



## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MKWK IN INCREASING UNDERSTANDING OF INTERFAITH TOLERANCE VALUES AMONG STUDENTS

Fajar Kurniadi<sup>1(\*)</sup>, Sanudin Ranam<sup>2</sup>, Aster Pujaning Ati<sup>3</sup>, Apipudin<sup>4</sup>, Luthfiyyah Hasna<sup>5</sup>

Universitas Indraprasta PGRI, Jakarta, Indonesia<sup>1-5</sup>  
fajar.kurniadi@unindra.ac.id<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

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This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of Compulsory Curriculum Courses (MKWK) in enhancing students' understanding of interfaith tolerance. The research methods include surveys, interviews, documents analysis, and observations of changes in students attitudes and behavior before and after participating in MKWK. The findings indicate a significant improvement in students' comprehension of interfaith tolerance. Additionally, there were positives changes in students' attitudes, making them more inclusive and participatory in interfaith activities. These results suggest that MKWK plays a crucial role in shaping students into tolerant individual who appreciate diversity. Hopefully, this study will provide insights into the effectiveness of Compulsory Curriculum Courses (MKWK) in fostering interfaith tolerance among students.

**Keywords:** Evaluation; MKWK; Tolerance; Students

(\*) Corresponding Author: Kurniadi, fajar.kurniadi@unindra.ac.id

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## INTRODUCTION

Differences in religious beliefs are often a source of conflict and tension in society. This is due to differences in understanding, practice, and values believed in by each religion. When a person's religious beliefs are considered absolute truth, this can lead to an attitude of intolerance towards other religious beliefs that are different. Inter-religious conflicts can also arise when one party feels superior and considers their beliefs more correct than the other. This has happened in Europe, precisely at the time of the fall of the Constantinople Empire, this is in line with Rinawati (2024) the historical review of the Christian-Islamic conflict, especially after the fall of Constantinople, the Ottoman Empire highlighted tensions due to differences in beliefs and political competition with European Christian powers. Discrimination against minority religions by both parties exacerbated this conflict. Bobokhonov (2022) historical conflict between Islam and Christianity, highlighting the old nature and cultural-political conditions that exacerbate differences. It identifies the main historical stages of this conflict, emphasizing the deep-rooted causes related to power, culture, and identity. This analysis covers the dominant narratives in world and Russian science, describing how this inter-civilizational relationship has evolved over time, ultimately shaping the ongoing dialogue and tension between the Western world and Islamic civilization. In Indonesia, inter-religious conflicts have occurred, let's look back at the conflict that occurred in Poso in 1999 (Adryamarthanino & Nailufar, 2021), which was caused by economic competition between the native population of Poso who

were predominantly Christian and the Bugis immigrants who embraced Islam. In addition to Poso, conflict also occurred in Ambon (Kumparan.com, 2023), with the trigger being two Muslim youths extorting money from Christians. Not only did it occur because of differences of opinion among the people, but also because of public dissatisfaction with government regulations regarding sects that were considered deviant, which also caused religious conflicts in society. Let's listen to the conflict of the Ahmadiyah sect (Cyndi, 2021), with the cause of Discrimination against the Indonesian Ahmadiyah Congregation (JAI) occurring in Sintang Regency, West Kalimantan, on Friday, September 5, 2021. The destruction of the Ahmadiyah house of worship was allegedly triggered by residents' disappointment with the Sintang Regency Government which only stopped operations.

To overcome conflicts and tensions arising from differences in religious beliefs, it is important for society to strengthen interfaith dialogue. By respecting and understanding differences in beliefs, harmony and peace amidst religious diversity can be created. In addition, an inclusive educational approach that teaches tolerance and harmony between religious communities is also very important to prevent conflict. In addition, globalization and technological developments have indeed made the world smaller and more connected. However, this also brings new challenges in maintaining cultural and religious diversity. The value of tolerance is the main key to maintaining social stability amidst the various differences that exist. Learning to respect and accept differences, without having to feel superior or judge each other. By understanding the value of tolerance, a harmonious and peaceful environment will be created, where every individual feels safe and respected. Let's strengthen the value of tolerance in everyday life, so that we can live side by side peacefully and support each other in facing the challenges of this modern era. Creating a better and more harmonious world for future generations. One approach is through student activities and the campus environment.

