



Applying Pancasila's First Principle against Intolerance among Islamic Education Students at UNIS Tangerang

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Abstract

This study examines the application of the first principle of Pancasila, Belief in the One and Only God (*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*), in addressing the challenge of intolerance among students of the Islamic Religious Education Study Program. It aims to understand how divine values can be internalized and practiced in a diverse academic environment and to identify the factors that influence tolerant attitudes among students. The study used a qualitative method with a case-study approach, involving observation and document analysis. The results show that a deep and applied understanding of the first principle strengthens tolerant attitudes among students, encourages interfaith dialogue, and reduces the potential for conflict. In addition, education that emphasizes the practice of Pancasila values proves effective in shaping students' character to be inclusive and respectful of diversity. This study recommends integrating Pancasila values into the curriculum to create a harmonious academic environment free from intolerance.

Keywords: Pancasila; tolerance; education

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known as a vast and diverse archipelagic state stretching from Sabang to Merauke. Its wealth of cultures, languages, customs, and religions makes Indonesia one of the most pluralistic countries in the world. However, this diversity is not only a source of richness but also a challenge in realizing national unity and cohesion. In this context, the first principle of Pancasila, "Belief in the One and Only God" (*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*), plays a central role as the moral, spiritual, and ethical foundation for all citizens. The first principle contains a universal value that recognizes the existence of the One God as the creator and governor of the universe. As a nation founded on Pancasila, Indonesia must be able to manage this diversity well in order to create harmony within its society (Irawan et al., 2023).

Values such as interreligious tolerance, mutual respect for freedom of religion, and the rejection of coercion in matters of belief form the core of the first principle. This is in line with Article 29 Paragraph 2 of the 1945 Constitution, which guarantees every citizen the freedom to embrace a religion and to worship according to his or her beliefs. In practice, the first principle serves as a foundation for national integration. As a nation whose motto is *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), Indonesia must be able to turn religious diversity into a strength rather than a source of conflict. Through the application of Pancasila values, community life can be directed toward balance and harmony (Tamara et al., 2023).

Pancasila provides a normative framework for society to uphold universal values such as justice, fraternity, and cooperation, which are essential for maintaining the integrity of the state. In reality, however, challenges in applying the first principle of Pancasila still frequently arise. Interreligious conflicts, stereotypes, and a limited understanding of other beliefs remain obstacles to creating a harmonious life. Therefore, education grounded in Pancasila values plays a very important role in instilling tolerance and respect for differences from an early age. Education not only forms religious individuals but also produces generations capable of fostering harmony amid diversity (Janah et al., 2024).



In the educational context, the first principle of Pancasila plays a strategic role in shaping the character of university students. Pancasila-based character education aims to instill moral and spiritual values consistent with the first principle, such as faith, tolerance, responsibility, and mutual respect (Nabila et al., 2024). Character formation grounded in the first principle can be realized by integrating Pancasila values into daily life, religious activities, and everyday learning practices on campus.

The first principle, "Belief in the One and Only God," emphasizes the importance of faith and tolerance in religious life. In today's social context, however, students often face challenges of intolerance that can threaten harmony and unity. This article aims to explore how students' application of the first principle of Pancasila can serve as a solution to these challenges. Through educational approaches and interfaith dialogue, students are expected to develop more inclusive attitudes and to value differences. Within a campus environment, attitudes that demonstrate tolerance and togetherness are fundamental components that must be cultivated. Tolerance is vital in social life, especially in a country as diverse as Indonesia. Tolerance does not merely mean accepting differences; it also involves a habit of mutual appreciation that fosters respect for and understanding of other people's perspectives, thereby creating social harmony and preventing conflict (Riyanti et al., 2025). Consequently, a deep understanding of the first principle of Pancasila is a crucial first step for students in building a harmonious and civilized society. In confronting intolerance, students need not only to act but also to possess critical understanding and deep empathy toward others, regardless of differing beliefs (Suhartono et al., 2024).

