Fostering Religious Tolerance in Catholic Religious Education: A Study of Policy Impact in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the levels of religious tolerance among students at six Catholic universities in Indonesia and the efforts to sustain and enhance this tolerance. Using a mixed-method approach, specifically the Sequential Exploratory model, the research begins with the collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by qualitative data. An online questionnaire, completed by 250 students enrolled in Catholic Religious Education programs, reveals that students exhibit a very high level of tolerance (90%) in terms of acceptance, recognition, respect, and cooperation. However, several areas require further attention: the establishment of places of worship, representation of diverse religious backgrounds in public leadership roles, respect for religious observances, and willingness to engage in activities with adherents of other religions. Interviews indicate that while the six study programs have implemented policies promoting inter-religious tolerance in both academic and non-academic areas, tolerance has not yet become a central focus in the policies of some programs. This study emphasizes the need for higher education institutions to address these issues to further strengthen students' tolerance, despite the already high levels observed.

ABSTRAK
Penelitian ini mengkaji tingkat toleransi beragama di kalangan mahasiswa di enam universitas Katolik di Indonesia serta upaya untuk mempertahankan dan meningkatkan toleransi tersebut. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran, khususnya model Sequential Exploratory, penelitian ini diawali dengan pengumpulan dan analisis data kuantitatif, yang kemudian dilanjutkan dengan data kualitatif. Kuesioner daring yang diisi oleh 250 mahasiswa dalam program studi Pendidikan Agama Katolik menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa memiliki tingkat toleransi yang sangat tinggi (90%) dalam hal penerimaan, pengakuan, penghormatan, dan kerjasama. Namun, beberapa aspek perlu mendapat perhatian lebih lanjut: pendirian tempat ibadah, representasi latar belakang agama yang beragam dalam peran kepemimpinan publik, penghormatan terhadap perayaan keagamaan, serta kesediaan untuk terlibat dalam kegiatan dengan penganut agama lain. Wawancara mengungkapkan bahwa meskipun keenam program studi telah menerapkan kebijakan yang mendorong toleransi antaragama di bidang akademik dan non-akademik, toleransi belum menjadi fokus utama dalam kebijakan beberapa program. Penelitian ini menekankan perlunya institusi pendidikan tinggi untuk menangani masalah-masalah ini guna lebih memperkuat toleransi mahasiswa, meskipun tingkat toleransi yang diamati sudah tinggi.

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Introduction

In the multi-religious context of Indonesia, tolerance holds significant importance (Suhadi, 2018); (Turmudi, 2021); (Pajarianto et al., 2022). Etymologically, the term "tolerance" originates from the Latin noun "tolerantia." Tolerantia was subsequently translated into English as "tolerance," signifying patient allowance of something. The noun "tolerantia" is further translated as looseness, gentleness, lightness and patience (Hussain, 2016); (Suhadi, 2018); (Mustaqim, 2019); (Mujahidin et al., 2021). In assessing the Religious Harmony Index, Balitbang of Indonesian MoRA describes tolerance as an attitude of mutual acceptance and respect between religious groups (Ulum et al., 2022). For the purpose of this study, religious tolerance refers to an attitude of respecting and acknowledging religious diversity, as well as being willing to collaborate for the common good. This concept of tolerance contributes to the achievement of religious harmony in Indonesia, as mandated in the Joint Regulation of the Minister of Religion and the Minister of Home Affairs Number 9 of 2006 No. 8. Religious harmony is defined as the state of relations among religious communities based on tolerance, mutual understanding, respect, equality in practicing religious teachings and cooperation in social, national and state affairs within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, grounded in Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia.

Despite having Pancasila as a philosophical-juridical foundation, which serves as a guiding spirit and inspiration for its citizens to manage religious, cultural and ethnic diversity, the issue of inter-religious tolerance in Indonesia persists, indicated by the emergence of conflicts and disputes among religious communities (Sukestiyarno et al., 2022); (Budiman et al., 2022); (van Boven & Wijsen, 2017) escalating to violence, resulting in casualties (Sunarno et al., 2023); (Zuhdiyah et al., 2023). In inter-religious conflicts, both parties' endeavor to infringe upon the rights of the other, including their right to life, property, or even to eradicate future generations if possible (Bagir, 2017);(Saleh, 2022);(Ghafar et al., 2019);(Yazdani, 2020). A study conducted by the Setara Institute (2022) indicates that in 2021 alone, there were 171 incidents and 318 instances of violations of Freedom of Religion/Belief (KBB). The study further reveals that the most common inter-religious conflicts revolve around disruptions to places of worship, comprising the rejection of their establishment, disturbances during worship, destruction of religious sites and attacks on individuals within places of worship/houses of worship, perpetrated by both non-state actors and/or governmental entities (Sigit et al., 2021).

In the realm of higher education, several studies highlight the proliferation of extremism within public/private universities (Setara Institute, 2022), along with the phenomenon of exclusivism in religious education textbooks at public schools (PPIM UIN Jakarta, 2021). Additionally, student activists exhibit a religious understanding that tends to be closed-minded (Abubakar & Nabil, 2018). A recent study (PPIM UIN Jakarta, 2021) at three State Religious Universities (UIN Jakarta, UIN Bandung, and UIN Yogyakarta) reveals unstable external and internal empathy values across nearly all groups, including students, lecturers and educational staff (Mustakim et al., 2021); (Mutawali, 2023). This indicates a significant challenge for the implementation of religious moderation, which has been advocated since 2020 (Sodikin & Ma`arif, 2021); (Ma'arif et al., 2023); (Inayatillah et al., 2022); (Syahnan & Ja'far, 2021); (Wardi et al., 2023).

This fact underscores that religious differences represent an issue and challenge that permeates the reality of religious diversity, often leading to both intolerance and religious harmony. Religious diversity acts as a double-edged sword: on the one hand, it fosters religious equality as a protective shield, while on the other hand, it can serve as a divisive sword in social life. In essence, religion and its differences are depicted as both a centripetal force capable of superseding primordial bonds such as kinship, ethnicity, and nationality and a centrifugal force capable of disrupting harmony (Kementerian Agama, 2019); (Junaedi, 2019); (K. A. Sigit & Hasani, 2021).

Conflicts between religious communities typically stem not solely from religious factors but also from economic, political and social factors (Hannan et al., 2020); (Hidayat, 2021). Resolving conflicts between religious communities begins with the elimination of mutual suspicion and resentment among individuals. By addressing suspicion and resentment, effective dialogue involving all levels of society can be pursued. Religious prejudice or suspicion among adherents of different religions largely arises from the absence of connections between individuals of diverse religions.