Students are very important agents of change in building a harmonious and inclusive society. They are the spearheads in creating positive transformation in various aspects of life, from education, social, economic, to the environment. With a tireless fighting spirit, students are able to inspire others to play an active role in improving existing social conditions. This nation has changed because of the participation of young people and student movements.

The journey of the student movement that changed the face of Indonesia is very long. Back in 1908, the movement (MPMBKM, 2021) Stovia students who formed the Boedi organization Oetomo as a forum for students to fight against the colonialism movement. Twenty years later, the youth/students held (Formadiksi, 2023), movement in the Youth Pledge event initiated by the Indonesian Students Association (PPPI), an organization consisting of students from all over Indonesia. After the Independence of the Republic of Indonesia, student associations united in the Indonesian Students Association (PPMI) formed in 1947, demanded that Soekarno immediately take firm action against the PKI. In 1998, a student movement occurred that changed the face of Indonesia. Students held massive demonstrations. The demonstrations were triggered by the faltering Indonesian economy since early 1998 due to the influence of the Asian financial crisis since 1997 and demanded that Soeharto step down from his position as President of the Republic of Indonesia.

As young intellectuals, students have a crucial role in voicing the aspirations of society, channeling fresh ideas, and becoming agents of change who are able to bring positive changes to the surrounding community. They are not just students of knowledge in college, but also fighters who are ready to fight for justice, equality, and diversity. With critical thinking and a clear vision, students are able to open the public's insight into the importance of cooperation and tolerance between individuals. They are also able to build

bridges of communication between generations and groups in order to create harmonious and inclusive relationships in the midst of society. Therefore, let's support the role of students as important agents of change in building a better society, because they are the hope for a bright future for this nation.

Looking at the data and facts presented, universities are here to maximize student potential and minimize SARA-based friction in society by presenting Compulsory Curriculum Courses (MKWK). MKWK is a series of courses designed to maximize student potential in the social, religious, cultural, technological, and community fields that are made flexibly and project-based. With this design, it is hoped that superior, caring, independent, adaptive, and creative students will be created. However, have these hopes been achieved? What is the role of MKWK in shaping student character in this era of disruption? Then are there any obstacles to the implementation of MKWK in the campus and community environment? How do students respond to MKWK-based learning?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **MKWK**

MKWK stands for Compulsory Curriculum Courses. These are a group of courses that must be taken by all students in college, regardless of the major or study program they choose. MKWK is designed to provide a strong foundation for students in various aspects, not only technical science, but also human, social, and moral values.

The purpose of implementing MKWK is to shape the character of students by instilling the values of integrity, ethics, and social responsibility. Instilling values such as integrity, ethics, and social responsibility is very important in shaping a person's character. Integrity (Li, 2024; Ponomarenko, 2024; Zahari et al., 2022) teaches us to always be honest and consistent in our actions, without sacrificing the principles we hold firmly. Ethics (Ansari & Yeravdekar, 2023; Ikhsan, 2024; Teitelbaum & Ben-Ze'ev, 2023) teach us to always act politely and respect others, without violating applicable norms. Ethics are an important guide in everyday life that teaches us to always act politely and respect others. Without ethics, this world would be a chaotic place full of conflict. Ethics also teach us not to violate applicable norms, because by obeying these norms, humans can live in harmony with others. Meanwhile, social responsibility (Ataullah Al-Azab Ali Ismail & Sayed Abdellatif, 2024; Bergant, 2022) teaches us to care about the surrounding environment and make a positive contribution to society. Social responsibility is not just an obligation, but also an opportunity to prove that we care about the surrounding environment and society. By taking an active role in social activities, humans can make positive contributions that are not only beneficial to others, but also to themselves. Through social responsibility, students learn to be more sensitive to the needs of others and feel satisfaction when they can provide assistance.

The next goal of implementing MKWK is to improve competence, especially developing critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills. To develop critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills, students need to engage their brains more deeply than just participating in everyday conversations. Critical thinking requires the ability to analyze information in depth, evaluate arguments wisely, and make rational decisions. Meanwhile, good communication skills involve not only verbal skills, but also the ability to listen attentively and express ideas clearly and persuasively. In addition, cooperation is the main key to achieving common goals. In working together, students will learn to respect the opinions of others, resolve conflicts maturely, and work as a solid team.

