Pedagogies for Promoting Religious Tolerance in Students: Content Analysis

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Abstract

Schools pedagogies have correlations with students' behaviors. Teacher centered pedagogies foster ethno-centrism in students' whereas learner-centered pedagogies and more inclusive pedagogies contribute in developing religious tolerance in students. We employed content analysis both as a methodology and data analysis technique in this study. This paper offers a review of relevant literature to spotlight pedagogical approaches and instructional strategies employed in schools to develop religious tolerance in students. The findings reveal that collaborative and inclusive pedagogies are effective pedagogies for developing religious tolerance in students. Therefore, on the basis of the findings it is recommended that schools and teachers need to introduce a wide variety of participatory and inclusive pedagogies and instructional strategies in order to develop religious tolerance in students.
Key Words: Religious intolerance, tolerance, pedagogical approaches, teaching strategies,

Introduction

The families, communities, societies and schools are important social agencies that shape attitudes and behaviors of youth. These social agencies either foster religious tolerance or promote chauvinistic mind sets in youth (Stenger, 2009). A child behaviour is molded in a family where she/he starts his/her life. That is the reason the role of families in fostering tolerant attitude at home has long been considered critical for children success in school (Okten, 2016). Therefore, teaching of religious tolerance to young children is highly emphasized in early age (NCPC, 2012). Then comes the role of a society or community in shaping the behaviour of a child as s/he learns from his /her surrounding world. A society as a second social agency, exposes a child to different situations and environment which in turn contributes in perspective shaping of a child (Boudon, 1999).

The third important social agency that contributes in behviour shaping is school. The values of religious tolerance are also shaped in a school where a child starts his /her formal journey of learning. Schools either foster religious tolerance in students or promote ethnocentric worldviews in students. These social agencies are powerful agents of intergenerational transmission of religious beliefs and values (Balint, 2011). To sum up, one can argue that the inculcation of values of religious tolerance begins at home, deepens in a society and further internalized through educational processes (Hitlin & Pilia-vin 2004). The social development of a child takes place in these social

agencies where a child has the first exposure of socialization (Raihani, 2018 & Khoury-Kassabri, and Ben-Arieh, 2009 & Obiekezie & Timothy, 2015).

Problem Statement

In schools students exposed to ethnocentric worldviews fail to appreciate or respect religious values of their fellow students (Raihany, 2014). Religious intolerance prevails in schools where others' religions are not acknowledged and respected (Broer, Muvnck, Potgietr, Wolhuter & Walt, 2015). The lack of respect and appreciation for other beliefs and values in classroom triggers the religious conflict, disparity and violence (Juwita, Salim & Winario, 2018). This intolerant attitude in turn contributes in developing intolerant society and leads to social disintegration and chaos (Daugherty & Stanhope, 1998).

The fragile functions of schools in terms of fostering religious tolerance in students are reflecting in our intolerant society. Religious intolerance can also be witnessed in schools and classrooms (Smart, 2012 & Timothy, 2013). The religious values of other students are often not respected in classroom and particular religious values are respected. The religious values of students from other religion are undermined by a dominant religious group of people (Musurlieva1 & Stoykova, 2018) which leads to marginalization of students of other religion. Their religious values are not respected and sometimes such students are being physically attacked and their religious liberties are being curtailed (Raihani, 2018). This situation provides a strong justification for this study to review current literature for spotlighting the functions of pedagogical approaches and instructional strategies employed in schools to foster religious tolerance in students.

Research Design

This study employed content analysis as a research design as well as data analysis technique (Neuendorf, 2001 & Krippendorf, 2004). We selected both theoretical and empirical research articles on pedagogies and strategies used in schools for developing religious tolerance in students. Following the coding scheme suggested by Krippendorf (2004) we performed a close reading of the selected articles to identify dominant pedagogies and strategies used in schools for fostering religious tolerance in students. The paper in the next section discusses the notions of religious intolerance and tolerance followed by discussion on pedagogies and instructional strategies employed in schools for fostering religious tolerance in students.