Tolerance could exist in communities where there are cultural, familial, professional and relational ties that facilitate communication and problem-solving with a rational approach. Tolerance is nurtured through education within tolerant families, supportive social and religious environments, formal education systems and supportive government policies promoting tolerance. The roles of political and religious leaders are crucial (Ali & Purwandi, 2021); (Wisnarni, 2023). The government, particularly the Ministry of Religious Affairs, plays a pivotal role in fostering civility and nurturing a more peaceful and tolerant nation. On a smaller scale, the roles of religious educators in schools and religious counselors in communities are paramount in imparting and exemplifying tolerance among adherents of different religions. It is conceivable that if religious educators were intolerant individuals and acted as provocateurs, prolonged inter-religious conflicts could lead to the collapse of the nation (Mappiasse et al., 2021).

The role of formal education is also crucial in addressing the formation of prejudices that lead to intolerant attitudes. Through appropriate exercises in self-regulation, prejudices can be mitigated. Several studies indicate that tolerance-building efforts can be achieved through education that emphasizes self-regulation within the framework of enhancing tolerance (Isom et al., 2021; Mustakim et al., 2021). Richardson and colleagues suggest that the self-regulation of prejudice becomes automatic over time (Richardson et al., 2009). Study findings also demonstrate that teachers, as role models, contribute significantly to children's moral education (Mappiasse & Hayadin, 2022). Schools play a collective role in fostering students' tolerant character. Study findings underscore that parents, teachers, and administrators as stakeholders can collectively encourage students to embody positive values that influence the development of social attitudes, social skills, and spiritual perspectives (Marzuki & Mumtazul, 2022).

Several studies on tolerance among students at religious universities have been published (Salmah et al., 2022); (Mujahidin et al., 2021); (Utari & Rosiana, 2022); (Yedi et al., 2019); (Marzuki & Mumtazul, 2022). Salmah et al.'s study focuses on students and lecturers of the Islamic Religious Education Study Program in Bogor, revealing that respondents' tolerance falls within the high category. The factors influencing perceptions among the students in Salmah's study are primarily shaped by cultural backgrounds and personal values (Salmah et al., 2022). Similarly conducted in Bogor, Mujahidin et al.'s study indicates that Islamic university students tend not to interact with adherents of other religions; however, when such interactions occur, they are generally positive (Mujahidin et al., 2021) A study by Utari and Rosiana involving students in Bandung concludes the following: (1) Religious tolerance among students in Bandung is rated as high, with 198 out of 207 respondents scoring high on religious tolerance, (2) There is

some influence of demographic factors on the religious tolerance of students in Bandung (Utari & Rosiana, 2022). In line with this, Yedi et al.'s study explores the internalization pattern of religious moderation values among Islamic Religious Education (PAI) students and lecturers. It finds that such internalization occurs through PAI courses directly correlated with fostering moderate student character. Additionally, internalization is facilitated by the example set by stakeholders and policies at UPI, particularly PAI lecturers who consistently prioritize moderate attitudes (Yedi et al., 2019).

Numerous studies underscore the significant role of religious teachers and counselors in shaping the religious character of society (Ali & Purwandi, 2021) (Burhani et al., 2020). Despite these studies, there has been limited studies focusing on Catholic students, prospective Catholic religious teachers and Catholic religious counselors, who are the primary participants of this present study. The role of study programs in implementing policies aimed at enhancing religious tolerance, particularly among prospective Catholic religious teachers remains a less explored theme. Furthermore, the use mixed methods which not only measure the level of tolerance through quantitative data but also explore the impact of study program policies in strengthening religious tolerance through qualitative studies is rarely employed. These are the gaps that this study fills.

This present study aims to examine how policies within Catholic religious education study programs can foster tolerance among Catholic students across six Catholic universities. The first three Catholic universities were the Sekolah Tinggi Pastoral Kateketik Santo Yohanes Rasul Jayapura (located in Jayapura, Papua), Sekolah Tinggi Pastoral Atma Reksa Ende (in Ende, East Nusa Tenggara), and Sekolah Tinggi Pendidikan Agama Katolik (in Ambon, Maluku). The remaining three Catholic universities were Sekolah Tinggi Pastoral Tahasak Danum Pambelum Keuskupan Palangkaraya (in Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan), Sekolah Tinggi Pastoral Santo Bonaventura Keuskupan Agung Medan (in Deli Tua, North Sumatra), and Sekolah Tinggi Pastoral Institut Pastoral Indonesia (IPI) Malang (in Malang, East Java). The first three Catholic universities are located in the top five provinces with the highest tolerance index, while the second three universities have a religious harmony index ranking below them (based on 2022 IKU data from the Ministry of Religion's research and development). The subjects of this study were students enrolled in the Catholic Religious Education Study Program (PKK) at these six universities, all of whom identify as Catholic.

The depiction of tolerance within a region reflects the essence of its populace, and this study focuses into exploring this relationship. Have Catholic universities located in tolerant regions exemplified the ethos of tolerance? It is plausible that even in highly tolerant regions, instances of intolerance or seeds of intolerance may exist (Rahman et al., 2022); (Mutawali, 2023). Strengthening the value of tolerance holds significance for students, who are young citizens within higher education, especially considering their potential roles as future leaders and religious educators in society. Universities serve not only as platforms for intellectual enrichment but also as platforms for nurturing social values (Gaffar et al., 2022). The six study programs under study comprise students who are exclusively Catholic (homogeneous). It is hoped that universities, despite their homogeneity, can instill a culture of tolerance, enabling students to coexist harmoniously, appreciate one another, and respect individuals with diverse religious and cultural backgrounds (Syahbudin et al., 2023). Institutions, including study program policies, play a pivotal role in shaping students' tolerant character.

This article begins by exploring the concept of tolerance, conflicts between religious adherents, and the actual implementation of tolerance in society, particularly within universities as the background for this study. Subsequently, the research methods and the research results will be presented. The discussion unfolds with an examination of the

224 – 244 |

quantitative research data concerning the practices of students across six universities, followed by an analysis of the qualitative research results concerning the study program policies at each university that facilitate the enhancement of tolerance. This article concludes with a summary.

Methods

This study was conducted at six universities with Catholic Religious Education Study Program. It employed a mixed-method approach, specifically the Sequential Exploratory model, wherein quantitative data were collected and analyzed in the initial stage, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data in the subsequent stage, and finally, the comprehensive analysis of the combined data leading to conclusions (Creswell, 2021). The use of mixed methods allows this study to capture the tolerance level and endeavors to promote the tolerance, both from the perspectives of the students and the study programs.

