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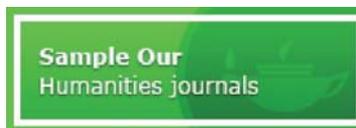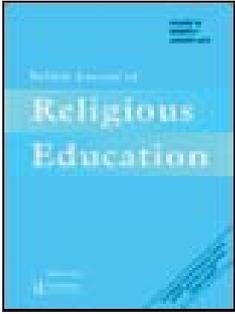
Researching religious tolerance education using discourse analysis: a case study from Indonesia

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Researching religious tolerance education using discourse analysis: a case study from Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Complementing existing studies on religious tolerance education which have mainly evaluated interventions using pre–post designs, this article argues that discourse analysis can be a viable alternative methodology for generating new knowledge in this field. To illuminate the potentials of discourse analysis, the article also presents a case study of the application of this methodology in analysing a religious tolerance education project in an under-represented Global South country, Indonesia – where religious conservatism and intolerance are on the rise. Following the contact hypothesis, the project involved students from different religions working on a film-making group assignment about religious tolerance. Three key discourses drawn upon by students in giving meaning to religious tolerance within these films are identified, namely, a discourse of nationalism, tolerant theologies, and romantic love; and their implications are discussed with regard to the promotion of religious tolerance in education.

KEYWORDS
Religious tolerance; religious education; discourse analysis; Indonesia

Introduction

Contemporary educational research on religious tolerance has mainly documented various case studies on religious tolerance projects and measured their effectiveness, typically using pre–post measurements (e.g. Berger et al. 2016; Schweitzer 2017). Seeking to offer alternative methodologies to this scholarship, this article proposes that discourse analysis might be beneficial for research and the promotion of tolerance within religious education (RE) settings, particularly in the way it provides an alternative approach to explore (discursive) resources and generate new insights for action. To empirically flesh out such benefits, a case study of the application of discourse analysis in researching tolerance in an RE setting is presented, that is, in an Indonesian contemporary context – where religious conservatism and intolerance are on the rise (Hadiz 2018). The article starts by briefly reviewing previous studies and highlighting a gap which this article seeks to fill, namely, the lack of the utilisation of discourse analysis within these studies. The article then highlights the ways in which discourse analysis may enrich and contribute to studies on RE and the promotion of religious tolerance. Finally, a religious tolerance education project in the authors' university is described and analysed using discourse analysis as a case study.

Discourse analysis and existing studies on religious tolerance in education

Existing educational studies on religious tolerance have mainly used a post-positivist paradigm, which constitutes social reality as objective, patterned, mechanistic and governed by causal laws (Creswell and Poth 2018). These studies researched religious tolerance in the language of quantified variables (e.g. attitudes, behaviours, values, skills, etc.) and relationships between those variables. Specific attention was commonly given on factors contributing to increasing tolerance and what forms of intervention work better. A general approach within these studies was to report, evaluate, compare or reflect on certain tolerance education programmes, such as Schweitzer's (2017) interreligious education course in Germany; Berger et al.'s (2016) exchange programme in Israel; Koukounaras-Liagis's (2011) theatre-based intervention in Greece; and Brockman's (2016) comparison of RE in Texas and Québec public schools. One recurring discussion in these studies is the centrality and development of Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis, that is, optimising inter-religion contact to reduce prejudice and promote tolerance. These studies have generated considerably important insights for the promotion of religious tolerance education. However, the use of alternative methodologies may enrich the way religious tolerance is understood and advanced in this field of study.

One significant epistemological turn leading to the use of alternative methodologies in the study of religious tolerance education can be found in Jackson's (2008, 2011) interpretive approach, where social realities – including religions – are understood as cultural constructs. It implies that the meaning of religion 'has changed over time, varies in different cultural situations and has never been universally agreed' (2008, 20). Jackson's work directs attention to how religions are represented, how individuals interpret religious traditions and how individuals reflexively understand one's own and others' worldviews. This interpretive approach and the epistemological shift it offered have become increasingly influential in researching religious tolerance – giving rise to subsequent qualitative and mixed-method studies (e.g. Jackson 2011; Schihalejev 2013; von der Lippe 2011), including the European large-scale REDCo (Religion, Education, Dialogue, and Conflict) project. This article seeks to further these methodological advancements, that is, by highlighting how a discourse analysis (with its specific epistemological stance) might be beneficial for researching religious tolerance in education.

