# RELIGIOSITY AND INTERFAITH TOLERANCE AMONG STUDENTS IN INDONESIAN ISLAMIC AND GENERAL JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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## ABSTRACT

Religious education plays a critical role in shaping both personal faith and interreligious harmony among students. This study investigates the levels of religiosity and religious tolerance among students attending Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) and general junior secondary schools (SMP) in Indonesia. Employing a descriptive-quantitative research design, data were collected from 400 students—200 from MTs and 200 from SMP in West Java—using two validated questionnaires measuring religiosity and religious tolerance, each comprising 24 items. The findings reveal no significant difference in religiosity between MTs and SMP students, with the majority in both groups scoring high in religiosity (71% and 69%, respectively). However, a significant difference was observed in religious tolerance, with SMP students demonstrating higher tolerance levels (60.5%) compared to MTs students, who mostly showed lower tolerance (67.5%) (t = 7.649, p < .01). Additionally, while no significant correlation was found between religiosity and religious tolerance among MTs students (r = .055, p > .05), a moderate positive correlation was found among SMP students (r = .589, p < .01). These findings suggest that school type influences the development of religious attitudes, with general schools being more effective in fostering both religiosity and tolerance. The study underscores the need for further investigation into the pedagogical approaches used in SMP that successfully promote religious tolerance. It also calls for the development of religious education models in MTs that integrate tolerance-building strategies without compromising religious commitment.

Keywords: Religiosity, Religious Tolerance, Islamic School, Public School

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of religiosity, defined as an individual's level of involvement in religious practices and beliefs (Hanif, 2021; Kress, 2015), plays a crucial role in shaping moral and ethical behavior among students. The Indonesian government—as is common in Muslim-majority countries—requires schools and universities to provide mono-religious education (Yusuf, 2020), namely religious education according to the religion of the students. But the goal is not just to be spiritually pious—as in countries in the Middle East. The Director General of Islamic Education, Komarudin Amin (2015), emphasized that religious education in Indonesia emphasizes spiritual, moral, and social piety, as well as moderation.

Previous studies have established a correlation between religiosity and various aspects of student life, including academic integrity and motivation. For instance, Herdian and Mildaeni (2022) found that higher levels of religiosity among Muslim students in Indonesia correlate with reduced academic dishonesty, suggesting that religious knowledge fosters character development and ethical behavior (Herdian & Mildaeni, 2022). Similarly, Fatima et al. (2017) demonstrated that Islamic religiosity positively influences academic motivation, indicating that religious beliefs and practices can enhance students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Fatima

et al., 2017). This body of literature underscores the importance of religiosity in educational settings, particularly in contexts where moral and ethical education is emphasized.

In Indonesia, where the majority of the population identifies as Muslim, the educational curriculum mandates the inclusion of religious education, which aims to instill moral values in students. Research indicates that students attending religious education classes exhibit higher moral standards compared to their peers in secular education settings. For example, a comparative study in Zambia highlighted that students receiving religious education demonstrated greater discipline and lower instances of misconduct, such as bullying and substance abuse (Jaya & Sukirno, 2020). This finding resonates with the Indonesian context, where the government mandates religious education in schools, particularly in regions with significant Muslim populations like West Java (Laksmidara & Nashori, 2022). However, despite the emphasis on religiosity, studies have shown that students in Indonesia, particularly those in Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) and junior high schools (SMP), often exhibit low levels of religiosity and morality (Sujarwoto et al., 2021).

The gap in the existing literature reveals a lack of comprehensive studies focusing specifically on the religiosity and religious tolerance of MTs and SMP students in Indonesia. While previous research has explored the religiosity of students at higher educational levels, findings indicate that younger students often score lower on religiosity assessments (Ridwan & Diantimala, 2021). For instance, Ridwan and Diantimala (2021) reported low average religiosity scores among MTs and SMP students, which aligns with findings from other studies indicating a general trend of declining religiosity among younger populations (Rahmawan & Falikhatun, 2024). This presents a critical gap that the current study aims to address by specifically investigating the religiosity and religious tolerance of MTs and SMP students in West Java.

Moreover, the relationship between religiosity and religious tolerance remains underexplored. While some studies suggest that higher religiosity correlates with increased moral behavior, there is evidence indicating that religiosity does not necessarily translate to religious tolerance. The Setara Institute's reports highlight that West Java has been identified as an intolerant region for several years despite its predominantly Muslim population (Putra et al., 2024). This paradox raises important questions about the interplay between religiosity and tolerance among youth. Ismatu Ropi (2021) noted a concerning trend of intolerance among young people in Indonesia, which suggests that increased religiosity may not equate to greater acceptance of diversity (Zubairu & Sakariyau, 2016).

The primary focus of this study is to investigate the intricate relationship between religiosity and religious tolerance, two interrelated concepts that possess distinct definitions and variables (Mamahit & Mamahit, 2024). Religiosity is defined as the degree of an individual's engagement in religious practices, beliefs, and values associated with a particular faith. This engagement can manifest in various forms, including participation in rituals, adherence to moral codes, and the internalization of religious values (Campos et al., 2020; Lubis & Sianipar, 2021; Usman et al., 2023; Mamahit & Mamahit, 2024). In contrast, religious tolerance refers to the attitude of mutual respect and acceptance of differences in religious beliefs, which is essential for coexistence in diverse societies (Campos et al., 2020; Fuad & Masuwd, 2023; Usman et al., 2023; Mamahit & Mamahit, 2024).

