

Empowering Educational Actors and Institutions to Promote  
Religious Moderation in Preventing Violent Extremism - **CONVEY Indonesia**

# Policy Brief Series

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This Policy Brief Series is made as part of CONVEY Indonesia project conducted by PPIM UIN Jakarta and UNDP Indonesia.

CONVEY Indonesia is aimed to promote peace in Indonesia and prevent extremism with violence and radicalism through a set of research, surveys, policy advocacy and public interactions based on the potency of religious education. CONVEY Indonesia project covers issues on tolerance, diversity and nonviolence among youth.

## Improving Religious Tolerance: Growing and Building Diversity Ethics from Higher Education

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Currently, higher education institutions are facing a big issue which is student intolerance. One example from the Family Action Unit (KAKB) of the University of Indonesia (UI) assesses that intolerance in Indonesia has reached an alarming stage. They considered that one of the reasons was that campuses were used as places to spread intolerance (Kompas, 2017).



Several studies up to 2020 still show a similar trend in all types of tertiary institutions. This condition is a problem for the nation and state because universities are one of the places that play a significant role in preparing the regeneration of public leadership in Indonesia.



The government has issued three (3) essential policies to respond to this problem. **The first** is Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2017 concerning Strengthening Character Education. **Second**, Regulation of The Minister of Research, Technology, And Higher Education, The Republic of Indonesia (Permenristekdikti) No. 55 of 2018 concerning the Development of Pancasila Ideology in Higher Education Student Organizations. **Third**, the Religious Moderation Policy was issued in 2019 by the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

The key findings of the national survey by PPIM Convey (2020) provide an overview of the fundamental problems of student tolerance. Factors that impact student tolerance in all types of HE are cross-group relations and perceptions of threat. Cross-group relations emphasized that cross-group relations with different religious groups in students did not occur automatically as a social process. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen and improve specific skills to manage the obstacles, namely social prejudice and discrimination. For example, individuals perceive a situation negatively and feel the need to protect themselves. In addition, there are two types of threats perceived, namely realistic and symbolic threats, both of which can trigger a weakening/strengthening of student religious tolerance. These two factors require special treatment in the HE environment as a place for students to develop their full potential.

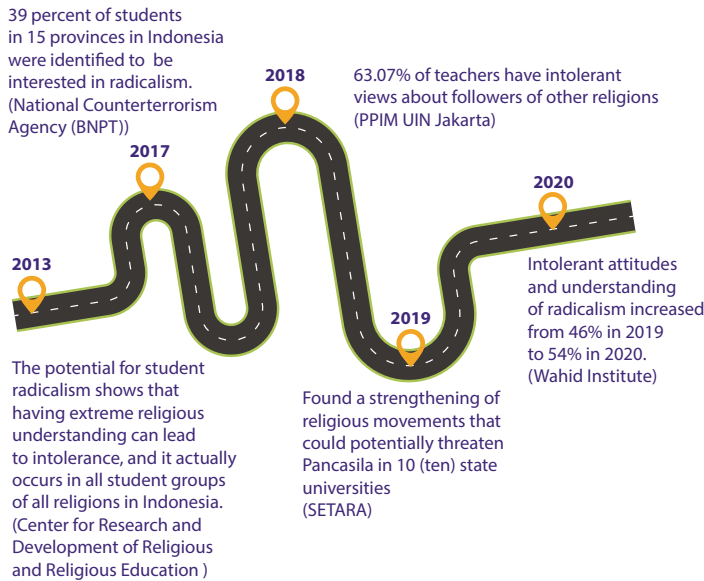
In general, changes that need to be made at the tertiary level are to restore the basic functions of higher education. It can be done by enabling

students to understand the ethical implications of the knowledge learned to manage the ethics of diversity. There are several ways to make changes: first, by changing the curriculum for compulsory national courses, particularly religious education and citizenship education. Curriculum orientation needs to be changed to train students to accept, apply, and act in various realities. Second, encourage universities to build a healthy and open social and academic climate through policies related to evaluating the performance of the HE. It is in line with changes in the orientation of national education in the independent campus program, namely the evaluation of outputs and outcomes. Thus, students can have the ability to change religious tolerance, control themselves over their social environment, and influence each other constructively. Besides, they also can know how much responsibility they have to maintain the common social order (social order, state administration, and symbolic order). Finally, the ethics of diversity can be realized in the campus environment.




