



## **Community Tolerance, Habitus, and Early Childhood Education in Schools: A Phenomenological Approach**

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose** – This study examines how the tolerant culture of the Senggarang community, rooted in its traditions and values, influences religious tolerance education in early primary education in Tanjungpinang City, Indonesia, by utilizing Bourdieu's theory of habitus and cultural capital to clarify the impact of cultural practices in multicultural communities on early childhood education oriented towards tolerance.

**Design/methods/approach** – This study employs a qualitative phenomenological approach, utilizing direct observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis to explore the influence of cultural practices on tolerance education. Field research engaged diverse informants from Senggarang, including elementary school teachers from early elementary education, local community members, and officials familiar with the area's historical and social dynamics, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the community's tolerance-related practices.

**Findings** – The findings reveal that the tolerant cultural practices in Senggarang, deeply rooted in historical and social contexts, significantly influence tolerance education among students. Children aged 6–7 years in early primary education adopt tolerance as part of the behaviors they learn through communal activities such as interfaith holiday celebrations and support for religious events. Cultural values that promote interfaith respect, evident in traditional interactions and mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), are internalized by children through family and community engagement. These practices align with Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and cultural capital, demonstrating how inherited cultural norms and daily practices shape children's dispositions toward tolerance. Educators and the school environment further reinforce these practices by embedding tolerance education through routines and collaborative activities among diverse students.

**Research implications/limitations** – This study provides valuable insights into how community culture influences school-based tolerance education. However, its findings may be less applicable to areas with different social and historical contexts. Future research could further examine the role of cultural capital and habitus in multicultural education contexts across various regions in Indonesia.

**Practical implications** – The study highlights the importance of incorporating local cultural values into education to foster early tolerance, offering a model for using cultural practices as teaching tools in diverse communities.

**Originality/value** – This study highlights how community culture and Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and cultural capital enrich our understanding of tolerance education in first-grade primary school students (ages 6–7), encouraging further exploration of local cultural values to shape inclusive educational practices in multicultural societies.

**Keywords** Tolerance, Cultural capital, Multicultural education, Early childhood education

**Paper type** Research paper

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## 1. Introduction

Interfaith tolerance is a critical issue in Indonesia, given its diverse society comprising various religions, ethnicities, and cultures (Lestari, 2020). This diversity, while a source of cultural richness, has also made Indonesia vulnerable to tensions and conflicts, highlighting the urgent need to promote understanding and harmony among its people. This diversity presents both potential conflicts and opportunities for fostering social harmony (Casram, 2016). The multiethnic community in Tanjungpinang City has long demonstrated awareness of the importance of diversity and interfaith harmony (Salim, 2006). Specifically, Senggarang, a part of the city, has been recognized as a Harmony-Aware Area, serving as an example of religious and cultural tolerance (Zahid, 2021). Thus, understanding and practicing tolerance in this region becomes a significant focus in tolerance education for primary school children.

Earlier research highlights how education plays a vital role in cultivating tolerance from a young age, as seen in successful programs like school-led interfaith workshops in diverse communities, where children engage in activities such as joint cultural performances and collaborative projects that emphasize mutual respect and understanding. (Dewi, 2021; Suryadilaga, 2021). (Al Sadi, 2013). Studies indicate that curriculum content plays a significant role in addressing injustices like intolerance and inequality, preparing students to practice tolerance in multicultural societies (Alabdulhadi, 2019; Chang, 2002). In Indonesia, however, some studies have found that the curriculum content has not sufficiently emphasized tolerance (Listia, 2007). Although examples of schools teaching tolerance effectively do exist, such as in private schools (Hoon, 2011), tolerance education in general still requires significant improvement. The dominance of indoctrination and instructional approaches has made religious tolerance subjects monotonous and lacking in critical engagement, thus failing to capture students' interest (Raihani, 2014).

Character education plays a crucial role in shaping tolerant behavior in children, especially when reinforced through habituation and role modeling, as seen in programs like peer mentoring, collaborative community projects, and integrated classroom discussions that actively involve students in real-world applications of tolerance (Cahyaningrum, 2022; Mulyasa, 2012). A holistic approach that brings together families, schools, and communities has been shown to further strengthen character education efforts in fostering tolerance (Rusmiati, 2023; Sarinastitin, 2019). Moreover, linking learning material to real-life experiences helps students internalize these values more effectively (Ariyani, 2023).

To understand the deeper mechanisms behind these practices, the concept of habitus provides valuable insights. Habitus explains how students' behaviors and practices are shaped by their community's social norms and values (P. Bourdieu, 1986). In the context of Senggarang, the tolerant practices observed among children at school are deeply rooted in their family, cultural, and historical backgrounds. This perspective underscores how communal and familial influences contribute to fostering tolerance values in early childhood education.

