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School Policies for Social Harmony and Intolerance Prevention in Indonesian High Schools: A Qualitative Study in Surabaya

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to explore how high schools conceptualize, implement, and evaluate school-level policies designed to promote social harmony and prevent intolerance.

Methods and Materials: This study employed a qualitative research design with a descriptive approach. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes across institutional categories. The research was conducted in Surabaya, Indonesia, involving seven purposively selected schools: three public schools (SMAN 6, SMAN 13, SMAN 18), two private religious-based schools (SMA Al-Hikmah, SMA St. Louis 1), and two private public-based schools (SMA Kemala Bhayangkari, SMA Trimurti). Participants consisted of 14 key educational staff, including principals, vice-principals, and teachers from Civic Education, Religious Education, and Guidance and Counseling (BK). Data from open-ended qualitative questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework for thematic analysis, supplemented by Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) for data triangulation.

Findings: The analysis revealed that schools utilize a mixture of preventive and repressive strategies. Preventive efforts include integrating character education into the curriculum, implementing anti-bullying movements, and fostering cross-community interactions. Repressive strategies primarily rely on guidance, counseling, and progressive behavioral sanctions. However, the study highlights that student participation in policy formulation remains limited, and objective school-level monitoring and evaluation instruments are highly uneven or absent. Teachers perceive that these measures help maintain a respectful environment, though objective metrics of policy efficacy are lacking.

Conclusion: While schools have developed diverse tolerance-oriented policies, student voices and evaluation mechanisms remain uneven and require systemic strengthening to ensure sustainable social harmony.

Keywords: Intolerance, Social Harmony, Tolerance Education, School Policy, Radicalism Prevention.

Introduction

Recently, intolerance-radicalism in Indonesia has penetrated the education field through schools. Students are parties who are not immune to the threat of intolerance-radicalism. Of course, this phenomenon raises a strong paradox. Schools play an important role in guiding students to become good citizens, but they often tend to be counterproductive stakeholders. If they are not aware of the growing ideas and practices of intolerance-radicalism, schools can be easily trapped in practices that can plunge students into anti-citizenship and anti-nationalism through the practices of intolerance-radicalism. Rationally, these practices of intolerance-radicalism will only keep students away from the values, enthusiasm, and good practices of citizenship and nationalism.

Schools hold a crucial and strategic position in shaping students' character. They function as spaces to nurture the values of tolerance, respect, and harmony. However, they can also become sites where intolerance is reproduced through internal dynamics, such as biased teaching materials or insufficiently inclusive practices, as well as through wider societal and cultural pressures. This makes it important for schools to strengthen tolerance across teaching, learning, and school life. In the digital environment, exposure to polarizing narratives and hate speech can intensify these challenges. Recent Indonesian research has similarly emphasized the vulnerability of students to intolerance and radicalizing influences and the need for school-based preventive responses (Suyanto et al., 2022; Sirry et al., 2024; Yani & Hanafi, 2022; Yani et al., 2026).

The phenomenon of intolerance in schools needs to be addressed seriously before it escalates into more severe forms of exclusion, extremism, or radicalism. Schools, as educational institutions, therefore play a crucial role in fostering tolerance through policies that support social life based on mutual respect (Berry, 1997; Banks, 2015; Naim & Sauqi, 2008). Policies for developing social harmony typically emphasize tolerance, equality, coexistence, and awareness of diversity (Sirry et al., 2024; Suyanto et al., 2024; Yani et al., 2023a; Yani et al., 2023b; Yani et al., 2024). Their implementation requires both preventive and corrective strategies, with teachers and school leaders occupying central roles while student participation remains an important consideration.

Therefore, teachers need further training in managing intolerance and implementing tolerance to create an inclusive and harmonious educational environment that fosters mutual respect and acceptable interactions. One of the best reinforcing efforts is the implementation of policies that promote communication and social interactions based on the values of tolerance.

Intolerance in educational settings is not a new phenomenon, but the scale and speed of digital communication can make polarizing narratives more visible and more difficult for schools to address. Related research has examined religious tolerance, intergroup contact, and educational responses to prejudice in diverse settings (Al Sadi & Basit, 2013; Kanas et al., 2015; Suyanto et al., 2022). These concerns reinforce the need for school policies that explicitly support social harmony and constructive interaction across differences.