## Preface

The main objective of this national survey is to identify robust predictors strengthening or weakening religious tolerance among students in Indonesia. The two main factors as the focus of this study are the Campus Environment and the Individual students. Religious tolerance has long been a severe problem and has been the concern of various parties because of its potential to become a threat to the integrity of the Indonesian nation and state. Many surveys have been conducted to describe and understand this condition, especially the survey among young people and society in general. In particular, this survey targets the campus environment as a place for young people to cultivate intellectual thoughts, build self-concepts and careers, and prepare themselves for their future.

The development of intolerance studies in the world of education in five (5) years provides an alarming picture.



Religious tolerance (hereinafter referred to as tolerance) is interpreted from the perspective of the religious attitudes, which are manifested fundamentally in political and social life.

		
<p><b>Data Collection</b> Online under the guidance of enumerators in 34 provinces</p>	<p><b>Respondents</b> 2387 students 543 lecturers</p>	<p><b>Data Analysis</b> Multilevel approach, and hypothesis testing uses a multiple regression approach</p>



**Method**  
Circular systematic  
Random sampling



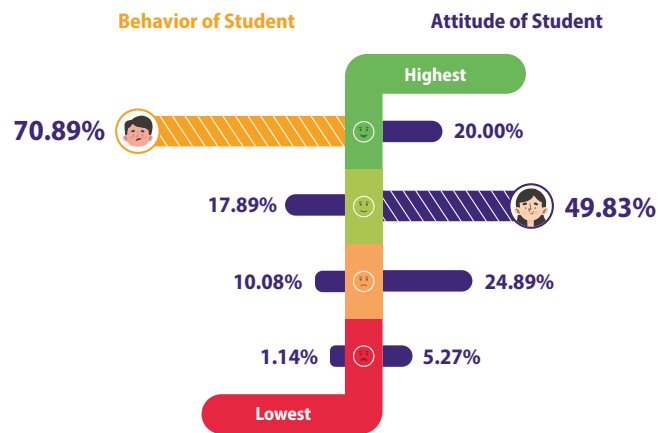
**Attentional Checker**  
Verification on  
all respondents



**Duration**  
1 November -  
27 Desember 2020

## Overview of National Survey Findings

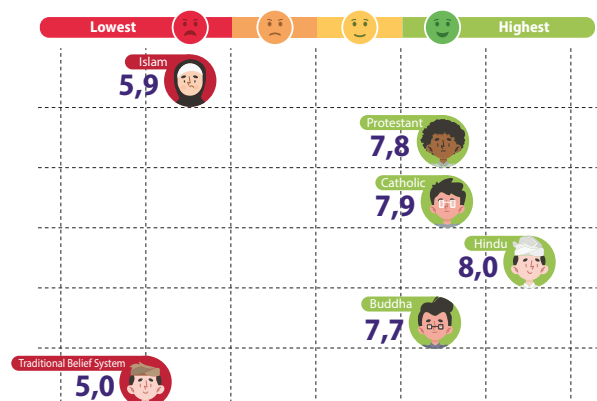
The category of students having very low and low tolerance was about 30.16%. Based on religious groups, Muslim students have the lowest average compared to other religious groups



The Feelings towards other religions (dislike of other religions) scale shows the following conditions

