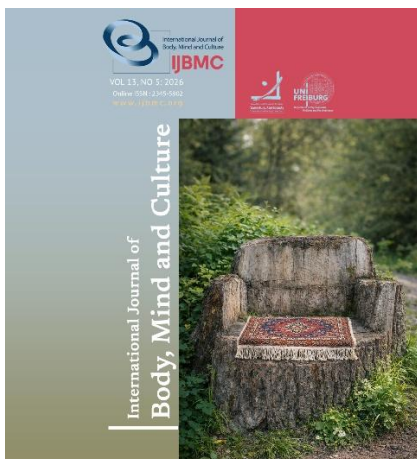


Article type:  
Theoretical Research

- 1 Professor, Pancasila And Civic Education, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia.
- 2 Professor, Islamic Religious Education, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, Surabaya, Indonesia.
- 3 Professor, Ilmu Sosial, Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya, Indonesia.
- 4 Professor, Information Science And Library, Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya, Indonesia.
- 5 Professor, International Relations, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.
- 6 Professor, Sociology, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia.
- 7 Professor, Physics, Universitas Negeri Malang, Malang, Indonesia.
- 8 Professor, Indonesian Language Education, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia.
- 9 Education Management, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia.

Corresponding author email address:  
[muhammadturhan@unesa.ac.id](mailto:muhammadturhan@unesa.ac.id)



Article history:

Received 17 Feb 2026  
Revised 22 Mar 2026  
Accepted 01 Apr 2026  
Published online 01 May 2026


How to cite this article:

Yani, M. T., Muzakki, A., Suyanto, B., Sugihartati, R., Bustami, M. R., Kartono, D. T., ... & Hazin, M. (2026). Youth Intolerance and Radicalism in Indonesian High Schools: Weak Management of Student Religious Organizations and Alumni Influence. *International Journal of Body, Mind and Culture*, 13(5), Article e2026-1340. <https://doi.org/10.61838/ijbmc.v13i5.1340>



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# Youth Intolerance and Radicalism in Indonesian High Schools: Weak Management of Student Religious Organizations and Alumni Influence

Muhammad Turhan. Yani<sup>1\*</sup>, Akh. Muzakki<sup>2</sup>, Bagong. Suyanto<sup>3</sup>, Rahma. Sugihartati<sup>4</sup>, Mohammad Reevany. Bustami<sup>5</sup>, Drajat Tri. Kartono<sup>6</sup>, Ahmad. Taufiq<sup>7</sup>, Anas. Ahmadi<sup>8</sup>, Mufarrihul. Hazin<sup>9</sup>

## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study analyzed intolerance and radicalism among high school students in Indonesia and explored their relationship with the management of school-based religious organizations in Surabaya and Jakarta.

**Methods and Materials:** This qualitative study was conducted in 50 senior high schools with active student religious activities in Surabaya and Jakarta. Data were collected through surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions with 50 informants, including 20 school principals and 30 teachers. In each city, 10 principals and 15 teachers participated. Secondary sources, including media reports, journal articles, institutional surveys, and relevant documents, supported primary data. Data were analyzed using emic and etic approaches to compare informants' perspectives with researchers' interpretations.

**Findings:** The findings showed indications of intolerance and radicalism among some high school students, particularly those involved in school religious organizations. Teachers reported concerns about students' selective peer relationships, rigid religious attitudes, and exposure to external ideological influence. A key finding was that alums and senior students continued to influence or control weekend religious activities through mentoring networks and social media. Weak school supervision, limited teacher assistance during Saturday and Sunday activities, and the use of external religious mentors created opportunities for ideological indoctrination.

**Conclusion:** Intolerance and radicalism among high school students are linked to weak management of student religious organizations and insufficient teacher supervision. Schools should strengthen monitoring, assign trained teacher mentors, regulate alum involvement, and collaborate with moderate religious organizations and leaders.

**Keywords:** Students, Schools, Religion, Terrorism, Qualitative Research, Indonesia.

## Introduction

Recently, intolerance-radicalism in Indonesia has penetrated the education field through schools. Students are parties who are not immune to the threat of intolerance-radicalism. Of course, this phenomenon raises a strong paradox. Schools play an important role in guiding students to become good citizens, but they often act as counterproductive stakeholders. If they are not aware of the growing ideas and practices of intolerance-radicalism, schools can be easily trapped in practices that can plunge students into anti-citizenship and anti-nationalism through the practices of intolerance-radicalism. Rationally, these practices of intolerance and radicalism will only keep students away from the values, enthusiasm, and good practices of citizenship and nationalism.

