

Religious Tolerance as a Practice of Local Wisdom: The Legacy of Harmony in Dandangan Urban Village as a Pillar of National Social Resilience

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Abstract: *This study analyzes religious tolerance practices in Dandangan Urban Village, Kediri City, as a form of local wisdom for maintaining harmony in a multicultural environment. It employs a qualitative approach with an instrumental case study design. Two informants were selected purposively: a Muslim community member and a Christian religious leader, both of whom possess an understanding of local social conditions. Data were gathered through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using a reflective thematic approach and validated through source and method triangulation. The study reveals three key findings. First, interfaith interactions occur naturally through greetings, commercial transactions, daily communication, and meetings between religious leaders and community members. Second, stereotypes persist on a small scale primarily involving misunderstandings regarding loudspeaker usage and worship times but do not escalate into open conflict as they are managed through communication. Third, harmony is sustained through dialogue, mutual respect, adaptability, social closeness, and respect for the ritual autonomy of each religion. Based on these findings, the study formulates the concept of "proximity-based negotiated tolerance" a practice of tolerance maintained through social closeness, direct dialogue, and norms of non-interference regarding the ritual spheres of other groups. This concept is presented as a contextual finding of the case study rather than a universally proven model. The research demonstrates that everyday tolerance practices can serve as social capital to strengthen harmony and social resilience in multicultural environments.*

Kata kunci: Religious Tolerance; Local Wisdom; Cultural Heritage; Social Resilience; Multicultural Society

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known as a country with great religious and cultural diversity. This diversity can serve as a social strength if managed through interaction, adaptation, equality, and mutual respect (Ramadhan et al., 2020). In the context of a multicultural society, tolerance involves not only accepting differences but also the ability to build social relationships that allow people to coexist peacefully (Ramadhan & Eiranda, 2025). Umikalsum & Fauzana (2019) demonstrate that social integration is fostered through interaction and mutual respect within a diverse society.

Previous studies have examined interfaith tolerance across various contexts. Adawiyah et al., (2019), for instance, position multicultural education as a means of fostering tolerance within school environments. Nisvilyah, (2013) shows that tolerance between Muslims and Christians can be strengthened through shared religious values, cultural elements, and social activities. Unlike those studies, this research focuses on the practice of tolerance in the daily lives of the residents of Dandangan Urban Village, examining how social interaction, communication, mutual respect, and the management of potential conflict shape social harmony.

Dandangan Urban Village was selected because the community exhibits religious diversity yet maintains harmonious interactions. Interactions occur through greetings when passing one another, commercial exchanges at local shops, daily conversations, and meetings between religious and community leaders. At the same time, there is potential for conflict regarding differences in worship times and the use of loudspeakers. This situation indicates that tolerance must be understood as a social practice negotiated in daily life, rather than merely as a normative concept.

This study addresses three questions: (1) what forms of social interaction exist among religious groups in the research setting; (2) do stereotypes exist between religious groups; and (3) what efforts does the community make to maintain tolerance and harmony? The study aims to analyze forms of social interaction and identify stereotypes. Data analysis yielded three findings aligned with the research focus: social interaction among religious communities, stereotypes and the potential for conflict, and strategies for maintaining tolerance and harmony.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with an instrumental case study design. This approach was selected because the research aims to understand practices of tolerance and the dynamics of interfaith relations based on real-world conditions in the field. The case study design was utilized to gain a contextual understanding of the social mechanisms at play in Dandangan Urban Village (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Two informants were selected purposively based on their relevance to the research focus. The first informant is a Muslim community member who lives and interacts directly within this multicultural environment. The second informant is Reverend Thomas Suharto, an assistant pastor and Christian religious leader who understands the social conditions and interfaith relations in the research area. This composition provides two distinct perspectives: that of the general public and that of a religious leader.

Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observations focused on community activities and social interactions including relationships between residents, social events, and situations related to religious life. Interviews were used to explore the informants' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes regarding religious diversity. Documentation served to complement the observational and interview data.

Data analysis was conducted using a thematic, reflective approach involving data familiarization, initial coding, theme searching, theme reviewing, theme defining, and the drafting of the analytical report (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Data validity was reinforced through source triangulation comparing information from informants of different religious backgrounds and method triangulation comparing findings from interviews, observations, and documentation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings represent a case study rather than a claim that this model is universally more robust or sustainable than formal institutional tolerance. In the context of living cultural heritage, the practice demonstrates that the value of tolerance can be upheld through social habits that are learned, modeled, and passed down within the community. However, as this study involved only two informants in a single local setting, the findings are not intended for statistical generalization. Its contribution lies primarily in the contextual explanation of how social proximity and respect for ritual boundaries work together to maintain harmony.