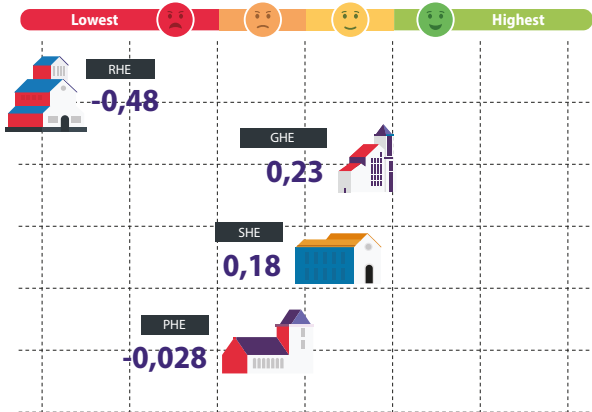
Based on religion, it can be seen that students of the traditional belief group have the lowest average feelings of dislike towards other religious groups, followed by Islam, Confucianism, Buddhism, Protestantism, Catholicism, and Hinduism

## Religion Thermometer Beside Own Religion Based on Religion



Based on the type of HE, the average order from lowest to highest is RHE, PHE, SHE, and GHE.

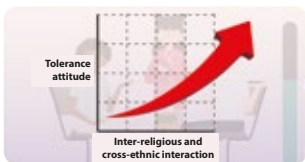
### Religion Thermometer Beside Own Religion Based on HE



In general, student tolerance can be explained from the pattern of its correlation with the campus social environment/climate, which is unidirectional.

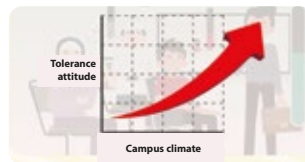
Factors that have a strong enough impact on strengthening/weakening student tolerance, in order from the strongest to the index, are cross-group relations, lecturer tolerance, HE's attitude towards minorities, and cross-group discussions.

### Factors Affecting Tolerance in HEs



#### Interrelationships among religions & ethnicities

The higher the students' level of inter-religious and cross-ethnic interaction, the higher their tolerance attitude



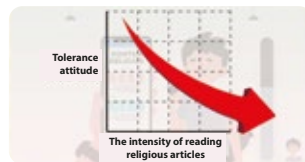
#### Campus climate

Universities, having lecturers with a high tolerance attitude and giving visibility to minorities, commonly have highly tolerant students; and vice versa.



#### The influence of religious activities

The higher the level of students' participation in campus religious activities, the lower their tolerance attitude



The more intensely the students read online religious articles, the lower their tolerance attitude



#### The effect of perceived threat

The higher the students' perception of the threat, either socially or economically, the lower their tolerance attitude

Threat Perception Factors and Cross-Group Relationships became impact factors in all models after controlling for factors of Age, Democratic Values, Openness (AOT), Authoritarianism, Social Identity, Parental Income, and Religious Diversity in their hometown.

In particular, there is variation based on the types of HE by controlling for several factors: Age, Democratic Values, Openness (AOT), Authoritarianism, Social Identity, Parents' Income, and Religious Diversity in their hometown. The following is a description of the dynamics of student tolerance based on the general model, types of universities, and religious groups.

	Model 2	Model 3
		Type of HE
Cross-Group Discussion	0.098	0.095
Cross-Group Relations	<b>0.215</b>	<b>0.213</b>
Spiritual Activities	-0.107	-0.105
HE's Attitude towards Minorities	<b>0.118</b>	
Lecturer Tolerance	0.109	<b>0.152</b>
Muslim	-0.375	-0.373
Religious Rituals		
Reading Religious Articles	-0.064	-0.064
Java	0.117	0.128
Males	0.077	0.078
Threat Perception	-0.267	-0.268
Parent's income > IDR 15 Million	<b>0.259</b>	<b>0.245</b>
Hometown Poverty	-0.075	
RHE		-0.214
	Model 4	Model 5
	Muslim	Other Religious
Cross-Group Discussion	0.086	<b>0.153</b>
Cross-Group Relations	<b>0.231</b>	<b>0.144</b>
Spiritual Activities	-0.139	-0.002
HE's Attitude towards Minorities		0.130
Lecturer Tolerance	<b>0.187</b>	
Muslim		
Religious Rituals	-0.065	
Reading Religious Articles	-0.080	
Java	<b>0.162</b>	-0.130
Males		
Threat Perception	-0.258	-0.277
Parent's income > IDR 15 Million		<b>0.438</b>
Hometown Poverty		-0.246
RHE		

