QUR'ANIC PEDAGOGY FOR INTERRELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Religious prejudice among students poses a serious challenge to Islamic education in pluralistic societies. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of the Qur'an-based Religious Diversity (QbRD) method in reducing religious prejudice among Muslim university students. Employing a mixed-methods design, the research combined the qualitative development of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) materials with a quasi-experimental quantitative approach. The QbRD learning model was implemented in four stages: (1) student-led discussions on the concepts of faith and disbelief; (2) lecturer-led reflection on the Islamic mission of moral excellence; (3) student analysis of Qur'anic verses concerning Muslims and non-Muslims; and (4) student synthesis of theological perspectives based on the Qur'an. The study involved 12 IRE classes, with 200 students in the intervention group and 200 in the non-intervention group. Statistical analysis showed a significant improvement in the intervention group's positive religious attitudes (t = 16.925, p < 0.01), while the control group showed minimal change. These findings indicate that QbRD fosters inclusive theological understanding and interfaith tolerance among students. The study suggests that Qur'an-based and dialogical pedagogies can play a transformative role in Islamic education, particularly in universities and pesantren, to promote peace and religious moderation.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education, Interreligious Tolerance, Qur'anic Pedagogy, Religious Diversity, Religious Prejudice

INTRODUCTION

Religious prejudice has emerged as a critical global issue, significantly threatening social harmony by perpetuating discrimination, intolerance, and escalating into violent conflicts. Its negative impacts are vividly demonstrated through various global conflicts, including tensions between Rohingya Muslims and Buddhists in Myanmar, characterized by severe humanitarian crises and widespread displacement of communities (Neuberg et al., 2014). Similarly, ongoing conflicts between Palestinian Muslims and Israeli Jews in Gaza illustrate how deep-rooted religious prejudices can exacerbate violence, perpetuate cycles of retaliation, and hinder peaceful coexistence (Tayeh, 2022; Pratiwi et al., 2022). Such examples highlight that religious prejudice, if not effectively addressed, not only undermines societal cohesion but also significantly contributes to protracted humanitarian emergencies. Consequently, global policymakers and educational institutions face the urgent task of identifying and implementing effective strategies to mitigate prejudice and foster mutual understanding across diverse religious communities (Crosby & Varela, 2013; Deitch, 2020).

Globally, addressing religious intolerance requires initiatives that actively promote understanding, mutual respect, and dialogue among diverse religious groups. Educational institutions have become essential venues for these initiatives, providing structured environments that foster interreligious harmony. Studies indicate that when students engage in

open discussions and demonstrate respect for diverse spiritual beliefs, occurrences of religious intolerance substantially decrease (Fosnacht & Broderick, 2020). Conversely, educational environments that limit opportunities for such interactions may inadvertently heighten tensions and fuel intolerance (Fosnacht & Broderick, 2020). Emphasizing the importance of holistic education, researchers advocate for integrating co-curricular activities that facilitate interreligious engagement, thereby effectively nurturing empathy, tolerance, and constructive worldviews among students from diverse faith backgrounds (Bowman & Smedley, 2013). These educational strategies represent vital efforts in global peacebuilding, underscoring the transformative potential of education to bridge divides and foster peaceful coexistence.

A growing body of empirical evidence affirms that educational interventions rooted in the principles of religious moderation significantly contribute to reducing intolerance and prejudice. These interventions promote a balanced understanding of religion, foster mutual respect, and encourage ethical engagement across diverse belief systems. In Russia, for instance, ideological tensions between majority Christian populations and minority Orthodox Muslims have led to recurring conflicts, driven by rigid interpretations of religious and political identity (Karpov & Lisovskaya, 2008). Similarly, in Pakistan, religious minorities have long endured systemic discrimination and hostility fueled by extremist factions that manipulate religious doctrine for political agendas (Ahmed & Brasted, 2020; Zaidi, 1988). These cases illustrate the consequences of failing to instill moderate and inclusive religious values through education. They also underscore the urgency for transformative learning environments that cultivate empathy, pluralism, and peaceful coexistence, core objectives of religious moderation curricula (Karamouzis & Athanassiades, 2011). Thus, promoting tolerance through structured religious education is not only necessary but foundational for social stability and interfaith harmony (Ucan & Wright, 2019; Wang & Froese, 2019).

