

Religious Character Education: Students' Perspectives on Religion in Diversity

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Abstract

Diversity is a gift that brings good but also a catastrophe that brings bad. Managing attitudes towards diversity is key. This research explores the younger generation's perception of their passion for faith. The goal is to formulate the perception of young integration as a determining factor in religious attitudes, seeing the implications for the education of religious character. To achieve this goal, this study uses a phenomenological qualitative methodological approach. Data collection is carried out by surveys and interviews. The results showed that (1) religious motivation is dominated by the family environment and affective dimensions; (2) the passion of religious life is still in ritual and spiritual circles; (3) perceptions and attitudes of tolerance in the pluralist paradigm become distinctive in the face of other religions. These findings have implications in the education of religious character, personal development of learners, moral and social values, public policy with dynamic system analysis. This study concludes three things: the affective dimension in the motivation of religious life; the centrality of prayer and rituals as focal points of faith; and the respondents' pluralistic stance towards other religious traditions. Thus, this research underscores the critical need for religion-based character education that integrates both personal development and social responsibility. It highlights the relevance of religious values in navigating the complexities of contemporary global challenges. This research implies that religious character education should not be confined to strengthening personal values. It should additionally pave the way for comprehending and addressing global challenges through an inclusive religious perspective.

Keywords: Religious Character Education, Tolerance, Religious Motivation, Students' Perspectives, Diversity

INTRODUCTION

Conflict is a global phenomenon, which is inseparable from differences and stems from attitudes and choices of action towards diversity (Putra et al., 2022). Therefore, conflict has become one of the global crises because violence has become an option of action. This phenomenon explains the problem of diversity, namely: ideas, ideologies, religions, tribes-cultures, and so on. forms that emerge in society are attitudes of discrimination-intolerance (Kanas et al., 2017; Pew Research Center, 2012; Stange, 2019) or radicalism (Adryanmarthanino, 2021; Kanas et al., 2017; McRae, 2008; Robingatun, 2017; Schulze, 2017; I. A. Widayat et al., 2018; I. A. R. Widayat et al., 2021). This phenomenon is not only a spontaneous action, but also a systematic action because it has entered into public and massive policies, such as legislation (Institute, 2022).

Diversity as a trigger for conflict, in Indonesia, has been realized by the founder of the nation. Therefore, the founders of the nation reminded the importance of strengthening national identity. For example, Sukarno reminded that religion as a religious identity should not fade the identity of the nation (Setiawan, 2018). Identity strengthening is built on the foundation of nationality. Pancasila and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika became the agreed foundation for the plurality of nations (Halwati et al., 2018; Pramudya, 2005; Susanto, 2016; Syam, 2011). However, the existence of faith-based conflicts is a sign for the existence of a character of tolerance from society. The loss of the character of tolerance means 1) the growth of intolerance or radicalism, and 2) the polarization or division of members of society. Strengthening the character of tolerance is a necessity, as it has been established that the character of noble morals and global diversity is emphasized and has become part of the profile dimension of Pancasila students. Within the framework of the implementation of the value of tolerance, educational institutions bear responsibility and are challenged in order to change attitudes and life choices (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2020).

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An attitude is largely determined by one's beliefs (Kosasih et al., 2021) well as the formalities of religious life, radicalism, intolerance or tolerance (Robingatun, 2017; Stange, 2019). Meanwhile, beliefs form perceptions and views that ultimately influence action. Therefore, the exploration of perception can describe one's beliefs and the probability of action to be carried out because what is understood (cognitive) and perceived (affective) becomes the basis of what is done (psychomotor). For this, the environment and experience need to be considered in the study of perception (Prabowo, 2011).

Research on perceptions related to diversity or plural societies has provoked researchers to conduct scientific studies and analysis. There are at least three major themes that have been researched. *First, social perception and identity.* Segre (2021) associates religion with social identity. With this status, religion is a shaper of social identity with certain standards of attitudes and actions. On the one hand, as an identity, religion is inherent in its adherents. On the other hand, community members experience groupings due to religion (Segre, 2021). *Second, the formation of perception and religion as an institution.* In society, institutions based on a religion often act as a unifying tool for community members for the purposes and agendas of social movements (Ariansyah & Masyhur, 1970). *Third, the perception and sensitivity of interfaith relations.* Perception affects the emotional state. For example, in Indonesia, religion has become a very sensitive social identity. A small dispute will become a big conflict when it comes to religion. Because of this sensitive nature, religion is easily used in the formation of public opinion when there is a clash of social groups. For example, the Sampang Madura conflict case raised religion to garner public support, although the root of the problem also concerns politics and economics (Humaedi, 2014). *Fourth, social perceptions and conflicts.* Apparently, perception is closely correlated with conflict strategies. Schulze (Schulze, 2017) analyzes public perceptions built in several diversity-based conflicts, namely the Poso and Ambon conflicts which are narrated as religious conflicts and the Sambas conflict which is narrated as ethnic conflicts. The formation of public perception shapes public judgments and attitudes towards problems encountered and solved (Ansori et al., 2015; Schulze, 2017). The study of perceptions of religious life is not only due to the potential for conflict, but the role of the digital world for the formation of public opinion which ultimately affects the behavior of the younger generation (Siswantara, 2021b, 2021a).

