



The Urgency of Islamic Studies Approach in Building a Tolerant Society

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the urgency of a comprehensive and contextual approach to Islamic studies in building a tolerant society. In the era of globalization and an increasingly plural society, the challenge of building tolerance and harmony between religious communities has become increasingly urgent. Islam, as the religion with the second largest number of adherents in the world, has an important role in promoting the values of tolerance and peace. However, Islam is also often misunderstood and associated with acts of intolerance and violence. This research uses a qualitative approach with library research. The results show that a comprehensive and contextual approach to Islamic studies has a crucial role in building a tolerant society. This approach enables a deeper understanding of the values of tolerance and peace contained in Islamic teachings, as well as overcoming misconceptions and negative stereotypes. In addition, interfaith dialog and cooperation, as well as the development of an inclusive Islamic education model, are important factors in building a harmonious society.

Keywords: *Islamic Studies, Tolerance, Plural Society, Interfaith Dialogue, Inclusive Islamic Education.*

Riwayat artikel:

Sent:
23 November 2025

Revised
17 December 2025

Recieved
4 January 2026



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A. Introduction

In an era of globalization and an increasingly plural society, the challenge of building tolerance and harmony among religious communities has become more urgent. Islam, as the religion with the second largest number of adherents in the world, plays a significant role in promoting values of tolerance and peace. However, on the other hand, Islam is often misunderstood and associated with acts of intolerance and violence. This misconception is often reinforced by media narratives and global political events that do not represent the true essence of Islamic teachings (Esposito, 2004). Therefore, a comprehensive and contextual approach to the study of Islam becomes crucial in understanding Islamic teachings in a complete and accurate manner.

A comprehensive approach to the study of Islam not only focuses on sacred texts but also considers the historical, social, and cultural contexts in which Islamic teachings were revealed and practiced. (Rahman, 1982) emphasizes that understanding Islam must take into account historical context to avoid narrow and textualist interpretations. This approach also highlights the importance of inter-civilizational dialogue and cross-cultural understanding as strategies for building social harmony (Bayat, 2019). By understanding Islam within a broader context, society can more easily avoid negative stereotypes and misconceptions that often arise in global discourse.

One of the main objectives of this research is to explore the urgency of a contextual approach to the study of Islam in building a tolerant society. In this regard, a contextual approach can help in understanding the values of tolerance and peace within Islamic teachings more comprehensively. Concepts such as *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (mercy for the universe) and the principle of justice in Islam demonstrate that Islam teaches respect for differences and encourages cooperation among religious communities (Hasan, 2021). Therefore, by understanding Islam through a more contextual approach, society can more easily embrace pluralism as part of social reality.

In addition, an inclusive approach to the study of Islam can help address misconceptions and negative stereotypes about Islam. Many views that equate Islam with violence arise from a lack of deep understanding of Islamic teachings themselves. Through more holistic academic studies, including comparative religion and intercultural dialogue, society can see how Islam actually shares many similarities with other religions in terms of universal moral and ethical teachings (Esposito, 2004).

A comprehensive approach to the study of Islam can also serve as a foundation for developing an inclusive and tolerant model of Islamic education. Education plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' perspectives on the world, including fostering awareness of the importance of living harmoniously alongside followers of other religions. According to (Hasan, 2021), Islamic education should not only teach theological aspects but also encourage understanding of pluralism and interfaith cooperation. Such an educational model will help cultivate a generation that is more open, critical, and ready to contribute to the creation of global peace.

By understanding the urgency of a contextual approach to the study of Islam in building a tolerant society, this research aims to contribute to efforts in promoting harmony and peace among religious communities. Islam, when understood correctly, can be a major force in creating a more inclusive and harmonious society. Therefore, systematic efforts are needed to educate the public about the Islamic values that support tolerance and interfaith cooperation. In this way, Islam can function as an agent of global peace, in line with its fundamental teachings on compassion and social justice.

B. Method

This research employs a qualitative approach with a type of study known as library research. Library research was chosen because this study focuses on the analysis of texts and ideas found in literature relevant to the research topic (Sugiyono, 2013). This method allows the researcher to explore various academic perspectives on tolerance in Islam and to understand how the concept has been developed within different Islamic thought.

