

The Role of Intercultural Communication and Communication Tolerance in the Harmonization of Multicultural Congregations (Salafi, Muhammadiyah, NU) at Al-Muttaqin Mosque, Cakra, Mataram

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Abstract

This study addresses the limited scholarly attention to intercultural communication and tolerance within intra-Islamic contexts, despite their crucial role in sustaining social harmony. While most existing literature focuses on interfaith dialogue, fewer studies examine how diverse Islamic groups, such as Salafi, Muhammadiyah, and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) negotiate coexistence in shared religious spaces. Focusing on Al-Muttaqin Mosque, Cakra, Mataram, this research aims to (1) assess how intercultural communication contributes to harmony, (2) identify key factors shaping tolerance, and (3) analyze how tolerance fosters social cohesion. A qualitative descriptive design was employed, using purposive sampling of active congregants and mosque administrators. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and document review, and analyzed thematically to identify communication patterns. The findings reveal that intercultural communication bridges doctrinal differences through respectful dialogue, religious expressions, and non-verbal practices such as greetings, handshakes, and shared meals. Collaborative activities, including Qur'anic study circles, charity programs, and mosque renovations further reinforced cooperation beyond group boundaries. Tolerance was shaped by neutral leadership policies, historical experiences of coexistence, and cultural traditions such as *gotong royong*, which collectively fostered harmony by mitigating doctrinal tensions, strengthening trust, and cultivating shared ownership of mosque life. The study concludes that effective communication and tolerance mechanisms transform intra-faith diversity from a source of potential conflict into a foundation for unity. Theoretically, it extends

intercultural communication frameworks into intra-Islamic settings, while practically offering guidance for mosque administrators and religious leaders to promote inclusivity through balanced programming and collaborative initiatives.

Keywords: Intercultural Communication; Tolerance; Intra-Islamic Diversity; Social Harmony; *Gotong Royong*

INTRODUCTION

Religious diversity in Indonesia has long been a defining characteristic of its social and cultural life. This plurality is not only evident in interfaith interactions but also within Islam itself, where various groups and schools of thought coexist in a shared religious space. Masjid Al-Muttaqin Cakra, Mataram, exemplifies such diversity, hosting congregants from different Islamic traditions including Salafi, Muhammadiyah, and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). While these groups share a common faith, they differ in their interpretations, practices, and orientations toward Islamic teachings. Salafi groups are often associated with a more conservative approach, while Muhammadiyah and NU are known for their moderate and inclusive practices. These differences may lead to tensions and potential conflict if intercultural communication is not carefully managed. Effective communication across cultural and religious backgrounds can mitigate conflict and strengthen mutual respect among congregants (Meilani et al., 2024)

For example, in a mosque with congregants from Salafi, Muhammadiyah, and NU backgrounds, differences in worship practices, clothing styles, and even ways of interacting can create tension if there is no effective communication. Therefore, intercultural communication in the mosque plays an important role in facilitating encounters between different religious practices, reducing tension, and enabling dialogue among groups. It highlights the importance of acceptance of differences in intercultural communication, allowing individuals to view diversity as a source of richness rather than as a barrier (Setiawati, 2022). In a multicultural society, social harmony can be achieved through positive interactions among different groups, where effective communication and tolerance toward differences become the key elements (Christianto, Naryoso, 2024)

The mosque occupies a strategic role in this context. Beyond being a site of worship, it also functions as a social arena that brings together diverse communities. Intercultural communication within such a space enables congregants to reduce prejudice, stereotypes,

and miscommunication, while fostering an inclusive atmosphere of learning and interaction (Adnan et al., 2024; Muhtarom et al., 2024). In this regard, communication tolerance—defined as openness and respect toward differences in communicative interactions—becomes indispensable (Chairozi, 2025). Communication tolerance involves the willingness to accept and appreciate others' perspectives and behaviors even when significant differences exist (Wulandari, 2024). This implies that differences in ritual practice or theological interpretation should not be viewed as threats but rather as opportunities to build harmony.

Scholars have emphasized that effective intercultural dialogue requires attention to context, power relations, and historical dimensions to prevent value conflicts from escalating; communication competence helps diverse groups establish ground rules for coexistence (Martin & Nakayama, 2021). Similarly, the intercultural praxis framework highlights self-reflection, ethical dialogue, and collaborative action as strategies to transform inequality and foster solidarity, particularly useful for mosque leaders seeking to bridge practices of Salafi, Muhammadiyah, and NU congregants (Sorrells, 2024). Klyukanov (2025) further argues that the principles of intercultural communication—uncertainty management, openness, and ethical listening—are essential in reducing anxiety and creating shared meaning in pluralistic communities. Such practices strengthen communication tolerance and provide a pathway toward harmony.

In the Indonesian context, multicultural interaction is not merely a social reality but also a critical element of nation-building. Studies have shown that intergroup engagement can foster social harmony if conducted inclusively and respectfully (Abdullah et al., 2023). For instance, tolerance education that cultivates intellectual humility, cognitive flexibility, and cultural literacy has been proven to strengthen religious tolerance and can serve as a model for mosque leadership (Suryani, H., & Kambali, 2023). Wulandari, (2024) and Fajri, (2023) emphasize that communication tolerance is more than passive acceptance; it requires active empathy and respect for differences. Devi (2020) adds that tolerance is not simply acknowledging others but embracing diversity with sincerity. Within multicultural societies, tolerance functions as a crucial mechanism for creating peaceful coexistence (Chairozi, 2025). Ramdhan, T. W., & Arifin, (2025), drawing on Kymlicka, argue that maintaining harmony requires not only respecting differences but also actively seeking common ground.