The concept of "cultural capital" helps explain how families and communities shape students' learning experiences and achievements (P. Bourdieu, 1986), as seen in Senggarang, where children inherit values of tolerance through daily practices like interfaith holiday celebrations, shared meals, and community-led educational activities that emphasize mutual respect and cooperation. Cultural capital encompasses the knowledge, skills, and values children acquire through their interactions within the family, community, and educational settings. This includes elements such as language, body posture, and preferences for clothing, food, and other cultural expressions (P. Bourdieu, 1989). These aspects of cultural capital often align with the dominant cultural norms reproduced in schools, giving certain students an advantage (P. Bourdieu, 1986; P. ; P. Bourdieu J. C., 1990). In the context of tolerance education, families play a vital role in transmitting values of diversity and acceptance to children. These values are then shared and negotiated in school environments, where children engage with peers from varied backgrounds. While children from dominant cultural groups may find it easier to navigate such interactions, those from minority backgrounds often face challenges requiring adaptation or negotiation of differences, which can sometimes lead to disadvantages.

This connection between cultural capital and tolerance highlights the importance of fostering collaboration between families and schools. By integrating values of tolerance into everyday practices and interactions, schools can create an inclusive environment that supports students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Habitus, as a related concept, reflects the formation of habits, norms, and behaviors through children's daily interactions with their surroundings. For young children, these interactions occur through play, family activities, and community involvement. Understanding these dynamics helps explain how tolerance values and cultural traditions become internalized from an early age. This perspective reinforces the need for education systems to design learning environments that nurture values like tolerance and cooperation from a young age.

In the educational context, this theory can be used to design a conducive learning environment where positive values such as tolerance, cooperation, and curiosity are nurtured early through daily interactions (Purwanti, 2020). Furthermore, the theory emphasizes the crucial role of teachers and parents in building children's "cultural capital" through creative activities and stimulation that support holistic child development (Cahyaningrum, 2022). The importance of integrating tolerance values into education lies not only in shaping individual character but also in maintaining social harmony in multicultural societies (Hasan, 2016). In regions like Senggarang, where local traditions support interfaith harmony, character education focused on tolerance holds significant potential to reduce conflicts and promote peaceful coexistence (Hanani, 2017; Syafar, 2017). This aligns with Bourdieu's concept of habitus, wherein repetitive social practices shape the habits and values adopted by society (P. Bourdieu, 1977).

Nevertheless, several studies indicate that tolerance in Indonesia continues to face various challenges, particularly with the rise of intolerance cases against minority groups in recent years (Itsram, 2021; Pusdatin, 2020). These challenges directly impact the education system by creating divisions among students, limiting interfaith interactions, and undermining efforts to instill values of mutual respect and acceptance in schools. Cases of worship bans and discrimination against religious minorities have become serious concerns in efforts to promote tolerance and religious freedom (DM, 2018; Yahya, 2017). Therefore, there is an urgent need to further explore how tolerance practices at the community level can support tolerance education in schools.

This research explores how the deeply rooted tolerance practices within the Senggarang community shape tolerance education in primary schools. It focuses on understanding how children internalize these communal values of acceptance and diversity through formal education systems, highlighting the interplay between community traditions and school initiatives. By shedding light on these dynamics, the study aims to enrich the literature on tolerance education and provide actionable insights for policymakers to create more inclusive and effective character education programs that address the challenges of multicultural societies.

## 2. Methods

This study was conducted using a qualitative approach to explore and understand perceptions, experiences, and views of the community in depth, particularly in the context of the role of habitus and cultural capital in early childhood tolerance education. The research was carried out in the Tanjungpinang City area, specifically in the Senggarang Subdistrict.

The subjects of this study included the Senggarang Subdistrict community in Tanjungpinang City, first-grade elementary school students (ages 6–7 years), and teachers at the early elementary education level (SDN 004) in Tanjungpinang City. The community members or teachers selected as informants were considered based on the objectives and purposes of the research, which aimed to identify the habitus of religious tolerance practices in Senggarang Subdistrict, Tanjungpinang City, and their influence on the tolerance attitudes of elementary school students in Senggarang at SDN 004, Tanjungpinang City. Informants were selected using purposive sampling and snowball techniques, consisting of several Senggarang residents and teachers. To determine whether students acquire tolerance values through interactions with their families and the Senggarang community, the informants were selected based on three criteria. The first criterion was that they should be residents who were born and raised in Senggarang Subdistrict,

Tanjungpinang City. The second criterion applied to community figures, requiring them to be leaders or officials with knowledge about the conditions in Senggarang Subdistrict. The third criterion was for teachers, specifying that they should have been actively teaching at the elementary school for more than three years (Table 1).