In Indonesia, a range of pedagogical efforts, including dialogue-based learning and inclusive instructional materials, have been employed to promote religious tolerance and empathy among students (Rahmat & Yahya, 2021, 2022). While these approaches encourage moderation and coexistence, recurrent incidents of religious extremism, including the 2002 Bali bombing and the 2018 Surabaya church attacks, reveal that such strategies alone may not sufficiently address the roots of intolerance (Amal, 2020; Bourchier, 2019). These challenges point to the need for more contextually grounded educational models that engage students in critical reflection on religious diversity (Mulya & Aditomo, 2018).

To fill this gap, the present study proposes the Qur'an-based Religious Diversity (QbRD) method, a pedagogical model that corrects misconceptions about faith, disbelief, and the status of non-Muslims through reflective Qur'anic interpretation. Grounded in transformative learning theory and Islamic pedagogy, QbRD aims to reduce religious prejudice among university students by fostering deeper scriptural understanding and interreligious awareness. This study not only evaluates the method's effectiveness but also contributes to advancing peace education and religious moderation within Islamic higher education.

METHOD

This study employed a mixed-method design to both develop and evaluate the effectiveness of the Al-Qur'ān-based Religious Diversity (QbRD) learning model, framed within the Islamic Transformative Intergroup Contact (ITIC) Framework. This integrative framework draws on Islamic educational principles, intergroup contact theory, and transformative learning theory, aligning with the model's objectives to reduce religious prejudice and foster interfaith understanding. The qualitative phase involved designing the model through expert consultation and instructional analysis, emphasizing Qur'anic ethics and pluralism. The quantitative phase used a quasi-experimental design to assess the impact of structured intergroup contact and

guided reflection. A purposive sample of 12 classes (n=400) was selected from a major public university in West Java, Indonesia, with four classes (200 students) receiving QbRD instruction and four others serving as controls. Pre-test and post-test scores were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 24 to measure shifts in students' religious prejudice. The validated questionnaire included 16 items, eight positive and eight negative, confirmed through a Delphi study and reliability testing (r = 0.84, α < 0.01). The intervention stages, peer discussion, ethical exposition, thematic scriptural analysis, and collaborative reflection, were designed to activate Allport's (1954) contact conditions and Mezirow's (1997) principles of critical reflection, providing a cohesive methodological structure grounded in ITIC.

Table 1. Stages of IRE learning using the QbRD method

Stage	Form of Activity	Lecturer Activity	Students Activity
First	Students discussed the status of faith/disbelief of Muslims and non-Muslims.	The lecturer asks two students to lead a class discussion about the status of faith/disbelief of Muslims and non-Muslims based on the students' prepared knowledge (without opening their cell phones/notes). Issues discussed: 1. Do Muslims automatically believe, while non-Muslims disbelieve? 2. Who has the right to go to heaven? Will Muslims go to heaven, while non-Muslims go to hell? 3. What about non-Muslims who have good character? Do they believe and will go to heaven? 4. What about Muslims who have bad character? Are they infidels, and will they go to hell? Two students appeared in front of the class to lead the discussion.	One by one, the questions were discussed and immediately concluded. 1. The status of faith/disbelief of Muslims, namely, are Muslims automatically believers, while non-Muslims are disbelievers? 2. People who have the right to go to heaven, will Muslims go to heaven, while non-Muslims go to hell? 3. Are there non-Muslims who believe and will go to heaven? 4. Are there any Muslims who disbelieve and will go to hell?
Second	The lecturer's presentation on the mission of the Islamic religion to instill noble morals was followed by questions, answers, and discussion.	The lecturer presented and then encouraged students to ask questions and discuss the following themes: 1. The mission of the Islamic religion is to "perfect" noble morals. Namely, noble morals without being mixed with disgraceful morals. The strength of his faith, the sincerity of his worship, and the goodness of his pious deeds can be seen in his increasingly noble morals and the increasingly eroding of despicable morals. 2. Having an alfaqir spirit as the core of noble morals, namely: (a) even though he maintains his purity, he feels that he has committed the most sins and mistakes, so he always repents, (b) humbles himself before Allah and the Messenger of Allah, is humble in before humans, (c) even though	Students ask questions and discuss the following themes: 1. The mission of the Islamic religion is to "perfect" noble morals. Namely, noble morals without being mixed with disgraceful morals. The strength of his faith, the sincerity of his worship, and the goodness of his pious deeds can be seen in his increasingly noble morals and the increasingly eroding of despicable morals. 2. Having an alfaqir spirit as the core of noble morals, namely: (a) even though he maintains his purity, he feels that he has committed the most sins and mistakes, so he always repents, (b) humbles himself before Allah and the Messenger of Allah, is humble in before