This research will focus on conducting studies on the perceptions of the younger generation related to religious motivation, passion for faith, and the relationship between religions. This study wants to explore three things: (1) What motivates young people to choose and live their religion? (2) What is the perception of young people in living their religion), and (3) What is the perception of young people towards religious relations? Research analysis gives rise to discussions about character education, especially the environment, tolerance, and spirituality.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Character Education

Character education is a systematic and continuous process that aims to cultivate "universal" human values (Ives & Kidwell, 2019), moral values, ethical principles, and social responsibility within individuals through diverse formal and non-formal educational methodologies (Liljestrand, 2017; Romi & Schmida, 2009; Supriadi et al., 2022). This concept covers the integration of knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to mold well-rounded, responsible individuals who adhere to accepted social norms (Sartika et al., 2024). Further, character education employs a holistic approach that incorporates classroom learning, social interactions, and practical experiences designed to internalize values such as honesty, discipline, collaboration, and empathy (Saepudin et al., 2023; Supriyadi et al., 2024). Consequently, character education endeavors to develop individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also possess strong moral character and contribute positively to society (Komalasari, 2018; Saepudin et al., 2023; Sapiudin et al., 2024).

Religious Character Education

Religious character education refers to a pedagogical approach that promotes personal devotion and the freedom to engage in authentic religious practices (Emmert, 2020; Muhtar, 2019). It comprehends the cultivation of personal values and spiritual growth that extends beyond the confines of formal rituals.

Instead, it emphasizes the cultivation of a profound connection with the divine or a higher power, alongside the embodiment of universal values such as justice and empathy (Bellous, 2019). Religious Character Education represents a distinct educational approach that aims to cultivate individual character through the integration of religious values into the educational curriculum (Hoon, 2014; Saint-Martin, 2013). It seamlessly integrates religious teachings and practices into the curriculum, fostering the development of morality, ethics, and personal integrity (Muhtar, 2019; Taja et al., 2021). This approach attempts to nurture not only academically proficient individuals but also ethical members of society who actively contribute to the construction of social harmony (Bellous, 2019; Molina & Pérez-Garrido, 2022; Supriyadi et al., 2024). Furthermore, Religious Character Education strives to promote an inclusive understanding of spirituality and reinforce moral values that are particularly relevant in addressing contemporary global challenges, such as issues of sustainable development (Bellous, 2019; Molina & Pérez-Garrido, 2022).

Religion in Diversity

Religion stands as a pervasive social institution, exerting a profound influence on virtually every component of culture and society. According to the Pew Research Center (2017), approximately 84% of the world's population identifies with a religious affiliation. Given the vast diversity of practices and worldviews across religious traditions, formulating a precise definition of religion proves challenging, as the term itself is deeply rooted in history (Spiro, 1966). Thus, this study adopts Haluza-DeLay (2014) broad definition of religion, encompassing beliefs, worldviews, practices, and institutions that transcend social boundaries, time, and scale (Haluza-Delay, 2014). Furthermore, the concept of religion in diversity refers to the coexistence and interaction of various religious traditions, including belief systems, practices, and institutions within a shared social context. In this context, religion serves as a wellspring of moral and spiritual values, contributing to a normative framework that governs individual behavior and interactions among community members. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that religion also holds the potential to ignite value conflicts (Woodhead et al., 2016). Therefore, a thorough understanding of religion in diversity is vital to promoting interfaith dialogue, tolerance, and awareness of pluralism, aiming to strengthen harmonious coexistence within multicultural communities. Social inclusion through shared responsibility and reciprocity, coupled with sensitivity to cultural and ethnic marginalization, alongside the deconstruction of societal anxieties, are key to achieving this objective (Memoli & Sannella, 2017).

METHOD

Research Design

This research uses a qualitative and phenomenological approach. With phenomenological design, this study elevates experiences, especially respondents' perceptions, and exposes them in a descriptive manner. Through phenomenology, research seeks to describe participants' life experiences of a particular condition and situation (Hujar & Matthews, 2021; Kosasih et al., 2021; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) including their outlook on life (Cannon & Carr, 2020; Creswell, 2015). This study aims to capture perceptions of religious life related to religious experience, understanding, teaching that has been received, either by family or also education in formal educational institutions (Fishwick & White, 2017; Thompson & Panacek, 1998). Research focuses on the passion of faith as part of religious life. The implications of the findings of this study provide a policy direction in character education.

