



Tolerance Villages in Bandung: Fostering Interfaith Harmony and Multicultural Awareness

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords:</p> <p>Village of tolerance; multiculturalism; Bandung City.</p> <hr/> <p>Article history:</p> <p>Received 2025-11-17 Revised 2026-02-27 Accepted 2026-03-11</p>	<p>Bandung is a multicultural city with high religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity. However, this condition also gives rise to the potential for intolerance, which has received serious attention in recent years. In response, the Bandung City Government initiated the Tolerance Village to strengthen interfaith harmony and increase community multicultural awareness. By 2025, six villages had been inaugurated. This study aims to examine the role of the Tolerance Village in maintaining harmony, increasing multicultural awareness, and comparing similarities and differences between the six locations. The research method used was a qualitative descriptive, comparative case study. Data were collected through interviews, field observations, and document analysis. The results show that the Tolerance Village contributes positively to the creation of interfaith dialogue spaces, strengthening diversity-based social interactions, and multicultural education at the community level. However, budget limitations, resistance from some groups, and lack of program sustainability are obstacles that need to be overcome. This study concludes that Tolerance Village can serve as an innovative social model for building urban harmony. This program needs to be expanded to other areas by strengthening stakeholder collaboration to make Bandung more inclusive, tolerant, and sustainable.</p>

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a highly diverse country, with diverse cultures, ethnicities, languages, and religions. Six religions are officially recognized: Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. With more than 700 ethnic groups and 1,000 regional languages, this diversity is both an asset and a challenge, especially in densely populated cities. Unmanaged differences can lead to social conflict. Therefore, appropriate strategies are needed to maintain harmony, integration, and peaceful coexistence in this heterogeneous, multicultural society (BPS, 2020). Bandung, known as a multicultural city, reflects its ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity. To maintain harmony, the Bandung City Government launched the Tolerance Village program. By 2022, six villages had been inaugurated, serving as spaces for peaceful interaction and learning the values of tolerance for communities living side by side despite differences. Various interfaith activities, such as joint celebrations of religious holidays, community service, and interfaith dialogue forums, strengthen harmony and foster multicultural awareness. The social interaction patterns established within

Tolerance Villages have a significant impact on increasing tolerance, particularly in preventing interfaith conflict in urban areas (Soffi, 2023). However, implementing tolerance values is not without challenges, such as unequal understanding of tolerance within the community and the negative influence of social media, which can lead to disinformation and division. Therefore, more comprehensive research is needed to assess the extent to which Tolerance Villages can act as a driving force in building harmony and multicultural awareness in urban areas (Ramdhan et al., 2020).

Urban areas like Bandung City have a religiously diverse population, making religious issues highly sensitive. Differences in religious backgrounds can trigger conflict if tolerance between religious communities is not maintained. A high level of tolerance is achieved when people are able to live side by side without open conflict. If tolerance fails to be maintained, the potential for division and conflict between individuals or groups will increase. To maintain the values and attitudes of tolerance amidst this diversity, the Bandung City Government designed the Tolerance Village program. This program is implemented through six locations that have been realized, namely Kebon Jeruk Village (Andir District), Jalan Dian Permai Babakan Ciparay Village, RW 008 Jalan Luna Jamika Village (Bojongloa Kaler), RT 02 RW 002 Jalan Ruhana Paledang Village (Lengkong District), RW 004 and RW 005 Balonggede Village (Regol District), and the Tolerance Village Cibadak Village (Astana Anyar). One example, the Gang Luna Tolerance Village in Jamika Village, boasts four churches, four temples, and two mosques located close together without conflict. This harmony is supported by social interaction, community participation, and the role of local organizations (Hibatullah et al., 2023).

Each of these villages has unique characteristics that facilitate a harmonious religious life. For example, in the Tolerance Village of Kebon Jeruk, there are four houses of worship from different religions in one area, reflecting the peaceful coexistence of their diverse communities. Previous studies have highlighted certain aspects of the Tolerance Villages, such as social adaptation and settlement patterns in the Tolerance Village on Jalan Vihara, interfaith communication in the Tolerance Village of Paledang, and the role of religious leaders in Gang Luna. However, to date, no comprehensive study has compared the six Tolerance Villages as a whole. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by conducting a comparative descriptive study comparing the role of each Tolerance Village in facilitating interfaith harmony and increasing multicultural awareness in urban communities. With this approach, it is hoped that a deeper understanding of the effectiveness and challenges each village faces in promoting tolerance and social harmony can be obtained.

The reason the government created the tolerance village program is because there is a society with diversity in terms of tribe, ethnicity, culture, race, language, and religion, which also has various places of worship from each religion with the aim that every element of society can interact socially with each other in their daily lives in order to create a community environment that can live peacefully, harmoniously, love peace, respect each other, uphold the values of tolerance, and help each other (Muttaqin, 2021).

The ongoing phenomenon of intolerance, discrimination, and radicalism in several regions further reinforces the urgency of this research. Furthermore, according to the Setara Institute (2022) index report, West Java Province was once the highest-ranking province in terms of intolerance, with Bandung being the most intolerant city in Indonesia. According to the Setara Institute, the 10 most intolerant cities in Indonesia are Bandung, Bekasi, Bogor, Depok, Sukabumi, and Tasikmalaya, which are among the top ten most intolerant cities in West Java. The other four cities are Banda Aceh, Mataram, Tangerang, and Serang. Furthermore, violations of religious freedom often occur in Indonesia. Therefore, the existence of Tolerance Villages is expected to be a local solution in maintaining unity amidst diversity. This research aims to explore the role of Tolerance Villages in shaping harmonious social life and understanding the community's perspective on the concept of multiculturalism (Yosarie, 2022).