| Stage	Form of Activity	Lecturer Activity	Students Activity
		the people closest to him think he is the best human being, he feels he is the worst compared to anyone else, so he always tries to improve his quality, and (d) even though he prays a lot earnestly, he feels the worst and the minor worship so many people repent. Having high concern as the core II of noble morals, not being egoistic: Happy to share, happy to help people in trouble, not hurting people, including not accusing people of other religions of being infidels (with the essence being tolerant and having good religious prejudices).	humans, (c) even though the people closest to him think he is the best human being, he feels he is the worst compared to anyone else, so he always tries to improve his quality, and (d) even though he prays a lot earnestly, he feels the worst and the minor worship so many people repent. Having high concern as the core II of noble morals, not being egoistic: Happy to share, happy to help people in trouble, not hurting people, including not accusing people of other religions of being infidels (with the essence being tolerant and having good religious prejudices).
Third	Student research on the Qur'an regarding the relationship between religious identity (Islam vs non-Muslim) regarding faith, disbelief, heaven, and hell.	The lecturer asks students to analyze and present the following verses from the Qur'an: 1. QS Al-Taubat/9:100-101 (about the status of the faith of Muslims around the Prophet Muhammad SAW) 2. QS Ali Imran/3:110,113-114,199 (about among the People of the Book, some are upright, have faith, practice good and evil, and prostrate) QS Al-Baqarah/2:62, Al-Maidah/5:69 (about believers, Jews, Christians, and Shabi'in who believe in Allah and the Last Day and do good deeds).	Students analyze, discuss, and present the results of the discussion of the following verses of the Qur'an: 1. QS Al-Taubat/9:100-101 (about the status of the faith of Muslims around the Prophet Muhammad SAW) 2. QS Ali Imran/3:110,113-114,199 (about among the People of the Book, some are upright, have faith, practice good and evil, and prostrate) QS Al-Baqarah/2:62, Al-Maidah/5:69 (about believers, Jews, Christians, and Shabi'in who believe in Allah and the Last Day and do righteous deeds)
Fourth	Students present the status of faith/disbelief of Muslims and non-Muslims	The lecturer asks student representatives to present the results of their analysis of the following verses of the Qur'an, and other students may differ in their opinions: 1. What is the message in QS Al-Taubat/9:100-101 (All the Muslims around the Prophet were believers, or were there also unbelievers?) 2. What is the message in QS Ali Imran/3:110, 113-114,199 (Are there any among the upright People of the Book who have faith, practice good and evil, and prostrate themselves?) What message is in QS Al-Baqarah/2:62, Al-Maidah/5:69 (Are there Jews, Christians, and Shabi`in	Student representatives present the results of their analysis of the following verses of the Qur'an, and other students may differ in their opinions: 1. What is the message in QS Al-Taubat/9:100-101 (All the Muslims around the Prophet were believers, or were there also unbelievers?) 2. What is the message in QS Ali Imran/3:110, 113-114,199 (Are there any among the upright People of the Book who have faith, practice good and evil, and prostrate themselves?) What message is in QS Al-Baqarah/2:62, Al-Maidah/5:69 (Are there Jews, Christians, and

Stage	Form of Activity	Lecturer Activity	Students Activity
		who believe in Allah and the Last Day and do good deeds?)	Shabi`in who believe in Allah and the Last Day and do good deeds?)

Table 1 outlines the structured implementation of the QbRD method across four stages of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning. In the first stage, students participate in peer-led discussions that address theological assumptions about belief, disbelief, and salvation for both Muslims and non-Muslims. The second stage involves a lecturer-guided session on the ethical mission of Islam, emphasizing noble character, humility, and tolerance, followed by interactive discussion. The third stage guides students through thematic analysis of selected Qur'anic verses, such as QS Al-Taubat/9:100/101, QS Ali Imran/3:110,113–114,199, and QS Al-Baqarah/2:62; Al-Maidah/5:69, that reflect nuanced views on the faith of Muslims and People of the Book. Finally, in the fourth stage, students present their interpretive findings and engage in peer evaluation to develop critical and inclusive understandings of religious identity, belief, and morality through a Qur'anic lens. This four-stage approach is designed to deepen students' theological reflection and promote constructive interreligious perspectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the empirical findings of the study, beginning with an overview of students' religious prejudice profiles before and after the intervention. The results are analyzed in relation to the core elements of the Islamic Transformative Intergroup Contact (ITIC) Framework, which underpins the QbRD method used in this research. Through both descriptive and inferential statistics, the section evaluates changes in students' attitudes toward interreligious belief, salvation, and social relations, followed by a statistical assessment of the QbRD model's effectiveness in promoting positive religious prejudice and reducing intolerance.
Student Religious Prejudice Profile