Unpacking Religious Intolerance

Religious intolerance refers to a situation when a group refuses to tolerate practices, beliefs and values of other religious group(s) (Baylor School Hedges Library Religious Intolerance Research Project, 2016). Religious intolerance also refers to unwillingness to grant religious liberties and freedom to the people of other faiths. The two identical definitions mentioned above refer to a denial state of mind of individuals or groups who deny and negate religious liberty to people of other faith (Karpov & Lisovskaya, 2018). Religious intolerance also understood as an aggregation of prejudices and negative attitudes which are often developed based on false information (Musurlieva1 & Stoykova, 2018). It also refers to blaming, discriminating or separating others (Kamaliathat, Indartono & Islamiyah 2018). The nutshell is that religious intolerance is a state of mind which makes one reluctant to be accommodative for others in terms of religious choice. It also refers to one's biased, prejudiced and chauvinistic attitude about others' religious practices and values (Broer, Muvnck, Potgietr, Wolhuter & Walt, 2014).

Conceptualization of Religious Tolerance

The notion of religious tolerance refers to allow, recognize, appreciate and respect others' religious beliefs, values and practices (Anwar, 2016). It is the ability to treat someone with forbearance and endurance for people with different faith, values and practices (Broar, Potgieter Walt & Wolhuter, 2019). Religious tolerance can also be equated with the inclination to express ideas and even to reject ideas without showing

hostility and prejudiced attitude (Hurd, 2015). Religious tolerance requires that everyone's viewpoint receives a courteous attention and hearing despite the fact that all viewpoints are not equal in terms of worth, merit or truth (Bergen & Colise, 2013 & Juwita, Celine Winarno, 2018). For some religious tolerance is the willingness to accept or tolerate someone's behavior or opinion which is different from yours' opinion. In schools religious tolerance means the calmness of the students to the religious beliefs and creeds of fellow students with different religions (Bar-Tal, Daniel, and Yona Teichman. 2005). The common thread run through all the above definitions is that religious tolerance is one's agreement or endurance with the religious ideas, practices and values that are different from one's religious ideas, practices and values. Religious tolerance is no longer seen as passive attitude for bearing conflicts and collision but it is also seen an active attitude for fostering mutual respect in the presence of religious differences (Kurniawan, 2018).

The summary is that there are multiple definitions of religious tolerance. Religious tolerance refers to attitude of being open to alienated religious beliefs/values. It is also equated with showing respect to others beliefs/values. It also embraces disagreement with other's ideas without hostility. Religious tolerance also refers to passive attitude of bearing conflict and collision. It also refers to an active attitude of fostering mutual respect.

Pedagogical Approaches for Fostering Religious Tolerance

Schools are the places where our future is rehearsed, where we learn the grammar of cooperation, respect, understanding and develop the attitude of accepting one another's ideas, culture, religious values and practices (International, 2006). Schools are ideally laboratories for providing of tolerance education. Therefore, fostering religious tolerance should be part of schools educational process and practices. That is why in schools ideas, habits, and values needed to be taught to students in order to foster religious tolerance in students (Obiekezie & Timothy, 2015). Schools need to provide students knowledge of other religions and cultures through different pedagogies and instructional strategies in order to make students more tolerant to others and appreciate all forms of differences including religious differences (Broer, Maynek, Potgieter, Walt & Wolhuter, 2019). The following pedagogies and instructional strategies emerged in literatures that are being used in schools for fostering religious tolerance in students.

Integration of Multicultural and Cross-cultural Contents

One of the dominants pedagogies used to develop religious tolerance in students emerged in literature review is the incorporation of relevant content of religious tolerance into subject matter knowledge. Schools should include cross-cultural, multicultural and intercultural education contents in the subject matter to foster attitude of religious tolerance in students (Sahin, n.d). Schools need to incorporate values like love, truth, faith in God, universal love, sympathy, fellow feeling and mutual understanding as the desirable characteristics to be developed in students (Cheetham, Pratt, & Thomas, 2013). It means schools need to integrate cross-cultural, inter-cultural and multi-cultural education elements in schools curricula for promoting religious tolerance in students (Castro, 2006 & Dhal, 2007).

Teaching Children the Beliefs and Practices of Others

Schools need to provide accurate information of other religions and teach students about different religions of the world. Teaching bout different religions of the world will be helpful in removing students' miss-perceptions about different religions which are often developed due to lack of knowledge of different religions or due to wrong information about different religions (Ozrudi and Aliabadi, 2016). Thus, one of the pedagogical approaches used in schools is to expose students to different religious beliefs, values and practices for developing religious tolerance in students. Therefore, schools need to teach students about different religions.

