Social Interaction in Building Religious Tolerance in Sukabumi City Society

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Abstract:

This study aims to determine the understanding of society, social interaction in building religious tolerance and the role of religious institutions in maintaining religious tolerance in the community of Sukabumi. This form of study is qualitative and based on fieldwork using three methods including phenomenological method, sociological method, and historical method. The results of this study found that: first, the understanding of the people of Sukabumi about tolerance reflects an attitude of respect and acceptance of religious diversity, culture, and views. They actively interact with diverse backgrounds, respect human rights, and encourage interfaith and cultural participation in community activities. This understanding creates an inclusive, harmonious, and peaceful coexistence environment, which makes Sukabumi an inspiring example in building a tolerant society. Social interaction between citizens of different religions and effective social communication have established a social contract that respects and respects religious rights. Sukabumi's achievement as the 6th tolerant city in Indonesia shows the commitment of the government and society in promoting the values of tolerance. Positive factors, such as government policies, inclusive education programs, and public awareness, contributed to this achievement. Through the iceberg models approach, researchers can understand how social interaction fosters harmony and awareness of religious diversity. Understanding and respect for religious diversity is the hallmark of Sukabumi that must be strengthened in order to be an example of harmony for a diverse Indonesia.

Keywords: iceberg model; mutual understanding; religious harmony; social interaction; urban society.

INTRODUCTION

Value-based humanism, particularly in the context of religious education, seeks to integrate human values with religious principles in order to promote a more inclusive, just, and empowered civil society (Lwamba et al., 2022; Petersen, 2020). Humanism stresses each individual's dignity and worth, encouraging critical thinking, empathy, and moral responsibility. Humanism attempts to connect these ideals with religious concepts in religious education, turning it into a transforming process that humanizes persons (Alfiyanto et al., 2023). This perspective sees humans as beings having spiritual values that must be developed in daily life (Malisi et al., 2023). It fosters character development by integrating religious ideals into everyday life, emphasizing caring, empathy, tolerance, humility, honesty, love, and critical thinking (Mishra & Muddgal, 2022).

The principle of diversity in the nation and state of the Indonesian nation is Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, which is Indonesia's national motto that emphasizes tolerance, unity and unity in diversity. Indonesia is recognized as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, but it is also inhabited by various religions such as Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, and Buddhism, some beliefs originate from non-religious teachings (Ahmad, 2012). Tolerance is a very important foundation in creating an attitude of mutual understanding and respect for differences in society. Religion and culture have a close relationship like two currencies that complement each other, influence each other, and have a sustainable impact. Religion is an important element in forming cultural identity, and conversely, culture has a significant influence on the development of religion in the society where that religion lives and develops (Ghazali, 2004).

Tolerance is the main key to paving the way for meaningful dialogue and the creation of harmony between religious communities (Setia & Rahman, 2022). To prevent conflicts that stem from differences in beliefs, tolerance must be instilled as a shared awareness at all levels of society, from the younger generation to adults, and from various social layers such as students, employees, bureaucrats, to college students (RI, 2010). Indonesia's diversity makes Indonesia is an example of a country with many plural cities. As a country consisting of thousands of islands and inhabited by various ethnic and cultural groups, Indonesia has many cities with a high level of diversity. Several large cities in Indonesia such as Jakarta, Surabaya, Medan, Bandung and Yogyakarta are examples of plural cities in this country.

According to data released by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2022, Sukabumi City shows very significant population diversity, including in terms of nationality, ethnicity and religion. The phenomenon of ethnic and religious pluralism in Sukabumi City is growing rapidly, confirming that this city is included in the category of plural city which has a diverse and diverse society (BPS Kota Sukabumi, 2023)

In the 2020 IKT Report, a framework developed by Brian J. Grim and Roger Finke was used to measure the level of religious freedom and tolerance in certain countries. This methodology has also been applied by Bappenas and several other academic organizations. Based on this framework, there are four pillars and eight benchmarks used to determine the level of tolerance in a country:

First, in measuring the level of inclusivity in the city's Regional Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMD), several indicators are assessed, such as the vision of religious tolerance, gender equality, harmony policies, and fair budget allocation. Apart from that, there is also an evaluation of policies that are discriminatory or have the potential to be discriminatory against certain religious groups. Second, The Government Pillar Action involves evaluating official remarks and statements from key city government officials related to incidents of intolerance. This criterion also includes an assessment of the good and negative actions taken by the city government in dealing with situations of intolerance. Third, The Social Regulation Pillar evaluates the existence of incidents of intolerance and violations of Freedom of Religion and Belief (KBB) in the city during the evaluation period. In addition, monitoring is carried out on the dynamics of civil society in relation to intolerance, including the extent to which civil society is involved in practicing and advancing attitudes of tolerance. Fourth, the Socio-Religious Population pillar assesses the religious diversity and philosophical views of the surrounding community. Apart from that, this benchmark also examines the level of mutual respect between religions in society. Finally, the Socio-Religious Openness benchmark evaluates how local communities express their views towards minority groups in religious and non-religious contexts. With these indicators and pillars, each city can learn from each other and adopt governance that leads to a more tolerant city. Evaluation of these factors will help cities to increase the level of tolerance and harmony in society, as well as encourage joint efforts to create inclusive and harmonious cities (Ulfa, 2021).

With these indications and pillars, each city can learn from each other and adopt governance that leads to a more tolerant city. Evaluation of these benchmarks provides a comprehensive view of the level of tolerance and harmony in each city, and provides an opportunity for these cities to improve and strengthen efforts to create an inclusive and peaceful environment for all their residents, regardless of differences in religion, ethnicity, or religious views. As the recipient of the tolerant city award in 2021, Sukabumi City has a life of religious tolerance which is quite significant in fostering a culture of tolerance. This can be seen from the population of 346,325 million people. Dominated by Islam with 333,328 people, Catholics with 3,252 people, Protestants with 6,846 people, Buddhists with 2,939 people and Hindus with 50 people. (Sukabumi, 2023).Even though Islam is the majority religion in this city, the principle of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika ("Diverse but still one") is still upheld in public life in Sukabumi City. It is important to remember that this diversity provides cultural richness and harmony in people's lives in Sukabumi City. Society interacts harmoniously and respects differences in ethnicity, religion and race, reflecting the spirit of tolerance and coexistence in diversity.

This observation by researchers in Sukabumi City inspired researchers to study more about the tolerance that exists in Sukabumi City. Seeing the award received by the city of Sukabumi as a Tolerant City category in 2021, referring to the differences that exist both in terms of religion, race, ethnicity and culture, is an attraction for deeper study. How social life is in the city of Sukabumi and how interactions exist in the city of Sukabumi as well as the role of government institutions in maintaining tolerance in order to maintain community harmony are the focus of study in this research.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach, intended by researchers to collect information about an existing situation or phenomenon by studying and describing it in depth. In order to achieve the expected research objectives, researchers used three methods: the phenomenological method, sociological method, and historical method (Rahman, 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The concept of social interaction acts as a basic capital in building religious tolerance because social interaction involves meetings and relationships between individuals from various religious backgrounds. Through social interaction, individuals can communicate with each other, share experiences, and understand each other's religious beliefs and practices. Social interaction allows the formation of mutual understanding and tolerance between religious communities. By interacting directly, individuals have the opportunity to see religious diversity as something rich and valuable, not as a source of conflict or division. Understanding of religious differences and similarities in human values will be opened through good social interaction. Apart from that, social interaction also helps strengthen the sense of unity and oneness in a religiously heterogeneous society. Through positive interactions, individuals can feel as part of a larger unity, namely the people of Sukabumi City, without having to feel divided by religious differences.

The basic capital that is built through social interaction is the community's collective awareness of the importance of living side by side in harmony and mutual respect for religious differences. This creates an unwritten social contract that reflects a mutual agreement to maintain interfaith tolerance and harmony. Thus, social interaction is a crucial basic asset in forming and strengthening religious tolerance in Sukabumi City. In this context, society has the opportunity to build a stronger network of inter-religious cooperation and dialogue, as well as promote the values of tolerance and respect for religious diversity as a foundation for harmony and unity amidst diversity.

Judging from history, religious diversity in Sukabumi City is very rich and originates from various long historical periods. Several religions in Sukabumi City have grown and developed over the centuries. Islam is the dominant religion in Sukabumi City and has existed since the time of the spread of Islam in Indonesia.