According to the Joint Regulation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs No. 9 and 8 of 2006, religious harmony is a state of relations between fellow religious followers based on tolerance, mutual respect, mutual understanding, respect for equality in the practice of religious teachings and cooperation in the life of society, nation and the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. The issue of religious life in Indonesian society is a very sensitive issue among various socio-cultural issues. Society if the problem has race, religion, racial identity, especially if it insults a particular religion in our community life, considering the various religions in Indonesia The problem is much more complicated. Therefore, all religions play a very important role in the unity and preservation of the nation and the peace of life in society, nation and state. In order to build a harmonious religious life, the founding of Indonesia actively responded to the problem that it is very difficult to overcome the problem of faith if social conflict occurs.

Therefore, the Founding Fathers included provisions regarding the freedom to accept and worship religion based on one's religion, as stated in Article 29 of the 1945 Constitution. With this regulation, the government intended to provide guidance and protect the freedom to embrace and worship a religion without interference from adherents of other religions (Rusydi & Zolehah, 2018).

According to information from the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, West Java Province ranked in the bottom three on the religious tolerance index in 2020. Considering Indonesia is a country with significant diversity in many aspects, including religious contexts, religion has become a belief system that is chosen and adhered to by humans. Every human being can do whatever is commanded by their religion or belief system. This demonstrates that religion is a crucial factor in life. Therefore, religion is a very influential factor in human life because it serves as a system that regulates beliefs by teaching justice and truth, as is now the norm in social society. However, it will have a very bad impact if the justice and truth that have been explained in religious teachings are not practiced directly in everyday life, considering that Indonesia is a multicultural country, it will give rise to a lack of sympathy for fellow humans who have different beliefs from us, it can even give rise to elements of SARA which will certainly be vulnerable to division or conflict due to contradictory attitudes or deviations in religious teachings or beliefs (Kemenag, 2020). Tolerance Village is a social initiative that aims to build harmony and multicultural awareness in urban areas of Indonesia. This program emphasizes the values of tolerance, mutual cooperation, and inclusivity to create social harmony amidst religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity.

2. METHOD

In any research, implementing systematic methodological steps is crucial for effective data collection and accountable research results. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method, which focuses on understanding and analyzing social phenomena occurring within society. This method aims to explore in-depth various aspects of human life, including beliefs, culture, and social behavior. The research process is conducted through direct observation and refers to various credible sources of information, including narratives, opinions, and descriptions of research subjects. The data obtained are then systematically analyzed to answer the research problem formulation. This approach allows researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the various social dynamics, mindsets, and characteristics of the community that is the focus of the research. The data collected are descriptive, in the form of spoken and written words from informants, as well as observations of relevant social behavior. Furthermore, this research applies a sociology of religion approach to understand the interaction between religion and social life in society. This approach allows researchers to explore how social interactions between residents of different religious backgrounds can foster harmony and tolerance. The research focuses on the social structure of the Tolerance Village and the dynamics of interfaith relations, including factors that strengthen or weaken harmony.

The theoretical basis used includes Emile Durkheim's theories of social integration and social cohesion, as well as an adaptation of Robert K. Merton's anomie theory. Social integration theory explains that societal cohesion is achieved when individuals and groups share a shared understanding of norms and values (Merton, 1998). This study examines how interfaith integration is realized in the Tolerance Village and how the balance between religious diversity and social unity is maintained. Meanwhile, anomie theory is used to explain social tensions resulting from the mismatch between cultural values and institutional means within society. In an urban context, anomie can arise due to high cultural diversity but a lack of forums for interfaith dialogue. The Tolerance Village exists as a response to this potential anomie, creating a new social structure that bridges the value tensions between religious and cultural groups (Azhari & Albina, 2024).

The research locations include six Tolerance Villages in Bandung City, namely Kebon Jeruk Village, Andir District, Dian Permai Street, Babakan Ciparay Village, RW 008, Luna Street, Jamika Village, Bojongloa Kaler District, RT 02, RW 002, Ruhana Street, Paledang Village, Lengkong District, and RW 004 and RW 005, Balonggede Village, Regol District. The research was conducted through a sociology of religion approach to understand social interactions, with a focus on the role of religion in shaping relationships between residents, both in daily activities and in the context of tolerance. The research objects include interactions between residents who embrace various religions, including Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Catholicism, and Confucianism, as well as their efforts to build harmonious social relationships in their respective environments.

Data collection was conducted through primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained directly from the field, including in-depth interviews with community leaders, religious leaders, Tolerance

Village managers, and local residents. Direct observation of social and religious activities in the village was crucial for obtaining a concrete picture of the practice of harmony. Field documentation in the form of photographs, observation notes, and ongoing events was also collected. Secondary data were obtained from relevant literature, including official government documents related to Tolerance Village, scientific articles, journals, books, research reports, mass media news, and regulations related to interfaith harmony, such as joint ministerial regulations. The qualitative data collected included interview narratives, observation notes on behavior and social activities, and documentation in the form of text, images, and audiovisual recordings (Sugiyono, 2017).

Data collection techniques used included observation, interviews, documentation, library research, and the use of online sources. Observations were conducted by observing every social activity of the community at the research location. Interviews were conducted directly with informants at the research location to obtain in-depth information regarding interfaith harmony. Interview questions were prepared in writing to ensure the data obtained aligns with the research objectives. Documentation was conducted to obtain evidence and information related to the observed phenomena, including archives, reports, photographs, and letters between groups. Library research was used to strengthen field data with theory, literature, and previous research. Information access via the internet was also used to obtain journals, theories, and practices related to Tolerance Villages (Hadi, 1982).

