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# Preventive Exploration of Conflicts on Christmas Celebration at Schools

*Exploración preventiva de conflictos en la celebración de navidad en las escuelas*

A. SYAR'I

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3798-7454>

[dr.ahmad.syari@gmail.com](mailto:dr.ahmad.syari@gmail.com)

Institute Agama Islam Negeri Palangka Raya, Kalimantan Tengah, 73112, Indonesia

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### RESUMEN

Algunos maestros musulmanes están presentes durante la celebración de Navidad en la escuela pública media en Pangkalan Bun, Central Kalimantan y hasta se dedican a desear "feliz Navidad"; pero otros tantos no asisten a los rituales de celebración ni son capaces de desear "feliz Navidad". Es decir, la diversidad religiosa en la escuela en cuestión, conlleva a celebrar la Navidad de manera plural y atendiendo al dictamen de las seis religiones con las que se convive en el recinto educativo. Todos los maestros musulmanes son selectivos acerca de las comidas y bebidas halal o haram que se sirven durante las celebraciones; además algunos tampoco participan en actividades de adoración durante la celebración. Musulmanes y no musulmanes ya entendieron las actitudes y puntos de vista de cada maestro y se dieron oportunidades mutuamente de acuerdo con la religión y las creencias.

**Palabras clave:** Celebración navideña, conflicto preventivo, religiones.

### ABSTRACT

Some Muslim teachers are present during the Christmas celebration at the public middle school in Pangkalan Bun, Central Kalimantan and are even engaged in wishing "Merry Christmas"; but many others do not attend the rituals of celebration or are able to wish "Merry Christmas". That is to say, the religious diversity in the school in question, leads to celebrate Christmas in a plural way and according to the opinion of the six religions that coexist in the educational campus. All Muslim teachers are selective about the halal or haram foods and drinks served during the celebrations; some also do not participate in worship activities during the celebration. Muslims and non-muslims already understood each teacher's attitudes and views and gave each other opportunities according to religion and beliefs.

**Keywords:** Christmas celebration, preventive conflict, religions.

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## INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning, Indonesian people have been accustomed to live in differences, because of their multicultural existence, including the diversity of tribes and religions, inhabiting 6000 islands spread throughout Indonesia (Lembaga Administrasi Negara: 2008). They live in peace and help one another. All adherents of religion, namely Islam as the majority religion, are able to colour a tolerant life as lived so far. Other religions are Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Law 01/1965 mandates that every citizen may adhere to one of the protected religions of the country. It means that it is a necessity to accept each other's differences because it is a principle in continuing of life together. This causes tolerance to be very crucial in Indonesia. Moreover, Levina, Lukmanova, Romanovskaya, & Shutova (2016) stated that tolerance one of the leading values in modern education as well as the basis of productive cross-cultural interaction.

This empirical fact shows that Indonesian people already owned and based social life based on religious values which becomes the beliefs of their adherents (Eko & Putranto: 2019), and in practice, it is strongly supported by the state (Mujiburrahman: 2006). Performing the worship referred that is protected by Law 1945 Article 28 E paragraph (1) that "Everyone is free to embrace religion and worship according to his religion..." and regulated in Article 29 paragraph (2), that "The state guarantees the independence of each population to embrace their respective religions and to worship according to their religion and beliefs". The freedom to embrace religion and practice worship in accordance with the religion adopted has also been arranged up to formal educational institutions. In the National Education System Law, 20/2003 requires schools to provide religious learning according to students' religion (Ministry of Education: 2003).

Unfortunately, religious education studies in Indonesia show that schools have not been able to teach their students religious tolerance (Listia et al.: 2007; Ahmad & Ahmad: 2018). This is because some religious studies teach the doctrine of the truth of each religion in the class (PPIM: 2008), has not touched the universality of religion yet. It is ironic since religious education is an important dimension/component of education with important effects on the moral health of the nation and as a factor of influence of human wellbeing (Niculescu & Norel: 2013). Moreover, Purrostami (2012) stated that ethical and religious teaching is able to open a new chapter in the forms of the following trilogy pivots in the educational system: 1) presenting Worldviews to science, trainee, trainer and educational environment, 2) presenting educational data through explaining hypotheses and true scientific propositions, and 3) endowing revealing knowledge with applying ethic and purification of the carnal soul. Since 2006, formal schools have gained a new authority by giving authority to teachers to design and create learning (Raihani: 2011; Ahmad & Ahmad: 2019), but this freedom also allows the intrusion of the teacher's personal beliefs to teach with a radical or intolerant approach to the religious teachings. Kurniawan (2018) found that practices of intolerance, through both the formal and informal spheres within the school structure, in a hidden curriculum.

As a practice of learning Catholic and Protestant religion in schools is carrying out devotions in the celebration of Christmas at school. The most visible school of religious tolerance at Christmas celebrations is the Public Middle School in Pangkalan Bun, Central Kalimantan. Since the establishment of the school, there has never been a religious intolerance that caused a conflict (Disdik et al.: 2018). Whereas public schools certainly have various religious adherents in terms of teachers, education staff and students in which are six religions protected by the state. School members help each other to carry out the constitutional mandate in accordance with their respective duties and functions.

Living in a diversity of religions in schools is not impossible, differences can occur that can lead to disputes, because the perceptions and views of each person may not be the same. For example, various attitudes showed by teachers in the celebration of Christmas by adherents of Protestant and Catholic religions. There are several teachers who are okay to attend as long as they are not in the ritual of worship, but there are also those who have the principle of not attending because they are considered to attend and believe that other religions do; there are also those who say "Merry Christmas" to those who celebrate, but there are also those who do not want to because they wish them a Christmas that is believed to have recognized the cause

of the Christmas celebration which is the belief in the birth of Jesus Christ; there are also those who visit each other during Christmas moments, but there are also those who do not do so on the grounds that visiting each other includes celebrating and believing in the event.