Quantitative data was collected through an online questionnaire on Google Forms and distributed to students of the six Catholic Religious Universities. The selection of the universities employed a random sampling technique, targeting students in the third, fifth, and seventh semesters of each study program who have study program policies on religious tolerance. A total of 250 valid responses were collected. The distribution of respondents who completed the questionnaire was as follows: Sekolah Tinggi Pastoral Kateketik Santo Yohanes Rasul, Jayapura: 14 (6%); Sekolah Tinggi Pastoral Atma Reksa, Ende: 78 (31%); Sekolah Tinggi Pendidikan Agama Katolik (STPAK) St. Yohanes Penginjil, Ambon: 22 (9%); Sekolah Tinggi Pastoral Tahasak Danum Pambelum Keuskupan, Palangkaraya: 26 (10%); Sekolah Tinggi Pastoral Santo Bonaventura Keuskupan Agung, Deli Tua Medan: 88 (35%); Sekolah Tinggi Pastoral Institut Pastoral Indonesia (IPI), Malang: 22 (9%). The majority of respondents were in semester V as of 103 respondents (41%), followed by semester III as of 97 respondents (39%), and semester VII as of 50 respondents (20%).

The research was conducted from June to December 2023. Prior to questionnaire distribution, validity and reliability testing were performed on the questionnaire at two high schools not involved in the data collection process. Validity was assessed using the Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient formula, while reliability was assessed using the Kuder Richardson formula. Qualitative data collection involved interviews and document searches (Curriculum and Academic) from each study program to ascertain the policies implemented to promote religious tolerance. Structured online interviews were conducted with study program leaders (12) at the six universities.

Quantitative data consisting of four indicators will be presented to describe the levels of student tolerance, complemented by qualitative data explaining the role of policies within Catholic Religious Education Study Programs in enhancing student tolerance.

Results

Quantitative data: Implementation of Tolerance to Catholic Religious Education Study Program Students

Quantitative data results from questionnaire developed based on four indicators: acceptance, recognition, respect and cooperation, as outlined by the Research and Development and Training Agency Indonesian Ministry of Religion in 2021 (Burhani et al., 2021). The results of the validity and reliability tests of the questionnaire (performed prior to data collection) are as follows:

Table 1. Validity Test Results

No	Indicator	Statement Items	Valid Limits	The calculation results
1	Reception	I accept the presence of individuals of different religions and coexist with them as neighbors.	0.349	0.541 (Valid)
2		I accept adherents of other religions in establishing places of worship in my village/subdistrict.	0.349	0.624 (Valid)
3		My family and I maintain harmonious relationships with friends and relatives of other religions.	0.349	0.638 (Valid)
4		I am willing to receive assistance from individuals of different religions during times of disaster.	0.349	0.475 (Valid)
5	Recognition	I recognize that all citizens are equal before the law, irrespective of their religion.	0.349	0.638 (Valid)
6		I recognize the entitlement of individuals of other religions to receive equal access to public services.	0.349	0.560 (Valid)
7		I recognize that individuals of other religions can hold public leadership positions in their respective areas (e.g., hamlet heads, village heads, sub-district heads, mayor/regent).	0.349	0.624 (Valid)
8		I recognize that every student at every level of education, irrespective of their religion, has the right to receive religious education at school according to the religion they adhere to.	0.349	0.712 (Valid)
9	Respect	I respect the beliefs of individuals of different religions.	0.349	0.735 (Valid)
10		I respect religious observances held by individuals of different religions in my village.	0.349	0.558 (Valid)
11		I refrain from imposing my beliefs or religious teachings on individuals of different religions.	0.349	0.638 (Valid)
12		I extend sincere wishes to individuals of different religions for a joyous celebration during their religious holidays.	0.349	0.769 (Valid)
13	Cooperation	I am willing to visit the homes of adherents of other religions, or welcome them into my own home.	0.349	0.475 (Valid)
14		I am willing to engage in environmental/business/organizational	0.349	0.512 (Valid)

226 – 244 |

		activities involving adherents of other religions.		
15		I am willing to attend invitations from other religions for events marking occasions of sorrow and joy.	0.349	0.716 (Valid)
16		I am willing to assist friends/neighbors who adhere to different religions when they encounter difficulties or disasters.	0.349	0.773 (Valid)

Reliability Test was performed utilizing the formula:

$$r_{11} = \left(\frac{k}{k-1}\right)\left(1 - \frac{\sum \sigma b^2}{\sigma t^2}\right)$$

$k = 16$

$\sigma b^2 = 11.8244$

$\sigma t^2 = 103.5$

$$r11 = \left[\frac{16}{16-1}\right]\left[1\frac{11.8244}{103.5}\right]$$

$r_{11} = 0.93$

Based on the reliability calculations utilizing the Cronbach's alpha formula, the questionnaire shows a reliability coefficient of 0.93, indicating very high reliability. Consequently, the questionnaire is considered suitable to be distributed to respondents.

Permission from the heads of study programs was obtained prior to distributing the questionnaires to students. The questionnaire was distributed to students in semesters III, V, and VII under the assumption that they had been exposed to inter-religious tolerance policies during their respective university education. Descriptive statistical analysis was utilized to characterize the sample data, including determining the mean, minimum value, maximum value, and standard deviation of the variables, based on the Likert Scale (Sugiyono, 2016), namely:

1. *Strongly Agree* is given a score of 5

2. *Agree* is given score of 4

3. *Unsure* is given score of 3

4. *Disagree* is given score of 2

5. *Strongly disagree* is given score of 1

The criteria of quality is set as follows.

