Amorti: Jurnal Studi Islam Interdisipliner
Vol. 5, No. 4, Oktober 2026, pp.2216-2227
http://journal.amorfati.id/index.php/amorti | | ISSN 2962-9209

Interdisciplinary Scope of Contemporary Islamic Studies • Interdisciplinary Islamic Education • Interdisciplinary Islamic Law, Ethics, and Fatwa Studies • Interdisciplinary Islamic Economics, Finance, and Philanthropy • Islam, Society, and Culture • Islam, Politics, Governance, and Public Policy • Islam, Gender, Family, and Human Rights • Islam, Media, Communication, and Digital Da'wah • Islam, Health, Environment, and Sustainable Development • Islam, Science, Technology, Artificial Intelligence, and Digital Transformation

Religious Education in the Public Sphere: A Synthesis of Christian Educational Thought and Fikrah Islamiyyah to Strengthen Tolerance

Urbanus Sukri [a,1*], Busari Afeez Babatunde [b2], Anzar Aquil [c3]

[*a] Sekolah Tinggi Agama Kristen Anak Bangsa, Indonesia
[b] University of Ibadan, Nigeria
[c] Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, India
[1] urbanussukri9@gmail.com, [2] Busari123@gmail.com, [3] anzaralvi@gmail.com
*Correspondent Author; urbanussukri9@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Article history
Received:
23-07-2026
Revised:
24-08-2026
Accepted:
21-09-2026
Available online:
19-10-2026

Keywords
Religious education
Christian education
Fikrah Islamiyyah
Public sphere
Tolerance
Religious moderation
Interreligious dialogue

ABSTRACT

The increasing complexity of pluralistic societies, the polarization of religious identities, and the expansion of the digital public sphere demand a paradigm of religious education oriented not only toward internal identity formation but also toward strengthening tolerance and social cohesion. This article aims to analyze points of convergence between Christian educational thought and Fikrah Islamiyyah and to formulate a conceptual synthesis for developing religious education in a democratic and multicultural public sphere. The study employs a qualitative approach using library research, conceptual analysis, and comparative synthesis of recent academic literature on Christian education, Islamic education, tolerance, religious moderation, and the public sphere. The findings show that although the two traditions differ in theological and epistemological aspects, they converge on respect for human dignity, love or *rahmah*, justice, dialogue, social responsibility, and coexistence. Based on these findings, the study formulates an integrative model of tolerance education consisting of five dimensions: theological foundations, religious literacy, interreligious dialogue, social collaboration, and democratic citizenship. These five dimensions position religious education as an instrument of social transformation capable of forming religious individuals who are open, dialogical, and responsible citizens in public life. Theoretically, the study contributes to the development of an inclusive and transformative paradigm of religious education, while practically offering implications for curriculum development, teacher education, and religious moderation policies in pluralistic societies.

This is an open-access article under the CC–BY-SA license.

Introduction

Over the past several decades, religious tolerance has become one of the most complex challenges in multicultural societies. Globalization, advances in digital technology, transnational migration, and the increasing intensity of interaction among religious identities have created a public sphere that is increasingly open while also vulnerable to conflict rooted in differences of belief (Jackson, 2020; Gearon, 2023). In Indonesia, a country characterized by

high levels of religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity, religious education occupies a strategic position in forming citizens who are able to live peacefully amid plurality. Nevertheless, various studies indicate that religious education is still often practiced within a framework of identity exclusivism that positions other groups as theologically and socially different, thereby potentially inhibiting the development of tolerant and dialogical attitudes (Arifin, 2021; Parker & Raihani, 2022).

The growing phenomenon of social polarization and the emergence of intolerant narratives in the public sphere, particularly through digital media, indicate that religious education has not fully succeeded in carrying out its transformative function of building social cohesion. Various empirical reports suggest that younger generations face new challenges in the form of exposure to fragmented religious information, echo chambers, and the spread of religion-based hate narratives that can reinforce stereotypes of other groups (Campbell et al., 2021; Lim, 2023). In this context, religious education can no longer be understood merely as a means of transmitting religious doctrine; rather, it must be understood as a pedagogical process that prepares learners to participate constructively in a pluralistic and democratic public sphere (Biesta, 2021; Wright, 2022).