While there are various theories of discourse and versions of discourse analysis, the particular approach adopted in this article is informed by Foucault's (1972, 1978) understanding of discourse and feminist poststructuralists' readings of his theory (e.g. Davies 1991; Weedon 1987), which we will detail in the next section. In the field of religious tolerance, there have been calls for the use of such post-foundational theories and methodologies (e.g. English 2010); few, however, have applied discourse analysis. Some examples include von der Lippe's (2011) analysis of discourses which gave rise to Norway youth's ways of talking about religion and diversity; Nicolaisen's (2012) examination of Norway's Hindu children's values in relation to hegemonic discourses about RE; and Iversen's (2014) proposal of an iterative curriculum discourse analysis. Beyond Norway contexts, Nelson (2017) applied discourse analysis to explore how meanings are given to RE in Northern Ireland educational departments' web pages. Building on and expanding their work, this article will highlight the potentialities of discourse analysis in researching religious tolerance in education by also using examples from these studies. Simultaneously, it seeks to complement these European-based discourse analysis studies with an example from an Indonesian context in order to enrich global knowledge on religious tolerance education – another gap this article seeks to fill.

As a developing country in the Global South with a history of complicated religious relations, Indonesia is a unique place to explore and learn about the social dynamics of religious tolerance (more in the subsection 'Introduction to contemporary Indonesia'). However, relatively few international publications focus on religious tolerance education in Indonesian contexts. Cooper's (1989) short description about Indonesian RE provided a window into the atmosphere of religious tolerance in Indonesia from 1945 until a few decades ago, but this depiction might be outdated.

Similarly, Leirvik's (2004) portrayal of tolerant, multi-choices RE, and promising interfaith educational initiatives might not be representative of contemporary socio-religio-politics vis-à-vis RE in Indonesia after the 1998 democratic reform. A more recent publication by Künkler and Lerner (2016) also highlighted Indonesia's success in integrating secular curriculum into religious schools. At the end of their article, positive and encouraging quantitative data on attitudes towards democracy and tolerance are presented, mainly based on surveys conducted between 2004 and 2013. Since then, however, Indonesia has witnessed a rise in religious conservatism and intolerance – a phenomenon which has not been documented and discussed in academic publications in the field of RE. This article also seeks to fill this gap.

In addition to the three aforementioned studies, a key publication from Indonesian contexts pertinent to this article is Baidhawy's (2007) work on the exploration of theological resources for a tolerant RE. Accurately identifying that curriculum reform is insufficient without a theological transformation from exclusivist to multiculturalist, Baidhawy proposed a multiculturalist theology-based RE founded upon Islamic traditions in Indonesia. He crystallised his theology into 4 core values, 10 implementation-level values and 3 goal-level values. For instance, he proposed the Islamic concept of *rahmah* – God as merciful and benevolent – to encourage the spirit of love and care in human interactions, including between religions. Other concepts which Baidhawy drew upon included *ummah* (living together), *tafahum* (mutual understanding), *takrim* (mutual respect), *sulh* (reconciliation) and *salam* (peace). Tidswell and Franzmann (2010, 391) consider Baidhawy's theological work as 'a first step in developing a RE curriculum' that is tolerant, multicultural and relevant for Indonesian contexts. This current article takes Baidhawy's work one step further by exploring whether and how these tolerant theologies have been discursively taken up by Indonesian students in their understanding of religious tolerance. Before elaborating on this point, we first describe the version of discourse analysis employed in this study.

Why discourse analysis might be beneficial for researching religious tolerance

Discourse is a set of interconnected ideas through which individuals give meaning to their realities (Foucault 1972; Weedon 1987). Discourse is multiple, contextual and continuously contested. Some discourses are dominant, reproduced in relatively established patterns, and therefore appear as 'natural' or 'ordinary'. Other discourses are marginalised, but always have the potential to gain greater currency. Discourse both enables and limits individuals' possibility to think, speak and act (Davies 1991). Following this perspective, Foucauldian discourse analysis (Willig 2013) focuses on identifying the availability of discourses in a specific context, how those discourses are taken up by individuals to give meaning to their worlds and the ways in which such discursive taking up are both enabling and limiting. It is based on an epistemological understanding that there is no objective knowledge 'out there' independent from the knower's ways of knowing. Any knowledge or claim of truth is always constituted through specific, contextual and shifting discourses (Weedon 1987). For instance, Nicolaisen (2012) identified that in Norway the dominant way of understanding religious tolerance is via a discourse of 'multireligionism' (p. 240), where different religions are understood as separate and should exist together peacefully. In contrast, Hindu children she interviewed gave meaning to religious tolerance in a way that is unintelligible to their friends because they drew on a discourse that constitutes all religions as essentially the same and only different on the outside. This alternative discourse enables these children to simultaneously believe in Hindu gods, Jesus, Buddha and Allah. Nicolaisen then suggested RE teachers to engage is such discursive contestation constructively, where hegemonic discourses encounter alternative oppositional discourses and possibly produce new ways of being tolerant.

Discourse analysis provides a specific methodological tool to research religious tolerance education, particularly when compared to the widespread post-positivist studies in this field. While both approaches have advantages and disadvantages, in this section we discuss five characteristics of discourse analysis which highlight the benefits of its use within this scholarship.