Raising how the attitude of Muslim teachers towards the Christmas celebration carried out by Catholic and Protestant teachers is very important. Given that Central Kalimantan has experienced conflicts in the name of religion. Although actually, it is not religion that triggers a conflict between Dayaks as local people are mostly non-Muslims and Madurese as immigrants who are mostly Muslims in Central Kalimantan, ethnicity and economics are the triggers (Raihani, *Successful School Principals in Indonesia*: 2004). After the New Order, local Dayaks felt marginalized after decentralization in 1999 (Jonge & Nooteboom: 2006) (Klinken: 2007), and Madurese immigrants are seen as failing to respect local residents (Klinken: 2007; Ahmad & Sahar: 2019) to cause a bloody conflict that kills up to 500 people (Cahyono et al.: 2008). Overall until 2016, researchers (Eko & Putranto: 2019) noted that there were 270 acts of intolerance occurring in Indonesia up to 2016, including the Christmas celebration conflict. It tells that in a multi-religious school and various differences in views and practices of Muslim teachers towards the Christmas celebration above, if not addressed with tolerance it will certainly cause conflict. However, (Raihani: 2014) said that the conflict against Christmas celebration at school also would not occur if each teacher has a preventive awareness of intolerance, and adheres to the principle of Central Kalimantan society, namely a longhouse (*Huma betang*), which is a symbol of cultural harmony between various religions and ethnicities in Central Kalimantan.

Against the facts above, the teacher is the executor of the implementation of religious tolerance learning and as an innocent/imitated figure. According to (Raihani: 2014), the teacher has a very important role in helping overcome the penetration. The religion teachers in schools should transform themselves into agents of peace (Maulana: 2017). Not only they must show tolerance in religion, but they must also show a preventive attitude towards intolerance, including the attitude of Muslim teachers towards Christmas celebrations for non-Muslims, and according to the research by Xiuhua Wang & Paul Froese (2019), the more educated a person is, the empathy for religious differences is more tolerant and has an introspective awareness in avoiding conflict. Furthermore, although ethnic conflicts in the name of religion in Central Kalimantan have been counted for a long time, and teachers in the school are categorized as highly educated, but the anticipation of intolerance still needs to be developed and cannot be ignored (Eko & Putranto: 2019).

The author begins this article with a brief literature review on a tolerance between religious communities, and intolerance that triggers conflicts between religious communities. Furthermore, the author describes the results of the study and discuss the various attitudes of Muslim teachers towards Christmas celebrations by non-Muslim teachers. Thematically analyzed using theological, pedagogical and social approaches. So, it can be seen how the exploration of preventive conflict Christmas celebrations in schools studied.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Religious tolerance among religious groups in schools**

Religious tolerance was understood as an activity aimed at avoiding causing any harm (both physical and moral) to surround people as might base on their belonging to other faiths (Shyryn et al.: 2013). It is one way to maintain the sustainability of the system in a school, and it is expected to actively take part in advancing the school. So, the first thing that must be addressed is the internal personal situation itself, in this case, the educators and education staff, in order to develop a dynamic religious understanding such as maintaining religious tolerance (Raihani: 2014). Joint Regulation from the Ministry of Religion and the Ministry of House Affairs 8-9/2006 that religious tolerance which can be practised in schools includes practising worship or carrying out religious rituals in accordance with their respective religious teachings; Commemoration of Religious Holidays (PHBK), for instance, are the celebration of Eid and Christmas celebrations (Depag: 2008).

Religious harmony is the relationship among religions, which is based on the mutual understanding, mutual respect, loyalty and the practice of their religion and cooperation in society, nation and state in the country of the Republic of Indonesia Year 1945 (Kementerian Agama dan Kementerian Dalam Negeri: 2006). (Muhaimin: 2009) said that the indicators of religious tolerance in educational institutions are: implement joint worship in schools in accordance with the religion of each adherent; do not disturb the adherents of other religions in worship; carry out and participate in joint activities which carried out in schools in accordance with the religious guidance of each adherent, for example, is commemorating religious days; reminds those who fail to practice worship wisely; reprimand and prevent those who violate religious law or school manners and order.

Tolerance between religious communities in public schools is a plural recognition that acknowledges peace in religious life. Tolerance is the fact that many people who embrace different religions need to recognize them as brothers and sisters in God (Departemen Agama RI: 2008). Department of Religion or now Ministry of Religion as an institution that supports religious people responsible for religious education in schools means more tolerance for active involvement in the hope that every religious community can interact positively in the multicultural environment as reality and inevitability of Indonesian society. Hoping that religious people in Indonesia are willing to accept the reality of different opinions about the truths of religion adherents, being respectful of the beliefs of others about their religion, can also giving freedom in implementing the teachings of their religion. Traditionally, tolerance has been interpreted as a system of norms, based on the democratic principles of equality, freedom and non-violence in understanding oneself from the attitude to the other (Korobeynikova: 2015) Jackson (2007) interprets tolerance as the value of mutual respect and recognizes differences, while (Bretherton: 2004) defines tolerance as an attitude of patience in differences.