Figure 1 presents a comparative overview of students' religious prejudice levels in both the intervention and non-intervention groups, measured before and after the implementation of the QbRD method. This figure visualizes the distribution of student responses across three categories, positive, neutral, and negative prejudice, allowing for a precise examination of shifts in attitude over time. With an equal sample size of 200 students in each group, the figure serves as a baseline reference to assess the intervention's impact on religious attitudes.
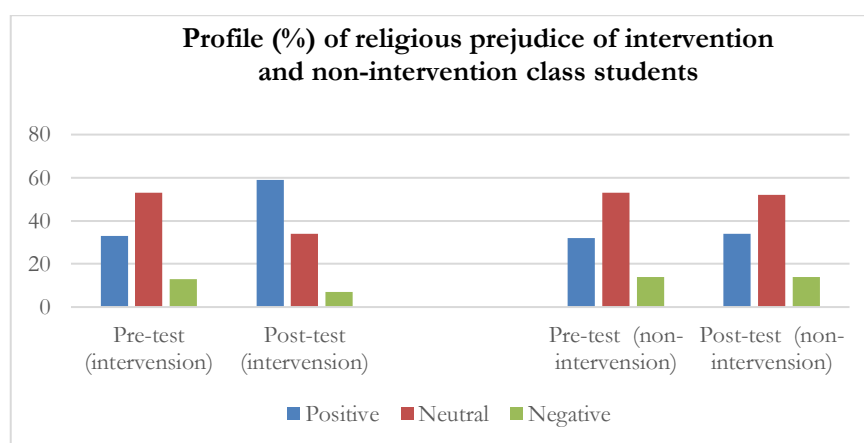
n intervention = 200 students, n non-intervention = 200 students
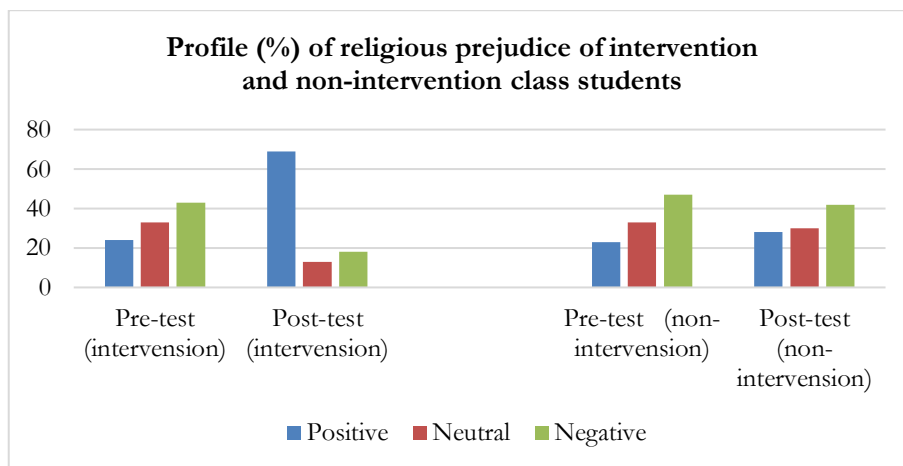Figure 1. The result of pre- and post-tests of students' religious prejudice

The results of this study reveal both quantitative shifts in students' attitudes and qualitative insights into the nature of religious prejudice. The pre-test data indicated that

students in both the intervention and non-intervention groups began with relatively similar levels of religious prejudice. In both groups, a majority of respondents (53%) demonstrated neutral attitudes, while approximately one-third showed positive prejudice, with 34% in the intervention class and 33% in the non-intervention class. A smaller subset expressed negative prejudice, accounting for 13% and 14% respectively. These figures suggest that prior to any intervention, students generally held moderate views, with a mix of tolerant and intolerant sentiments.