Participation in Multi-Religious Events

Another important pedagogical approach for fostering religious tolerance in students is to provide them the opportunity to participate in different religious events and activities to make them learn about different religions which in turn made them tolerant. It is also true that students develop religious tolerance while participating in religious celebrations such as religious/cultural holydays, rituals and customs of other communities. Literature validates that students develop religious tolerance while participating multi-religious events and activities (Bagir, 2013). Therefore, giving students the opportunity to participate religious events and celebrations of different religious groups is one of the effective ways to promote religious tolerance in students.

Discouraging Intolerance/Religious Stereotypes

It is important that teachers set a good example for children in terms of displaying religious tolerance. Teachers need to be sensitive to practice anything that may be construed as intolerant for another religious group. Schools must not tolerate statements of religious extremism rather schools need to encourage children to develop friendships with people of different backgrounds and religious beliefs to promote tolerant attitude (Bennett, Wragg, Carré, and Carter, 1992). Teachers need to model living role in terms of tolerant attitude (Angela Lumpkin, 2008) creating feelings of love towards people of different religions in classrooms (Audrey Osler, 2010).

Giving Classrooms a Diversity 'Audit'

Classroom diversity audit is another pedagogical approach for developing religious tolerance in students. Teachers need to complete "diversity audits" of their classrooms by walking around a classroom and making note of the multiple identities, religions and cultures represented in classroom materials, books, pictures and classroom decor. Teachers could even invite a friend to come and make a few observations about representation of diversity in classroom. The friends and guests can make recommendations to consider many different kinds of diversity as well. Teachers have to identify presentation of different ethnicities in picture books, story books, posters, students background ability and language as all these are representing various abilities and characters. Teachers need to walk their class even in the mental shoes of someone else to notice a great deal of diversity and elaborate it (Soares & Sudarsana, 2018).

Positive Portray of World Religions in Learning Materials

 Another pedagogical strategy of fostering religious tolerance in students is possible through the provision of learning materials that portray different cultural groups in a positive light (Garcia, Powell & Sanchez 1990 & Pate 1988). Infusing universal values in the contents and learning materials about other culture, race and religion helps students understand people different from themselves and develop all forms of tolerance (Kurnivan, 2018). The favorable projections and presentations of minority groups in learning resources have the potential to modify racial and ethnic hostile attitudes. Materials with multiethnic characters have the most positive effect on students' attitudes and prepare them to live in a diverse social context (Cotton, 1993 & Broer, Muynck, Potgieter, Walt, Wolhuter, 2019). Teachers can ensure that lerning mterils portry positive imge of different religions in order to open minded students (Sulaiman, 2015).

Developing Critical Thinking Skills

The literature shows that applying critical thinking skills has been effective in reducing prejudice in students (Byrnes 1988; Pate 1981, 1988; Walsh 1988). Critical thinking skills help in making informed judgments, choices, and right decisions that have social and personal consequences. Therefore, teachers need to enable students think critically rather than mythically (Castro, 2016). Literature reveals that students with *c*ritical thinking ability have been effective in enhancing intergroup relations and reducing prejudices (Walsh, 1988). Critical thinking skills promote open-mindedness and develop the ability to respect a wide variety of beliefs. This ability makes students

flexible enough to avoid dogmatic attitude and rigidity and flexible to respect different which in turn leads students to religious tolerant attitude (Walsh, 1988).

Initiating Interfaith Project and Activities

The introduction of interfaith projects and activities is another pedagogical approach which contributes in improving interfaith relations, building mutual respect and understanding the values and traditions of other people. Literature recommends that educators need to complement the curricular and pedagogical efforts with out-of-classroom projects and activities. These projects and activities could be camping and various other collaborative programs that seek to reinforce the goal of interfaith understanding and religious tolerance in students (Castro, 2006). These projects and activities are effective strategies for teaching religious tolerance in an appropriate social interactive and teamwork manner which would break the chain of mechanism that sustain all forms of prejudices (Maurice, 2012 & Smartt, 2012). Literature also reveals that bringing students into task-related social contact with students of other religion/culture influences students' attitudes for positive intergroup relations (Cotton, 1993). That is why initiatives of interfaith projects and activities are being seen as productive ways to develop religious tolerance in students (Wolhuter, 2016).