The triangulation process, as explained by Sugiyono (2017), is applied to increase data validity by matching information from observations, interviews, and documentation. Triangulation helps researchers verify the consistency of data from various sources and techniques. Data validity is tested through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is achieved through triangulation, member checking, and extended field participation. Transferability is achieved through detailed descriptions of the community's social, cultural, and religious background. Dependability is achieved through an audit trail, which is the systematic recording of all research processes. Confirmability is maintained by maintaining researcher objectivity and providing traceable raw data (Sugiyono, 2017).

Data analysis, based on the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and verification/drawing conclusions. Data reduction included filtering, summarizing, and selecting key data from interviews, observations, and documentation to focus on research themes, such as multicultural practices, forms of tolerance, and the roles of local actors. Data presentation was conducted through descriptive narratives, thematic tables, or comparison matrices across the six tolerance villages to systematically examine patterns, relationships, or differences across locations. Verification was conducted by comparing information from various informants, ensuring consistency, and rechecking interpretations to maintain objectivity. The analysis was cyclical, meaning that during data collection, initial analysis was conducted and, if necessary, a return to the field for clarification (Miles et al., 2019). A comparative analysis plan was implemented to assess the implementation of tolerance values, social participation, and the quality of life of residents in the six tolerance villages. This analysis compared the level of implementation of tolerance values, the effectiveness of the program, its impact on residents' perceptions, and the good practices and challenges in each village. The analysis indicators include social and religious tolerance (interfaith cooperation, the presence of nearby places of worship, conflict management), community participation (citizen involvement, support for government programs, the role of youth and women), social infrastructure and quality of life (public facilities, access to basic services, security), and local initiatives and innovations (unique tolerance programs, cross-sector collaboration) (Neuman, 2022).

The research implementation schedule is divided into several stages: primary and secondary data collection (weeks 1–3), interviews and field observations (weeks 4–5), data analysis (week 6), and preparation of reports and recommendations (weeks 7–8). The expected results are a comprehensive comparative report of six tolerance villages, policy or program recommendations based on field findings, and a model for developing tolerance-based inclusive villages. Data obtained include field observations, in-depth interviews with community leaders, religious leaders, and residents, questionnaires for local residents, and document and program archive studies. Thus, this study uses a descriptive qualitative approach based on the sociology of religion, with comprehensive primary and secondary data collection, data validity through triangulation and validity testing procedures, and systematic and comparative interactive analysis. The research aims to understand the practice of interfaith harmony, evaluate the effectiveness of Tolerance Villages, and develop recommendations for the development of a multicultural and harmonious society in the city of Bandung.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Tolerance Villages as a Means of Interfaith Harmony

Tolerance Villages play a crucial role in fostering a harmonious social life. First, interfaith dialogue is fostered through regular discussions and interfaith forums that foster empathy and openness in discussing differences without conflict. Second, social and religious activities are conducted collaboratively, from community service and community service to the celebration of religious holidays, all carried out in a spirit of togetherness. Third, the community is educated about multiculturalism through seminars, workshops, and a school curriculum that emphasizes the value of tolerance. Fourth, security and social stability are maintained through the role of community leaders and government support. Furthermore, inclusive interactions are realized through mutual cooperation, interfaith celebrations, collaborative facility construction, and youth dialogue forums to instill a moderate attitude from an early age. These include:

First, the role of Tolerance Villages in Maintaining Interfaith Harmony has been evident since their inauguration in Bandung in 2017, reaching six villages, most recently in Cibadak on April 29, 2025. The gradual inauguration pattern demonstrates institutional commitment, legitimacy, and coordination between Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD), religious organizations, and local government. Its functions include conflict prevention, alignment of interfaith activities, and mediation. The 2025 study confirmed that harmony is maintained through daily interactions, visits to places of worship, mutual cooperation, and dialogue forums that build interfaith social networks (Pauzian, 2025). Ethnographic data in Kebon Jeruk Village demonstrates tangible harmony through daily practices, such as the smooth running of worship activities without interruption, agreements on the use of loudspeakers, and neighborly ethics that transcend religious differences. Residents also confirmed that there have never been any conflicts related to faith, indicating the functioning of self-regulatory mechanisms without the need for official intervention. However, structural factors in the city remain influential. The Tolerance City Index (IKT) serves as a benchmark for policy success and community participation. To be effective, tolerance villages need to be aligned with inclusive city governance, particularly in the establishment of places of worship and discrimination-free public services.

Second, the role of Tolerance Villages in raising multicultural awareness is reflected in the interactions between residents of different faiths that take place in an atmosphere of equality, safety, and sustainability. The 2025 research in Bandung City showed that regular dialogue, interfaith visits, and social cooperation can strengthen perspective-taking, namely the ability to understand the perspectives of other groups. This confirms that multicultural awareness grows through consistent and planned daily interactions (Pauzian, 2025). In Kebon Jeruk, religious moderation is growing through government policies, cultural diversity with four adjacent houses of worship, and the residents' values of tolerance. This synergy facilitates the internalization of multiculturalism, distinguishing between the religious and social spheres. The tolerance village serves as a social laboratory, strengthening harmony, fostering productive collaboration, and enhancing the city's image of inclusiveness (Nurjannah & Rahim, 2024). Several challenges remain, including tokenism, dependence on central figures, and activities that stall midway. Therefore, city-level learning needs to focus on reducing dysfunction through program knowledge management. This includes documenting good practices, training dialogue facilitators, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) that assesses changes in attitudes, not simply counting activities. This way, the manifest function of raising awareness is maintained and not reduced to mere ceremony (Pauzian, 2025).