Muslim teachers who serve in public schools certainly hold fast to the teachings of Islam as a religion of revelation that has set the tolerance to be universal to other religions because it is regulated in *i'tiqadi*. This is the principle that must be held by a Muslim who is in public schools. Yusuf al-Qaradhawi (1994), formulated that tolerance in Islam was built on basic principles, including:

- 1 The principle of human glory, however diverse (Q.S. al-Isra'[17]: 70).
  - 2.The belief that difference is a necessity and Allah's will [Q.S. Yunus[10]: 99].
  - 3.Believe that nonMuslims are not responsible for the way of life of Muslims (Q.S. Al-Kahfi[18]: 29).
  - 4.Stick to the principle of justice (Q.S. al-Maidah[5]: 8).
- 
1. Helping anyone without sorting out the poor, the sick, even those who have different religious (HR. Bukhari number 2363 and HR. Muslim nomor 2244).
  2. Establishing kinship in non-Muslims, including parents themselves who have different beliefs, (Q.S. Luqman[31: 15], and (Q.S. al-Mumtahanah[60]: 8).
  3. The ability to give gifts to non-Muslims (H.R. Bukhari number 2619).
  4. Having strict principles in the *i'tiqadi* area (Q.S. Al-Kafirun[109]: 6).

### **Intolerance becomes a trigger of inter-religious conflict in the school**

Conflict refers to some form of friction, disagreement, or discord arising between individuals or within a group when the beliefs or actions of one or more members of the group are either resisted by or unacceptable to one or more members of another group (Madalina: 2016). Kim & Leung (2000) define conflict as communicative exchange between at least two interdependent parties who have different, opposite, or incompatible opinions and goals and who perceive that the other is interfering in the achievement of his or her goals.

The reality of the pluralism of school implementers also allows for high potential conflicts, both small- and large-scale conflicts (Nasrum: 2016). Small-scale conflict can be backed up by communication that is not connected or not working as it should. It is called as poor communication by Shahmohammadi (2014), which

can lead to misunderstandings and allow barriers to be erected. This results in the offense, anger, frustration, disappointment, irritation, confusion, questions and so on (Karampourian, Ghomian, & Khorasani-Zavareh, 2018) and can cause trauma. Meanwhile (Nasrum: 2016), large-scale conflicts manifest in, for example, social unrest, multicultural chaos, racial equality, ethnicity, religion and others.

Minority issues are also part of the issue of conflicts in a pluralistic community/ school (Eko & Putranto, 2019). There are exceptions to traditional minorities; other religions are more tolerant of traditional minorities such as Buddhism and Taoism than Islam and Christianity (Wang & Froese, 2019). In this case, the concept of minority relates to the term difference. There are several thoughts on how these differences take place, including the study of the results of mapping differences as an unavoidable result of the modernity project. The metaphor of modernity enlightenment that was introduced by the West through the colonization project resulted in a condition where differences were structured, codified and institutionalized.

The triggers of intolerance that result in conflict in Indonesia, including public schools, and also debate about cultural essentialism to trace the sources of the causes (Parekh: 2000). For example, through the rubric of the Muslim-Christian conflict, it means that there is a role for the news giver some views debate the issue of religious conservatism, blame old-fashioned and orthodox doctrines compared with moderate views and transitions with certain teachings/understandings (Yang & Ishak: 2015). The polemic that occurred both from conservatives and liberal groups attacked each other by expressing their respective propositions/doctrines that were believed to be true, and it was certainly assumed if the views of other groups were wrong. A different point of view was delivered by (Mudhoffir: 2015), who argued that the tension of interfaith relations in Indonesia does not arise simply because there are cultural differences. Conflict and violence in Indonesia were more an expression of struggle in the political-economic contexts as the consequences of the political repression during New Order and social and economic marginalization as a particular effect of capitalist development.

## **METHODS**

This research method uses a qualitative approach that is presented in a descriptive-analytic manner. Qualitative research contributes to an understanding of the human condition in different contexts and of a perceived situation. However, there is no perfect designed study, and unexpected events will always appear. It is conducted to answer questions about the 'what', 'how', and 'why' of phenomena in which the researcher attempts to develop understandings of the phenomena under study, based as much as possible on the perspective of those being studied (Goodman: 2011; Berk et al.: 2015; Bengtsson: 2016).

The location of this research chooses in public education institutions because it consists of various religious adherents who are certain to have various explorations in maintaining a tolerant life and have many ways of anticipating conflict. The selected educational institution is the public middle school in Central Kalimantan which is known to be the most heterogeneous followers of religion and complete from 6 (six) protected religions in Indonesia, namely Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism from the teacher, education staff and students. The public school has also been operating for approximately 38 (thirty-eight) years, and there has never been a conflict between religious communities in the school.

Data collection is carried out with moderate or participant observation so that the author can occasionally position herself in the situation and condition of the research subject, but still position herself as a researcher; and in-depth interview techniques that focus on exploring conflict prevention measures at Christmas celebrations conducted by non-Muslim teachers, without a detailed list of questions so that informants feel free and natural in providing information and allowing new information to support the data being extracted; as well as documentation techniques that are used as complementary techniques to obtain data related to school documentation and teacher profiles. Research data are collected from all 45 teachers, and all of them are used as research subjects. In addition, this study also takes the data through other informants such as former

school principals to find out the history and development of Christmas conflict prevention practices in the school, head of the school committee and head of the West Kotawaringin education office, as well as the education staff as teacher partners in interfaith tolerance, as well students who are targeted to serve as teachers at school. Research data are analyzed thematically using theological, pedagogical, and social approaches.