Many research works have dealt with the new changes in intolerance-radicalism practices in schools. A study conducted by the Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat (PPIM; Center for the Study of Islam and Society) of the Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN; State Islamic University) of Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta (2018), conveyed that the magnitude of intolerance-radicalism practices can be indicated by teachers' and students' views and attitudes. More concretely, the PPIM study explained that radical intolerance, although invisible, has entered, developed, and influenced the delivery of education in several schools through two important sources, namely literature and extracurricular activities.

Along with the PPIM findings, [Kisbiyanto \(2016\)](#) also noted that the role of reading books as part of the curriculum is highly significant for the development of students' positive character, especially the spirit of nationalism. In his research entitled "Curriculum Management in the Perspective of Anti-radicalism," Kisbiyanto found a link between the curriculum, including reading books, and an anti-radicalism identity. He argued that curriculum planners should consider an approach that supports an integrated curriculum pattern or the unification of all courses into a systematic, integral body of teaching material for the learning process. For instance, Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan (PPKN; lit. "Pancasila and Citizenship Education") subject matter emphasizes nationalism and Indonesian citizenship based on Pancasila, which teaches people to

love and uphold peace. Another example is learning the Indonesian language and making it the language of association, education, and preaching, thereby promoting peace and uniting all components of the nation.

The same thing was stated by [Baidhawiy \(2010\)](#). According to Baidhawiy, topics on social interaction with others, especially non-Muslims, receive less attention. Therefore, preaching materials addressing multicultural values are relatively few compared with those on piety, which are related to akhlaq, fiqh al-`ibadah, or tawhid. In addition to the issue of teaching materials and/or textbooks, the broader learning process is also an important topic for discussion in analyzing the relationship between schools and intolerance-radicalism practices. [Munip \(2012\)](#), for example, stated that the development of intolerance-radicalism practices was inseparable from the learning process and assistance offered by schools, especially by teachers, during students' learning activities. He identified four important steps to prevent intolerance-radicalism practices: providing an adequate explanation of Islam; promoting dialogue in Islamic religious learning; monitoring activities and religious mentoring materials, especially in Islamic religious activities in schools; and introducing and implementing multicultural education.

Teachers play an important role in students' understanding and practice regarding intolerance and radicalism. [Azra et al. \(2007\)](#) stressed this point by giving an example of radicalism among school staff and students, especially in pesantren (Islamic boarding schools). They referred to the case of the development of intolerance-radicalism practices in Ngruki Islamic boarding school, Solo, Central Java, led by Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, a person better known as the amir (ideologue) of the extremist organization named Jama'ah Islamiyah. This is an example of a case in which the leader's presence and ideology easily influence the school staff and students.

In contrast to the scientific works mentioned previously, this study aims to analyze the phenomenon of intolerance-radicalism practices that occurred among high school students in Surabaya and Jakarta. The present study also aims to examine the relationship between intolerance-radicalism and the presence of schools' religious organizations. This study focuses on several important issues, including whether external

networks, such as alumni, still control their schools' religious activities. After examining the relationship between alum networks and schools' religious activities, this study further examines the extent of a teacher's role in mentoring students, particularly regarding their religious development.

#### *Theoretical Framework*

To provide a solid theoretical basis for studying cases of intolerance and radicalism practices in schools, it is important to explain the key concepts of radicalism at the outset. In Arabic, violence and radicalism are referred to by several terms, including al-'unf, at-tatharruf, al-ghuluww, and al-irhab. Al-'unf is the antonym of ar-rifq, which means gentle and affectionate. Although these words are not used in the Qur'an, the Hadith mentions them. As these words exist in the Hadith, it is clear that Islam is a religion that discourages violence against anyone, including followers of different religions. On the contrary, Islam is a religion that is full of tenderness.

The word at-tatharruf is linguistically derived from the word al-tharf, which means an edge. It means being at either the left or right end. Therefore, in modern Arabic, the word al-tatharruf carries connotations of radical, extreme, and exaggerated meanings. Thus, at-tatharruf al-dini means all excessive acts in religion. The opposite of that is al-wasath (middle/moderate), which means good and praiseworthy. The word al-ghuluww means "excess" or "exceeding the limit" and is often used to refer to extreme religious practices that go beyond reason.

