Fostering Unity in Diversity Through Pancasila-Based Islamic Education Among Madrasah Students

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Abstract	This study explores the critical role of Pancasila-based Islamic education in promoting tolerance and unity among *madrasah* students from diverse ethnical backgrounds. Conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Al-Islamiyah 1 Sumber Batu Pamekasan, this qualitative case study examines how integrating Pancasila values with Islamic teachings creates an educational environment that celebrates diversity while maintaining religious identity. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with 12 teachers of Islamic studies and general subjects, 24 students from grades 10-12 representing various ethnic and family backgrounds, 4 administrative leaders, and 3 parents; classroom observations totaling 80 hours; and document analysis of curriculum materials, lesson plans, and institutional policies. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis procedures that combined inductive and deductive approaches, including familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining themes. The findings demonstrate that when Islamic educational principles are harmoniously integrated with Pancasila values, students develop enhanced tolerance, critical thinking about diversity, and commitment to social harmony. This study contributes to the discourse on multicultural education in predominantly Muslim contexts and offers practical implications for educational policy and practice in diverse societies.
Keywords	Diversity; Islamic Education; *Madrasah*; Multicultural Education; Pancasila

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's remarkable diversity presents both opportunities and challenges for national cohesion and social harmony. As the world's largest Muslim-majority nation, Indonesia encompasses over 300 ethnic groups, 700 languages, and multiple religious communities coexisting within a unified national framework (Herwandito, Wahyudi, and Sampoerno 2024). The national philosophy of Pancasila, with its five principles emphasizing belief in one God, just and civilized humanity, Indonesian unity, democracy, and social justice, provides the ideological foundation for managing this pluralism (Ihsan & Fatah, 2021). However, recent decades have witnessed rising intolerance, religious extremism, and identity-based conflicts that threaten the nation's pluralistic character. Educational institutions, particularly *madrasah*s that serve millions of Muslim students, play a crucial role in either perpetuating or challenging these divisive tendencies.

Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia face the complex task of maintaining religious

authenticity while promoting values consistent with democratic citizenship and cultural pluralism (Harmi 2022; Rofiqi et al. 2024; Sutrisno 2019). *Madrasah*s, which integrate Islamic teachings with national curriculum requirements, occupy a unique position in Indonesia's educational landscape. They serve as sites where religious identity formation intersects with civic education and where traditional Islamic values encounter contemporary challenges of diversity and tolerance (Banks and Banks 2004). The question of how *madrasah*s can effectively balance these sometimes competing demands while preparing students to be both committed Muslims and engaged citizens in a diverse society remains critically important. Understanding this balance is essential for developing educational approaches that strengthen rather than undermine social cohesion.

Pancasila represents a distinctive Indonesian synthesis that attempts to reconcile religious commitment with pluralistic coexistence (Irawati et al. 2022; Lisa et al. 2023). The first principle, belief in the one supreme God, acknowledges Indonesia's religious character, while the remaining principles emphasize humanitarian values, national unity, democratic governance, and social justice. For Islamic education, Pancasila provides a framework that validates religious identity while establishing common ground with other communities (Aminullah and Umam 2020). When integrated thoughtfully into Islamic education, Pancasila values can help students understand their faith within a broader national context and develop an appreciation for diversity without compromising their religious commitments. This integration, however, requires careful pedagogical approaches that avoid superficial treatment of either Islamic teachings or Pancasila principles.

The educational policy environment in Indonesia has increasingly emphasized character education and the promotion of moderate Islam, particularly following incidents of religious violence and radicalization among young people. Government initiatives have called for *madrasah*s to strengthen their role in fostering tolerance and preventing extremism through curriculum reform and teacher training programs (Karim and Sugianto 2023; Kosim et al. 2023). These policy directions reflect growing recognition that educational institutions must actively counter narratives that promote intolerance and exclusivism. However, implementation of these policies varies considerably across institutions, and questions remain about the most effective ways to translate policy goals into classroom practice. Understanding how particular *madrasah*s successfully implement Pancasila-based Islamic education can provide valuable insights for broader educational reform efforts.

Recent international research on Islamic education and multicultural diversity has produced important insights relevant to this study. Aderibigbe et al. (2023) examined how Islamic educational principles can foster tolerance and respect for diversity, demonstrating that when Islamic teachings are properly contextualized, they naturally align with pluralistic values. Their study in the United Arab Emirates showed that students who received education grounded in Islamic principles developed stronger capacities to respect cultural differences and promote social harmony. Similarly, research by Amet (2023) on inclusive Islamic religious education in multicultural-based schools revealed that systematic integration of inclusive values within Islamic education frameworks significantly enhanced students' religious tolerance without compromising their Islamic identity. This finding challenges assumptions that religious education inherently promotes exclusivism.

Studies specifically addressing Pancasila integration in Indonesian education contexts have demonstrated both opportunities and challenges. ZA et al. (2024) investigated Pancasila as a core value for character building in Islamic higher education institutions, finding that when Pancasila values are presented as complementary rather than contradictory to Islamic teachings, students develop more sophisticated understandings of citizenship in diverse societies. Irawati et al. (2022) explored the Pancasila student profile as an approach to realizing national character, identifying key pedagogical strategies for integrating Pancasila values across curriculum areas. However, their research also highlighted implementation challenges, including teacher capacity, resource constraints, and occasional resistance from conservative voices questioning the compatibility of Pancasila's emphasis with Islamic authenticity.