	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
	SHE	PHE	RHE
Cross-Group Discussion	0.078	0.118	0.141
Cross-Group Relations	<b>0.213</b>	<b>0.212</b>	<b>0.217</b>
Spiritual Activities	-0.151		
HE's Attitude towards Minorities			
Lecturer Tolerance		<b>0.228</b>	<b>0.780</b>
Muslim	<b>0.451</b>	-0.177	
Religious Rituals	0.029	-0.023	
Reading Religious Articles	-0.110		
Java	0.166		<b>0.202</b>
Males		<b>0.143</b>	
Threat Perception	-0.300	-0.269	-0.188
Parent's income > IDR 15 Million	<b>0.346</b>		
Hometown Poverty			
RHE			

## Strategies of Strengthening Religious Tolerance in Higher Education

Based on these general and specific findings, the following are some policy recommendations that can be proposed for Universities and Government Institutions related to national education as a whole.

### Overall:

Based on the key findings that apply to all types of higher education institutions, the factors that have a strong impact on student tolerance encompass cross-group relations and threat perceptions; several proposals related to policy are as follows:

1

Managing and strengthening the diversity ethic as the basis for building a campus social climate through the following:

- Improving skills in building and managing relationships across religious groups to manage diversity among students and lecturers
- Improving discussion skills across religious groups to manage diversity among students and lecturers
- Improving literacy of religions to enrich knowledge and understanding of religions among students and lecturers

2

Managing threat perceptions in students by doing the following:

- Improving critical thinking skills and being open to external stimuli and circumstances
- Improving students' self-evaluation abilities on what they see, hear, or feel and receive
- Strengthening the value system that supports the ethics of diversity in the campus social environment

### At College Level:

Based on the pattern of unidirectional relationships with students, campus social climate factors play a role in strengthening student and lecturer tolerance in all types of universities. Therefore, the following actions are proposed:

### These actions generally apply to all types of HE

1

- Building and strengthening an academic environment that promotes diversity through various student activities and cross-religious religious activities.
- Building and strengthening a social environment that can help students build self-concept by interacting in diverse environments; and assisting lecturers in developing social and personality competencies, especially for lecturers in religious subjects.
- Revising the curriculum for religious education, citizenship education, character education, and learning methods that provide space for understanding own religions/groups and increase social interaction between different religions/groups – We need a curriculum that enables students to train mind and body in a balanced way (cognition, affect, and psychomotor).
- Showing respects towards minorities to increase understanding of the existence of others to live together through arts and cultural activities based on on-campus social life.
- Making adjustments to the new standard of assessment of HE and lecturer performance achievement by including the element of satisfaction of external stakeholders – this effort is supposed to be held annually as a form of evaluation or feedback from external stakeholders.
- Developing a lecturer self-development program to help lecturers improve competence and provide diverse experiences specifically.
- For non-Muslim student groups, universities should pay attention and encourage the students, especially from the remote areas, to be active in various interfaith/group activities, and help build student resilience in the face of difficulties in cultivating democratic values.

**Specifically applies to particular conditions:**

2

**Religion-based Higher Education**

- Enabling students to be open-minded to different religions and building student resilience in the face of economic difficulties to foster democratic values.
- Re-formulating the RHE policies related to the vision of the institution and the scientific vision of each study program.
- The public campaign is related to the "new face" of RHE as a higher religious education institution that is more open and advanced in promoting diversity.
- The lecturer's tolerance factor has a powerful impact on the RHE campus social environment. Thus, controlling the lecturer's religious attitude needs to be stated explicitly in the RHE policy.

**Private Higher Education only**

- The campuses must improve the social climate that is more open and strengthening the social roles of each gender.

**State Higher Education only**

- Increasing the understanding of each own religion and opening chances for encounters to build an ethics of diversity in the social climate of SHE.
- Opening opportunities for student activities that provide students with spiritual experiences to strengthen their healthy self-concept.