0 – 20% = Very Low

21 – 40% = Low

41 – 60% = Medium

61 – 80% = High

81 – 100% = Very High

The results of the questionnaire from students are explained per indicator as follows:

227 – 244 |

Dimension of Acceptance

The Dimension of Acceptance comprise four statements based on Acceptance indicators results the total percentage is 88%, falling within the <u>very high</u> category. The calculation results are illustrated in the following diagram:

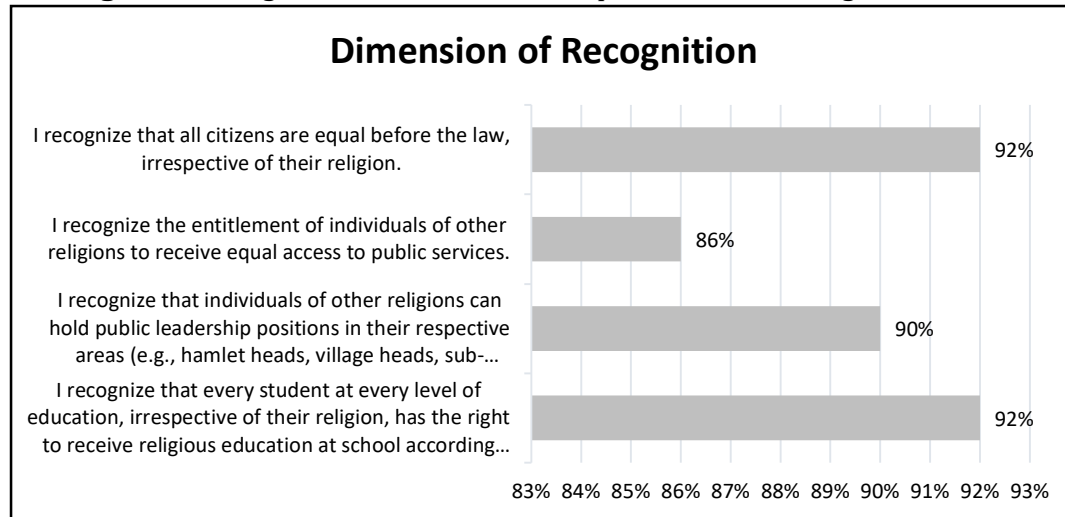**Figure 01**. Diagram of dimension of acceptance of other religious communities

Figure 01 above shows that the highest percentage (91%) in the dimension of acceptance pertained to the statement: "accepting the presence of individuals of different religions and coexist with them as neighbors." Conversely, the lowest percentage (82%) was observed in the statement: "accepting adherents of other religions in establishing places of worship in the village where they live." This data indicates that coexistence in a diverse society with strong cultural connections may explain respondents' ability to accept the presence of individuals of other religions and to coexist with them as neighbors. However, respondents' attitudes towards the establishment of places of worship for adherents of other religions remain a concern within the framework of inter-religious tolerance (Munawaroh & Kudus, 2023). A study conducted by (Amalia et al., 2023) exhibits that regions or cities perceived as welcoming to diversity and boasting a high tolerance index, such as Yogyakarta, are not immune to issues surrounding places of worship and policy matters deemed discriminatory against minority groups.

Dimension of Recognition

Dimension of Acceptance comprising four statements based on Recognition indicators achieves the total percentage of 90%, falling within the <u>very high</u> category. Recognition of the rights of other religious communities includes rights in political, religious, social and educational domains. The calculation results are illustrated in the following diagram:

Figure 02. Diagram of dimension of recognition of other religious communities
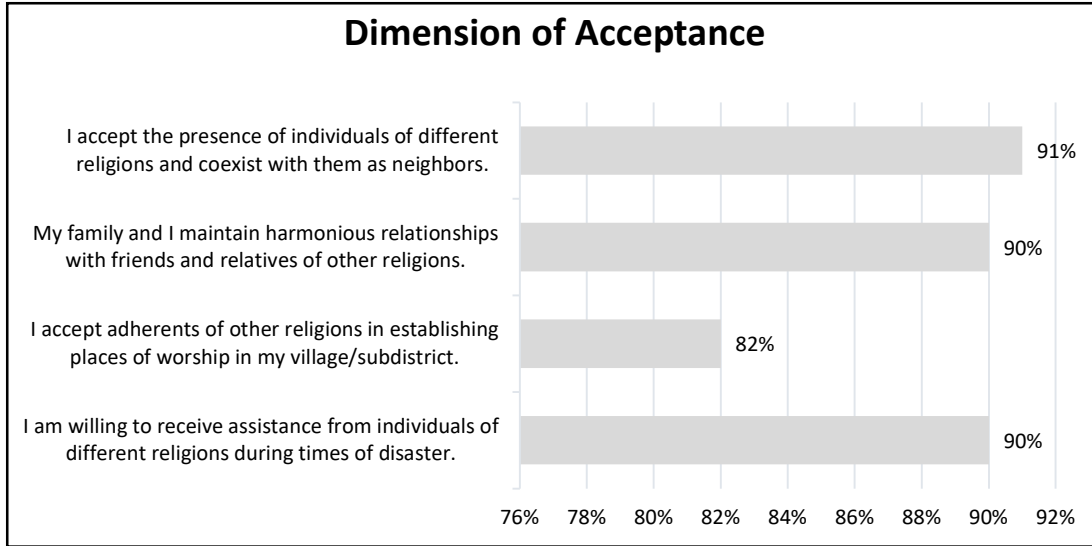

Figure 02 above illustrates that the issue concerning public leaders from minority groups received the lowest percentage as of 86%, whereas the highest percentage as of 92% in the statements concerning the recognition of equality before the law and recognition of students' rights to receive religious education at school according to the religion they adhere to. This echoes some previous studies that issue of minority representation in public leadership roles often emerges as a sensitive matter prone to the politicization of religion (Roring, 2022); (Soenjoto, 2024).

Dimension of Respect

The Dimension of Respect represents a continuum of the dynamics of tolerance among religious communities. Respect, in essence, entails an attitude of esteem stemming from the acceptance and recognition of equality as fellow citizens. Despite differences in ethical beliefs pertaining to morality and modes of living and practice, mutual respect is upheld among individuals. The overall percentage for the dimension of respect in the questionnaire results stands at 91%, falling within the <u>very high</u> category.