Research on multicultural education theory and practice provides important theoretical foundations for understanding Pancasila-based Islamic education. Banks (2015) The seminal work on cultural diversity and education articulates five dimensions of multicultural education—content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture—that offer valuable frameworks for analyzing educational approaches to diversity. Banks emphasizes that effective multicultural education requires comprehensive transformation rather than superficial content addition, a principle directly applicable to *madrasah* contexts. Verkuyten, Yogeeswaran, and Adelman (2019) examined intergroup toleration and its implications for culturally diverse societies, demonstrating that tolerance education must address both cognitive understanding and affective attitudes to produce meaningful behavioral change. Their research highlights the importance of experiential learning opportunities for developing genuine intercultural competence.

Studies of Islamic educational institutions' approaches to diversity reveal varying strategies and outcomes. Sechandini et al. (2023) examined multicultural-based Islamic religious education models to foster moderate attitudes among junior high school students in Cilegon, Indonesia. They found that project-based learning approaches integrating multicultural values significantly increased students' tolerance and empathy. Rosanti, Murtyaningsih, and Nurhartanto (2025) investigated humanistic multicultural education within Islamic Religious Education frameworks, demonstrating that when teachers model inclusive behaviors and create supportive learning environments, students develop more positive attitudes toward diversity. However, these studies also note that changing deeply held prejudices requires sustained, long-term educational interventions rather than isolated programs.

Despite these contributions, significant gaps remain in understanding how Islamic educational institutions specifically integrate Pancasila values with religious teachings to promote tolerance while maintaining religious identity. While previous studies have examined multicultural education in various contexts and Pancasila education in secular schools, few have investigated the unique dynamics of Pancasila-based Islamic education in *madrasah* settings. Existing research has focused primarily on policy documents and curriculum analysis rather than on classroom implementation and student experiences. Furthermore, limited attention has been paid to how students themselves understand and navigate the relationship between their Islamic identity and pluralistic values, or how educational practices specifically cultivate the capacity to maintain religious commitment while embracing diversity.

This study addresses these gaps by examining how Pancasila-based Islamic education operates in practice at Madrasah Aliyah Al-Islamiyah 1 Sumber Batu Pamekasan, exploring both institutional strategies and student experiences. Unlike previous research that focused on policy or curriculum documents, this study investigates actual classroom practices, teacher pedagogies, and student meaning-making processes. By examining a specific case in depth, this research aims to illuminate the mechanisms through which Islamic educational institutions can effectively promote unity in diversity while maintaining religious authenticity. The study contributes to understanding how religious education can support rather than undermine pluralistic coexistence in diverse societies, offering practical implications for educational policy and practice in Indonesia and other multicultural Muslim-majority contexts.

The theoretical framework for this study draws on multicultural education theory, which emphasizes transforming educational content, pedagogy, and institutional culture to promote equity and inclusion across differences. Banks' dimensions of multicultural education provide a useful lens for analyzing how Pancasila-based Islamic education addresses content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and the empowerment of school culture (Imam Syafei et al., 2022; Zakso et al., 2021). Additionally, theories of religious education in pluralistic contexts inform understanding of how religious identity and intercultural competence can develop together rather than in opposition. The study also considers how character education frameworks emphasizing values such as tolerance, respect, and social responsibility can be implemented within Islamic

educational contexts. This theoretical grounding enables systematic analysis of the educational practices and outcomes observed in the research setting.

2. METHODS

This research employed a qualitative case study approach to examine the implementation and effects of Pancasila-based Islamic education at *Madrasah* Aliyah Al-Islamiyah 1 Sumber Batu Pamekasan. The case study method was selected because it enables in-depth exploration of complex educational phenomena within their real-world context, allowing for rich description and analysis of how Pancasila values are integrated into Islamic education and experienced by participants (Takona 2024). This approach is particularly appropriate for investigating educational processes and outcomes that cannot be easily separated from their institutional and cultural contexts. The focus was the *madrasah* itself, with particular attention to classroom practices, institutional policies, and student experiences related to diversity and tolerance education. Data collection occurred over six months during the 2024-2025 academic year, providing sufficient time to observe patterns and variations in educational practices.

Participants included twelve teachers of Islamic studies and general subjects, twenty-four students from grades ten through twelve representing various ethnic and family backgrounds, four administrative leaders, including the principal and curriculum coordinator, and three parents selected for their involvement in school activities. Selection employed purposive sampling to ensure diverse perspectives and maximum variation in experiences related to the research questions (John W. Creswell & J. David Creswell 2018; Yin 2018). Student participants included both those highly engaged in diversity-related activities and those less actively involved, enabling analysis of varying responses to Pancasila-based Islamic education. Teacher participants represented different subject areas, years of experience, and approaches to integrating Pancasila values. Administrative leaders provided insights into institutional policies and challenges in implementing Pancasila-based education. All participants provided informed consent and were assured of confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms in research reports.

Data collection utilized multiple methods to achieve triangulation and a comprehensive understanding. In-depth semi-structured interviews lasting sixty to ninety minutes explored participants' understandings of Pancasila values, experiences with diversity education, and perceptions of how Islamic teachings relate to tolerance and pluralism. Interview protocols were tailored to each participant group but addressed common themes across all interviews (Mahmudah et al., 2023). Classroom observations totaling eighty hours documented teaching practices, student interactions, and the integration of Pancasila values into various subjects, particularly Islamic education courses. Observations employed a structured protocol focusing on content related to diversity, teaching methods that promote intercultural understanding, and classroom dynamics reflecting tolerance or its absence. Document analysis examined curriculum materials, lesson plans, student work, and institutional policies related to character education and Pancasila values. Field notes recorded informal conversations and observations of school activities beyond formal classes. Regular member checking with participants validated interpretations and ensured accuracy.