The data sources in this research are divided into two main categories: primary data and secondary data. Primary data consists of religious texts such as the Qur'an and Hadith, which serve as the main foundation for understanding Islamic teachings on tolerance and harmony. Additionally, primary data includes works by scholars and Muslim intellectuals relevant to the theme of tolerance and Islamic studies, such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun, and Fazlur Rahman. Meanwhile, secondary data encompasses books, academic journals, articles, and other documents related to Islamic studies, tolerance, and plural societies. This secondary data is used to enrich the understanding of how the concept of tolerance in Islam is contextualized within various academic studies (Esposito, 2004).

The data collection techniques in this research are conducted through document study and content analysis. Document study involves searching for, collecting, and analyzing various relevant literature sources. This method allows the researcher to trace the development of thought regarding tolerance in Islam and to see how Islamic teachings are understood in various historical and social contexts. Meanwhile, content analysis is used to identify themes, concepts, and arguments related to the research topic. This approach aids in understanding how various Islamic thoughts shape the discourse on tolerance and pluralism (Casram, 2016).

After the data has been collected, this research employs several data analysis techniques, namely text interpretation, comparative analysis, and synthesis. Text interpretation is used to interpret the meanings of religious texts and other literature while considering historical, social, and cultural contexts. This interpretation aims to gain a deeper understanding of the concept of tolerance in Islam (Bayat, 2019). Comparative analysis is conducted by comparing and contrasting various approaches to Islamic studies and perspectives on tolerance from different sources. In this way, the research can demonstrate how tolerance is understood across various schools of thought and Islamic traditions (Rahman, 1982). Meanwhile, synthesis aims to integrate findings from various sources to build a comprehensive argument regarding the urgency of a contextual approach to the study of Islam in building a tolerant society (Miles et al., 2015).

This research is conducted through several systematic stages, namely data collection, data selection, data analysis, interpretation of results, and report writing. The data collection stage involves searching for and gathering relevant literature from various sources, both print and online. Following this, data selection is carried out by sorting and selecting credible and relevant sources for further analysis. In the data analysis stage, this research employs text interpretation, comparative analysis, and synthesis techniques to obtain findings that can support the research objectives. The interpretation of results is performed by interpreting the analyzed data to formulate conclusions that can provide new insights into the study of Islamic tolerance. Finally, the research findings are compiled into a systematic and comprehensive report in accordance with academic standards.

C. Results and Discussion

This research finds that a comprehensive and contextual approach to the study of Islam plays a crucial role in building a tolerant society by providing a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings that emphasize the values of tolerance, justice, and peace (Mahmud et al., 2024). The study demonstrates that these values are not only applicable to Muslims but can also serve as a foundation for harmonious social interactions in multicultural societies. However, challenges remain in the form of misconceptions and negative stereotypes that often arise from a lack of accurate understanding of Islamic teachings, both among Muslims themselves and in the broader community (Prasetiawati, 2017). Therefore, an inclusive and contextual approach to the study of Islam is necessary to present accurate information and promote interfaith dialogue to address these misunderstandings. Additionally, the development of a more open and moderate model of Islamic education can help shape a generation with a broader understanding of religion and the ability to coexist in a pluralistic society (Casram, 2016). Thus, this study emphasizes that a more holistic approach to the study of Islam not only contributes to strengthening deep religious understanding but also plays a role in building a more peaceful and inclusive society.

Understanding the Value of Tolerance in Islam

The analysis of religious texts, such as the Qur'an and Hadith, reveals that Islam emphasizes the importance of tolerance towards fellow human beings as part of the fundamental principles of communal life (Salamah et al., 2020). Islamic teachings encourage respect for differences, both in beliefs and cultures, and uphold justice as a form of social balance. This study confirms that these values are not only relevant in historical contexts but also play a significant role in strengthening efforts to build an inclusive and harmonious society in the modern era (Tohari, 2023). Which emphasizes that tolerance in Islam is the foundation of a peaceful social life, where differences do not become sources of conflict but rather strengths for creating shared prosperity (Suryani, 2023). Therefore, a deeper and more contextual approach to the study of Islam is essential to clarify the teachings that support peace and to prevent misunderstandings that could trigger social tensions.