(1) *Contextual*: Discourse analysis moves beyond studying relatively universal causal laws or general mechanisms that may increase tolerance, to contextual (cultural-social-political) resources that might be drawn on to construe experiences. As a result, it generates more relevant findings for specific contexts. By researching how individuals draw on specific discourses to give meaning to religious tolerance, discourse analysis may contextually illuminate, for example, how students' encounter with religious diversity at school resulted in more or less tolerant ways of thinking.

(2) *Constructivist*: Discourse analysis moves beyond identifying factors associated with tolerance, to specific sets of ideas/logics that give rise to tolerant ways of thinking. By researching how tolerance is *constituted* through discourses instead of *influenced* by other factors, discourse analysis offers a more direct route to understand and expand tolerance. Rather than analysing external factors such as personal background or the diversity in the school, discourse analysis focuses on questions like what rhetoric make sense to participants, or what logic underlie their ways of being (in)tolerant.

(3) *Agential*: As a consequence of its constructivist character, discourse analysis acknowledges individuals' agency in giving meaning to their experience. Participants are positioned as agentic subjects who make meaning out of their experience and make choices. It addresses Morris' (2011) critique on how research on religious tolerance has paid more attention to pragmatic-procedural dimensions, at the expense of subjective-interpretative dimensions. In von der Lippe's (2011) discourse analysis study, for example, young people's views on religion and diversity were listened to, acknowledged and analysed in relation to the dominant discourses in Norway's media and public debates.

(4) *Political*: Discourse analysis moves beyond (ostensibly apolitical) studies of individuals' attitudes and behaviours, to connecting individuals' ways of being with larger social-cultural-political situations. Hence, religious tolerance is not studied as an isolated psychological concept existing in a vacuum, but as an effect of the operation of modern power that governs individuals' ways of thinking through the circulation of discourses (Foucault 1978). Discourse analysis, thus, offers a tool to identify the micro-politics of regulation, and simultaneously, of resistance. Nicolaisen (2012) and von der Lippe's (2011) studies, for example, connected their participants' ways of seeing religious tolerance with dominant discourses in Norway and how those might be destabilised.

(5) *Contested*: Since discursive constellations in any society are always in flux, employing discourse analysis in RE research may open possibilities for contesting dominant ideas surrounding religious (in)tolerance, particularly through an exploration of alternative discourses. Dominant (intolerant) ways of thinking may be challenged or given new meaning by drawing on alternative discourses identified in the research. For instance, Iversen (2014) pointed out that in Norway the idea of a democratic nation is predominantly understood through a dominant discourse of 'community of shared values' which emphasise sameness of values. Seeking to destabilise this way of thinking, he proposed that understanding the democratic nation through an alternative discourse of 'community of disagreement' may enable more tolerant ways of being and relating with others.

The application of discourse analysis in RE research: an example from an Indonesian context

This part presents a case study of how discourse analysis could be applied to research tolerance in RE at the authors' university. It focuses on demonstrating the resources and possibilities which might be explored by using discourse analysis to promote religious tolerance. To position this case study in its political-historical-educational contexts, we begin with a brief introduction to

contemporary Indonesia vis-à-vis religious (in)tolerance, then a description about the authors' RE project at the University of Surabaya (UBAYA), and finally an application of discourse analysis on the output of that project.

Introduction to contemporary Indonesia: the rise of religious conservatism and intolerance

Located in Southeast Asia, Indonesia is the fourth most populous country and the home of the largest Muslim population in the world. Almost 90% of the Indonesian population are Muslims and around 9% are Christians, while the rest are Buddhists, Hindus, Confucians and other believers including ethnic spiritual traditions. Since the 1998 democratic reform that toppled Soeharto's authoritarian regime, both conservative and progressive movements have grown extensively in Indonesia. Human rights, women and LGBT movements – among others – have advanced their progressive activisms alongside hard-line Islamist groups such as the Islam Defender Front (FPI) and the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS). As we will elaborate, the latter (i.e. conservative) groups have recently gained momentum within the political arena and at the grassroot level. As Hadiz (2018) puts it: 'a country that prides itself for its tolerant Islamic traditions seemingly produced new intolerant ones under democratised conditions' (p. 2).