## RESULTS

Based on school documents examined in the 2018/2019 school year, a total of 45 teachers, consisting of 33 Muslims as followers of the majority religion; second place is 8 Protestant Christians; then the Catholic religion in third place is two people; after that, there are 1 Hindus; same as the number of Buddhists as much as one person, 15 men and 30 women in which there are 40 civil servants (PNS) and five honorary staff. All of them embrace and practice worship in accordance with their respective religions.

The percentage description of religious adherents of Public Middle School (SMPN) 2 South Arut teachers above can be seen in the following table:

RELIGION	NUMBER OF PEOPLE	PERCENTAGE
Islam	33	73,33
Christian Protestant	8	17,78
Catholic Christian	2	4,44
Hindu	1	2,22
Budha	1	2,22
Confucius	-	-

**Tabel 1.** Teacher Data Based On Religious Adherents

All teachers support one another and are universal in their learning so that they respect, support and maintain one another. The same message is not only delivered in the classroom during the teaching and learning process but also delivered outside the classroom. Several times the writer witnessed when students lined up in the schoolyard at 06.15 - 06.30 WIB (West Indonesia Time), the picket teacher guided the students and opened the things that were considered important. One of them is to cultivate mutual respect and strengthen each other in order to stay alive in harmony, maintain comfort and security, and carry out their respective worship according to their religion. The teacher's task is not only to transfer knowledge to students but also no less important is to be a figure who is innocent and imitated. So, it is impossible if the teacher conveys and asks students to tolerate, while he himself does not implement it. Making teachers truly as role models in implementing tolerance.

When it coincides with Christmas, Catholic and Protestant teachers also celebrate it with all students of the same religion. Catholics and Protestants are more often celebrated/celebrated together in school, in addition to being small in number, it is also because they prioritize togetherness. They share roles as performers and work together in preparation until implementation. All non-Muslim teachers who celebrate Christmas at school have considered the conditions and situation of the celebration form, who is invited, what kind of event and so on, so that it continues as expected and that no party feels uncomfortable especially if it causes conflict due to Christmas celebrations. As the Christian religion teacher said, "For followers of Protestant and Catholic religions, besides having to understand each other, they must also share roles and be open, starting from planning the activities to carrying out the evaluation".

Every Christmas celebration at the school invites all teachers and administrative personnel as well as school committees and representatives from the district education office. There are a number of attitudes in

response especially from Muslim teachers, and all of them are already tolerated if it is a matter of principle that is believed, but in practice, it is flexible to be implemented in schools. Other forms of tolerance at school can be seen at Christmas at the houses of Catholics and Protestants. There are several attitudes shown by Muslim educators. For example, a mathematics teacher who is Muslim, he is close friends with one of the non-Muslim teachers, visiting each other's houses and not only at Christmas, even eating and drinking at the house often because it is like a relative. In addition, because he knows very well that his friend has never cooked food that Muslim should not eat, this is the real reason, so they feel confident and feel safe in enjoying it.

Unlike the attitude of a biology teacher who is Muslim, he never visits non-Muslim houses at Christmas, but usually visits on other days, such as when there is death, birth, marriage, or other needs. According to the teacher; maintaining friendship is not only and must visit at Christmas if visiting at Christmas is not also celebrated. If I join in celebrating, it means I agree with what is done. It is abstinence also for me to say the word 'Merry Christmas', because Islam boundary in giving such remarks to non-Muslims, but I used to say 'good luck', 'good health' or other sentences for worldly affairs, "this is the way Islam tolerates".

In contrast to the attitude of the counselling guidance teacher, he can make friends with all who are in school, work together and get along, but still look for close friends in the faith, it is intended that when exchanging opinions can be free and without boundary. The principle of counselling guidance teacher is almost the same as the attitude of Islamic Religious Education teachers, getting along naturally because it is a necessity in life and serving in public schools. He also visited the house of the teacher who celebrated Christmas, but never during the Christmas celebration with the intention of giving non-Muslim friends the opportunity to celebrate that day, which he chose before or a few days after, including not saying "Merry Christmas". He chose first to sincerely say "sorry for the wrong and mistake" during socializing. The reason is the same as the previous teacher, which is a principle in maintaining tolerance. If you say "congratulations", it means agreeing to what they believe. So, his presence to visit on the day before or after Christmas is in order to maintain the friendship. In the one hand, this is the same as being invited to devotion at Christmas at school. Even though the Muslims are only in a special room provided at school, while the devotions are in another room, they also do not want to come because they are already in the realm of ritual worship, it must be based on the principle of 'lakum dinkum waliyadin' (for you your religion and for me my religion).

Thus, there are several teacher's attitudes in practising tolerance when invited at Christmas events at school and at the house, namely: 1) attend invitations and visit the house that celebrates Christmas and wish a Merry Christmas, but does not attend devotions held at school. The aim is to maintain togetherness with non-Muslim friends; 2) attend an invitation and visit the house that celebrates Christmas but does not wish you a merry Christmas; 3) do not attend invitations at school and do not visit a house at Christmas, but usually visit it before or after in other moments, with the intention of giving opportunities to those who celebrate Christmas worship in their respective churches and celebrate happiness with adherents of their religion, and invite to non-Muslims to carry out Christmas worship at school. In addition, teachers who used to wish a Merry Christmas directly also used to do it through cyberspace such as Instagram, Facebook, What is App and others.

Tolerance in schools is also shown in terms of eating non-Muslim foods and drinks. All Muslim teachers claim to be very careful in consuming food and drinks from non-Muslim friends. This precaution is understood by non-Muslims at school. Understanding it for non-Muslims is shown by respecting and conditioning it. This is almost the same as what other non-Muslim teachers do who claim to say that at the house it is safe for Muslims to eat and drink, they never cook dog meat and pork at the house, even though they often consume it at family places. They do this because people who work in their house are Muslim. Not only that, but they also allow their employees to offer prayers or take part in religious recitation at a neighbour's house or at a house of worship that is close to their house.