Data analysis followed an iterative process combining inductive and deductive approaches. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were analyzed using thematic analysis procedures, including familiarization with data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and producing the final analysis (Getnet Agazu, Ketemaw Dejenu, and Lemi Debela 2022; Merriam 2009). Coding initially used an open approach to identify patterns emerging from the data, followed by focused coding organized around theoretical frameworks and research questions. The constant comparative method enabled the identification of similarities and differences across cases and data sources (Hashimov 2015; Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña 2014).

Multiple readings of data and ongoing memo writing facilitated interpretation and theory development. Software for qualitative data management supported the organization and retrieval of coded data. Peer debriefing sessions with colleagues provided external perspectives on emerging interpretations. The analysis process continued until theoretical saturation was achieved, and no new significant themes emerged from the data.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

Integration of Pancasila Values in Islamic Education Curriculum

The *madrasah* demonstrates a systematic and comprehensive approach to integrating Pancasila values throughout its Islamic education curriculum. Document analysis of 20 lesson plans across different subjects revealed that 90% explicitly linked Islamic teachings to Pancasila principles. Teachers consistently employ a theological grounding strategy, presenting Islamic concepts as naturally harmonious with Pancasila values rather than in tension with them. The curriculum materials examined show deliberate scaffolding, introducing connections at foundational levels in tenth grade and progressing to more sophisticated analysis in twelfth grade. Observation of curriculum planning meetings documented that teachers collaboratively design units, ensuring consistent messaging about the compatibility of Islamic identity and national citizenship across different subject areas.

Teachers articulated clear pedagogical rationales for this integration approach during interviews. As one senior Islamic studies teacher explained, *"Kita tidak bisa hanya menyuruh siswa untuk toleran. Kita harus menunjukkan bahwa toleransi itu berakar kuat dalam ajaran Islam. Ketika kita menghubungkan rahmatan lil alamin dengan kemanusiaan yang adil dan beradab dalam Pancasila, siswa memahami bahwa menjadi Muslim yang baik berarti juga menjadi warga negara Indonesia yang baik."* This sentiment was echoed across all twelve teacher interviews, with teachers emphasizing the importance of theological authenticity in teaching pluralistic values. Classroom observations confirmed this approach in practice, with teachers regularly using Islamic texts and traditions to reinforce rather than contradict Pancasila principles. The integration extends beyond mere mention to substantive engagement, with teachers facilitating discussions about how Islamic ethical frameworks motivate the embrace of Indonesia's diversity.

Specific curricular content demonstrates the depth of integration achieved. The Islamic studies curriculum includes dedicated units examining Indonesian Muslim scholars who championed pluralism, particularly figures like Abdurrahman Wahid, Nurcholish Madjid, and Ahmad Syafii Maarif. Document analysis revealed that these units present these figures not as compromising Islamic authenticity but as exemplifying sophisticated Islamic thought applicable to diverse contexts. History courses explicitly address how Pancasila emerged from Indonesia's Islamic and pluralistic heritage, examining the contributions of Islamic leaders to formulating the national philosophy. Civic education lessons analyze contemporary challenges to diversity through both Islamic ethical frameworks and Pancasila principles, helping students develop an integrated rather than compartmentalized understanding. Students engage with primary sources, including Quranic verses on human diversity, prophetic traditions regarding the treatment of minorities, and constitutional texts establishing Pancasila as the state ideology.

The integration manifests differently across subject areas but maintains consistency in core messages. A mathematics teacher described her approach during interviews: *"Bahkan dalam matematika, kita bisa mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai ini. Ketika siswa bekerja dalam kelompok yang beragam untuk memecahkan masalah, saya secara eksplisit menghubungkan kolaborasi mereka lintas perbedaan dengan ajaran Islam tentang kerjasama dan prinsip gotong royong Pancasila. Kontennya mungkin angka, tapi prosesnya mengajarkan persatuan dalam keberagaman."* This creative integration across all subjects emerged as a distinguishing feature of the *madrasah*'s approach. Science teachers connect environmental stewardship to both the

Islamic khalifah concept and Pancasila's social justice principle. Language teachers select texts that highlight Indonesia's diversity and analyze them through Islamic literary traditions that emphasize universal human dignity. Physical education teachers structure cooperative activities that require students from different backgrounds to work together, explicitly framing them as embodying both Islamic brotherhood and Pancasila's unity principle.

Extracurricular programming complements and reinforces curricular integration. School records document that the *madrasah* sponsors interfaith dialogue sessions twice per semester, cultural festivals celebrating Indonesia's ethnic diversity annually, and monthly community service projects bringing together students from different backgrounds. Participation data show 85% of students engaged in at least one diversity-related extracurricular activity during the academic year, with 60% participating in multiple activities. These programs move beyond mere exposure to structured engagement that builds relationships and challenges stereotypes. Interfaith dialogue sessions follow the school's protocols, beginning with finding common ground in shared values before respectfully exploring differences. Cultural festivals include not only performances but also educational components where students research and present on various Indonesian cultural traditions, learning to appreciate diversity through deep engagement rather than superficial celebration.

Assessment practices reflect the *madrasah*'s holistic commitment to Pancasila-based character development alongside academic achievement. Teachers employ diverse assessment methods, including observation rubrics documenting student interactions across differences. In these reflection journals, students process experiences with diversity, collaborative projects that require substantive engagement across backgrounds, and peer evaluations that assess both task completion and inclusive collaboration. Analysis of assessment records revealed that character competencies related to tolerance and respect are systematically evaluated, comparable to academic content mastery. However, ten out of twelve teachers acknowledged, in interviews, the inherent challenges in assessing genuine internalization of attitude versus surface compliance. The *madrasah* addresses this challenge through triangulation, using multiple assessment methods over time to identify patterns suggesting authentic attitude change rather than relying on any single measure.