At the grassroot level, religious conservatism and intolerance have noticeably gained currency in Indonesia, including in educational settings. A survey by the Wahid Foundation and the Indonesian Survey Institute (Hakim 2016) among 1520 Indonesian adults, for example, showed that almost 60% stated that they hate some minority groups such as non-Muslims, Chinese Indonesians and 'communist' groups. Among those 60%, more than 90% do not want those minorities to become government officials, 82.4% do not want them as a neighbour and 7.7% are willing to engage in violent acts against them. In educational settings, another survey by the Wahid Foundation (Fajriati 2017) among 1626 secondary students attending a national Islamic retreat reported that 60% were ready to take part in religious wars, 10% supported the Jakarta bombing in 2016 and 6% supported ISIS. The Indonesian Minister of Higher Education, Research, and Technology has expressed concerns over increasing radicalism in Indonesian universities and warned all rectors that they are to be held responsible for radical movements in their campus (Indriani 2017). Anas Saidi, a senior researcher at Indonesian Institute of Sciences, reported that Indonesian young people have become more radical and universities are increasingly influenced by hard-line Islamist groups (Lestari 2016). Intolerant expressions against minorities have also circulated during massive protests against Basuki Tjahja Purnama, a Chinese Christian Governor of Jakarta who was then imprisoned in 2017 over a blasphemy accusation (Setijadi 2017). It is within this sociopolitical landscape that the current study took place, where political mobilisation of religious sentiments effectively shifted public discourses towards conservatism and intolerant atmospheres. Responding to this situation, the authors' university initiated a reform in RE which is detailed in the following section.

Religious education in UBAYA

As one of the largest private universities in Surabaya (i.e. the second largest city in Indonesia), UBAYA attracts students from various parts of Indonesia. The student population in UBAYA is approximately 11,500. In contrast with other leading private universities in Surabaya that are mainly religiously affiliated, UBAYA has no affiliation with a particular religion. UBAYA often promotes itself as a multicultural, multi-faith and multi-ethnic university.

Higher education authorities require Indonesian universities to include two compulsory courses in all bachelor's degree curricula, namely, Citizenship Education and Religious Education. In general RE in Indonesia is confessional. Students are expected to choose a class according to the religion they adhere, and taught by a lecturer adhering to the same religion. All students are assumed to adhere to a religion, as atheism is socially 'forbidden' (Schäfer 2016) and associated with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), whose members were violently persecuted in 1965.

Prior to 2017, RE in UBAYA covered 10 general themes such as the nature of the Divine, humans, morality, religion and law, science and technology, arts, politics, culture and society. These themes were then specified and contextualised by the lecturers in each religion. In 2017, there was an innovation in UBAYA's RE which aimed to promote more positive interactions between students from different religions. The authors are RE lecturers in UBAYA who were involved in the initiation of this innovation. The original 10 general themes were reduced to half and completed before the midterm. After the midterm, the students were given a film-making project in groups consisting of 6–8 students from different religions. The instruction was: 'Create a 10–15 minute film about religious tolerance and harmony in Indonesia!' They were informed that the cinematographic aspects of the video were not as important as the content, creativity and group process. Additionally, students were asked to interview another student from a different religion within their group and write a reflection about the interview and the whole film-making project. Weekly classes were replaced with consultations about the film-making and group process with the lecturers. At the end of the semester the films were screened and watched by other groups. Selected films were later uploaded to a YouTube channel (i.e. Ubaya Interfaith) managed by the authors (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvs3knQKABaMHL5dM2u6WQQ). These publicly available films were then analysed and reported in this article. In addition, the authors' field notes, reflections and participatory experience within the project were also used as supporting data.

In total, 1088 students from eight different faculties in UBAYA took part in 31 innovated RE classes offered in both first and second semesters of 2017. They include 2 Confucius, 19 Hindu, 139 Catholic, 144 Buddhist, 360 Protestant and 424 Muslim students. This proportion is not representative of Indonesian population.

The innovation was designed based on several theoretical and empirical deliberations. Schihalejev's (2013) study in Estonia reveal that although students from different religions attend the same school they participated in very few or no conversations about religion. According to students' reflections, this has also been the case here in Indonesia. So the main framework adopted in UBAYA's RE reform was Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis, which focuses on enhancing positive interactions between students from different religions. As Allport explained (p. 281):

> Prejudice … may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals. The effect is greatly enhanced if this contact is sanctioned by institutional supports (i.e. by law, custom, or local atmosphere), and provided it is of the sort that leads to the perception of common interests and common humanity between members of the two groups.

Firstly, this film-making project required students from different religions to work together as an equal member of the group, regardless of their status as a believer in a majority or minority religion. Each group was purposely formed to ensure relatively equal proportion of majority (Islam) and minority religions. Secondly, an institutionally sanctioned common goal/task was given, namely, creating a short film which contributed 60% to the final grade. Thirdly, the theme of the film itself encourages members of the group to think about tolerance, to discuss the importance of tolerance, and to explore common grounds for tolerance from within their religions. Such group interaction fosters a sense of commonality and humanity among these members of different religions.

Further, the film-making assignment was also designed to give students the opportunity to become 'spect-actors' (Boal 1979), where 'they enjoyed themselves; they got involved, criticised, argued and made comparisons and choices … they all participated, collaborated and undertook responsibility' (Koukounaras-Liagis 2011, 84). Such film-making activity encourages imagination, creativity and flexibility of thought, all of which support the promotion of a tolerant atmosphere. The project sought to eschew what Schweitzer (2007) calls 'teaching for tolerance through intolerant procedures' (p. 96).