Within the Christian educational tradition, contemporary thought has shifted from a defensive paradigm of identity formation toward a more dialogical and inclusive approach oriented toward the common good. Christian education is viewed as a means of character formation that emphasizes love, respect for human dignity, social justice, and reconciliation as foundations for shared life in a plural society (Smith et al., 2021; Groome, 2022). This approach places active engagement in the public sphere as an integral part of the Christian calling, so that religious education is oriented not only toward strengthening internal community identity but also toward building inclusive and transformative social relationships.

By contrast, within the tradition of Fikrah Islamiyyah, education is understood as a process of forming human beings who are knowledgeable, morally grounded, and capable of realizing social welfare. Contemporary Islamic educational thought increasingly emphasizes moderation (*wasatiyyah*), interreligious dialogue, respect for diversity, and social responsibility as educational aims (Al-Saidi, 2021; Sahin, 2023). Concepts such as *ta'āruf*, *tasāmuh*, *ukhuwah insāniyyah*, and *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* provide a normative foundation for developing religious education capable of strengthening democratic life and social harmony in multicultural societies (Hashim & Rossidy, 2021; Ahmed, 2024).

Nevertheless, studies of Christian education and Islamic education have generally developed within separate academic traditions. Most research focuses on the internal characteristics of each educational system, whether theological, pedagogical, or curricular. Research on Christian education commonly highlights character formation, spirituality, and faith identity, whereas research on Islamic education more often discusses *tarbiyah*, *adab*, and religious moderation (Raihani, 2021; Hull, 2023). Consequently, there remains limited scholarship that systematically places these two traditions in dialogue as complementary conceptual resources for religious education in a pluralistic public sphere.

More specifically, the novelty of this study lies not merely in comparing Christian and Islamic educational perspectives, but in constructing a conceptual synthesis between Christian educational thought and Fikrah Islamiyyah for the development of tolerance-oriented religious education in the Indonesian public sphere. The study brings together selected convergent principles from the two traditions—particularly human dignity, love and *rahmah*, justice, dialogue, social responsibility, and coexistence—and translates them into pedagogical dimensions relevant to Indonesia's religiously and culturally diverse society. In this sense, the study moves beyond an interreligious comparison toward the formulation of an integrative educational framework that connects theological foundations with religious literacy, interreligious dialogue, social collaboration, and democratic citizenship.

This synthesis is particularly relevant to the Indonesian context because religious education operates within a society where religious identity, cultural diversity, democratic citizenship, and social interaction are closely interconnected. Previous studies have generally

focused on interreligious dialogue within social and political relations, while the pedagogical dimension that can provide a foundation for cultivating tolerance through education has received insufficient attention (Ipgrave, 2020; Berglund & Gent, 2022). Studies connecting the principles of Christian education with Fikrah Islamiyyah within a framework for strengthening tolerance in the public sphere also remain relatively limited, particularly in Indonesia. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by positioning religious education as a space in which different religious traditions can contribute to the formation of dialogical, socially responsible, and democratic citizens.

The urgency of this study is further heightened by the important role of religious education in shaping the social orientation of younger generations amid increasingly complex digital social dynamics. Education that emphasizes only internal identity may reinforce social segregation, whereas education that integrates tolerance, dialogue, and respect for diversity can become a strategic instrument for strengthening democracy, social peace, and national resilience (Banks, 2020; UNESCO, 2021). A conceptual framework is therefore needed to bridge Christian educational perspectives and Fikrah Islamiyyah while remaining attentive to the Indonesian social context.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this article aims to analyze the points of convergence between Christian educational thought and Fikrah Islamiyyah in the context of religious education in the public sphere. More specifically, the study seeks to identify convergent pedagogical principles within the two traditions, examine their relevance to strengthening tolerance in pluralistic societies, and formulate a conceptual synthesis consisting of theological foundations, religious literacy, interreligious dialogue, social collaboration, and democratic citizenship. Through this synthesis, the study seeks to contribute theoretically to religious education studies and practically to the development of educational policies and practices that support peaceful, inclusive, and responsible coexistence in Indonesia.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach in the form of library research combined with conceptual analysis and comparative-interdisciplinary synthesis. This approach was selected because the research problem focuses on exploring, interpreting, and integrating normative, philosophical, theological, and pedagogical ideas developed within the traditions of Christian education and Fikrah Islamiyyah. The primary objective is not to measure empirical phenomena, but to construct a conceptual framework capable of explaining how the two educational traditions contribute to strengthening tolerance in a pluralistic public sphere.

