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THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS IN FOSTERING SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE: A CASE STUDY OF SMKN 2 PURWAKARTA

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Abstract

Schools occupy a strategic position in cultivating students' capacity to live with social and religious difference, yet tolerance education often remains confined to normative instruction. This study examines how SMKN 2 Purwakarta fosters social and religious tolerance, identifies the practices through which tolerance is institutionalized, and analyzes supporting and constraining factors. It employed a qualitative case-study design. Field data were collected on 16–21 December 2025 through semi-structured interviews with six purposively selected participants a principal, a religious education teacher, a Pancasila education teacher, a homeroom teacher, and two students supported by non-participant observation and document review. Data were analyzed through condensation, thematic display, and iterative conclusion drawing; credibility was strengthened through source and technique triangulation. The findings show that tolerance was embedded in school policies, dialogic learning, non-ritual participation in religious activities, student organizations, and routine cross-identity cooperation. Three analytical patterns emerged: a cultural-institutional approach, non-ritual inclusivity, and functional tolerance. Institutional commitment, teacher modelling, and everyday diversity supported these practices, whereas social-media narratives, different family socializations, and limited instructional time constrained them. The study concludes that tolerance is cultivated most convincingly when formal norms are reinforced by repeated, equitable, and purposeful social encounters. Because the study concerns one school and a short fieldwork period, the findings should be read as a context-bound account rather than evidence of causal effectiveness or a model automatically transferable to other schools.

Keywords: *Social Tolerance, Religious Tolerance, School Culture, Multicultural Education, Vocational School*

Abstrak

Sekolah menempati posisi strategis dalam menumbuhkan kemampuan peserta didik untuk hidup bersama di tengah perbedaan sosial dan keagamaan, tetapi pendidikan toleransi kerap berhenti pada penyampaian norma. Penelitian ini menganalisis peran SMKN 2 Purwakarta dalam menumbuhkan toleransi sosial dan keagamaan, mengidentifikasi praktik yang digunakan untuk melembagakan toleransi, serta mengkaji faktor pendukung dan penghambatnya. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data lapangan dikumpulkan pada 16–21 Desember 2025 melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur terhadap enam informan yang dipilih secara purposif, yaitu kepala sekolah, guru Pendidikan Agama, guru Pendidikan Pancasila, wali kelas, dan dua peserta didik, serta didukung observasi nonpartisipatif dan telaah dokumen. Data dianalisis melalui kondensasi, penyajian tematik, dan penarikan kesimpulan secara iteratif; kredibilitas diperkuat melalui triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa toleransi diintegrasikan ke dalam kebijakan

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sekolah, pembelajaran dialogis, keterlibatan nonritual dalam kegiatan keagamaan, organisasi peserta didik, dan kerja sama lintas identitas dalam aktivitas rutin. Tiga pola analitis ditemukan, yakni pendekatan kultural-institusional, inklusivitas nonritual, dan toleransi fungsional. Komitmen kelembagaan, keteladanan guru, dan pengalaman keberagaman sehari-hari menjadi faktor pendukung, sedangkan narasi media sosial, perbedaan sosialisasi keluarga, dan keterbatasan waktu pembelajaran menjadi penghambat. Penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa toleransi lebih meyakinkan ketika norma formal diperkuat oleh perjumpaan sosial yang berulang, setara, dan berorientasi pada tujuan bersama. Karena hanya mencakup satu sekolah dan periode lapangan yang singkat, temuan ini bersifat kontekstual serta tidak dimaksudkan sebagai bukti efektivitas kausal atau model yang otomatis dapat digeneralisasikan.
Kata Kunci: *Toleransi Sosial, Toleransi Keagamaan, Budaya Sekolah, Pendidikan Multikultural, Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan*

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A. Introduction

Religious, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic plurality is a fundamental feature of Indonesian life. This diversity provides social capital for the development of open-minded citizens, but it may also become a setting in which prejudice emerges when difference is not managed fairly. In West Java, religious and ethnic prejudice remains connected to the challenge of building social harmony (Truna & Zakaria, 2022). Horizontal conflict involving religious identity further demonstrates that tolerance cannot be reduced to the absence of violence; it requires the ability to recognize the rights of others, manage disagreement, and cooperate without erasing difference (Ibrahim et al., 2023). Schools are therefore important institutions because they bring students into regular contact under shared rules, purposes, and activities.