The Islamic radicalism movement originates from basic theological concepts. Saifuddin (2011) stated that the Islamic radicalism movement usually laid down theological conceptions as the basis for action. These theological conceptions, according to him, included jihad (in a narrow sense), enforcement of Islamic shari'ah, formalization of Islamic shari'ah, amar ma'ruf nahi munkar (lit. "Commanding the good and forbidding the evil"), and establishing a khilafah/dawlah Islamiyah (Islamic state). Even though the basic concepts underlying Islamic radicalism are similar, in Saifuddin's view, the Islamic radicalism movement does not have strong roots in Indonesia. These movements originated outside the country, particularly in the Middle East. Similarly, Mukti Ali opined that Indonesia, as a pluralistic society, adopted an approach called "agree in

disagreement" to foster tolerance and harmony (Ismail, 2012).

In the context of the emergence of intolerance and radicalism practices, it should be noted that there is a close relationship between social attitudes and religious beliefs. The relationship between the two provides ample space for intolerance and radicalism to flourish. The advanced development of communication and information technology facilitates the growth of intolerant radical practices. The growth in radical attitudes is due to the increasing number of people being exposed to information containing hate speech on various social media (Zickmund, 1997). In addition, acts of radicalism arise due to several other factors, including poor government bureaucracy and weak democracy (Fealy, 2004). However, its emergence is more likely among people who fall for shallow religious teachings and oppose the fulfillment of citizenship rights.

Youth radicalism has indeed become a global phenomenon (Siegel et al., 2019). It has intensified among high school students through the process of increasing intolerance. The indications of intolerance and radical practices in schools are evidence of a shift in values away from religious and civic education (Yani et al., 2020). According to the findings of a 2018 study conducted by PPIM of Jakarta, the proportions of school students holding very radical and moderate opinions were quite far apart, at 41.4% and 10%, respectively. In contrast, 54.3% of the students leaned toward very moderate practices, and 2.4% leaned toward very radical practices. Furthermore, the fact that 41.4% of the students held very radical opinions prompted stakeholders to pay attention to avoid the implications of such intolerance.

The role of religious mentors who teach and, at the same time, help strengthen high school students' religious knowledge should not be underestimated in relation to the development of students' ideology. According to Rokhmad's (2012) study, schools' Islamic religious organizations are not guaranteed to be free from elements of Islamic radicalism because part of the learning process is handed over to third parties, namely ustadz (teachers) from outside the school, whose backgrounds are not clear. They are often suspected of being affiliated with community organizations or certain political organizations that carry the ideology of NII and encourage the implementation of religion in a rigid and

intolerant manner. Islamic extra-religious activities, such as night gatherings (mabit) and training (dawrah), aim to cultivate certain Islamic ideologies that can potentially encourage students to have a rigid religion. To prevent the spread of radical Islamic ideology, deradicalization must be conducted with various strategies in several places. School, as a learning center for students who are developing and seeking their identities, is a strategic place to instill a basic understanding of Islam.

In this regard, it is truly a big irony that educational institutions are tarnished with practices that are contrary to the noble values of religion and Pancasila. This is where schools and all organizations, such as Organisasi Siswa Intra Sekolah (OSIS; lit. "Intra-School Students organization"), Sie Kerohanian Islam (SKI; lit. "Islamic religious organization"; often shortened "Rohis"), Sie Kerohanian Kristen (SKK; lit. "Christian religious organization"; often shortened "Rokris"), and Scout, have the responsibility to develop a more tolerant and compassionate life, not the other way around, of hating one another because of differences in understanding and belief. If there are indications of radicalism among fellow students or others, the school, whose primary role is played by teachers, should take immediate action.

Extremism-radicalism is indeed a complex issue in which there are several surrounding aspects of life. According to Azra (1996), contemporary radicalism has emerged in response to the penetration of Western social, cultural, political, and economic systems and values, both through direct contact with the West and through Muslim thinkers. Furthermore, Azra argued that ideological groups, such as modernists, secularists, and Westernists (or Muslim government regimes, which, according to fundamentalists, are an extension of the mouth and hands of the West), are seen as triggers of active responses from supporters of contemporary radicalism. Consequently, such groups give rise to radical responses.

From the perspective of inclusive religion and religious nationalism, radicalism does not have a place, especially in Indonesia, even though the issue has often been raised by massive militant groups, which caused various parties, including the government, religious institutions, and educational institutions, to pay special attention to dealing with radicalism. This is an important

issue, and the government has established an institution that specifically addresses it, namely Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme (BNPT; lit. "The Nationalist Agency for Handling Terrorism"). Radicalism has a close relationship with terrorism. Since it is the beginning of a person's growth to become a terrorist, this is not always the case.