Table 1. Informant Codes and Occupations

Informant Code	Description
INF-01	Community
INF-02	Community
INF-03	Leader/Official
INF-04	Elementary School Teacher
INF-05	Elementary School Teacher

The object of this study was tolerance education in early childhood, focusing on the role of habitus and cultural capital in shaping tolerance values. The study explored how social and cultural factors influence children's tolerance behaviors in school environments. Informants were determined using snowball sampling techniques to obtain relevant individuals following interviews with the first informant.

Data collection techniques included direct observation, interviews, and documentation. Researchers conducted observations in the natural settings of the Senggarang community and schools, focusing on interactions that reflect tolerance practices. Interviews with several informants were conducted in stages, starting with direct observation and followed by in-depth, unstructured interviews that allowed the process to flow naturally based on the informants' perspectives. Documentation or document analysis was also conducted using primary and secondary data sources from relevant literature. This qualitative data collection, grounded in a phenomenological approach, ensured validity by involving informants who were aware of their roles in the dynamics of social development and tolerance practices in schools. Data analysis in this study employed Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis technique. This model consists of three main stages: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification.

### 3. Result

#### 3.1. *The Habitus of Tolerance in the Senggarang Community*

The practice of tolerance in the Senggarang community is viewed as a habitus, a concept by Pierre Bourdieu encompassing long-lasting dispositions guiding actions within a social environment. Habitus is shaped through internalized social and cultural structures developed via education, upbringing, and interaction, as seen in Senggarang. For example, schools play a role in fostering tolerance by providing shared spaces for children from diverse backgrounds to interact. Similarly, familial teachings instill respect for other cultures, and daily social interactions in community hubs like coffee shops encourage mutual understanding and harmony. It functions as a framework that guides and influences behavior and practices. In Senggarang, this habitus has historical roots in its multicultural society, established from the 17th to 19th century when Chinese immigrants arrived in Riau, particularly Tanjungpinang and Senggarang, a hub for gambier and other commodities (Arman, 2019; Rahmat, 2022). This historical multiculturalism is reinforced by nativist influences, such as the ingrained customs and traditions of the local ethnic groups, and environmental factors, including the geographic proximity of diverse communities, which necessitated harmonious coexistence (Ubaidillah, 2021).

People of Chinese ethnicity have been present in Indonesia, including in Senggarang Village, Tanjungpinang City, for hundreds of years. However, they have faced various social dynamics in being accepted as Indonesians. The Indonesian government during the independence era tended to continue the policies of the colonial period, which segregated Chinese people from locals by labeling them as "pribumi." During the New Order era, stereotypes emerged portraying the Chinese as foreigners, unfaithful, and exploitative (Ubaedillah, 2023). For instance, Chinese-owned businesses were often labeled as monopolistic and accused of exploiting local resources,

which fueled public resentment and reinforced these negative stereotypes. They were often scapegoated during economic and political crises, culminating in many Chinese people becoming victims during the May 1998 tragedy (Makmur, 2018). During the presidency of Abdurrahman Wahid, also known as Gus Dur, the Chinese ethnic group began to experience a new era that allowed them to express their identity freely, with the repeal of Presidential Instruction No. 14/1967, which prohibited various Chinese-related activities, including celebrating Chinese New Year (Makmur, 2018). Gus Dur's government policies toward the Chinese community marked a turning point in the history of the Chinese in Indonesia. These groundbreaking policies enabled the rejuvenation of the three pillars of Chinese identity: language, education, media, and organization (Ubaedillah, 2023).

The multicultural awareness of the Senggarang community in Tanjungpinang City has developed and eventually supported a deeply rooted habitus of tolerance. Historically, this awareness was fostered through the community's long-standing cultural exchanges, such as shared markets and social hubs, and culturally significant events, like communal celebrations of Chinese New Year and Eid. These interactions nurtured an innate understanding and respect among the various ethnic and religious groups. This awareness is also a potential and innate ability to understand one another (Salim, 2006). This is evident in the existence of several places of worship from different religions located next to each other, such as the Sasana Budhaya Vihara Complex with the ST. Maria Goreti Senggarang Catholic Church and the Tirta Maitreya Vihara. Not far from these locations are the Al-Huda Grand Mosque, as well as several Pentecostal churches and small temples within the settlement. These serve as symbols of religious harmony and tolerance. The religious diversity in the Senggarang community is also reflected in the distribution of religious adherents: 69% Muslims, 27% Buddhists, 3% Protestants, 1% Catholics, and others, including Confucianism, making up the remaining percentage (Zahid, 2021).