Following the implementation of the Qur'an-based Reflective Dialogue (QbRD) method in the intervention group, notable attitudinal changes were observed. The proportion of students displaying positive prejudice rose significantly to 59%, reflecting a shift toward more inclusive and empathetic religious views. At the same time, the percentage of neutral responses declined to 33%, and negative prejudice dropped to just 8%, indicating a meaningful reduction in hostile or exclusive perceptions. In contrast, the non-intervention group showed minimal change: positive prejudice rose only slightly to 34%, neutral responses fell modestly to 52%, and negative prejudice remained relatively stable at 14–15%. These comparative findings underscore the effectiveness of the QbRD method in fostering more constructive interfaith attitudes.

Beyond these numerical changes, the study also explored specific dimensions of religious prejudice, revealing underlying beliefs that inform students' attitudes. A dominant theme concerns the association of religious identity with moral judgment, where individuals are viewed as inherently good or bad depending on their faith affiliation. One persistent belief is that salvation is exclusively tied to religious identity, namely, that all Muslims are destined for heaven, while non-Muslims are fated for hell, regardless of individual character or moral behavior. This binary worldview reflects a rigid, doctrinal interpretation that limits interreligious empathy and understanding.

In addition, the study uncovered tensions surrounding interfaith social relations, particularly in students' willingness to form friendships with non-Muslims or to accept non-Muslim candidates for regional leadership positions. These findings suggest that religious prejudice not only affects theological beliefs but also extends into social and political spheres, influencing patterns of inclusion and exclusion. The extent and distribution of these attitudes are illustrated in Figures 2 through 4, which visualize the shift in perspectives and highlight the contrast between the intervention and non-intervention groups. Together, these results affirm the potential of dialogic, scripture-based pedagogy to promote critical reflection and reduce religious prejudice among students.

n intervention = 200 students, n non-intervention = 200 students
Figure 2. The result of pre- and post-tests of students' religious prejudice aspects of the relationship of faith with religious identity

Figure 2 illustrates that prior to participating in the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) course, students in both the intervention and non-intervention classes exhibited similar levels of religious prejudice. Nearly half of the students in each group, 43% in the intervention class and 45% in the non-intervention class, held negative religious prejudices, indicating a belief that faith and disbelief are determined solely by religious identity (e.g., that Muslims inherently possess faith while non-Muslims inherently lack it). Around one-third of students (33%) in both groups demonstrated neutral attitudes, and a smaller proportion, 24% in the intervention class and 22% in the non-intervention class, expressed positive religious prejudice, reflecting a more inclusive and open-minded view toward religious others.

Following the implementation of the Qur'an-based Reflective Dialogue (QbRD) method, there was a significant shift in attitudes within the intervention class. The proportion of students exhibiting positive religious prejudice rose markedly to 69%, suggesting that the QbRD approach effectively encouraged more empathetic and theologically nuanced perspectives. The percentage of students holding neutral views decreased to 13%, while those expressing negative prejudice dropped to 18%. In contrast, the non-intervention class showed only marginal change. Negative prejudice remained high at 42%, and only a modest increase was observed in positive prejudice, which rose to 28%, while neutral responses accounted for 30%. These results suggest that the QbRD method played a crucial role in reshaping students' perceptions of faith and religious identity by fostering reflective engagement with religious texts and interfaith understanding.
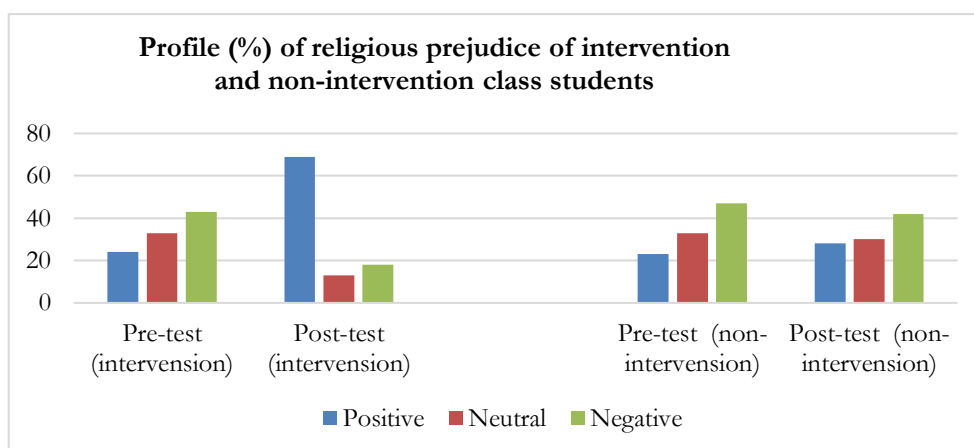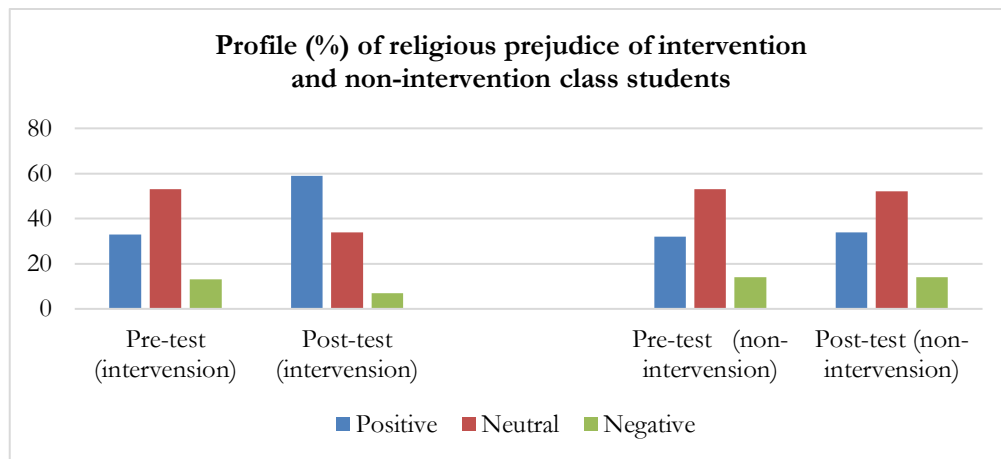