## Methods and Materials

### *Study Design*

This study was conducted in two major cities in Indonesia, namely Jakarta and Surabaya. The location setting was the right consideration for the research because these cities became the national parameter of developing cities in Indonesia. Moreover, the selection of these two cities was considered appropriate, as many existing problems affected youths, especially high school students, who were mainly driven by their psychological instability in dealing with personal and rapid urban changes. Jakarta and Surabaya faced several problems and underwent rapid changes, posing challenges for many high school students. Therefore, the dynamics of the problems and changes faced by high school students were the main rationale for choosing the research setting.

Data collection was conducted through a survey, interviews with informants, and primary and secondary sources. Data from primary sources were obtained from findings or studies conducted by the research team through interviews or focus group discussions (FGDs). Concerning the primary sources, this study conducted data mining from key informants, namely the chiefs of the education office, school principals, and high school teachers in Surabaya and Jakarta, on the phenomenon of intolerance-radicalism practices among high school students and the existence of schools' Islamic religious organizations. Moreover, secondary data were obtained from findings in other sources, such as print and online media, journals, survey results from several institutions, and other relevant sources.

The research data were collected through surveys and interviews with high school principals and teachers in Surabaya and Jakarta. The number of informants for high schools in Surabaya was 25, consisting of 10 principals and 15 teachers from different schools. Similarly, the number of informants for senior high schools in Jakarta

was 25, comprising 10 principals and 15 teachers from various schools, resulting in a total of 50 informants across 50 senior high schools. The selection of schools was based on identifying those with active, productive student spiritual activities.

The data obtained from both primary and secondary sources were analyzed using qualitative narratives to examine the relationship between radicalism and the presence of schools' religious organizations, as well as outside parties suspected of controlling activities within the existing organizations. Emic (informant's perspective) and etic (researcher's perspective) approaches to analysis, conducted through focus group discussions or interviews, deepened the investigation of the findings.

### Findings and Results

#### The Roots of Intolerance: Radicalism Practice in Schools

There is an argument that Islamic radicalism, or terrorism, has no historical roots in Indonesia. This is in accordance with the main goal of humanity, as stated by Abdullah (2020): everlasting and perpetual peace in the lives of people of different religions, anywhere, is the prime purpose of human beings. According to Siroj (2015), Islam in Indonesia does not have radical roots. The emergence of radicalism, especially terrorism, is the result of the adoption of religious culture from outside. Islamic radicalism is more of an imported product from abroad, which is applied domestically. The current global belief in communication allows people to easily absorb external ideas, leading to a "new model" struggle to interpret and act on Islamic teachings.

Radicalists are very skilled at using the media to spread their ideology. They seem to make adequate use of the media. In terms of the spread of radicalism, for example, Munip (2012) stated that the supporters of Islamic radicalism use several means and types of media to spread their beliefs. Social media is used to benefit the internal cadre and to socialize with the wider community. They seem very proficient at using various social media platforms to spread their ideology and, at the same time, recruit individuals who lack established religious knowledge and have impressionable minds.

Radical groups use several means and media to spread their ideology and recruit as many cadres as

possible. According to Munip, there are eight means or media used to spread radicalism. First, the dissemination of radical ideology is carried out through organizational cadres. Organizational cadres conduct activities that guide members and/or prospective members of organizations to become sympathizers or supporters of radicalism. Second, the dissemination of radical ideology is conducted through religious activities. It is important to mention that the recitation activities organized by radical groups contain radical Islamic thoughts, such as suggestions to be hostile to other parties that are considered contrary to the concept of *al-wala wa al-bara'* (lit. "Loyalty and disavowal").

Third, the dissemination of radical ideology is performed through Islamic mentoring. Initially, Islamic mentoring activities are carried out on several public campuses and are intended as complementary activities to compensate for the limited time allotted for the so-called Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI; or Islamic education) lecture activities in classrooms. Currently, Islamic mentoring activities are found in several high schools, both junior high schools (Sekolah Menengah Pertama/SMP) and senior high schools (Sekolah Menengah Atas/SMA). Usually, trainers (often called *murabbi* or mentors) are upperclassmen or outsiders who are deliberately brought in. PAI's mentoring activities in schools and colleges are often used by their mentors to inspect Islamic teachings that contain radicalism.