Normatively, Indonesia's national education system directs education toward the formation of democratic and responsible citizens while guaranteeing students the right to receive religious education in accordance with their own faith (Republik Indonesia, 2003). The provision of religious education in schools is further regulated through Government Regulation No. 55 of 2007 and Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 16 of 2010 (Republik Indonesia, 2007; Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2010). The national framework of religious moderation identifies tolerance as an important indicator in managing life within a religiously plural society (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019). These provisions place two responsibilities on schools: respecting students' religious identities and creating an educational environment free from discrimination. Similarly, the Pancasila Student Profile treats recognizing and respecting cultures, communicating across cultures, and reflecting on experiences of diversity as essential student competencies (Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan, 2022).

The presence of regulations and subject content does not, however, automatically produce tolerant attitudes. Multicultural education scholarship emphasizes that

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knowledge of diversity must be accompanied by changes in structures, relationships, and learning experiences if students are to receive equitable opportunities and learn to examine prejudice critically (Banks, 2015). UNESCO (2006) likewise presents intercultural education as an undertaking that encompasses curriculum, pedagogy, governance, and the learning environment. Tolerance education is therefore inadequate when it consists only of moral lectures or ceremonial observances. Its values must also be evident in teachers' language, the way schools address conflict, the distribution of opportunities in student organizations, the provision of religious education, and patterns of everyday cooperation.

This argument is consistent with the whole-school approach. Raihani (2011) explains that tolerance education should be understood as the product of interactions among a school's vision and policies, leadership, curriculum and instruction, organizational culture, student activities, and relationships with the wider community. A subsequent study showed that a culture of tolerance in an Indonesian school was built not only through religious instruction but also through leadership, school–family relationships, social practices, and consistent institutional norms (Raihani, 2014). This perspective is useful because it allows researchers to determine whether tolerance operates as an organizational practice or remains primarily a formal discourse.

Research on multicultural citizenship education at a Chinese Christian school in Jakarta shows that schools can become spaces in which national, religious, and ethnic identities are negotiated through everyday experience (Hoon, 2013). Parker (2014) similarly argues that religious education in Indonesia faces difficulties in supporting peaceful coexistence when teaching concentrates heavily on one's own identity while leaving insufficient space for understanding shared life. In multireligious public schools, equitable access to religious education and interreligious competence affect students' experiences of recognition (Utami, 2022). Together, these studies indicate that tolerance at school involves rights, knowledge, interaction, and a sense of belonging.

From a social psychological perspective, intergroup encounters can contribute to prejudice reduction, particularly when interaction occurs under relatively equal status, involves common goals and cooperation, and receives institutional support (Allport, 1954). Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) meta-analysis supports a general association between intergroup contact and lower prejudice. More recent assessments, however, caution that the effects of contact are not uniform, often depend on how the interaction is designed, and do not necessarily generalize from the individuals encountered to an entire group (Paluck et al., 2019, 2021). Scacco and Warren's (2018) field experiment, for example, found that contact through shared skill-building activities more clearly reduced discriminatory behavior than it changed every stated prejudice. Cross-identity group work at school must therefore be interpreted carefully: it may create promising conditions for social learning, but it cannot by itself be treated as proof of permanent attitudinal change.

Recent research in Indonesia reveals similar complexity. Secondary-school teachers use varied language to define tolerance and do not always agree on the

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boundaries between respect, acceptance, and recognition of difference (Sirry et al., 2024). In Batu, high-school students' tolerance was shaped by the city's transitional social context and the kinds of interaction they experienced (Kartono et al., 2025). Research in teacher education shows that the meaning of being a religiously tolerant Muslim is negotiated in relation to religious convictions and competing discourses rather than formed in a social vacuum (Wijaya Mulya et al., 2022). Teaching religious moderation consequently requires reflective space in which prospective teachers and students can examine assumptions rather than merely memorize terminology (Purwanto et al., 2024).