In the social life of the Senggarang Village community, there has never been any social conflict. The Senggarang community is culturally composed of several ethnic groups, such as Malay, Bugis, Chinese, Javanese, Bawean, and others, who have long lived and become part of the development of Tanjungpinang City. They coexist amidst various religious and cultural/traditional differences, which makes them a strong multicultural community in social activities. Residential areas are divided into different locations, for instance, Malay people predominantly live inland in Sebauk Village, Bawean people mainly reside in the market area, and Chinese people mostly live near the sea. As one resident informant explained: "*Untuk wilayah rumahnya, kalau di sini banyak orang-orang boyan, kalau China mereka kebanyakan di (daerah) Laut, dan kalau di kedai kopi mereka berbaur. Selama ini memang tidak pernah ada masalah konflik agama*" (Inf-001). (*Regarding the residential area, there are many Boyan people here; for the Chinese, most of them live in the coastal area, and in coffee shops, they mingle. So far, there has never been any religious conflict.*)

Another informant also noted: "*Kalau Melayu, Bawean, Jawa, Tionghoa, paling dominan, sepertinya terbagi sama. Wilayah sini kan orang bilang kampung Boyan. Mereka olahraga sama, berbaur, sekolahnya pun sama. Semuanya berbaur. Saya, sejak kecil, sudah mempraktekkan toleransi dengan suku lain, seperti dengan orang China atau suku yang beragama lain, dan itu menurut saya bagus*" (Inf-003). (*For Malay, Bawean, Javanese, and Chinese, they seem evenly distributed. This area is often called Boyan Village. They exercise together, mingle, and even attend the same schools. I've practiced tolerance with other ethnic groups, like the Chinese or those with different religions, since I was a child, and it's been good.*)

In the interactions among the people in Senggarang, daily life is quite intense; they live in harmony even though their settlements are divided into different regions. Chinese residents in the Senggarang area are referred to by the Chinese community as Toa Po or Big City, a term reflecting the area's historical significance as a bustling hub for trade and community life, particularly among the Teochew and other Chinese ethnic groups. This area is dominated by Teochew/Tiociu people who live near the coast, with some even building stilt houses over the sea. Another group in Senggarang is the Hakka people, who generally settle inland. Meanwhile, most

temples were built by the Hokkien people, as they were known for their craftsmanship (Rahmat, 2022).

The long-standing coexistence of the community, rooted in history and culture, has accustomed them to living with various differences, be it religion, culture, or tradition. Consequently, in social interactions, they possess a strong sense of solidarity as a multicultural community. A community informant stated: *"Orang kita ni ada yang meninggal, nanti orang itu datang, begitu juga orang sana (china) itu meninggal itu kita datang juga, sama ibaratnya kita saling membantunya itu kuatlah. Kalau di Senggarang ini kampung ini, tanya nama siapa aja dari ujung ke ujung semua tahu, Chinapun misalnya kamu nanya kenal sama ini nggak, kenal, semua tahu saling kenal, sampai ke (daerah) laut-laut sana"* (Inf-001). *(If someone from our community passes away, they will come, and if someone from their community (Chinese) passes away, we will also come. In essence, the mutual help is strong. In this village, if you ask about anyone's name from end to end, everyone knows each other. Even the Chinese, if you ask them whether they know someone, they will say yes. Everyone knows each other, even up to the coastal areas).*

Tolerance practices are one of the traditions deeply rooted in history, seen in this research as habitus. These practices are evident in the interactions among the community. During religious celebrations in Senggarang Village, such as Chinese New Year, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, Ramadan, and other festivities, they have customs or traditions of visiting each other's homes. For instance, during Chinese New Year, Muslim residents visit Chinese homes, with children often receiving angpao. During Eid, some Chinese residents visit Muslims and even give canned drinks to the locals. As described by a community informant: *"Sudah jadi tradisi atau adat. Gesekan pun tidak ada. Saling mengisi, mereka kenak banjir, orang kita yang banyak membantu, pernah juga orang banjir kadang-kadang kita, kapal pecah, malah kita yang membantu menyelamatkan kita, mereka yang punya usaha rata-rata mereka itu baik, hari-hari besar kita orang kasih-kasih THR minuman dia pun bagi juga berbagi, kalau Imlek contoh anak saya, imlek itu kan seperti kita itu ditelpon, datanglah ke rumah kami, sama juga Imlek ya kita ngasih, lebaran ya kita dikasih beberapa minuman, kita dapat duit dari imlek, kita belanjakan, seperti itu balas membalasnya itu ada, anak-anak kita berkunjung ke rumah mereka pas imlek itu dikasih angpao"* (INF-03). *(It has become a tradition or custom. There are no frictions. We help each other; for instance, when they experience flooding, our people help them a lot. Similarly, when we face flooding or when boats sink, we help rescue them. Most of their business owners are good people. During festive days, we exchange gifts. For example, during Chinese New Year, my child gets a call and is invited to visit their home. Similarly, during Eid, we give and receive drinks, and during Chinese New Year, we receive money and use it to shop. This reciprocal exchange exists. Our children visit their homes during Chinese New Year and receive angpao).*