In 2017, the Wahid Institute Survey again reported that 40% of high school students who participated in Islamic extracurricular activities, Rohis ("Rohani Islam"), admitted to supporting the change of Indonesia into an Islamic state under a caliphate system. This survey shows that 34.3% of students are very intolerant towards religions other than Islam (Syafruddin et al., 2018).

The data and facts related to intolerance as mentioned above cannot be ignored, but rather need to be addressed by various parties because this is the shared responsibility of all educational institutions, both formal (schools) and informal (families and communities). These educational institutions must work together and reinforce the importance of the solutions that must be implemented. However, this study focuses on the role of formal educational institutions, namely schools, in carrying out their functions and duties as shapers of a harmonious social life.

In the digital age, concerns about intolerance among school students intersect with broader challenges of religious diversity, school segregation, and young people's everyday

encounters with difference (Shahar & Berger, 2018; Laksana & Wood, 2019). Because social media can extend these interactions beyond school boundaries, prevention efforts require coordination among schools, families, communities, and students themselves.

Responding to this fact, the world of education, in this case schools, is important to prepare more effective tools, including through social harmony development policies so that all school members have effective protection from intolerant attitudes. The role of schools and teachers in preventing the development of intolerance among students has not been focused and effective (Raihani, 2011; Raihani, 2014; Dowd, 2016).

In several cases, it has been found that a number of teachers are suspected of encouraging intolerance in Indonesia's pluralistic society, and some teachers even stimulate intolerance among students, for example, by "forcing" them to wear the hijab and the like. This fact shows that there is a need for more serious study of the role of schools and teachers in preventing the development of intolerance. Usually, the victims of bullying are minority students, especially in terms of religion and ethnicity. They do not have many opportunities to speak up because of pressure from the dominant group (Moulin, 2011; Johansson, 2008).

Recent reports from Garut, West Java, illustrate how adolescents can become exposed to radical ideological networks outside formal school structures. In October 2021, Metro TV News reported that 59 teenagers were suspected of having been initiated into the Indonesian Islamic State (NII), with parents describing marked changes in behavior and school participation (Metro TV News, 2021). Such cases underscore the need for schools to recognize external ideological pressures without assuming that all forms of student religiosity or difference are signs of radicalization.

Based on the facts and phenomena related to the spread of intolerant attitudes, it is important to conduct research to examine the phenomenon of intolerance in the school environment, social interactions at school, and the important role that schools play in preventing intolerance in line with the massive influence of social media, because it is suspected that the development of intolerance among students tends to spread and can endanger the unity and integrity of the nation in the future (Mietzner & Muhtadi, 2018).

Schools hold a strategic position in shaping student character and nurturing an appreciation for diversity. However, they can also become sites where intolerance is reproduced through internal bias or external societal pressures. This vulnerability is compounded by the reach of digital communication and polarizing narratives. Recent studies of Indonesian schools and youth likewise show that tolerance, religious literacy, peer relations, and organizational environments can shape how intolerance is experienced and managed (Suyanto et al., 2022; Sirry et al., 2024; Sirry et al., 2026; Yani et al., 2026).

While existing literature recognizes the broad necessity of tolerance education, a substantial research gap remains regarding the explicit operational mechanics of school-level policies within diverse institutional types (public vs. private religious vs. private secular). Little is known about the concrete strategies teachers employ to balance preventive and repressive measures, the extent to which student input is integrated into rules, and the functionality of localized monitoring tools.

To address these empirical omissions, this study answers the following research questions:

1. How do diverse high schools in Surabaya conceptualize and implement social harmony policies to prevent intolerance?
2. What strategies are actively used by school actors to counter intolerant behaviors?
3. How are school leaders, teachers, and students involved in the formulation and day-to-day implementation of these policies?

Methods and Materials

Study Design

This study employs a qualitative research design and thematic analysis to explore school policies, implementation strategies, and educator perspectives. Data collection relied on qualitative open-ended questionnaires distributed to participants to gather foundational textual responses, followed

by semi-structured interviews to probe nuanced institutional narratives. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were utilized for data triangulation and validation.