**At the relevant Government Institutions:**

1

**Independent Campus Policy:**

The campus social climate plays a significant role in building tolerance of students and lecturers. Therefore, one of the instruments that can encourage a conducive campus social climate is to set it as one of the points in evaluating the performance of HE and the points by which HE is accredited.

The points mentioned above are the assessment results of the campus social climate and the lecturers related to the impact of the campus environment as proven in inter-religious relations, inter-ethnic relations, and religious discussions with other groups. It is one of the objectives of the religious education and civic education courses as national compulsory subjects (to be one of the indicators of HE's achievement). The proposed activities related to this proposal are:

- Developments of assessment instruments are mandatory to be filled out as part of campus accreditation with a process and outcome paradigm. One of the outcomes-based evaluations (OBE) of 2 courses is intended to be a

"goalkeeper" in building a conducive campus environment in respecting differences and open-mindedness and being adaptive (as a counter to the impact of perceptions of threats). The survey results become one of the performance indicators from universities which are managed centrally every year.

- Curriculum preparation training is necessary for lecturers in charge of religious education and civic education courses. It needs to be done to standardize the understanding among the lecturers who support these courses and in accordance with the goals set nationally.
- Preparation training for making assessments must be based on OBE and learning activities that allow the introduction of diversity with appropriate approaches, for example, experiential learning/problem-based focus/and others.
- The recruitment process for lecturers who teach religious education and character education courses is based on the demands of learning outcomes, and they will be given the same reward as lecturers of scientific subjects.

2

**Religious Moderation Policy**

- Improving Literacy of Religions – this idea refers to the findings at the campus level that inter-religious relations and discussions with other groups are significant risk factors providing opportunities for student exposure (intolerance). Thus, it will reduce the impact of spiritual activity factors that tend to be exclusive.
- Strengthening discourse in religious moderation policies focuses on topics that foster hope and optimism for students viewing the world outside themselves and their groups.
- Inserting social and personality competencies in RHE accreditation related to lecturer competence, especially lecturers who are in charge of the subject of "religious education and civic education"
- Opening classes that introduce diversity to students with varied approaches (experiential learning/problem-based projects/ or others)

**Practical recommendations:**

1

**Managing Threat Perceptions in Students**

Perception of threats is the most substantial factor in its impact on student tolerance in all types of universities and religious groups. Therefore, it needs special attention from the university as a manager. The purpose of managing Threat Perception is to build students' ability as individuals to accept truth outside of themselves and the reality outside of themselves/their group. The substantial effort of this process is to train students to examine their ways of thinking, understand desires/motivations, and choose and sort information. The following are some practical recommendations, such as opening communication spaces (meeting rooms) and having inter-religious interaction in the campus environment as mandatory and non-mandatory student activities. Some of the activities that can be carried out include:

**Mandatory Activities:**

- Inviting guest lecturers from outside the campus who have different religious backgrounds and thoughts
- Exchanging students with campuses that have specific characteristics according to the purpose of student exchange
- Providing incentives for campus religious organizations to interact with religious or non-religious organizations inside and or outside the campus

**Nonmandatory Activities:**

- Forming religious study groups is one of the options for activities on campus
- Visiting other places of different religions in order to get to know and understand
- Develop a live-in program as part of the leadership program to different religious groups

2

**Lecturer Life**

The following are some practical ideas that can be implemented at the campus level to anticipate and manage the problem of lecturer tolerance:

- a. Developing a lecturer performance appraisal system with one of the tools is a questionnaire filled out by students. In the questionnaire, one of the indicators is to picture the religious attitude of the lecturer, and the survey results become one of the lecturers' performances assessments.
- Self-development programs for lecturers need to be carried out by each university-self-development to open spaces for communication and intellectual development of thinking (cognition) and affection. The target of this program is to increase the ability to build

climate/social relations in the campus environment.

- For lecturers who are in charge of religion/character education courses, a particular recruitment system is needed by including special instruments to identify personality indicators based on the motivational trait in the lecturer.



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