Beside the film-making, the project also involved students from different religions interviewing each other in an informal friendship setting. This element was inspired by Goss's (1997) World

Religions class in the U.S. Like Goss's, the instruction given to students was also short: to learn about and from another religion, not to engage in a debate. The interview was expected to develop students' dialogic competencies (Morris 2011), including active listening, openness, respect for others and attention to attitudes that may hinder dialogue. The reflection assignment (which contributed 40% to final grade) was designed to provide a space for students to be reflexive, to compare and contrast other religions with their own, to scrutinise their prior understanding about other religions (Jackson 2011).

The impact of this innovation for students' religious tolerance is not the object of the current analysis, as it will be published separately. Rather, as we demonstrate in the next section, the aim of the current study is to provide an example of how discourse analysis might offer a new way to explore possibilities and resources to advance religious tolerance in a specific cultural-political-historical context.

Identifying discourses given rise to religious tolerance: an example from Indonesia

The objective of discourse analysis employed in this study was to identify a set of interconnected ideas that have given rise to the way students understand religious tolerance, and how those ideas can be developed to promote religious tolerance. To this end, the authors analysed the data by (re) watching all short films that have been uploaded to Ubaya Interfaith YouTube channel. While (re) watching these, the authors asked themselves what logic, ways of thinking or discourses underlied students' choices of genres, topics, plots, scenes, songs and words in the film, and how these choices reflected students' ways of seeing religious tolerance.

This analysis technique was aligned with the constructivist and agential characters of discourse analysis in at least two ways. Firstly, exploring these discursive elements during the analysis directed the researchers' attention to students' ways of *constructing* knowledge on religious tolerance rather than students' *responses* to predetermined scales. Secondly, it acknowledges students' version of comprehending religious tolerance as agentic subjects, without imposing the researchers' frameworks of what tolerance might mean or how it may be promoted. It focused directly on how tolerance is understood by participants, as opposed to external factors that may influence it. The authors then discussed with each other to sharpen and formulate the findings into three key themes, namely, a discourse of nationalism, tolerant theologies and romantic love – which will be discussed in the following.

The first key discourse identified in a number of these films, which attests to the contextual character of discourse analysis, is a discourse of nationalism. A sense of nationhood, or a sense that 'we are one nation', emerged in many short films especially when students talked/presented scenes about why religious tolerance is important. In contrast with Liljestrand's (2017, 323) research in Sweden where the dominant impression among her participants was 'Sweden as a nation is Christian' so that nationalist sentiments hinders tolerant attitudes towards minority religions, Indonesian nationalism is not associated with Islam as the majority religion but with the notion of embracing diversity. Since Indonesia comprises more than 17,000 islands and hundreds of languages and ethnic identities, pioneers of Indonesian independence promoted a national motto to unify this extraordinarily diverse nation, namely, *bhinneka tunggal ika* (unity in diversity). Until now this motto has served as an ideological foundation for not equating Indonesian-hood with Islam as the majority religion (Kunkler and Lerner 2016) and for promoting respect and tolerance between religions.

In the Ubaya Interfaith channel, the best representation of this discourse can be found in the film entitled '*SARA di negeriku, toleransi bagianku*' ('identity-based discriminations in my country, tolerance is my part'; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VC5HYqCRHh8), which portrays Indonesia as a diverse country struggling to live together peacefully. The narrator's message of tolerance begins with a statement that 'my country is not a country of the majority, it is a country of *bhinneka tunggal ika*'. Images of islands, ethnic groups, cultural practices, places of worship and

the Indonesian flag and symbols are displayed throughout the film – evoking and strengthening a sense of both diversity and nationhood. This film's ways of positioning religious tolerance within a framework of nationhood demonstrates how a discourse of (Indonesian) nationalism has been drawn upon by the filmmakers in understanding and promoting tolerance. However, constituting religious tolerance through this discourse of nationalism has a limitation: it ostensibly dichotomises nationalism and religion as if being religious is associated with intolerance and being nationalist with tolerance. In fact, Indonesian political parties which are not religiously affiliated are commonly addressed as nationalist parties. This dichotomy is problematic because being religious is often socially desired in Indonesian contemporary contexts. As this example shows, identifying discourses which give rise to certain ways of thinking already implies an attention to contextual specificities, because any discourse, including nationalism, always exists in specific historical, cultural and political contexts.