Third, multicultural education for residents will be more effective if delivered concretely, relevantly, and involving active participation. In Bandung's Tolerance Village, research found that interfaith workshops, cultural classes, and tours of places of worship encouraged learning by doing, where residents learned to understand the rituals of other religions through direct experience. Educational modules can utilize local history, such as the Satya Budhi Temple, to foster a sense of shared ownership of the multicultural city. The Kebon Jeruk case demonstrates that education plays a role in strengthening tolerant habits while simultaneously developing collective knowledge for the younger generation. According to Merton's perspective, multicultural education is a manifest function that is explicitly formulated in the tolerance village program.

However, it also brings out latent functions such as the formation of interfaith volunteer networks, increased digital literacy among residents to share good practices, and the development of more refined neighborly ethics. Without proper design, dysfunctions can occur, such as a curriculum that is normative, lacks community participation, or is simply a one-time activity. Therefore, an experience-based curriculum is needed, accompanied by evaluation that measures attitudinal changes (Pauzian, 2025). To broaden its impact, multicultural education needs to be integrated with city targets (IKT) and other tolerance village

networks through module sharing, experience exchange visits, and inter-village mentoring. The involvement of schools, youth organizations, and the Family Welfare Movement (PKK) opens up intergenerational learning pathways, while documentation of good practices facilitates implementation in the sixth tolerance village and beyond. Thus, tolerance villages can function as city-level learning hubs (Yosarie, 2022). Social media has become a strategic platform for disseminating the values of tolerance and pluralism. Research from Makassar State University (2025) shows that these platforms, through educational content, digital campaigns, and strengthening awareness of pluralism, have significant potential to shape inclusive perspectives in society. However, challenges such as hoaxes and hate speech are intensifying, making digital literacy an urgent need.

Fourth tolerance campaigns through social media are a strategic tool for spreading pluralistic values. UNM 2025 research confirms the effectiveness of social media through educational content and digital campaigns. However, hoaxes and hate speech require strengthening digital literacy so that messages of tolerance remain influential (Pauzian, 2025). The GIFFANI Kuliner blog emphasizes that social media can be an effective tool for tolerance campaigns. Multicultural content, interfaith stories, and inclusive hashtags such as #ToleransiltuKeren can spread a spirit of togetherness, especially among the younger generation. In Bandung, tolerance villages can utilize social media to share videos of mutual cooperation, interfaith dialogues, or messages from community leaders. Digital strategies based on educational-visual content, the involvement of leaders, and community literacy strengthen the existence of tolerance villages, both physically and digitally (Giffani, 2025).

Fifth, the involvement of religious and community leaders plays a crucial role in maintaining social cohesion and fostering a spirit of tolerance. A phenomenological study of the Gang Luna Tolerance Village shows that Muslim and Christian community leaders not only respect each other but also guide their followers to respect freedom of worship without prejudice. In daily activities such as mutual cooperation (gotong royong), interfaith celebrations, and community forums, religious leaders act as social mediators, bridging differences. Their presence strengthens the value of togetherness while ensuring harmonious and sustainable interfaith interactions. The priest of the Vihara revealed that even though the call to prayer is clearly audible, harmony between the communities is maintained. This is because Muslim leaders played a role in the construction of the vihara and collaborated with Buddhist and Christian leaders. This situation reflects a latent function, namely the emergence of interfaith solidarity that was not fully planned from the outset (Saumantri, 2024).

Ethnographic research in Paledang Village found that interfaith communication in the tolerance village occurs not only structurally, but also through the role of religious leaders as agents of moderation. They serve as liaisons between residents, clearing up misunderstandings, and facilitating regular interfaith dialogue. Structurally, the involvement of religious leaders ensures the maintenance of tolerance through social and religious legitimacy. Meanwhile, latent functions are evident in the emergence of informal networks among religious leaders, the growth of mutual trust, and advocacy in village governance. However, the effectiveness of this role is not always automatic, as challenges such as the dominance of prominent figures, internal resistance, and minimal leadership regeneration can lead to dysfunction. Therefore, preventative measures are needed through interfaith dialogue training, the establishment of community forums, and strengthening community solidarity. Religious leaders, such as religious leaders, pastors, and traditional leaders, also play an active role in resolving minor conflicts and instilling messages of peaceful living.

Social Dynamics in Six Tolerance Villages

This descriptive study examines six tolerant villages in Bandung City, each with distinct social characteristics. Village A emphasizes the tradition of celebrating religious holidays involving all elements of the community, while Village B emphasizes multicultural education for children through interfaith activities. Demographic factors, community history, and social structure significantly influence the character of each village. In Kebon Jeruk Village, for example, community interactions are relaxed but orderly, with interfaith night patrols scheduled and loudspeaker use regulated during worship services. These practices reflect a manifest function of managing social life that supports harmony. Quantitative findings from the Bandung National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) indicate that the Social Cohesion Index (SCI) scores of the six tolerant villages are higher than the city average. This indicates that open interaction between religious communities serves a latent function in strengthening social capital, making tolerance villages not merely symbolic but real spaces for the formation of cross-identity relationships. Generational diversity also enriches the dynamics. Young people, both students and members of youth organizations and student councils, act as informal

influencers, spreading the values of tolerance through online and offline activities. Thus, tolerance villages become arenas for the formation of intergenerational social relations. Economic factors also contribute. Several villages hold creative markets and interfaith bazaars that not only stimulate the local economy but also open up spaces for community interaction. This latent function strengthens real solidarity, making tolerance more than just discourse.