The tradition of exchanging greetings during religious holidays is often practiced among residents celebrating major religious occasions, as one informant noted: *"Nanti ada mereka datang ke rumah, nanti dia kasih air kaleng dengan kita, dia pun ngucapin selamat dengan kita, misalnya Ketika Imlek, kita pun ngucapin selamat ke dia, kita pun bertamu ke rumah dia, seperti biasa saja. Kalau idul fitri mereka juga ngucapin selamat, datang ke rumah. Kalau kita ke rumahnya orang itu akan ngerti apa yang enggak boleh kita makan, mereka sudah mengerti kalau kita ini ga makan babi"* (INF-02; interview, 2023). *(They come to our house and give us canned drinks. They also greet us with well wishes, for instance, during Chinese New Year, we also greet them, visit their house, just as usual. During Eid al-Fitr, they also greet us and come to our house. If we go to their house, they understand what we cannot eat; they already know that we don't eat pork).*

During Ramadan, Chinese residents occasionally donate to the neighborhood head (RW) to purchase communal iftar meals at the Al-Huda Mosque. As described by another informant: *"Sama juga sebaliknya mereka dengan perayaan-perayaan kita, malah kita di bulan suci Ramadhan itu ada beberapa mereka yang punya usaha di sini memberi makanan untuk berbuka, kadang bukan satu dua kali mereka lakukan itu, mereka tanya ke saya, Pak Samsul kira-kira kami boleh ga ngasih ini, oh boleh bersedekah selagi makanan itu halal, tapi mereka tidak memberi makanan dari mereka, di situlah toleransi mereka, mereka hargai mereka, Mereka memberi uang, ini ada uang untuk siapkan menu berbuka di masjid, nah mereka gitu, nah kita kan di masjid-masjid setiap magrib itu di bulan puasa itu paling tidak satu talam atau hidangan untuk empat orang, siapa tahu ada orang yang*

*musafir itu selalu kita siapkan kan gitu, nah itu mereka ikut-ikutan. Setiap tahun 3-4 orang itu melakukan hal yang sama, mereka antar aqua 20 dus, nanti habis mereka antar lagi luar biasa tanpa kita komando, dan tanpa kita minta” (INF-03). (Likewise, they participate in our celebrations. During the holy month of Ramadan, some of them who own businesses here provide meals for iftar. Sometimes, it's not just once or twice. They ask me, "Mr. Samsul, can we donate this?" I say, "Yes, you can donate as long as the food is halal." But they don't directly give the food themselves. This shows their tolerance and respect. They give money to prepare meals for iftar at the mosque. That's what they do. At the mosques, every evening during Ramadan, there's always at least one serving tray or meal for four people prepared in case of travelers. They follow along with this practice. Every year, 3-4 people do the same thing. They bring 20 boxes of mineral water, and when it's finished, they bring more. It's extraordinary, without us commanding or asking them).*

Traditions of tolerance and harmony in society manifest through mutual help among residents and shared celebrations of religious holidays like Chinese New Year and Eid. These acts demonstrate mutual respect and appreciation for cultural diversity. Furthermore, the tradition of reciprocating kindness illustrates respect and generosity during celebrations, fostering harmonious relationships filled with mutual regard. These overall tolerance practices depict an active and respectful community in their social relations, where each group supports and celebrates one another in mutually beneficial traditions. The habitus of tolerance manifested in these community practices collectively portrays how religious and ethnic diversity in Senggarang can be viewed as a unifying strength. Active participation in religious celebrations and mutual respect for traditions reinforce harmonious relationships within the community.

### **3. 2. Tolerance Education in SD Senggarang**

Through the habituation of tolerance practices, the Senggarang community, as described above, has influenced the tolerant attitudes of children in schools. Some of the impactful tolerance practices include: congratulatory exchanges between religions, where residents greet each other during religious holidays to show respect for differing beliefs; interfaith visits, where residents visit each other's homes during religious celebrations as a sign of togetherness and brotherhood; sharing wealth between communities, such as Chinese residents giving "angpao" to Muslim children during Chinese New Year and distributing iftar meals during Ramadan; and collaboration in religious events, such as interfaith residents participating as committee members in annual temple celebrations, involving all parties in local cultural and religious festivities. These traditions influence the implementation of tolerance education in schools.

Through the habituation of tolerance practices, the Senggarang community has significantly influenced the tolerant attitudes of children in schools. Residents engage in various impactful practices such as exchanging greetings during religious holidays to show respect for differing beliefs, visiting each other's homes during religious celebrations to foster togetherness, sharing wealth through gestures like giving "angpao" to Muslim children during Chinese New Year and distributing iftar meals during Ramadan, and collaborating in religious events where interfaith residents participate as committee members in annual temple celebrations. These activities create a shared sense of community and promote a culture of mutual respect and understanding.