Table 1. Findings

No	Aspect	Informan 1 (Islam)	Informan 2 (kristen)
1	Social interaction	Exchanging greetings, shopping at local stalls, and making adjustments for comfort.	Monthly meetings between religious and community leaders; harmonious social relations.
2	Stereotypes/perceptions	Minor stereotypes arising from misunderstandings, including the use of loudspeakers.	No stereotypes were found in the immediate environment; prejudice was observed more frequently in external media.
3	Potential for conflict	Differences in worship times and facility usage have the potential to cause conflict, but this can be prevented through communication.	Conflicts never occur within the immediate environment; external conflicts are attributed to a lack of closeness and mutual respect.

4	Tolerance and integration	Dialogue, mutual respect, and not interfering in matters of worship	Respecting one another, refraining from comparing religions, and building closeness.
5	Empathy and adaptation	Adapting to the situation and showing respect to foster mutual comfort.	Engage with all religions without restriction; empathy and openness strengthen relationships.

Interactional Harmony as Social Capital

Social interaction occurs naturally through greetings when passing one another, buying and selling at local stalls, daily communication, and monthly meetings among religious and community leaders. The first informant highlighted the importance of mutual adjustment to foster shared comfort, while the second emphasized harmonious social ties and interfaith gatherings. These findings indicate that social relationships extend beyond passive tolerance, manifesting instead through routine interactions that maintain closeness among residents.

These findings align with the concept of social integration, which positions interaction and mutual respect as essential elements in building harmonious relationships (Umikalsum & Fauzana, 2019). In the context of this study, social capital is formed through daily interaction habits and relationships among religious leaders. Thus, the practice of tolerance in Dandangan can be understood as a social habit nurtured through shared lived experiences.

Respect for Ritual Autonomy and Social Closeness

Interview results reveal that the community maintains tolerance through dialogue, mutual respect, non-interference in the worship practices of other faiths, avoidance of religious comparisons, and the cultivation of close communication. The first informant emphasized mutual adjustment and respect to ensure shared comfort, while the second highlighted interaction with all religious groups without restricting social ties. Empathy and openness emerged as factors strengthening interfaith relationships.

Based on these patterns, this study employs the working term "proximity-based negotiated tolerance" to describe the practice of tolerance built upon three elements: (1) social closeness in daily interactions; (2) direct dialogue when misunderstandings arise; and (3) respect for the ritual autonomy of other groups.

Latent Stereotypes and Their Management through Communication

Stereotypes did not manifest as open conflict; however, the first informant recalled a minor instance of stereotyping stemming from a misunderstanding regarding the use of loudspeakers during worship. According to the first informant, "There were minor stereotypes arising from misunderstandings such as the use of loudspeakers but these were resolved amicably." The second informant did not encounter stereotypes within the immediate neighborhood, observing instead that prejudice was more prevalent outside that environment. This divergence in responses is significant, as it demonstrates that perceptions of stereotypes are not entirely uniform.

These differing perceptions did not escalate into major conflict. Potential conflicts identified related to differences in worship schedules and facility usage were successfully minimized through communication. These findings reinforce the understanding that prejudice and a lack of communication can serve as sources of latent conflict (Khoir & Anshory, 2023). In the case of Dandangan, direct communication and ongoing social relationships acted as control mechanisms, preventing misunderstandings from escalating into open confrontation. The study highlights the importance of fostering spaces for social interaction and dialogue among residents and religious leaders as a means of maintaining social resilience. Future research could incorporate a larger number of informants, diverse communities, and longitudinal data to determine whether similar patterns of tolerance emerge in other contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the practice of tolerance in Dandangan Urban Village unfolds through daily social interactions and relationships among religious figures. Interactions such as exchanging greetings, commercial transactions, communication, and interfaith gatherings strengthen social bonds and foster harmony within the multicultural community. Stereotypes may still arise on a small scale, particularly due to misunderstandings regarding religious practices such as the use of loudspeakers and

differences in worship schedules. However, based on the two informants studied, these stereotypes do not escalate into open conflict, as the community employs communication and dialogue as mechanisms for managing differences. Efforts to maintain tolerance are characterized by mutual respect, non-interference in the worship practices of other faiths, adaptability, social closeness, empathy, and openness. Based on these findings, the term "proximity-based negotiated tolerance" is adopted as a working concept to describe the pattern of tolerance observed in the specific context of the study site. Given that the research design is a qualitative case study involving two informants, claims regarding the superiority or sustainability of this model are limited to the context of the study itself.

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