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THE PRACTICE OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

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Abstract

This study analyzes the practice of Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam, PAI) in the context of religious diversity in four elementary schools in Mataram City, Indonesia, namely SD Nusa Alam, SD Stella Gracia, SD Kristen Tunas Daud, and SD Katolik Santo Antonius Ampenan, where Muslim students constitute a numerical minority. The study employed a qualitative approach with a multisite case study design. The data consisted of information on instructional practices, school policies, forms of religious accommodation, and the experiences of school members, obtained from 32 informants (PAI teachers, principals or school administrators, and Muslim and non-Muslim students), classroom observations, and school documents. Data were collected from March to May 2025, analyzed within and across sites, and interpreted through Banks's five dimensions of multicultural education. The findings reveal five interrelated patterns: contextual strengthening of Islamic identity, pedagogical adaptation, structured interreligious interaction, institutional accommodation, and a school culture that supports diversity. Teachers maintained the substance of PAI while adjusting examples, methods, and instructional media; the sustainability of these adaptations depended on instructional time, worship space, scheduling, the protection of students' rights, and coordination among religious education teachers. The study concludes that multicultural education in PAI emerges from the interrelationship among religious identity, pedagogical adaptation, and institutional accommodation. Such multicultural education does not require the weakening of Islamic identity; however, its sustainability depends on the school's capacity to guarantee accommodation as a right rather than as a concession.

Keywords Elementary School, Institutional Accommodation, Multicultural Education, Muslim Minority Students, Pedagogical Adaptation.

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INTRODUCTION

Religious diversity is a defining feature of Indonesia's educational landscape. Article 12(1)(a) of the National Education System Law grants students the right to receive religious education in accordance with their own religion, taught by educators of the same faith (Republic of Indonesia, 2003); the implementation of this right is further regulated by Government Regulation No. 55 of 2007 (Republic of Indonesia, 2007) and Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 16 of 2010 (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2010). However, this right is not automatically fulfilled simply because the curriculum provides for it. Shortages of religious education teachers, limited school budgets, and the small number of students from particular groups can hinder the equitable provision of religious education for all religious communities in multireligious public schools (Utami, 2022). In schools with few Muslim students, the delivery of religious education depends on the availability of teachers, instructional time, prayer rooms (*musalla*), scheduling, and school policies. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) should be understood as a practice jointly shaped by learning materials, teacher strategies, classroom interaction, and institutional arrangements, rather than by curricular content alone.

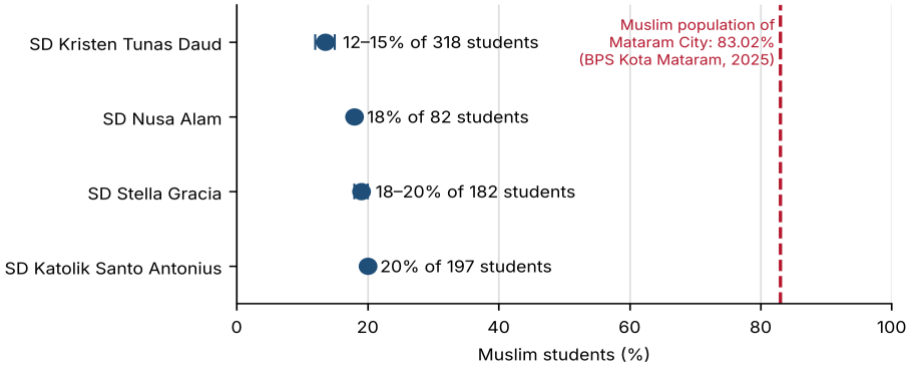
This study was conducted in four elementary schools in Mataram City that differ in student enrollment and composition (Table 1). SD Nusa Alam has 82 students in six classes, SD Stella Gracia has 182 students in nine classes, SD Kristen Tunas Daud has 318 students in twelve classes, and SD Katolik Santo Antonius Ampenan has 197 students in seven classes. According to school records, the proportion of Muslim students ranges from 12% to 20%, or approximately 125–138 of 779 students (±16–18%). Muslim students are thus a numerical minority in each school. This situation contrasts with the regional context: in 2024, 381,627 of Mataram City's 459,683 residents (83.02%) were Muslim (BPS Kota Mataram, 2025). These schools therefore represent a minority context at the school level but not at the regional level.