Overcoming Misconceptions and Stereotypes

This research also reveals that many misconceptions and negative stereotypes about Islam are widely circulated, particularly in multicultural societies, often arising from a lack of comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings (Geertz, 1968). Misinterpretations of Islamic concepts can reinforce prejudices and widen the gap between different community groups. Therefore, an approach to the study of Islam that combines the analysis of religious texts with historical contextualization is an important step in correcting these misunderstandings (Setiawan & Sudrajat, 2018). This approach allows for a more objective understanding of Islamic teachings, which actually emphasize the values of peace, justice, and respect for differences. Previous studies by (Rosyidi, 2019) also affirm that document-based research conducted systematically can help reduce misunderstandings and provide a more accurate understanding of Islam within a broader social and historical context. Thus, a more inclusive and academically grounded study of Islam can serve as an effective tool in promoting a more balanced understanding and eroding the negative prejudices that develop in society (Prasetiawati, 2017).

Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation

The research findings indicate that interfaith dialogue plays a crucial role in building a tolerant society, especially in a multicultural context (Kurniasih et al., 2023). Open and respectful interactions can reduce misunderstandings and build trust among religious groups. An inclusive approach to the study of Islam not only strengthens the understanding of Islamic teachings that emphasize the values of peace but also encourages cooperation in addressing shared social challenges. This aligns with (Nasr, 2010) view, which emphasizes that a critical approach to religious texts can enrich interfaith dialogue by opening up broader and more relevant interpretive spaces in line with modern social dynamics. Thus, a non-exclusive, dialogical, and open understanding of religion can serve as a foundation for the formation of a more harmonious and inclusive society.

Inclusive Islamic Education Model

Inclusive Islamic education plays a strategic role in instilling a moderate understanding of religion and a tolerant attitude in community life. By integrating values of peace, justice, and interreligious dialogue into the curriculum, education can serve as an effective means of shaping a generation capable of coexisting in diversity (Fahri, Mohammad, 2022). An educational model that emphasizes religious pluralism allows students to understand and respect differences, thereby preventing the emergence of exclusivism and intolerance. The findings of this research align with (Mahmud et al., 2024) assertion that pluralism-based Islamic education is key to building a harmonious and inclusive society. Therefore, the development of a curriculum that instills values of togetherness and respect for diversity is an urgent necessity in facing the current global challenges.

Comparison with Previous Research

The findings of this research align with various studies that emphasize the importance of a comprehensive approach to the study of Islam in building tolerance. However, this research further contributes by highlighting the role of inclusive Islamic education as a primary instrument in shaping moderate attitudes amidst diversity. Additionally, this study underscores the importance of contextual analysis of Islamic teachings as a strategy to address misconceptions and negative stereotypes that

develop in society. Furthermore, the results indicate that interfaith dialogue based on academic study not only enriches cross-religious understanding but also serves as an effective tool for enhancing social tolerance. Thus, educational approaches and academic dialogue can be key in building a more inclusive and harmonious society (Hasni & Kambali, 2022).

The findings of this research are consistent with various studies that emphasize the importance of a comprehensive approach to the study of Islam in building tolerance. However, this research further contributes by highlighting the role of inclusive Islamic education as a primary instrument in shaping moderate attitudes amidst diversity. Additionally, this study underscores the importance of contextual analysis of Islamic teachings as a strategy to address misconceptions and negative stereotypes that develop in society. Furthermore, the results indicate that interfaith dialogue based on academic study not only enriches cross-religious understanding but also serves as an effective tool for enhancing social tolerance. Thus, educational approaches and academic dialogue can be key in building a more inclusive and harmonious society (An-Na'im & Islam, 2008).

D. Conclusion

A comprehensive approach to the study of Islam plays a crucial role in building a tolerant society by instilling the values of tolerance, justice, and peace found in Islamic teachings. Dialogue and cooperation among religious communities are also key to creating social harmony. Furthermore, an inclusive model of Islamic education is necessary to instill these values of tolerance in the younger generation. These findings align with previous research but place greater emphasis on the importance of interfaith dialogue and inclusive education in fostering a harmonious society.

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