Addressing intolerance among students requires a deep understanding of the role of spiritual and moral values in shaping a culture of tolerance. Several studies show that Pancasila values can serve as a strong foundation for promoting diversity and respecting differences in belief on campus. In this context, the first principle encourages mutual respect for each individual's beliefs, which is essential for social harmony. The first principle, Belief in the One and Only God, plays a central role in shaping students' character because it emphasizes religiosity, tolerance, and respect for religious diversity (Arisnawawi et al., 2024). Pancasila-based education, particularly concerning the first principle, is thus an important instrument for building a dignified, civilized, and prosperous nation.

Studies by various researchers indicate that students who understand and practice the first principle tend to be more tolerant of religious and cultural differences. Character education focused on Pancasila values, including interfaith and cross-cultural discussion activities, can raise awareness and acceptance of plurality. Nevertheless, intolerance persists and is often triggered by a lack of understanding and constructive dialogue. Higher education institutions therefore play an important role in organizing educational and training activities that emphasize the application of the first principle of Pancasila in order to strengthen tolerance and respect for diversity among students. A deep understanding of the first principle of Pancasila is essential for strengthening the unity of the Indonesian nation and creating social harmony grounded in belief in the One and Only God (Amir & Lestari, 2024).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative technique to analyze the collected data (Ardiansyah et al., 2023). The research was carried out in stages: determining the topic, conducting a literature study by analyzing journals and articles available online, compiling data and theories, and organizing them systematically into a journal article. The researcher sought to describe systematically the facts and characteristics of the challenge of intolerance in applying the first principle of Pancasila, "Belief in the One and Only God," among students of the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FAI). Data were collected through library research.

The researcher inventoried data by searching for, reading, and recording literature related to the values of the first principle of Pancasila and the challenge of intolerance. This process was conducted online through journal databases (Google Scholar and SINTA). The method involved collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing various relevant written sources, such as books, scholarly journals, articles, official documents, and other references related to character education, Pancasila, and the role of the first principle in education

(Widyatama et al., 2024). The data consisted of reports and journal articles related to the subject under discussion, namely the application of the first principle of Pancasila in facing the challenge of intolerance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The First Principle of Pancasila: "Belief in the One and Only God"

The first principle of Pancasila emphasizes the importance of recognizing the existence of God and freedom of religion. On a multicultural campus, the application of this principle can serve as a strong moral foundation for students to develop mutual respect. Intolerance often stems from a lack of understanding of, and prejudice against, other religions or beliefs. Education that emphasizes Pancasila values, particularly the first principle, is therefore needed to shape students who are inclusive and respectful of pluralism. The meaning of the first principle is that Indonesian citizens have faith in and are devoted to the One and Only God according to their respective beliefs (Tular & Manik, 2022).

In addition, interfaith discussions and seminars on Pancasila held on campus can be effective means of strengthening cross-religious understanding. Students who actively participate in such activities show improvement in their ability to communicate and cooperate with individuals from different religious backgrounds. In the long term, applying the first principle has the potential to reduce incidents of intolerance and increase social cohesion on campus. It is also important for higher education institutions to strengthen curricula that integrate Pancasila-based character education. In this way, students not only acquire cognitive knowledge but are also shaped affectively in terms of national and humanitarian values. This collective effort is expected to produce a young generation that is not only academically capable but also of noble character with a strong national outlook.

The application of the first principle of Pancasila, "Belief in the One and Only God," on an Islamic campus can be realized in various ways that reflect respect for and practice of spiritual values. Islamic campuses usually integrate religious values into academic and non-academic activities, for example by providing adequate, comfortable, and easily accessible places of worship, such as mosques or prayer rooms (*mushola*), for the entire academic community. In addition, campuses can organize religious activities such as Islamic study circles, discussions on Islamic ethics, and spiritual development programs involving lecturers and students. In this regard, it is important for the campus to encourage tolerance and mutual respect among adherents of different religions so that every individual feels valued in practicing his or her beliefs. The values of honesty, justice, and cooperation taught in Islam can also be integrated into the curriculum and campus policies, supporting a conducive and ethical academic environment. Through consistent and inclusive application, the first principle of Pancasila can become a strong moral foundation for building a harmonious campus community with integrity.