Table 1. Student Profiles of Four Elementary Schools in Mataram City

No.	School	Number of Students	Number of Classes	Proportion of Muslim Students	Estimated Number of Muslim Students
1	SD Nusa Alam	82	6	18%	±15
2	SD Stella Gracia	182	9	18–20%	±33–36
3	SD Kristen Tunas Daud	318	12	12–15%	±38–48
4	SD Katolik Santo Antonius Ampenan	197	7	20%	±39
	Total	779	34	±16–18%	±125–138

Source: Student and class numbers were taken from the school profiles of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (odd-semester data for the 2026/2027 academic year, accessed in November 2026); the proportion of Muslim students was taken from school reports. Note: The number of Muslim students is an estimate calculated from the reported percentages, not an administrative headcount. Student numbers reflect the Ministry profiles at the time of revision, whereas the proportion of Muslim students was reported by the schools during fieldwork (March–May 2025); because the two sources refer to different periods, the estimated figures should be read as approximations.

Figure 1. Proportion of Muslim Students in Four Schools Compared with the Proportion of the Muslim Population of Mataram City



Source: Table 1; BPS Kota Mataram (2025). Note: SD = sekolah dasar (elementary school). Dots indicate midpoints; lines indicate estimated ranges.

Figure 1 shows that the proportion of Muslim students in the four schools ranges from 12% to 20%, far below the proportion of Muslims in the population of Mataram City (83.02%). The lowest proportion is found at SD Kristen Tunas Daud, which also has the largest enrollment, whereas SD Nusa Alam, SD Stella Gracia, and SD Katolik Santo Antonius fall within the 18–20% range.

The first academic problem concerns how PAI is implemented in elementary schools where most students are non-Muslim. Muslim students account for only about 16–18% of the 779 students in the four schools (Table 1), with the lowest proportion (12–15%) at SD Kristen Tunas Daud, where some classes have only one to three Muslim students. This situation raises issues of teacher availability, instructional time, and classroom space, which have also been reported in other contexts. Fihris et al. (2023) emphasized that PAI teachers in schools where Muslim students are a minority need to give special attention to minority students. Hasan (2024) found that in two schools in North Sulawesi, PAI for Muslim minority students was taught by Christian teachers because no qualified PAI teachers were yet available. Idris et al. (2022) examined the availability and accessibility of PAI for elementary school students in North Minahasa, a region with a predominantly non-Muslim population, whereas Muthohharoh et al. (2024) showed that PAI teachers in four general and vocational senior high schools in Denpasar not only transmitted

knowledge but also strengthened the faith and religious practice of Muslim minority students. Accordingly, the first research question asks how PAI is implemented in these schools, including the materials taught, the methods and media used by teachers, and the conditions that enable or constrain its implementation.

The second academic problem concerns the extent to which PAI practices align with the principle of respect for religious diversity. For PAI teachers, the issue is not merely whether the curriculum mentions tolerance, but whether they must choose between preserving the distinctiveness of their teachings and building relationships with other religious groups, and whether the school provides conditions that allow both to coexist. Sirry et al. (2024) identified the lack of interreligious learning as a challenge for tolerance education in senior high schools; Mulyana et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of non-Muslim students' perceptions of PAI; and Nuha et al. (2021) found that role modeling, habituation, and interaction can foster tolerance in schools with religiously diverse students. In West Lombok, Fitriani and Naamy (2024) found that religious education fosters tolerance when its objectives, teachers, curriculum, and methods are inclusive, but risks triggering ideological conflict when they are not. The second research question is therefore formulated descriptively: to what extent do these PAI practices align with the principle of respect for religious diversity, without measuring changes in students' attitudes?

The third academic problem concerns how PAI can be developed to support interreligious harmony in the school environment. Previous studies indicate that religious education practices cannot be separated from institutional support. Faishol et al. (2026) found that the shift in the role of PAI teachers toward that of dialogue facilitators is influenced by school leadership and structural constraints; Ginting and Limbong (2025) showed that implementing the values of religious moderation requires a strong institutional framework; and Hasan (2024) recommended affirmative policies, inclusive models of religious education, and collaborative governance. The third research question therefore examines how the development of PAI can combine teachers' capacity to contextualize learning materials with school support for maintaining harmony.