Research indicates that religious tolerance can be viewed as a variable influenced by religiosity. For instance, scholars argue that individuals with higher levels of religiosity are more likely to exhibit tolerance, provided their understanding of religion is inclusive and respects human rights (Mulya & Aditomo, 2018; Campos et al., 2020; Althalathini et al., 2020). Conversely, individuals who interpret their faith in a literal manner may demonstrate a reduced inclination to engage with other religions, leading to a tendency toward intolerance. This assertion is supported by Ardi et al. (2021) and Lubis and Sianipar (2021), who found that the

relationship between religiosity and religious tolerance is significantly mediated by factors such as intellectual humility and cognitive flexibility. These cognitive traits enhance the capacity for tolerance among religious individuals (Lubis & Sianipar, 2021).

Moreover, the context in which religiosity is practiced plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes toward tolerance. For example, Fuad and Masuwd (2023) highlight that in plural and multicultural societies, such as Indonesia, the experience of religiosity can intensify the practice of tolerance, thereby fostering a more harmonious coexistence among diverse religious groups. This perspective aligns with the findings of various researchers, who assert that an inclusive understanding of religion that encompasses human rights or empathy is likely to promote a more tolerant attitude among individuals (Mulya & Aditomo, 2018; Campos et al., 2020; Althalathini et al., 2020; Latuconsina et al., 2023).

The present study seeks to fill this gap by examining the religiosity and religious tolerance of MTs and SMP students in West Java, utilizing established frameworks such as Glock and Stark's dimensions of religiosity. This research will not only assess the levels of religiosity among these students but also explore how these levels relate to their attitudes toward religious tolerance. By focusing on this demographic, the study aims to contribute valuable insights into the complexities of religious education and its impact on societal attitudes in a diverse nation like Indonesia. Ultimately, the findings could inform educational policies and practices aimed at fostering a more tolerant and inclusive society.

## METHOD

This study employs a descriptive-quantitative research method to investigate the religiosity and religious tolerance of MTs and SMP students in West Java, Indonesia. The research framework is grounded in established theories of religiosity and religious tolerance, which guide the formulation of the research instruments and the analysis of the data.

The primary instruments for data collection are questionnaires designed to measure the variables of religiosity and religious tolerance. The religiosity variable is operationalized through three key aspects: faith, worship, and morals, as delineated by Rizal and Rahmat (2019). Each aspect is represented by a set of items that capture the nuances of students' religious beliefs and practices. Similarly, the religious tolerance variable is structured around three dimensions: tolerance towards other religions, tolerance towards co-religionists of different sects, and tolerance towards the state and government, following the framework established by Rahmat and Yahya (2022).

The questionnaires consist of a total of 48 items, with 24 items dedicated to measuring religiosity and another 24 for religious tolerance. Each set includes 12 positively framed items and 12 negatively framed items to ensure a balanced assessment of the constructs. Prior to the administration of the questionnaires, a Delphi test was conducted to establish content validity, wherein a panel of experts evaluated the relevance and clarity of the items. The experts affirmed the validity of all 48 items, ensuring that they accurately reflect the constructs being measured.

The data analysis framework is structured around several key statistical techniques facilitated by IBM SPSS Statistics 24. Initially, the validity of the items was assessed using correlation analysis of odd-even items, which allows for the identification of any inconsistencies in responses. Reliability testing was conducted through scale reliability analysis, ensuring that the instruments yield consistent results across different administrations.

Responses to the items are scored dichotomously, with a "Yes" response assigned a score of 1 and a "No" response assigned a score of 0 for positive items. Conversely, for negative items, a "Yes" response is scored as 0 and a "No" response as 1, following the scoring methodology outlined by Rahmat and Yahya (2022). This scoring system facilitates a

straightforward interpretation of the data, allowing for the calculation of overall religiosity and religious tolerance scores for each participant.

Descriptive statistics are employed to analyze profile data, providing a percentage-based overview of the religiosity and religious tolerance levels among the participants. Comparative analysis between MTs and SMP students is conducted using paired-samples t-tests, enabling the identification of significant differences in religiosity and tolerance levels between the two groups. Furthermore, the relationship between religiosity and religious tolerance is examined through partial correlation analysis, which controls for potential confounding variables and elucidates the strength and direction of the association between these constructs.

The sample for this study is determined purposively, focusing on two cities in West Java: Bandung, which is recognized for its multi-ethnic and multi-religious composition, and Tasikmalaya, which has the largest Muslim population in the province (Kusnandar, 2022). In each city, one MTs and one SMP are selected, resulting in a total sample of 400 students—200 from MTs and 200 from SMP. This purposive sampling strategy ensures that the study captures a diverse range of perspectives on religiosity and religious tolerance within the context of Indonesian education.