Student Experiences and Attitudes Toward Diversity

Student interview data revealed complex and nuanced understandings of diversity that evolved through their *madrasah* experiences. Of twenty-four students interviewed, eighteen articulated sophisticated conceptions of tolerance that distinguished between accepting people as equals deserving respect and endorsing all beliefs as equally valid. These students demonstrated the capacity to maintain strong Islamic religious commitments while genuinely valuing religious and cultural differences. Analysis of student reflection journals showed progressive development, with tenth-grade entries typically expressing simpler understandings of diversity as "everyone is different," evolving by twelfth grade into more complex analyses recognizing how multiple identities intersect and how structural factors shape experiences of difference. Students from more homogeneous family backgrounds showed particular growth, with initial discomfort with diversity developing into genuine appreciation through sustained exposure and guided reflection.

Students consistently grounded their tolerance attitudes in Islamic teachings, demonstrating successful integration of religious and civic values. A twelfth-grade student explained during her interview, *"Awalnya saya pikir terbuka terhadap agama lain bisa melemahkan Islam saya. Tapi dari apa yang kami pelajari di sini, saya paham bahwa menghormati orang lain sebagai ciptaan Allah adalah bagian dari menjadi Muslim yang baik. Al-Quran mengatakan Allah menjadikan kita berbangsa-bangsa dan bersuku-suku agar kita saling mengenal. Pancasila hanya membantu kita menjalankan ajaran Al-Quran itu dalam konteks Indonesia."* This theological framing proved crucial to students' acceptance of pluralistic values, with 15 of 18 students who explicitly articulated mature tolerance connecting it to Islamic principles. Students frequently cited specific Quranic verses and prophetic traditions learned in Islamic studies classes to

justify their pluralistic attitudes, indicating deep rather than superficial learning.

Classroom observations documented generally positive intergroup relations, though with some nuanced variations. During eighty hours of observation across multiple classes, students collaborated effectively in diverse groups 90% of the time, with natural friendships crossing ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds evident during breaks and informal interactions. The school environment normalized diversity through consistent representation in student leadership, with the student council president, vice president, and committee chairs representing different backgrounds. Diversity was visible in curriculum materials displaying various cultural traditions and in hallway decorations celebrating Indonesia's pluralism. However, observations also captured moments of tension, particularly during three classroom discussions of politically charged topics when national political events heightened awareness of religious and ethnic identities. Teachers skillfully managed these moments, using them as opportunities for teaching constructive dialogue across differences rather than avoiding difficult conversations.

Students identified specific educational experiences as particularly influential in shaping their attitudes toward diversity. A tenth-grade student reflected in his interview, "*Dialog lintas agama itu mengubah segalanya bagi saya. Sebelumnya, saya belum pernah benar-benar berbicara dengan orang dari agama lain. Saya takut mereka akan mencoba mengonversi saya atau semacamnya. Tapi ketika kita benar-benar berbicara, saya menemukan bahwa kita punya banyak nilai yang sama. Kita semua ingin menjadi orang baik dan membantu orang lain. Sekarang ketakutan saya hilang dan saya punya teman-teman dari berbagai agama.*" Twenty out of twenty-four students ranked interfaith dialogue activities as highly impactful, with many describing them as transformative experiences that challenged stereotypes and humanized abstract concepts of diversity. Service learning projects similarly resonated with students, demonstrating shared values across differences. Historical lessons about the consequences of religious conflict motivated students to value peace and tolerance. Exposure to Muslim role models who championed pluralism provided important examples that pluralism and Islamic authenticity are compatible rather than contradictory.

Student responses to diversity education varied based on prior experiences and ongoing influences outside school. Students with family members in diverse workplaces or communities generally embraced pluralistic values more readily than those from more homogeneous environments. Six students expressed concerns during interviews that some family members or community religious teachers questioned whether tolerance education might compromise Islamic identity, creating tensions that students had to navigate. Despite generally positive attitudes, some students acknowledged struggling to maintain pluralistic perspectives when returning to less diverse home communities or when exposed to exclusivist religious messages through social media or particular mosques. These challenges highlight that schools cannot completely overcome powerful socialization from other sources, though most students demonstrated the capacity to evaluate conflicting messages rather than simply accept them. The *madrasah*'s approach to grounding tolerance in Islamic teachings appeared to provide students with resources to resist exclusivist interpretations they encountered elsewhere.

Student impact extended beyond attitudinal change to behavioral manifestations both within and beyond school. Seventeen of twenty-four students reported intervening when they witnessed prejudice in their communities, applying conflict-resolution skills learned at school, or serving as bridges between different groups. Students described educating family members about tolerance, challenging peers' stereotyped statements, and actively seeking diverse friendships. Some students became involved in youth organizations promoting interfaith dialogue or community development across group boundaries. However, the impact varied, with some students struggling to maintain pluralistic attitudes against strong countervailing social pressures. The most sustained impact appeared among students who had multiple reinforcing experiences over time—curricular learning, experiential activities, supportive peer culture, and teacher modeling—rather than any single intervention. These students developed what might be termed a pluralistic habitus, where valuing diversity became integrated into their identity rather than remaining an abstract intellectual commitment.

Pedagogical Strategies for Teaching Tolerance

Classroom observations revealed diverse and sophisticated pedagogical strategies employed by teachers to promote intercultural understanding and tolerance. Dialogical methods featured prominently in 70% of observed Islamic education classes, where teachers facilitated structured conversations allowing students to explore different perspectives on diversity and pluralism. These dialogues followed clear protocols emphasizing respectful listening, evidence-based reasoning, and distinguishing between disagreeing with ideas versus disrespecting people. Teachers skillfully scaffolded dialogue skills, beginning with less controversial topics to build capacity before addressing more sensitive issues related to religious and ethnic differences. Observations documented teachers intervening when discussions became heated, redirecting energy toward productive engagement rather than avoiding difficult conversations. The dialogical approach appeared most effective when teachers genuinely demonstrated openness to multiple perspectives rather than steering conversations toward predetermined conclusions.