Complementing the discourse of nationalism discussed above, the second key discourse underpinning these students' ways of understanding religious tolerance in the films is a discourse of tolerant theologies; which demonstrates the contested character of discourse analysis. Several short films in the channel based their portrayals of religious tolerance on the notion that all religions basically have theological resources that promote peace and tolerance. As argued by Schweitzer (2007) and Bertram-Troost and Miedema (2017), it is crucial to identify resources for tolerance within each religion itself as 'tolerant attitudes can never be imposed upon people from outside' (Schweitzer 2007, 95). In an Indonesian context, Baidhawy (2007) has eloquently provided an example of a multiculturalist Islamic theology which focuses on concepts such as of *ummah, rahmah* and *tafahum* (as discussed in a preceding section). The exploration of such alternative discourses is paramount in the endeavours to contest religious intolerance in Indonesia. The taking up of such tolerant theologies in understanding religious tolerance can be found in a short film entitled *Beauty in Diversity* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zI3vaGY9xY), where students documented their interviews with a Buddhist monk, a Christian pastor and a Muslim preacher. All three talked about tolerance from their respective theological perspectives, offering unique and valuable theological resources. The Buddhist monk promoted acceptance of all religions by describing religions as merely an outer coat for more essential values of love, justice and peace; the Christian pastor talked about loving one's neighbour; and the Muslim preacher brought attention to the Prophet Muhammad's remark that whoever made war with *kafir dzimmi* (believers of other religions who want to live peacefully with Muslims) has basically made war with the Prophet himself. Similarly, another film (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_qZ6blFg7Lc) displayed scriptures promoting tolerance from various sacred texts at the beginning of the film. These examples demonstrate how a discourse of tolerant theologies has been drawn upon by these students in giving meaning to and promoting religious tolerance in Indonesia. Here, the discourse analysis employed identifies a possibility, an alternative framework to contest or destabilise the dominant notion of intolerance in contemporary Indonesian religious relations.

The third key discourse which appears to be quite popular among students in this project is a discourse of romantic love, which might show the political character of discourse analysis. The idea that love and romance can emerge between two Indonesian young people from two different religions became a main theme in several short films (e.g. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BvB4QX_Uuxw, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9KxMRHmhko, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAPh7dnMO04). The political character of discourse analysis enables researchers to see the ostensibly apolitical idea of two people falling in love as a political struggle, particularly in a context where marriage is limited by religious boundaries. Currently in Indonesia, a marriage can only happen between a man and a woman from the same religion as the government requires a confirmation from the couple's religious authority before issuing a marriage certificate. There was a recent failed attempt by activists to change this law to allow inter-religion marriage (Parlina 2015). Civil union is not legally recognised, socially condemned and currently in the process of being criminalised through the *zina* bill (Hodge and Rayda 2018). Carefully twisting but not

challenging this societal/religious ideal, the plot in every film on this theme was relatively identical. It starts with two heterosexual young people from different religions falling in love and enjoying a relationship characterised by tolerance towards each other's religious beliefs and practices. The relationship, however, is opposed by parents and religious leaders until it falls apart because the young couple could not see their future together. Nonetheless, while choosing to end their romantic relationship, the ex-couple maintain good friendship. Here, romantic love is represented as momentary, intense, beautiful and powerful enough to go beyond religious walls.

Hints of possibilities of practising tolerance in this very personal context were exhibited, accompanied with poetic words, humorous scenes and emotional music. For instance, the film entitled *Love in Diversity* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9KxMRHmhko) began with a sentence: 'Nothing is more beautiful than a love that grows out of difference.' The film portrayed how happy the couple was despite having different religions. Thinking about religious tolerance through a discourse of romantic love implicitly and inevitably puts two believers of different religions in very close contact and humanises the person from the other religion. It demonstrates that the others are human beings, capable of loving and being loved, and we may fall in love with them. Although all these films ended with break-ups, happy moments and fun sides of the relationship were dominant throughout the films – giving an impression that tolerance at this depth of relationship is possible, stimulating the audience to hope that 'love wins'. This example shows how discourse analysis may reveal the micropolitics of intolerance in this specific context, that is, through rendering inter-religion romantic relationship as improbable. However, similar with the discourse on nationalism discussed previously, this discourse of romantic love (in this Indonesian context) has its limitation: it pits love and tolerance against religious teachings and legal rules. Consequently, it places those with genuine intentions to be both religious and tolerant, law-abiding and loving, in an uncomfortable dilemma.

Conclusion

This article has discussed the use of discourse analysis in researching religious tolerance in education. It has presented methodological benefits in using discourse analysis in this field of study and provided a case study of its application to a RE project which resulted in the identification of three key discourses that students drew upon in their understanding of religious tolerance (i.e. a discourse of nationalism, of tolerant theologies and of romantic love). These findings contribute a new contextuality to the accumulation of knowledge in this scholarship from an underrepresented Global South country, Indonesia.