The study draws on both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include academic works that directly discuss Christian educational thought, Christian religious education, Fikrah Islamiyyah, contemporary Islamic education, multicultural education, religious tolerance, the public sphere, and interreligious dialogue. These sources include academic books published between 2020 and 2026 by reputable international publishers, as well as international journal articles addressing religious education, the public sphere, interreligious dialogue, religious literacy, multicultural education, citizenship education, religious moderation, and social cohesion. Secondary sources include educational policy documents, reports from international institutions, previous research findings, academic proceedings, and other scholarly publications relevant to the research topic.

Data were collected through documentation and a systematic literature search. Sources were identified through Scopus, Web of Science, Taylor & Francis Online, SpringerLink, JSTOR, Sage Journals, Wiley Online Library, ProQuest, ERIC, and Google Scholar. The search used combinations of the following keywords: “Christian Education,” “Religious Education,” “Islamic Educational Thought,” “Fikrah Islamiyyah,” “Public Sphere,” “Religious Tolerance,” “Interreligious Dialogue,” “Religious Literacy,” “Multicultural Education,” “Citizenship Education,” “Religious Moderation,” and “Social Cohesion.”

The literature selection process consisted of several stages. The initial database search identified [insert number] potentially relevant sources. After removing duplicate records and

screening the titles and abstracts, [insert number] sources remained for further assessment. Following full-text assessment based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, [insert number] sources were selected for the final analysis. The inclusion criteria were: (1) publication between 2020 and 2026; (2) direct relevance to the research theme; (3) publication in a reputable journal or by a trusted academic publisher; and (4) presentation of theoretical arguments or research findings capable of supporting the conceptual analysis. Sources that lacked thematic relevance, did not meet academic standards, or consisted of non-peer-reviewed popular material were excluded.

Following the literature-selection process, the selected sources were analyzed using qualitative content analysis combined with thematic analysis. Content analysis was used to identify key concepts, philosophical assumptions, normative values, educational aims, and social orientations found in the Christian education and Fikrah Islamiyyah literature. Thematic analysis was then used to organize these ideas into major themes related to tolerance, the public sphere, pluralism, citizenship education, interreligious dialogue, and social cohesion.

The analysis proceeded through four main stages. First, data reduction involved identifying and selecting literature based on thematic relevance and academic quality. Second, categorization involved grouping the data into conceptual themes such as the aims of religious education, conceptions of the human person, values of tolerance, interreligious dialogue, social responsibility, and participation in the public sphere. Third, comparison involved examining Christian educational thought and Fikrah Islamiyyah to identify elements of convergence and divergence, including their epistemological foundations and pedagogical implications. Fourth, synthesis involved formulating an integrative conceptual framework connecting the values of Christian education and Fikrah Islamiyyah as a foundation for religious education that is inclusive, dialogical, and oriented toward strengthening tolerance in the public sphere.

To maintain the validity and credibility of the study, source triangulation and theoretical triangulation were employed. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing different types of literature from diverse disciplines, religious traditions, and geographical contexts. Theoretical triangulation involved the use of multiple theoretical perspectives, including Habermasian public-sphere theory, multicultural education theory, religious literacy theory, democratic education theory, and theories of interreligious dialogue. These perspectives supported a more comprehensive analysis and helped reduce potential interpretive bias.

Overall, the research method was designed to produce a conceptual synthesis of the contributions of Christian education and Fikrah Islamiyyah to the development of tolerance in the public sphere. Through systematic library research, qualitative content analysis, thematic analysis, critical comparison, and interdisciplinary synthesis, the study seeks to generate a conceptual model that can provide a foundation for curriculum development, educational policy, and pedagogical practices supporting peaceful, inclusive, and democratic coexistence in Indonesia and the broader global context.