Learning about religious diversity can broaden students' knowledge and awareness, although its value depends on pedagogical design. Li et al. (2023) demonstrate that religious-diversity education can be supported by media that enable children to learn in an accessible and contextualized manner. Sakallı et al. (2021), meanwhile, argue that tolerance education should be understood as an activity system connecting subjects, rules, communities, and objectives. The development of a religious-moderation curriculum must also be accompanied by evaluation of knowledge, attitudes, and practice rather than assessed solely through the presence of material in curriculum documents (Mukhibat et al., 2024). These studies share a central insight: tolerance content acquires educational meaning when it is connected to social experience and institutional structures.

Vocational secondary schools deserve particular attention in this discussion. Their emphasis on skills, teamwork, projects, organizations, and preparation for employment creates frequent opportunities for students to interact beyond religious or social identities. At the same time, dense academic and vocational requirements may restrict opportunities for reflection on diversity. Research in West Kalimantan shows that multicultural education can help address a legacy of ethnic conflict when it creates room for local experience, dialogue, and identity recognition (Nakaya, 2018). Nevertheless, empirical accounts of how the broader ecosystem of a vocational school cultivates tolerance through policy, teaching, religious activities, and student organizations remain relatively limited.

SMKN 2 Purwakarta was selected as a case because its students come from diverse social, cultural, and religious backgrounds. The research data indicate several relevant practices, including non-discriminatory policies, dialogic teaching, social support for religious activities without participation in another religion's rituals, and cooperation in organizations and group projects. In the analysis, interview, observation, and documentary evidence are separated from theoretical interpretation so that the distinction between informants' accounts and the researcher's reading remains clear. This separation enables readers to see how conclusions were reached and helps prevent conceptual claims from extending beyond the evidence.

Against this background, the study addresses three questions. First, how does SMKN 2 Purwakarta contribute to the cultivation of social and religious tolerance? Second, what programs and practices does the school use to internalize tolerance? Third, what factors support and constrain these efforts? The study does not measure program effectiveness causally. Its contribution lies in a contextual account of the relationships

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among policy, teacher modelling, dialogic learning, non-ritual social participation, and cross-identity cooperation at a vocational school. Three concepts derived from patterns in the data guide the analysis: the cultural-institutional approach, non-ritual inclusivity, and functional tolerance. They are treated as interpretive categories for this case rather than theories already established across schools.

B. Method

This study adopted a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design. A case study was appropriate because the research focused on one school environment bounded by place, actors, activities, and a particular period of field data collection. Case study research makes it possible to examine relationships among policy, members' experiences, and everyday practices in their natural context (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). The purpose was not to calculate a tolerance score or test the effect of an intervention, but to understand how tolerance was interpreted and practiced and what conditions supported or constrained it.

The study was conducted at SMKN 2 Purwakarta, a state vocational secondary school in Purwakarta Regency, West Java. The site was selected purposively because its student population includes varied social, cultural, and religious backgrounds, making it relevant for examining cross-identity interaction. Field data were collected over six days, from 16 to 21 December 2025. This period refers specifically to on-site data collection; analysis and manuscript preparation took place after the fieldwork. The distinction avoids suggesting that preparation, data collection, analysis, and writing were all completed within a single week.

Informants were selected through purposive sampling based on their involvement in and knowledge of school policy, classroom instruction, student guidance, religious activities, and student life. There were six informants: one principal (PR), one Religious Education and Character Education teacher (RE), one Pancasila Education teacher (PE), one homeroom teacher (HT), and two students (ST1 and ST2). Codes distinguish sources while keeping the presentation centered on institutional roles rather than personal identities. Not every informant is quoted individually in the findings; their information is used according to its relevance and to compare patterns across sources.

Code	Role	Relevance of data
PR	Principal	School vision, policy, and governance
RE	Religious Education and Character Education teacher	Religious learning and teacher modelling
PE	Pancasila Education teacher	Dialogue, disagreement, and contextual learning
HT	Homeroom teacher	Classroom interaction and student guidance

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ST1–ST2	Two students	Activities, organizations, and peer relations

Source: Research data, 2025

Primary data were obtained through semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation. Interviews explored informants' understandings of tolerance, school policies and practices, experiences of difference, participation in religious activities and organizations, and supporting and constraining factors. Observations covered classroom group work, religious activities, extracurricular or student organizational activities, and visible patterns of social interaction during the fieldwork period. Secondary data came from available documents, including the school's vision and mission, rules, programs, curriculum, activity reports, and regulations related to religious education, character development, and diversity.