Challenges in managing tolerance villages arise when the principle of inclusivity is not fully upheld. One example is social jealousy between neighborhood associations (RTs), especially when some areas are more active in organizing activities than others. This situation is sometimes exacerbated by the dominance of local elite groups who determine the tolerance agenda without involving broader community participation. If continued, this situation has the potential to create internal fragmentation within the community. Furthermore, the density of students and temporary urban communities (*transient community*) also influences social interaction patterns. In areas around campuses, for example, residents' lifestyles change more rapidly, so the value of tolerance must adapt to a more dynamic social rhythm, multitasking, and openness to new diversity. This adaptation is crucial for the spirit of tolerance to remain relevant and accepted across generations and social groups (Zubaedi, 2016). The use of public spaces also demonstrates the social dynamics of tolerance villages. Open parks are often used as shared stages, showcasing interfaith art performances, religious studies, and local cultural performances. These activities demonstrate the manifest function of public spaces as neutral platforms for community gatherings. At the same time, a latent function is evident in the forging of informal social ties, where residents from various backgrounds are increasingly accustomed to interacting, sharing space, and building trust. Thus, although challenges remain, the practice of tolerance can be continuously strengthened through participatory management and inclusive use of public spaces.

The Role of Community and Religious Leaders

Religious and community leaders play a key role in supporting social cohesion. In Bandung's six Tolerance Villages, they are not merely symbols but active actors who design, facilitate, and maintain the sustainability of interfaith cooperation. Their role is also evident in mainstreaming inclusive discourse through official speeches, sermons, and joint community activities. For example, in Paledang Village, clerics, priests, and monks regularly hold interfaith dialogues at the beginning of Ramadan, discussing spiritual understanding and exchanging cultural values. This initiative serves a manifest function that deepens understanding of rituals and strengthens religion as a medium of tolerance. Furthermore, they also serve as social mediators when community cohesion is disrupted, whether by local incidents such as loudspeaker issues and house of worship renovations, or external issues such as religious polemics in the media. This role includes a latent function that prevents conflict escalation (Azwan et al., 2024).

In every village, the existence of a local Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB) demonstrates the strengthening role of religious leaders in the social structure. FKUBs not only fulfill regulatory obligations but also provide an internal forum for resolving disputes and organizing shared ritual agendas (FKUB, 2024). However, reliance on specific figures carries the risk of dysfunction. The case in Bojongloa Kulon shows that after the death of a central figure, tolerance activities ceased for a year, disrupting the social rhythm (Samuel & Tumonglo, 2023).

Therefore, leadership regeneration is an urgent need. Youth organizations (Karang Taruna), youth leaders, representatives of Muslim, Christian, and Buddhist communities, and women's groups need to be nurtured to be ready to become new drivers, ranging from dialogue facilitators and event moderators to those responsible for village programs. Overall, the role of leaders extends beyond manifest and latent functions to maintaining civic norms and the operation of the village as an inclusive space. They serve as guardians of values, liaisons between residents, and guardians of local social institutions. In conclusion, community and religious leaders are structural forces that ensure the sustainability of tolerance. Leadership training, the formation of interfaith teams, and the documentation of good practices will strengthen this role, enabling the Tolerance Village to become a robust model for replication in diverse living (Halawa et al., 2024).

Community and religious leaders play a crucial role in promoting the values of tolerance. They serve as mediators in resolving conflicts and educating the public about the importance of harmony. For example, in the Tolerance Village of RW 004, Jamika Village, the Tolerance Village Management often holds interfaith dialogues to discuss sensitive issues such as the church bombing, the Rohingya, or the Islamic Defenders Front. Local leaders (religious, community, youth, and government) also play a role. For example, in the Pancasila Village, religious leaders, community leaders, youth, and the village government work together to implement tolerance.

Functionalization of Six Tolerance Villages in Bandung City

The functionalization of six tolerance villages in Bandung City demonstrates how the value of harmony can be institutionalized in the daily lives of the community. Institutional structures and formal support are essential foundations for managing this program. Each tolerance village is managed through a community-based institutional system involving neighborhood associations (RT), neighborhood associations (RW), interfaith forums, and close collaboration with the sub-district. Through this structure, various collective activities can be systematically planned and implemented, from community service activities and interfaith dialogue to joint celebrations. The Bandung City Government's award of the "Tolerance Village" designation further strengthens its legitimacy and official recognition. Furthermore, the placement of physical spaces and symbols of tolerance are also important instruments in building the identity of tolerance villages. Each area is given visual markers such as signboards, plaques, or monuments to emphasize that the area is welcoming to diversity. These symbols are not merely signs but also central representations of shared values. For example, in one Bandung neighborhood association (RW), markers have been installed at six strategic points, which residents feel provide a sense of security and comfort in living side by side.

Managing interfaith activities is also a key aspect. Village administrators, consisting of neighborhood associations (RT), neighborhood associations (RW), and interfaith leaders, schedule activities inclusively. They ensure that religious services do not interfere with each other and initiate interfaith and intercultural dialogue, particularly during major holidays. These efforts have successfully fostered collective awareness and increased the active involvement of residents from diverse faith backgrounds. Equally important, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) and social synergy serve as a unifying force. Collective actions such as cleaning the environment, maintaining security at religious events, or assisting residents experiencing hardship demonstrate concrete practices of tolerance. Residents feel that shared involvement, regardless of background, strengthens solidarity and fosters a sense of belonging. To support sustainability, the Bandung City Government also engages volunteers and tolerance ambassadors. These volunteers, drawn from youth, students, and community leaders, are appointed to act as information disseminators, dialogue facilitators, and liaisons between communities. The presence of these tolerance village ambassadors not only helps build inclusive social networks but also prepares for sustainable leadership regeneration. Finally, evaluation and refinement are integral to the functioning of the tolerance village. Studies show that the program's function is increasingly optimized as the number of villages increases, particularly after the inauguration of Cibadak as the sixth location. However, the evaluation also highlighted the need for improved documentation, the development of more structured operational guidelines, and regular training for administrators. These steps are expected to maintain sustainability and strengthen the role of tolerance villages as living spaces that truly represent the values of harmony and togetherness.