This research is an exploration of the experience of faith. this experience of faith is influenced by the events that occurred and the meaning of those events (Wardell & Engebretson, 2006). Both things require a link. In this study, perception or view is a bridge between the two. This perception or view focuses on topics or themes: the motivation of religious life, the passion for the life of faith which concerns the view of truth and salvation, the relationship between religions which includes respect and cooperation with other religions.

Each of the topics follows the following notion. (1) The uniqueness of faith is the view and appreciation of everything, which is contained in one group and can be a characteristic of that group and that distinguishes it from other groups. In religions, the hallmark lies in the claims of truth and salvation that influence religious attitudes towards other religions. (2) A truth claim refers to the belief of a group that states that its teachings

lead people to truth, i.e., 'reality' that is judged to be true (according to reality). (3) The claim of salvation refers to the belief of a group that states that its teachings lead people to the salvation of life. Meanwhile, religious relations mean the views of a religious group towards other groups in relation to religious uniqueness, truth, and salvation, as well as the relationship model (Sopandi & Taofan, 2019).

Participants

Private higher education students in West Java province are willing to take part in this research. The determination of students as participants is due to their experience in the process of religious education at the previous level of education (Primary and Secondary Education). In the process, participants have been explained data retrieval techniques through purposeve sampling. Participants will then be asked to fill in data according to demands through Google Forms or a web-based application that is effective in collecting the information and data needed from the participants (Creswell, 2012, 2014; Nurmahmudah & Nuryuniarti, 2020; Thompson & Panacek, 1998). A total of 50 people is willing to be participants in the study. Table 1 describes the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Information	Sum	%
Gender		
Man	27	54.40
Woman	23	46.00
Age Range		
16-19	17	34.00
20-23	32	66.00
Lecture		
Semester 1-2	1	02.00
Semester 3-4	16	32.00
Semester 5-6	28	56.00
Semester 7-8	5	10.00
Religious Background		
Buddhist	1	02.00
Christian	18	36.00
Catholic	12	24.00
Islam	19	38.00

Data Collection

Data collection was carried out by utilizing semi-structured surveys and interviews. The two stages can be carried out together (Creswell, 2012, 2014). In the questionnaire, participants are given a statement, situation, or opinion in the form of sentences. Against these sentences, participants were asked to give their opinions. The opinions given are data that will be processed as data on the perception of the passion of living in faith. The perception data relates to participants' motivations, experiences, and opinions. In semi-structured interviews, participants were asked to give opinions and reasons on the topic under discussion.

Participants gathered in one activity and were given information about the purpose and purpose of data collection. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions about the vagueness of information and were further given the freedom to be voluntary respondents. In the questionnaire, the statement of willingness as a participant is stated by clicking on the statement: "I hereby submit all information in the form of the above personal response or opinion". Meanwhile, in semi-structured interviews, the opinions and explanations given by participants when asked have been a sign of participants' ability and willingness in the study (Hett & Hett, 2013; Shamim & Qureshi, 2013).

Analysis data

The respondent's views responded to all statements made. However, respondents were given the freedom to show their attitude tendencies. In the average tendency of these attitudes, it appears that 1) all categories received a response (so that there is a score of value); 2) tendency of views (either agree or disagree). Data analysis is carried out after data collection is carried out through questionnaires. The questionnaire data is processed through the Google Form facility and the Excel program is used to perform the analysis. The perception assessment scale uses average values. Furthermore, an analysis was carried out on the respondent's response data. Subjective interpretations of data overlays are carried out to see themes or patterns of faith life experiences, in particular comparative studies between religions (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017).

FINDING

This finding is divided into several themes, namely: religious *motivation*, *religious passion*, *the relationship between religions*. All three themes describe respondents' perceptions of religious life.

Religious Motivation

Religious motivation is a factor, (1) that influences a person to religion ("*I am religious because*"), or (2) which moves a person to choose and keep living up to the religion he has chosen ("*want to continue to be religious because....*"). For reasons of religion or the choice of a religion, respondents revealed that the foremost and greatest determining factor was the family (70%); the remaining 30% is a combination of two factors, namely school community and friendship (6%) or personal decisions (24%).

The above respondents can be included in two external and internal categories. In this category, the determining factor for religious respondents was apparently not an internal factor (24%), but came from external factors (76%), namely the **environment**, whether family, school community, or friendships. "Self-choice" can mean a response that shows the motivational development of the respondent internally in his spiritual mind. The following table 2 shows those results.