The next goal is to foster civic awareness (DU, 2019; Wenni et al., 2024; Yuniarto et al., 2024) by instilling a sense of love for the homeland, concern, pluralism values, and

tolerance. To foster true civic awareness, it must start by instilling a sense of love for the homeland from an early age. Through education that prioritizes the values of concern and pluralism, the creation of a society that has an attitude of tolerance and tolerance. Indonesia is a shared home for various different tribes, religions, and cultures. By understanding these differences, living side by side in harmony and mutual respect will be created. Civic awareness is not only about the rights and obligations of citizens, but also about how to contribute to building this nation to be better. Developing civic awareness by maintaining a sense of love for the homeland, concern, pluralism values, and tolerance starts from schools and campuses. Because only with an inclusive and compassionate attitude, a peaceful and advanced Indonesia will be created.

MKWK, especially courses that discuss religion and diversity, have an important role in increasing understanding and tolerance between religious communities among students (DU, 2019; Yuniarto et al., 2024). Through in-depth learning about various religions and cultures, students are expected to know and appreciate differences by understanding that each religion has good values and deserves to be respected. Building effective communication by being able to communicate with people of different religions in a polite and respectful manner (Bawazier et al., 2022; Mahendra & Kurniadi, 2024). Avoiding inter-religious conflict prevents conflicts that are rooted in religious differences.

### **Social Learning Theory**

Social Learning Theory is a framework that explains that humans learn not only through personal experience, but also through interaction with others. This learning process involves observation, imitation, and internalization of other people's behavior (Kang et al., 2021; Palmer & Johnson, 2024; Ramsey et al., 2021). Social Learning Theory is indeed very interesting because it reveals that students do not only learn from themselves, but also from others. Through observation and imitation, students can gain new knowledge and skills without having to experience it themselves. The process of internalizing other people's behavior also helps to understand the values and social norms that exist in society.

Albert Bandura, a renowned psychologist, was a central figure in the development of social learning theory (Amsari et al., 2024; Baştan & Dölek, 2023; Khozin et al., 2024). His most famous experiment was the Bobo doll experiment. In this experiment, children observed adults treating a doll aggressively. The results showed that children who observed aggressive behavior tended to imitate the behavior.

### **Cognitive Theory**

Cognitive theory is a very important approach in the field of psychology (Alahmad, 2020; Clarisa Aprilia, 2024; Saluja & Shah, 2024), because its main focus is on the role of the individual mind in shaping a person's behavior, attitudes, and experiences. This theory asserts that the individual mind has a very significant role in determining how a person responds to a particular situation (Bem, 1992; Santistevan et al., 2024; Snyder, 1983). In the context of forming attitudes and behavior, cognitive theory emphasizes that an individual's thought processes, including beliefs, values, experiences, and interpretations of information received, greatly influence how a person will act or respond to a situation. Individuals have unique and complex thought patterns, which form the basis of how they interact with the world around them.

In cognitive theory, it is important to understand that each individual has a different way of thinking (Boogert et al., 2018; Judd et al., 2024), so their response to certain situations will also vary. This shows that there is no one approach that can be used universally in understanding human behavior, because each individual has a unique thought process. Therefore, in applying cognitive theory in psychology practice, it is important for

professionals to pay attention to the diversity of individuals and understand how their thoughts influence their behavior and attitudes.

One important aspect of cognitive theory is the concept that individuals have the ability to change their thought patterns through learning and experience. This suggests that, although a person's thought patterns may have been formed over a long period of time, it is still possible to change them through the right effort. With a deeper understanding of how thoughts influence behavior, individuals can learn to identify unhealthy or ineffective thought patterns and replace them with more positive and productive ones.

In psychology practice, cognitive theory is often used in a variety of contexts, from cognitive behavioral therapy to education. In cognitive behavioral therapy, for example, cognitive theory is used to help individuals identify and change negative thought patterns that may contribute to psychological problems such as depression or anxiety. In educational contexts, cognitive theory is used to understand how students learn and how teachers can help them develop more effective and adaptive thought patterns (AL-Momani, 2024; Soloman, 2024).

Overall, cognitive theory provides valuable insights into the relationship between an individual's thoughts and their behavior. By understanding how thoughts influence a person's attitudes and actions, we can better understand ourselves and others, and provide appropriate support in personal development and the management of psychological problems. Cognitive theory thus plays a vital role in understanding the complexity of human beings and helping individuals achieve optimal mental well-being.