The study was conducted across seven high schools in Surabaya, selected via purposive sampling to guarantee institutional and socio-religious diversity. The sample includes:

1. Public Schools: SMAN 6 Surabaya, SMAN 13 Surabaya, and SMAN 18 Surabaya (bound directly by national civic mandates).
2. Private Religious-Based Schools: SMA Al-Hikmah (Islamic-oriented) and SMA St. Louis 1 (Catholic-oriented).
3. Private Public-Based Schools: SMA Kemala Bhayangkari and SMA Trimurti (secular-private structures).

These schools were selected based on their structural variance, accessibility, and willingness to participate. No selected schools refused participation.

Participants

A total of 14 formal school actors were recruited via purposive inclusion criteria (holding leadership or student-facing instructional roles for over three years). The participant group consisted of:

- 3 School Principals / Vice-Principals
- 4 Guidance and Counseling (BK) Teachers
- 4 Civic Education (PPKn) Teachers
- 3 Religious Education Teachers (representing Islamic and Christian instruction)

The gender distribution was balanced (8 males, 6 females) with a mean teaching experience of 12 years. Students and parents were not interviewed directly; data reflect the professional perspectives and structural experiences of the educational staff.

Data Collection

Data collection occurred face-to-face over a four-month period. Semistructured interviews lasted 45 to 60 minutes per participant, were conducted in Indonesian, audio-recorded with explicit consent, and transcribed verbatim. Two separate FGDs (lasting approximately 90 minutes each) were conducted to triangulate responses across schools. Field notes were maintained during site visits to document structural practices. Official school code of conduct booklets and policy documents were also collected and reviewed.

Sample Interview Question:

"How does your school structurally respond if a student exhibits verbal intolerance or exclusive peer-grouping based on identity, and what specific guidelines govern that response?"

Data Analysis

The textual data were examined using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework for thematic analysis. The analytical process progressed through the following steps:

[Familiarization with Transcripts]
|
▼
[Generating Initial Inductive Codes] (Conducted independently by 2 researchers)
|
▼
[Searching for Overarching Themes] (Mapping codes to systemic patterns)
|
▼
[Reviewing and Refining Themes] (Resolving coder disagreements via consensus)
|
▼
[Defining and Naming Final Analytical Themes]

Coding was primarily inductive, allowing themes to emerge organically from the text rather than forcing them into predetermined policy categories. Qualitative data analysis software was utilized to manage and organize the transcript codes.

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Trustworthiness

To strengthen trustworthiness, the analysis was organized around credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability, consistent with established qualitative research criteria (Lincoln & Guba, 1985):

1. Credibility: Achieved via source triangulation (interviews, qualitative questionnaires, FGDs, and code of conduct document analysis) and peer debriefing among the co-authors.
2. Dependability: Maintained through a clear, detailed audit trail documenting every stage of data transformation from raw transcripts to final codes.
3. Confirmability: Managed via reflexive memoing to minimize subjective researcher bias during the coding phases.
4. Transferability: Secured by providing a thick description of the specific Surabaya institutional contexts and participant roles, enabling contextual comparison for future researchers.

Reflexivity Statement

As researchers embedded within the Indonesian higher education ecosystem, the authors acknowledge that their positionality—deeply valuing national unity (*Pancasila*) and inclusive education—could bias data interpretation. To maintain neutrality, the researchers intentionally separated personal religious/nationalistic convictions from the analytical process, treating all school types with equal analytical detachment and evaluating participant narratives strictly against established educational theories.

Findings and Results

Social Interactions in School Environment

The study's findings provided a description of social harmony, which generally referred to the congruence of interactions between different individuals in a pluralistic society. Social harmony referred to a state in which individuals or groups within a group of people lived side by side peacefully, respected each other, and interacted intensely without significant conflict. In this case, social harmony was defined as balance, harmony, and understanding between various groups within a diverse society.

The key elements of social harmony included: (1) Tolerance: the ability to accept and appreciate differences between individuals, including diversities in religion, culture, ethnicity, and other backgrounds, (2) Equality and respect: respecting the rights and dignity of individuals regardless of the existing differences, and treating everyone fairly, (3) Harmony and openness: the ability to live side by side peacefully, promoting mutual understanding, and being willing to learn from differences to improve social firm relationships, and (4) Awareness of diversity: understanding that society consisted of many different individuals whose differences promoted richnes and uniqueness instead of conflicts.

