

# DEFINING TOLERANCE MEANING OF THE RELIGIOUS CONTEXT AT PALAS VILLAGE, RUMBAI DISTRICT, PEKANBARU CITY RIAU

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**Submission date:** 28-Mar-2020 08:44AM (UTC+0800)

**Submission ID:** 1283655699

**File name:** 2301-6270-2-PB\_1.pdf (161.76K)

**Word count:** 4071

**Character count:** 22111

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### Abstract

*This research has been conducted at Palas Village, Rumbai District, Pekanbaru City. The aim of the study is to demonstrate the values of religious tolerance in the context of Palas village in Pekanbaru. This study entitled "Understanding Tolerance in the Religious Context". The study conducted through survey where the researchers went to the field and conducted interviews. The study used method of sampling by purposive sampling. The researchers choose samples with several considerations of data instrument such as observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings of the study showed that the attitude of mutual respect plays key role in maintaining tolerance in religion and keeping the unity in society. This tolerance will also avoid the conflicts in the community. Lastly, the community is encouraged to maintain and realise between rights and obligations among others.*

**Keywords :** *Tolerance, People, Religion.*

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilakukan di Desa Palas Kecamatan Rumbai Kota Pekanbaru. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui nilai-nilai toleransi dalam beragama di Desa Palas Kecamatan Rumbai Kota Pekanbaru. Penelitian ini berjudul "Memaknai toleransi dalam konteks beragama". Penelitian ini adalah penelitian survey, yaitu peneliti turun ke lapangan dan melakukan wawancara. Cara pengambilan sampelnya dengan Purposive Sampling. Di mana peneliti memilih sampel dengan pertimbangan tertentu instrument datanya seperti observasi, wawancara, dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan keistimewaan toleransi didalam beragama untuk menjaga keutuhan dan persatuan dalam masyarakat diperlukan sikap saling menghormati dan menghargai. Sehingga gesekan-gesekan yang dapat menimbulkan pertikaian dapat dihindari. Selain itu, masyarakat juga dituntut untuk saling menjaga hak dan kewajiban diantara satu sama lain.

**Kata Kunci :** Toleransi, Umat, Beragama.

## INTRODUCTION

Human is both an individual and social being. As a social being, every person should be able to interact with other individuals in order to meet their needs. Living in a social society, an individual will be confronting with different groups including different in religions.

Further, a human as a social being needs a cooperative relationship in establishing relations with others as part of lives both material and spiritual. Islamic teachings encourage people to work together and help each other for goodness (*ta'awun*). In a broader context, for instance, Muslims can live with tolerance not only with Muslim but also to anyone without differentiating race, nation and religion (Suryana, 2011, p. 128).

In Islamic perspective, tolerance among religious groups gives the followers freedom to embrace the religion they believe in. It is important to note that the practice of religious belief in Islam makes into two rules, they are *muamalah* (human interactions) and *aqidah* (worship: God connections). In *aqidah*, a faith is the most basic thing for every followers of the religion. This means a follower respects to their own belief without having intimidation or intervention from others. Meanwhile in terms of *muamalah*, tolerance can be defined as establishing social relations among humans over the globe (Mursyid, 2016, p. 46-47). The rules of religion or other word are several kinds of limitation in religion considered to be significant to enhance the community that such religious differences are exist and that is the thing that community can learn to understand and respect to the differences with others so that the horizontal conflict can be prevented by living harmony in diversity.

## **RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The focus of this study is formulated into some research questions as follows: (a) How is the view of the community about the values of religious tolerance? (b) How is the pattern of religious community at Palas Village in Pekanbaru? (c) How is the form of religious tolerance between non-Muslims and Muslims at the village of Palas in Pekanbaru?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Tolerance**

According to Cambridge dictionary (2019), the word of tolerance means acceptance. This can be defined as having the character of being tolerant (appreciating, allowing) of opinion, or belief that different or contrary towards other people (Akhmad Syarief Kurniawan, 2013, p. 303-314). In Arabic word, the term of tolerance is *samanah* or *tasamuh*, this means an open attitude in confronting the differences which is actually such a noble personality. The meaning of *tasamuh* has virtue, because it symbolizes the attitude to self-esteem and sincerity.

Tolerance in a socio-cultural and religious context means attitudes and actions that prohibit discrimination against different groups and open to any society. In this case, a religious tolerance where the majority of particular religious followers also welcome and respect to other religious followers.