Identifying discourses which give rise to the way people understand religious tolerance as shown in this example may have some practical implications. Firstly, promotion of religious tolerance may be more effective when based on discourses that 'make sense' for individuals in a specific political-historical-cultural context. A discourse of human rights, for example, has been identified in previous studies as a key discourse in promoting religious tolerance (Roux 2010). However, this may not be the case in Indonesia where awareness of human rights in general is still lacking. Instead, a discourse of nationalism might be more relevant to promote religious tolerance in contemporary Indonesia. Secondly, by being aware of the contextuality of discourse, campaign strategies for religious tolerance can be tailored to specific segments of the society. For instance, drawing on a discourse of romantic love to discuss religious tolerance might engage young people, but not parents or older audiences. Thirdly, based on the awareness that any discourse is always both enabling and constraining, engaging in discourse analysis may facilitate religious tolerance activists to be more reflexive, well-informed and strategic. Solely drawing on the discourse of nationalism, for instance, might risk a further dichotomisation of religion/nationalism in Indonesia. Drawing on a discourse of tolerant theologies might help to destabilise such dichotomy. Future research may utilise discourse analysis to further explore such discursive contestations in other RE contexts and generate alternative knowledge to advance research on and the promotion of

religious tolerance in education. Future research may also explore the limits of tolerance as a discourse, such as the (im)possibility to draw on the discourse of tolerance to allow inter-religion marriage, same-sex marriage or atheism in a context like Indonesia.