The data revealed that high schools in Surabaya conceptualize their institutional spaces as a crucial defensive barrier designed to actively neutralize polarizing social narratives external to the school, particularly those multiplying on social media platforms. However, the operational implementation of this "preventive space" varies systematically according to the school's structural identity.

Public schools (SMAN 6 Surabaya, SMAN 13 Surabaya, and SMAN 18 Surabaya) conceptualize social harmony through a secular, constitutional lens, explicitly framing tolerance rules around the state ideology of Pancasila. Conversely, private religious-based schools embed their implementation within comprehensive theological character education. For instance, SMA Al-Hikmah operationalizes tolerance through a structured conceptual exploration of religious diversity without compromising its core faith tenets, while SMA St. Louis 1 focuses on practical cross-community integration to actively dismantle abstract socio-religious prejudices.

A senior Civic Education instructor at SMAN 6 Surabaya detailed this operational dynamic during an interview: *"We cannot allow our classrooms to remain passive while social media algorithms actively dictate how students perceive diversity. In our school, the preventive space is built by confronting these digital narratives head-on during lessons. We break down online hate speech and contrast it with the practical*

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mandates of Pancasila. The goal is to ensure the school grounds function as a real-world counterweight to digital echo chambers.

Social harmony serves as a fundamental pillar for the progress of a diverse society, including within the school environment. To maintain harmony and balance in interactions among individuals and groups, schools need policies that actively promote and support the development of social harmony. In this study, data were collected to illustrate how interactions within schools occur, what efforts are being made to prevent intolerance, and what policies schools implement to foster a harmonious environment. For better clarity and understanding, Table 1 shows the social interactions in school environment.

Table 1.

Social Interaction at School

No	School's Name	Tolerance Taught and Accustomed
1	SMA St. Louis	*Interaction with different communities*. The school actively builds relationships with various communities, including Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). This allows students to interact with peers from different religious backgrounds, helping to reduce stereotypes and increase understanding.
2	SMA Trimurti	*The importance of awareness and education*. Some students sometimes engage in unintentional teasing as an act of intolerance. Schools recognize that a lack of awareness may be a major cause of this behavior. Therefore, schools focus on education and awareness about intolerance.
3	SMAN 13	1. *Success rate*. Although there have been no reports of incidents of intolerance, the school remains vigilant and prepared to address any possible occurring issues. The programs implemented aim to prevent the emergence of intolerance and build positive character. 2. The school encourages students to apply tolerance practices in their daily lives, including in relationships with classmates, religious activities, and other social interactions.
4	SMAN 6	1. *The role of teachers and the curriculum*. Teachers at SMA 6 Surabaya play a crucial role in supporting students' tolerance and character development. The curriculum, which incorporates values of tolerance from various religions, and the role of teachers in teaching the teachings of tolerance, show a positive impact. 2. *Students' understanding of tolerance*. Data show that students at SMA 6 Surabaya have a good understanding of tolerance and diversity. They are encouraged to respect and appreciate differences.
5	SMAN 18	Character building, supervision, communication with parents, and the active involvement of teachers and principals contribute to creating a positive and safe school environment that builds tolerance and avoids the potential for violence.
6	SMA Kemala Bhayangkari	*Anti-bullying movement*. The school has implemented an anti-bullying movement. There is an anti-bullying team tasked with educating classmates about the dangers of bullying.
7	SMA Al-Hikmah	*Classical approach and introduction to other religions*. The school emphasizes the importance of an understanding of other religions through a classical approach and other relevant activities. It strives to introduce students to different religious views.

Social Harmony Development Policy in Schools to Prevent Intolerance

Based on the obtained data, the following details showed an analysis of the mechanisms carried out when intolerant treatment (repressive actions) occurred and efforts to prevent it (preventive actions) carried out by teachers/school leaders.

First, preventive actions (efforts to prevent the growth of intolerance) were carried out by means of: (1) mentoring and value education, involving teachers/leaders in providing mentoring and facilitating activities that encouraged tolerance and inserting values of tolerance during the teaching and learning process; (2) socialization of school values, initiating socialization activities about the values of tolerance, such as Berajud Tali (Clean, Friendly, Honest, Disciplined, Resilient, Caring), to foster an attitude of tolerance in the school environment; (3) involvement of teachers and leaders, implying that teachers and school leaders actively monitored and prevented the growth of intolerance by involving the entire school community, including supervising and providing direction to students who tended to show intolerant behavior.