**Figure 03**. Dimension of respect to other religious communities
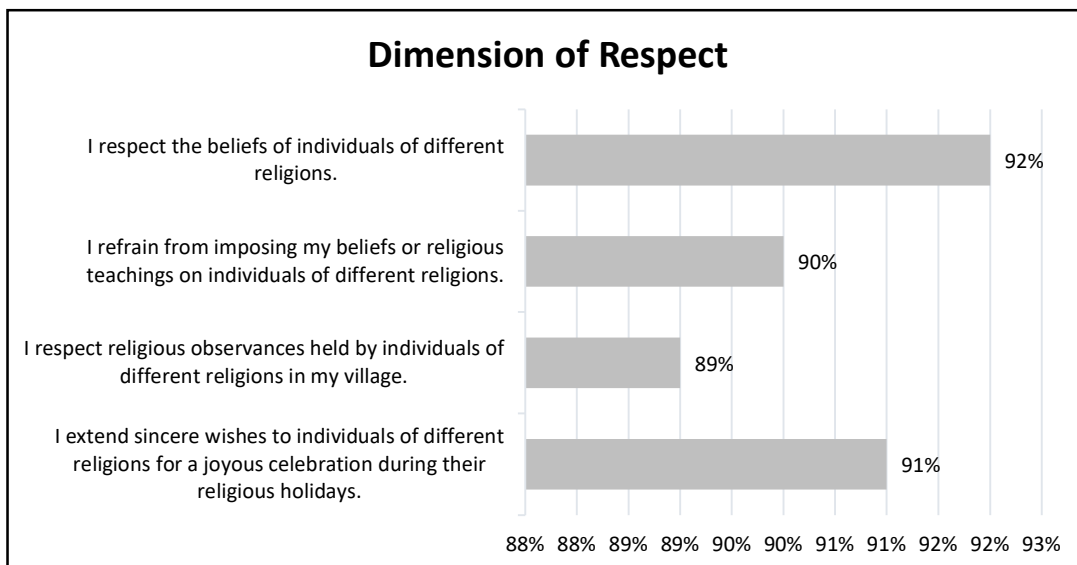
Tolerance comprises mutual recognition and respect. This deeper ethical understanding is further exhibited by the positive reception of differing viewpoints, even when they may harbor flaws and weaknesses. From a communal standpoint, there is recognition of the diversity of communal values and a willingness to exchange perspectives, seeking common ground while tolerating certain variations. From the questionnaire, statements concerning respect for religious observances held by individuals of other religions in one's village received the lowest percentage (89%). Conversely, the statement concerning respect the beliefs of individuals of different religions received the highest percentage (92%).

Dimensions of Cooperation

Tolerance transcends mere acceptance and recognition; it entails a willingness to cooperate with other religious communities. The overall percentage for the dimension of cooperation in the questionnaire results stands at 89%, falling within the <u>very high</u> category.

Figure 04. Diagram of dimension of cooperation with other religious communities
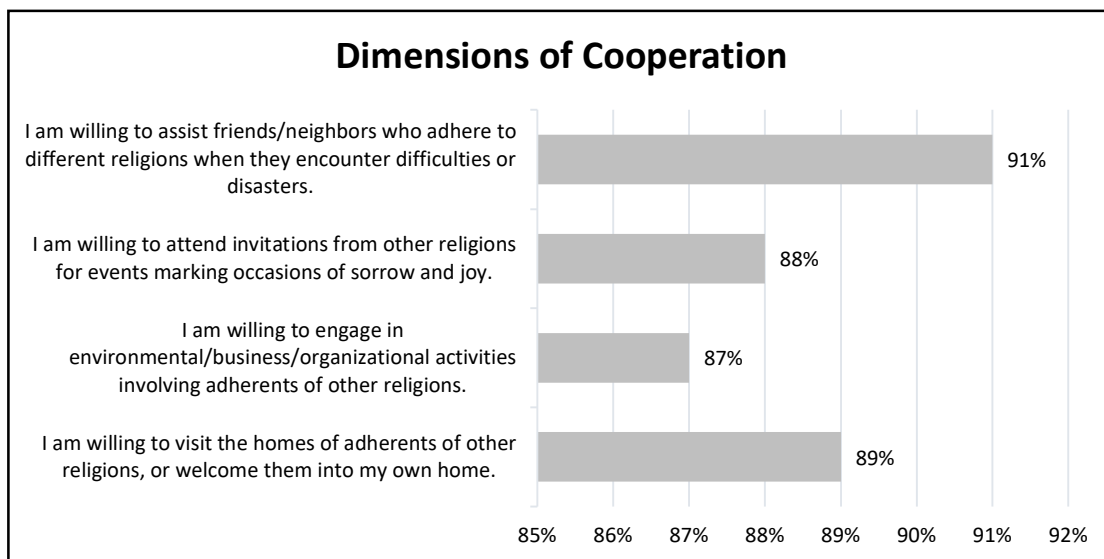
From the diagram above, the highest percentage (91%) was observed in the statement concerning the willingness to assist friends or neighbors adhering to other religions who encounter difficulties or disasters. On the other hand, the lowest percentage (87%) pertained to the statement concerning the willingness to engage in environmental, business, or organizational activities involving adherents of other religions. These results indicate that the lack of joint activities among religious communities may exacerbate the communication gap between them. Whereas, collaborative activities uniting individuals from diverse religious backgrounds serve as platforms for sharing social experiences, faith encounters, and aspirations for coexisting in peace and harmony (Sunarno et al., 2023); (Aris Yusuf, 2022); (Kafomay et al., 2019). Reluctance to engage in joint activities with other religious communities may stem from limited contact between them, whether through organizations or community initiatives. Religious activities often predominate societal engagements, fostering group exclusivity within society.

Qualitative Data: Policies of Catholic Education programs and Their Implementation in Enhancing Religious Tolerance

To present how and to what extent the concept and implementation of religious moderation within the Catholic Religious Education Study Program, the researchers analysed the guidelines and curriculum framework of the CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Study Program. The sample of promoting religious tolerance in the curriculum is presented in Figure 05 below

ASPEK	KODE CPL	CAPAIAN PEMBELAJARAN LULUSAN (CPL)
SIKAP & TATA NILAI	S1	Menunjukkan sikap beriman dan bertakwa sebagai pendidik agama Katolik yang jujur, adil, berintegritas, rendah hati dan berspiritual sesuai ajaran iman Katolik
	S2	Menjunjung tinggi nilai-nilai humanis dalam menjalankan tugas sebagai pendidik agama Katolik berdasarkan agama, etika dan moral kristiani
	S3	Berperan aktif dalam meningkatkan mutu kehidupan masyarakat, umat dan kelompok kategorial sebagai pendidik agama Katolik dan petugas pastoral berdasarkan Pancasila dan ajaran sosial Gereja
	S4	Berperan sebagai pendidik agama Katolik yang memiliki sikap solider, bangga dan cinta terhadap tanah air dan bangsa serta proaktif dalam proses pembangunan
	S5	Menghargai keanekaragaman budaya, sosial, pendapat, temuan orisinal orang lain, pandangan, agama, dan kepercayaan sesuai dengan prinsip-prinsip moderasi beragama dan wawasan kebangsaan
	S6	Mampu bekerjasama dan memiliki kepekaan sosial terhadap umat dan masyarakat dengan dilandasi spiritualitas pelayanan

Figure 05. Excerpt of curriculum of Catholic Education program

The following section presents qualitative data from online structured interviews regarding interfaith collaboration efforts initiated by lecturers and students at Catholic universities under study.