### **Discussion of Tolerance in Islam**

Tolerance is an open attitude and willing to accept the various differences such as ethnicity, skin color, language, customs, culture, language and religion, or more popularly known as inclusion, pluralism and multiculturalism. This is in line with what Allah SWT said in the

holy Qur'an which means "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)," (Al-Hujurat: 13).

All humans are in the circle of "sunnatullah" in which this verse indicates that Allah SWT created various differences including in theological terms in which every person will face it to enable them to learn and accept those differences. Tolerance among people in different religion has become part of the important studies in Islamic theological system.

As the last religion and stated to complete the previous religious teachings, Islam has taught to be tolerant in numerous conditions. This is stated in the holy Qur'an, "There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves in Taghut and believes in Allah, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break. And Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower," (QS. Al-Baqarah: 256).

This verse particularly indicates to the unbelievers. In this context, Muslims do not necessarily force the will of others to enter to Islamic religion. For the infidel (disbeliever) in this case is given the right to choose faith in Islam or the right not to believe in it.

In understanding the meaning of tolerance in Islam, this does not mean that it is freely follow and do the worship and ritual of all religions without binding the religious rules. Religious tolerance should be understood as a form of system and procedures for worship and give freedom to carry out their respective religious beliefs.

In general, tolerance is interpreted as mutual respect regardless of ethnicity, gender, culture, religion and social status. Meanwhile interfaith tolerance highlights the existence of mutual respect about different beliefs in carrying out the religious activities.

Islam is a religion that respects and tolerates one another, a religion that teaches its followers to love and protect each other regardless of their race, nationality and social status. This is in line with Indonesian Islam, the so called "Islam Nusantara". Although Indonesia is not an Islamic country, the majority of the country's population is Muslim. Interestingly, Indonesia is a country that is not so affected by Arabization because the Indonesians are a multicultural society by upholding the cultural values. However, it does not mean that the Islam they embrace deviates from the purity of Islamic teachings themselves (Astuti, 2017, p. 28).

The attitude of acceptance and acknowledgment of others as the teachings of tolerance offered by Islam as mentioned in the hadiths and verses of the Qur'an are actually rational and practical. In relation to belief (*aqeedah*) and worship, it cannot be mixed up because Muslims believe in one God; Allah SWT. This is not the same with the beliefs of the followers of other religions towards their gods and also the procedures for worship while Islamic teaching forbids the followers in denouncing gods of any religion. Therefore, the word *tasamuh* or tolerance in Islam is not something strange but this has been embedded as the core teaching of Islam that should be implemented in life since Islam came down. This context has been narrated by al-Bukhori (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 1997, p. 143).

### **Correlation of Tolerance among Muslims**

The correlation of tolerance towards fellow Muslim brotherhood as mentioned in the holy Qur'an, "The believers are but brothers, so make

settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy,” (Al Hujurat: 10). In this verse, Allah SWT stated that among the believers, they are brothers and sisters and it is encouraged to reconcile the relations if there is a misunderstanding among Muslim groups.

In developing an attitude of tolerance, this can be begun throughout building harmony in togetherness and realizing that differences are something unavioded and prioritizing brotherhood that resulted sense of love, mutual understanding and ultimately lead to tolerance as this had been exemplified by the prophet Muhammad SAW and following the guidance of his *Sunnah* and the holy Qur’an.

### **Tolerance among Religious Followers**

The study conducted by Syamsul Hidayat (2001) demonstrated that Islamic thinkers have various and broader perspectives in seeing the meaning of the verses of the Qur’an about religious pluralism. The Qur’an sign and verses of religious plurality that there is no prohibition and coercion in entering religion and Qur’an have showed precisely. Furthermore, Islam acknowledges and respects of the previous and other religions. Some of the verses that form the basis of this first view reference are that the Qur’an instructed humans to take the Islamic faith with wisdom and without coercion. Even though non-Muslim people remain in their faith, their rights are guaranteed by *sharia* law which is applied equally so that all citizens together stand before religious law.

According to Roem Rowi that was quoted by Hidayat (2001, p. 102), there was no compulsion for humans to reunite in one religion. The reasons are: first, religion is a belief that will provide peace and inner satisfaction or vice versa if people do hypocrisy that God hates. Second, the path to truth and error has been stated while humans have been equipped with a reason to choose. Whoever seeks a religion other

than Islam, the religion will not be accepted from Allah SWT and in the hereafter including those who lose.