Five studies published in the past five years provide direction but still leave gaps. Hadi and Laili (2022) examined multicultural-based PAI at SMP Sapta Andika Denpasar and found that religious education can be linked to how students respond to difference. However, that study focused on a single school and did not compare institutional characteristics. Sirry et al. (2024) interviewed 152 teachers from 28 senior high schools in four cities in East Java and found that the

lack of interreligious education poses a challenge for tolerance education; their study relied on teachers' perspectives and did not address the position of Muslim minority students or institutional accommodation. Bakar et al. (2025) showed that PAI for Muslim minority students at a *madrasah aliyah* (Islamic senior high school) in Bali can strengthen students' identity while fostering harmonious relations with the majority group. However, that study was conducted in a single Islamic institution. Salmiati et al. (2025) examined Islam-based multicultural education at SMPN 2 Makale, Tana Toraja, and found that the school implemented it through inclusive policies, contextual and value-oriented PAI instruction, and interreligious activities; because the study was conducted in a single junior high school, variation across schools could not be compared. Faishol et al. (2026) found that the role of PAI teachers has shifted toward that of dialogue facilitators, a shift influenced by school leadership and structural constraints; their unit of analysis was teachers in public senior high schools, not the minority status of Muslim students.

Three gaps emerge from these studies. First, research has generally been conducted at a single site or with a single group of actors, so variation in practice across schools with different institutional characteristics has not yet been compared. Second, religious identity, interreligious interaction, teacher roles, and institutional support have generally been examined separately. Third, research at the elementary school level has mostly focused on the availability and accessibility of PAI services or has been conducted in a single school. For example, Idris et al. (2022) examined service availability in North Minahasa but did not focus on pedagogical practice or interreligious interaction. Riadi et al. (2026) identified the values of freedom of expression, equal opportunity, tolerance, and justice in PAI instruction at a religiously diverse public elementary school, whereas Susari et al. (2024) reported the integration of tolerance into the curriculum, teacher role modeling, and religious activities at an Islamic elementary school in Bangka Belitung. Vika et al. (2026) examined identity negotiation and pedagogical adaptation in a minority context at SMA Negeri 1 Komodo, East Nusa Tenggara, whereas Fihris et al. (2023) examined the strengthening of PAI at a public junior high school; both are likewise single-school studies. The novelty of the present study lies in its comparison of four elementary schools with different characteristics and its integration of instructional practice, interaction, and institutional support within a single analysis. Banks's five dimensions, namely content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture and social structure, were used as an analytical lens after empirical patterns had been identified from the data (Banks & Banks, 2019).

This study aims to analyze PAI practices in the context of religious diversity in four elementary schools in Mataram City where most students are non-Muslim, focusing on five aspects: the strengthening of Islamic identity, pedagogical adaptation, interreligious interaction, institutional accommodation, and school culture. Rather than treating these aspects as a list, the study examines how three components, namely religious identity, pedagogical adaptation, and institutional accommodation, interact with one another, while interreligious interaction and school culture are read as arenas in which the three meet. Theoretically, the study tests the applicability of Banks's dimensions to PAI in a minority context. Practically, its findings may serve as a reference for PAI teachers, school administrators, and policymakers in designing instructional support, schedules, and facilities. The research framework, which links the context, gaps, research questions, methods, and interpretive lens, is presented in Figure 2.