Table 2. Religious Motivation Factors

Information	Sum	%
Family	35	70
Environment (community or friendship, school)	3	6
Own choice	12	24
Total	50	100

Furthermore, to the question of the decision to *remain* religious, the respondent expressed views as outlined in the following table. There are three factors that most influence a person when choosing to be religious. The three factors are *Religion is useful and useful*, *personal is formed because of religion*, and *agama soothes the soul*. Thus, psychological factors (comfort or emotion) have a large role for respondents to maintain or be in a certain religion.

Table 3. Perceptions of Religious Choice

Information	Sum	%
Didn't think of the reason	4	8
Religion is useful	14	28
the personal is formed because of religion	18	36
Religion soothes	9	18
Forms of self-search	1	2
Life guidelines	1	2
Religion provides life guidance	1	2
Agnostic	1	2
My life depends on God	1	2
Total	50	100

Regarding the religion now professed, the respondent put forward several reasons as presented in the following table 4.

Table 4. Reasons for Religious Choice

Information	Sum	%
I voted because of the teachings of my parents	14	28
I'm already comfortable with the religion that's been embraced	30	60
I live a normal religion	1	2
I didn't think of a reason	2	4
I feel like I already have an inner connection with God.	1	2
I didn't choose any religion because I felt confused about the choice of religion.	1	2
I chose because of a spiritual experience	1	2
Total	50	100

There are many reasons a person chooses a religion. However, there are two biggest reasons, namely (1) parental teachings and (2) the comfort of a religion. The opinions of the respondents above reinforce two topics that correlate strongly with diverse motivations, namely environment and affection.

The Passion of the Life of Faith

Religious passion is related to how a person's experience living out the faith or religion he has chosen. Data on the passion for religious life or faith is drawn by filing the following statement: "I live the faith through". For this statement, participants expressed their ideas and views and experiences of religious life. In response to the question, participants are allowed to choose more than one possible answer. In addition, it was possible for study participants to give other answers because they were not contained in the possible answers. A summary of respondents' opinions is illustrated in the following table.

Table 5. Forms of Religious Life

Information	Point	%
Prayer	39	78
Go to a place of worship	29	58
Taking social action	25	50
Clinging to the faith	22	44
doing all virtues	1	2
Faith in the Lord's Favor	1	2
Be grateful every day	1	2
Do good	1	2
My daily actions	1	2

The table above shows four actions performed or chosen by respondents to live out the faith or as a form of passion for faith. Such types of actions are *prayer*, *going to a place of worship*, *performing social actions*, *clinging to the faith*. These actions show three dimensions for living the faith in the religion professed, namely the dimension of faith or belief, the dimension of ritual or community faith in one religion, and the dimension of social action.

Table 6. Three Elements of Religion and Their Indicators

Dimension	Action Type
Faith	1. clinging to the Faith
	2. surrender to God
	3. Grateful for life
Ritual	4. Go to a place of worship
	5. Religious activities
Social	6. Taking social action
	7. performing obligations

Respondents had a view or perception that the faith of a religion's beliefs was lived in *prayer* and *activities in places of worship*. This conclusion finds its rationalization in the discussion of religious motivation. What is said is that the tendency to express religious life in prayer and ritual activities is the impulse or motivation of affection in religion. Thus, in the participants researchers or respondents tended to see religious life as limited to personal affairs or the immediate environment; An example is family. This conclusion does not rule out the possibility of another attitude. However, as far as the research participants revealed, religious passion is within the private sphere. Nevertheless, the social dimension has received attention to express its faith.

Relationship with other Religions

Interfaith relationships are related to a person's views or perceptions when dealing with religions or beliefs that are different from his own. This theme is very important to explore because of the diversity. In terms of diversity, the Asia-Pacific region is the region with the highest religious diversity. So is Indonesia. Although not a country with very high diversity, Indonesia has a diversity nature because it consists of various ethnic groups that differ in various aspects (local politics, language, culture, local religion, and so on. All elements that make up the nation must be valued for the sake of unity and unity. Without efforts and awareness of diversity, a society cannot grow with diversity. In short, societal differences must still be considered for the common good (Pew Research Center, 2014). In diversity, opinions about other religions describe a person's perception of the existence of his religion towards other religions. This perception is reflected in two findings: 1) religious paradigms and 2) religious attitudes towards differences.

First, The Religious Paradigm. What is meant by the religious paradigm is a basic view of the life of faith that includes claims of truth and salvation. Religious paradigm data were obtained by asking respondents to determine attitudes on a likert scale. The grouping of views is calculated in two inclinations. The following table shows respondents' opinions about their religious paradigms.