Tolerance between religious people can be interpreted as an attitude to be able to live with people who adhere to other religions by having the freedom to carry out their respective religious principles (worship), without any coercion or pressure both for worship and non-worship from one party to another other. Meanwhile, the practice of social life can be started from the attitude of togetherness between religious adherents in everyday life.

Talib and Gill (2012, p. 51) demonstrated that religious tolerance as “Religious tolerance is an attitude of willingness to allow and accept religious differences to be practiced in any community or country without prejudice even if it is in one’s power to reject or deny it, in order to achieve well being and a harmonious society”.

The tolerance between rights and obligations in religious communities has been embedded in the values that belong to *Pancasila*. In Indonesian context as a pluralistic country consisting of various ethnicities and religions, it is needed a mutual respect between rights and obligations, so that various kinds of friction between religious groups can be avoided. The attitude of tolerance among religious people can be started from living in a good relationship with neighbors whether they are the same faith with us or not. This attitude of tolerance is reflected in a way of mutual respect as well as mutual help (Suprayogi, 2012, p. 105).

### **Statement of No Tolerance in ‘Aqeedah’ but Yes for ‘Muamalah’**

The holy Qur’an provides a very strict answer to the statements of the exclusive religious community. Religious guidance is not just for certain people but for all pious humans and no single group can claim that only they have been appointed by Allah and have obtained His instructions.



Fazlur Rahman in his book *Interpretation in the Quran* cited by Alwi Shihab (1997, p. 10) said that there are several verses of the Quran that showed the value of Islamic pluralism and form the basis of this second view argument, among others, is Surat al-Hujarat verse 13, “O man indeed, we created you from a man and woman, and made you nations and tribes so that you would know each other. Surely the noblest of you by Allah is the most fearful among you. Verily Allah knows all the more omniscient”. This verse has explained that Allah SWT has created men and women, and created human beings with nation-wide to establish good relations.

The word of *ta'aruf* tends to positive interaction, so that every good deed is called *ma'ruf*. The creation of human beings with nations and tribes is in the hope that one to another are able to interact well and positively. Furthermore, in *Surah al-Ankabut* verse 46 that “And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best, except for those who commit injustice among them, and say, “We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you. And our God and your God is one; and we are Muslims (in submission) to Him”. Then in *Surah al-Maidah* verse 48 that “Had Allah willed, He would have made you one nation [united in religion], but [He intended] to test you in what He has given you; so race to (all that is) good. To Allah is your return all together and He will [then] inform you concerning that over which you used to differ”. In this verse Allah confirms that He can create a nation or a people, but why not? The reason is as explained in the following verse, namely *liyabluwakum fi ma atakum* to test with what you receive from God’s guidance. Will humans be consistent? Because God wants to see who is consistent and who is deviant, then *fastabiqul khairat*, competing to do good.

Regardless the different belief systems and religions, Al-Qur’an has confirmed through one of his letters namely *Surah al-Kafirun* verses

1-6. This affirms that all human beings adhere to a single religion is a necessity. On the contrary, it is impossible for humans to adhere to several religions at the same time or practice the teachings of various religions simultaneously. Therefore, the Al-Qur'an affirms that Muslims still cling to the absolute system of Allah's essence while the unbelievers in the teachings of God are self-determined.

In understanding tolerance, Muslims should not be mistaken. Tolerance to non-Muslims can only be in muamalah aspects, but not in terms of aqeedah and worship. Islam recognizes the existence of differences but must not be forced so that something clearly is different.

In Islamic history, the Prophet Muhammad SAW was a good example in implementing religious tolerance by embracing all ethnicities and whatever their skin color and nationality. Togetherness is one of the priority principles, related to the character of modernization in Islam. Where Allah SWT wants to realize a moderate Islamic society as Allah says: Meaning: and thus (also) we have made you (Muslims) a just and elect people so that you become a witness to human actions and that the Apostle be a witness to your actions.

Avoiding divisions to be tolerant is a solution so that there is no division in practicing religion, the attitude of tolerance must be a personal awareness that is always accustomed to in the form of social interaction. Strengthening hospitality can be one manifestation of the tolerance of religious life is establishing and strengthening the relationship between religious people and maintaining good relations. Building a peaceful relationship between followers of religion can only be possible if each party respects each other. Developing a religious tolerant attitude is that every believer of religion can practice their religious teachings and ritual freely without pressure.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative research. Qualitative research is research that produces descriptive data in the form of written words or from people's verbal or observable behavior. This approach is directed at the background and the individual holistically and does not use hypotheses (non hypotheses) so that in this study there is no need to form a hypothesis (Arikunto, 1998, p. 245). The researcher emphasizes to clarify about a phenomenon that occurs or social reality by decrypting a number of variables related to the problem and the unit under study.