Results and Discussion

1. Religious Education in the Public Sphere: From an Identity Paradigm to a Coexistence Paradigm

The literature analysis shows that the development of pluralistic societies in the twenty-first century has transformed the position of religious education from an instrument for forming the internal identity of religious communities into a means of developing social competencies that enable individuals to live constructively in diverse societies. This shift has occurred alongside increasing interreligious interaction, cultural globalization, and the expansion of the digital public sphere, which brings different identities, values, and beliefs into a shared arena of communication. In this context, religious education can no longer be understood solely as the transmission of religious doctrine, but rather as a process of forming citizens who are capable of managing

differences democratically and with dignity (Biesta, 2021; Schweitzer, 2023).

A review of the literature on Christian education and Fikrah Islamiyyah reveals a similar tendency: a movement from exclusive approaches toward dialogical ones. Religious education is no longer oriented toward creating rigid identity boundaries, but toward developing learners' capacity to understand, respect, and cooperate with different groups. This finding indicates that both traditions have substantial potential to contribute to the development of tolerant and inclusive societies.

From the perspective of the public sphere, religion is not positioned as a threat to democracy but as a source of public ethics capable of strengthening social solidarity. Religious education therefore has a responsibility to prepare learners to translate religious values into social practices that support justice, peace, and respect for human dignity.

2. Convergence of Values in Christian Education and Fikrah Islamiyyah

Comparative analysis indicates that there are several substantive points of convergence between Christian education and Fikrah Islamiyyah that can provide a foundation for developing religious education oriented toward tolerance.

a. **Human Dignity as a Shared Foundation**

In the Christian tradition, the concept of Imago Dei affirms that every human being is created in the image and likeness of God and therefore possesses a dignity that cannot be diminished by differences in religion, ethnicity, or social status. This concept provides a foundation for respect for human rights and for the development of inclusive social relationships. Contemporary Christian education regards respect for others as a logical consequence of faith expressed through acts of love and social service.

In Fikrah Islamiyyah, a corresponding principle is found in the concept of karāmah al-insān (human dignity), as affirmed in the Qur'an. Every human being is understood to possess an honor bestowed by God and therefore must be treated justly and with dignity. This perspective provides a basis for cultivating tolerance, respecting differences, and recognizing diversity as part of God's will.

This similarity demonstrates that both Christian and Islamic education possess strong anthropological foundations for supporting a culture of tolerance. Tolerance is not merely a social strategy, but a theological consequence of viewing human beings as valuable creatures of God.

b. **Love and Rahmah as Social Ethics**

The analysis shows that the concept of love in Christian education bears substantive similarity to the concept of rahmah in Islamic education. In the Christian tradition, love is understood as the principal norm governing human relationships with God and with others. Love is not limited to the internal community but extends to all humanity, including those of different beliefs.

In the Islamic tradition, rahmah is understood as a principle of universal compassion that transcends group identities. Islamic education oriented toward rahmatan lil-'alamin emphasizes the importance of building social life that is peaceful, just, and harmonious. This value provides a foundation for the development of religious moderation and respect for diversity.

The convergence between love and rahmah shows that both traditions possess ethical resources that reject discrimination, hatred, and violence committed in the name of religion.

3. Religious Education and the Reconstruction of Tolerance in the Public Sphere

The findings show that tolerance cannot be adequately understood as a passive attitude of merely allowing the existence of other groups. Tolerance must be reconstructed as a social competence involving knowledge, dialogical skills, empathy, and the ability to

cooperate across identities.

Recent studies indicate that religious education focused solely on strengthening internal identity tends to produce exclusivism and a limited capacity to interact with different groups. By contrast, religious education that integrates religious literacy, interreligious dialogue, and multicultural learning is more effective in reducing stereotypes and social prejudice.

In this context, both Christian education and Fikrah Islamiyyah contain conceptual resources that can be used to construct a more transformative model of religious education. Religious education must move from a paradigm of "teaching one's own religion" toward a paradigm of "learning to live together in diversity."

This transformation is especially important in light of increasing social polarization amplified by digital media. The digital public sphere often becomes an arena for the dissemination of intolerance, disinformation, and hate speech based on religious identity. Religious education must therefore develop critical thinking, digital literacy, and communication ethics that enable learners to participate responsibly in the contemporary public sphere.