Proactive educational measures focus on building institutional safety and moral awareness. These include embedding multi-faith tolerance frameworks directly into the curriculum (Civic and Religious education), establishing

student-led anti-bullying peer frameworks, and organizing controlled, external cross-identity interactions.

SMA Kemala Bhayangkari addresses everyday peer friction through a dedicated peer-led anti-bullying cadre system to intercept exclusionary dynamics.

SMA St. Louis 1 implements structural intergroup contact by facilitating experiential field visits to Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), allowing their predominantly non-Muslim student body to build personal relationships with Muslim peers.

A senior administrator at SMA St. Louis 1 explained the experiential rationale: *"Reading about harmony in a textbook does very little to change a deeply held stereotype. Our core preventive strategy is to facilitate direct, equal-status intergroup contact. When our students spend time living and talking with peers at a pesantren, the abstract 'out-group' becomes a real person."*

Second, repressive actions were applied after an act of intolerance had occurred. These actions included: (1) mentoring and counseling, where students involved in intolerant behavior were called to the Guidance and Counseling (BK) office or given direct enlightenments by teachers or school leaders to help them understand the negative implications of their actions; (2) disciplinary sanctions, which might involve written warnings, violation points, or further consequences such as conducting school-parent meetings or, in severe cases, expulsion from school; and (3) parental involvement, where parents were invited to discuss the incident and were provided with guidance on addressing the issue, ensuring they understood the harmful impact of intolerant behavior.

When proactive measures fail and explicit acts of intolerance manifest, all seven schools pivot to a formalized, progressive disciplinary framework. These corrective interventions follow a highly structured escalation pathway:

[Level 1: Internal Counseling] ⟶ [Level 2: Written Warning & Demerit Points] ⟶ [Level 3: Parent-Teacher Disciplinary Meeting] ⟶ [Level 4: Institutional Suspension]

A Guidance and Counseling (BK) counselor at SMAN 18 Surabaya detailed this enforcement: *"When a student commits a verified act of identity-based intolerance or psychological bullying, we immediately pull them into the counseling center. If they refuse to adjust, the system escalates automatically: demerit points are logged, parents are legally summoned to the school, and formal suspension is executed. The social harmony of the wider student body takes absolute precedence over individual non-compliance."*

Third, a persuasive approach combined with character education was applied to instill the values of tolerance and respect for diversity. Teachers and school leaders used strategies such as delivering lectures, modeling positive behavior, and providing character-based learning activities to help students understand the importance of embracing differences. In addition, observation and coaching played a critical role in closely monitoring student interactions. In this case, teachers and leaders could identify early signs of intolerance and provide timely guidance or intervention to prevent these attitudes from escalating.

Regarding the aforementioned data, developing an attitude of tolerance and controlling intolerant behavior in students required a holistic approach. The crucial role of families, schools, and the social environment in educating and guiding students to understand the values of tolerance and avoid intolerant behavior was urgent.

To prevent intolerance, education should extend beyond the classroom and involve the active participation of parents and the nearby communities in fostering tolerant characters and respect for differences. Open communication, education in the values of tolerance, and monitoring student interactions became the key to creating an inclusive and harmonious educational environment. To facilitate understanding of the findings, Table 2 summarizes the schools' efforts to prevent intolerance.

Table 2.