The Impact of Tolerance Villages on Multicultural Awareness

The existence of Tolerance Villages in Bandung, such as in the Jamika, Gang Luna, and Balonggede areas, has had a significant impact on strengthening the community's multicultural awareness. The presence of these villages demonstrates that inclusively managed social spaces can foster bonds across religions and cultures. Through social and religious activities, as well as religious moderation education, residents are increasingly accustomed to living together, respecting differences, and building a strong collective identity (Pauzian, 2025). A phenomenological study of Gang Luna revealed that tolerance is implemented concretely through the freedom to practice worship without discrimination, active involvement in the culture of mutual cooperation, mutual assistance among residents, and joint celebrations across religions. These practices not only foster social solidarity but also continuously instill multicultural awareness in everyday life (Abdullah, 2015).

In Balonggede, the Tolerance Village is practiced through religious moderation that emphasizes balance, mutual respect, and open dialogue between faiths. Symbols of togetherness, support from community leaders, and social interaction activities strengthen the legitimacy of inclusive moderation. Research shows that the intensity of interaction and the application of moderation values form the foundation of multicultural awareness. Residents not only understand diversity as a concept but also make it a daily practice, reflected in increased interfaith participation and a reduced potential for conflict. The Tolerance Village program, through cultural festivals and training, strengthens social cohesion, although its sustainability still requires collaborative and innovative strategies (Nurjannah & Rahim, 2024).

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Six Tolerant Villages

Supporting factors and obstacles in the implementation of tolerance villages can be seen from both policy and social aspects. From a policy perspective, the support of the Bandung City Government serves as the main foundation through the inauguration of tolerance villages, the issuance of a Mayoral Decree, assistance from the National Unity and Politics Agency (Kesbangpol), and regulations related to houses of worship and interfaith activities. These policies serve as institutional legitimacy that strengthens the creation of a climate of harmony. Meanwhile, social capital is a latent supporting factor. Residents' habits of upholding tolerance, experiences of living side by side with adherents of other religions, and the openness of community leaders confirm that the value of tolerance existed before the formal program. Research findings in Gang Luna and Balonggede show that the tradition of mutual respect is deeply rooted, facilitating policy implementation. Thus, the interaction between the manifest function of regulations and the latent function of social capital provides tolerance villages with a solid foundation in maintaining harmony (Abdullah, 2015).

Partnerships between Tolerance Villages in Bandung play a crucial role in strengthening networks, expanding replication, and creating shared learning spaces through the exchange of educational methods, best practices, and the use of social media. Support for the ****Bandung Santun**** program through dedicated funding enhances sustainability, while youth and women become drivers of social change. The openness of Sundanese culture contributes to accelerating the acceptance of multicultural values. However, a study by UIN Sunan Gunung Djati revealed evaluation weaknesses, minimal documentation, and reliance on central figures. The risks of tokenism, exclusivism, economic disparity, and the politicization of religious issues also pose serious challenges. Solutions include a culture-based M&E system, capacity building, digital documentation, and cross-village forums (Saumantri, 2024).

One of the key drivers of the Tolerance Village's success is the official recognition from the Bandung City Government through the label "Tolerance Village." This legitimacy not only strengthens the institution's position at the local level but also facilitates access to various government programs and support (Nurjannah & Rahim, 2024). The role of local community leaders such as neighborhood heads (RT) and neighborhood heads (RW), religious leaders, and youth serves as a valuable social asset. Their active involvement helps create a harmonious atmosphere and is a key driver in carrying out joint activities involving various groups. The tradition of mutual cooperation, manifested through community service, security for religious events, and the provision of social assistance, is one of the forces that strengthens positive relationships between residents of different faith backgrounds (Abdullah, 2015).

Frequent obstacles include a lack of understanding among some residents regarding the universal values of tolerance. Furthermore, the dominance of certain groups sometimes reduces the open space for other groups to participate equally. Another contributing factor is the residents' busy schedules, both related to work and local traditions. This busy schedule can reduce their level of involvement in cross-community activities. Overall, the main strength of the Tolerance Village lies in its open social structure and government support. Conversely, the biggest challenge stems from a lack of diversity literacy among the community and the potential for exclusivity in social relations (Fitra et al., 2024).

Challenges faced by communities around the six tolerance villages in Bandung City

Despite its numerous benefits for strengthening interfaith harmony, the existence of the Tolerance Village in Bandung still faces a number of complex challenges. One major obstacle is the persistence of social segregation, where some community groups tend to interact only within their own communities. This indicates that even though the value of tolerance has been internalized, daily practices still leave gaps between residents. Furthermore, the influence of social media, which frequently spreads false news or hoaxes with racial and ethnic nuances, can trigger misunderstandings and weaken the established social harmony. Another factor is the lack of support from certain parties, both individuals and groups, who still hold exclusive views that conflict with the spirit of togetherness that is being sought. External challenges also arise from the social dynamics of the urban community surrounding the Bandung Tolerance Village, which often demands new adaptations to changing interaction patterns.