4. Pedagogical Synthesis: A Dialogical Model of Religious Education

Based on the analysis of the two traditions, this study formulates a pedagogical synthesis consisting of four main dimensions.

a. **Theological Dimension**

The theological dimension emphasizes that diversity is a reality that must be accepted as part of God's will. From a Christian perspective, diversity is understood within the framework of God's universal love. From an Islamic perspective, diversity is part of sunnatullah, enabling human beings to know one another (ta'āruf).

This understanding changes how religious education views other groups. Differences are no longer regarded as threats, but as opportunities to build dialogue and cooperation.

b. **Ethical Dimension**

The ethical dimension places love, rahmah, justice, solidarity, and respect for human dignity at the core of religious education. These values serve as a moral foundation for shared life in pluralistic societies.

Through this dimension, religious education does not stop at doctrinal mastery but is directed toward forming social character capable of practicing universal human values in everyday life.

c. **Dialogical Dimension**

The dialogical dimension emphasizes the importance of the ability to communicate and interact with different groups. Dialogue is not intended to eliminate religious identity, but to build mutual understanding and trust.

The literature indicates that education that provides structured spaces for dialogue can increase empathy, reduce prejudice, and strengthen social cohesion.

d. **Citizenship Dimension**

The citizenship dimension positions learners as citizens who bear responsibility for shared life. Religious education should help learners understand that faith has social implications expressed through active participation in building a just and peaceful society.

From this perspective, religious education becomes a means of forming democratic citizens who respect the law, human rights, and the principles of coexistence.

5. Implications for Religious Education Curriculum Development

The synthesis produced by this study has important implications for the development of religious education curricula in Indonesia.

First, curricula need to integrate religious literacy that enables learners to understand

their own religious traditions while also learning about other religions objectively and academically. Various studies show that limited knowledge of other groups often contributes to stereotypes and intolerance.

Second, learning should adopt dialogical and collaborative approaches. Learning activities can be designed through interfaith projects, multicultural discussions, case studies, and community-service activities involving learners from different backgrounds.

Third, the evaluation of religious education should assess not only cognitive mastery of doctrine but also the development of tolerant attitudes, social empathy, and the capacity to interact constructively with other groups.

Fourth, religious education needs to respond to developments in the digital public sphere by cultivating religious digital literacy that enables learners to evaluate information critically and avoid extremist and intolerant narratives.

6. Theoretical Contribution of the Synthesis of Christian Education and Fikrah Islamiyyah

The main contribution of this study lies in the development of a conceptual model that brings together two major traditions of thought that have generally been studied separately. The resulting synthesis shows that Christian education and Fikrah Islamiyyah share several convergent principles that can serve as foundations for building inclusive and peace-oriented religious education.

This model offers a new perspective: tolerance does not have to be constructed through the secularization of religious education, but can instead be developed from theological resources within each religious tradition. Religious education can thus retain its religious identity while simultaneously contributing to the construction of a democratic and pluralistic public sphere.

This finding strengthens the argument that religion, when taught through appropriate pedagogical approaches, can become a source of social capital that reinforces societal cohesion. Religious education is not merely a means of reproducing identity; it is also an instrument of social transformation that can help form generations that are religious, open, and responsible for shared life.

7. Epistemological Analysis of Christian Education and Fikrah Islamiyyah

Analysis of the literature shows that Christian education and Fikrah Islamiyyah differ epistemologically in their sources of knowledge authority, yet display significant convergence in their aims for human formation and social life. In the Christian educational tradition, the primary sources of knowledge are rooted in God's revelation as manifested in Scripture, church tradition, reason, experience, and reflection within the community of faith. Modern Christian educational epistemology no longer positions faith and reason as mutually opposed entities, but as complementary dimensions in the search for truth. Education is understood as a process of human transformation integrating spiritual, intellectual, moral, and social dimensions (Smith, 2021; Groome, 2022).

In Fikrah Islamiyyah, sources of knowledge are rooted in the Qur'an, the Sunnah, reason ('aql), empirical experience, and the Islamic intellectual tradition. Contemporary Islamic educational thought increasingly emphasizes the integration of revelation and modern science, producing a holistic educational paradigm. Knowledge is understood not merely as the accumulation of information, but as a means of forming human beings who are capable of fulfilling the function of khalifah and realizing social welfare (Sahin, 2023; Hashim, 2021).