n intervention = 200 students, n non-intervention = 200 students
Figure 3. The result of pre- and post-tests of students' religious prejudice aspects of the relationship between heaven and hell with religious identity

Figure 3 reveals that, prior to participating in the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) course, students in both the intervention and non-intervention classes held comparable levels of religious prejudice regarding beliefs about salvation. Approximately 44% of students in the intervention group and 47% in the non-intervention group exhibited negative religious prejudice, reflecting the belief that entry to heaven or hell is based solely on religious identity, namely, that Muslims, regardless of moral conduct, are assured heaven. At the same time, non-Muslims, even if morally upright, are destined for hell. Additionally, 33% of students in both groups displayed neutral attitudes, and a smaller proportion, 23% in the intervention group and 20% in the non-intervention group, held positive religious prejudice, suggesting more inclusive views about salvation being based on moral character rather than religious affiliation alone.

Following the application of the Qur'an-based Reflective Dialogue (QbRD) method, significant changes emerged within the intervention class. The percentage of students with positive religious prejudice increased sharply to 68%, indicating a growing acceptance of more inclusive theological perspectives. The proportion of students expressing neutral attitudes declined to 14%, while those with negative prejudice dropped to 18%, suggesting a substantial shift away from rigid, identity-based views of salvation. In contrast, the non-intervention group demonstrated only minimal change. Negative prejudice remained high at 42%, positive prejudice increased slightly to 28%, and neutral responses accounted for 30%. These findings highlight the effectiveness of the QbRD method in fostering critical reflection on deeply held doctrinal assumptions and promoting a more compassionate and character-based understanding of religious salvation.

n intervention = 200 students, n non-intervention = 200 students
Figure 4. The result of pre- and post-tests of students' religious prejudice
aspects of friendship with followers of non-Islamic religions

Figure 4 illustrates that before attending the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) course, students in both the intervention and non-intervention classes exhibited similar attitudes toward the issue of non-Muslim regional leadership. In both groups, a majority of students (53%) held neutral views, indicating ambivalence or open-mindedness regarding the possibility of non-Muslims serving as regional leaders or heads. Approximately one-third of students (33%) in each class expressed positive religious prejudice, signifying their willingness to accept non-Muslim candidates in political leadership roles. A smaller segment, 14% in both groups, demonstrated negative religious prejudice, rejecting non-Muslim leadership on the basis of religious identity.