### **The Concept of Tolerance**

Farouk (2023) defines tolerance as mutual respect regardless of ethnicity, gender, appearance, culture, beliefs, abilities, or sexual orientation. It is an attitude that prohibits discrimination and promotes a humane and peaceful world (Pinto, 2024). This practice of mutual respect builds an important foundation in building peace, harmony, and equality among individuals (Yuniarto et al., 2023). When one accepts and respects diversity as a richness, not as an obstacle, a social environment is created that promotes tolerance, understanding, and brotherhood among different groups of people. By respecting each other, we show respect for the dignity of human beings without exception, thus bridging differences and strengthening solidarity among individuals.

Through the principle of mutual respect, we distance ourselves from discriminatory attitudes, prejudice, and other forms of injustice. Respect also creates space for each individual to express their identity without fear of being judged. Respect is an important foundation in building healthy and harmonious relationships between individuals from different backgrounds (Engelbrecht & Mumba, 2024; Mitias, 2021). It involves recognizing and accepting the values, beliefs, and identities of each individual without discrimination or negative judgment. With mutual respect, each individual feels safe and comfortable to express their identity authentically without fear of being judged or criticized by others. This opens up space for diversity in all aspects of life, including ethnicity, gender, appearance, culture, beliefs, abilities, or sexual orientation. When each individual is given the opportunity to speak up and is accepted with respect, an inclusive and supportive environment is created for everyone.

### **METHODS**

The method used in this study is a qualitative method with a descriptive analytical approach. The data collection process was carried out by surveys, interviews, document analysis, and observation, all of which were carried out carefully in order to obtain accurate data. Qualitative methods (Brock, 2024; Chasokela, 2024; Thao et al., 2024) are used in

research to explore in depth the experiences, perceptions, and reflections of students. Survey (Arundel, 2023; Domede & Dinkelman, 2022; Jansen et al., 2024), became one of the most common methods used in this study. By sending questionnaires to students before and after participating in MKWK, researchers were able to see significant differences in their views and understanding of entrepreneurship. Interviews (Blomberg et al., 2024; Celeri, 2023; Yamineva, 2023) is no less important, because by talking directly to research subjects, researchers can gain deeper insight into the changes in attitudes and behavior that occur. Document analysis (Dombrovskis, 2019; Ji, 2024; Morgan, 2022) also an important part of this research. By collecting various documents related to the curriculum and its development, researchers can see the extent to which students have experienced changes in their thinking and actions. Observation should not be forgotten, because by directly observing student interactions in the context of MKWK learning, researchers can clearly see how the process of change occurs. More than five hundred students from various universities in East Jakarta and South Jakarta were involved in this activity.

## **RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

### **As many as 37% of students cannot define tolerance correctly.**

Based on the results of calculations and interviews with students, it was found that 37% of students could not define tolerance correctly. Tolerance as a form of allowing religious activities without protection. In the context of allowing religious activities without protection, tolerance refers to an attitude that allows individuals or other groups to practice their religious beliefs without intervention or special protection from the government or other parties. In other words, allowing religious activities without protection shows that every individual or group has the freedom to practice their religious beliefs and practices without fear of interference or abuse by other parties. Tolerance also means respecting the right of every individual to practice their religious beliefs without discrimination or pressure. As a principle underlying diversity and social harmony, tolerance plays an important role in building a diverse but peaceful and respectful society. By encouraging tolerance, we can create an environment where every individual feels safe to practice their religious beliefs without fear of discrimination or oppression. If tolerance is interpreted as allowing without protection, then this can give rise to various serious problems, such as intolerance, discrimination, conflict, and extremism that lead to violence. After participating in MKWK, students realize how important it is to provide protection and peace for their minority colleagues in practicing their beliefs. In this increasingly complex world, tolerance and respect for differences are key to creating harmony among diverse communities. By understanding that every individual has the right to worship and practice their beliefs without fear or threat, students can create an inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone. As students, they realize that they have an important role in building awareness of the importance of respecting differences and supporting individual rights in practicing their religion or beliefs in order to create a safer and more comfortable environment for them, but also help strengthen the values of tolerance and diversity in society.