Each form of evidence was treated differently during analysis. Informants' statements were classified as interview data and are presented as interview summaries because the source manuscript did not provide complete verbatim transcripts. Quotation marks are therefore not used for paraphrased accounts. Events directly witnessed by the researcher were classified as observation data, while policy and program content was classified as documentary data. Once the evidence is presented, the following paragraphs perform analysis and discussion by comparing sources, identifying patterns, and relating those patterns to the literature. This structure prevents the researcher's interpretation from being presented as though it were an informant's exact statement.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2014): data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Condensation involved selecting evidence relevant to the three research questions and grouping it under school policy and culture, teaching, religious activities, organizational cooperation, supporting factors, and constraining factors. The evidence was then displayed in a source-by-theme matrix to compare interviews, observations, and documents. Conclusions were developed iteratively by identifying agreement, divergence, and evidence that limited an interpretation. The three analytical categories cultural-institutional approach, non-ritual inclusivity, and functional tolerance were formulated from relationships among themes and checked again against the available evidence.

Credibility was strengthened through source and technique triangulation. Source triangulation compared accounts from the principal, teachers, homeroom teacher, and students. Technique triangulation examined whether interview patterns received support from observations or documents. The absence of supporting evidence was not automatically treated as disconfirmation but was recorded as a limit on corroboration. The study is limited by its single location, small number of informants, and short data-collection period. Its findings are therefore not used to claim the prevalence of tolerant attitudes, long-term change, causal relationships, or the school's superiority over other

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institutions. Instead, the study offers a description of the patterns of practice identified during the research.

C. Results and Discussion

1. The School's Role: From Formal Norms to a Cultural-Institutional Environment

The first finding shows that the school played related roles at two levels. At the formal level, tolerance appeared in policy orientations that emphasized equitable treatment and respect for students' backgrounds. At the cultural level, those orientations were enacted through everyday language, teacher modelling, dialogue, and habitual cooperation. This relationship is described here as a cultural-institutional approach. The concept indicates that formal rules provide legitimacy, while daily interaction enables students to experience what those rules mean in practice.

> Interview Data PR. The principal explained that education should produce students who are not only academically capable and vocationally skilled but also able to live harmoniously with others. School policies were intended to ensure that every student felt accepted and respected regardless of religion, ethnicity, or social circumstances. (PR, interview, December 2025)

The principal's account suggests that tolerance was positioned as part of school governance rather than an additional program. This orientation is consistent with the whole-school approach, which connects leadership, policy, instruction, student activities, and organizational culture (Raihani, 2011). It also corresponds with Raihani's (2014) finding that school leadership and relationships among stakeholders contribute to a culture of tolerance. Nevertheless, the principal's interview primarily describes institutional aims and normative design. Assessing their enactment requires the account to be read alongside evidence from teachers, students, observations, and documents.

At the documentary level, the school's vision and mission, rules, and programs articulated standards for treating members of the school community. The data indicated rules that applied to all students and an orientation toward non-discriminatory language. Such policies accord with schools' responsibilities to protect students' educational rights and safety (Republik Indonesia, 2003; Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi Republik Indonesia, 2023). Documents, however, demonstrate formal commitment rather than implementation. Evidence that this commitment entered school culture appeared when teachers and students invoked similar principles in managing disagreement and allocating responsibilities.

> Interview Data PE. The Pancasila Education teacher stated that disagreement during lessons was not treated as a disruption to be avoided. Instead, it became an opportunity to teach students to listen to other views, present reasons respectfully, and retain their own convictions without demeaning another person. (PE, interview, December 2025)

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The PE teacher's account marks a shift from tolerance as agreement to tolerance as a way of managing disagreement. Tolerance does not require students to hold identical positions; it requires recognition of an interlocutor's dignity and adherence to fair rules of dialogue. This distinction matters because Indonesian teachers may use different understandings of tolerance, ranging from simply allowing difference to recognizing the rights of others (Sirry et al., 2024). Dialogic practice gives students an opportunity to distinguish criticism of an idea from degrading treatment of an identity.