In summary, the methodological framework of this study is designed to rigorously assess the religiosity and religious tolerance of MTs and SMP students in West Java. By utilizing validated instruments and robust statistical techniques, the study aims to contribute valuable insights into the interplay between religious beliefs and tolerance among Indonesian youth.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
### Students Religiosity
The majority of respondents from both school types demonstrate a high level of religiosity, with 71% of MTs students and 69% of SMP students falling into this category. A smaller proportion of students reported moderate levels of religiosity—23.5% in MTs and 27.5% in SMP—while only a minimal percentage were categorized as having low religiosity, namely 5.5% in MTs and 3.5% in SMP. These findings indicate that students in both educational settings generally exhibit strong religious orientations.

The profile of students' religiosity in MTs and SMP classes can be seen in the following Fugure 1.
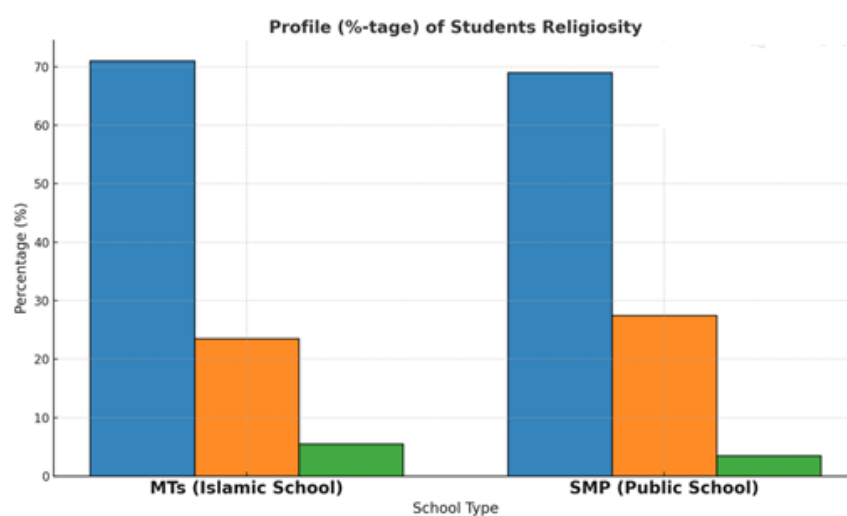


n MTs = 200 students, n SMP = 200 students
Figure 1. The profile (%-tase) of students religiosity

Figure 1 shows that respondents from MTs or SMP students are highly religious (71% and 69%). The majority were medium (23.5% and 27.5%) and low (5.5% and 3.5%). The per-item view can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Percentage of student religiosity items

| No. | Religiosity items | MTs | | SMP | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | f | % | f | % |
| A. | **Faith (Credial)** | | | | |
| 1. | I believe that God exists | 200 | 100 | 200 | 100 |
| 2. | I submit myself to Allah | 190 | 95.0 | 200 | 100 |
| 3. | I don't feel that God doesn't exist | 196 | 98.0 | 197 | 98.5 |
| 4. | I do not doubt the existence of Allah | 190 | 95.0 | 191 | 95.5 |
| 5. | I feel close to God | 194 | 97.0 | 196 | 98.0 |
| 6. | It felt like Allah protected me | 200 | 100 | 195 | 97.5 |
| 7. | I don't feel that God is far from me | 195 | 95.0 | 187 | 93.5 |
| 8. | I feel that God has not abandoned me | 196 | 98.0 | 186 | 93.0 |
| | **Average** | | **97.3** | | **97.0** |
| B. | **Worship (Ritual)** | | | | |
| 9. | I perform the five obligatory prayers | 194 | 97.0 | 188 | 94.0 |
| 10. | Even though I was sick, I still prayed | 160 | 80.0 | 186 | 86.0 |
| 11. | Even when I'm busy, I still pray | 186 | 93.0 | 178 | 89.0 |
| 12. | Even though I was tired, I continued to pray | 166 | 83.0 | 184 | 92.0 |
| 13. | Before studying at home/school, I first pray | 196 | 98.0 | 188 | 94.0 |
| 14. | Before carrying out daily activities, I ask Allah for help | 200 | 100 | 185 | 92.5 |
| 15. | I have never been lazy about praying | 142 | 71.0 | 169 | 84.5 |
| 16. | I pray not only when facing difficulties | 176 | 88.0 | 182 | 91.0 |
| | **Average** | | **88.8** | | **90.4** |
| C. | **Akhlaq (Morality)** | | | | |
| 17. | I can easily make friends with anyone | 168 | 84.0 | 182 | 91.0 |
| 18. | I am used to helping friends who are in trouble | 196 | 98.0 | 181 | 90.5 |
| 19. | I choose friends without considering people who are at my level | 196 | 98.0 | 181 | 90.5 |
| 20. | I don't just help friends who like to support me | 168 | 84.0 | 174 | 87.0 |
| 21. | Under no circumstances am I telling the truth or lying | 130 | 65.0 | 154 | 77.0 |
| 22. | Even if it's to my detriment, I'm still honest | 172 | 86.0 | 160 | 80.0 |
| 23. | It is not true that by being honest, it is difficult to achieve luck | 176 | 88.0 | 142 | 71.0 |
| 24. | Cheating is a significant act of cheating | 44 | 22.0 | 103 | 51.5 |
| | **Average** | | **78.1** | | **79.8** |
| | **Average religiosity** | | **88.0** | | **89.1** |
| | **t = - .621 not significant in alpha .05 (df 24-1)** | | | | |

The t-test results showed no difference in religiosity scores between MTs and SMP students, t = -.621 not significant at alpha .05 (df 24-1)—the average scores of 88.0% and 89.1% show that MTs and SMP students have high religiosity.