Tolerance as an activity of interfering in religious activities or symbols. In recent years, there has been a lot of discussion about the use of one religious attribute in another religion (BBC Indonesia, 2016; Hasanuddin, 2016; Muhyiddin, 2023), and so on. Then, the MUI Fatwa was issued regarding the prohibition of the use of certain religious attributes for Muslims (Abi, 2024; MPU Aceh, 2024; MUI, 2016). The use of other religious attributes in Muslims is a wrong practice of tolerance. However, this incident is considered

commonplace by students. After participating in MKWK, students became more aware of the importance of understanding the limits of tolerance in religion. They realized that tolerance is not about changing someone's beliefs, but rather about respecting each other and not disturbing faith and devotion to Allah SWT. With this understanding, students become wiser in interacting with others, are not easily provoked by emotions, and are able to maintain harmony between religious communities. In MKWK, students are also taught not to get caught up in attitudes of intolerance or radicalism that can damage relations between religious communities. They learn that every individual has the right to believe and worship according to their respective religions, without having to belittle or judge others. Thus, students can become agents of change that encourage the creation of a more harmonious and peaceful society.

Tolerance is considered a weak and indecisive attitude. This assumption occurs among students who have a certain family background and are accustomed to living with only one group. So, they do not recognize or have difficulty in implementing tolerance. They assume that accepting differences is a weak thing. After participating in MKWK, students realized that tolerance is not actually a weak attitude, but rather a form of maturity in establishing relationships between individuals or between groups by giving respect to differences, in beliefs, cultures, and views. Tolerance shows openness and an inclusive attitude towards diversity, which can help build harmony and shared prosperity in a multicultural society. So, tolerance should be seen as a force that enriches relationships between individuals and strengthens unity in diversity, not as a weak or indecisive attitude.

**As many as 25% of students tend to “judge” different groups.**

Before MKWK, there were students who judged fellow students just because they had different religions and wore the hijab. The judgment process here was in the form of discrimination. The discriminatory behavior experienced was in the form of prejudice, bias, and Prejudice.

Prejudice is a negative attitude that arises without a clear reason. A behavior that should be avoided, but unfortunately is still often found in society. Prejudice can arise because of ignorance, fear, or even laziness to find out more about a person or group. As intelligent people, we should not be easily influenced by unfounded prejudices. Students must dare to open their minds and hearts to accept others as they are, without getting caught up in narrow and shallow thinking. Don't let prejudice prevent us from building good relationships with others. Students must learn to see someone from a different perspective, giving the person the opportunity to prove who they really are.

Bias is something that is hard to avoid in everyday life. Humans can feel more like or dislike someone for no apparent reason. It could be because of physical appearance, social background, or even just because of a first impression that may not be accurate. However, as students grow older and experience, they begin to realize that bias is not always beneficial. So, instead of getting stuck in a narrow mindset, let's try to see every person and situation with a more objective eye. This can lead to prejudice, which is a strong and difficult to change attitude.

After studying MKWK, students are taught to be more receptive to information and new people in their learning environment, especially regarding differences in religion and belief. Through deeper discussions and interactions, students are able to reconcile differences and can synergize into a cohesive group to complete the MKWK project assignment.

**As many as 41% of students feel uncomfortable interacting with people of different religions.**

This figure reflects the social reality that is still often faced in academic environments and society in general, where religious differences are a factor of social tension that affects interactions between individuals. Student activities that indicate discomfort are avoiding interaction, showing a closed attitude, expressing negative opinions, and forming exclusive groups.

Students avoid contact with people of different religions, both in daily activities and in group discussions. The impact of students avoiding contact with people of different religions can be seen in their daily activities. For example, in a campus environment, students may tend to form homogeneous groups in terms of religion, causing a lack of diversity of views and thoughts in discussions and other academic activities. This can hinder the exchange of ideas and views between individuals which is important in developing a deeper understanding of differences. To overcome this problem, MKWK strives to provide interfaith education and understanding in the campus environment can be an effective solution. Seminars, workshops, or self-development programs that encourage interfaith dialogue can help students open their minds, deepen their understanding of other religions, and reduce existing tensions and fears. Thus, students can sharpen their cross-cultural communication skills and develop a more open attitude of tolerance towards religious differences.