This issue becomes particularly salient in contemporary Indonesia, where the identity and activism of Salafi groups continue to be negotiated in relation to national narratives.

Communicative engagement in civil and religious spaces plays a role in shaping a more inclusive sense of citizenship (Chaplin, 2021). Harmonization, in this sense, does not imply erasing differences but finding constructive ways for diverse groups to work together for shared goals (Nasution & Albina, 2024). As Melati & Hamdanah, (2024) notes, fostering harmony in multicultural societies requires mutual understanding and recognition of multiple cultural identities. In the context of mosques, this involves creating opportunities for dialogue, collaborative religious study, and social activities that strengthen solidarity while respecting distinct traditions.

Previous studies have explored related dynamics. Zuhrah & Yumasdaleni, (2021) examined the mosque's role in religious moderation and harmony in Medan, highlighting inclusive communication strategies that reduce intergroup conflict. **Syarifah et al., (2023)** analyzed interpersonal communication patterns that foster interreligious tolerance in Parapat Village, identifying key interactional mechanisms that could inform the study of intra-Islamic diversity. Husnan & Nur Halimatus, (2023), focused on multicultural preaching at Masjid Cheng-ho, showing how intercultural communication in dakwah fosters tolerance, though their emphasis was on preaching rather than structured congregational life. Rahmawati & Hariyati, (2024) investigated multicultural communication within interfaith organizations, underlining its role in weaving tolerance across religious lines, though their scope did not focus on the mosque as a religious and social hub. These studies provide valuable insights but leave a gap in understanding how intercultural communication and communication tolerance function specifically within the mosque context, where worship and community life intersect.

Research on intercultural communication in the context of multicultural congregations is strongly linked to primary theories of cross-cultural communication. Samovar, Porter, and McDaniel (2021) argue that intercultural communication is a vital process that enables individuals from diverse backgrounds to achieve mutual understanding through symbols, language, and social practices. This perspective is particularly relevant to mosque congregations, where religious practices are often influenced by differing cultural and ideological orientations. Chen and Starosta (2020) emphasize that communication tolerance serves as a foundation for fostering social harmony. Without acceptance of differences, interactions between groups are more likely to generate tension and conflict. This concept underscores the need for open-mindedness among congregants from different affiliations such as Salafi, Muhammadiyah, and NU. Gudykunst (2020), through the

Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) Theory, highlights that effective intercultural interaction depends on managing anxiety and uncertainty in communication. This theoretical lens is applicable to the dynamics of multicultural congregations, where misperceptions and stereotypes may otherwise hinder harmony. Finally, Martin and Nakayama (2021) point out that the novelty of studying intercultural communication in religious settings lies in its departure from the dominant discourse in globalization and business contexts. By examining communication and tolerance within mosque congregations, this research contributes a fresh perspective to both the theory and practice of intercultural communication in religious multiculturalism.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the role of intercultural communication and communication tolerance in harmonizing the multicultural congregations of Salafi, Muhammadiyah, and NU at Masjid Al-Muttaqin, Cakra, Mataram. By situating the mosque as both a sacred and social space, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how communication practices can reduce prejudice, manage differences constructively, and build solidarity. The findings are expected to advance scholarly discussions on intercultural communication in religious contexts while providing practical recommendations for mosque leadership in fostering inclusive and harmonious community life. Specifically, this study seeks: (1) to explore how intercultural communication contributes to creating harmony among salafi, muhammadiyah, and nu congregants at al-muttaqin mosque, (2) to identify the key factors that shape communication tolerance among mosque congregants, and (3) to analyze the extent to which communication tolerance fosters social harmony across different congregational groups.

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to gain an in-depth understanding of intercultural communication and communication tolerance among Salafi, Muhammadiyah, and NU congregants at Al-Muttaqin Mosque, Cakra, Mataram. The qualitative descriptive method was chosen for its capacity to present phenomena in everyday language while maintaining research rigor in culturally nuanced settings (Villamin et al., 2024)

1. **Research Design**

A descriptive qualitative design was employed, focusing on naturally occurring communicative practices without imposing predefined theoretical structures. This design facilitates context-rich exploration of intergroup dynamics in real-life religious settings

2. **Research Setting and Time**

Data were collected at Al-Muttaqin Mosque, Cakra, Mataram, a microcosm of Indonesia's Islamic diversity, from July to September 2025. This timeframe coincided with congregational prayers, religious studies, and communal activities—ideal for observing authentic intercultural interactions in situ. Selecting the appropriate research context and timeline is critical to capturing meaningful qualitative insights (Yin, 2025).