Furthermore, a non-Muslim history teacher claimed to have asked one of the Muslim teachers at school about what food and drink Muslims might and might not consume, and the information was sought because he planned to have thanksgiving at his home and would invite his friends at school. There was a new explanation that he got; all this time he knew that he should not only eat and drink it (dog meat and pork), it turned out that the former place of cooking was not allowed either unless it had been cleaned according to Islamic regulations. As a form of anticipation, he asked Muslims and usually a schoolmate to cook it, with the hope that the school friends who were present would not hesitate or believe if it could be consumed.

The teacher statement above was agreed by the Islamic Religious Education teacher and several other teachers if the non-Muslims really understood and conditioned it in such away. Even so, this teacher claimed to still feel doubtful/doubtful, because there were deeper things that were not known by non-Muslim friends, namely the former place of eating meant not only those eaten and drunk at that time but the former place of eating before. It has not been said to be sacred, unless it is unknown or beyond the boundary of its ability to avoid it. Meanwhile, specifically for friends who keep dogs in their house, and everyone has witnessed that he eats with his dog in the former food place of his master, and his dog is free to roam in the house. So, he deliberately not to explain the situation, chose to restrain himself, and enjoyed it for himself and his family.

If the facts above are directed to the Muslim teachers who hold back and limit themselves as a form of attitude to maintain tolerance, here are facts to the contrary. When the authors conducted a study that focused on the problem of conflict prevention intolerance, the author had witnessed the conversation of a teacher who suggested eating at school before Christmas as usual when there are certain moments. The proposal was responded positively by offering to bring the required menus. Suddenly, there was a math teacher who refused and said to bring only fruit, because at the house he had just cooked dog meat. The statement issued by a non-Muslim teacher is a form of tolerance between religions, which is to respect Muslims against the boundary of not eating from used foodstuffs that are forbidden according to Islam.

The understanding of tolerance in the limitation of consuming haram food/drink according to shariah provisions is also very well understood by a Muslim teacher. He claimed that before he became mullah, he already knew that there were haram foods and drinks consumed by Muslims, such as eating dog meat and pork or used food containers unless they had been cleaned up first, because in his neighborhood when he was a child, he was in the Muslim environment and hang out with Muslim friends. In addition, there are already several of his families who are Muslim. Since becoming mullah, his family has respected him by not serving food and drink, which is prohibited in Islam.

Several facts above show that all Muslim teachers are very careful and more selective in matters of food and drink which are prohibited in Islam. This attitude is already well understood by non-Muslims so that mutual respect and understanding are prioritized and always anticipating, and never experience problems that cause discomfort, especially until conflicts occur because of the preventive attitudes that they are aware of and do.

The author witnessed a teacher of Islamic Education who helped teach the arts and culture, one day he once rectified the interpretation of faulty tolerance, that is; finding Muslim students who painted pictures of the Christian cross in his book when Christian and Protestant students did it before Christmas, the teacher reminded him not to join in that in order to avoid negative prejudice. The author also found a number of other cases, such as the quarrel between Muslim teachers and Protestant teachers during lesson breaks at the picket table. Starting from small talk about daily activities to the Christmas problem, there was an offence between the two parties and even heard a sentence that was inappropriate and high-pitched. After about three days, each of them realized and understood that if not appeased, they could be provoked by the other party. That made each one apologize first. This experience makes all school members be very careful when talking about religious teachings.

The next case was the distribution of the Bible to Muslim students on the eve of Christmas by guests, namely two men from one of the foundations based in Jakarta. After expressing the purpose of their attendance, they were permitted by the principal to meet students in classes with non-Muslim students (Class VII A, VII B, VIII A, VIII B IX A and IX B). They get acquainted and give religious advice, and ask Catholic and

Protestant students to raise their hands and share the Bible. Apparently, there were eleven Muslim students in class VIII B who got it. Even though it was reminded by Protestant mathematics teachers who taught at the time not to study it because Islam already had its own holy book, Al-Qur'an.

The incident above resulted in a negative response from parents of students whose children were given the Bible. There were three parents who met the Islamic Education teacher the next day, and they did not accept the incident because their children got the Bible. The principal asked the Christian Religious Education teacher to retract the bible that the students had already received and had to apologize to the parents concerned. All relevant parties (school principals, deputy principals, and all religious teachers) were brought together by the school principal to evaluate the case and emphasize that the incident would not be repeated later, and most importantly, that the case be resolved immediately without creating new problems.

Although previously, there was tension because there had been protests from Islamic Religious Education teachers who considered violating ethics and religious restrictions because they were considered to spread religion to people who were already religious. Through the principal's policy at that time, everyone could understand, and the Christian teacher involved expressed remorse and promised to apologize to students and parents and to withdraw all the bible that had already been distributed and promised not to be repeated later in the day for the sake of tolerance that is felt comfortable in school.