Following the implementation of the Qur'an-based Reflective Dialogue (QbRD) method, the intervention class showed a notable shift in attitudes. The proportion of students demonstrating positive religious prejudice increased significantly to 59%, suggesting a growing acceptance of inclusive civic participation regardless of religious background. Neutral responses declined to 34%, while negative prejudice dropped markedly to just 7%. These changes reflect a meaningful transformation in students' views on religious plurality in governance. In contrast, the non-intervention group experienced only minimal change. A majority of students (52%) remained neutral, while the proportion of positive prejudice remained unchanged at 33%, and negative prejudice slightly increased to 15%. Overall, these findings highlight the effectiveness of the QbRD method in promoting civic tolerance and transforming exclusionary attitudes toward political leadership across religious lines.

The Effectiveness of QbRD on Increasing Student Religious Prejudice

To further evaluate the impact of the QbRD method, a statistical analysis was conducted to compare the changes in students' religious prejudice scores across intervention and non-intervention groups. This analysis offers a more comprehensive understanding of the intervention's effectiveness, extending beyond descriptive observations. The summary of the results is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of statistical tests on the effectiveness of QbRD

Group	Mean 1	Mean 2	t-test	Remark
1. Post-pre intervention	16.053	11.347	18.195	Significant at alpha 0.01
2. Post-pre non-intervention	11.620	11.453	4.602	Significant at alpha 0.01
3. Pre-intervention- non-intervention	11.347	11.453	-.303	Not significant
4. Post-intervention- non-intervention	16.053	11.620	14.203	Significant at alpha 0.01
5. Intervention- non-intervention gain	4.707	.193	16.925	Significant at alpha 0.01

The results presented in Table 2 demonstrate a significant difference in the effectiveness of the QbRD method compared to conventional approaches. Prior to the intervention, the mean scores of religious prejudice in both the intervention (M = 11.347) and non-intervention (M = 11.453) groups were nearly identical and statistically insignificant at the 0.01 alpha level. Following the implementation of the QbRD method, both groups exhibited statistically significant improvements; however, the intervention group experienced a much greater increase in mean score (M = 16.053, t = 18.195, p < 0.01) compared to the non-intervention group (M = 11.620, t = 4.602, p < 0.01). Additionally, the gain score analysis further confirmed the superior impact of QbRD, with a significant difference between the two groups (t = 16.925, p < 0.01), indicating that the QbRD approach was substantially more effective in enhancing students' positive religious attitudes.

The QbRD method's success can be attributed to its student-centred and inquiry-driven learning design. Unlike conventional instruction, which typically involves direct lecturing and limited discussion, QbRD engaged students in collaborative exploration of controversial theological topics. Students formed small groups, conducted discussions, explored Qur'anic verses, and completed structured questionnaires. They were encouraged to critically examine concepts such as "Muslim," "infidel," and "non-Muslim" in their proper theological and ethical contexts. Through this process, many students discovered that the Qur'an emphasizes moral character rather than religious identity in defining these terms. Misconceptions, such as the belief that Christians and Hindus worship multiple gods, were challenged through guided inquiry and interreligious mini-surveys. Students learned, for example, that Christian theology considers God the Father the one true God, and that figures such as the Son and Holy Spirit are understood as holy manifestations, not separate deities. Similarly, in Hinduism, deities such as Vishnu and Shiva are seen not as rival gods, but as spiritual beings comparable to Islamic angels. This reflective and dialogic learning led students to reinterpret their previous assumptions and fostered a more inclusive and tolerant religious outlook. Consequently, the QbRD method significantly reduced religious prejudice and promoted interfaith understanding among Muslim students.

Based on the results of the present study, there are several aspects to discuss. The results of the study concerning the student religious prejudice profile showed that before the implementation of the QbRD method, students in both intervention and non-intervention classes exhibited similar levels of religious prejudice. Over half of the students in both groups held neutral attitudes, approximately one-third showed positive religious prejudice, and a smaller proportion demonstrated negative prejudice. These findings are consistent with previous studies

that reported significant levels of intolerance among Indonesian students (Woodward, 2017). Yahya and Rahmat (2021) and Rahmat and Yahya (2022) found that nearly half of the students surveyed expressed intolerant attitudes, particularly in contexts related to faith and interreligious interaction. In East Java, for example, 20–25% of 500 respondents showed sympathy toward religious radicalism, revealing an underlying trend that, although numerically limited, could negatively affect social harmony and national unity (Muzakki, 2004). Other research also identifies religious intolerance as influenced by figures of authority (Hamayotsu, 2013), including Salafi jihadists and preachers who appear to endorse exclusivist views (Muzakki, 2004; Olsson, 2020; Sugihartati et al., 2020). This issue should be taken into consideration by future teachers (Saeed, 1999; Amigo-Ventureira et al., 2023).