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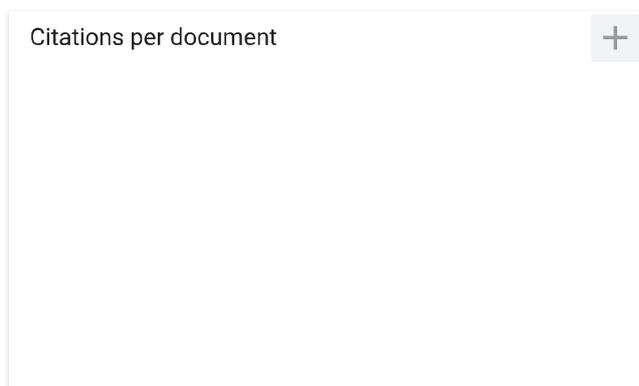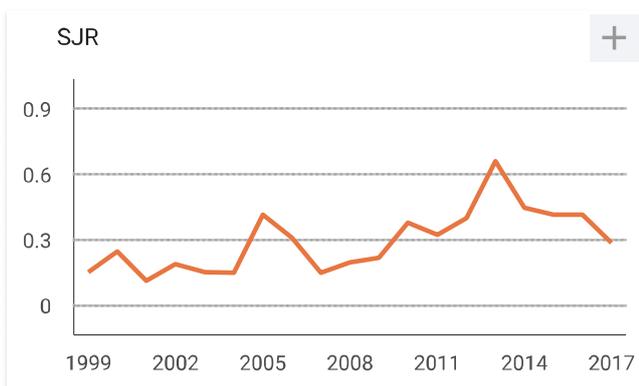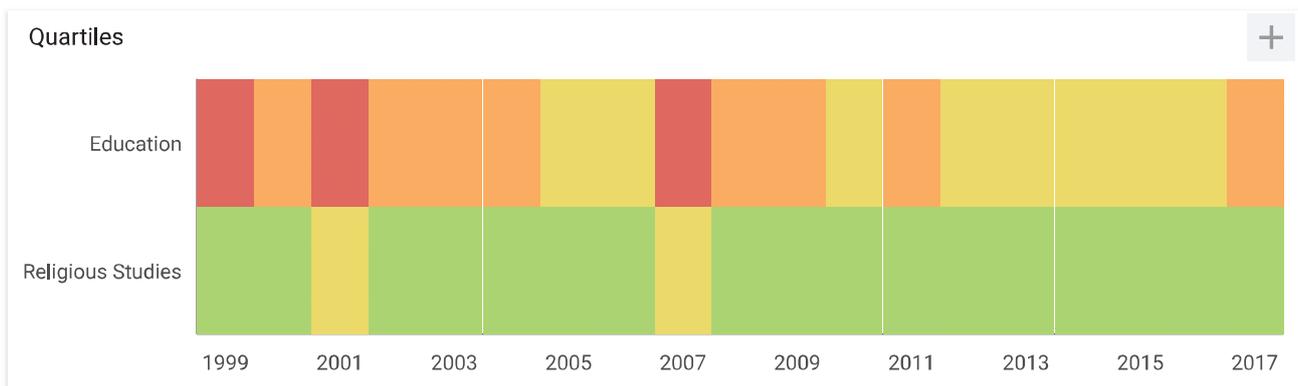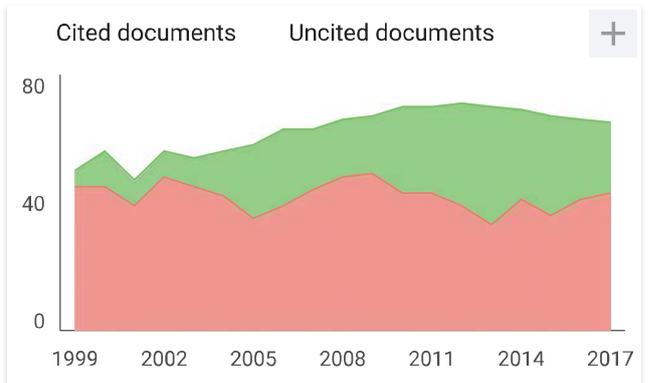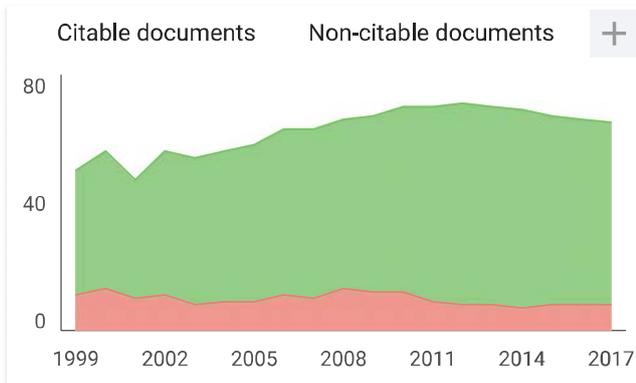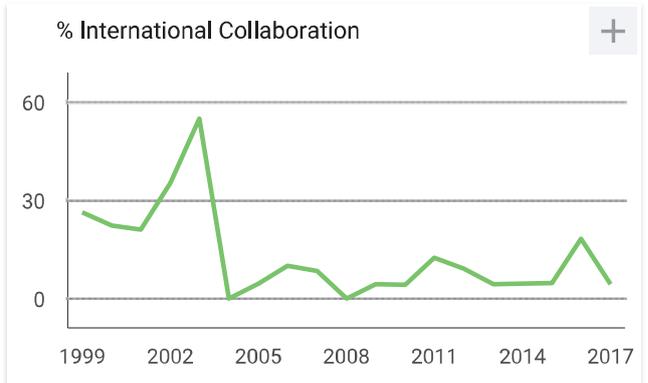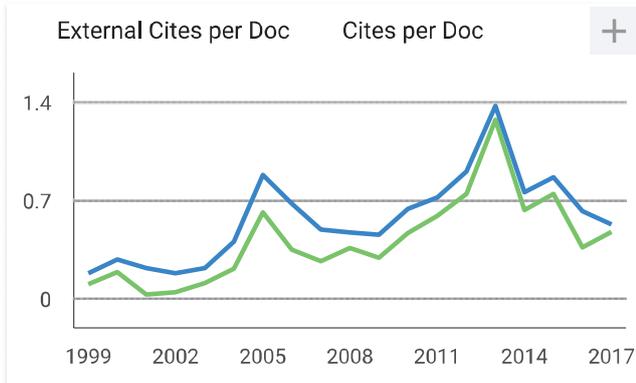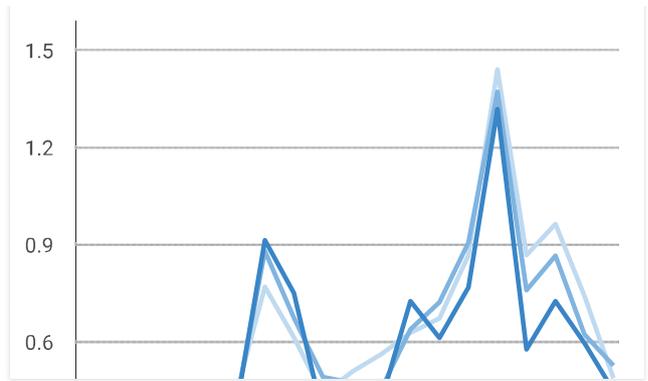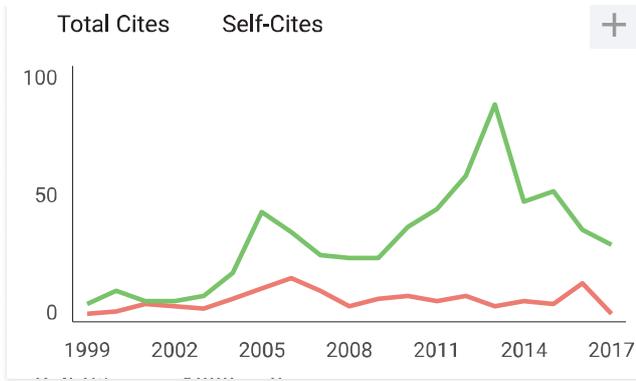
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