This approach also reflects multicultural education's concern with developing the capacity to examine experience from more than one perspective (Banks, 2015). The teacher regulates the conditions of dialogue by establishing speaking norms, preventing domination, and returning discussion to reasons that can be examined. Institutional support for relatively equal interaction resembles the conditions for positive contact proposed by Allport (1954). The present data, however, do not measure prejudice before and after the lessons. The findings therefore demonstrate the availability of dialogic practice, not permanent attitudinal change among all students.

> Interview Data RE. The Religious Education and Character Education teacher regarded modelling as a primary means of internalizing tolerance. Students were considered more likely to understand respect for difference when they observed teachers communicating inclusively, treating students fairly, and maintaining constructive relationships with colleagues than when they received conceptual explanations alone. (RE, interview, December 2025)

The RE teacher's account positions educator behavior as part of the experienced curriculum. When teachers model equitable treatment, students encounter a practical example of how a norm operates in a specific situation. This process complements formal instruction: lesson content supplies concepts and reasons, while modelling demonstrates their consequences in relationships. Purwanto et al. (2024) emphasize that moderation education for prospective teachers requires reflection and pedagogical enactment, and Wijaya Mulya et al. (2022) show that tolerant identity is negotiated through discourse rather than simply transmitted. At SMKN 2 Purwakarta, teacher modelling helped prevent discussion of difference from becoming disconnected from the ways teachers treated students.

These sources support the cultural-institutional category while serving different evidentiary functions. The principal described policy orientation; the PE and RE teachers explained how values entered teaching and relationships; and documents provided a formal record of rules and programs. Agreement among the sources strengthens the interpretation that tolerance was not assigned to a single subject. Yet the limited observation period does not establish consistent implementation in every class, by every teacher, or throughout the academic year. The cultural-institutional approach should thus be understood as an identified pattern rather than a claim of institutional perfection.

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2. Programs and Practices: Learning, Religious Activities, and Student Organizations

The second finding is that the school did not operate a single initiative explicitly labelled a "tolerance program." Tolerance was instead incorporated into lessons, religious activities, student organizations, group work, arts, sports, and social projects. This pattern may be described as integrated tolerance because the same value appeared in several settings through different mechanisms. Integration offered repeated exposure: students discussed difference in class, observed teachers' conduct, and then practiced cooperation in activities.

> Interview Data PR. The principal stated that tolerance was not strengthened through one stand-alone activity. It was incorporated into policy, teaching, religious activities, student organizations, and everyday interaction so that it became a habit rather than merely lesson content. (PR, interview, December 2025)

This account distinguishes integration from ceremonial treatment. A ceremony may draw temporary attention to tolerance without necessarily changing relationships. Research suggests that tolerance education requires the learning environment, rules, curriculum content, and community to work toward compatible purposes (Sakallı et al., 2021). UNESCO (2020) similarly describes inclusion as a process of creating belonging and valuing every learner rather than merely placing people in the same physical space. The strength of integration therefore lies in consistent experience; its risk is that tolerance objectives can become difficult to assess when no deliberate reflection or evaluation accompanies them.

In the classroom, teachers connected tolerance to issues close to students' lives, including different forms of worship, religious traditions, identity-based conflict, and social-media use. Discussion, case analysis, and problem-based learning were used to help students examine reasons, consequences, and possible responses. This approach went beyond teaching that students "must respect others"; it practiced assessing information, distinguishing evidence from stereotypes, and considering what equitable action would involve.

> Interview Data PE. The Pancasila Education teacher explained that students discussed social cases, including conflicts associated with religion or opposing views. They were asked to identify the problem, consider the perspectives of those involved, and formulate responses that did not demean another group. (PE, interview, December 2025)

The account indicates that teaching was directed toward social and reflective competence. Contextual material gave students opportunities to test generalizations acquired outside school. Li et al. (2023) show that religious-diversity education can raise awareness when material is presented through experiences accessible to learners, while Mukhibat et al. (2024) emphasize the need to evaluate religious-moderation curricula across knowledge, attitudes, and practice. In this case, dialogue provided an educational process, but the data did not include an instrument measuring attitudinal change. The

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school could strengthen the practice through reflection rubrics, learning journals, or assessment of dialogic processes without turning evaluation into a judgment of students' private beliefs.