These results also align with broader national surveys regarding attitudes toward interfaith relations. Suleeman (2016) reported that while many Indonesian Christian students are open to formal relationships with people of other faiths, only a few are willing to pursue more intimate connections, such as interfaith marriage. The Centre for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies at Gadjah Mada University found that although 95.4% of respondents agreed that religious tolerance is vital for peaceful coexistence, this belief does not always translate into tolerant behaviour in daily life (Cross-Cultural Studies of UGM, 2008). This pattern was evident in our study, where students initially rejected non-Muslims as regional leaders and even supported restrictions on non-Muslim religious practices. These views mirror findings by The Wahid Institute, which reported increasing violations of religious freedom, such as bans on religious gatherings. Similarly, the Ministry of Religion noted that only about half of Indonesians surveyed were willing to visit the homes of people from other religions. West Java, the site of this research, was identified by Setara Institute as the most intolerant province, with 629 reported cases of violations against religious freedom. Additional studies also highlight deep-seated resistance to pluralism: 68.2% of respondents opposed the building of non-Muslim houses of worship in their neighbourhoods (Suleeman, 2016), and 38% of Muslim students in Jakarta expressed rejection of non-Muslim teachers (Yasmine et al., 2007). Religious harmony is the goal to achieve in a diverse nation (Erawadi & Setiadi, 2024).

The findings on the effectiveness of QbRD on increasing student religious prejudice are consistent with previous research highlighting the growing concern of religious intolerance among students and the role of education in addressing it (Fitriani, 2023). As religious prejudice continues to pose challenges in plural societies, scholars and educators have increasingly emphasized the importance of instilling religiosity and ethical awareness through curriculum interventions (Fancourt, 2010; Fosnacht & Broderick, 2020; Mietzner & Muhtadi, 2018; Rahmat & Yahya, 2022). The present study confirms that integrating Qur'anic content through the QbRD method significantly enhances students' theological understanding while promoting respectful engagement with followers of other religions. This alignment with prior research supports the conclusion that educational efforts grounded in religious texts, when properly contextualized, can foster not only doctrinal literacy but also interreligious empathy and tolerance. Religious texts, such as the Qur'an and Hadith, should be taught to achieve religious moderation (Pangastuti et al., 2025).

Several other Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning models have demonstrated similar effectiveness in promoting moderation and reducing religious prejudice (Hasan & Mujahidin, 2023; Moulin, 2011). For instance, Rahmat et al. (2019) and Ali et al. (2021) showed that Qur'an-based instruction increased students' comprehension of both their own and others' religious beliefs, thereby strengthening interfaith tolerance. Two studies emphasized the impact of dialogic-argumentative learning in enabling students to reflect on and revise prejudiced perspectives (Yahya & Rahmat, 2021; Ma`arif et al., 2024). Likewise, inclusive instructional materials (Rahmat & Yahya, 2022) and IRE grounded in religious maturity (Ma`arif et al., 2024)

have been successful in cultivating balanced religious attitudes. Together, these studies underscore the importance of reflective and inclusive pedagogical approaches, such as QbRD, in fostering a generation of Muslims who are both devout and open to peaceful coexistence with diverse faith communities.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Qur'an-based Religious Diversity (QbRD) method is an effective pedagogical approach to reducing religious prejudice and promoting interfaith tolerance among Muslim university students in Indonesia. Implemented through the Islamic Transformative Intergroup Contact (ITIC) framework, which integrates Islamic educational values, intergroup contact theory, and transformative learning, the QbRD model led to a marked increase in positive religious attitudes among students in the intervention group, as evidenced by a significant gain score (t = 16.925, p < .01). By engaging students in dialogic learning, critical scriptural analysis, and interreligious inquiry, the QbRD method successfully addressed misconceptions about faith, disbelief, and religious identity. Students moved from neutrality or negativity toward a more inclusive understanding of religious diversity, grounded in authentic Islamic teachings. These findings make both empirical and theoretical contributions to the field of Islamic Religious Education, demonstrating the value of contextualized, reflective, and transformative models, such as QbRD. Future studies are encouraged to explore the persistence of negative biases among a small subset of students and to expand the model's application across broader educational settings and religious contexts. Overall, QbRD provides a meaningful framework for cultivating empathetic and theologically grounded religious understanding in pluralistic societies.

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