Teachers demonstrated strong pedagogical intentionality in selecting and implementing teaching strategies. An experienced civic education teacher explained during her interview, *"Saya tidak hanya ceramah tentang toleransi dan mengharapkan siswa menjadi toleran. Saya menciptakan situasi di mana mereka harus benar-benar mempraktikkan toleransi, bekerja dengan orang yang berbeda dari mereka, mendengarkan perspektif yang awalnya tidak mereka setujui, menemukan kesamaan meskipun ada perbedaan. Praktik itu jauh lebih kuat daripada ceramah apapun yang bisa saya berikan."* This emphasis on experiential learning was consistent across teacher interviews, with 11 of 12 teachers articulating clear rationales for choosing active learning methods over traditional lecture approaches. Teachers recognized that changing attitudes requires more than transmitting information; it demands creating experiences that challenge existing assumptions and develop new capacities for engaging difference constructively.

Narrative and case-based pedagogies proved particularly effective for developing empathy and perspective-taking. Teachers regularly incorporated stories of individuals navigating religious and cultural differences, both historical figures and contemporary examples. Sixty-five percent of observed classes included narrative elements, with teachers selecting cases that resonated with students' developmental stages and experiences. Role-playing activities occurred in 40% of the observed classes, enabling students to experience different perspectives. One particularly powerful activity observed involved students taking roles in a historical negotiation between Muslim and Christian leaders during Indonesia's independence struggle, helping them appreciate how religious differences were successfully navigated in founding the nation. Teachers reported that narrative approaches resonated emotionally with students in ways abstract principles did not, making them especially valuable for attitude formation rather than merely knowledge transmission. Story selection required cultural sensitivity, with teachers choosing narratives featuring Muslim protagonists demonstrating pluralistic values to maintain students' religious identification while expanding their perspectives.

Cooperative learning structures created practical opportunities for students to work across differences toward common goals. A mathematics teacher described his approach: *"Ketika saya memberikan tugas kelompok, saya sengaja membuat kelompok yang beragam dan memberi mereka masalah kompleks yang memerlukan kontribusi semua orang. Awalnya beberapa siswa lebih suka bekerja dengan teman dari latar belakang serupa, tapi mereka belajar bahwa keberagaman membawa kekuatan yang berbeda-beda. Siswa yang kuat di aljabar mungkin dari satu latar belakang, yang bagus dalam pemikiran geometris dari latar belakang lain. Mereka menemukan bahwa keberagaman memperkaya pemecahan masalah mereka, tidak hanya di IPS tapi juga di matematika."* Observations confirmed this pattern across subjects, with 85% of group activities featuring deliberately diverse compositions. Teachers assigned roles ensuring equitable participation and regularly processed group dynamics, explicitly connecting successful collaboration to both Islamic cooperation principles and Pancasila's gotong royong value. This approach transformed diversity from an abstract concept to a lived experience of benefiting from different perspectives and strengths.

Critical pedagogy approaches equipped students with analytical tools for examining how prejudice and discrimination operate in society. 55% of observed classes included critical analysis components, with teachers guiding students to examine media representations, historical narratives, and contemporary issues through lenses that recognize multiple perspectives and vested interests. Students analyzed how particular groups are represented in textbooks, news media, and popular culture, developing awareness of whose stories are told and whose are marginalized. Teachers helped students identify and challenge stereotyped assumptions in various contexts while maintaining appropriate respect for religious and cultural sensitivities. This emphasis on critical thinking appeared particularly important for helping students distinguish between legitimate intellectual disagreement and prejudiced dismissal, between respecting different beliefs and accepting discrimination. However, three parents expressed concerns during interviews that critical approaches might encourage students to question religious or political authorities inappropriately, reflecting tensions teachers must navigate in implementing critical pedagogy in religious educational contexts.

Teacher modeling emerged as perhaps the most powerful pedagogical strategy, though least formally structured. Students consistently identified specific teachers as influential, not primarily through explicit instruction but through authentic embodiment of pluralistic values in their behavior and relationships. Twenty-two out of twenty-four students named particular teachers who demonstrated genuine curiosity about different perspectives, acknowledged complexity and uncertainty rather than presenting simplistic answers, maintained relationships with diverse individuals, and visibly practiced the tolerance they taught. Observations confirmed differences in teacher authenticity: some teachers naturally embodied inclusive attitudes, while others appeared to follow curricular requirements without deep personal conviction. Students proved remarkably perceptive about these differences, responding more positively to teachers they perceived as genuinely valuing diversity rather than merely completing mandated lessons. This finding highlights that effective tolerance education requires not just good curriculum and teaching techniques, but also teachers who have developed intercultural competence and a genuine appreciation for diversity.

Implementation Challenges and Opportunities

Implementing Pancasila-based Islamic education faces multifaceted challenges that require ongoing navigation and problem-solving. External pressures from conservative religious voices questioning whether tolerance education compromises Islamic authenticity emerged as a significant concern across all administrative interviews. Document analysis revealed three formal complaints from parents during the academic year questioning specific diversity education activities, particularly interfaith dialogue sessions. Some community religious leaders expressed skepticism about emphasizing Pancasila, viewing it as government interference in religious education or fearing that teaching about other religions might confuse students. The *madrasah* principal described spending considerable time engaging with concerned community members, explaining educational rationales, and demonstrating how the approach strengthens rather than weakens Islamic identity. These external pressures create ongoing tension that school leaders must manage carefully, balancing fidelity to the educational vision with maintaining community support, which is essential for institutional sustainability.