Fourth, the dissemination of radical ideology is carried out under the guidance of Rohis in high schools (SMA/SMP). The activities of students who are members of Rohis can become easy targets for radical ideology. Student activities are often infiltrated by outsiders invited to promote their ideology. This is an indication that requires serious attention from the school because Rohis was originally formed to strengthen religious character, which is conducive to the common good of *Lestari*. Fifth, radical ideology is disseminated through mosques, which radicalists have successfully controlled. Radical Islamic groups are also very good at using mosques that are not "taken care of" by the surrounding community.

Sixth, the dissemination of the radical ideology is conducted through magazines, bulletins, and booklets. The "Da'wah & Jihad" bulletin, published by Ar-Rayan Pamulang under the leadership of Abu Muhammad Jibril,

an MMI leader, is one of the bulletins used to promote violent jihad. Seventh, the dissemination of radical ideology is conducted through the publication of books. Radicalism is also spread through books, both translations from Arabic, which are generally written by Middle Eastern writers, and their own writings. Eighth, the dissemination of radical ideology is ably carried out through the internet. Apart from using paper media, radical groups also use cyberspace to disseminate books and information about jihad.

According to Azca et al. (2019), repeated intolerant acts are manifested not in a single form but in multiple ways, either symbolic, instrumental, or ideological. The actions are not always related to a transcendental orientation of "serving God" or the purification of religious meanings and teachings. Rather, multiple underpinning motives have brought Islamists to commit intolerant forms of action.

Essentially, perpetrators of intolerance-radicalism practices take advantage of information and communication technology, including social media and the internet, as a medium for disseminating ideology. The target is not only the wider community but also specifically school students. School students are targeted because they are easy to influence due to their limited religious knowledge. Moreover, school students may be young cadres considered capable of upholding the intolerance-radicalism ideology for longer periods.

#### *Religious Organization as a Medium to Perpetuate Intolerance-Radicalism Practice*

Radicalism has changed peaceful, tolerant, and comfortable social lives into tense, anxious, and fearful conditions. It has also invaded the field of education. The present study's results show that most high school teachers in Surabaya and Jakarta have concerns about students' exposure to radicalism. The following statement was made by Dila Sofia, one of the high school teachers in Jakarta:

Teachers have concerns about student activities, especially outside class hours on Saturdays and Sundays, to the point that they cannot sleep. Therefore, all teachers help prevent students from being exposed to radicalism. The school also strives to organize extracurricular activities according to students' interests, providing facilities for student activities such as sports, performing arts, the Islamic religious

organization ('Rohis'), and the Christian religious organization ('Rokris'). (Interview with Dila Sofia).

In fact, students who are members of a school's religious organization often engage in religious activities. Achmad Azwar Pambudi, a high school teacher in Surabaya, said that students in SKI extracurricular classes often hold activities outside of study hours and school. They are very intense in following it." Seger Widodo, a high school teacher in Surabaya, observed that "there are children who only want to make friends with certain children in a certain group. This is because differences make them difficult to adapt, especially when they differ in religious understanding. Schools' religious activities have the opportunity to insert radicalism teachings."

Furthermore, the intolerant-radical religious understanding gained by students from outside school learning negatively impacts their behavior toward their fellowmen, including their schoolmates. This condition ultimately affects the way they interact with others. Erni Kurnia Rohmawati, a high school teacher in Surabaya, gave the following testimony: "There are some students who have different opinions about the teachings of Islam, so they make friends with whoever shares the same opinion." These attitudes, liking or disliking, and agreeing or disagreeing, show that some students display indications of intolerance simply because of different religious understandings.

To analyze the indications of intolerance, students' relationships with alum networks must be examined more deeply. The important question is whether there is a chance for intolerance-radicalism to grow in schools, including the source of its teachings. Johannes Mardijono, a high school teacher in Surabaya, said that activities in schools can offer the opportunity to grow intolerance-radicalism through alumni who influenced or still participated in activities of OSIS, SKI, and SKK through social media." Gatot Handoko, a teacher at a state senior high school in Jakarta, states the same thing. According to her, any school acts as a platform for the growth of radicalism due to the influence of the seniors who have an intolerant religious understanding and who teach that understanding to their juniors.