Religious activities constituted a second setting. Students of another religion could support the social and technical aspects of an activity without participating in rituals inconsistent with their beliefs. This pattern is termed non-ritual inclusivity. The category recognizes two considerations at once: religious activities contain theological boundaries that deserve respect, but those boundaries need not prevent social solidarity. Distinguishing ritual and social dimensions enabled participation to be based on willingness and a clearly defined role.

> Interview Data ST1. A student explained that students could assist with preparations or help maintain order when peers of another religion held a religious activity. Such involvement was understood as social support and did not require participation in another religion's worship. (ST1, interview, December 2025)
>
> Observation Data Religious Activity. During the religious commemoration observed, students from different backgrounds undertook preparation, crowd-management, and related social tasks according to their roles. The field notes did not indicate that students were required to join the ritual component of another religion. (Field observation, December 2025)

The agreement between ST1's account and the observation supports the interpretation of non-ritual inclusivity. This practice is relevant to students' right to religious education according to their own faith and to the principle of equal provision (Republik Indonesia, 2003; Utami, 2022). It also addresses a recurring challenge in religious education: strengthening identity without presenting knowledge of another group as a threat (Parker, 2014). Respect did not mean ritual blending, and ritual boundaries were not used to reject social cooperation.

Non-ritual inclusivity nevertheless requires sensitive management. Social involvement should be voluntary, roles should be explained in advance, and students should have equitable choices. Schools must also avoid repeatedly positioning minority students as "guests" who assist majority activities without comparable recognition of their own needs. Intercultural education requires recognition and participation, not simply one-directional tolerance extended by a dominant group (UNESCO, 2006). The short fieldwork period did not provide sufficient evidence to compare majority and minority experiences in detail; this issue warrants further research.

Group projects, extracurricular activities, student organizations, arts, sports, and social projects provided a third setting. These activities brought students together through shared interests or purposes rather than identical backgrounds. At a vocational school, teamwork is also connected to practical learning and preparation for employment. When responsibilities are distributed equitably, students can experience that a member's contribution is not determined by religion, ethnicity, or social background.

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> Observation Data Grade XI Group Work. During a collaborative Grade XI project, students from different social and religious backgrounds worked in the same groups. They divided responsibilities and concentrated on completing the task. No open exclusion or refusal based on religious identity was observed during the session. (Classroom observation, December 2025)
>
> Observation Data Extracurricular Activity. Students from different backgrounds took part in planning and implementing an organizational activity. They discussed, allocated responsibilities, and made decisions together without using religious identity as the basis for assigning tasks. (Extracurricular activity observation, December 2025)
>
> Interview Data ST1. The student explained that organization members prioritized the activity's shared goals rather than religious or ethnic differences. Diversity was regarded as an ordinary part of cooperation and as something that could enrich collective learning. (ST1, interview, December 2025)

Together, these three sources underpin the category of functional tolerance: respect that develops through the practical need to complete a shared task. "Functional" is not intended to diminish the moral significance of tolerance. It identifies an experiential mechanism through which students learn interdependence, assess contributions, manage disagreement, and build trust by participating in an activity. Common goals, cooperation, and institutional support resemble conditions associated with intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Recent evidence nevertheless requires a restrained interpretation. Repeated contact does not invariably eliminate prejudice, and positive effects toward familiar individuals may not generalize to an entire group (Paluck et al., 2019). Scacco and Warren (2018) found that heterogeneous skill-based interaction could reduce discriminatory behavior even when reported attitudes did not all change. Paluck et al. (2021) likewise caution that prejudice-reduction interventions vary by context and outcome measure. Because this study did not track attitudes or behavior over time, functional tolerance is treated as an observed opportunity for learning rather than proof that prejudice had disappeared.

Hoon's (2013) study of multicultural citizenship education supports the importance of turning the national ideal of diversity into a lived school experience. Nakaya (2018) also demonstrates that multicultural education becomes more meaningful when connected to social relationships and local history. At SMKN 2 Purwakarta, the vocational context provided a medium through group projects and organizations. The case contributes an account of how practical cooperation may become an arena for tolerance education when accompanied by equitable rules and reflection; it does not show that vocational schools are automatically more tolerant than other institutions.