## DISCUSSION

The attitude shown by the teacher in the previous discussion was understood by all parties, not only among religious adherents, but also fellow adherents of the religion. Thus, religious life takes place peacefully without any obstacles. The differences in attitudes shown by Muslims occur only because of differences in providing perceptions and interpretations in interpreting the word "ritual worship". All Muslim teachers agree not to participate in other religious rituals, according to the Qur'an, *دِينٌ وَلِيَ دِينُكُمْ لَكُمْ*

Translation: "For you is your faith, and for me, my faith" (Q.S. al-Kafirun[109]: 6)

Islam is very strict in regulating tolerance that is related to mahdah worship, and indeed provides the flexibility of tolerance in social / muamalah problems, it is intended to enable adaptations in various social situations and conditions, as long as it still holds the principle of lakumdinukumwaliyadin. In connection with the presence of Muslims who wish them a Merry Christmas and those who do not, the interpretation in Surah Maryam regarding the story of Christmas in the Qur'an,

*يَعْتَرُونَ فِيهِ الَّذِي الْحَقُّ قَوْلٌ مِّنْ رَبِّهِ ابْنُ عِيسَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ*

Translation: That is Isa, the son of Mary – the word of truth about which they are in dispute.. (Q.S. Maryam[19]: 34).

Muhammad Quraisy Shihab (1992) explained that it does not matter if there are Muslims who wish them a Merry Christmas, as long as the Muslim aqidah can be maintained and held fast to the Islamic faith. This reason can be used as a justification for a Muslim who congratulates or attends a Christmas ceremony that is not a non-Muslim ritual of worship. This reasoning is in accordance with the boundary intended by teachers who consider merely visiting or attending a Christmas invitation which is considered to be merely humanitarian and worldly (Ath-Thabari, 2009). Those who do so assume that their actions are not the same as carrying out religious rituals. They also understand that the teachings of Islam concerning the issue of aqidah and monotheism are above all and believe that their actions are only social problems that are prevalent in socializing with non-Muslims. So, there can be a variety of opinions/perceptions in understanding the boundary.

Be selective about Allah's provisions in terms of food and drink, according to the Qur'an,

*مُؤْمِنِينَ عَدُوًّا لَكُمْ إِنَّهُ ۗ لَسَتِطِئْنَ خُطُوتَ شَيْطَانٍ وَلَا طَيْبًا حَلَالًا أَلْأَرْضِ فِي مِمَّا كَلُوا النَّاسُ بِأَيْهَا*

Translation: O people, eat halal better than that which is on the earth, and do not follow the steps of Satan; for surely Shaitan is a real enemy to you (Q.S. Al-Baqarah[2]: 168).

Halal food in question is a food that is allowed according to the provisions of Islamic law, halal substances such as rice, fruits, and side dishes. Halal is essentially a portion of food that is obtained or processed in the right way, according to Islam (Shihab: 1992). It also refers to a code of conduct which is permitted by Shariah which it applies to every activity carried out by a Muslim (Rezai et al.: 2012). Therefore, meat that had not been slaughtered according to Islamic rules are also forbidden for all Muslims (Salman & Siddiqui: 2014). Even the supply chain of the meat products should be considered halal as the demands of halal consumers (Alqudsi: 2014). Haram food is the opposite, which is haram substances such as dog meat, pork, blood, including carcasses other than fish and grasshoppers, and it is kind according to fiqh provisions. It is strictly forbidden; namely, food obtained or processed is not in accordance with the provisions of Islamic teachings, for example, halal animals slaughtered not by the name of Allah, food from the results of corruption/robbery results and others (Al-Qurtubi, 2007).

The affirmation of the above verse is not only the command to eat halal food, but also to eat food from the good. In tune with the following word of God, *إِيَّاهُ كُنْتُمْ إِنْ لَبَّيْتُمْ مَا طَيَّبْتُمْ مِنْ حُلُومِ أَمْثَلُوا الَّذِينَ يَأْتِيهَا تَعْبُدُونَ* Translation: "O you who believe, eat among the good fortune that We have given to you and give thanks to Allah if you really worship Him." (Q.S.Al-Baqarah[2]: 172)

The statement to consume halal and good food, Allah repeated in several verses of the Al-Qur'an, (Shihab, 1992) shows how important it is to be selective in this matter. It is not difficult to distinguish between halal and good food because halal food is certainly good, but good food is not necessarily halal (Shihab, 1992). The criteria for good food are good when considered sensibly and good in terms of health measures. So, indicators of good food are conditional also situational from the person concerned and from the habits of local people.

All Muslim teachers in public schools understand that food and drinks consumed affect personal attitudes and behaviour. Therefore, they are very cautious, including doubts such as attitudes adopted by Islamic Religious Education teachers and some other Muslims, as reminded by Rasulullah SAW in the hadith which means:

From Abu Abdillah Nu'man bin Basyir r.a, "I heard Rasulullah SAW saying," verily the halal is clear, and the haram is clear. Between them, there are cases that are doubtful (vague) that are not known by many people. So whoever is afraid of doubtfulness, it means he has saved his religion and honour. And whoever is involved in the case of doubtfulness, will be involved in a case that is forbidden, as a shepherd who is herding animals around (fields) that are forbidden to enter it. Know that every king has a ban, and the prohibition of God is what He forbids. Know that there is a lump of flesh inside, if he is good, then this whole body is good, and if he is bad, then the whole body is bad. Know that he is a heart. (H.R. Bukhari).

Based on the above hadith, the teacher who receives doubts about the halal nature of the food or drinks needed is the implementation of beliefs that originate from religion. This certainly has a strong influence on individual behaviour because it is the source of the highest and more absolute values (Buseri: 2010). Moreover, halal food awareness is caused highly by health reason as the contributing predictor (Ambali & Bakar: 2014). Even more, non-Muslim consumers showed positive attitudes towards Halal concept on food (Mathew et al.: 2014). This is a very important value for a Muslim, of course, it cannot be accepted from the attitudes and activities of a person, including teachers who represent the individual followers of Islam, as well as a servant state serving in schools and as members of the community. That attitude has been bound in every Muslim and has become the culture and principles applied in social life.