School administrators acknowledged the political complexity of navigating these tensions while maintaining educational integrity. The principal explained during his interview, *"Sebagian orang berpikir mengajarkan toleransi berarti kita membuat Islam lemah atau menerima semua agama sebagai sama. Kita harus terus menjelaskan bahwa toleransi berarti menghormati orang, bukan menerima semua kepercayaan sebagai sama-sama benar. Kita tunjukkan bahwa Nabi Muhammad sendiri membuat perjanjian dengan suku-suku Yahudi dan Kristen di Madinah, mempraktikkan toleransi sambil mempertahankan prinsip-prinsip Islam.* Ketika kita mendasarkan pendekatan kita pada sejarah dan teks Islam, sebagian besar kekhawatiran mereda. Tapi ini pekerjaan yang terus-menerus, bukan sesuatu yang kita jelaskan sekali lalu selesai."* This statement captures the delicate balance required in implementing Pancasila-based Islamic education in contexts

where some community members harbor suspicions about pluralistic education. The *madrasah* addresses concerns through transparent communication, invites skeptics to observe classes, and consistently demonstrates that the approach produces students with strong Islamic identities who also contribute positively to diverse communities.

Teacher capacity emerged as another significant implementation challenge, with substantial variation in teachers' preparedness and effectiveness in addressing diversity issues. Seven out of twelve teachers reported during interviews feeling inadequately prepared to facilitate difficult conversations about religious differences. Five teachers expressed concerns about managing conflicts arising from diversity discussions, sometimes avoiding controversial topics rather than engaging them constructively. Professional development records showed that teachers received an average of 8 hours of diversity education training annually, though the quality of these training opportunities varied considerably. Newer teachers, particularly, struggled to address sensitive topics, lacking both content knowledge of different religious and cultural traditions and pedagogical skills to manage charged classroom dynamics. Some teachers demonstrated sophisticated approaches, while others implemented diversity education somewhat mechanically, following curriculum requirements without deep understanding or conviction. This variability suggests that effective implementation requires not just a good curriculum but sustained, high-quality teacher professional development.

Teachers themselves recognized their need for ongoing learning and support in this domain. A third-year teacher candidly shared, *"Saya percaya pada pengajaran toleransi, tapi kadang saya tidak tahu bagaimana merespons ketika siswa mengajukan pertanyaan sulit tentang agama lain atau ketika mereka membawa hal-hal kontroversial yang mereka dengar di masjid mereka. Saya khawatir mengatakan sesuatu yang salah yang bisa menyebabkan masalah. Kadang saya menghindari topik-topik ini karena saya tidak yakin bisa menanganinya dengan baik. Saya butuh lebih banyak pelatihan bukan hanya tentang apa yang harus diajarkan tapi bagaimana mengajarkannya ketika isu-isunya sensitif."* This honest acknowledgment appeared across several teacher interviews, with educators recognizing gaps in their capacity while desiring to improve. The *madrasah* has begun addressing these needs through peer-mentoring systems pairing experienced and newer teachers, collaborative planning that enables teachers to learn from each other, and more systematic professional development. However, developing teacher expertise in diversity education requires sustained investment that cannot be achieved through occasional workshops alone.

Resource constraints limit implementation possibilities in various ways despite creative problem-solving. Budget analysis revealed limited funding for curricular materials, guest speakers, field trips, and other enrichment activities that could enhance diversity education. Teachers managed average class sizes of 32 students, constraining the individualized attention and the depth of discussion possible. The *madrasah* lacked dedicated spaces for certain activities, requiring the creative use of available facilities. Library holdings on different religions and cultures remained limited despite teachers' requests for additional materials. Access to technology, while adequate for basic needs, was limited, limiting the possibilities for virtual exchange programs or multimedia projects that some teachers envisioned. These resource limitations required prioritization among competing needs and creative problem-solving to maximize impact within constraints. School leaders cultivated community partnerships, provided volunteer resources, and focused investments on areas with the greatest potential impact. However, resource scarcity ultimately constrained what could be achieved, highlighting that policy rhetoric supporting diversity education must be backed by adequate funding.

Despite significant challenges, substantial opportunities exist to strengthen and expand Pancasila-based Islamic education. Growing recognition of intolerance as a serious social problem has increased support for educational approaches that promote pluralism, thereby creating more favorable political and social environments. Government policies increasingly emphasize moderate Islam and character education aligned with Pancasila values, providing supportive policy frameworks even if resource allocation remains insufficient. Many parents appreciate *madrasah* efforts to prepare students for diverse workplaces and communities in globalized contexts, recognizing the practical benefits of intercultural

competence. Student enthusiasm for diversity-related activities suggests genuine interest when approached appropriately. Technological resources offer new possibilities for virtual exchange programs, enabling access to diverse perspectives and the creation of engaging multimedia content despite budget limitations. The *madrasah*'s demonstrated success despite constraints positions it to serve as a model for other institutions and potentially attract additional support. These opportunities suggest that, while challenges are real and substantial, they are not insurmountable, and that continued commitment and strategic action can significantly advance Pancasila-based Islamic education.

Discussion

The findings from this study illuminate the complex dynamics through which Islamic educational institutions can foster pluralistic values while maintaining religious authenticity, offering important insights into both multicultural education theory and the specific challenges of religious education in diverse societies. The systematic integration of Pancasila values observed at this *madrasah* exemplifies what Banks (2015) conceptualizes transformative multicultural education, moving beyond superficial content addition to a fundamental reconstruction of how knowledge is presented and of educational culture. Banks' five dimensions of multicultural education—content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture—provide a useful analytical framework for understanding the *madrasah*'s approach. However, the findings also reveal dimensions that Banks' framework does not fully capture, particularly the role of theological grounding in motivating pluralistic values within religious educational contexts.

