

# The Practice of Tolerance among Islamic Education Teachers (IETs) through *Shura* in the Management of Da'wah Activities in Schools

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## Abstract

Tolerance is a rational, practical, and highly recommended practice in Islamic teachings. This study aspires to identify tolerance levels through *shura* practiced by Islamic Education Teachers (IET) across all national primary schools in Peninsular Malaysia. This study was conducted entirely using quantitative approach. A survey along with a five-point Likert scale questionnaire was distributed to 433 respondents in 4 different zones representing the state of Kedah (north zone), Kelantan (east zone), Selangor (central zone) and Johor (south zone). The results showed that the (IETs) tolerance level through *shura* is at high value (min = 4.39 and sd = 0.383). The contribution of this study is to boost the comprehension of openness through a more dynamic *shura* towards educators because of its capacity to promote positive shift in any school management activities.

## Keywords

Tolerance, *Shura*, Islamic Education Teachers, Management, *Da'wah* Activities

## 1. Introduction

Tolerance is one of the mechanisms of founding a civilized, interpersonal space of interaction between people of different faiths, beliefs, and views (Agius & Ambrosewicz 2003). Tolerance is a reciprocal process between two or more perspectives. In other words, tolerance is engendered by the conflicting feelings of being in the mood to accept or reject something for the motives of avoiding conflict; to be tolerant of something even though they disagree or dislike it. (Gibson, 2006; Sullivan & Transue, 1999; Vogt, 1997). According to Shadi Nafisi

(2018), a difference in thought, behaviour and tastes is one of the realities of human life which is rooted in the nature of man's creation. Meanwhile, *shura* is a platform where every member of the organization engages harmoniously to make an impactful and accurate decision. Nevertheless, the employment of *shura* is difficult to attain if the tolerance constituent has been disregarded. From the Islamic outlook, tolerance can be elucidated as the attitude and noble character implemented within the society for the goal of respecting each other within the specific limits presented in Islam (Ade, 2016).

Tolerance should also be established as a willingness to be open to others, willingness to accept criticism, willingness to respond and to believe that every single message that others convey is correct in their own way (Nurfarhana & Khadijah, 2013). Nonetheless, tolerance in the Islamic perspective is limited in practice in certain technical matters and does not concern facets of religious beliefs or morals (Bustanul, 2016; Mazlan, 2017). In accordance with the practice of the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him), this attitude of tolerance was commonly showed by Prophet Muhammad through *shura* activities with the fundamental of encouraging, training and guiding his other associates so that they are free to engage their opinions, suggestions, and thoughts on world affairs (Abdul, 2003).

For this particular study, the tolerance practiced presented refers to its application through *shura* in revealing IETs' willingness to accept constructive criticism, ready to listen and accept opinions, comfortable to discuss on issues and willing to share information on tasks. Concurrently, tolerance must also be taken into consideration when it is applied among educators especially IET for the purpose of promoting excellent communication and management in schools and thus establishing a positive working surrounding (Ahmad Marzuki, 2013).

### 1.1. Objective

This study aspires to identify tolerance levels through *shura* practiced by Islamic Education Teachers (IETs) across all National primary schools in Peninsular Malaysia.

### 1.2. Issues and Challenges

The attitude of tolerance through *shura* is not widely practiced among teachers in school management. This proposal is based on the results of the study of Muhammad Faizal, Rosnah, Saedah, Husaina, & Gary (2014), who found that the competency of teachers to argue disparate views professionally during meetings was only at the satisfactory level (56.6%). The views and ideas of the school community that were openly accepted were at the level of (60.0%) which is high and satisfactory. Additionally, tolerance in a *shura*-based viewpoint is regarded as a failure because many teachers still refuse to communicate in the meetings carried out and instead these meetings frequently turned into sole briefings (Norasmah & Rofilah 2013). This circumstance reflects the personality flaws among teachers in which its consequences will only worsen the teaching com-

munity and their management in education (Sufean, 2004).

Meanwhile, based on preceding studies, researchers recognized that many studies on tolerance have been debated in a more focused manner on the stance and attitude of the multiple religious' views in Islamic perspectives and their feasibility in community life (Abur, 2018; Ammar, 2011; Friedmann, 2003; Hussain, 2008; Elius, Khan, Roslan, Yakub & Kamaruzaman, 2019; Nurfarhana & Khadijah, 2013; Saeed Akhtar et al., 2016). Most of the studies completed are also in the manifestation of literature. An empirical study on the practice of tolerance in human behaviour, work, and personal relationships are not explored in detail, the researcher proposed that it is vital for this study to examine the understanding of the tolerance concept through shura that should be regarded more dynamically and clearly through human behaviour in terms of management among IET in schools.