Lack of supervision of students' religious activities outside school hours and minimal assistance by schools are reasons for the spread of the intolerance-radicalism ideology among students. Jonny Suchayono, a high

school teacher in Surabaya, said: “There is a chance for intolerance-radicalism to grow if there is no direct supervision, especially supervision of supervisors or teachers from outside.” In line with Sucahyono’s statement, Heppy Panggabean, a teacher at a high school in Jakarta, also affirmed the spread of the ideology of intolerance and radicalism among several students due to a lack of support from the school. Moreover, Panggabean explained that opportunities for intolerance-radicalism could arise, for example, through extracurricular activities, such as Rohis, with speakers from outside the school, who are not alumni. Sri Tawami, a high school teacher in Surabaya, added that the absence, or at least the lack of attention from schools, could create opportunities for the growth of intolerance and radicalism among high school students, given their impressionable minds.

The growing indications of intolerance and radicalism practices among several school students, especially those involved in schools’ religious organizations, raise a strong paradox. A school’s religious organization is formed to provide guidance and support for students’ religious lives, helping them develop toward maturity in thought, attitude, and behavior. According to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 62 of 2014, a school’s religious organization is considered part of extracurricular activities.

Article 1, paragraph (1) of the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture states that curricular activities carried out by students outside of learning hours are considered intracurricular and co-curricular activities that should be conducted under the guidance and supervision of educational units. This article explains that all extracurricular activities, including a school’s religious organization, must be under the school’s guidance and supervision. However, such religious organizations, which are part of the intra-school organizational structure known as OSIS, are rarely monitored. In reality, many of these organizations are free from their respective schools’ attention, guidance, and supervision.

The previously stated facts about the growing signs of intolerance-radicalism among students should make all school education stakeholders ensure that all student activities, including extracurricular activities, receive attention, assistance, and school supervision. If the

activities are not well supervised, they can create opportunities for the growth of intolerance and radicalism, which might further influence school students’ ideology. This is because students are the direct targets of ideological campaigns conducted by other parties, including the intolerance-radicalism ideology promoted by religious leaders outside schools or by alums seeking to build new networks among school students.

The real problem in the field of education is not just intra-school organizations that become the means of production and consumption of students’ religious ideas. There are extracurricular organizations formed to improve mentoring in student activities at [Lestari](#). However, ironically, it is precisely the existence of this extra-school organization that, if not properly managed and identified, triggers the growth of ideas and practices contrary to the initial provisions issued by policymakers in the education sector, ranging from the Ministry of Education to school administrators.

Weak mentoring by schools or teachers ([Sirry et al., 2022](#); [Sirry et al., 2024](#); [Suyanto et al., 2022](#); [Suyanto et al., 2024](#)) is then exploited by actors engaged in intolerance-radicalism practices from outside the school to influence further how students think, behave, and act. This is where the seeds of intolerance-radicalism are sown through the involvement of people outside of school. It could be alums and spiritual mentors from outside of school who influence students’ beliefs. Therefore, schools need to manage extracurricular activities, including religious organizations. Proper supervision and monitoring will ensure that such religious organizations help build students’ character ([Sulistiono, 2019](#)). The subsection below explains more concretely how the management of extracurricular activities, including schools’ religious organizations, can be improved through the teacher-mentoring process.

### *Intolerance-Radicalism among School Students and the Importance of Teacher Assistance*

The emergence of an intolerant radicalism attitude does not occur suddenly. There are several processes beyond these, such as the family, community, and school environments. Both formal and informal education institutions, as well as social media, have contributed to the emergence of intolerance and radicalism among

students who have become more self-aware and curious due to the availability of a wide range of information. Therefore, educational institutions, including schools and student organizations, are morally responsible for preventing the growth of intolerance and radicalism. Their intervention is especially necessary as alumni and even individuals from outside the school control school activities through groups created by their peers.

The role of schools is quite significant in shaping students' character, including encouraging anti-radicalism. In this regard, [Alhairi \(2017\)](#) argued that the influence of a formal educational environment (i.e., the school) is highly significant. One-third of children's activities take place at school, so schools play a crucial role in shaping students' character. Implementing anti-radicalism education in schools is not an easy task. However, it must be encouraged as an effort to anticipate the regeneration of terrorist and radical networks, which are increasingly troubling the community. Moreover, in [Alhairi's](#) view, schools play a significant role in shaping students' positive character, including promoting anti-radicalism.

Anti-radicalism applications in a school environment can be implemented through various educational program models. [Alhairi](#) showed three ways that could be actualized and implemented in the school environment. The first effort is by integrating anti-radicalism values into school subjects. Integrating anti-radicalism values into learning certainly requires hard work from the teacher council. Teachers must be able to include anti-radical values during the learning process. Anti-radicalism values that can be integrated into other lessons are those derived from the Qur'an and the Hadith.