Table 1, Section A, illustrates that the credal dimension (faith) attains the highest scores across all aspects, averaging 97.3% for MTs students and 97.0% for SMP students. The data demonstrate that all respondents from both groups unanimously affirm belief in the existence of God, with a 100% affirmation rate in each group. Regarding the sense of divine protection, 100% of MTs students reported feeling protected by Allah, compared to 97.5% of SMP

students. A similarly high proportion of students do not question God's existence, with 98% of MTs and 98.5% of SMP students expressing no doubt.

Furthermore, the majority of students in both groups do not feel neglected by God, as reported by 98% of MTs and 95% of SMP students. The perception of God's closeness is also widely experienced, with 97% of MTs and 98% of SMP students affirming this sentiment. In terms of submission and humility before Allah, 95% of MTs students and all SMP students (100%) demonstrated such devotion.

Doubt concerning the existence of Allah is minimal, with 95% of MTs and 95.5% of SMP students denying any skepticism. Similarly, the feeling that God is distant is largely absent, with 95% of MTs and 93.5% of SMP students reporting that they do not perceive God as being far away. Collectively, these findings reflect a strong and consistent level of faith and spiritual closeness among students in both educational contexts.

Table 1, Section B, indicates that the worship dimension also yields a high average religiosity score, with MTs students at 88.8% and SMP students at 90.4%. The data reveal that before engaging in daily activities, all MTs students (100%) consistently seek Allah's help through prayer, whereas this practice is observed in 92.5% of SMP students. Similarly, before studying at home or school, 98% of MTs students and 94% of SMP students commence with prayer. The performance of the five obligatory prayers is upheld by 97% of MTs students and 94% of SMP students, reflecting a strong commitment to ritual worship.

Even amidst busy schedules, the majority of students maintain their prayer routines, with 93% of MTs students and 87% of SMP students continuing to pray regularly. Prayer is not confined to times of hardship, as 88% of MTs students and 91% of SMP students report praying consistently beyond difficult situations. Despite feelings of fatigue, 83% of MTs students and an even higher proportion of SMP students (92%) persist in their prayers.

When experiencing illness, 80% of MTs students and 86% of SMP students continue to engage in prayer, demonstrating resilience in their spiritual practice. However, a slightly lower percentage of students report never feeling too lazy to pray, with 71% of MTs and 84.5% of SMP students affirming this commitment. Overall, these data indicate a high level of religious observance and dedication to prayer among students in both educational contexts.

Table 1, Section C, reveals that the moral dimension of religiosity also attains relatively high average scores, with MTs students scoring 78.1% and SMP students 79.8%. The data illustrate several notable aspects of students' moral attitudes and behaviors.

A vast majority of MTs students (98%) and a substantial proportion of SMP students (90.5%) reported that they are accustomed to helping friends who are experiencing difficulties. Similarly, both groups showed a high level of openness in selecting friends, with 98% of MTs students and 90.5% of SMP students indicating that they choose friends without limiting themselves to those of the same social or academic level.

Regarding honesty and its perceived consequences, 88% of MTs students disagreed with the notion that honesty hinders success, compared to 71% of SMP students. Moreover, 86% of MTs and 80% of SMP students expressed their commitment to honesty even when it might be disadvantageous to themselves. The data also reveal that students generally exhibit sociability, with 84% of MTs and 91% of SMP students reporting that they quickly make friends with others.

Altruism appears consistent, as 84% of MTs and 87% of SMP students stated that they help friends regardless of whether the help is reciprocated. However, when it comes to unwavering truthfulness, the percentages are lower; only 65% of MTs and 67% of SMP students affirmed that they always tell the truth and avoid lying under any circumstances.

Finally, cheating is regarded as a significant moral violation, but the perception varies notably between groups: only 22% of MTs students strongly associate cheating with dishonesty, whereas this view is held by a much larger proportion of SMP students, at 51.5%.

Overall, these findings depict a generally positive moral orientation among students, with high levels of empathy, honesty, and social openness, though some differences exist in perceptions regarding truthfulness and cheating.

The results of this study show that the religiosity of MTs and SMP students is good. The dimensions of their faith and rituals are high. The moral dimension is generally high, too. In previous research, the religiosity of MTs and SMP students was low (Azizah, 2006; Bigalke, 2022; Gez, 2022). High religiosity in the last research was only found at higher levels of education, namely in Madrasah Aliyah and high school students (Mastiyah, 2018; Abubakar & Hanafi, 2019) and university students (Rahmat, 2022). The results of this research are also in line with Christian Religious Education in Zambia, which has succeeded in building student morality (Thelma, 2023).

Research findings on the moral dimension of items about cheating are not promising. Only 22% of MTs students and 51.5% of junior high school students think that cheating is an act of cheating. Most of them believe that cheating is a light act of cheating. Meanwhile, in previous research, the morality of MTs and SMP students was generally low (Azizah, 2006; Bigalke, 2022; Gez, 2022).

