: 255) which affirms the omnipotence of Allah over the whole world. After displaying absolute divine authority, verse 256 affirms the principle of man's freedom in choosing faith. This shows that although God is Almighty, faith is not built through compulsion, but rather through individual awareness and moral choice. Hermeneutically, the relationship between these two verses reflects the balance between God's authority (*divine authority*) and human freedom (*human agency*). Man is given the ability to distinguish between truth (*al-rushd*) and error (*al-ghayy*), so true faith must be born from consciousness, not from external pressure. In the context of education, this value affirms that teachers should not impose beliefs, but facilitate dialogue, reflection, and understanding. Thus, the principle of *لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ* is an important basis in building tolerant, humanistic, and inclusive educational interactions. Relationship to the verse after: The next verse, QS. Al-Baqarah: 257, *اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ* Meaning: "Allah is the Protector of the believers; He brought them out of darkness into light." affirming that Allah is the Protector (*guardian*) of the believers, who guides them from darkness to light. Instead, the unbelievers are under the shadow of Satan-led error.

Connection with the previous verse (QS. Al-Baqarah: 256) reinforces that faith is a conscious choice, not the result of coercion. God's help and guidance are given to those who voluntarily choose the path of faith. Thus, this verse affirms the moral consequences of religious freedom: humans are free to choose, but every choice carries real spiritual implications. In the context of education, this reinforces that the internalization of the values of faith and tolerance must be built through awareness and learning experience, not pressure. Teachers play the role of guiding, not coercing, so that students can understand and choose the value of goodness reflexively and responsibly. Thematic context (Reasonable maudhu'iy): Emphasizing the principle of religious freedom as an individual right; Showing God's moral consistency: giving guidance, but not force; Relevant in education: teachers provide guidance without coercion, allowing students to understand and consciously accept the values of faith or ethics. Reasonable Core: The verse *لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ* is logically connected to the previous emphasis on the power of Allah and is followed by moral consequences for those who choose faith or not. This affirms the principles of voluntary choice and moral responsibility, which are the basis for the application of tolerance, religious freedom, and the ethics of interaction in education and social life.

c. Asbabun Nuzul (Because of the Descent of Verse)

Some classical mufassir explain that QS. Al-Baqarah: 256 descended in response to the practice of coercion in religious affairs, both in the Jewish and Christian communities, and in the social context of Arab society in the early days of the Prophet Muhammad's preaching. According to the study of contemporary interpretations of QS. Al-Baqarah: 256, this verse rejects the practice of coercion in religious affairs and affirms that freedom of religion is an individual right that must be respected. Modern research states that in this verse the Qur'an affirms that a person should not be forced to accept certain beliefs, because faith is a conscious decision born from inner awareness, as well as the foundation of the value of tolerance in social relationships. This understanding is shown in a study of interpretation that examines the principle of religious freedom and the rejection of coercion in religion based on *Al-Misbah* and other contemporary studies on this verse (Kuswanto & Alfi, 2023). Meanwhile, Al-Jalalayn emphasized that this verse also contains an important principle in da'wah, namely the necessity of conveying teachings

with clarity and rational argumentation. Thus, the coercive approach is not justified, and da'wah should be carried out through education based on logical explanations and examples.

d. Mufassir's Opinion

Various mufassir and contemporary studies emphasize the relevance of the verse لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ in the social and educational context: Kuswantoro & Alfi (2023): a) This verse affirms the prohibition of coercion in religion, emphasizing that the creed must be chosen consciously and through inner consideration. b) Relevance for teachers: not forcing students to follow certain religious practices, but rather guiding through example, persuasive approaches, and deep understanding. Rahmawati & Fadhilah (2022) a) Emphasizing that the difference between the path (*rushd* and *ghay*) must be consciously understood by each individual. b) Teachers need to explain the value of religious freedom to students in an educational and dialogical way. Hidayat & Santoso (2024): a) Interpreting this verse thematically, it affirms that religious freedom is a universal moral principle that is relevant in modern social interactions. b) for education: the internalization of the value of tolerance must include affective and behavioral aspects, not just textual comprehension. Mulyani (2023): a) Emphasizing the application of the principle of this verse in educational practice, especially in the ethics of teacher-student interaction. b) Teachers are exemplary in respecting students' freedom of belief and managing differences in an inclusive way. Based on the above interpretation, the implementation of the verse La ikraha fi al-din in education includes: a. Teacher Ethics: 1) Do not impose students on certain religious practices. 2) Be an example of tolerance and patience in dealing with differences. b. Student Ethics: 1) Respect the religious freedom of classmates. 2) Internalize the value of tolerance as part of daily life. c. Education Strategy: 1) Interactive dialogue on moral values and religious freedom. 2) Experiential learning activities and tolerance case studies.

Pedagogical Implications (Practical Application in the World of Education)

Based on the verse of Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 256 (لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ) and its thematic interpretation, there are several main pedagogical principles: 1) There is no coercion in religious learning. a) Teachers should not force students to follow certain religious practices (Kuswantoro & Alfi, 2023; Rahmawati & Fadhilah, 2022). b) The teacher's focus is to guide the students through example, dialogue, and rational approach. 2) Education based on moral awareness and reflection. The value of tolerance is not enough to be instilled through the memorization of concepts alone, but needs to be internalized through real experiences, dialogues, and active involvement of students in various participatory activities. This approach allows students to understand the meaning of tolerance more deeply and contextually in everyday life. As emphasized by Rahmawati & Fadhilah (2022) and Kuswantoro & Alfi (2023), an understanding of religious values, including tolerance, must be built through reflective processes and life experiences, so as to be able to form authentic moral awareness, not just theoretical knowledge. 3) Acceptance of differences as part of the learning process. The teacher emphasized that differences in beliefs are natural in a plural society and should be respected by every individual. This approach helps learners understand that respecting differences is not just a social obligation, but also part of moral and ethical character building. As expressed by Mulyani (2023), respect for diversity of beliefs must be a basic principle in educational interactions in schools.