Table 7. The Paradigm of Religion and Its Assessment

Dimension	Statement	Score		Value
		Yes	Not	
Exclusivism	1. In my passion, my religion is the truest of the religions	44	56	No
	2. Other religions are heretical and there is no truth of faith in them	4	96	No
	3. There is only one true religion in the world, and that is the religion I profess	46	54	No
	4. In religious life, God's truth exists in only one religion.	34	56	No
	5. To survive and go to heaven, one must embrace my religion	26	50	No
Pluralist	6. My religion and other religions are the same. All religions share the same truth.	76	24	Yes
	7. In my view, even though it is another religion, one can still survive and go to heaven because of my religion.	76	24	Yes
Inclusionism	8. Other religions do have the truth; but the complete and perfect truth is only my religion.	42	58	No
	9. Even if people don't trust my God, God still saves that person.	18	82	No

Based on the statements and responses provided and the table value above, the analysis of this study can provide three topics of discussion. *First*, respondent **tends not to be exclusive** where truth does not exist in other religions and exists only in one's own religion. *Second*, the respondent **tends not to be inclusive** where the truth exists in another religion but the wholeness or pinnacle of truth is in the religion. *Third*, respondents **are more likely to be pluralist**, where the truth is present in one's own religion and in other religions.

Second, Religious Attitudes. *Religious attitudes* mean respondents' views when dealing with and dealing with other religions. Views on other religions reflect the perceptions formed and mindsets that influence how to deal with adherents of other religions. By choice of *Agree* or *Disagree*, the respondent expressed his view of the statement.

Table 8. Attitudes Towards Other Religions

Statement	Agree	Disagree
1. Against other religions, I don't want to be related or friends.	0	50
2. I prefer to be friends with brothers and sisters because it is more comfortable.	2	48
3. Cooperation between people of different religions is not important because the matter of going to heaven is a personal matter.	11	39
4. My family will not accept prospective couples (husbands/wives) of different religions.	32	18
5. Against other religions, I don't want to be related or friends.	19	31
6. If my religion is insulted, then I will chastise people who insult my religion.	7	43

In the tables and graphs presented, respondents disapproved of religious discrimination (response no. 1,2,3,5) and faith-based violence (response no. 6). Nevertheless, the family exerts a strong influence (response no. 4). This tendency is aligned and in line with the role of the environment (including the family) in religious choices.

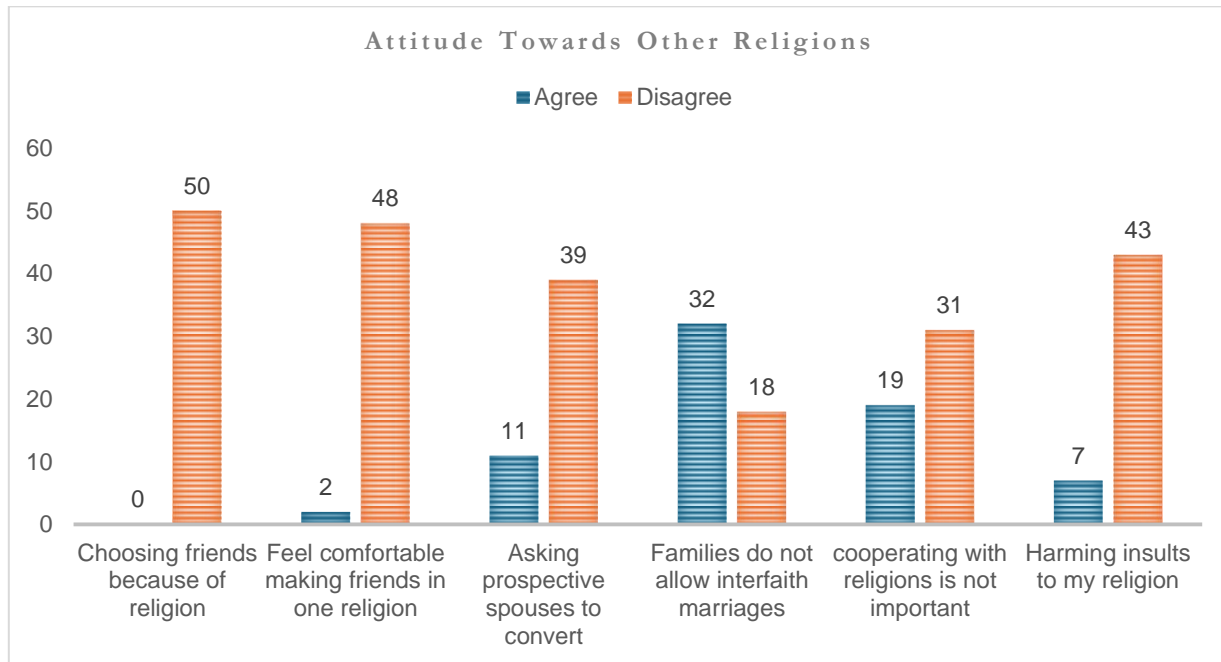


Figure 1. Comparison of Attitudes Towards Diversity

DISCUSSION

The results of this study brought three main topics found, namely about motivation, passion for life, and the paradigm of living together. All three carry implications in character education. In detail, the implications of character education are discussed in the discussion.