Preventive Efforts against Intolerance

No	School's Name	Efforts to Prevent Intolerance in Schools
1	SMA St. Louis	The school actively engages with diverse communities, including Islamic boarding schools. This allows students to interact with peers from diverse religious backgrounds, helping to reduce stereotypes and increase understanding.
2	SMA Trimurti	The school focuses on education and awareness about intolerance because some students sometimes engage in unintentional teasing as an act of intolerance. The school acknowledges that a lack of awareness is a major cause of this behavior.
3	SMAN 13	The school encourages students to apply tolerance practices in their daily lives, including in relationships with classmates, religious activities, and other social interactions.
4	SMAN 6	Schools optimize the role of teachers and incorporate the values of tolerance from various religions into the curriculum, as well as the role of teachers in teaching tolerance. Students are encouraged to respect and appreciate differences.
5	SMAN 18	The school optimizes the active involvement of school leaders and teachers, all of whom contribute to creating a positive and safe school environment, building tolerance, and avoiding the potential for violence.
6	SMA Kemala Bhayangkari	The school implements an anti-bullying movement by forming an anti-bullying team whose job is to promote understanding of the dangers of bullying.
7	SMA Al-Hikmah	The school promotes understanding of other religions and recognizes that each religion has its own religious views. Therefore, mutual respect is necessary.

The data showed that many teachers were actively involved in formulating policies and strategies to prevent intolerance among students, with the majority confirming their participation in this process. This finding reflected a strong awareness of the importance of engaging educators, as they played a critical role in guiding students' behavior and shaping their attitudes toward tolerance. However, student participation in this policy formulation was inconsistent and tended to vary from different schools. While some cases showed the involvement of students, the majority of responses indicated that students were not directly in charge of the policy formulation process. Students were generally seen as passive implementers of existing policies rather than active participants in the policy formulation process. This lack of involvement created a gap between policy design and the actual needs or experiences of students. Despite this inconsistency, there was growing recognition of the importance of including students in policy development. Their participation was considered essential to ensure that policies were relevant, practical, and aligned with their perspectives. When students were engaged in the formulation process, they were more likely to feel a sense of ownership and responsibility, which might lead to more effective implementation and stronger commitment to fostering tolerance.

The analysis revealed that student involvement in formulating policies to prevent intolerance remained limited and required significant strengthening. Students were often excluded from critical decision-making stages, which reduced the relevance and effectiveness of the resulting policies. Adopting a more integrated and consistent approach to student participation would not only make policies more responsive to their needs and perspectives but also foster a sense of ownership and accountability among students. When students felt that their voices were heard, they were more likely to support and actively implement these policies, creating a stronger foundation for promoting tolerance within the school environment.

The empirical data revealed a distinct hierarchical asymmetry regarding how school leaders, teachers, and students are integrated into the life cycle of these policies.

1. School Leaders and Administrators; The policy formulation phase is heavily centralized and top-down. Principals, vice-principals of student affairs, and discipline boards act as the elite drafting authorities, codifying rules and behavioral expectations with minimal broader consultation.
2. Frontline Teachers; Teachers are positioned primarily as implementation agents. While they are excluded from the initial structural design phase, they are fully responsible for the day-to-day enforcement of rules, monitoring classroom interactions, and serving as primary moral role models. Parents are similarly kept at a distance, integrated only re-actively when their children

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trigger disciplinary sanctions.

3. The Student Body; A consistent finding across all institutional types was the structural marginalization of student voices in policy design. Students are treated as passive recipients of rules rather than co-creators of their community guidelines. Student representative bodies, such as the Intra-School Student Organization (OSIS), are systematically excluded from administrative meetings where conduct codes are finalized.

A Guidance and Counseling (BK) teacher at SMA Trimurti highlighted this disconnect: *"The student codes of conduct are pre-formulated. Students are required to read and sign them upon entry; they do not have any direct hand in defining violations. We are beginning to realize that this absolute exclusion reduces their internal ownership of these rules. They obey to avoid the punitive point penalties, not necessarily because they feel an internal democratic commitment to the policy*."

The present study also found a variety of responses regarding the evaluation of intolerance prevention policies and strategies in schools. The evaluation focused on two key elements: evaluations on policy content and its implementation. Regarding the evaluation of policy content, most responses indicated that many respondents felt the policies were adequate. However, some responses acknowledged the need for improvement but emphasized the importance of remaining consistent with existing approaches. The evaluation indicated that intolerance prevention policies and strategies in schools had reached a satisfactory level, but still required regular updates and active involvement from various stakeholders.

Concerning the evaluation of the policy's implementation, most respondents felt that the policy had been well implemented in different school activities. Some explained that its implementation was carried out through various activities, regulations, and the announcement of the vision and mission at each learning activity. However, several respondents felt the need for more intensive workshops or training, especially for teachers and all students, to better understand and prevent intolerance. Monitoring and evaluation of the results of this policy's implementation ensured its success and encouraged its continued development, with collaboration between schools, teachers, and students to create a more inclusive environment.