These traditions influence the implementation of tolerance education in schools. This habitus is reproduced by schools through policies, particularly within the formal religious curriculum that emphasizes tolerance attitudes. Teachers also play a significant role in fostering tolerance in schools. The elementary school in Senggarang that became the focus of this research is an early elementary school (SDN 004) in Tanjungpinang City. The school is near community activity centers, such as markets and sports fields, and places of worship like mosques, churches, and temples. This proximity indirectly influences students' perspectives on religious differences, ultimately shaping their tolerant attitudes.

Practices of tolerance in SDN 004 are reflected in various activities that promote mutual respect and understanding among students. During the learning process, first-grade students, aged 6–7 years, are invited to pray together, with the teacher appointing one student to lead the prayer. Everyone is encouraged to pray according to their respective religions, allowing for

diversity in practices such as bowing heads or raising hands. This simple yet significant practice instills a sense of respect for different religious traditions and fosters a culture of tolerance in the classroom.

According to a teacher at SDN 004, the school also organizes joint prayers before major exams, such as graduation exams. Representatives from various religions, including Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity, lead prayers alternately. As one teacher shared: *"Tahun lalu, diadakan Doa Bersama sebelum ujian akhir sekolah, dengan tujuan agar semua siswa kami dapat lulus. Guru-guru agama yang memimpin doa secara bergantian sesuai dengan agama masing-masing. Dengan diadakannya acara itu para siswa dapat melihat perbedaan cara-cara agama lain dalam berdo'a dan dengan begitu bisa mulai menghormati cara doa agama lain, yang memperkuat pemahaman mereka terhadap agama lain"* (Inf-04). *(Last year, we held a Joint Prayer session before the final school exams, with the aim of ensuring that all our students could pass. Religious teachers led prayers alternately according to their respective religions. By holding this event, students could see the differences in how other religions pray and thus began to respect the prayer methods of other religions, strengthening their understanding of other religions).*

Such activities provide students with opportunities to witness and understand worship practices of other religions, fostering mutual respect and supporting the formation of a culture of tolerance. By acknowledging the rights and recognition of every individual regardless of religion, students develop respect for others.

Religious education at SDN 004 follows the National Education Law Number 20 of 2003, which mandates religious instruction according to students' faiths. Islamic education encompasses Qur'an studies, theology, ethics, jurisprudence, and Islamic history, while Catholic education focuses on self-concept with Jesus as a role model, the role of the Church, and guidance from the Bible in community life. Buddhist education emphasizes theological and ethical teachings, and Protestant education highlights the Trinity and Christian values, with a strong emphasis on spreading religious messages. These curricula aim to establish strong religious faith while fostering balanced relationships among individuals, God, and the community, while promoting tolerance. These curricula aim to establish strong religious faith while promoting balanced human relationships and tolerance.

Students at SDN 004 are accustomed to interacting with peers of different religions and ethnicities, both within and outside the classroom. These friendships, often rooted in their community ties, help them appreciate and understand the traditions of other religions. Observations revealed students exchanging congratulatory messages through social media, participating in celebrations, and visiting each other's homes during major religious holidays such as Eid al-Fitr, Christmas, and Chinese New Year. Such interactions foster a sense of togetherness and encourage an appreciation for diversity among the students.

These practices of tolerance extend beyond the school environment into the wider community. Families play a significant role in instilling these values by involving their children in interfaith exchanges during religious holidays. For example, sharing "angpao" during Chinese New Year or distributing iftar meals during Ramadan helps students learn the importance of respecting religious differences. These activities not only promote inclusivity but also build a strong foundation for tolerance that students bring back into their school culture.

Through these integrated practices, SDN 004 effectively cultivates a culture of tolerance among its students. By blending familial and community traditions with school initiatives, the students learn to coexist harmoniously, embracing diversity in their everyday lives. This holistic approach ensures that tolerance becomes an intrinsic part of their character and is reflected in their interactions with others. The practices at SDN 004 illustrate how schools can cultivate a culture of tolerance through both curricular and extracurricular activities. By integrating community values and emphasizing mutual respect, SDN 004 fosters an environment where students learn to appreciate and coexist with diversity, embodying the spirit of tolerance in their daily lives.



## 4. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that tolerant traditions in society significantly influence the development of tolerance attitudes in children at school. This process can be understood within the conceptual framework of Pierre Bourdieu's habitus. This concept refers to a set of dispositions shaped by individual social experiences, which influence ways of thinking, acting, and interacting with the world (P. ; P. Bourdieu J. C., 1990). To examine how the habitus of tolerance in children is formed, which has been shaped since childhood through the environment, family, and also school education, this section discusses several elements connecting societal habitus with tolerance education in schools. In Bourdieu's theoretical argument, habitus originates from mental (cognitive) structures used by actors to interact with social life (Wirawan, 2021). Habitus is the result of a long process of individual inculcation, beginning in childhood, which eventually becomes like a "second sense" or second nature. The long-standing practice of tolerance in the Senggarang community has become a social structure that contributes to shaping tolerant characteristics in social agents, thereby forming habitus.