Dimension of Curriculum

The concept of religious moderation is implicit within the guidelines and curriculum framework of several study programs (I-1 & I-2), albeit without direct mention of the term "religious moderation" (I-3). However, the idealism of religious moderation is encapsulated in the terminology utilized in these guidelines and curriculum framework, such as "dialogical, open (inclusive), and democratic individuals" (Inayatillah et al., 2022). These terms are deemed to hold practical significance as they are directly linked to everyday life practices, making it easier for students to internalize them (I-3). Therefore, the employment of expressions like dialogical, open, and democratic individuals in this curriculum signifies more than just a symbolic strategy; it represents a genuine effort to nurture students' character and capacity to engage ethically and religiously within a plural and diverse society (Caswita, 2019); (Purwanto et al., 2019). With such positioning, it can be inferred that the Catholic Religious EducationStudy Program has embedded the idealistic notion of religious moderation within its curriculum framework, drawing from the daily praxis of its academic community. The utilization of the aforementioned terms aligns with the ethos of religious moderation in Indonesia, which advocates for religious individuals to become inclusive and open-minded, accepting and embracing religious and cultural diversity. Inclusive religious individuals, therefore, lead a comprising life of faith

and are prepared to cooperate with individuals of other religions. Essentially, religious moderation necessitates that adherents refrain from isolation and exclusivity, but rather adopt inclusivity, integration, adaptation, and engagement with diverse communities, continually learning and imparting lessons (Zulkifli et al., 2023).

The rationale behind integrating the concept of religious moderation into the Catholic Religious Education Study Program's curriculum framework lies in recognizing it as a fundamental attitude in educational practices and nurturing faith among the populace (Azhar, 2022); (Abdullah et al., 2022); (Zuhdiyah et al., 2023); (Bizany & Slam, 2022). This is articulated in the Graduate Learning Outcomes (GLO) attitude, which comprises playing an active role in enhancing the quality of life of the nation and state, as well as the progress of civilization based on Pancasila and Catholic Church teachings. It also involves acting as proud citizens who harbor love for the nation, homeland, environment, and the Catholic Church; respecting cultural, ideological, religious, and belief diversities (multiculturalism), along with original opinions or outcomes of others; cooperating and demonstrating social sensitivity and concern for society and the environment with a spirit of solidarity, compassion, and environmental love (I-4 and I-5). Such attitudes serve as embodiments of the four indicators of religious moderation, particularly those pertaining to tolerance and national commitment (Junaedi, 2019); (Abror, 2020).. Tolerance is exemplified through the act of respecting differences, providing space for others to believe and express their beliefs, as well as respecting equality and being prepared to cooperate/collaborate with those who hold different views.

Dimension of Courses in the Study Program

In the Catholic Religious Education Study Program at Sekolah Tinggi Pastoral, several courses are intertwined with the content and values encapsulated in the concept of religious moderation. The informant/respondent (I-1-5) delineated the courses as follows: Inter-Religious Dialogue/Inter-Faith Relations/Inter-Religious Education, Pancasila and Nationalism, Christian Morals, Phenomenology of Religions, Church Social Teachings (ASG), Catechesis and Pastoral, Sociology of Religion, Multiculturalism, Citizenship/National Insight. Additionally, certain study programs even feature a dedicated course named the Religious Moderation course outlined in the curriculum framework, offered in the third semester (Indriyani et al., 2022); (Abdullah et al., 2022); (Taufik, 2022). Courses like Inter-Religious Dialogue or Inter-Faith Relations or Inter-Religious Education directly delve into the essence of religious moderation. They revolve around comprehending the principles and indicators of religious moderation and their practical application in religious life.

Furthermore, numerous courses, through their assignment descriptions and final exams, bolster the execution of religious moderation. As relayed by the informants, students, for instance, interviewed religious figures and compiled reports, sought out videos concerning hate speech and conducted analyses, and deliberated on societal issues such as poverty and radicalization within the context of different religions (I-4 and I-5).

Dimension of Learning Models

The learning model utilized in lecture halls also serves as an embodiment of the concept of religious moderation at the tertiary level (Witro et al., 2022); (Zulkifli et al., 2023. The informants attested that the learning model or methodology embraced the notion of religious moderation. Firstly, active learning within the classroom entails inviting students to conduct field observations and direct visits to places of worship, as

well as participating in various inter-religious dialogue activities and religious moderation seminars organized by the City/Provincial FKUB. This hands-on approach offers students a valuable opportunity to closely examine religious practices within a diverse society (I-1). Secondly, within an educational framework, this concept materializes through diverse learning methodologies, including in-depth classroom discussions, collaborative projects, and courses tailored to foster cross-cultural and religious comprehension (I-2). This underscores the institution's dedication to nurturing social interaction competencies and recognizing plurality as an intrinsic aspect of religious moderation (Inayatillah et al., 2022); (Anggoro, 2022).

Dimension of Seminar-Discussion-Workshop Themes

The Catholic Religious Education Study Program at several Sekolah Tinggi Pastoral in Indonesia has also spearheaded and nurtured the concept of religious moderation through seminars, discussions, workshops, and spiritual activities such as recollection (faith formation) for students (I-1-4). Some of the themes and titles addressed during these occasions include: "Catechesis of the People and Religious Moderation," "Embracing Diversity: The Beauty of Differences," "Human Dignity Across Theological, Anthropological, Sociological, and Educational Perspectives," "Church Social Teachings on Human Dignity," "Addressing Social and Religious Segregation in Religious Life," and "Interreligious Literacy for Fostering Tolerance Among Religious Communities" (Darisman et al., 2022); (Mehrotra et al., 2021); (Kuntjoro-Jakti, 2022).

However, one Catholic Religious Education Study Program acknowledges that over the past three years, there have been no specific activities focused on religious moderation. Instead, numerous seminars and events have been organized in collaboration with other universities, predominantly featuring speakers from non-Christian backgrounds, including Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism (I-5). Additionally, several lecturers from Sekolah Tinggi Pastoral have actively participated as resource persons and committee members in Religious Moderation School events organized by the City/Provincial FKUB (I-1).

Dimensions of Interfaith Cooperation

The informants highlighted that institutionally and personally, moments of interfaith cooperation have been fostered through collaborative research and community service activities, programs aimed at enhancing the quality of accreditation for study programs and institutions, and other academic endeavors such as seminars and public discussions (I-1 -5). This can be viewed as a strategic and significant step in the realm of higher education, particularly in enriching academic perspectives and broadening diversity horizons (Salim, 2022).