The scientific integration mentioned above is necessary to suppress the potential for intolerance and radicalism in schools. Such integration can be carried out across scientific disciplines. [Alhairi](#) stated that several subjects can be integrated with anti-radicalism values, such as religion, citizenship, social sciences, and natural sciences. The need to integrate anti-radicalism values with the natural sciences, in particular, is based on the fact that many cases of intolerance and radicalism have been found among several students of the natural sciences ([Yusar, 2016](#)).

The second effort is by applying anti-radicalism values in the school environment. The school

environment is synonymous with the diversity of ethnicity, religion, and race. In this case, students are taught togetherness and harmony in the school environment. The values of compassion for others must also be nurtured in the school environment, as the Prophet Muhammad SAW taught compassion for others, including both believers and non-believers. In addition, it is important to teach caring for and sharing. A sense of empathy also needs to be built in a school environment. The feeling of empathy that grows in the students' hearts will directly enable them to be respectful and courteous toward others and avoid radical attitudes and behavior ([Alhairi, 2017](#)).

Third, strengthening anti-radicalism therapy services for students through school counseling is necessary. Teachers-counselors play a very important role in conducting anti-radicalism therapy for students who have been exposed to radicalism. As much as possible, the counselor should impart a good understanding of religion to correct the student's misunderstanding. Moreover, counseling is important to improve the socio-religious and psychological awareness of students who have been exposed to radical ideology. Counseling can help direct their understanding, attitudes, and practices toward shared values from both socio-religious and citizenship perspectives ([Saihu & Marsiti, 2019](#)).

Teachers play a very important role in fostering students' spirituality and also in preventing the growth of radicalism and intolerance among them. For this reason, teachers need to monitor the movements and involvement of outsiders or alums in religious activities in schools. Such monitoring is essential because alumni have a strong influence on junior students' opinion formation. Especially with easy access to various digital platforms due to advances in communication and information technology, it cannot be denied that the media heavily color one's mindset, including the growth of intolerance ([Lu & Yu, 2020](#); [Nasih & Hamid, 2023](#); [Yani et al., 2020](#)).

With the rapid development of communication and information technology, teachers need to be present in students' daily lives, according to [Akh. Muzakki](#), teachers should play an important role as models for children's self-development, complementing their role as sources of information. Teachers facilitate the development of children's independence by being role models for that process. This role cannot be replaced by an information

and technology product that has been an extensive and intensive source of information on various learning materials. The teacher continues to serve as a key role model in facilitating a student’s social life.

Therefore, in the learning process, teachers should put themselves as living references for students’ daily activities. In this regard, Muzakki emphasized that education is very important to developing learning practices known as teaching-through-examples or *al-ta’lim bi al-qudwah al-hasanah* (teaching by example). This learning practice positions the teacher not only as a deliverer of material but also as a model. This principle requires teachers to present themselves not only as transmitters of information but also as individuals whom students can always refer to as living examples. Students can, thus, obtain examples of the material they receive or learn. This way, students will not lose the references and will apply them in their daily lives.

On the other hand, apart from teachers, parents also play an important role in children’s education. In Hardiyanti Pratiwi’s view, given the challenges in moral and social education that will emerge in the Industrial Revolution 4.0, the role of the family in education must be redefined. According to him, the family should no longer play a supporting role in children’s education but must be the primary support, including treating children with love and making an effort to instill anti-radicalism from an early age. Furthermore, Pratiwi stated that in the realm of basic education, radicalism can be prevented by conditioning children to grow and develop in a friendly and loving Islamic religion. In Pratiwi’s (2018) argument, children who receive an education rooted in parental love will grow into independent, mature individuals who can control their thoughts and emotions and maintain good social relationships.