The location of the study was conducted in Palas Village, Rumbai District, Pekanbaru City with these considerations: (a) Palas Village is a village in which there are four religions, namely Islam, Christianity, Catholicism and Hinduism. (b) Palas Village is a village located near the residence of the researcher.

The data needed for this study were data related to how the views of the Palas community towards tolerance and how the people of Palas continue to establish harmony in a social environment. To explore the completeness of the data, data sources were needed as follows: (a) Primary Data Sources; the subject of research was used as information for research by using measurement tools and direct data retrieval, also known as interviews and observations (Azwan, 2007, p. 91). (b) Secondary Data Sources of data taken indirectly from data sources. Secondary data in this study were obtained through the study of documentation, questionnaires and data from the village, internet, literature and other documents related to research.

## RESEARCH FINDING

Religion has become part of the needs of individuals or groups in organizing community life which encourages their attitudes and behavior

in realizing shared life in harmony and diversity.

The variety showed by the people of Palas Village, Rumbai District, Pekanbaru City that the attitude and behavior of individuals or groups in their social interactions within families and relatives, neighborhoods and workplaces. Regarding the general patterns of harmony, the people of Palas Village have an image as a plural village. The Palas Village community is a group that has a homogeneous image in which the community is very tolerant with social variation and plurality that develops in their social life, in this case the image of the homogeneity.

There has been a harmony among religious people in Palas Village, Rumbai District, Pekanbaru City that is described as follows: (1) harmony between followers of the same religion, namely a form of harmony that exists between people who adhere to one religion, for instance; the harmony of fellow Muslims or Christians. (2) The harmony between other religious communities, namely a form of harmony that exists between people who embrace different religions. For example, harmony between Muslims and Christians, between Christians and Buddhists, or harmony carried out by all religions. (3) Upholding a sense of tolerance among religious people, both among people of the same and different religions. Tolerance can take many forms. For example, giving permission to build places of worship, not mock each other and disturb other people, or give other people time to worship and many other things that can be done to show tolerance. This is very important in order to maintain the harmony of the religious community in Palas Village. (4) Helping each other and not discriminating against a religion, especially when they need help. For example, in an area in Indonesia, there was an experience of the natural disaster. The majority of the population is Christians. (5) Maintaining respect for others regardless of what religion they hold, for instance; talking smoothly and not cynically. This certainly will strengthen religious

harmony in Indonesia. (6) Having ability in encountering the conflicts particularly in religious differences, in this case no blame each other. Thus, the religious leaders, community leaders, and the community itself need to take their role in achieving a good solution and beneficial for broader communities.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, it can be concluded that the views of Palas community regarding tolerance in religion has been showed by the people of Palas Village, Rumbai District, Pekanbaru City. Their tolerance could be seen from the attitudes and behavior of individuals or groups in their association with family and relatives, their living environment and workplace. The Palas Village community represents a homogeneous image in Indonesia that the community is very tolerant towards others despite the different religion that develops in their lives. In this regard, the community of Palas Village emphasizes that the homogeneous image of the community also has multiple features and social segmentation as a consequence of community relations pattern. This also shows that basically people can accept differences within their community eventhough they come from majority groups.

From the findings of the study, there are three suggestions made for these groups; community, community leaders and religious leaders. (1) It is important to realize that a conflict in community will happen anytime where the differences exist there. But, the differences are not the things that should be debated and somehow these are good to enrich one's experience. The differences exist are to give colour in the lives and develop better communities. Thus, it is recommended that the communities in Palas Village, Tumbai District, Pekanbaru City are able to develop good relationships with neighbors who have different beliefs either in

organization or in society. (2) It is suggested for the community leaders that they are actively involve in maintaining harmony among religious groups in the community by becoming the role model for establishing good relations among other community leaders whether they are different in religions or not. (3) Lastly, it is recommended that the religious leaders are expected to give understanding for their religious followers (*jama'ah*) to interact and maintain good relations with people from different faiths while they still explore the religious teachings based on the respective religions without disparaging other religions.

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