Strategies for Implementing Tasamuh Values in the Classroom

1) Teacher Strategy

a) Role Models in Ethics and Attitudes. Teachers show appreciation for students' differing beliefs as part of inclusive and humanist educational practices. This attitude not only fosters mutual respect among students, but also strengthens a harmonious and conducive learning climate. As noted by Hikmah & Muizzuddin (2025), appreciation for the diversity of beliefs is one of the important indicators of the success of internalizing the value of tolerance in schools. b) Interactive Dialogue and Thematic Discussion. Teachers hold class discussions about the value of tolerance and religious freedom to encourage students to think critically and reflectively about the importance of respecting differences. This activity allows students to exchange views, understand the perspectives of others, and internalize the principles of tolerance in a practical way. As noted by Marulloh & Susilo (2025), participatory discussion methods are effective in forming tolerant attitudes and moral awareness of students. c) Experiential Learning. Teachers provide collaborative tasks involving learners of different faiths, including role-playing activities and case studies, to train empathy and the ability to understand the perspectives of others. This approach helps students internalize the value of tolerance through hands-on experience and constructive social interaction. As revealed by Kurniawan & Kuswanto (2026), learning strategies based on active participation and practical simulation have proven to be effective in forming an attitude of mutual respect and respect for differences. d) Positive Reinforcement and Appreciation of Tolerant Attitudes. Teachers give appreciation to students every time they show an attitude of respecting differences, so that tolerant behavior gets positive reinforcement and is motivated to continue to be applied. In addition, teachers integrate character evaluations, including attitudes of respect for diversity, as part of formal assessments, so that the internalization of tolerance values becomes measurable and systematic. This approach is in line with the findings of the SETARA Institute (2023), which emphasizes the importance of character evaluation as an indicator of the success of tolerance education in schools.

2) Students Strategy

a) Internalization of Tolerance. Students are encouraged to respect classmates who have different beliefs, as a tangible manifestation of internalizing the value of tolerance in daily interactions. This attitude helps to create an inclusive and harmonious learning environment, as well as train students' social skills and empathy. As emphasized by Mulyani (2023), respect for differences in peer beliefs is one of the important indicators of the success of tolerance education in schools. b) Active Participation in Inclusive Learning. Students are encouraged to participate in class discussions constructively, while respecting the differing opinions of classmates. This activity not only trains critical thinking skills, but also instills mutual respect and empathy. As emphasized by Rahmawati & Fadhilah (2022) and Kuswanto & Alfi (2023), participatory experiences such as active discussions are an important means of internalizing the value of tolerance in real terms, not just theoretical understanding. c) Practice of Daily Life. Students are taught to practice the principle of *إِكْرَاهٌ فِي الدِّينِ* in social interactions at school, for example by not forcing classmates to follow certain religious rituals or practices. This approach helps build awareness about religious freedom and the importance of respecting differences. As explained by Mulyani (2023), the application of this principle in daily life is a tangible form of internalizing the value of tolerance in line with Islamic ethics.

4. CONCLUSION

QS. Al-Baqarah: 256 affirms the principle of *lā ikrāha fī al-dīn* or no coercion in religion, which is an important theological foundation for the internalization of the value of tolerance in the educational interaction between teacher and student. This verse emphasizes that faith and understanding of religion must be born from individual awareness and moral choices, not through pressure or coercion, so that teachers have a guiding role without restricting students' religious freedom (Mulyani, 2023). Thematic interpretation emphasizes the relevance of this verse in the context of education, especially to shape ethical behavior and attitudes in schools. Teachers can apply this principle by respecting differences in beliefs, encouraging open discussion, and instilling the value of tolerance through participatory experiences, examples, and reflection, so that students learn to respect religious freedom as part of their character and moral competence development (Mulyani, 2023; Akbar et al., 2025). The value of tolerance can be effectively internalized through an approach that integrates cognitive, affective, and behavioral practice aspects. This means that learners not only understand the concept of tolerance theoretically, but also live these values emotionally and apply them in real actions in daily life. This holistic approach allows for the formation of a deeper and more sustainable moral consciousness. In this process, teachers play the role of facilitators as well as role models who provide real examples in being tolerant. Meanwhile, students are trained to appreciate differences through learning experiences, social interactions, and inclusive activities, so that the value of tolerance is not only understood, but truly internalized in their behavior. Practical strategies in internalizing the value of tolerance can be carried out through interactive dialogue, experiential learning, positive reinforcement, and reflection activities that encourage students to understand the meaning of tolerance in depth. This approach helps students not only know, but also feel and practice those values in their daily lives. Such a pedagogical model allows for the creation of a harmonious and inclusive classroom environment, where every student feels valued regardless of differences. In addition, this approach also supports the development of students' moral character as a whole, so that they are able to be tolerant, empathetic, and responsible in social life.

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