This study has not explored whether the high religiosity of MTs and SMP students is based on awareness or is the result of habituation from their environment. The research results in Yogyakarta show that teenagers' religious observance is not supported by good religious ideology and knowledge but rather by external influences (Afiatin, 1998), especially habituation and coercion from their parents. Other findings reinforce that there is a relationship between perceptions of parents' consistency in implementing the religious values they adhere to and the level of religiosity in students (Yanta, 1995)

**Students' Religious Tolerance**

The profile (% percentage) of students' religious tolerance reveals a noticeable contrast between the two groups. The majority of MTs student respondents demonstrated low levels of religious tolerance, comprising 67.5% of the sample, while only 27% reported moderate levels, and a mere 5.5% exhibited high levels of tolerance. In contrast, most SMP students (60.5%) displayed high levels of religious tolerance, with 26.5% categorized as moderate, and only 13% classified as having low tolerance. This disparity suggests differing patterns of religious tolerance development between students in Islamic educational settings and those in general education environments.

To assess and compare the levels of religious tolerance among students in different educational settings, this study examined responses from students enrolled in general junior high schools (SMP) and Islamic junior high schools (MTs). Understanding these variations is crucial for identifying how school environments might influence students' attitudes toward religious diversity. The profile of students' religious tolerance, based on the classification of low, medium, and high levels, is illustrated in Figure 2.
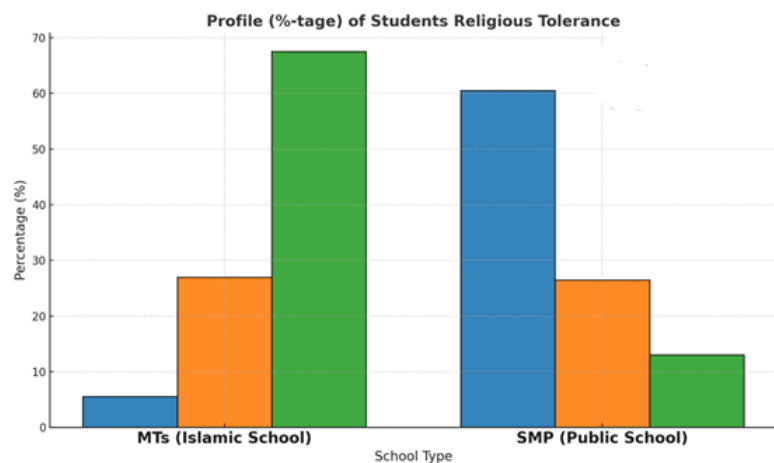
n MTs = 200 students, n SMP = 200 students
Figure 2. The profile (% percentage) of students' religious tolerance

Figure 2 reveals a significant contrast in tolerance levels between the two student groups. A large proportion of MTs students (67.5%) demonstrated low levels of religious tolerance, while 27% exhibited moderate levels, and only 5.5% showed high tolerance. Conversely, the majority of SMP students (60.5%) displayed high religious tolerance, with 26.5% categorized as moderate and 13% as having low tolerance. A detailed breakdown of student responses by individual items is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Percentage of students' religious tolerance items

| No. | Students' religious tolerance | MTs | | SMP | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | f | % | f | % |
| **A.** | **Tolerance towards other religions** | | | | |
| 1. | Every religion has the right to exist in Indonesia | 181 | 90.5 | 198 | 99.0 |
| 2. | I want to be neighbors/friends with followers of other religions | 154 | 77.0 | 195 | 97.5 |
| 3. | Each religion should only live in a specific area | 182 | 91.0 | 194 | 97.0 |
| 4. | I only want to be friends/neighbors with members of the same religion as me | 89 | 44.5 | 194 | 97.0 |
| 5. | Other religions may build houses of worship in my neighborhood | 98 | 49.0 | 189 | 94.5 |
| 6. | Followers of other religions may celebrate their religious days in the area where I live | 132 | 66.0 | 191 | 95.5 |
| 7. | Houses of worship of other religions should be far from where I live | 107 | 53.5 | 182 | 91.0 |
| 8. | It would be better if our country only consisted of one or two religions, not many religions like now | 107 | 53.5 | 170 | 85.0 |
| | **Average** | | **65.6** | | **94.6** |
| **B.** | **Tolerance towards minority Islamic schools of thought** | | | | |
| 9. | Every Islamic sect (NU, Muhammadiyah, Shi'a, Ahmadiyya) has the right to exist in Indonesia | 114 | 57.0 | 183 | 91.5 |
| 10. | I want to be friends/neighbors with fellow Muslims even though they are of a different sect than mine | 190 | 95.0 | 189 | 94.5 |
| 11. | Minority sects (Shi'a, Ahmadiyya) should be banned in Indonesia | 187 | 93.5 | 190 | 95.0 |