The theological grounding strategy emerged as the most critical element in enabling the successful integration of Pancasila values into Islamic education. By explicitly connecting Islamic concepts like rahmatan lil alamin with Pancasila principles, teachers addressed what Verkuyten et al. (2019) Identifying is a fundamental challenge in promoting intergroup tolerance: helping individuals see diversity appreciation as enriching rather than threatening their primary identities. This finding extends research by Aderibigbe et al. (2023) and Bahri et al. (2025) demonstrating that Islamic teachings naturally support pluralistic values when properly contextualized. However, this study shows more specifically how such contextualization can be achieved through national philosophical frameworks like Pancasila, which provide a culturally resonant vocabulary for discussing pluralism that might be absent in contexts lacking such frameworks. The *madrasah*'s success in fostering students who maintain a strong Islamic identity while genuinely embracing diversity challenges persistent assumptions in educational literature that religious education inherently promotes exclusivism or that pluralism requires weakening religious commitments.

The observed integration practices reflect a sophisticated engagement with Banks's (2015) knowledge construction dimension, in which teachers help students understand how knowledge claims reflect particular cultural perspectives and serve particular interests. By teaching students to examine Islamic texts for messages about diversity, analyze how different Muslim scholars interpret pluralism, and recognize that both Islamic tradition and Indonesian nationalism offer resources for managing difference, teachers develop students' epistemological sophistication regarding how meaning is constructed across different frameworks. This approach avoids presenting either Islamic teachings or Pancasila principles as monolithic, instead helping students appreciate internal diversity within both traditions and cultivate the capacity for nuanced thinking about complex issues. Such pedagogical sophistication was consistently evident among experienced teachers. However, it proved challenging for newer educators, suggesting that effective implementation requires not merely curriculum materials but teachers who possess this epistemological flexibility.

Student attitude development revealed the complexity that multicultural education theory must engage more seriously. While many students developed sophisticated pluralistic understandings, this development proved neither linear nor uniform. The finding that students with more homogeneous backgrounds initially struggled but eventually showed significant growth aligns with contact

hypothesis predictions that sustained, structured intergroup contact under supportive conditions can reduce prejudice (Samba, Sanitioso, and Mahfud 2025; Verkuyten et al. 2019). However, the finding that some students maintained pluralistic attitudes only within school contexts, reverting to more exclusive views in less diverse environments, highlights what Banks' (2015) acknowledges but perhaps underemphasizes: schools alone cannot overcome powerful socialization from families, communities, and media. This suggests that multicultural education scholarship should pay greater attention to helping students develop what might be termed 'pluralistic resilience'—the capacity to maintain inclusive attitudes despite encountering exclusivist messages in other life domains. The students who demonstrated such resilience typically had multiple reinforcing experiences over time and strong relationships with teachers who authentically modeled pluralistic values.

The pedagogical strategies observed demonstrate important principles for teaching about difference that extend beyond this specific context. The effectiveness of narrative and experiential approaches over purely cognitive instruction aligns with extensive research showing that attitude change requires engaging affective and behavioral dimensions alongside intellectual understanding (Gay, 2018; Gunay, 2014). However, this study reveals particular considerations relevant to religious educational settings that general multicultural education literature may not adequately address. Specifically, the importance of selecting narratives featuring protagonists who share students' religious identity while demonstrating pluralistic values suggests that effective diversity education in religious schools requires careful attention to identification processes. Students appeared more receptive to pluralistic messages when delivered through Muslim exemplars than through secular frameworks, highlighting how cultural and religious contexts shape receptiveness to particular pedagogical approaches. This finding has important implications for developing culturally responsive approaches to tolerance education that work with rather than against students' existing identities and commitments.

Teacher modeling emerged as a critical yet often overlooked dimension of tolerance education. While Banks' (2015) The equity pedagogy dimension addresses teaching methods, and the importance of teachers' authentic embodiment of pluralistic values extends beyond technique to matters of identity and character. This finding resonates with research by Sakban and Sundawa (2023) and Wulan Dari (2024) on character education, emphasizing that values education requires more than curriculum and instruction; it demands educators who exemplify the values they teach. The students' acute awareness of whether teachers genuinely value diversity versus merely completing mandated lessons suggests that effective tolerance education requires addressing teacher attitudes, not just teacher knowledge and skills. This has profound implications for teacher preparation, suggesting that programs must focus on supporting teachers' own intercultural development rather than merely equipping them with diversity-teaching techniques. The variation in teacher effectiveness observed in this study likely reflects differences in teachers' own intercultural competence and comfort with diversity as much as differences in pedagogical skill.

The implementation challenges documented reveal systemic issues that educational policy must address to support diversity education effectively. The external pressures from conservative voices reflect broader tensions in Indonesia and many other contexts between religious authenticity and pluralistic citizenship that cannot be resolved purely through educational interventions (Parker and Raihani 2011; Raihani 2012). The *madrasah*'s strategy of addressing these concerns through transparent communication, grounding tolerance in Islamic traditions, and demonstrating positive outcomes offers a model for other institutions facing similar pressures. However, this approach requires considerable leadership capacity and institutional confidence that not all schools possess, suggesting the need for support systems helping educators navigate these tensions. The resource constraints limiting implementation despite creative problem-solving highlight a frequent disconnect between policy rhetoric supporting diversity education and actual resource allocation. As Gordon and Nieto (1992); Suleiman (2000) argue that multicultural education requires not just good intentions but also structural support, including adequate funding, reasonable class sizes, professional development, and

appropriate materials. The progress achieved despite constraints in this case suggests even greater potential if resources matched policy aspirations.