3. **Population and Sampling**

Participants included congregants affiliated with Salafi, Muhammadiyah, and NU traditions, as well as mosque administrators. They were selected through purposive sampling, targeting individuals actively engaged in intergroup religious and social activities. This sampling technique ensures inclusion of diverse, information-rich perspectives needed to unpack intercultural communication (Ahmad et al., 2024)

4. **Data Collection**

Data were collected using two complementary approaches: semi-structured in-depth interviews and participant observation. Interviews allowed participants to express their lived experiences of intergroup communication and tolerance. Observations provided contextual understanding of real-time interaction dynamics within mosque routines. The combination of these techniques supports creation of nuanced, thick descriptions in qualitative inquiry

5. **Data Analysis**

Analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, following a structured six-phase process: data familiarization, coding, theme development, theme review, theme definition, and report writing. A checklist approach was used to affirm rigor and reflexivity at each step, ensuring validity and transparency in interpretive coding of qualitative data (Ahmed et al., 2025)

RESULTS

1. Intercultural Communication and the Creation of Harmony

a. Verbal Strategies of Respect and Dialogue

The findings indicate that verbal communication was a central strategy in sustaining harmony among Salafi, Muhammadiyah, and NU congregants at Al-Muttaqin Mosque. Dialogue was conducted with politeness, framed by religious expressions such as *Alhamdulillah* or *Insyallah*, and supported by gentle correction rather than confrontation.

For example, a young Salafi participant reflected on how verbal communication shaped his maturity:

“This mosque helped me become more mature. I used to judge quickly, but here we learn to deliver messages with wisdom. Even if we make mistakes, the administrators correct us gently” (P03, male, 25, Cakra, personal communication, Aug 20, 2025).

A Muhammadiyah congregant also highlighted the importance of inclusive verbal dialogue:

“For me, this mosque is like a laboratory of tolerance. We are trained to be mature, not to debate. At first, I felt stiff when engaging with NU or Salafi friends, but over time we discovered many similarities” (P06, male, 28, Cakra, personal communication, Aug 22, 2025).

These statements align with observations of Qur’anic study sessions where debates on ritual differences concluded with mutual smiles, laughter, and informal small talk (Observation, July 15, 2025). Such practices demonstrate that respectful dialogue served as a mechanism for reducing doctrinal tensions and cultivating mutual trust.

b. Non-Verbal Expressions of Acceptance

Non-verbal communication also played a vital role in reinforcing social bonds. Greetings, handshakes, and shared meals were repeatedly observed as gestures of acceptance that transcended theological divisions.

During Friday prayers, congregants from different backgrounds consistently exchanged warm greetings and engaged in casual conversations before dispersing, signaling that ritual spaces were also arenas of social bonding (Observation, Aug 29, 2025). Similarly, a clean-up event illustrated how laughter, shared physical labor, and joint meals facilitated social cohesion: congregants from all groups worked side by side, exchanging jokes, and sitting together for communal food afterwards (Observation, Sept 10, 2025).

An NU elder acknowledged these subtle but powerful practices of inclusion:

“Alhamdulillah, I feel accepted here. Even though I practice tablilan and yasinan, nobody makes me uncomfortable. Instead, we pray together peacefully” (P07, male, 55, Cakra, personal communication, Aug 26, 2025).

Such non-verbal signals effectively communicated unity, even in the absence of explicit verbal agreements.

c. Shared Religious and Social Practices

Shared participation in religious and social activities further contributed to harmony. Congregants reported that joint worship, Qur’anic recitations, and community-based programs such as charity drives, study forums, and mosque maintenance created opportunities for interaction beyond doctrinal boundaries.

A Muhammadiyah elder highlighted this transformation:

“This mosque used to be strongly Muhammadiyah. But now it’s more diverse. We realized that if we want it to remain peaceful, we must be open. Now, it has become a house of worship for all groups” (P04, male, 65, Cakra, personal communication, Aug 22, 2025).

From the Salafi perspective, another respondent stressed the administrators’ neutrality in organizing activities:

“Alhamdulillah, it feels comfortable here. The administrators are very wise. They don’t lean toward one group, and we can also share our da’wah, as long as it is done politely” (P02, male, 60, Cakra, personal communication, July 15, 2025).

Observations further confirmed this dynamic. In one event, a Salafi ustadz and an NU cleric shared a panel during a mosque seminar. Despite expressing different theological positions, both ended the session with a handshake and warm conversation, followed by congregants mingling together (Observation, Sept 5, 2025).

These findings show that shared religious and social practices serve as a collective platform that transforms potentially divisive theological differences into opportunities for collaboration and mutual understanding.

Taken together, the results demonstrate that intercultural communication at Al-Muttaqin Mosque is multidimensional. Verbal dialogue ensures respectful engagement, non-verbal gestures of acceptance normalize inclusivity, and shared practices institutionalize

collaboration. These three dimensions of communication collectively transform the mosque into a multicultural religious space, where doctrinal differences are not eliminated but reinterpreted as resources for dialogue and harmony rather than conflict.

The following Venn Diagram provides a visual framework to understand how different aspects of intercultural communication intersect to build social harmony at Al-Muttaqin Mosque.