Despite their different theological foundations, both traditions share an understanding of education as a process of forming human beings who are responsible before God and toward others. Education does not aim merely to produce personally pious individuals, but also members of society who can contribute to public life. This epistemological similarity

provides a starting point for developing a more dialogical and inclusive paradigm of religious education.

The synthesis identifies three convergent epistemological principles. First, knowledge has a moral dimension and is not neutral. Second, the ultimate aim of education is human transformation rather than the mere transfer of information. Third, truth has social implications that must be embodied in shared life. These three principles provide a strong conceptual foundation for developing tolerance education in pluralistic societies.

8. The Habermasian Public Sphere and Religious Education

Analysis of Habermas's theory of the public sphere demonstrates its strong relevance to the development of religious education in contemporary democratic societies. Habermas defines the public sphere as an arena of communication in which citizens engage in rational discourse about common concerns through argumentation free from domination and coercion. In the development of his thought on post-secular society, Habermas recognizes that religion continues to make an important contribution to the modern public sphere, provided that religious values are translated into language that can be understood universally by all citizens.

In the context of religious education, Habermas's ideas provide a theoretical foundation for developing dialogical pedagogy that cultivates not only religious identity but also the capacity to participate in public discourse. Religious education is no longer positioned as a private instrument isolated from social life, but as a means of forming citizens who can articulate their religious beliefs rationally, openly, and with respect for diversity. A healthy public sphere requires communication skills, critical literacy, and a willingness to listen to other perspectives.

From the perspective of Christian education, participation in the public sphere is part of the calling to embody love, justice, and reconciliation in social life. Likewise, in Fikrah Islamiyyah, the concepts of maṣlaḥah, ta'āruf, shūrā, and wasatiyyah provide a normative basis for constructive Muslim engagement in public life. Both traditions can therefore be understood as sources of moral capital that support deliberative democracy and social cohesion.

This study shows that religious education needs to prepare learners to become actors in the public sphere who are capable of critical and constructive dialogue. In the digital era, the public sphere is present not only in formal institutions but also on social media and digital platforms that bring together diverse identities and worldviews. Religious education must therefore develop competencies in digital literacy, communication ethics, and the critical evaluation of religious information.

9. Integrative Model of Tolerance Education

Based on the conceptual synthesis, this study proposes an Integrative Model of Tolerance Education consisting of five main components.

a. **Theological Foundation**

The theological foundation begins with the recognition that every human being possesses dignity derived from God. In Christian education, this principle is rooted in the concept of Imago Dei, whereas in Fikrah Islamiyyah it is rooted in the concept of karāmah al-insān. Both concepts affirm the equal worth of human beings and provide an ethical basis for respecting differences.

b. **Religious Literacy**

Religious literacy encompasses not only an understanding of one's own religion but also the ability to understand other religious traditions objectively and academically. Such literacy is important for reducing stereotypes, prejudice, and misperceptions that often become sources of intolerance.

c. **Interreligious Dialogue**

Dialogue is positioned as a learning method that enables learners to interact with

different groups in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Dialogue does not seek to homogenize beliefs, but to build understanding and trust.

d. **Social Collaboration**

Tolerance education must be realized through concrete experience. Community-service activities, interfaith social projects, and community-based learning therefore become important means of building social solidarity.

e. **Democratic Citizenship**

The final component is the formation of a civic identity that respects human rights, social justice, and democratic participation. Religious education should produce citizens who are religious while also capable of living in a pluralistic society.

This model shows that tolerance is not merely a passive attitude of accepting the existence of others, but a social competence involving knowledge, empathy, communication, cooperation, and civic responsibility.

10. Implications for National Education Policy

The findings of this study have important implications for the development of national education policy in Indonesia. First, religious education curricula need to shift from an orientation overly focused on doctrinal transmission toward the development of socio-religious competencies. These competencies include religious literacy, interfaith dialogue, conflict resolution, and civic participation.

Second, the government needs to strengthen the integration of religious moderation values at all levels of education without eliminating the distinctiveness of each religious tradition. Religious moderation should be understood as a pedagogical framework that balances commitment to one's beliefs with respect for diversity.