Islam entered this area through trade and travel by Arab and Indian traders around the 14th to 16th centuries AD. The arrival of these traders also brought Islamic teachings which then spread and were embraced by the local community. Next, Christianity is a religion that came to Sukabumi City through Christian missionaries in the 18th and 19th centuries. Catholic and Protestant churches were built in this area to serve European and Chinese immigrants who came to trade or work. Next, Hinduism and Buddhism: In the past, Hinduism and Buddhism also developed in the area that is now Sukabumi City. Historical evidence shows that the presence of Hinduism and Buddhism existed during the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms in West Java, such as the Sunda Kingdom and Pajajaran.

Some people in Sukabumi City adhere to traditional beliefs. Before the big religions came, the people in this area also had traditional spiritual beliefs and practices. Several local traditions and beliefs are still maintained and preserved by the indigenous tribal communities in Sukabumi City. As time goes by, religious diversity in Sukabumi City continues to grow in line with social, economic and political changes. The city is a center for meetings and various ethnicities, cultures, and religions, creating a rich and unique multicultural environment. Even though they have experienced challenges and conflicts, the people of Sukabumi City as a whole have demonstrated a high spirit of tolerance in maintaining interfaith harmony. Peaceful coexistence amidst religious diversity is clear evidence of how the people of Sukabumi City continue to respect differences and create meaningful harmony for all its citizens.

The existence of religious diversity in society creates opportunities for Sukabumi City residents to interact with each other. This social interaction opens up opportunities to get to know each other, communicate, and

understand differences between religions. A social interaction will not be possible if it does not fulfill two conditions according to Soerjono Soekanto (Soekanto, 2014), namely the existence of social contact and the existence of social communication. In social contract theory, Soerjano Soekanto emphasizes the importance of social agreements in forming and maintaining society. In Sukabumi City, social interaction between residents of various religions reflects a kind of unwritten social contract. The people of Sukabumi City implicitly agree to live side by side with tolerance and mutual respect for religious differences. Through positive social interactions, people create strong social bonds and build brotherhood amidst religious diversity.

Apart from the social contract as a condition for society to interact, social communication is a very important tool in building religious tolerance. In Sukabumi City, social interactions involving effective communication enable citizens of various religions to understand each other's values, beliefs and religious practices. Open communication and empathy in social interactions enable people to explore their differences in a deep and meaningful way, thereby creating awareness about the importance of respecting and appreciating religious plurality.

Social interactions that include interreligious dialogue and participation in joint events reflect a mutual agreement in appreciating and respecting the religious rights and freedoms of each citizen. Religious tolerance in Sukabumi City is formed through indirect social agreements which include collective awareness of the importance of living side by side in harmony. In social contract theory and social communication, Soerjano Soekanto provides a relevant perspective in understanding how social interaction in Sukabumi City contributes to building religious tolerance (Soekanto & Sulistyowati, 2013). Good social interaction reflects an unwritten social agreement, where the people of Sukabumi City are collectively committed to living in harmony and respecting each other's religious diversity. Effective social communication is also the key to opening dialogue and understanding religious differences, helping people achieve a deeper understanding of each other's values and beliefs so that Sukabumi City can receive an award as a tolerant city in 2021, followed 2 years later in In 2023, Sukabumi City achieved the best achievement by winning the sixth place award in Indonesia in the 2022 Tolerant City Index held by Setara Istitute (Sukabumi, 2023). This achievement shows the extraordinary commitment and efforts of the government and the people of Sukabumi City in promoting the values of tolerance and harmony between religions, cultures and ethnic groups. Sukabumi City succeeded in achieving this ranking due to various positive factors, including:

1. Government Policy: The Sukabumi City Government has policies that support and promote religious tolerance and cultural diversity in various aspects of life. This policy covers education, social and economic aspects that strengthen relations between citizens from various backgrounds.
2. Educational Programs: Schools and educational institutions in Sukabumi City have inclusive educational programs and strengthen understanding of the values of tolerance. This program provides opportunities for the younger generation to learn about various religions and cultures, so that they grow into citizens who appreciate diversity.
3. Community Events and Activities: The existence of various community events and activities in Sukabumi City involving participation from various religions and cultures also contributes to strengthening social relations between residents. Events such as cultural bazaars, art performances and intercultural dialogue create an inclusive and harmonious environment.
4. Public Awareness: The people of Sukabumi City have a high awareness of the importance of interfaith tolerance and harmony. They are actively involved in various activities to increase understanding of tolerance and create a friendly and respectful environment.