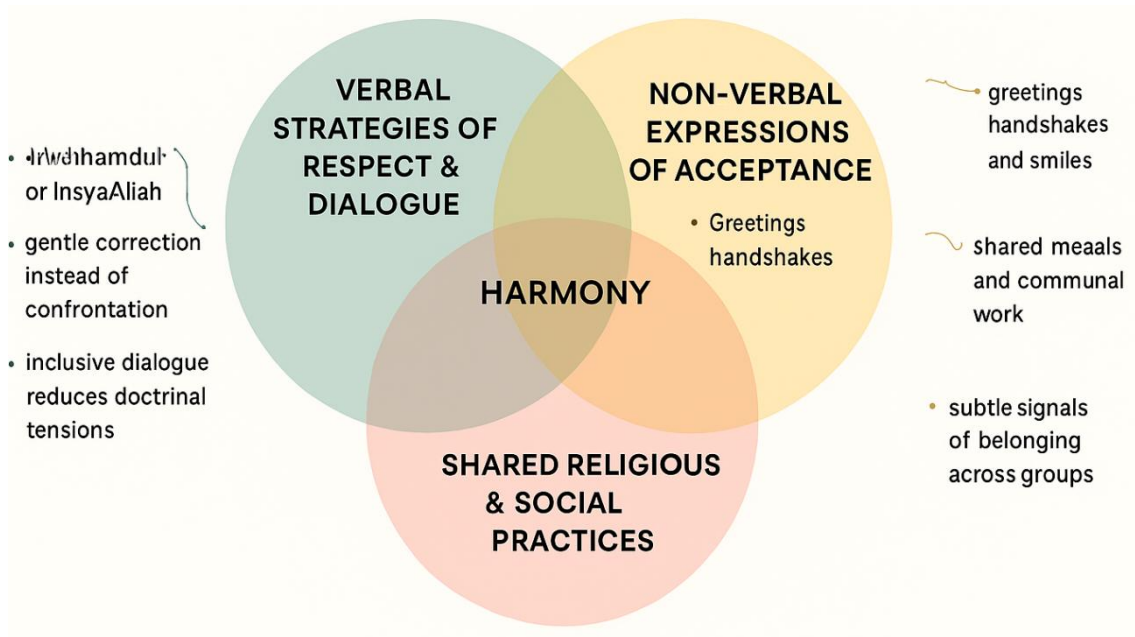


Figure 1. Venn Diagram of the Overlapping Dimensions of Intercultural Communication at Al-Muttaqin Mosque

The Venn Diagram illustrates the overlapping dimensions of intercultural communication at Al-Muttaqin Mosque and how they collectively foster harmony. The first circle emphasizes Verbal Strategies of Respect and Dialogue, where polite expressions, gentle correction, and inclusive discussions serve as the foundation for respectful interaction. The second circle represents Non-Verbal Expressions of Acceptance, such as greetings, handshakes, smiles, and shared meals, which provide subtle yet powerful signals of belonging across different groups. The third circle highlights Shared Religious and Social Practices, including joint Qur'anic recitations, community service, and collaborative events that create opportunities for cooperation beyond doctrinal differences. At the center of these three dimensions lies Harmony, showing that when respectful dialogue, non-verbal inclusion, and

shared practices intersect, they transform diversity into a source of unity and sustained coexistence.

2. Factors Shaping Communication Tolerance

a. Leadership and Mosque Administration Policies

Leadership and mosque administration were consistently identified as crucial determinants of communication tolerance. The mosque's administrators adopted a policy of neutrality by ensuring that no single group dominated religious programs or sermons. Schedules were carefully balanced to accommodate Salafi, Muhammadiyah, and NU speakers, minimizing the risk of sectarian bias.

One NU elder observed:

“This mosque is extraordinary. In other places, differences often become sources of hostility. But here, the administrators are smart. They carefully arrange schedules and speakers so sermons don't trigger division” (P08, male, 62, Cakra, personal communication, Aug 26, 2025).

Similarly, a Muhammadiyah congregant acknowledged the role of leadership in fostering inclusivity:

“If the administrators leaned toward one group, I am sure we would have conflict. But here, they treat us equally, so nobody feels excluded” (P10, male, 40, Cakra, personal communication, Sept 3, 2025).

Observation during Friday sermons confirmed this approach. Sermons delivered by different preachers avoided provocative theological issues, instead focusing on shared themes such as morality, social justice, and community solidarity (Observation, Sept 5, 2025). This policy reinforced tolerance by directing attention toward unifying rather than divisive topics.

b. Historical Experiences of Group Interaction

The congregation's historical experiences also shaped tolerance. Long-term members recalled periods when the mosque was more closely associated with one group, particularly Muhammadiyah, which sometimes created exclusivity. However, over time, repeated interactions and shared crises—such as fundraising for natural disaster victims or supporting education initiatives—helped normalize cooperation.

A senior Muhammadiyah figure narrated this transformation:

“This mosque used to feel exclusive, mainly Muhammadiyah. But when we faced big challenges—like raising funds for earthquake victims—we realized we needed all groups. That moment changed us” (P12, male, 68, Cakra, personal communication, Sept 8, 2025).

From the Salafi perspective, one congregant highlighted how historical misunderstandings gradually shifted toward tolerance:

“In the past, people thought Salafis were too rigid. But after years of praying together and joining activities, people see we also just want peace” (P05, male, 45, Cakra, personal communication, Aug 25, 2025).