The emergence of this habitus of tolerance also stems from the community's awareness of differences. Tolerant attitudes represent a reality understood by agents to address differences. As in Bourdieu's habitus, it originates from awareness, which then manifests in bodily actions, such as the way people walk, spit, eat, and talk (Munafi, 2021). The habitus of tolerance is also a product of the internalization of social world structures over a long period, as Bourdieu's habitus emerges from historical products that, in turn, generate both individual and social practices. Thus, habitus is something that is shaped and shapes simultaneously (Adib, 2012). This habitus always exists in the actor's mind as part of their consciousness, while the field (arena) is external to their mind (Ritzer, 2010). Therefore, to bridge the two, it requires practice as the result of their interaction, in this case, the practice of tolerance. As in Bourdieu's habitus practice, the practice of tolerance in the Senggarang community is then accepted as a sketch or pattern internalized by social actors, which they use to feel, understand, be aware of, and assess social reality (Ritzer, 2012).

This tolerance practice is then internalized by teachers as one of the actors, which in turn is externalized through the teaching of tolerance practices in schools in the process of reproduction or transformation. Teachers in early elementary education in Tanjungpinang City also act as agents, who, in performing reproduction, require strategies (reproduction strategies) which, according to Bourdieu, are designed to enhance or maintain social capital. These strategies can be pursued through education, which has the ability, within the social structure, to accept community traditions/heritage (Munafi, 2021). In this context, the strategies can include a set of practices through habituations such as collective prayers, classroom teaching about differences, school environment interactions, and joint celebrations of religious holidays with other students. Students easily follow tolerance practices because they are already accustomed to practicing tolerance culture at home and in their community environment.

The habitus of tolerance in society, in its practice within social arenas, also undergoes social dynamics resulting in several adjustments. As a social product, habitus is influenced by the types of capital possessed by individuals, such as economic, cultural, and social capital. Habitus is also related to the duration of an actor's position in social life. Thus, habitus changes depending on a person's social position. Not everyone has the same habits. Habitus is a group phenomenon that, at a certain time, is the result of a collective life creation lasting over an extended historical period. Habitus is heavily influenced by patterns produced by history (Ritzer, 2012). Similarly, the practice of tolerance in the Senggarang community, which has been a long-standing tradition, is not always the same; changes and adjustments occur. Community informants revealed that those who had been living in the area since childhood often only possessed small pieces of land, as much of the land historically belonged to the Chinese.

The practice of tolerance in the Senggarang community has undoubtedly experienced dynamic changes and adjustments over time due to changes in social actors resulting from certain political policies. Thus, the current religious tolerance practices in Senggarang society lean toward harmonious interaction patterns among people of different religions, ethnicities, and cultures. These practices include: interfaith greetings, interfaith visits, sharing resources among

communities, collaboration in religious events. These practices not only reflect harmonious but also active interfaith relationships in Senggarang's daily life. This ongoing tolerance is further strengthened by the presence of Al-Huda Mosque and a sports field complex donated by a Chinese individual, Tan Ngi Hok, as documented on the endowment land plaque in front of Al-Huda Mosque. Using Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, it can be explained that the values of tolerance held by students and teachers are influenced by their interactions with family and community, shaping their knowledge, competencies, and experiences of diversity. This cultural capital is then brought into the school environment and becomes the foundation for forming a culture of tolerance in schools through various teaching practices. Embodied cultural capital includes the values and experiences they gain from family and community regarding religious diversity and tolerance, which are further enriched and applied through daily interactions in school (P. Bourdieu, 1986).

The practical application of tolerance in schools, as discussed earlier, is inseparable from the tolerance habitus within society. Tolerance education instilled in students through peer interactions, religious teachings, and school activities can be seen as an attitude of appreciating differences that cannot be negotiated, as per Habermas's perspective (Habermas, 2004). For Habermas, tolerance emerges when differences cannot be negotiated, and mutual respect among individuals becomes a solution. This study demonstrates how teachers at schools play their roles as actors, viewing differences in religion, ethnicity, and culture among students as non-negotiable or uncompromisable matters, thereby striving to habituate tolerant attitudes in children. This is reflected in students' acceptance of their friends' religious differences and respect for each other's worship practices, such as during joint prayers before exams, where students from various religions directly witness the prayer traditions of others. This practiced tolerance aligns with moral and virtuous principles, where students treat others as they wish to be treated themselves (Al Majali, 2020).

Religious tolerance practices among first-grade students at Senggarang Elementary School, as previously explained, meet several principles of religious tolerance, including: freedom of belief and worship; equality: equality between Muslims and non-Muslims in humanitarian matters; justice: justice for non-Muslim residents, where all members of society have equal rights regardless of their beliefs; coexistence: fostering social participation and warm relationships with non-Muslims, thereby creating a community that integrates Muslims and others; keeping promises: fulfilling agreements with all parties, regardless of their beliefs; compassion and kindness: showing compassion and kindness to both Muslims and non-Muslims; security and peace: ensuring full security for non-Muslims; gentleness in dialogue: being kind and gentle when interacting with non-Muslims (Alabdulhadi, 2019).