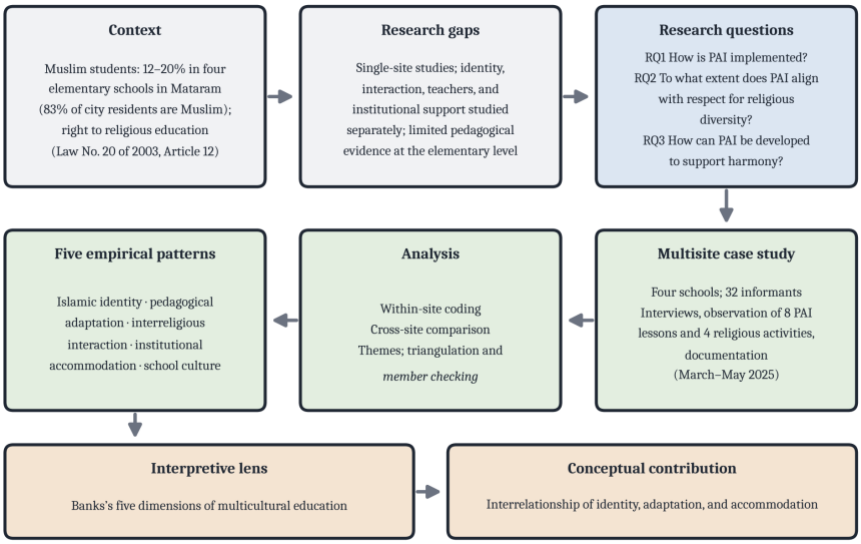


Figure 2. Research Framework

Source: Developed by the authors.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative design with a multisite case study approach (Yin, 2018). It focused on PAI practices in the context of religious diversity in four elementary schools in Mataram City where most students are non-Muslim, namely SD Nusa Alam, SD Stella Gracia, SD Kristen Tunas Daud, and SD Katolik Santo Antonius Ampenan. The data consisted of information on instructional practices, school policies, forms of religious accommodation, and learning experiences, obtained from 32 purposively selected informants, instructional and religious activities, and school documents. Data were collected from March to May 2025 through interviews, observation, and document analysis; the informants, observation dates, and documents for each school are

summarized in Table 2.

Interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 32 informants, identified by status rather than by name: four PAI teachers (one per school), four principals or school administrators (one per school), twelve Muslim students, and twelve non-Muslim students from Grades IV and V. Teachers and principals were asked about lesson planning, methods, scheduling, facilities, and school policies; students were asked about their experiences of PAI instruction, worship, and interreligious interaction. Each interview lasted approximately 40–60 minutes. Informants were coded by status and school (G = PAI teacher, KS = principal or school administrator, SM = Muslim student, SNM = non-Muslim student; NA = Nusa Alam, SG = Stella Gracia, TD = Tunas Daud, SA = Santo Antonius), for example, G-NA or SM-TD-02.

Observation. Nonparticipant observation was conducted in Grades IV and V from March 3 to April 23, 2025. The observations covered eight PAI lessons (two per school) and four religious activity sessions (one per school); the date of each session is listed in Table 2. Field notes recorded the learning materials, methods and media, student participation, and the use of worship space and time.

Documentation. The documents analyzed included PAI instructional materials for Grades IV and V (lesson plans or teaching modules and student worksheets), school policy documents on religious practice and dress, schedules and reports of religious programs such as spiritual guidance sessions and Ramadan activities, and school records on students' religious composition. The school documents specifically cited were the School Code of Conduct Handbook (*Buku Panduan Tata Tertib Sekolah*) and the Character Development Program Report (*Laporan Program Pengembangan Karakter*). The study received ethical approval (No. UINM/LP2M/EC/145/III/2025) from the Institute for Research and Community Service (Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat, LP2M) of UIN Mataram, and informants' identities were anonymized using codes.

Table 2. Informants and Observation Schedule at Each School

No	School	Informants (by status)	PAI Lessons Observed	Religious Activities Observed
1	SD Nusa Alam	1 PAI teacher; 1 principal/administrator; 3 Muslim and 3 non-Muslim students	Grade IV: March 3; Grade V: March 10, 2025	Short-term Ramadan *pesantren* (Multicultural Ramadan Camp), March 14, 2025
2	SD Stella Gracia	1 PAI teacher; 1 principal/administrator; 3 Muslim and 3 non-Muslim students	Grade IV: March 5; Grade V: March 12, 2025	Interfaith iftar (Interfaith Iftar Gathering), March 20, 2025 (one day before the school holiday)

No	School	Informants (by status)	PAI Lessons Observed	Religious Activities Observed
3	SD Kristen Tunas Daud	1 PAI teacher; 1 principal/administrator; 3 Muslim and 3 non-Muslim students	Grade IV: March 4; Grade V: March 11, 2025	Ramadan *takjil* (iftar snack) sharing by Christian students (Ramadan Takjil Sharing), March 19, 2025
4	SD Katolik Santo Antonius	1 PAI teacher; 1 principal/administrator; 3 Muslim and 3 non-Muslim students	Grade IV: April 9; Grade V: April 16, 2025	Joint *Halalbihalal* and Easter Thanksgiving (Joint Eid and Easter Celebration), April 23, 2025
5	Total	32 informants (4 teachers, 4 principals/administrators, 24 students)	8 lessons	4 sessions

Source: Observation field notes, March–April 2025; list of informants, March–May 2025.
Note: SD = sekolah dasar (elementary school).