These historical encounters created what congregants described as “lessons of maturity,” reinforcing the necessity of patience and acceptance in sustaining long-term coexistence.

c. External Social and Cultural Influences

External social and cultural contexts also influenced communication tolerance inside the mosque. Congregants frequently referred to broader Mataram society, where intergroup cooperation is common in neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces. These daily interactions outside the mosque created cultural expectations for tolerance inside the mosque as well.

A young NU congregant remarked:

“We live side by side every day, not only here but in the market, offices, and schools. So if we can work together outside, why not in the mosque?” (P09, female, 32, Cakra, personal communication, Sept 2, 2025).

Additionally, national discourses on pluralism and local traditions of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) provided cultural resources that congregants drew upon. During a mosque clean-up day, members framed their collaboration as part of this broader tradition, stating that “cleaning the mosque together is like cleaning our own home” (Observation, Sept 10, 2025).

External influences such as government campaigns on religious moderation and interfaith harmony also reinforced local practices. A Muhammadiyah congregant explicitly mentioned exposure to these narratives:

“We often hear about religious moderation in seminars and media. That makes us more careful in speaking here, because we don’t want to be seen as intolerant” (P11, male, 50, Cakra, personal communication, Sept 7, 2025).

The results show that tolerance in communication is not an accidental byproduct but the result of multiple reinforcing factors. Leadership and mosque policies create structural safeguards against division, historical experiences provide collective memory that encourages patience, and external cultural influences normalize inclusive practices. Together, these elements form a robust foundation for sustaining tolerance among diverse congregants at Al-Muttaqin Mosque.

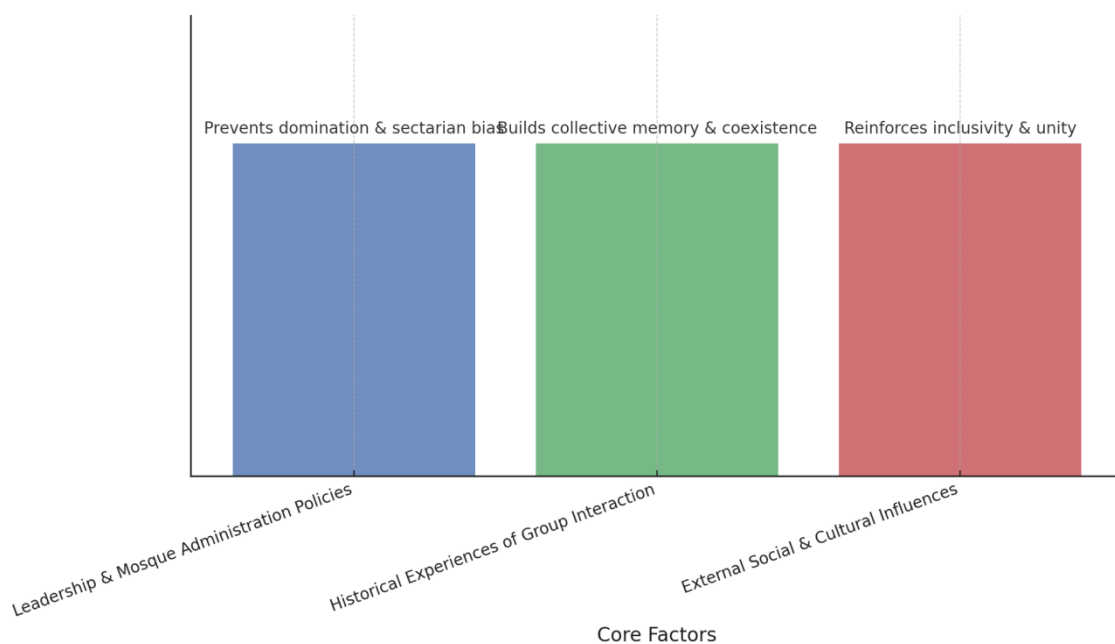


Figure 2. Factors Shaping Communication Tolerance at Al-Muttaqin Mosque

The graph highlights three key factors shaping communication tolerance at Al-Muttaqin Mosque. First, leadership and administration ensure neutral scheduling and balanced programs, preventing domination and bias. Second, historical experiences of cooperation transform past exclusivity into long-term coexistence. Third, external social and cultural influences, such as gotong royong and national discourses on moderation, reinforce inclusivity. Together, these factors sustain unity and social harmony among congregants.

3. Communication Tolerance and the Fostering of Social Harmony

a. Reducing Doctrinal Conflicts through Dialogue

Tolerance in communication was shown to be a critical factor in reducing doctrinal conflicts between Salafi, Muhammadiyah, and NU congregants. Instead of avoiding differences, congregants emphasized respectful dialogue as a way to prevent escalation. Structured forums, such as Qur'anic study sessions or post-prayer discussions, became platforms for expressing diverse views while maintaining mutual respect.

A Salafi ustadz shared:

“If we disagree, we talk gently. I believe debates should not be to win but to find wisdom. That way, we don't create hostility” (P13, male, 48, Cakra, personal communication, Sept 12, 2025).

From the Muhammadiyah side, a youth leader confirmed the role of dialogue:

“We try to focus on what unites us. If doctrinal issues arise, we clarify with dalil, but in a polite tone. It is better to discuss than to keep silent and then feel suspicious” (P15, male, 30, Cakra, personal communication, Sept 14, 2025).