Religious Character Education in the model of Constructivism and Value Transmission

Environmental and emotional elements play a role in the passion for a life of faith or religion. Religion is an external form of the internal dimension of human beings, namely spirituality. Spirituality is not merely a spiritual and religious realm but concerns the entire experience of human life. Therefore, spirituality has a place in areas of life other than religious rituality. spirituality concerns the relational dimension of the individual (Wixwat & Saucier, 2021). Therefore, it is very rational that the environment (whether the institution of family, friendship, or other social forms) has a large role in perceptions and views in living a life of faith as translated in this study.

The following scheme describes the social environment, one of which is the family, an important relationship in the formation of motivations for religious life, where it becomes an archetype for action in real life. In short, the environment plays an important role in the internalization of religious values in a religion.

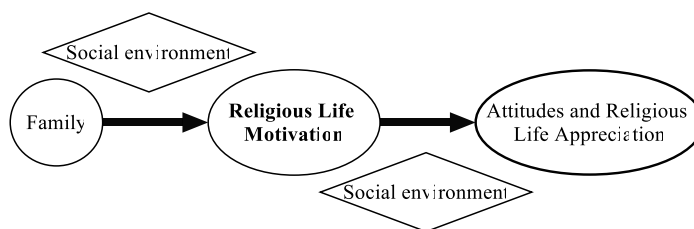


Figure 2. The Role of the Environment, Religious Motivation, and Actions in Life

In line with this, emotions after becoming an indispensable part of the uplift of religious life. That is, in addition to dogmatic, moral, and social ethical teachings, apparently the emotional or emotional aspects form the patterns of passion and attitudes of religious believers. And this, often goes unnoticed in looking at the practice of religious life in society. In fact, if we look further, various kinds of conflicts or concrete attitudes in religious life in society are often influenced by these dimensions of feelings or emotions.

Dua the above ideas carry implications for character education. In the process of mentoring students, religious character education is an internalization of values into students. In the process of internalizing this value, social environmental factors (family, school) play a large role. This can be understood because 'religion is instilled from childhood, even pre-birth'. Consequently, the cognitive aspects of a child have not been able to develop. Therefore, values are internalized through affective or psychomotor aspects (real experiences) (Hakam, 2013).

In the basic or child stage, a character education is supposed to focus on the affective aspects and conditioning of the environment in such a way that values can be well internalized in the learner. The pressing point of this aspect is a new point of view in the internalization of values. (LW et al., 2001). In the three aspects in the human being, namely cognitive, effective, and psychomotor, the cognitive aspect is not the main one. Therefore, in the context of character education, educational institutions must formulate values to shape the school environment or culture in accordance with the objectives of the school institution, such as the internalization of religious, moral, and leadership values (*transmission of values*) (Hakam, 2018b; Sukendar et al., 2019)

Thus, the data show two models of value and character development in education. On the one hand, a value (as well as character or person) can develop through a model of value transmission. The transmission model is based on sociological thinking, where values reside in society and its members must accept those values. On the other hand, a value already exists in one's body and education provide space and means for the development of that value. This constructive model perceives a sense of psychological thinking, in which is in a person and whose task is to develop those values optimally. In the process of development, a person's thinking makes him mature to accept a value as part of himself (Al Majali & Al Khaaldi, 2020; Hakam, 2018a, 2018b).