| No. | Students' religious tolerance | MTs | | SMP | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | f | % | f | % |
| 12. | I want to be friends with people who have different sects from me | 108 | 54.0 | 186 | 93.0 |
| 13. | Minority sects (Shi'a, Ahmadiyya) may establish mosques/*majelis taklim* around where I live | 97 | 48.5 | 181 | 90.5 |
| 14. | Minority sects (Shi'a, Ahmadiyya) may hold their religious holidays near where I live | 124 | 62.0 | 180 | 90.0 |
| 15. | Minority sects (Shi'a, Ahmadiyya) should not be prohibited from establishing mosques/*majelis taklim* around where I live | 104 | 52.0 | 179 | 89.5 |
| 16. | Minority sects (Shi'a, Ahmadiyya) should not be prohibited from holding their religious holidays near where I live | 119 | 59.5 | 180 | 90.0 |
| | **Average** | | **65.2** | | **91.8** |
| **C.** | **Tolerance towards the State and Government** | | | | |
| 17. | For me, Pancasila is final as the basis of the Republic of Indonesia | 101 | 50.5 | 179 | 89.5 |
| 18. | As a form of acceptance of the 1945 Constitution, the Republic of Indonesia, and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, we must accept the existence of various ethnicities, cultures, customs, and religions | 184 | 92.0 | 180 | 90.0 |
| 19. | I disagree that the state foundation of Pancasila is replaced with religion | 196 | 98.0 | 183 | 91.5 |
| 20. | Adherents of other religions/schools may occupy essential positions in government | 114 | 57.0 | 172 | 86.0 |
| 21. | I accept governors/regents/mayors who adhere to other religions/schools of thought that are different from my religion/school of thought | 88 | 44.0 | 161 | 80.5 |
| 22. | In my opinion, it is permissible for the governor to choose subordinate officials from followers of other religions/schools of thought | 45 | 22.5 | 153 | 76.5 |
| 23. | I do not reject governors/regents/mayors who adhere to other religions/schools of thought that are different from the majority religion/school of thought in their area | 84 | 42.0 | 155 | 77.5 |
| 24. | Adherents of minority religions/schools (Shi`, Ahmadiyya) may occupy essential positions in government | 100 | 50.0 | 143 | 71.5 |
| | **Average** | | **57.0** | | **82.9** |
| | **Average religious tolerance** | | **62.6** | | **86.0** |
| | **t = 7.649 significant at alpha .01 (df 24-1)** | | | | |

The t-test results showed a difference in religious tolerance scores between MTs and SMP students, t = 7.649, which is significant at alpha .01 (df 24-1). Judging from the average score, MTs students have a lower score (62.6%) than junior high school students (86.0%).

Table 2, Section A, presents the dimension of tolerance towards other religions, revealing a notable difference in average scores between MTs students and junior high school (SMP) students, with averages of 65.6% and 94.6%, respectively. The data provide insight into various attitudes reflecting religious tolerance.

A majority of students in both groups acknowledge the right of every religion to exist in Indonesia, with 90.5% of MTs students and 99% of SMP students affirming this principle. Similarly, 91% of MTs students and 97% of SMP students believe that each religion should be

allowed to reside in specific areas, which may indicate a preference for spatial religious coexistence.

Regarding interpersonal relationships, 77% of MTs students expressed a willingness to be neighbors or friends with followers of other religions, whereas this sentiment was stronger among SMP students, with 97.5% showing the same openness. The acceptance of religious celebrations by other faiths in one's neighborhood is supported by 66% of MTs students and 95.5% of SMP students.

However, when considering the proximity of houses of worship belonging to other religions, opinions diverge: only 53.5% of MTs students agree that such places should be distant from their residences, contrasting sharply with 91% of SMP students who hold the same view. A similar pattern emerges regarding the preference for religious diversity within the country; 53.5% of MTs students prefer fewer religions in Indonesia, compared to 85% of SMP students.

Further, the allowance for other religions to build houses of worship in their neighborhood is supported by 49% of MTs students and a substantially higher 94.5% of SMP students. Lastly, the willingness to be friends or neighbors not only with fellow Muslims but also with adherents of other religions is affirmed by 44.5% of MTs students, whereas 97% of SMP students express this inclusive attitude.

Table 2, Section B, presents data on religious tolerance towards minority Islamic sects, revealing a significant difference in average scores between MTs students, who scored 65.2%, and junior high school (SMP) students, who scored 91.8%. The findings provide a nuanced understanding of students' attitudes toward intra-Islamic diversity.

A strong majority of students in both groups express a willingness to be friends or neighbors with fellow Muslims of different sects, with 95% of MTs students and 94.5% of SMP students affirming this openness. Likewise, the vast majority agree that minority sects such as Shi'a and Ahmadiyya should not be banned in Indonesia, supported by 93.5% of MTs students and 95% of SMP students.

When it comes to the public celebration of religious holidays by minority sects near their residences, a notable difference emerges: 62% of MTs students support this practice, whereas a much higher 90% of SMP students are in favor. Similarly, 59.5% of MTs students oppose prohibiting minority sects from holding religious celebrations near their homes, compared to 90% of SMP students who hold this view.

The right of all Islamic sects, including NU, Muhammadiyah, Shi'a, and Ahmadiyya, to exist in Indonesia is recognized by 57% of MTs students and a substantially higher 91.5% of SMP students. Correspondingly, 54% of MTs students express a desire to be friends with individuals from different sects, contrasted with 93% of SMP students who share this sentiment.

Controversially, regarding the establishment of mosques or majelis taklim by minority sects in their neighborhoods, 52% of MTs students believe this should be prohibited, whereas 89.5% of SMP students disagree with such restrictions. Conversely, 48.5% of MTs students support the presence of these minority sects' religious institutions near their homes, while 90.5% of SMP students favor this inclusivity.