3. Supporting Factors: Commitment, Modelling, and Everyday Diversity

The first supporting factor was institutional commitment. A consistent policy orientation legitimized teachers' use of dialogue, their responses to discriminatory

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conduct, and the development of cross-identity activities. Leadership support also reduced the likelihood that tolerance would be understood as one teacher's personal preference. In contact theory, support from authorities is one condition facilitating positive intergroup interaction (Allport, 1954). In the whole-school approach, leadership connects vision, rules, resources, and practice (Raihani, 2011).

> Interview Data PR. The principal explained that justice, equality, and respect for diversity informed the provision of education. The school sought to ensure that every student received equitable treatment and had a place within school life. (PR, interview, December 2025)

This statement indicates an institutional orientation, but its sustainability depends on procedures. Commitment is stronger when translated into mechanisms for reporting discrimination, allocating responsibility, evaluating activities, and providing follow-up that students understand. National regulations on preventing and responding to violence in educational institutions provide a basis for addressing discrimination and violence systematically (Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi Republik Indonesia, 2023). Educational dialogue therefore does not replace protection; it must operate alongside procedures that ensure safety and accountability.

Teacher modelling was the second factor. The RE teacher's account shows that students observed how educators communicated and treated other people. Modelling matters because tolerance instruction loses credibility when teachers use stereotypes, distribute opportunities unequally, or permit identity-based humiliation. Consistent conduct, by contrast, helps establish classroom norms. Sirry et al.'s (2024) finding that teachers hold different understandings of tolerance indicates a need for professional discussion so that modelling does not depend entirely on incompatible individual interpretations.

Everyday diversity was the third factor. Diversity made difference visible not only in textbooks but through peers whom students knew and with whom they worked. These encounters could challenge stereotypes through direct experience. Kartono et al. (2025) show that high-school students' tolerance is connected to social context and interaction. At SMKN 2 Purwakarta, group work and organizations were the principal settings identified. Demographic diversity alone, however, is insufficient. Without equitable rules and common goals, contact can also intensify tension. Its educational potential emerged when difference was connected to structured cooperation.

The three factors formed a sequence. Policies provided direction and protection; teachers translated them through interaction; activities supplied experiential settings; and diversity provided actual encounters. Sakallı et al. (2021) describe tolerance education as an activity system in which changes to one element affect others. A similar logic appears in this case: a student organization cannot function as an arena of tolerance if tasks are distributed discriminatorily, while a policy has limited meaning if teachers and students do not experience it in everyday life.

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4. Constraining Factors: Social Media, Family Socialization, and Limited Time

The first constraint originated in digital spaces. Teachers reported that students sometimes brought information, stereotypes, or exclusivist views encountered on social media into school. Digital information flows allow identity-based narratives to circulate without context and gain credibility through repetition. The problem is not social-media use itself, but students' capacity to evaluate source authority, distinguish criticism from hatred, and identify manipulative content that divides groups. Research on online Islamic knowledge sources shows that Indonesian Muslim university students use varied websites, religious figures, and social-media sources while assessing their authority in different ways (Askar et al., 2025). A related literacy challenge applies to secondary-school students.

The school addressed these issues through contextual discussion, but a more systematic response is necessary. Tolerance education can be integrated with digital literacy by asking students to trace the origin of content, examine context, recognize dehumanizing language, and compare sources. Paluck et al. (2021) caution that message-based interventions often produce limited effects when they are disconnected from norms and experience. Correcting information should therefore be tied to classroom communication rules, teachers' conduct, and direct cooperation with peers who may be targeted by stereotypes.

The second constraint was variation in family socialization. Students arrived at school with different experiences, vocabularies, and boundaries of association. Some were accustomed to interacting across backgrounds, while others had limited experience of diversity. These differences shaped how they interpreted events at school. Raihani (2014) demonstrates the importance of school–family relationships in cultivating a culture of tolerance. Schools cannot control family beliefs, but they can communicate the principles of safety, respect, and rights that apply to every student.