Furthermore, the informants noted that within the Catholic Religious Education Study Program, collaborative research and community service (PKM) themes comprise accommodation for local cultures. These themes of accommodation represent a specific aspect of the concept of religious moderation. These themes include: Application of the Smart Harati Educational Philosophy in Schools; Application of Smart Tuntang Harati Values to Minimize Bullying Behavior in Class VII Students at SMPN 1 Muara Teweh; Enculturation of Faith in Animism: Church Meeting with Ritual Miwit Abeh Dayak Ma'anyan Dayu Village; Tomun Arut Dayak Tribe Tolerance Binding; Implementation of Cultivating Batang Garing Values in PAK Learning to Improve the Nationalism of Class XII Students at SMAN 4 Palangka Raya; and Implementation of Multiculturalism Values in

Catholic Religious Education Lessons at SMA Katolik 1 Kabanjahe. The Community Service sector targets themes such as Music-Based Post-Disaster Trauma Management as a Social-Based activity for Earthquake Victims in Waai Village (Protestant village); Trauma Healing Services for Ambon Earthquake Victims in Passo Village (Protestant and Catholic village); Socialization of the Benefits and Making of Betel Leaf Hand Sanitizer as an Effort to Prevent Covid-19 Transmission in Tehoru Village (Protestant village); and Environmental Sanitation and Cleanliness Efforts for Residents of Tanah Putih, Tawiri Village, Ambon (Protestant Village).

For the informants, this collaboration not only demonstrates openness to cross-institutional collaboration but also underscores the importance of interfaith understanding in curriculum development and higher education management. This approach helps fortify the academic and administrative foundations of study programs with a broader and more inclusive perspective (I-3). To enhance lecturer capacity, Sekolah Tinggi Pastoral overseeing the Catholic Religious Education Study Program proactively incorporates non-Catholic lecturers as resource persons. This step significantly contributes to enriching the learning process with diverse viewpoints. It is also seen as an opportunity to bolster lecturers' competence in managing dialogue and discussions within the context of fostering understanding of pluralism, multiculturalism, and multireligiousness (Sunarno et al., 2023; Widiyanto et al., 2022; Zagorin, 2011; Susanta & Upa, 2021).

In addition to lecturers, students from the Catholic Religious Education Study Program are provided opportunities to participate in lectures and other collaborative activities with UIN (State Islamic University) and/or IAIN (State Islamic Religious Institute), as well as Protestant Theological Schools in their respective cities/provinces. This initiative is viewed not only as supportive of academic development but also as facilitating the exchange of ideas and cultures among students from various religious (Mas'ulah, 2020). Such opportunities offer valuable learning experiences and enhance understanding and appreciation of diversity and plurality (I-1-3). Furthermore, collaboration extends beyond scientific spaces to social realms, such as inter-religious social services involving students from diverse religious backgrounds, provision of basic food services to the general public, services to street children, and staging of colossal inter-religious dramas on the occasion of Youth Pledge Day (I-4 and I-5). Particularly noteworthy are the activities of the Student Executive Board (BEM) that incorporate religious moderation (I-1). These activities include visits to houses of worship, engagement in activities in the Religious Moderation village (Orientation of Religious Moderation Pioneers), and the "one love a thousand smiles" activity at natural disaster sites (I-2). These activities are recognized as opportunities to instill a sense of concern in students towards the reality of diversity (Layan, 2022).

However, one aspect requiring attention is the observation made by informant (I-3) that, from an institutional perspective, there has been no initiative to strengthen the issue of religious moderation. Nonetheless, according to the informant, students still do not exhibit moderation. Many students feel secure because they constitute the majority in their city. Generally, students are not aware that Catholicism is not the only religion in Indonesia (Aihiokhai, 2022; Alfian & Halim, 2022). Similarly, the informant also mentioned that religious moderation has not yet become a concern (I-5) because there have been no significant issues disrupting religious harmony. However, according to the informant, the more fundamental aspect is that religious moderation has naturally evolved among students due to the culture and customs they adhere to, which also support the values advocated by the idea of religious moderation, such as tolerance, justice, loyalty to the homeland, peace, and respect for tradition (Nur et al., 2021;

Mahardhani, 2022); Atasoge & Sihombing, 2022). As per informant (I-5), it was mentioned that a culture of tolerance has been fostered within the family.

Discussion

The overall quantitative data results show that the level of student tolerance across the dimensions of acceptance, recognition, respect, and cooperation falls within the very high category (90%). This is different with the results of a study by PPIM (PPIM UIN Jakarta, 2021) and several other studies (Salmah et al., 2022; Mujahidin et al., 2021; Utari & Rosiana, 2022; Yedi et al., 2019; Marzuki & Mumtazul, 2022); Ridwan & Abdurrahim, 2022), where the level of student tolerance within the high category. There is many factors can influence the very high category of student tolerance, one of which is the impact of study program policies.

Quantitative data also shows that several issues occupy the lowest percentage of each indicator that requires attention: *First*, the establishment of places of worship. The establishment of places of worship in Indonesia continues to be a contentious issue impacting inter-religious harmony, attributable to various factors: lingering suspicions among religious adherents due to inadequate communication, the politicization of religion by leveraging religious matters, including the establishment of places of worship, involvement of local leaders (both religious and governmental), and governmental intolerance and indecision in enforcing existing laws (Dahlan & Aslamiyah, 2022; Suryawati & Syaputri, 2022). Interaction among students from diverse religious backgrounds and their participation in interfaith academic forums need to be further intensified within the scope of nurturing tolerance among religious communities, addressing issues related to the establishment of places of worship included.

Second, concerning public leaders from minority groups. Within a political landscape, shared religious identity stands as a predominant factor influencing the selection of leadership figures during general election contests. Political practices rooted in shared identities tend to intersect with interest-driven politics, where identity politics may eventually give rise to group interest politics as the primary consideration. Political campaigns leveraging religious issues are frequently employed extensively, particularly among the youth, to garner mass support for their political aspirations to secure leadership roles. Sociologically, this approach to identity politics has exhibited notable efficacy in perpetuating political dominance. However, the propagation of identity politics can breed intolerance and discord among religious communities, running counter to the ethos of democratization, where rational political considerations prioritize the public interest as the paramount goal of the state. Addressing this challenge may involve engaging students in discussions, seminars, and workshops focusing on the politicization of religion, aiming to prevent the proliferation of religious intolerance. Presenting instances of conflict between religious communities can shed light on the perils of identity politics. Given that students, particularly young individuals, are in the process of identity formation, it is imperative to guide them towards adopting appropriate thoughts and attitudes.