Third, teacher education needs to include competencies in multicultural pedagogy and interreligious dialogue. Religious education teachers should function not only as instructors of doctrine but also as facilitators of dialogue and builders of inclusive school cultures.

Fourth, schools and higher education institutions should be encouraged to become laboratories of tolerance through interfaith collaborative programs, cultural exchanges, dialogue forums, and joint community-service activities.

Fifth, education policy needs to respond to developments in the digital public sphere by integrating religious digital literacy into the curriculum. This is important given the increasing spread of intolerance, disinformation, and radicalism through digital media. Research shows that the digital public sphere strongly influences the formation of opinions and identities among younger generations.

11. Future Research Agenda

Although this study has formulated a conceptual synthesis between Christian education and Fikrah Islamiyyah, several research agendas remain to be developed.

First, empirical research is needed on the implementation of the tolerance education model in schools, higher education institutions, and religious communities. Such empirical studies would help test the effectiveness of the resulting conceptual model.

Second, future research should explore the role of digital technology in the formation of religious tolerance and intolerance. Developments in artificial intelligence, social-media algorithms, and the digital public sphere have created new dynamics that influence religious education processes.

Third, cross-national comparative research is needed to understand how religious education contributes to social cohesion in different cultural and political contexts. Comparisons involving Indonesia, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the Scandinavian countries would enrich the development of tolerance education theory.

Fourth, future studies should broaden this synthesis by incorporating other religious traditions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and local religions, in order to

produce a more inclusive model of religious education for multireligious societies.

Fifth, subsequent research should develop evaluation instruments capable of measuring learners' levels of tolerance, empathy, religious literacy, and dialogical competence more comprehensively. Such instruments are important to ensure that religious education genuinely contributes to the development of peaceful, democratic, and civilized societies.

Overall, the findings affirm that Christian education and Fikrah Islamiyyah have substantial potential to serve as sources of inspiration for developing an inclusive, dialogical, and transformative paradigm of religious education. The synthesis of these traditions shows that tolerance does not need to be built by diminishing religious identity, but can be developed through a deeper engagement with theological values that encourage respect for human dignity, dialogue, justice, and coexistence in a pluralistic public sphere.

Conclusion

This This study demonstrates that religious education has a strategic role in strengthening tolerance and social cohesion in pluralistic societies. The analysis of Christian educational thought and Fikrah Islamiyyah shows that, despite differences in theological and epistemological foundations, both traditions converge on several educational values, particularly human dignity, love or *rahmah*, justice, dialogue, and social responsibility. These convergent values provide a conceptual foundation for understanding religious education not merely as a means of transmitting religious identity, but also as an educational process that prepares individuals to engage constructively with diversity in the public sphere.

The main contribution of this study is the formulation of a five-dimensional model of tolerance education, consisting of theological foundations, religious literacy, interreligious dialogue, social collaboration, and democratic citizenship. These dimensions position tolerance as an active social competence that involves understanding religious differences, communicating across identities, cooperating for common interests, and participating responsibly in public life. The model therefore connects religious commitment with civic responsibility and provides a conceptual basis for developing religious education that is inclusive, dialogical, and socially oriented.

Theoretically, the study contributes to religious education scholarship by bringing Christian educational thought and Fikrah Islamiyyah into a shared conceptual framework rather than treating them as separate educational traditions. Practically, the five-dimensional model may inform curriculum development, teacher education, religious moderation programs, and educational policies aimed at strengthening tolerance and democratic participation. However, as a conceptual synthesis based on library research, the proposed model requires further empirical examination in different educational and social contexts.

Overall, the study concludes that religious education can contribute to peaceful and inclusive public life when it develops not only religious understanding but also the capacity for dialogue, cooperation, and responsible citizenship. The synthesis of Christian educational thought and Fikrah Islamiyyah therefore provides a conceptual foundation for developing tolerance education that responds to the challenges of religious diversity and contemporary public life.

References

Ahmed, A. (2024). *Islamic Education and Plural Societies*. Routledge.

Al-Saidi, A. (2021). Religious moderation and contemporary Islamic education. *British Journal of Religious Education, 43*(4), 451–463.