## 2. Literature Review

In Islam, the concept of tolerance instilled to Muslims is very practical and rational to be operated among people, so that they know and interact with each other. It is because the Quran encourages the presence of differing views in celebrating differences. This fundamental way of thinking is based on surah al-Hujurat 49: 13

*O mankind! Indeed, we have created you from men and women, and we have created you as different races and tribes, so that you may know one another (and be friendly to one another).*

(Translation of Abdullah Muhammad Basmeih 2006)

According to the verse, tolerance is necessary for every human being to accept the differences that emerge in terms of religion, race, culture, skin colour, or language. This is because the diversity is the sunnatullah and the nature set by Allah S.W.T. to His servant. As quoted in the Qur'an through Surah al-Syura 42:38; al-Hadid 57:25; dan al-'Araf 7:181 which suggest that every human being has the equal right to convey his beliefs either in terms of speech, conduct and attitude either in the manifestations of communication with Muslims or non-Muslims (Noraini Omar, Mohd Aderi, Mohd Isa, & Hasnan 2014).

Studies from both domestic and foreign scholars have also proven that the application of tolerance has a tremendous effect not only on one's behavior but also on others and their work environment. Among them are the discoveries of Mas Ayu and Fatimah (2014) which prove that there is a compelling relationship between the attitude of the individual's tolerance to the assessment of excellent job performance. Fatimah wati (2012) and Bonner (2010) also found that teachers with tolerance in their personality have the advantage of overcoming a variety of work because of their open, creative and flexible stance. Likewise, Bing and Lounsbury (2000) found that openness is profoundly affected by job performance because of its willingness to learn, acquire something and accept new suggestions. Then, the results of the study by Nurul Hudani, Ma'rof Redzuan, &

Noor Hisham (2016) reveal that consistent open practices have a positive contribution on their work-life and quality.

An exceptional level of tolerance can only be achieved if there is mutual understanding, determination, and respect for each other in harmony. With *shura*, the practice of tolerance that should be practiced suggests the IETs to think outside the context of the norm, to view things from different perspectives and to be ready to face all kind of possible consequences. Such people think that it is easier to explore new experiences since they have a more flexible way of experiencing their work environment (Rothmann & Coetzer, 2003). Meanwhile, an individual who has been adopted openness by themselves, tend to exhibit that attitude indirectly through his or her daily actions which will always be looked up to by any amateur or experienced teacher (Zahanim & Qurratu'aini 2018). IETs should cultivate a moral code in the pursuit of healthy work culture and congruous working atmosphere.

### 3. Methodology

This study uses a quantitative research design through a survey study. The instrument employed is based on the adaptation of several *shura*-related theories and models, together with the literature reviews by past scholars. A total of 6 items were created to serve as instruments according to the validity and reliability of the predetermined instrument. A total of 8 panellists in the field of study participated in assessing the validity of the questionnaire, while 2 linguists were hired for the objective of validating the overall instrument. The Content Validity Ratio (CVR) method created by Lawshe (1975) was used in this study for the aim of empirically measuring the content of the paper. The CVR level value for each item considered appropriate and acceptable for the eight panels is equal to or greater than 0.75 ( $\geq 0.75$ ). Based on the analysis of the CVI (Content Validity Index), generally, the instrument shows a high value which is equal to or greater than 0.8 ( $CVI \geq 0.8$ ).

Five Likert scales were used in the questionnaire, which are strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), moderately disagree (MD), agree (A) and strongly agree (SA). A pilot study was carried out on 153 teachers of Islamic Education (IET) from primary schools across Putrajaya. Based on the analysis, Cronbach's alpha coefficient has proven that the reliability of the questionnaire is high as the value of CVI exceeds 0.8. This value is regarded as appropriate because the best Cronbach alpha coefficient value must be equal to or greater than 0.7 (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008). The population for this study includes Islamic Education Teachers from primary schools throughout Peninsular Malaysia. The researcher has adopted a random sampling technique chosen from four different zones, specifically North (Kedah), South (Johor), East (Kelantan), and Central (Selangor). In this study, the total of 433 teachers of Islamic Education was involved. The data gathered were then examined descriptively based on five phases of interpretation as outlined by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) through **Table 1**.

**Table 1.** Table interpretations of respondents' answers.

Min Value Scores	Interpretations
2.01 - 3.00	Medium Low
1.00 - 2.00	Low
2.01 - 3.00	Relatively Low
3.01 - 4.00	Relatively High
4.01 - 5.00	High

## 4. Findings

Tolerance level through *Shura* practice

The findings of the study on the degree of tolerance among IETs through shura are presented in detail as **Table 2**.

Based on **Table 2**, it is evident that levels of implementation of tolerance through *shura* among IETs are high (min 4.39 and sd = 0.383). The results show that the highest min of *shura* practice is (min = 4.54, sd = 0.511). While the lowest (min = 4.30, sd = 0.563). It means that the practice of tolerance has been manifested into their attitude by allowing others to convey their ideas, celebrate difference in views, respect disparate ideas, by allowing themselves to forgive easily, quickly seek for forgiveness and being receptive towards criticism from others.