Furthermore, evaluating this policy required monitoring methods and instruments. The first was the use of teacher attitude assessment. Most schools used teacher attitude assessment as the primary instrument for monitoring the success of the policy's implementation. This was undertaken through attitude assessments by teaching staff, homeroom teachers, and guidance and counseling (BK) teachers. The second was the use of the attitude or character score report. Some schools used the attitude or character score report as an instrument for monitoring student behavior related to intolerance. The third was the use of surveys and questionnaires. Some schools conducted surveys or distributed questionnaires to students to assess their level of satisfaction, tolerance attitudes, and behavior related to intolerance. The fourth was the implementation of several activities and meetings. Some schools used student profile activities, teacher-student meetings, meetings with parents, or Intra-School Student Organization (OSIS) activities as monitoring instruments.

The research identified a major structural disconnect between the schools' high rhetorical commitment to social harmony and the actual technical instruments utilized to assess policy application.

Across all seven institutions, there is a total lack of standalone, objective monitoring metrics or standardized assessment tools calibrated specifically to measure student intolerance or evaluate policy efficacy over time. Instead, schools rely on subjective behavioral evaluations, including: (1) Informal visual observation by homeroom teachers during recess. (2) Unstandardized behavioral grades (e.g., "Good" or "Sufficient") compiled on end-of-semester report cards. (3) Raw descriptive logs of disciplinary incidents managed by the BK office.

If a school does not experience active, explosive physical conflicts, overt parental complaints, or legal crises, administrators assume the institutional climate is safe and

inclusive. This reactive approach leaves covert or passive forms of peer exclusion unmonitored.

A vice-principal at SMAN 13 Surabaya summarized this evaluation deficit: *"We must admit that we lack specialized, rigorous written instruments to scientifically audit our tolerance climate. Our evaluation is entirely reactive: if the BK office shows zero major conflict reports, we evaluate our policies as successful. This leaves us blind to quiet, covert forms of peer exclusion that never escalate to physical fights."*

In this context, it is important to note that some schools did not yet have clear monitoring instruments related to preventing intolerant behavior among students. Efforts were needed to develop more effective and comprehensive monitoring instruments and involve all stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation of policies to prevent intolerant behavior in the school environment.

Various policies, guidelines, and mechanisms had been implemented by the schools to develop harmony, especially among students, which included:

a. *School Code of Conduct*: Most schools had a code of conduct that encompassed values of tolerance, taught students to respect differences, and encouraged inclusive behavior.
b. *Student Manners Minutes Book*: The schools had a book or document that explained student behaviors and manners in order to maintain an attitude of tolerance in the school environment.
c. *Mentoring and Guidance*: The schools used specific activity times, such as the School Environment Introduction Period (MPLS), to provide outreach about the importance of tolerance and respecting differences.
d. *National Activities*: Socialization regarding national insight and tolerance was carried out in students' daily lives, for example, through flag ceremonies or other patriotic activities.
e. *Valueing Education Program*: Providing an understanding of the values of tolerance was integrated into the curriculum and learning activities to shape the students' good character of respecting differences.
f. *Rewards and Sanctions*: There was a system of rewards and sanctions in the form of violation points given to students according to the behavior exhibited, to encourage good behavior and prevent intolerant behavior.
g. *Social and Spiritual Activities*: Through extracurricular activities, mentoring, and religious activities, the schools aimed at strengthening the values of tolerance and mutual respect.
h. *School Community Approach*: The schools used community approaches, such as character pickets, morning greetings, or emergency meetings, to discuss intolerant behavior.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings emphasize the importance of school policies for fostering social harmony and preventing intolerance. Social harmony refers to balance and cohesion in interactions among individuals from diverse backgrounds within a pluralistic society (Putnam, 2007). In schools, this is closely connected to how students learn to coexist, communicate, and respect differences. The principles of tolerance, equality, mutual respect, and meaningful intergroup contact are central to reducing prejudice and sustaining inclusive communities (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

To address intolerant behavior in schools, a range of policies has been implemented, combining both preventive and repressive measures. These policies encompass school regulations, student etiquette monitoring, participation in national activities, values-based education programs, social and spiritual activities, and the use of rewards and sanctions (Darling-Hammond & Rothman, 2011). Preventive strategies focus on shaping positive attitudes before problems arise. These include persuasive approaches that encourage mutual respect, character education to instill core values, and continuous observation and coaching by teachers to detect and address early signs of intolerance (Gay, 2018). Such proactive efforts are crucial in fostering an environment where diversity is respected and intolerance is less likely to occur. Without these preventive measures,

schools risk relying solely on punitive actions, which address symptoms rather than root causes.