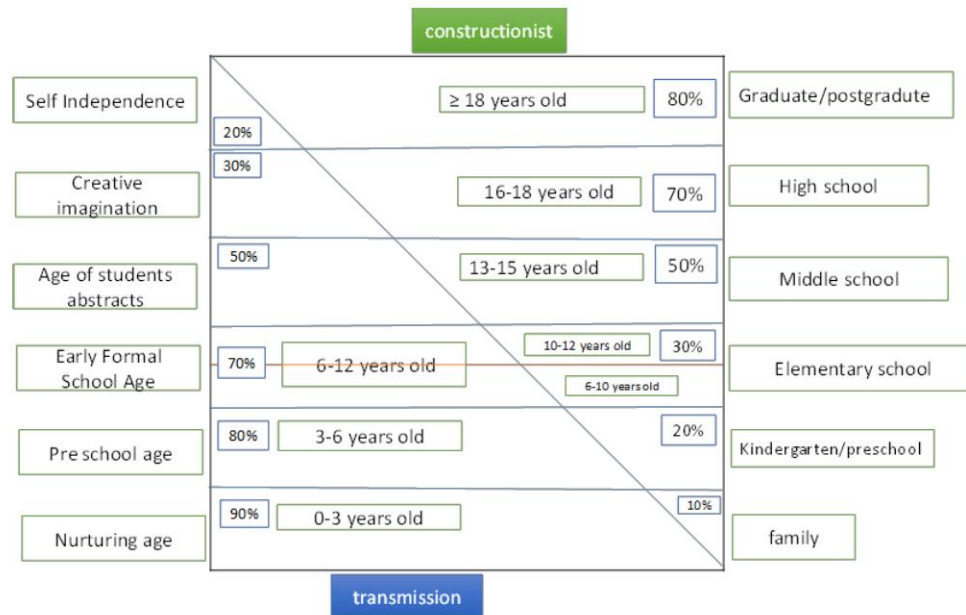


Figure 3. Rhombic Theory according to (Hakam, 2018a, 2018b)

The data of this study also showed that there were respondents who stated that religion was their own choice. The respondent's perception indicates a maturation or development of attitudes towards values (*constructivism*). The development of this attitude supposes two things: the ownership of values and free decisions. These two conditions allow a person to decide by his free will. This ability is the result of the psychological process of character education of a person. Cognitive abilities allow a person to understand and judge something to decide. Whether planting/internalizing or developing values, character and value education must follow the development of the learner's personality and level of education, as described in rhombic theory (Hakam, 2011, 2018b).

Religious Character Education: Global Morals and Ethics

Tolerance is a value that is grown in various cultures and religions to build value and meaning in a plural society (Ndolu & Tari, 2020). Diversity demands tolerance because without tolerance, diversity fuels conflict, harassment, ethnic and religious discrimination, or even terror (Lickona, 2006). However, the concept of tolerance is problematic if it is only placed in the context of 'respecting' and 'allowing' differences. Tolerance in that sense will only bring a dilemma. For example, because of tolerance, what to do with racist values or abortion? In religious practice, should we accept exclusivism?

This dilemmatic condition leads to value relativism. For this reason, tolerance presupposes standards, namely: freedom of conscience, and the common good (Lickona, 2006). Thus, the values of tolerance can include several related things not limited to: positive competition, tenderness, peace with oneself, social responsibility, openness, cultural diversity, help, participation, altruism, respect and appreciation, peace with others, equality and finally justice (Al Majali & Al Khaaldi, 2020).

An effort to objectivity the value of tolerance that focuses on understanding tolerance as an ethical and intellectual virtue.

First, tolerance is an ethical policy, that is, respect for freedom of conscience. In research, it is shown that tolerance is an ethical policy (Al Majali & Al Khaaldi, 2020). There are two consequences to this understanding. 1) *Tolerance rests on the voice of the heart and the conscience commands good action.* Although not absolute, conscience is the most honest personal choice under certain conditions. Because of its nature, conscience may be coercive to others because it is good in our opinion. This consequence becomes

problematic, but it is a personal moral decision, insofar as it does not harm the other party. However, what are the criteria for coercion or loss? This is where, universal value becomes a criterion that can be held. This universal value is grown in education (Siswantara, Suryadi, et al., 2022). 2) *Tolerance as an ethical virtue demands an attitude of respect towards others with the values they believe in, but does not require us to accept the beliefs and actions of others.* Tolerance allows a discussion and debate to find the truth. Thus, if a belief or value conflicts with conscience and the common good, then tolerance demands discussion and debate in order to achieve that (Lickona, 2006).

Second, *tolerance is an intellectual virtue, which prioritizes the value of justice and objectivity towards an object.* This understanding requires the perpetrator to open himself to other truths in a peaceful and humble manner. Tolerance is not just a particular political or ideological tendency, but an objective assessment of an action. In the context of religious diversity, tolerance encourages religious believers to dare to see the truth as objective. Therefore, in addition to the truth of his religion, a person who claims to be acting tolerantly, must dare to accept other truths with a big heart. On the other hand, a person who has tolerance must have the courage to criticize one's own untruths with a peaceful heart (Lickona, 2006). This attitude is nothing but the will to dialogue to find what is right and just. The dialogue here is not merely a ceremony but an attempt to seek true truths that can be contributed from spiritual riches in religions, without having to equate religions, or lose religious orientation and standards of value. (Lukito, 2012; Siswantara, 2020).