Showing a closed attitude, namely they appear less open or friendly towards people of different religions. A closed attitude towards people of different religions can be reflected in various daily behaviors. Students who feel uncomfortable acting with people of different religions tend to show unfriendliness in communicating or socializing with them. They may not invite these people to talk or engage in social activities together, and are less willing to build deep relationships or special friendships. MKWK provides training on cultural sensitivity and interfaith communication to students to help combat closed attitudes. In addition to this activity, in the future, MKWK plans to hold a cultural exchange program where students can interact with people from various religious backgrounds. Encouraging students to engage in interfaith discussions and dialogues can help open their minds and build a deeper understanding of other religious beliefs. And the activity of forming interfaith study groups on campus to provide space for students to study together and explore understandings of different religions and beliefs.

Forming exclusive groups, namely students tend to group with people who share the same religion. Students who form exclusive groups are often limited in their own worldview and find it difficult to understand the perspectives of individuals of other religions. This can reinforce negative stereotypes, prejudice, or misunderstanding of other religious groups. MKWK provides a solution through the introduction of educational programs or social activities that encourage interfaith dialogue and interfaith cooperation on campus. By expanding students' opportunities to interact with people from diverse religious backgrounds, they can gain a deeper understanding of religious diversity and build a strong sense of mutual understanding and cooperation.

**Project Based Learning Method**

Starting with group discussions, students can share their views, experiences, and understandings on the topic of tolerance with people from different religious and cultural backgrounds. This can help broaden students' horizons and understanding of diversity and tolerance. Continued with potential case studies in the context of increasing understanding of tolerance. By studying concrete cases related to inter-religious conflicts or diversity in society, students can learn from real experiences and reflect on ways to build tolerance and



harmony between religious communities. No less important, activities outside the classroom can also be an effective means of increasing understanding of tolerance. By engaging in activities such as visits to places of worship of various religions, inter-religious community service, or participation in inter-religious dialogue events, students can gain direct experience that helps them understand the importance of tolerance and diversity in society. In addition, a synergistic course design is also needed.

Designing synergistic course materials between several courses that are combined in a course such as Compulsory Curriculum Courses (MKWK) is an effective strategy in enriching and deepening students' understanding of certain topics. One example is creating a synergistic relationship between Religious Education Courses, Indonesian Language Courses, Citizenship Education (PKn) Courses, and Pancasila Education Courses. In this context, the combination of the four courses can provide a holistic learning experience for students. For example, Religious Education Courses can provide an understanding of the attitude of monotheism and tolerance between religious communities, while Indonesian Language Courses can play a role in improving communication skills and fostering sensitivity to meaning and values through literary works related to tolerance and diversity. Meanwhile, PKn and Pancasila Courses can strengthen students' understanding of the values of democracy, unity, justice, and humanity which are the foundation for creating an inclusive and tolerant society. By compiling lecture materials that synergize between these various courses, it is hoped that students can develop a deep and holistic understanding of the importance of tolerance, interfaith cooperation, and national values that underlie community life. This can also help students to integrate and apply these values in everyday life and prepare themselves as agents of change that encourage the creation of an inclusive, harmonious, and just society.

Character development programs in universities can develop more comprehensive character development programs to equip students with noble values. Universities can design holistic character development programs that include moral values, ethics, leadership, tolerance, and social skills to shape students into individuals with more integrity and able to contribute positively to society. This program can involve various activities such as ethics lectures, leadership training, community service projects, interfaith discussions, and instilling Pancasila values. Thus, students not only develop academically but also in terms of character and morality, so that they can become agents of change that are beneficial to their surroundings.

Collaboration with the Community initiated by universities can establish cooperation with various communities to provide a more real learning experience for students. Through this collaboration, students not only gain theory and knowledge from lectures, but can also apply this knowledge in real-life contexts. By engaging in activities carried out with the community, students can hone their social skills, leadership, and ability to adapt to various situations and people from different backgrounds. By engaging in various activities with the community, students can learn about diversity, understand social problems, and become agents of change who contribute positively to society. In addition, this collaboration can also help students develop soft skills such as communication skills, teamwork, and leadership that are essential for future career success.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that

1. MKWK can be an effective way to instill interfaith diversity among students.

2. Project-based MKWK increases students' creativity and sensitivity in dealing with conflicts in the campus and community environment.
3. MKWK needs to be continued with several adjustments in the areas of involvement of various areas of expertise of lecturers and the community.
4. MKWK synergy has a positive impact on students

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