The role of habitus in tolerance education reinforces previous research that character formation in students must be carried out continuously and holistically, encompassing all aspects of education: family, school, and society. These three elements are integrated into the concept of integrative education, which asserts that the success of character building in students depends significantly on the involvement of various parties (Sarinastitin, 2019). These parties include families, teachers/educational institutions, and the community in supporting the inculcation of character in children from an early age. One such character trait is tolerance, the growth and development of which heavily rely on a conducive environment (Rusmiati, 2023). This research finds that the tolerance habitus surrounding the educational environment at schools plays a significant role in instilling tolerance in early childhood. In addition to the community environment, families also play a crucial role in shaping children's character.

Research on parenting habitus underscores the significance of parenting styles in character formation, including studies on authoritative Islamic parenting models popularized through Islamic early childhood animation (Mustakim, 2022) and the influence of parenting styles and religious beliefs on children's behavior (Purnama, 2022). This study highlights the equally critical role of community engagement in character development. Teachers and families, as integral components of society, continuously internalize and externalize values shaped by their social environment through habitus. Within schools, they transform these values into character-building lessons using strategies grounded in children's lived experiences. At Senggarang Elementary

School, teachers skillfully adapt tolerance practices observed in the community and families, effectively cultivating these values among early childhood students in primary education. These findings underscore the need for systematic collaboration between schools, families, and communities to foster a robust culture of tolerance in educational settings.

#### **4.1. Research Contribution**

This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how societal practices and traditions shape tolerance development in educational settings through the lens of Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus. By examining the interplay between community and family influences on teachers' strategies in schools, the research provides a framework for analyzing the integration of cultural capital in tolerance education. This framework can serve as a foundation for designing character education curricula that emphasize interfaith dialogue and cultural diversity. Furthermore, the study highlights the significant roles of both micro (individual and familial) and macro (community and institutional) factors in fostering tolerance, offering practical insights for educators and policymakers aiming to build inclusive and harmonious educational environments.

#### **4.2. Limitations**

A major limitation of this study is the reliance on qualitative data from a single community, which constrains the generalizability of the findings to other cultural or regional contexts. The use of historical narratives and informant perspectives also introduces potential bias, as interpretations of past events may differ between participants. To address these limitations, future research should consider a comparative approach across multiple communities with varying social dynamics, and employ longitudinal methods to trace the evolution of tolerance habitus over time. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how tolerance practices adapt and evolve within different socio-cultural contexts.

#### **4.3. Suggestions**

Future research should expand the scope by conducting comparative studies between diverse communities to examine how different cultural, religious, and social backgrounds shape the formation of tolerance in education. Additionally, a longitudinal approach would be valuable to track the development of tolerance habitus from childhood through adulthood, shedding light on the long-term impact of early educational experiences on tolerance attitudes. Exploring the role of digital media in shaping tolerance in the contemporary world could also provide insights into how modern communication channels influence the formation of tolerance among younger generations.

## **5. Conclusion**

Tolerance in Senggarang has developed as a deeply ingrained habitus through interfaith and interethnic coexistence, reflected in harmonious practices like exchanging greetings, interfaith visits, and shared religious events. This culture, internalized by teachers and externalized in schools, fosters tolerant attitudes in children through inclusive education shaped by familial and community influences, building cultural capital that values diversity. This study underscores the significant influence of societal traditions and community practices in shaping the development of tolerance attitudes in children, particularly within educational settings. By utilizing Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus, the research demonstrates how tolerance, as a learned behavior, is internalized through family, community, and school interactions, becoming a foundational element of students' character formation. The findings reveal that teachers, as key agents of socialization, play a critical role in reinforcing these values through classroom practices that reflect the broader social and cultural environment. Additionally, the research highlights the dynamic nature of tolerance, which evolves in response to shifting social, political, and historical contexts. The study contributes valuable insights for developing inclusive educational strategies

that foster interfaith and intercultural understanding, emphasizing the need for holistic, integrative approaches involving families, schools, and communities to nurture tolerant attitudes from an early age.

## Declarations

### Author contribution statement

Muammar Qadafi conceived the idea and conducted data collection. Muhammad Alfian Sidik developed the theory of early childhood. Zulfadhly Mukhtar developed the theory of tolerance. All authors engaged in discussions regarding the findings, performed the analysis, and made contributions to the final manuscript.

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### Data availability statement

The dataset generated and analyzed during the research is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

### Declaration of interests statement

All authors declare that they have no financial or personal interests that could influence the work presented in this manuscript.

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