## 5. Discussion

Based on the outcome, IETs significant tolerance manifestations are observed in their willingness to allow others to come up with ideas and celebrate them despite differences of opinion. These discoveries are supported past research by **Nazirah and Kamarul Azmi (2016)** who found IETs to be warm, friendly, approachable and open-minded. This statement is under the opinion of **Kamarul Azmi and Ab. Halim (2015)** who mentioned that IETs should always be approachable, friendly, kind, and narrowing the gap between them and the students so that they can be approached through a flexible social connection. Additionally, the stance of being receptive towards criticism is also an exemplary act.

Further, the excellence of tolerance among IETs is presented through mutual respect despite having differences in opinions. This statement is supported by **Nazirah and Kamarul Azmi (2016)** who propose that IETs respect and understanding not only applies among them but also to other school colleagues. This atmosphere can directly form harmony and unity among members within the educational organization of the school itself (**Noraini, Mohd Aderi, Mohd Isa, & Hasnan 2014**). Should the individual fails to exercise respect for each other, it does trigger not only negative perceptions but also conflict. Such issues should be avoided in order to not trigger feelings of disagreement or incompatibility that may happen between individuals or among members themselves (**Rahim, 2010**).

Based on the findings of the study, even though the implementation of tolerance among IETs through shura is at a very high level, researchers found that one item that refers to the tendency to forgive others is at a meagre scale. From a

**Table 2.** Level of tolerance among IETs through *shura* implementation.

No	Item	Percentage (Frequency) N = 433					Min and Standard Deviation	
		SD	D	MD	A	SA	Min	Sd
	Regarding the implementation of <i>shura</i> among IETs partners, I,							
1	Give space for friends to convey their ideas			0.7	43.6	55.7	4.54	0.511
2	Celebrate difference in views			3.5	52.9	43.6	4.40	0.557
3	Respect disparate ideas		0.2	3.0	50.6	46.2	4.42	0.565
4	Easily forgive			3.2	63.3	33.5	4.30	0.525
5	Easily seek for forgiveness			5.1	58.4	36.5	4.31	0.563
6	Being receptive towards criticism			2.3	57.7	40.0	4.37	0.530
	Total						4.39	0.383

researcher's stance, this statement contradicts the IETs character which should have distinctive personalities, credibility and hence be an outstanding role model for the people around them (Ab. Halim, Khadijah, Mohd Aderi & Izham 2016; Solahuddin & Nor Azzuwal, 2017). Whereas in Islamic teaching, having a forgiving attitude is a part of the character of the righteous as quoted in Surah Ali Imran (3: 134) which means "*Those who give their sustenance in times of trouble and hardship, and those who hold back their anger, and those who forgive others. And (remember) Allah loves those who do good things*".

(Translation of Abdullah Muhammad Basmeih 2006)

Another trait that one should have is to forgive each other easily as it exhibits a very tolerant attitude when it comes to community relations. Other than showing empathy, this attitude is to train them to be positive and rational in realizing that no human being in the world is free from mistakes (Mohd Nasir, Siti Norlina, & Siti Aisyah, 2015). Therefore, IETs should continuously review and reflect on their own flaws and continuously forgive others. This attitude aspires people to better recognize themselves by thinking of all the shortcomings that they have and knowing the limits to the soul in order to exhibit a more reasonable and rational attitude. Therefore, as educators and preachers, GPI should strive to persist in cultivating a high degree of self-tolerance, gentleness and forgivingness as they play a crucial role as a *bil-hikmah da'wah* to co-exist (Nor Amin & Mohd Ismail, 2012). This good orientation is also one of the most desirable acts of the Prophet p.b.u.h for the objective of maintaining a good relationship among individuals.

In brief, these positive findings show that the high values portrayed by IETs through tolerance are observed in accordance with the Islamic Education Philosophy (IEP) which necessitates them to consistently spread knowledge, skills, and appreciation based on the Quran and al-Sunnah in promoting a right attitude and personality as a good servant in the world and the hereafter so that one will be able to benefit others.

## 6. Conclusion

The impact of this study substantiates that each IET is capable of fostering tolerance through shura in a way that avoids any prejudice that may lead to lousy impression and conflict among them. Therefore, the diversity and differences that exist among members are not supposed to split them (Nazri, Nik Yusri, & Ahmad Hidayat, 2011), but rather to become more sensitive and receptive and foster openness towards one another. Emphasis on tolerance through the implementation of *shura* is vital since its crucial role is not just to gather a wealth of ideas from teachers to promote the contribution of suggestions and ideas, but also to foster creativity and a culture of innovation. Even more significantly, it is intended to enhance their performance and personality especially in educational professionalism.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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