The Challenge of Intolerance

Intolerance on campus is a complex issue that requires serious attention from all parties. As a miniature of society, the campus is expected to be an inclusive place that supports diversity. In reality, however, various forms of intolerance still frequently occur, ranging from discrimination based on ethnicity and religion to discrimination based on political views. This can affect the academic and social climate on campus and hinder the creation of a conducive learning environment. Overcoming this challenge requires collaborative efforts among the university, students, and campus organizations. Education on the importance of tolerance and respect for differences must be continuously promoted. In addition, firm campus policies against intolerant acts need to be implemented, accompanied by programs that encourage open dialogue and cooperation among different groups. Through these steps, the campus is expected to become a friendlier and more inclusive place for all its members.

The application of the first principle on campus focuses on interreligious tolerance, worship in accordance with one's beliefs, and respect for the rights of others. This includes mutual respect, care for places of worship, and the avoidance of discrimination and of imposing one religion on others. Instilling the value of tolerance in education must be carried out in a planned and systematic manner, and the literature

identifies the first principle of Pancasila as a basis for strengthening tolerance (Harefa & Bawamenewi, 2021). Concrete forms of implementation that every member of the academic community can adopt include: (1) respecting friends of different religions, namely by not mocking other religions' forms of worship, not treating differences in belief as a barrier to friendship, and giving friends time and opportunity to worship amid lecture schedules or organizational activities; (2) participating actively in religious activities, by joining and supporting spiritual activities on campus and taking part in religious student activity units in accordance with one's own beliefs; (3) caring for places of worship, by maintaining the order and cleanliness of the prayer facilities provided by the campus so that they remain comfortable for all students; and (4) upholding good moral ethics, by being aware that the One and Only God is always watching, so that religious values guide behavior, including honesty during examinations and responsibility in completing assignments.

Intolerance on campus threatens the creation of a healthy, inclusive, and democratic academic climate. The main challenges include the spread of extremist propaganda in digital spaces, growing polarization among student groups, and a lack of empathy in accepting differences of race, ethnicity, and belief. The key challenges in addressing this issue are: (1) digital propaganda and polarization, as hoaxes and radical content on social media often target students, triggering group segregation and eroding mutual respect; (2) group exclusivism, as closing oneself off from heterogeneous social interaction limits the space for dialogue between groups; (3) rigid interpretations and mindsets, as certain doctrines that regard other groups as wrong give rise to prejudice and social discrimination; and (4) an inability to embrace differences, as a lack of early multicultural education makes it difficult for some students to adapt to a plural campus environment. The approaches taken to counter these challenges include: (1) multicultural education, by integrating the values of tolerance, human rights, and ethics into the curriculum; (2) open spaces for dialogue, by encouraging interfaith and cross-cultural dialogue so that students become accustomed to expressing their opinions in a mutually respectful environment; and (3) firm rules, by enforcing anti-violence regulations and inclusive procedural policies so that the campus becomes a "safe space" for the entire academic community.

Implementing the First Principle in Facing Intolerance

Resolving intolerance on campus in accordance with the first principle of Pancasila ("Belief in the One and Only God") is carried out through the internalization of inclusive spiritual values. This includes developing respect for the right to worship, prohibiting religious coercion, and fostering awareness that every belief is entitled to equal space in the academic environment. Concrete and strategic implementation steps include the following. First, the campus can establish an interfaith dialogue forum that facilitates regular encounters among students from various religious backgrounds; such dialogue aims to build empathy, break down stereotypes, and seek the universal values of belief in God that sustain harmony. Second, religious moderation should be embedded in academic activities: the curriculum and student activities must integrate the value of tolerance, and lecturers and students are encouraged to adopt a humanistic approach consistent with compassion and divine morality while avoiding discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup relations (SARA) in assignments and social interaction. Third, the campus must guarantee freedom of worship and adequate facilities; the first principle requires the state, and its institutions, to protect freedom of worship, so the campus must ensure adequate places of worship for every recognized religion and guarantee that students are free from disturbance or intimidation while performing religious rituals. Fourth, the campus needs a code of ethics against discrimination; the rectorate should formulate firm regulations prohibiting all forms of intolerant acts, religiously motivated bullying, and social exclusion, and violations of the right to religious freedom must be dealt with through legal and procedural channels.