In the context of social adaptation and settlement patterns, the residents of the Tolerance Village on Jalan Vihara have adjusted in two ways: direct adjustment and withdrawal from interaction. This process reflects that maintaining harmony is not always smooth, especially when settlement structures are influenced by the location of economic facilities and differences in building patterns. This presents a unique dynamic in building social cohesion in a multicultural environment (Chandra & Budiwono, 2021). Meanwhile, in areas like Paledang,

tolerance remains strong, but the diversity of housing styles, the proximity of places of worship, and the need to maintain local identity present new challenges. The community faces the dilemma of maintaining harmony without sacrificing the distinctive character of their neighborhood (Saumantri, 2024). In Lengkong, a different issue arises, related to limited formalization and government support. Efforts to establish the Tolerance Village as a community tourism destination through the formation of Tourism Awareness Groups (Pokdarwis) still face obstacles. In addition, handling crowds during religious holidays, parking arrangements, and the use of loudspeakers during worship services often require extra coordination to avoid friction (Chandra & Budi Yuwono, 2021).

The results of the phenomenological research in Gang Luna confirm that residents' awareness of mutual respect for freedom of worship is key to preventing potential conflict. However, new challenges in the form of ethnic, religious, and intergroup (SARA) issues that develop through social media require increased digital literacy. The study in Balonggede also demonstrated the importance of rapid communication channels, such as WhatsApp groups for house of worship administrators, to avoid misunderstandings and expedite problem resolution. Overall, the main challenges of the Tolerance Village include managing large-scale religious events, managing public facilities, and addressing digital issues. All of these challenges can only be overcome through the implementation of clear standard operating procedures (SOPs), cross-stakeholder coordination, and ongoing collaboration to foster strong harmony.

Efforts to Increase Multicultural Awareness in Urban Communities Through Tolerance Villages

Organizing religious moderation training through collaboration between the government, the Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB), universities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is an effective way to raise awareness of the importance of diversity. Interfaith activities, such as cultural festivals and interfaith dialogue forums, are strategic tools for fostering positive interactions that can strengthen social ties within the community. Furthermore, successful good practices need to be archived and compiled into a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) guide so they can be replicated by other villages interested in developing similar concepts (Saumantri, 2024).

A phenomenology-based approach, namely instilling tolerance through daily habits, has proven more effective than relying solely on theoretical delivery in formal settings. Another relevant strategy is the appointment of "tolerance ambassadors," who play a crucial role in educating citizens of various age groups. The presence of these ambassadors allows for the delivery of multicultural values in a more personal, contextual, and sustainable manner, making the message of tolerance easier for the public to understand and practice (Nurjannah & Rahim, 2024). All of these efforts have significant potential to foster sustainable multicultural awareness. However, the program's success can only be achieved with clear government policy support and active participation from all elements of society. Therefore, collaboration, education, and strengthening regulations are the three main pillars in realizing a harmonious and tolerant social life (Saumantri, 2024).

Increasing multicultural awareness can be achieved through integrated strategies. One strategy is strengthening the inclusive economy, such as interfaith creative markets, community cooperatives, and joint waste banks, which create productive meeting spaces and strengthen social cohesion. Multi-stakeholder forums at the village level involving the government, FKUB (Religious Forum for Religious Development), religious leaders, youth organizations, universities, and NGOs need to be strengthened to develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) for harmony, including celebration management, loudspeaker ethics, and rapid conflict mediation. Interregional FKUB working visits are also effective as a means of exchanging experiences and benchmarking (Pauzian, 2025). From a governance perspective, program success measurement should adopt a behavior-based monitoring and evaluation (M&E) model. Evaluation should focus on changing community attitudes, strengthening interfaith networks, and managing small-scale conflict incidents, rather than simply counting the number of activities. Local indicators also need to be aligned with the 2024 Tolerant City Index (IKT) so that evaluation results can provide more targeted policy feedback (Yosarie, 2022).

The practices of Bandung's six Tolerance Villages should be documented in an open repository containing SOPs, modules, videos, and M&E tools. The 2024–2025 academic publication on religious moderation can serve as a practical guide. A youth mainstreaming strategy through young tolerance ambassadors is crucial for dialogue, creative content, and cross-village activities. Emerging challenges include tokenism, dependence on central figures, the digital literacy gap, weak coordination, budget constraints, and minority bias. Solutions include ICT-based annual performance contracts, a leadership regeneration system, digital literacy training,

regular coordination forums, CSR co-funding, inclusive participation audits, and a city-wide repository for activity documentation (Nurjannah & Rahim, 2024). Ultimately, scalability limitations can be addressed with a hub-and-spoke model, where six tolerance villages act as mentors for new villages for a specific period. This model ensures the quality of mentoring while expanding the reach of tolerance practices at the city level.

Role Strengthening Strategy in Six Tolerance Villages in Bandung City

The issuance of an official Decree (SK) at the city and sub-district levels is a crucial step in clarifying the organizational structure for managing the Tolerance Village (Nurjannah & Rahim, 2024). With this decree, each role and responsibility becomes clearer and more accountable. Furthermore, incorporating the Tolerance Village program into the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) and the city government's social cohesion agenda will ensure the program's sustainability, as it has a stronger policy foundation (Saumantri, 2024). Establishing Cibadak as a learning center and pilot model is also an appropriate strategy to replicate proven good practices in other areas of Bandung City. Furthermore, optimizing support from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs can be directed toward the development of public spaces and communal facilities that can be shared by residents, thereby strengthening social interaction across groups (Nurjannah & Rahim, 2024).