It is often heard from the teacher's explanation that develops universal religious values through face-to-face learning in class. This is a necessity in serving public schools where the community in it is multi-faith and religious. It means that the teacher has also implemented integrated learning (Raihani: 2014), which is to mix religious lessons universally with other knowledge (Yamin: 2007). Teaching religious to shape religious culture at the school effects on the students' attitude in terms of their spirituality, brotherhood, tolerant, discipline and

motivation in learning activities (Sahlan: 2014). It is expected the function of education is felt to be very effective in helping to strengthen life in peace (Fontana: 2015). Likewise, with Islamic Education teachers who correct the interpretation of tolerance which is not right, which is finding Muslim students who take part in various activities ahead of Christmas commemoration in schools including drawing a Christian cross, he asserted that Islam must indeed tolerate to all human beings other than those related to *i'tiqadiyah* (belief/monotheism). Tolerance relating to *muamalah* problems is permitted, while those relating to *i'tiqad* issues are strictly prohibited and are among the most principle. The importance of drawing a Christian cross is not for business, nor is it for drawing practice, but it is feared that misinterpretation will occur, both by the person concerned and the classmates who found it. Therefore, teaching students to be able to religiously tolerance is imperative. The students are generally able to understand good religious tolerance when they understand the actual inclusiveness of Islam from different religious societies (Firdaus: 2018).

The understanding of religious teachers about the concepts of tolerance and religious harmony obtained results that religious teachers already understood the concepts of tolerance and religious harmony. Not only an adequate level of education but also experience teaching in multi-faith public schools. It is important since the teacher is one of the subjects that should take responsibility for internalizing tolerance values in Islamic education by giving examples of tolerance behaviour in the learning process (Nugroho: 2018). Teacher attitudes may also shape student attitudes in a variety of domains (Trevino et al.: 2018), in which the must-have greater sensitivity and empathy, and also deep religious convictions, reflected in their behaviour and in their way of relating with the student (Erne & Barna: 2015). Timothy (2015) also found that teacher could decrease students' ethnic and religious prejudice by using a certain method- as he used Generalization Assessment Game (GAG) in the research. Islam allows tolerance and religious harmony that tolerance and harmony are related to human rights that cannot be imposed by others because it is a belief that is imprinted in the heart as the Qur'an says "for you your religion and for me my religion".

The attitude is shown by Islamic Religious Education teachers which corrects the students' mindset that Islam allows tolerance related to social/*muamalah* problems and there must be self-limitation as the principle of tolerating issues concerning *i'tiqadiyah* is correct as stated above. This attitude does not mean intolerance, but rather as a reference for Muslims in applying the right tolerance that is to anticipate from a negative view. (Arends: 2008) said that the greater policy regarding the role of religion in certain schools might be outside the influence of the teacher, but the teacher can play a vital role in teaching about religion and its values and set an example of attitudes of respect and tolerance for various religious beliefs. Teachers are the agent for students in providing them with the best medium for learning tolerance (Anwar, 2015). In order for students to think critically in understanding religion outside the teachings that must be accepted dogmatically (Lin: 2018).

Maintaining tolerance does not mean you have to be the same in everything. (Zuo' an: 2013) called it "harmony without uniformity". This is what is shown by the teachers. They live mutual understanding, respect each other, choose to be anticipative towards things that lead to conflicts of intolerance. This was evidenced during the founding of the school where they served there had never been a conflict related to religious tolerance. Nevertheless, reminded by (Hasan: 2007) in his book *Adad Badamai: Interaction of Islamic Law and Customary Law in Banjar Communities*, that "although it seems that social and religious conditions are quite calm, it is assumed that these calm conditions are no guarantee that they will not appear conflict. "This opinion is in accordance with the conditions in the school because a public education institution that gathers and associates with people of different backgrounds, including religion is natural to experience different things. The most important thing is not a different problem, but how to respond to differences, especially if it is feared to lead to conflict.

As in the school, there was a case of light discussion between Muslim teachers and Protestant teachers, which touched on the substance of religious teachings. Even from the small talk, that is personal, but if it is not anticipated, it can lead to communal fighting. It has been reminded by (Isre: 2003) that momentum is usually only in the form of small fights between two individuals about something that is very trivial or far from

the root of the conflict, but serves to justify the onset of a large-scale conflict. Likewise, with the case of the distribution of the Bible to Muslim students. If it is not wise in practising religion, it can lead to high sensitivity. This is also reminded by (Isre: 2003) that the spread of religion from each of the religious groups is often alleged as a source of tension between one religious adherent with another religious adherent. In this case, religious broadcasting goes well orally through print media such as brochures, pamphlets, leaflets and so on, as well as electronic media, as well as other media that can cause vulnerability in the field of religious life harmony (Yang & Ahmad Ishak: 2015), especially aimed at people who have embraced other religions.

A school principal becomes the most responsible for everything that happens in the school, including for maintaining habits that have mutual respect and maintaining tolerance (Fontana: 2015), the role of practical politics in education is felt to be very helpful. Because religion and its imprudent implementation of teachings can lead to religious tensions which in turn can lead to communal conflicts, in order to optimize the conducive school climate, the school principal should create the physical condition of the school, and the socio-emotional condition is pleasant (Murtedjo & Suharningsih: 2018). Therefore, a school principal requires a series of appropriate leadership skills to bring the school, staffs and students to a high level of achievement, and to maintain school effectiveness (Piaw et al.: 2014). School principals also have significant roles in establishing professional learning communities (Bayler et al.: 2015).