Table 2, Section C, presents data on students' tolerance towards the State and Government, revealing a notable difference in average scores between MTs students, who scored 57.0%, and junior high school (SMP) students, who scored 82.9%. The data illustrate varying levels of acceptance regarding state ideology, diversity, and the role of religious minorities in governance.

A strong consensus exists among both groups opposing the replacement of Pancasila, the foundational state ideology, with a religious basis, with 98% of MTs students and 91.5% of SMP students rejecting such a change. Furthermore, a large majority agree on the necessity of embracing the diversity of ethnicities, cultures, customs, and religions as part of upholding the

1945 Constitution, the Republic of Indonesia, and the national motto, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity), with 92% of MTs and 90% of SMP students affirming this principle.

When considering the inclusion of adherents from other religions or schools of thought in essential government positions, differences emerge: 57% of MTs students accept this idea compared to 86% of SMP students. Similarly, only half of the MTs students (50.5%) regard Pancasila as the definitive foundation of the Republic of Indonesia, in contrast to 89.5% of SMP students who hold this view firmly.

Tolerance toward minority religions and sects occupying key governmental roles also varies, with 50% of MTs students and 71.5% of SMP students expressing acceptance. This extends to acceptance of governors, regents, and mayors adhering to religions or schools of thought different from their own, with 44% of MTs students and 80.5% of SMP students showing openness to such diversity in leadership.

Regarding political tolerance at the local level, 42% of MTs students do not reject leaders of different religious or ideological backgrounds than the majority in their area, compared to 77.5% of SMP students who are accepting. Lastly, only 22.5% of MTs students consider it permissible for governors to appoint subordinate officials from followers of other religions or schools of thought, whereas this view is supported by 76.5% of SMP students.

Overall, these findings illustrate a marked contrast in levels of religious tolerance between the two groups, with SMP students consistently demonstrating higher acceptance and openness towards religious diversity and interfaith coexistence than MTs students.

The results of this research indicate that MTs students' religious tolerance is low or intolerant. Previously, there was no research on religious tolerance among MTs/SMP students. The results of this research are in line with the intolerance of high school students (Firdaus & Rahmat, 2016) and university students (Rahmat et al., 2019; Yahya & Rahmat, 2021; Rahmat & Yahya, 2022; Ma'arif et al., 2023; Fahrudin et al., 2023; Ma'arif et al., 2024a; Ma'arif et al., 2024b). PPIM UIN Jakarta also found a tendency towards intolerant and segregative attitudes among young people (Ropi, 2021). The results of this research are also in line with societal intolerance in general. The Setara Institute reported that West Java was an intolerant area for 14 consecutive years (Hutasoit, 2022; Rahmat et al., 2019).

The findings of this research are promising but quite surprising, as junior high school students in West Java have high religious tolerance. These research results align with previous research on junior high school students in Tasikmalaya (Rizal & Rahmat, 2019). Do we need research on fostering religious tolerance in junior high schools? It is suspected that junior high schools in West Java implement character education well, which can be seen, among other things, from their tolerant character.

**Correlation Test Results Between Religiosity and Religious Tolerance**

The results of the correlation test via IBM SPSS Statistics between the variables religiosity and religious tolerance can be seen in the following table.

Table 3. Correlation Test Results Between Religiosity and Religious Tolerance

| No. | School | r | Significant |
|-----|--------|------|-------------|
| **1.** | MTs | 0.055 | Not significant at alpha 0.01 |
| **2.** | SMP | 0.589 | Significant at alpha 0.01 |

The results of the correlation calculation in the table above show that religiosity is not correlated with religious tolerance among MTs students, r = 0.055 (not significant at alpha 0.05). Meanwhile, there is a very significant positive correlation for junior high school students, r = 0.589 (significant at alpha 0.01). The correlation test results at MTs show a low relationship

between religiosity and religious tolerance. As with the sample of junior high school students, religion should affect religious tolerance.

No wonder researchers question the model of religiosity and religious education. With the discovery of the positive impact of religiosity, several liberal societies have made religious education part of the school curriculum (Clayton & Stevens, 2018). Concerns arise that religious education will build religious fanaticism and intolerance. Therefore, researchers recommend religious education devoid of religious fanaticism and tolerant of multi-ethnic and multi-religious practices (Eric et al., 2023). An interreligious education model is also advised to build a multicultural and multi-religious society. However, this educational model can only be implemented by educators and educational thinkers who are open, highly knowledgeable, strong, and brave (Lovat, 2022). In the West, religion-based schools have also succeeded in educating their students to become tolerant and respectful citizens (Martínez-Ariño & Teinturier, 2019).

## Students' Religiosity

The findings of this study reveal that both MTs and SMP students exhibit high levels of religiosity, with average scores of 88.0% and 89.1%, respectively. This is a notable contrast to previous research that indicated varying levels of religiosity among similar student populations in Indonesia, with some studies reporting lower levels (Herdian & Mildaeni, 2022; Fatima et al., 2017). The high scores in the faith dimension, averaging 97.3% for MTs and 97.0% for SMP, suggest a strong belief in God and a sense of divine protection among students. This aligns with findings that emphasize the importance of faith in shaping moral and ethical behavior in educational settings (Jaya & Sukirno, 2020; Laksmidara & Nashori, 2022).