Observation during a joint *halaqah* revealed how participants from different groups articulated contrasting interpretations of ritual practice. Yet, the session concluded with an agreement to emphasize common principles of sincerity and devotion, reducing the tension (Observation, Sept 16, 2025). This indicates that tolerance functions as a communication ethic, transforming potential conflict into constructive dialogue.

b. Building Trust and Social Bonds

Tolerance also nurtured trust and interpersonal bonds across groups. Through frequent interaction, congregants gradually moved from suspicion to familiarity and eventually to friendship. Simple acts—such as greeting each other, sitting together after prayers, or visiting during family ceremonies—were reported as milestones of trust-building.

One NU congregant stated:

“At first, we were cautious. But over time, because we often meet, trust grows. Now if a Salafi friend's child is sick, I visit him, and he does the same for me” (P16, male, 52, Cakra, personal communication, Sept 18, 2025).

A Muhammadiyah mother described her comfort with NU and Salafi neighbors in the mosque:

“We share food after events. That makes us closer, like family. I don’t think anymore about group differences” (P17, female, 38, Cakra, personal communication, Sept 20, 2025).

Trust was also observed in collaborative teaching sessions where NU, Muhammadiyah, and Salafi teachers rotated in guiding children’s Qur’an recitations. Parents expressed confidence in all instructors, indicating that tolerance had evolved into interpersonal reliability (Observation, Sept 21, 2025).

c. Sustaining Unity through Collaborative Activities

Finally, tolerance was institutionalized through collaborative activities that created a sense of shared ownership of the mosque. Collective projects—such as mosque renovations, social charity drives, Ramadan iftars, and disaster relief fundraising—offered opportunities for members to work side by side, temporarily suspending doctrinal boundaries.

A Salafi youth explained:

“When we clean the mosque or collect donations, we don’t care about which group we are from. We all wear the same gloves and carry the same buckets. That’s unity in practice” (P18, male, 22, Cakra, personal communication, Sept 24, 2025).

A Muhammadiyah elder similarly noted the importance of social cooperation:

“The secret is activities. If we only talk, we may argue. But if we work together, we naturally become closer” (P19, male, 63, Cakra, personal communication, Sept 24, 2025).

During a community charity distribution event, the researcher observed congregants from different backgrounds laughing together as they packed rice and basic goods for the poor. The cooperative mood contrasted with the doctrinal debates often heard in other settings, highlighting the power of shared action in sustaining unity (Observation, Sept 26, 2025).

The findings demonstrate that communication tolerance fosters social harmony through three interconnected pathways. First, it reduces doctrinal tensions by encouraging respectful dialogue rather than avoidance or confrontation. Second, it builds interpersonal trust and social bonds that transcend formal group boundaries. Third, it sustains unity by embedding tolerance within collective practices and community-oriented activities.

Together, these mechanisms transform diversity from a source of potential conflict into a foundation for enduring social cohesion at Al-Muttaqin Mosque.

Table 1: Communication Tolerance and the Fostering of Social Harmony at Al-Muttaqin Mosque

Dimension		Core Practice	Impact on Social Harmony
Reducing Conflicts through Dialogue	Doctrinal	Respectful dialogue in structured forums (Qur’anic study sessions, post-prayer discussions)	Prevents escalation of differences, transforms potential conflict into constructive exchange, emphasizes shared values
Building Trust and Social Bonds	Trust	Everyday interactions (greetings, shared meals, visits, joint teaching)	Strengthens familiarity and friendship, fosters mutual reliability, reduces suspicion across groups
Sustaining Unity through Collaborative Activities	Unity	Collective projects (mosque renovations, charity drives, Ramadan iftars, disaster relief)	Creates shared ownership, transcends doctrinal boundaries, nurtures a sense of unity through practical cooperation

The table shows that communication tolerance fosters social harmony at Al-Muttaqin Mosque through three pathways. Respectful dialogue reduces doctrinal conflicts by turning differences into constructive exchange. Everyday interactions build trust and friendship, reducing suspicion across groups. Collaborative activities create shared ownership and unity through practical cooperation. Together, these dimensions transform diversity into lasting harmony.

The synthesis of the overall research findings can be explained through Figure 3. Concept Map of Intercultural Communication, Tolerance, and Social Harmony at Al-Muttaqin Mosque, Cakra Mataram presented below.