By achieving sixth place in the Tolerant Cities Index, Sukabumi City has become an example for other cities in Indonesia to develop a society that is tolerant, inclusive and peaceful coexistence. This achievement is a motivation for the government and people of Sukabumi City to continue to promote the values of tolerance and strengthen relations between residents with various religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The long history and diverse historical periods in Sukabumi City have contributed to forming a society with rich religious diversity in this city. For example, this area has traces of Hindu-Buddhist, Islamic and Dutch colonial history, each of which contributed to forming a unique and diverse religious identity. The social contract and social communication that have been going on for centuries have become a strong foundation for public awareness of religious tolerance and religious diversity in Sukabumi City. Interaction between people from various religions in the scope of daily life, such as in business, social circles and community activities, has created a collective awareness of the importance of living side by side in harmony.

Through effective social communication, the people of Sukabumi City continue to understand each other's values, beliefs and religious traditions. This communication creates opportunities for people to talk openly about their religious differences, paving the way for deeper understanding and mutual respect. In order to understand the context of the phenomenon and the dynamics of social interaction among the people of Sukabumi City in building religious tolerance, researchers use the iceberg theory model (Ecochallenge, 2023). The city of Sukabumi is known as a city with rich religious diversity, with Muslims, Christians, Catholics, Hindus, Buddhists, Confucians and other religions living side by side in harmony. Social interaction between people from various religions has become the main basis for strengthening harmony and mutual respect in this community. However, there is a deeper aspect behind visible social interactions. The iceberg theory will help reveal patterns, structures, andmental models which formed the awareness of the people of Sukabumi City regarding the importance of religious tolerance and religious diversity as an integral part of the city's identity (Senge, 1994). Thus, analysis using the iceberg theory will provide a more comprehensive insight into how important social interaction is in fostering religious harmony amidst the complexity of the diversity of Sukabumi City society. The following is an overview of the analysis iceberg theory.
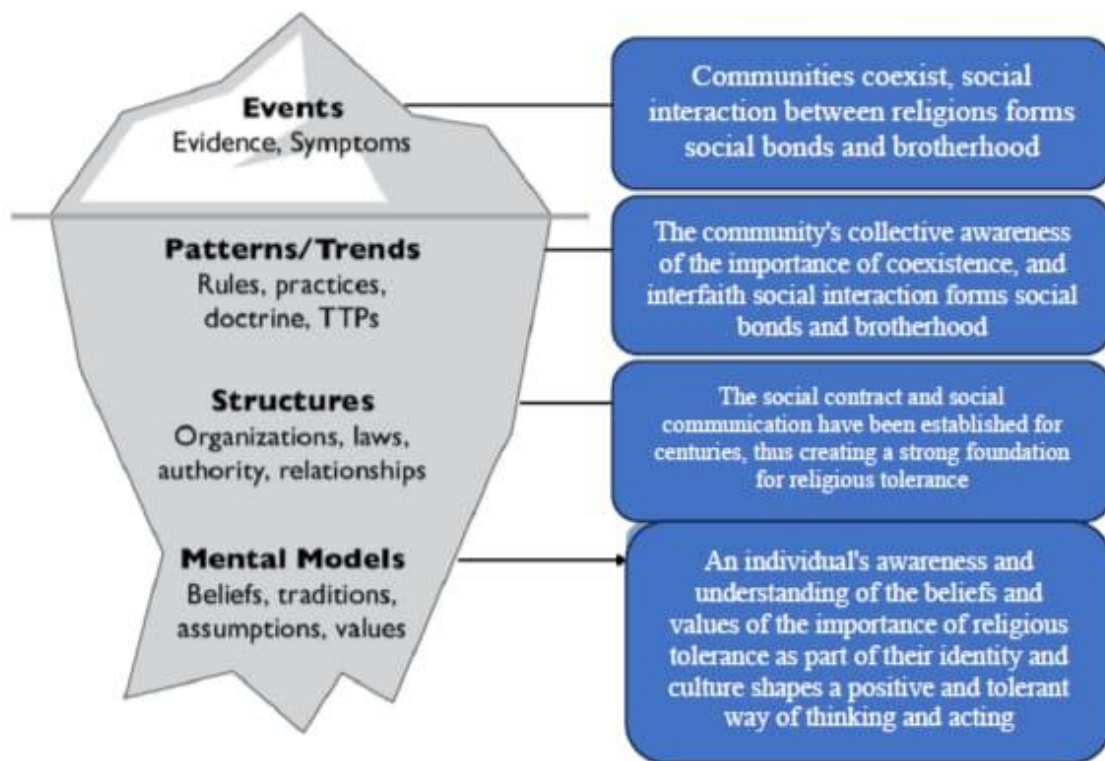