Training local mediators is crucial for early conflict prevention. Transparency in annual reporting ensures accountability, while inclusive economic programs such as creative markets and interfaith cooperatives strengthen networks and community peace (Yosarie, 2022). For further management, multi-stakeholder forums at the village level involving the government, FKUB (Religious Forum for Religious Affairs), religious leaders, youth organizations, universities, and NGOs serve as strategic platforms for developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for harmony. These SOPs cover the ethics of using loudspeakers, procedures for celebrating religious holidays, and mechanisms for rapid mediation. Working visits by FKUBs from various regions to Bandung also demonstrate that interregional learning and experience exchanges are significantly beneficial in strengthening tolerance.

The behavior-based M&E model is more effective because it assesses attitudinal changes, interfaith networks, and conflict management. Local indicators are aligned with the 2024 IKT, while the practices of the six Tolerance Villages are documented in an open repository for replication and applicable operational guidance (Pauzian, 2025). Finally, the youth mainstreaming strategy needs to be mainstreamed by recruiting young tolerance ambassadors. They can act as dialogue facilitators, digital content creators, and drivers of cross-village activities. Youth involvement is crucial in building an inclusive attitude, especially when combined with local cultural wisdom. National findings on interfaith youth dialogue also confirm that the role of youth has a significant impact on creating a more tolerant, harmonious, and sustainable society.

Similarities and Differences Between Six Tolerant Villages in Bandung City

The most fundamental similarity across all villages is their existence in areas with ethnic and religious diversity, accompanied by an inclusive RT/RW structure and the implementation of strong principles of religious moderation (Saumantri, 2024). Even in the Tolerance Village of Jamika Subdistrict, which is located in Gang Luna, it has a unique characteristic in the form of the existence of places of worship from various religions which are located close to each other (Nurjannah & Rahim, 2024). Balonggede sub-district stands out for its harmonious atmosphere between religious communities in the city center, which is a strong identity of the village (Saumantri, 2024). The Cibadak Tolerance Village, the sixth newest tolerance village, is positioned as a center for developing and replicating tolerance models for application in other areas of Bandung City. Striking differences between these villages include community characteristics, geographic location, and the availability of facilities in each area (Nurjannah & Rahim, 2024). Despite having different contexts and uniqueness, all villages show an equal commitment to maintaining tolerance and creating a harmonious social life (Abdullah, 2015).

The birth of the Tolerance Village in Bandung began with a government initiative in 2017, which continued until the inauguration of the sixth village in Cibadak in April 2025. The general pattern of its formation included local-level declarations, the involvement of community leaders, and support from Kesbangpol and FKUB. These villages, such as Jamika, Balonggede, Kebon Jeruk, Paledang, Dian Permai, and Cibadak, showcase diverse social spaces with adjacent houses of worship, practices of religious moderation, and institutional strengthening. Studies show that this initiative has succeeded in fostering harmony through open dialogue,

mutual respect, and socio-religious programs, especially in areas with physical proximity to houses of worship (Nurjannah & Rahim, 2024).

Each tolerance village in Bandung has a different inauguration timeline, although their goal is the same: institutional strengthening. Kebon Jeruk was inaugurated on January 19, 2022, as an icon of Andir District, while Cibadak became the sixth village on April 29, 2025. Paledang and Dian Permai were recognized earlier through official government publications. These variations in inauguration reflect differences in the pace of adoption, while remaining oriented toward legitimacy and sustainability. Operational challenges that arise generally relate to funding, worship schedules, and digital radicalism. Furthermore, the use of public media and documentation, as in Cibadak, Dian Permai, and Paledang, strengthens the presence and accelerates the replication of good practices (Saumantri, 2024). Overall, the main similarity of the six tolerance villages is a shared commitment to harmony and moderation, which has been formally institutionalized. Differences between villages primarily lie in spatial configuration, demographic conditions, and the focus of the programs implemented. Recent trends show the expansion of the model, such as the inauguration of the Cibadak Village and the push for increased replication at the sub-district level. This indicates that despite the diversity of strategies employed, all villages remain committed to a common goal: to achieve a harmonious and sustainable life amidst diversity (Pauzian, 2025).

4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study shows that the existence of the Tolerance Village in Bandung City has a real contribution to strengthening interfaith harmony while fostering multicultural awareness in the community. This program is not merely a symbol of local government policy, but rather a social innovation capable of managing diversity as a strength, not a source of division. The interfaith meeting space created through various communal activities demonstrates that diversity can be practiced in the form of harmonious social cohesion. The Tolerance Village has also been shown to have dual functions, both manifest and latent. The manifest function is seen in formal activities such as declarations, cultural festivals, and interfaith dialogue forums. Meanwhile, the latent function is manifested in daily interactions between residents that prioritize the values of mutual cooperation, mutual respect, and solidarity across ethnicities and religions. This confirms that efforts to foster tolerance are not limited to ceremonial events but also touch on practical aspects of daily life. Increasing multicultural awareness in the community is an important achievement of this program. Tolerance education carried out through discussions, outreach, and cultural activities, coupled with the use of social media, has succeeded in expanding its influence, especially among the younger generation. Thus, the Tolerance Village can be seen as a multicultural learning model that adapts to current developments. Comparisons between the six villages also reveal variations in implementation. While the basic goal is the same: building harmony, each village has its own unique characteristics, tailored to its local context. This demonstrates that the success of the Tolerance Village is inextricably linked to social conditions, history, and local community participation. Overall, this study confirms that the Tolerance Village is an effective strategy for maintaining social harmony in a pluralistic society. However, its sustainability requires consistent policy support, synergy between the government, religious leaders, academics, and civil society, and the active participation of all residents to ensure the sustainable internalization of tolerance values.

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