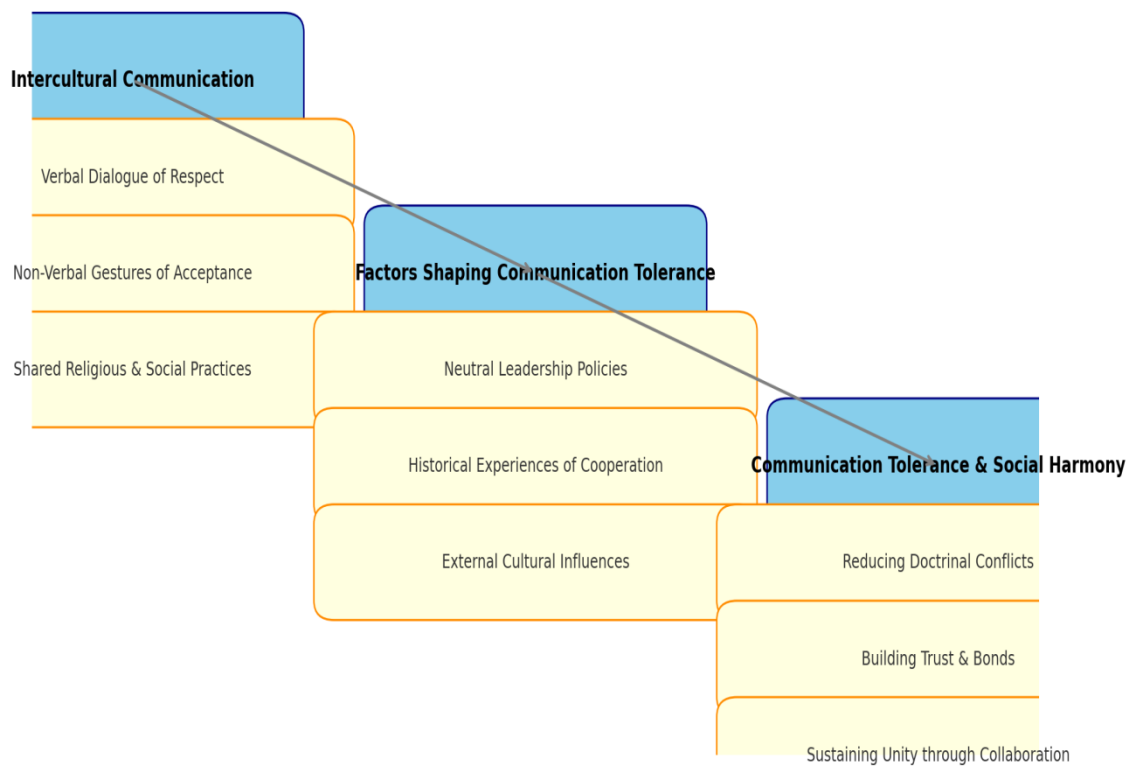


Figure 3. Concept Map Intercultural Communication, Tolerance and Social Harmony at Al-Muttaqin Mosque, Cakra Mataram

The concept map illustrates the study’s findings at Al-Muttaqin Mosque through three interconnected themes. Intercultural Communication lays the foundation for harmony with respectful dialogue, non-verbal gestures, and shared practices. Factors Shaping Communication Tolerance emphasize the role of neutral leadership, historical cooperation, and external influences in sustaining inclusivity. These, in turn, lead to Communication Tolerance and Social Harmony, where tolerance reduces doctrinal conflicts, builds trust, and sustains unity. The arrows highlight a clear progression: communication practices → supportive structures → social harmony.

DISDUSSION

1. Results Analysis

The results of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of how intercultural communication, tolerance, and social harmony are cultivated at Al-Muttaqin Mosque. They are discussed in relation to the three research objectives.

First, the objective of exploring how intercultural communication contributes to harmony among Salafi, Muhammadiyah, and NU congregants is clearly reflected in the findings. Verbal strategies such as respectful dialogue, framed in religious expressions and gentle correction, ensured that differences were expressed without hostility. Non-verbal gestures—including greetings, handshakes, and shared meals—further reinforced mutual acceptance. Shared religious and social practices, such as Qur’anic study circles and joint charity events, institutionalized collaboration beyond doctrinal boundaries. These dimensions of communication demonstrate that harmony is sustained not by eliminating differences but by reinterpreting them as opportunities for dialogue and cooperation.

Second, the objective of identifying the key factors that shape communication tolerance highlights the crucial role of mosque leadership, historical experiences, and external social influences. Neutral scheduling and balanced policies by the mosque administration prevented group domination and sectarian bias. Historical encounters, particularly shared crises and long-term interaction, transformed exclusivity into coexistence and patience. Meanwhile, broader cultural influences such as traditions of gotong royong and national narratives on religious moderation reinforced inclusivity inside the mosque. Together, these factors show that tolerance is not spontaneous but structured through leadership, memory, and cultural norms.

Third, the objective of analyzing the extent to which communication tolerance fosters social harmony is evidenced in three interconnected pathways. Respectful dialogue prevented doctrinal disputes from escalating into division, instead transforming them into constructive exchanges. Everyday interactions built trust and interpersonal bonds, reducing suspicion across groups and fostering friendships. Collaborative activities, from mosque renovations to charity drives, created shared ownership of the mosque space and nurtured a practical sense of unity. These pathways confirm that tolerance is not only an ethical principle but also a lived practice that sustains long-term harmony.

The findings demonstrate a clear progression: intercultural communication provides the tools for respectful engagement, tolerance structures sustain inclusivity, and together they foster social harmony. This dynamic is captured in the concept map (Figure 3), which illustrates how communication practices, supported by leadership and cultural factors, ultimately transform diversity into a foundation for unity at Al-Muttaqin Mosque.