If we look at the two cases that lead to intolerance above, the two teachers involved in the first case were aware of each other if it leads to intolerance and there was a fear that conflict will occur, they tried to solve the problem without involving a third party. Unlike the second case, it was resolved by the school principal as a third party because it was not possible to be resolved by both parties. Small problems can become big if they are not anticipated (Stark & Wang: 2015), and offers ways to resolve problems if intolerance leads or occurs (Hasan: 2007). First, it can be done by both parties as a family (reconciliation). The second method is carried out by both parties by using the services of a third party as an intermediary or mediator. The third method is carried out by force on both sides by the community or state power (legitimacy).

As in the first case above, according to the first method offered by Ahmadi Hasan, it is settled in a family way. (Schulze: 2017) said that good communication is highly effective in solving problems. This can be done because each party is aware of and based on a good sense of friendship. In addition, (Zulkefli et al.: 2018) mentioned that social interaction and communication between different religions are essential to guarantee a harmonious society. The existence of harmony could prevent any conflict, which contributes to the fragility of inter-religious relations and political instability. The second case, such as the offer of problem-solving uses a third party as a mediator, in this case, the principal. This means that the principal's power greatly determines policies and decisions. A school depends on the principal, so if it happens in a country depends on the principal of the country (Panggabean: 2018).

So, the implementation of tolerance in a school from its inception until now implements an attitude of tolerance between religions and between religions as well and always guarding. Even though something happened that almost leads to religious intolerance, it can be managed by the teacher so that it does not cause conflict. (Suwarno: 2005) said that the positive way to look at a conflict/ potential conflict is to take it as an opportunity to communicate and create an understanding with other people and be able to live side by side while respecting the differences. The attitude displayed by the teacher is in accordance with the results of the dialogue formulation of the development of multicultural insights between the central religious leaders and the religious leaders of Central Kalimantan Province, which was held on October 13-15, 2003. The Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia in his written remarks was read by the Head of the Religion Research and Development Agency, and the Religious Education Department of the Ministry of Religion between others said that differences should be an asset that must be developed, it lies in how to manage those differences (Departemen Agama RI: 2008). As differences exist in schools because they can be managed well, it becomes the strength of schools to achieve the goals of the institution, which are a common goal.

A fact in schools illustrates that the majority of religious adherents also influence the implementation of its religious culture, meaning that the majority of religions in schools are able to show a caring, open attitude

and non-Muslim parties feel confident and secure in serving. This generally applies throughout Indonesia for the majority of Muslims. (Madjid: 1995) said that Islam has proven its ability to convincingly carry out tolerance and pluralism uniquely in the history of religions in which Islam is the majority model so that other religions do not experience significant difficulties. Along with this reality, Muslim personnel in every institution, including schools, must be an open group, who can appear with confidence, and behave as humans who protect other groups. This is because in Islam there is already a doctrine about practising religion universally, "Islam provides a religious foundation for adherents to accept the existence of other religions and establish good relations for their adherents" (Hamdie: 2006). Unfortunately, people are often misguided or divided in the name of religion and culture, despite the fact that the philosophy of every religion is based on peace and harmony (Wani et al.: 2015).

There are several government policies in maintaining religious tolerance in Indonesia. For example 1) agree in disagreement was government policy at the time of the Minister of Religion Mukti Ali who introduced the basic principles of harmony; 2) during the Minister of Religion Alamsyah Ratu Perwira Negara, he developed an approach that was named "harmony trilogy", namely internal harmony, between religions and between religious communities and the government; 3) the time of the Minister of Religion Munawir Sadzali until the time of the Minister of Religion Malik Fajar, they continued a policy called dynamic harmony which aims to establish a wider social life among religious people; 4) during the Minister of Religion Tolchah Hasan and Said Agil Husin Al-Munawar, they were more directed towards the realization of humanity's attitude with a policy of "developing multicultural insight" including an approach that embraced by buzzing nationalist feelings. One of the right discourses to maintain religious tolerance in Indonesia is to campaign for the spirit of nationalism (Mulya & Aditomo: 2019).

This study indicates that all teachers feel the function of religion, namely the function of meaning and function of identity (Durkheim: 2002), and religious life-oriented at school cannot be separated from all activities at school including the principal and teachers (Raihani: 2014). Although it is said that religion originates from God (Hidayat: 1998), the meaning and actualization of religion will only be realized when the religion is understood, internalized, and practised by its adherents. In addition, fiqh education is not only at the level of cognition but also internalized in affective and psychomotor level so that it becomes a character (Kholish & Wekke: 2018).

## **CONCLUSION**

The result of the study shows that Muslim teachers have varied attitudes towards Christmas celebrations carried out by non-Muslim teachers in public junior high schools, everyone makes a conscious and flexible effort in anticipating intolerance among other religious communities and between religious communities responding to Christmas celebrations; they establish a system of tolerance responding to Christmas celebrations and prioritizing teamwork and togetherness, and prioritizing the prevention of Christmas celebration conflicts through good communication and mutual understanding that differences are a necessity.

As a recommendation to the Ministry of Education and Culture to provide the development of religious tolerance in accordance with the potential and culture of the school, so that it has its own characteristics that can be the wealth of Indonesia, and teachers as the spearhead of education implementers must be anticipative in minimizing intolerance, so conflicts do not occur.

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## **BIODATA**

**A. SYAR'I:** A. Syar'i in as associate professor for Islamic education program at faculty of tarbiyah and teacher Training of Insitut Agama Islam Negeri Palangka Raya. He holds Ph.D in Islamic Studies from Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. His main research and publication revalve in Islamic education. He has spoken at a number of conferences on Education and Published some articles.