Student Behavior on Campus

The author conducted observations on the campus of the Faculty of Islamic Studies, UNIS Tangerang. The observations revealed that some male and female students displayed attitudes that no longer reflected Pancasila values in daily life. The first principle states "Belief in the One and Only God." During the observations, some students still did not fulfil their obligation to worship as religious adherents. When the call to the *Dhuhr* (midday) prayer was heard, some students did not move to pray, and this continued until the

call to the *Asr* (afternoon) prayer, clearly indicating an intention to neglect their obligation to worship. On the other hand, most FAI students did perform their prayers: upon hearing the call to prayer, male students promptly went to the mosque, while most female students prayed in the classroom. With regard to tolerant behavior on campus, FAI students already demonstrated a high level of tolerance. They respected religious differences and showed neither discrimination nor radicalism toward differences, both on and off campus.

Students as Agents of Change in Creating a Tolerant Campus Environment

Indonesia is known as a country rich in ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. In this context, religious tolerance is one of the important pillars of national unity. As an educated young generation, students have a strategic role in keeping the value of tolerance alive in society. Religious tolerance is an attitude of appreciating, respecting, and accepting differences in the beliefs, worship, and religious practices of others without having to sacrifice or weaken one's own beliefs. Religious tolerance is also an important foundation for maintaining national unity. With their enthusiasm and knowledge, students should be at the forefront of nurturing this value. Through their daily attitudes, education, interfaith activities, and digital literacy, students can make a real contribution to creating a peaceful, harmonious, and cohesive environment. Tolerance does not mean mixing beliefs; rather, it means accepting differences as a social reality that must be preserved for the sake of common peace. As an educated young generation, students therefore play a strategic role in keeping tolerance alive in the midst of society.

As agents of change who create and maintain tolerance on campus, students must first set an example in daily life by showing tolerance in simple matters, such as respecting friends of different beliefs, not imposing opinions or religion on others, and giving others space to worship according to their beliefs. Students can also improve their diversity literacy: as intellectuals at the forefront of analyzing social issues, they should understand that differences are a source of richness rather than a threat. In addition, students should be active in discussion and education. Discussion forums offer a good opportunity to invite peers to engage in healthy dialogue without putting one another down, to convey the importance of interreligious harmony, and to act as disseminators of accurate information, especially on sensitive religious issues. Furthermore, as agents of change, students must be able to counter hoaxes and issues related to ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup relations (SARA), since many interreligious conflicts arise from provocation or misinformation.

Students can use technology to verify information before sharing it, counter false news with valid data, educate those around them about digital literacy, and use social media platforms to spread the values of peace and humanity. Students can also serve as a bridge between the campus and the wider community. Often regarded as agents of change, they should act as mediators when misunderstandings arise between groups of different beliefs, drive campus activities that uphold tolerance, spread the spirit of unity in the community, encourage the campus to adopt regulations that protect the rights of minorities and prevent discrimination, and refuse to be bystanders when intolerance-based bullying or harassment occurs on campus. Students must not be indifferent to their surroundings, especially on campus. When an act of intolerance occurs, students should stand at the forefront in upholding tolerance. In doing so, students fulfil their role as agents of change who create and maintain tolerance on campus, preventing conflicts that could divide the unity of the student community.

CONCLUSION

The first principle of Pancasila can serve as a strong foundation for fostering tolerance and respect for diversity on campus. Students are encouraged to internalize inclusive divine values so that they develop more open perspectives and respect differences in belief. Religious education that emphasizes interfaith dialogue and a deep understanding of the essence of belief in God is believed to be capable of reducing intolerance and creating a harmonious and peaceful academic atmosphere. This study recommends strengthening character education programs and campus policies that support diversity and intercultural dialogue. It also proposes regular discussions and seminars involving various parties to enrich students' understanding of the

importance of tolerance and consistency in a plural society. The application of the first principle of Pancasila, "Belief in the One and Only God," in addressing intolerance among students plays a crucial role as a moral foundation and ethical safeguard in the academic environment. Amid widespread exposure to exclusivist views, radicalism, and information polarization on social media, students are a vulnerable yet strategic group in maintaining unity, and they are capable of practicing their own beliefs without demeaning the beliefs of others.

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