For ease of understanding, additional information on the findings of this research is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.**

*Research Findings*

Research Finding	Rationale	Challenge	Strategy
Another finding reveals that the emergence of intolerance-radicalism among high school students cannot be separated from the influence of the seniors or alums who still control their schools’ religious activities.	The continued involvement of alums in spiritual activities at the school can be attributed to two primary factors. First, alums maintain an emotional connection and a sense of responsibility towards their younger counterparts, which motivates them to engage in activities such as preaching. Second, alumni desire to be recognized as individuals who retain some influence and authority, particularly within their former school.	The government and schools must take part in resolving the issue	Schools need to involve moderate religious organizations, such as NU and Muhammadiyah, as well as religious leaders who have moderate views and attitudes toward mentoring.
The involvement of the alums in their schools’ religious activities, particularly due to the schools’ inability to assist the students’ religious activities on the weekends, provides an opportunity for intense intolerance and radicalism indoctrination.	The lack of intense mentoring of school spiritual activities can be attributed to two primary factors. First, spiritual activities are often held during school holidays, which presents a challenge for principals and teachers tasked with monitoring them. Second, the limited availability of time during holidays further complicates the monitoring process.	The school must monitor alumni activities with junior students.	The school should form a team of teachers to serve as special assistants for spiritual activities held on holidays and as liaisons between alums and junior students.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

The vision and mission of education are the basic instruments for developing national conditions conducive to the nation’s survival. Karim (2018) argued that mistakes in educational practice can have fatal consequences for a nation’s survival. Consequently, in his view, the educational process should not be contaminated by attitudes and behaviors that run counter to the true vision and mission of education. All elements in the education process, according to him,

must support one another and synergize to ensure the country’s safety and glory, such as maintaining internal and inter-religious harmony to uphold national unity and integrity, as well as strengthening national resilience.

Indications of the emergence of intolerance-radicalism practices in the field of formal education, including schools, especially among students, certainly cannot be ignored. It must get serious attention from the

government. In this regard, the government and all policymakers need to step in immediately to prevent it from becoming a larger movement. Even so, the government should not work alone. Instead, the government should engage moderate religious organizations and figures as key pioneers in guiding citizens' views, thoughts, opinions, attitudes, and practices toward a more peaceful direction. Generally, school stakeholders, including students and teachers, are part of the community and should get assistance from religious organizations and moderate religious figures.

The government should consider making moderate Islamic religious organizations important partners in strengthening moderate ideology. In the view of [Hergianasari \(2018\)](#), the government should partner with the NU and Muhammadiyah groups, which are the largest moderate Islamic religious organizations, to mobilize a new religious spirit among all members of Islam who are oriented toward peace and harmony ([Purwanto, 2019](#); [Yani, Faidah, et al., 2023](#); [Yani, Hazin, et al., 2023](#); [Yani et al., 2020](#)). In particular, Muslim scholars and intellectuals should be encouraged to pursue a religious path that values a moderate life and can coexist with diversity. To do this, they need to reinterpret theological doctrines on war and hostility and eliminate interpretations that lead to violent jihad. Thus, a culture that prioritizes peace among people can be built as early as possible, grounded in a moderate, peaceful approach to religion.

Intolerance has become closely associated with school life. If a solution is not found, this phenomenon will bring youth radicalism in schools to the brink. The facts discussed in this study prove that the emergence of intolerance-radicalism among high school students in Surabaya and Jakarta shows the weakness of the management of students' religious activities in schools. It is not enough for principals and teachers to simply worry about students' potential exposure to radicalism. That concern should translate into good management of religious activities in schools. Moreover, reinforced by the enormous influence of social media, school chaplaincy activities often extend to school holidays, namely Saturdays and Sundays. In fact, schools lack a measurable mechanism to help students participate in religious activities on weekends. So, students who participate in such activities are controlled by activity mentors, who, on average, are individual religious

leaders from outside the school and are most likely to be intolerant or radical.

Specifically, intolerance in schools is also inseparable from the influence of seniors or alumni who still control religious activities in schools, and many of them tend to indulge in radical intolerance practices. The involvement of such alums is part of the process of fostering intolerance and radicalism in schools, and, ironically, this phenomenon tends to escape schools' attention. If these indications do not get serious attention from schools, it is feared that an alarming situation will arise for teachers, parents, and the government. However, we must also note the positive impact that schools' religious organizations have on the students' character education and personality development. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that religious activities and orientation are well managed and do not lead to intolerance or radicalism. Considering the findings and conclusions, the implications for policy and practice must be duly considered. Regulations or rules that serve as the basis and reference for government policy in organizing spiritual activities must be established to ensure that students gain an understanding that does not lead to misconceptions about religion or to malpractice in teaching religious concepts. This will ensure that schools and parents are not unduly concerned about their children's future.

#### Acknowledgments

The authors express their gratitude and appreciation to all participants.

#### Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

#### Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Ethical considerations in this study were that participation was entirely optional.

## Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

## Funding

This research was carried out independently, with personal funding, and without financial support from any governmental or private institution or organization.

## Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contribute to this study.

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