The third constraint was limited instructional time. Teachers had to meet subject competencies, while dialogue concerning social cases could require time, emotional management, and follow-up. In vocational schools, practical requirements and employment-oriented competencies may cause tolerance education to be treated as an additional concern. An integrated approach responds by incorporating reflection into existing activities, but integration also risks making tolerance objectives invisible. Religious-moderation curricula need explicit goals and evaluation if they are to move beyond formal inclusion in documents (Mukhibat et al., 2024).

These constraints show that tolerance education is a long-term process. Schools can provide corrective experiences and equitable norms, but their influence interacts with families, peer groups, media, and wider social dynamics. UNESCO (2020) describes inclusion as an ongoing effort to address exclusion and create belonging. The case should therefore not be read as a completed achievement. Existing practices require monitoring, channels for feedback from minority students, stronger digital literacy, and engagement with families.

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5. Synthesis and Implications

The study's three analytical categories operate at different levels. The cultural-institutional approach explains the relationship between policy and everyday culture. Non-ritual inclusivity explains how students support cross-religious activities socially without blending worship practices. Functional tolerance explains learning that emerges when students cooperate toward concrete objectives. The three categories are interconnected: policy protects participation, teacher modelling establishes interactional norms, and activities provide experiences in which those norms are tested.

The findings extend the whole-school approach within a vocational-school context. Raihani (2011) emphasizes the need to view the school as a system, while this case illustrates micro-level mechanisms linking its elements: dialogue manages disagreement, non-ritual participation protects solidarity and religious boundaries, and shared projects foster positive interdependence. This contribution is analytical and contextual. Multisite research and longer observation are needed to assess whether comparable patterns occur in other vocational schools.

The first practical implication is that schools should establish observable tolerance objectives without judging private belief. Indicators might include listening skills, non-degrading language, equitable opportunities, conflict resolution, and cross-group cooperation. Second, the boundaries of participation in religious activities should be communicated openly so that social assistance does not become ritual pressure. Third, digital literacy should be integrated into discussions of conflict and identity. Fourth, students need safe mechanisms for reporting discrimination.

The theoretical implication is that the presence of intergroup contact should not be equated with an outcome of tolerance. Meta-analysis and field experiments demonstrate the potential of contact but also reveal variable effects and limited generalization (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Paluck et al., 2019; Scacco & Warren, 2018). In this study, cooperation was observed as a condition for learning rather than as a measure of attitudinal change. This distinction prevents functional tolerance from becoming a causal claim unsupported by the research design.

The study also confirms that tolerance does not require the removal of belief or difference. Religious education retains its role in strengthening students' understanding of their faith, while schools ensure that identity formation occurs alongside recognition of others' rights (Utami, 2022). In multicultural citizenship education, particular identities and national belonging can meet through equitable participation (Hoon, 2013). Non-ritual inclusivity provides a practical illustration of this relationship: students are not asked to standardize their convictions but learn to share space, responsibility, and social concern.

D. Conclusion

SMKN 2 Purwakarta fostered social and religious tolerance through relationships among policy, instruction, teacher modelling, religious activities, and student cooperation. Interview data showed the principal's orientation toward equitable

treatment, the Pancasila Education teacher's use of disagreement as a basis for dialogue, the Religious Education teacher's emphasis on modelling, and a student's experience of supporting cross-religious activities in the social rather than ritual domain. Observations documented cross-identity cooperation in a classroom project, religious activity, and student organization. Agreement across these sources supports three interpretive categories: the cultural-institutional approach, non-ritual inclusivity, and functional tolerance.

Institutional commitment, teacher modelling, and diversity organized around shared goals served as supporting factors. Social-media narratives, variation in family socialization, and limited instructional time were constraints. The findings indicate that formal norms need reinforcement through repeated, equitable, and reflective social experience. The school should clarify behavioral indicators of tolerance, strengthen digital literacy, preserve voluntariness and non-ritual boundaries in religious activities, provide mechanisms for reporting discrimination, and involve families in communication about respect and safety. These conclusions remain limited by the single site, six informants, and six-day data-collection period. Future research should involve longer observation, include more student voices—particularly those of religious minorities—and compare several vocational schools.

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