Teacher capacity challenges reveal that successful implementation requires comprehensive professional development systems rather than isolated training events. The teachers who demonstrated sophisticated approaches to diversity education typically possessed a combination of subject-matter knowledge about different traditions, pedagogical skills for managing difficult conversations, and personal intercultural competence developed through their own diverse relationships and experiences. Research by Luthfi, Saputra, and Ali (2025) and Amiruddin, Askar, and Yusra (2019) similarly identifies teacher capacity as crucial for implementing character education effectively. However, this study provides more specific insight into what capacities matter most for diversity education in religious school contexts. Teachers need theological knowledge enabling them to draw on religious resources supporting pluralism, awareness of how prejudice operates to recognize and address it pedagogically, facilitation skills for managing charged discussions constructively, and, perhaps most importantly, genuine commitment to pluralistic values reflected in their own relationships and behavior. Developing this comprehensive capacity requires sustained investment in teacher education that current systems typically do not provide.

These findings contribute to ongoing scholarly conversations about the role of religious education in diverse societies. Whereas some research has positioned religious schooling as potentially divisive or as promoting exclusive identities incompatible with pluralistic citizenship (Raihani 2012; Umar and Nurrohman 2024)This study demonstrates that religious schools can actively cultivate pluralistic values when approached thoughtfully. The key appears to be not abandoning religious particularity but rather mining religious traditions for resources supporting coexistence and then connecting these resources to national frameworks like Pancasila. This approach differs from secular multicultural education that often treats religion primarily as diversity to be tolerated rather than as a resource for motivating tolerance. The *madrasah*'s success suggests that in religiously diverse societies, effective citizenship education may require engaging seriously with religious identities and traditions rather than bracketing them. This finding extends research by ZA et al. (2024), Pulhehe and Robandi (2024) and Kolek et al. (2025) on Pancasila education by showing how national philosophy and religious education can reinforce rather than compete with each other when both are understood as addressing fundamental questions about how diverse humans should live together.

Theoretically, these findings suggest the need for more sophisticated frameworks that address the intersection of religious identity and multicultural citizenship, beyond what existing multicultural education theory typically provides. Banks' (2015) influential framework focuses primarily on racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity, with less attention to religious diversity and religious schools as sites of multicultural education. While his dimensions remain useful, this study reveals additional considerations specific to religious educational contexts: the importance of theological grounding in pluralistic values, the role of religious exemplars in modeling inclusive identities, the need to distinguish between religious particularity and prejudice, and strategies to address concerns that diversity education might compromise religious authenticity. Developing more robust theoretical frameworks for the role of religious schools in multicultural education is an important agenda for future scholarship. Such frameworks must engage seriously with how religious and civic identities intersect, recognizing both tensions and potential synergies that purely secular multicultural education frameworks may miss.

The practical implications extend to educational policy and practice in Indonesia and, potentially, to other contexts facing similar challenges in managing religious and cultural diversity. Curriculum frameworks should enable flexible integration of diversity themes across subjects rather than treating tolerance as an isolated topic relegated to particular classes. Teacher preparation programs must develop both knowledge and facilitation skills for addressing diversity sensitively and effectively, including opportunities for pre-service teachers to develop their own intercultural competence through

structured experiences. Professional development for in-service teachers should move beyond occasional workshops to sustained systems that include peer mentoring, collaborative planning, and ongoing support for addressing challenges as they arise. Educational policies must provide resources that match rhetorical commitments to tolerance education, including reasonable class sizes, appropriate materials, professional development funding, and support for extracurricular activities, that create opportunities for meaningful intergroup contact. School leadership plays crucial roles in establishing inclusive institutional cultures, engaging skeptical stakeholders constructively, and supporting teachers in navigating implementation challenges. These implications suggest the need for comprehensive approaches that address multiple dimensions of educational systems rather than isolated interventions.

This research contributes to understanding how religious educational institutions can support pluralistic coexistence in diverse societies, a question of considerable importance given global challenges related to religious diversity and increasing polarization around identity issues. The *madrasah* studied demonstrates that it is possible to foster students who maintain strong religious commitments while genuinely valuing diversity and contributing to intercultural harmony. However, the findings also reveal that achieving this outcome requires sustained effort, skilled educators, supportive institutional cultures, adequate resources, and engagement with skeptical stakeholders — conditions not easily or quickly established. The opportunities identified suggest that with appropriate support, religious schools can become important sites for cultivating pluralistic values rather than barriers to social cohesion. Future research should examine Pancasila-based Islamic education across varied institutional contexts to understand how different conditions affect outcomes, investigate long-term impacts on graduates' attitudes and behaviors as they navigate diverse workplaces and communities, explore how different religious traditions approach diversity education in their schools, and develop more refined theoretical frameworks addressing the intersection of religious and civic identity development. Such research can inform efforts to harness the potential of religious education to promote coexistence rather than division in an increasingly diverse world.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Pancasila-based Islamic education effectively cultivates unity in diversity among *madrasah* students through integrated curricula, experiential learning, and pedagogical strategies that anchor pluralistic values in Islamic teachings. At Madrasah Aliyah Al-Islamiyah 1 Sumber Batu Pamekasan, this approach strengthened students' tolerance, critical awareness of diversity, and commitment to social harmony by explicitly linking Islamic ethical principles with Pancasila's national ideals. Despite its promise, implementation remains challenged by conservative external pressures, uneven teacher capacity, and limited resources, underscoring the need for sustained institutional commitment, comprehensive teacher preparation, and robust policy support. Overall, the findings affirm that religious and civic education can be mutually reinforcing when theological and philosophical frameworks are thoughtfully bridged, offering important implications for educational practice and policy as well as insights into how religious institutions can nurture pluralistic coexistence in Indonesia and other multicultural societies.

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