Through two understandings of tolerance, religious character education has two important values, namely spiritual moral values and global ethical values. On the one hand, religious value education develops and instills good values; on the other hand, religious education must bring a passion for faith in real life, namely global issues (Bandsuch & Cavanagh, 2005; Husin, 2009)

Religious Character Education

Education is a complex cultural activity, where the richness of human culture shifts and develops from generation to generation (Wixwat & Saucier, 2021). Through education, all cultural dimensions are internalized in the learner; one's religion. Religion is one of the actual educational contents in the context of the world, especially Asia-Pacific with a high degree of diversity (Pew Research Center, 2014) *On the one hand*, religion is a value and social system that governs an order of society with supernatural values as the basis (Mariana & Norel, 2013; Wixwat & Saucier, 2021). Therefore, religion is entrenched and contributes to shaping the face of society because of its overall spiritual nature and character, especially the religious nature of Asians (Indonesians, Filipinos, Malaysians). However, *on the other hand*, religious diversity is a factor that often makes good or bad for religion, can present cooperation or create hostility in the name of religion, for example, in the harsh face of religion affirms the correlation of factors of national love and religious violence (Hasyim, 2016; Nishi, 2020). Under these conditions, education is considered the institution most responsible for seeking a solution; One of them is the development of spiritual character education.

For this reason, this research conveys three important things in religious character education. *First, personal, and independent choice* is a sign and foundation of religious life that shows the maturity of religious life. Spirituality education can be pursued and developed as a maturation in which one is able to choose independently and freely. *Second*, religious life must balance religious life in the form of prayers, rituals, and social actions. Against this passage, the education of spiritual character must pay attention to or act through all three aspects.

Third, the uniqueness and peculiarities of religion counteract the potential dangers of relativism in the paradigm of pluralism. This can be pursued by seeing that all religions have beliefs, systems, faith, truth, and salvation, and that each member has unique peculiarities and virtues of values that exist only in those religions. If this is the case, the encounter of religions presupposes (1) the deepening of the faith of each religion and (2) the allegiance to share or give to each other from the richness of faith and the passion of living in faith to other religions (Richard & Siagian, 2021). The logical consequence is that religious believers are obliged to explore their own religion to discover the uniqueness and peculiarities of their religion. In that way, each religious believer will be prepared to face another religion not with prejudice, but with the spirit of enriching one another. In the context of religions, the education of religious character must also pay

attention to the dimensions of universal values when dealing with other social dimensions such as the economic politics of social inequality, and sectarian or group interests, to avoid radicalism and terror ideologies in living a religious life (Siswantara, Suryadi, et al., 2022). In addition, due to the context of divistas, religious value education must be able to develop peaceful and inclusive values in theological paradigms (the relationship of man and God), anthropological (relations of fellow human beings), and ecolis (relations of man and created nature) (Hasyim, 2016; Siswantara, Sujata, et al., 2022) either through general education or religious education (Siswantara, Bhakti, et al., 2022).

Based on the above three points, it can be concluded that religious character education faces the complexity of context that must be considered. Due to this complexity, religious character education cannot be designed or analyzed in just one aspect or dimension. Although religious character education is important and cannot be overlooked as an educational model, an analysis is required to enable policy makers in character education to perform their tasks effectively (Kusdarini et al., 2020).

Three important stages in religious character education are habituation, integration, and imitation (Fossen et al., 2021; Hidayat et al., 2022). However, in addition to these stages, an analytical model is needed that can map the effectiveness of religious character education, such as a dynamic systems model (Andhika, 2019). Therefore, a good and accurate analysis will help create good policies in religious character education.

CONCLUSION

The study found three things: *first*, the affective dimension in religious life motivation; second, prayer and ritual become areas of faith; *Third*, pluralist attitudes animate respondents' perceptions of other religions. These findings raise the younger generation's perception of the passion for a life of faith when compared to the rampant conflict or acts of discrimination in the name of diversity. These findings suggest that character education with a religious focus must address both personal development and social responsibility. On a micro level, it is not sufficient to focus solely on religious or spiritual activities, but rather to consider the complexity of the educational system and the needs of the learner. On a macro level, religious values must be able to transcend the boundaries of religion and address global problems, including social and ecological issues. This means that religious character education must be relevant to the challenges of the times and not simply focus on traditional religious practices or beliefs. It is important for religious character education to develop moral and social values that are applicable to contemporary issues and problems, and to work towards creating public policies that support this aim. Moreover, religious character education should also prioritize the cultivation of interfaith understanding and cooperation. While religious values may have different expressions in different religions, the underlying principles and values often overlap. By transcending religious boundaries and working towards shared goals, religious character education can make a meaningful contribution to addressing global challenges.

SUGGESTION

This research offers guidance for future investigation, particularly for professionals and scholars in the realm of religious education, to construct a framework for religious character education that combines individual growth, societal accountability, interfaith comprehension, and inter-religious collaboration to address global obstacles while considering prevailing ethical and social principles Pertinent to the current circumstances.

LIMITATION

This research has limitations only in the context of religious character education involving students at public universities. The results of this research may be different in the context of religious character education or other values developed by research subjects at other educational levels..

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