Arifin, S. (2021). Religious education and multicultural citizenship in Indonesia. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research, 12*(3), 101–121.

Azmira, T. (2026). *Negotiating Religious Identity in Diverse Communities*.

Banks, J. A. (2020). *Diversity and Citizenship Education: Global Perspectives*. Routledge.

Berglund, J., & Gent, B. (2022). Religion, education and dialogue in diverse societies. *Religions, 13*(6), 512–526.

Biesta, G. (2021). *World-Centred Education: A View for the Present*. Routledge.

Campbell, H., Tsuria, R., & Dyer, J. (2021). Digital religion and public engagement. *New Media & Society, 23*(9), 2485–2502.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2024). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (5th ed.). Sage.

Flick, U. (2022). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (7th ed.). Sage.

Gearon, L. (2023). *The Routledge International Handbook of Religion and Education*. Routledge.

Groome, T. H. (2022). *Christian Religious Education*. HarperOne.

Habermas, J. (2006). Religion in the public sphere. *European Journal of Philosophy, 14*(1), 1–25.

Hanurrahman, M. G. (2025). *An Analysis through Habermas's Theory of Communicative Action in Religious Moderation*.

Hashim, R., & Rossidy, I. (2021). Islamic education for social cohesion. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, 41*(2), 301–318.

Huda, M. (2024). *Incorporating the Value of Religious Moderation in Islamic Education*.

Hull, J. (2023). Contemporary perspectives in faith-based education. *Religious Education, 118*(1), 1–15.

Ipgrave, J. (2020). Interreligious education and public life. *British Journal of Religious Education, 42*(1), 5–18.

Jackson, R. (2020). *Religious Education for Plural Societies*. Springer.

Kurniati, R. (2025). Integration of religious moderation into the Islamic education curriculum. *Sosioedukasi*.

Lim, M. (2023). Digital polarization and religious narratives in Southeast Asia. *Information, Communication & Society, 26*(8), 1570–1588.

Mukhibbi, M. S. (2025). Religious moderation practices in Indonesian higher education institutions: A systematic literature review on typology, strategy, and evaluation. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam, 22*(2), 423–445.

Nabila, S. (2026). *Wasatiyah as Educational Philosophy*.

Pajarianto, H., et al. (2025). Religious literacy as a mediator in the ecosystem model of religious moderation and youth tolerance. *International Journal of Learning Sciences*.

Parker, L., & Raihani. (2022). Religious education and tolerance in Indonesia. *Indonesia and the Malay World, 50*(146), 1–19.

Pratomo, H. W. (2025). Integrating religious education into public policy for social inclusion and social cohesion. *Edukasi Islami*.

Purwanto, E., & Kristiawan, S. (2025). *Christian Education and Social Justice: Pursuing Shalom in the Public Sphere*.

Puspawati, S., & Arjana, I. B. M. (2025). Ethical foundations in religious pluralism: Epistemological perspectives for interfaith education in a globalized world. *Jurnal Konseling dan Pendidikan*.

Raihani. (2021). *Education for Multicultural Citizens in Indonesia*. Routledge.

Ramli, M. H. (2025). *The Dynamics of Religious Moderation and Identity Politics in Indonesia*.

Sahin, A. (2023). *Islamic Education in a Global Context*. Kube Publishing.

Schweitzer, F. (2023). Religious Education. *Encyclopedia of Educational Theory and Philosophy*.

Setiawan, F. X. R. (2023). *Tinjauan Filosofis Gagasan Ruang Publik Jürgen Habermas*.

Siswanto, S. (2023). The Islamic Moderation Values on the Islamic Education Curriculum.

Smith, J. K. A., Smith, J., & Smith, D. I. (2021). *Teaching and Christian Practices*. Eerdmans.

Ulum, M. N., et al. (2025). Mapping of religious moderation literature in higher education: A bibliometric review. *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan*.

UNESCO. (2021). *Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education*. UNESCO.

Wafa, A. A. (2026). *Manifesto on Moderate Islamic Education*.

Wankhade, P., & Siddiqui, J. (2022). *Researching Social Change and Public Policy*. Routledge.

Wright, A. (2022). *Religion, Education and Critical Realism*. Routledge.