The worship dimension also demonstrated significant scores, with MTs students averaging 88.8% and SMP students at 90.4%. This indicates that students are actively engaged in religious practices, such as performing obligatory prayers and seeking divine assistance before daily activities. The high levels of worship reflect a commitment to religious observance that is crucial for fostering a moral framework among students (Sujarwoto et al., 2021; Ridwan & Diantimala, 2021). However, the moral dimension revealed some concerning trends, particularly regarding attitudes toward cheating, where only 22% of MTs students and 51.5% of SMP students recognized cheating as a significant moral failing. This suggests a gap in the internalization of ethical values, which may be influenced by external factors such as peer behavior and societal norms (Rahmawan, 2024).

The study's findings raise questions about the sources of students' religiosity. While the data indicate high levels of religious observance, it remains unclear whether these behaviors stem from genuine belief or are a result of environmental habituation. Previous research has suggested that external influences, such as parental guidance and societal expectations, play a significant role in shaping students' religious practices (Putra et al., 2024; Zubairu & Sakariyau, 2016). This highlights the need for further investigation into the underlying motivations for students' religiosity, as understanding these factors could inform more effective educational strategies.

## Students' Religious Tolerance

In contrast to their religiosity, the results indicate that MTs students exhibit low levels of religious tolerance, with an average score of 62.6%, compared to SMP students, who scored 86.0%. This disparity is particularly concerning, given the increasing religious diversity in Indonesia. The data reveal that a significant portion of MTs students hold intolerant views toward other religions and sects, with many expressing a preference for homogeneity in their social circles (Sulaiman, 2022; Taja et al., 2021). This aligns with findings from previous studies

that have documented a trend of intolerance among youth in Indonesia, highlighting the urgent need for educational interventions that promote inclusivity and understanding (Malla et al., 2021; Batool & Akram, 2024).

The analysis of specific tolerance dimensions reveals that MTs students are less accepting of minority Islamic sects and less supportive of the idea that individuals from different religious backgrounds can hold positions of authority in government. This reflects a broader societal trend of intolerance that has been documented in various studies, including reports indicating persistent intolerance in certain regions of Indonesia (Hayadin et al., 2020; Mustamiah et al., 2022). The low tolerance scores among MTs students underscore the necessity for educational frameworks that prioritize character education and inter-religious dialogue as means to foster a more inclusive society (Mulyono et al., 2021; Ma`arif et al., 2023; Ma`arif et al., 2024a; Ma`arif et al., 2024b; Rachmadtullah et al., 2024).

**Correlation Between Religiosity and Religious Tolerance**

The correlation analysis reveals a significant positive relationship between religiosity and religious tolerance among junior high school students ($r = 0.589$), whereas no similar correlation was found among MTs students ($r = 0.055$). These findings suggest that higher levels of religiosity may contribute to increased religious tolerance among junior high school students, indicating that religious education can play a crucial role in shaping attitudes toward diversity (Azizah & Rohmadi, 2022; Busro & Gateri, 2023). The results of this study align with previous research indicating that an inclusive understanding of religion correlates positively with religious tolerance (Mulya & Aditomo, 2018; Campos et al., 2020; Althalathini et al., 2020; Fuad & Masuwd, 2023; Latuconsina et al., 2023).

However, the absence of a significant correlation among MTs students raises concerns regarding the effectiveness of current religious education practices, which appear to minimally promote religious tolerance (Mawadda et al., 2024; Aisyah & Suratno, 2019). These findings are consistent with previous research indicating that a literal interpretation of religion does not correlate with, and may even negatively correlate with, religious tolerance (Ardi et al., 2021; Lubis & Sianipar, 2021).

These results support the recommendations of several scholars advocating for the integration of inter-religious education into school curricula. Such educational models have been shown to enhance mutual understanding and respect among students of different faiths (Mawadda et al., 2023; Subaidi et al., 2023). The findings indicate that educators need to adopt approaches that emphasize tolerance and inclusivity rather than solely focusing on doctrinal teachings in a literal sense. This shift in educational philosophy is expected to help mitigate the rising intolerance observed among youth in Indonesia (Amin et al., 2022; Isroani & Huda, 2022), including at MTs, as indicated by the findings of this study.

**CONCLUSION**

MTs and SMP in West Java, Indonesia, have succeeded in building student religiosity. They have high faith and worship scores. Moral scores are generally high. However, the school styles are different in terms of building religious tolerance. In the case of junior high school, there is a very significant positive correlation between religiosity and religious tolerance ($r = .589$, significant at alpha .01). This means that SMP has succeeded in building religiosity and religious tolerance.

In contrast to the MTs' case, there is no correlation between the two variables ($r = 0.055$, not significant at alpha .05), Which means that MTs have only succeeded in building religiosity. Meanwhile, students' religious tolerance seems to be neglected (not fostered), so that the MTs students follow the general trend of religious tolerance in society. Firstly, the implication is that

there is a need for in-depth research on how religious formation in junior high schools is carried out to foster religiosity and religious tolerance successfully. Secondly, looking for a religious learning model that can increase religious tolerance in MTs students is necessary.

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