Third, respect for religious observances held by individuals of other religions in one's village. Similarly, akin to the issue of places of worship, the regard for worship conducted by adherents of other religions remains a significant concern. Worship practices and places of worship are deeply intertwined with the religious identity of a group, often escalating into contentious matters due to the absence of close connections/bonds, familiarity, and communication among religious communities. Mutual suspicion and the

lack of assertiveness from religious leaders and governmental entities serve as catalysts for conflict. The values of local wisdom and religion within society can be collectively explored with students to underscore the principles of brotherhood and solidarity ingrained in society over the years. Cultural, social, and religious connections imbued with pluralistic nuances must be safeguarded against the vested interests of certain individuals or groups exploiting religion to sow division within society. Students should be acquainted with the values, symbols, and rituals of various religions to mitigate susceptibility to provocation and foster moderation, potentially assuming roles as mediators in resolving conflicts among religious adherents.

Fourth, the willingness to engage in environmental, business, or organizational activities involving adherents of other religions. Tolerance within the realm of religious and cultural pluralism is viewed as an attitude of valuing and respecting such diversity, alongside a willingness to collaborate for the common good (Nurhasanah, 2020). Student participation in interfaith social organizations is pivotal for transcending religious exclusivism and broadening their perspectives. By collaborating with individuals of other religious backgrounds, students can address societal issues like substance abuse and gambling collectively.

These four issues can be input for every educational institution, including study programs, in making policies in the academic and non-academic fields. From the results of interviews and document searches, it was found that many study programs were proactive in strengthening religious tolerance, starting from the curriculum. And, this is the right policy, because the curriculum is a guideline for implementing education and learning in higher education. The researchers perceive these courses and their core themes as endeavors by the Catholic Religious Education Study Program to establish an epistemological foundation for students to actualize the significance and essence of mainstreaming religious moderation in Indonesia.

Strengthening religious tolerance is also carried out through a learning process that leads students to interact with other religious communities. This constitutes a platform crafted by the Catholic Religious EducationStudy Program that indirectly aids students in engaging with the actual diversity of religious and cultural differences surrounding them. Moreover, students are afforded the opportunity to peruse and dissect phenomena pertaining to the challenges and issues of religious moderation, such as religious radicalization and extremism (Sukmayadi et al., 2023; Sihombing et al., 2021). Direct engagement with the realities of others and collaborative endeavors among students are simple yet effective strategies that guide students towards cultivating an inclusive outlook on religion. Such an outlook represents one of the prerequisites for embodying moderate individuality, characterized by a willingness to repect and recognize those with differing viewpoints. Essentially, a moderate individual is one who embraces inclusivity in social relationships, aiming to foster a cohesive and harmonious society (Muttaqin, 2023; Hefni & Muna, 2022).. Such a society is marked by minimal levels of intolerance and social discord.

Strengthening tolerance through academically orchestrated activities conducted collaboratively serve as a means to bolster the epistemological foundation related to social interactions in pluralistic societies among students. This is deemed crucial, especially considering that the Catholic Religious Education Study Program in Indonesia, by and large, caters exclusively to Catholic students, thus operating within a homogeneous environment. In such a context, dialogues and discussions about others are imperative to broaden students' understanding of diverse perspectives (Inriani, 2021); (Widyawati, 2021); (Rumahuru, 2019). this imperative is seen as a response to the notion

of supersessionism, which entails viewing one's own group as superior and considering others as less complete or perfect.

In the future, the Study Program needs to pay attention to the four vulnerable issues through more contextual and effective policies. Of course, strengthening tolerance is not the only task of the Study Program, because above it there is still the vision and mission of educational institutions that need to be followed, including the policies of the Institutional Leadership. The urgent thing that needs to be realized is that through its policies, the Study Program actually continues and preserves the culture of religious tolerance that already exists within students which was brought from family or culture. Family as the nursery (basic seed) of the ideal of religious moderation. The harmony within families, where parents and children with different characteristics can coexist harmoniously, can be a small step towards realizing the grand ideal of religious moderation for the sake of a cohesive and harmonious society (Salmah et al., 2022); (Arfa & Lasaiba, 2022). What needs to be guarded against are the seeds of intolerance that can emerge among students due to the negative influence of certain extremes, including feelings of being in the majority and superiority. The researchers suggest that such sentiments can sow the seeds of narrow despotism, characterized by imposing excessive will on others, particularly those who differ, to submit and obey personal and group will and interests. If left unaddressed, it is conceivable that students may adopt an exclusive ideology that is unwilling to accept, recognize, and respect others.

Conclusion

This study yields several conclusions. *Firstly*, the online questionnaire results from 250 students of the Catholic Religious Education (PKK) Study Program indicate that the level of student tolerance across the dimensions of acceptance, recognition, respect, and cooperation falls within the very high category (90%). From the quantitative research results, several issues warrant attention in formulating study program policies, notably the establishment of places of worship, representation of individuals from diverse religious backgrounds in public leadership roles, respect for religious observances of different religions, and willingness to engage in environmental, business, or organizational activities involving adherents of other religions. These issues scored the lowest percentage across all indicators. Issues with the lowest percentage need to receive attention from the Catholic Religious Education Study Program and Pastoral College Institutions when designing CPL in the study program curriculum guidelines and structure.

Secondly, in the qualitative analysis, various policies within the Catholic Religious Education Study Program were identified to facilitate students in practicing tolerance: learning objectives in the Guidelines and Curriculum Framework that steer learning toward strengthening Religious Tolerance, dedicated courses on religious tolerance and moderation, development of learning models to foster student interaction with communities of other religions, organization of seminars, discussions, and workshops on religious tolerance, and engagement in interfaith collaboration through various activities and programs involving both lecturers and students. While several study programs acknowledge that religious tolerance is not their primary focus in their policies, as they concurrently pursue other study program targets or missions, it remains a significant consideration. According to researchers, the most important policy at the institutional level at every Catholic Pastoral College and Religious Education Study Program is the mainstreaming of religious moderation with an emphasis on religious tolerance as an indicator of religious moderation.

237 – 244 |

This study offers recommendations for study programs offering religious education to adopt policies that promote the implementation of religious tolerance among prospective religious teachers. Given the crucial role of religious teachers and counselors in fostering religious tolerance today, it is imperative that study program policies align with this objective. Researchers view this as the main thing considering the strategic position that religious teachers and religious instructors will hold as pioneers in providing guidance and counseling to the community using religious language. The central point is the preparation of prospective religious teachers who are insightful and have moderate religious attitudes. This preparation must be truly evident in the formulation of Learning Outcomes (LO).

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239 – 244 |

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241 – 244 |

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242 – 244 |

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243 – 244 |