Developing Self-esteem of Students

The most effective pedagogical approach schools and teachers use to combat prejudice is to improve students' self-concept or self image (Pate, 988). Schools boost self-esteem of students with regard to their responsibilities and others' rights. There is a positive correlation between positive self-regard and positive regard for others (Byrnes 1988; Garcia, Powell, and Sanchez 1990). Schools need to encourage students, celebrate students' academic success and provide them the opportunity of working closely with people of diverse background. Schools also need to introduce projects and activities that portray people of different cultural groups in a positive light in order to prepare open minded and religiously tolerant students (Cotton et,.al 1993).

Introducing Cooperative Learning Strategies

In schools cooperative activities are leading to the development of religious tolerance in students. Teachers need to organize learners into culturally heterogeneous teams with tasks that require group cooperation and interdependence. These nature of team work develop positive intergroup relations (Byrnes 1988; Conard 1988). In schools a culture of sharing common problems, tasks, goals and success with people of another ethnic group helps in developing positive feelings toward others (Pate, 1988). Cooperative learning activities lead to increased cross-cultural contacts which in turn promote religious tolerance in students (Cotton, 1993). That is the reason collaborative learning is recommended to cultivate interfaith insights (Halaffof, 2006). Cooperative learning activities promote positive interdependence among students and also help them develop interpersonal skills necessary for effective group functioning such as leadership, decision-making and conflict-management skills (Parrenas & Parrenas, 1990 & UNESCO, 1995). Thus, it can be argued that cooperative and collaborative pedagogies contribute in developing religious tolerance in students

Religious tolerance need to be taught to children with continuous reinforcement of the message over time (NCPC, 2012). Teachers have to use instructional strategies which are potential to promote religious tolerance giving students equal importance in classrooms. Pedagogies need to emphasize on teaching teamwork, collaborative work, unity and appropriate social interactions (Maurice, 2012). Teachers need to adopt collaborative pedagogies that question the structures of intolerance or prejudice and enable students to appraise their assumptions and myths about their religious prejudices for others (Smartt, 2012 & Obiekezie, 2015). Thus, it can be argued that collaborative pedagogies help students in reducing their prejudices and develop religious tolerance in students.

Co-curricular Activities Cultivate Interfaith Harmony

A good educational institution gives importance to co-curricular activities that foster interfaith harmony in students (Anna Halaffof, 2006). Schools need to provide maximum opportunities to students of different faith and cultures to come together and perform tasks that contribute in creating love and respect for each other and help them behave sympathetically beyond any religious biasness. Teachers can improve interfaith relations through different co-curricular activities which build students trust, mutual respect and understanding of each other's values and traditions (Castro, 2006). Schools need to hold religious activities for students of all religions which promote religious harmony in students (Soares & Sudarsana, 2018 & Bigdeli, 2002).

Teaching of Shared Values

Teaching of shared values is another pedagogical approach often referred to in the literature to be used in schools for developing religious tolerance in students. Teachers need to introduce models of education which are potentials to reduce social stratification by providing knowledge for cross- cultural appreciation and religious diversity. For this purpose, teachers have to enrich the curriculum with knowledge of religious tolerance (Cotton, 1993). Similarly, schools have to explore ways of incorporating into curricula the shared or common values of diverse cultural and religious traditions that are essential for the harmonious co-existence of people of all cultures and faiths. Schools need to incorporate shared values that are helpful in resolution of conflicts and promotion of religious tolerance in students (Castro, 2006).

Cooperation with Community Organizations

Schools also need to cooperate and collaborate with community and youth organizations for the creation of religious harmony and social integration in the form of recognition, acceptance and appreciation of students with various religions and ethnicities (Sumbulah & Purnomo, 2018). There is a positive connection between tolerant behaviour and social group membership in almost in all diverse societies (Glaeser, Laibson & Sacerdote, 2000). Students develop religious tolerance while interacting with community organization. Therefore, schools need to provide students with the opportunity to interact with the community.

Conclusion

The summary is that social agencies either develop religious tolerance or otherwise. The educational chauvinism and extremism affect the moderate behavior of students. The pedagogies in schools are important in the inculcation of religious tolerance in students. The traditional pedagogies promote prejudice and ethnocentrism in students. School pedagogies contribute in molding a rigid personality into humble and pluralistic individual. Teachers' inclusive and participatory pedagogies can transform a child's personality into a flexible personality. Teachers become successful in fostering religious tolerance in students when they introduce cooperative, learner-centered and inclusive pedagogical activities and projects.

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