2. Comparison with Previous Studies

The results of this study are broadly consistent with previous research on intercultural communication and tolerance in religious contexts, while offering a distinctive contribution by focusing on intra-Islamic diversity within a mosque setting. Similar to Zuhrah & Yumasdaleni, (2021), who found that inclusive mosque communication strategies reduced intergroup conflict in Medan, this study shows how leadership and structured forums at Al-Muttaqin Mosque prevented group domination and fostered inclusivity. In line with Syarifah et al., (2023) who emphasized interpersonal communication in fostering tolerance, the present findings highlight how everyday interactions—greetings, shared meals, and visits—build familiarity and trust across congregational lines.

The findings also resonate with Husnan & Nur Halimatus, (2023), who demonstrated how multicultural preaching fosters tolerance, though their focus was on dakwah, whereas this study situates tolerance within the broader communal and social practices of mosque life. Likewise, Rahmawati & Hariyati, (2024) emphasized multicultural communication in interfaith organizations, and this research parallels their conclusions while narrowing the scope to intra-Islamic pluralism.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings reinforce Chen and Starosta's (2020) view that communication tolerance is foundational for harmony, and they align with Gudykunst's (2020) Anxiety/Uncertainty Management theory, as congregants actively managed uncertainty and potential mistrust through dialogue and routine interactions. The study also supports Ting-Toomey's (2019) Face Negotiation Theory, as participants maintained dignity and identity while engaging across doctrinal differences.

However, this study extends prior work by providing empirical evidence that intercultural communication and tolerance within a single mosque community—across Salafi, Muhammadiyah, and NU groups—can transform diversity from a source of tension into a foundation for unity. Unlike many studies that emphasize interfaith contexts, this research demonstrates that intra-faith pluralism poses its own challenges but can also foster

strong models of coexistence when supported by leadership, cultural traditions, and collective action.

3. Implications of Findings

The findings of this study contribute both practically and theoretically to the field of intercultural communication and religious studies. Practically, they demonstrate that communication tolerance can be actively cultivated through structured leadership policies, respectful dialogue, and collaborative social practices. This provides a model for mosque administrators and religious leaders in other contexts who face challenges of intra-faith diversity, showing that inclusivity can be sustained through balanced programming, community engagement, and traditions of cooperation such as gotong royong.

Theoretically, the results extend existing frameworks on intercultural communication by situating them within an intra-Islamic context. While much prior research has emphasized interfaith relations, this study shows that intra-faith diversity also generates potential tension but can be transformed into social capital through effective communication strategies. The findings reinforce Chen and Starosta's perspective on tolerance as foundational for harmony and align with Gudykunst's Anxiety/Uncertainty Management theory, illustrating how uncertainty was reduced through repeated interaction and shared experiences. By integrating these theoretical perspectives with empirical data, this research adds nuance to the understanding of how communication practices operate in localized religious communities.

4. Research Limitations

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted within a single mosque community—Al-Muttaqin Mosque in Cakra Mataram—thus limiting the generalizability of the findings to broader contexts of intra-Islamic or interfaith settings. Second, the study relied on qualitative data drawn from observations, interviews, and document analysis, which, while rich in depth, may carry potential biases in interpretation and researcher subjectivity. Third, the sample size of participants was relatively small, focusing only on active congregants from Salafi, Muhammadiyah, and NU backgrounds, and therefore may not capture the perspectives of less-involved or peripheral members. Finally, uncontrolled variables such as broader political dynamics, media influence, or socio-economic differences were beyond the scope of this study but may also shape communication tolerance and social harmony in significant ways. These limitations suggest that future research could benefit from comparative studies across

multiple mosques, inclusion of larger and more diverse participant groups, and the integration of quantitative methods to complement qualitative insights.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the role of intercultural communication and communication tolerance in fostering harmony among Salafi, Muhammadiyah, and NU congregants at Al-Muttaqin Mosque, Cakra, Mataram. The findings demonstrate that: (1) Respectful dialogue, framed through religious expressions, along with non-verbal gestures such as greetings, handshakes, and shared meals, facilitated constructive engagement among Salafi, Muhammadiyah, and NU congregants. Shared practices like Qur'anic study circles and joint charity events further institutionalized collaboration across doctrinal boundaries; (2) Tolerance was shaped by structured mosque leadership, historical experiences of coexistence, and cultural traditions such as gotong royong. Neutral scheduling, balanced policies, and shared community crises transformed exclusivity into long-term patience and inclusivity, demonstrating that tolerance is not spontaneous but cultivated; and (3) Respectful dialogue prevented disputes from escalating, everyday interactions fostered trust and friendships, and collaborative activities built shared ownership of mosque life. These practices showed that tolerance operates not only as an ethical principle but also as a lived practice that sustains harmony within a pluralistic religious community.

Despite these insights, the study has certain limitations. It focused on a single mosque context with a relatively small sample, limiting the generalizability of the findings. The reliance on qualitative data also introduces potential interpretive biases, while broader political, media, and socio-economic factors were beyond the scope of analysis. These limitations highlight the need for caution in extending conclusions to other contexts of intra-Islamic or interfaith diversity. Future research should expand by comparing multiple mosque communities, involving a broader and more diverse participant base, and integrating quantitative approaches to complement qualitative findings. Such studies would enrich understanding of how communication tolerance operates in different settings and provide stronger evidence for designing inclusive strategies in religious and multicultural communities.

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