In policy formulation, teachers and school leaders held a dominant role in shaping strategies to prevent intolerance. Their involvement is understandable because they have direct responsibility for student behavior and classroom dynamics. However, student involvement remained inconsistent and relatively limited (Bryson et al., 2015). This gap between policy design and students' lived experience may reduce ownership and responsiveness. Evidence from qualitative educational research also indicates that student participation and a sense of community are closely tied to how institutional environments are experienced (Yang & Seyed Alitabar, 2024). Strengthening student engagement in policy development may therefore help schools create rules that are more relevant, legitimate, and inclusive.

The implementation of intolerance prevention policies in schools is carried out through a combination of socialization efforts and structured coaching programs. These initiatives aim to internalize tolerance values among students and are designed to address physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions of character development. To achieve this, multiple school stakeholders are actively involved, including teachers, the guidance and counseling (BK) team, and the discipline committee, all working collaboratively to ensure consistent application of these values in daily school life. Socialization activities may include classroom discussions, thematic campaigns, and extracurricular programs promoting diversity, while coaching focuses on mentoring students who exhibit early signs of intolerance. This integrated approach not only reinforces the importance of tolerance but also builds a supportive environment where respect for diversity becomes a shared responsibility across the school community.

In policy evaluation, various monitoring instruments are used. These include teacher attitude assessments, attitude score reports, surveys, and other monitoring activities (Patton, 2008). However, there is still a need to develop more effective and comprehensive monitoring instruments (Rossi et al., 2003).

Participants described several perceived benefits associated with school policies intended to prevent intolerance, including greater tolerance, cooperation, appreciation of difference, social engagement, and fewer reported conflicts. These accounts are broadly consistent with literature on intergroup contact and prejudice reduction (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Sherif, 1966). However, because the study did not use standardized outcome measures, student-level pre–post data, or a comparison design, these reports should be interpreted as stakeholder perceptions rather than evidence that the policies caused measurable changes in student behavior.

Participants further described perceived improvements in cooperation, appreciation of difference, and social engagement following the implementation of school policies. These themes reflect staff impressions of the school climate; they were not independently verified with student-reported outcomes, standardized measures, or longitudinal observations. Accordingly, they should be interpreted as qualitative perceptions of change rather than quantified evidence of policy impact.

Overall, school staff perceived the policies as contributing positively to the school climate through clearer expectations, guidance, and opportunities for interaction across differences. At the same time, the absence of standardized monitoring instruments, direct student interviews, and objective indicators prevents firm conclusions about policy effectiveness. Continuous monitoring and participatory evaluation are therefore important for identifying whether intended changes in tolerance, inclusion, and conflict actually occur over time.

Taken together, the staff narratives suggest that tolerance-oriented policies may support clearer behavioral expectations and more inclusive interactions within schools. Nevertheless, the study design does not permit claims of statistically significant or causal effects. Future evaluations should incorporate student perspectives, standardized indicators of school climate and intolerance, and repeated measurements to determine whether the reported improvements are sustained and measurable.

Conclusion

This qualitative study indicates that the seven Surabaya schools have developed diverse tolerance-oriented policies that combine preventive education with corrective responses to reported intolerance. Across participants' accounts, teachers and school leaders played central roles in implementation, while student participation in policy formulation and objective monitoring mechanisms remained uneven. Because students and parents were not interviewed directly and the sample consisted of purposively selected educational staff, the findings should be interpreted as institutional perspectives rather than direct evidence of policy effectiveness. Strengthening student voice, transparent monitoring tools, and context-sensitive evaluation may support more sustainable social harmony in schools.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Ethical considerations in this study were that participation was entirely optional.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contribute to this study.

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