Figure 1. Analysis of Iceberg Theory of Community Social Interaction
(Source: Researchers, 2023)

The following is an explanation of the analysis of the social interaction of the people of Sukabumi City in building religious tolerance using the iceberg theory:

1. Events

At the event level, we see the rich and diverse diversity of religions in Sukabumi City. Religions such as Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and others, coexist and interact harmoniously in everyday life where individuals or groups live side by side and interact harmoniously. This situation is the most visible part and can be observed directly. Religious events such as Religious Festivals and Carnivals of Diversity provide a forum for people from various religions to gather, interact and celebrate their religious differences.

These events demonstrate concrete situations in which individuals or groups coexist and interact in harmony, and this is only part of a broader picture of the complexity of intra- and inter-religious social relations in society. This diversity shows how complex and diverse religious identities are in Sukabumi City.

2. Patterns/Trends

From the events level, we can see patterns/trends that emerge. One striking pattern is the collective awareness of the people of Sukabumi City regarding the importance of living side by side in harmony and religious tolerance. Social interactions between people from various religions have formed social bonds and brotherhood amidst religious diversity. This pattern shows that religious tolerance in Sukabumi City has existed for a long time and has become a characteristic of the people of this city. The situation in Sukabumi City, which reflects collective awareness of the importance of living side by side in harmony and religious tolerance, is an illustration of how patterns of behavior and social interaction can form social bonds and brotherhood amidst religious diversity. This shows how harmonious coexistence and religious tolerance are not just isolated events or occurrences, but reflect broader patterns or trends in Sukabumi City society.

This pattern can arise from repeated positive interactions between people of various religions, from joint efforts to overcome challenges faced together, or from a social environment that supports inclusivity and mutual respect. In the context of the Iceberg Model, these patterns or trends reflect a second layer called "Patterns of Behavior." This pattern of behavior forms a unique way in which the people of Sukabumi City face religious differences and live together with tolerance.

3. Structures

At the structures level, there are elements that support the visible patterns/trends. In the context of this discussion, structure includes social contracts and social communication that have existed for centuries. The social contract is an unwritten social agreement among the people of Sukabumi City to live in harmony and religious tolerance. Effective social communication allows for a deeper understanding of religious differences and mutual respect for each other's beliefs. This structure creates a strong foundation for awareness of religious tolerance in the city.

Apart from communication and social interactions that arise in community interactions, the role of public policy makers, namely the government, is stated in Article 29 Paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, namely "The State guarantees the freedom of each of its residents to embrace religion" this is the consensus of presence the state in providing protection to the community and the community's commitment to carrying out its obligations to respect each other and respect the existence of religious diversity. Apart from that, the Sukabumi City Government also made a policy regarding tolerance in religious diversity as stated in Sukabumi City Regional Regulation Number 5 of 2013 concerning the Long Term Regional Development Plan for Sukabumi City for 2005-2025, in order to create human resources who are faithful, pious and cultured, then Religious development is needed to be directed at increasing the harmony of life among religious communities by increasing mutual trust and harmony between community groups so as to achieve an atmosphere of social life that is full of tolerance, tolerance and harmony.

4. Mental Models

At the level of mental models, there are beliefs, values and views that underlie social actions and interactions. In this discussion, mental models include the awareness and understanding of the people of Sukabumi City regarding the importance of religious tolerance and respect for religious diversity as part of their identity and culture. Mental models or people's mental models play an important role in shaping ways of thinking and acting in establishing positive social interactions and creating an inclusive environment. Mental models are a collection of beliefs, values, assumptions and understandings held by individuals and groups in a society.

In the context of social interaction, mental models influence how individuals and groups perceive and understand each other, how they respond to differences, and how they relate to each other in the social environment. If society's mental model is based on inclusive values, mutual respect and cooperation, then the social interactions that occur will tend to be positive and support an inclusive environment.

The values of mutual respect, mutual cooperation, or a spirit of brotherhood inherent in a community's worldview will influence how they interact and live together in harmony. Any examples of mental models that reflect an inclusive environment could include:

1) Belief in the importance of understanding and respecting differences: A mental model that emphasizes the importance of respecting differences in religion, culture, ethnicity, and political views can create an environment where social interactions proceed with mutual respect and without prejudice.

2) Values of mutual cooperation and empathy: Mental models that encourage mutual cooperation, caring for others, and empathy will influence the way society responds to the needs and challenges faced by community members, regardless of their background.

3) Respect for brotherhood and solidarity: A mental model that emphasizes brotherhood and solidarity between citizens, regardless of religious or ethnic differences, will create an inclusive environment and support cooperation.

Through positive interactions and an inclusive environment, communities can create strong and mutually supportive social bonds. Mental models that support diversity and equality will help overcome conflict and promote harmony in everyday life. It is important to note that society's mental models are not static and can change over time. Therefore, education, dialogue and awareness of the importance of inclusivity can help shape and strengthen mental models that support positive social interactions and create an inclusive environment in society.

Based on this explanation, the level of the event provides an overview of the religious diversity and social interactions that occur in this city. From the events level, patterns/trends can be seen in the form of collective awareness of religious tolerance, which is supported by structures such as social contracts and social communication. Behind all that, some mental models shape society's attitudes and values in dealing with religious diversity. Thus, analysis using the iceberg theory provides a more comprehensive insight into how social interaction in Sukabumi City plays an important role in fostering harmony and awareness of religious diversity in society.

Awareness of religious tolerance and religious diversity in Sukabumi City has become part of the community's identity and culture. This is reflected in various religious events held jointly, interreligious dialogue, and participation in social activities involving people from various religions. Interfaith harmony and cooperation is a reflection of the social contract agreed by the community, ensuring the survival of religious diversity in this city. Of course, preserving awareness of religious tolerance and religious diversity in Sukabumi City must continue to be strengthened and promoted by all levels of society, including by educational institutions and the local government. Only by understanding and respecting religious diversity can Sukabumi City continue to be an example of harmony and unity for Indonesia's diverse society.

Religion in education aims to create an inclusive, just, and empowered civil society (Suroso et al., 2023). Education can develop respect for variety, moral integrity, and social responsibility by combining human ideals with religious beliefs (Al-Obaydi, 2023). According to research, many educational models embody religious, humanistic ideals (Wijaya, 2021). This paradigm emphasizes the internalization of faith principles and the development of humanistic learning theories for use in Islamic religious education. Education can become a strong tool for developing individuals who are ethically responsible, sympathetic, and committed to creating a more equitable and inclusive society by combining human values and religious ideas (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Galvão et al., 2020).

CONCLUSION

The city of Sukabumi has a long and rich history of religious diversity. Various religions, such as Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and traditional beliefs, have coexisted for centuries in this city. This religious diversity developed through trade, merchant travel, and the arrival of missionaries from various religions. The people of Sukabumi City have demonstrated a high spirit of tolerance in maintaining interfaith harmony. Social interaction between citizens of various religions, supported by effective social communication, has formed an unwritten social contract that reflects a mutual agreement in appreciating and respecting the religious rights and freedoms of each citizen. Sukabumi City's achievement in achieving a sixth place as a Tolerant City in Indonesia shows the commitment of the government and society in promoting the values of tolerance and harmony between religions, cultures and ethnicities. Various positive factors, such as government policies, inclusive education programs, community events and activities, and public awareness, have contributed to this achievement. Social contracts, social communication and collective community consciousness have formed a unique and diverse religious identity in Sukabumi City. Through a theoretical approach iceberg models, we can understand how social interaction plays an important role in fostering harmony and awareness of religious diversity in Sukabumi City society. The importance of understanding and respecting religious diversity is a characteristic of Sukabumi City which must continue to be strengthened and promoted so that this city can continue to be an example of harmony and unity for Indonesia's diverse society.

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