Data analysis was conducted in two stages: coding within each school, followed by a cross-school comparison of codes and categories, which were then synthesized into themes (Miles et al., 2020). At the interpretation stage, the researchers critically examined these themes through the five dimensions of multicultural education (Banks & Banks, 2019) and compared them with previous studies; categories that could not be explained by a single dimension were retained. Credibility was ensured through source and method triangulation and through *member checking* with key informants at the end of May 2025. The PAI teacher and the principal or school administrator from each school (eight informants in total) were asked to review a summary of the preliminary findings; their responses were then compared with the interview transcripts, observation notes, and research documents.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The findings are based on interviews with 32 informants, observations of eight PAI lessons and four religious activities in Grades IV and V, and school documents (Table 2). They are presented in five tables corresponding to five patterns: the strengthening of Islamic identity (Table 3), pedagogical adaptation (Table 4), interreligious interaction (Table 5), institutional accommodation (Table 6), and school culture and its challenges (Table 7). Each table is followed by a description of the data from each school without theoretical interpretation.

Strengthening Islamic Identity

Table 3. Contexts Linked to PAI Materials

No	School	Identity-Strengthening Practices
1	Nusa Alam	*Fiqh* and *akhlaq* materials linked to the principle of *rahmatan lil ʿalamin*; the image of the Medinan society used to explain social relations
2	Stella Gracia	Islamic ethics and history linked to social media ethics and global social responsibility
3	Tunas Daud	Personal mentoring and everyday moral (*akhlaq*) formation
	Santo Antonius	Materials linked to Sasak local wisdom and *ukhuwwah bashariyyah* (human brotherhood)

Source: Interviews with PAI teachers (G-NA, G-SG, G-TD, G-SA), observations of PAI lessons, and PAI instructional materials; interviews and documents, March–May 2025; observations, March–April 2025; compiled by the authors.

Table 3 shows that the four schools used different contexts to deliver PAI materials. At Nusa Alam, the teacher drew on the principle of mercy to all creation and the image of the Medinan society. At Stella Gracia, the contexts used were social media issues and social responsibility. At Tunas Daud, identity was strengthened through personal mentoring and habituation. At Santo Antonius, the contexts used were local wisdom and human brotherhood. In all four schools, teachers continued to teach *aqidah*, *fiqh*, Islamic history, and *akhlaq*; what changed was the emphasis on particular topics and the examples used.

Pedagogical Adaptation

Table 4. Instructional Strategies and Their Underlying Conditions

No	School	Methods and Media	Underlying Conditions
1	Nusa Alam	Active learning, *jigsaw*, heterogeneous groups, case study videos, social project worksheets	Diverse class composition
2	Stella Gracia	Blended learning, digital tools, infographics, Google Workspace, projects, digital portfolios	International curriculum and limited face-to-face instruction
3	Tunas Daud	Individualized instruction, small-group learning, structured assignments	Only one to three Muslim students in some classes
4	Santo Antonius	Interactive lectures, reflective question-and-answer sessions on local wisdom	Students' diverse religious backgrounds and the need to relate PAI materials to social life and local wisdom

Source: Observations of eight PAI lessons, interviews with PAI teachers, and PAI instructional materials and worksheets; interviews and documents, March–May 2025; observations, March–April 2025; compiled by the authors.

Table 4 shows that no single uniform method was used. Nusa Alam leveraged its diverse class composition for the *jigsaw* method and mixed group work. At Stella Gracia, digital assignments and portfolios allowed learning to continue beyond face-to-face hours, although the teacher still needed to ensure feedback on students' worship practices. At Tunas Daud, the very small number

of Muslim students in some classes led the teacher to shift to small-group learning and structured assignments. At Santo Antonius, the teacher used interactive lectures and reflective question-and-answer sessions. Teachers' decisions were influenced by scheduling, the curriculum, facilities, and school policies.

Interreligious Interaction

Table 5. Forms of Interreligious Interaction

No	School	Forms of Interaction	How Interaction Developed
1	Nusa Alam	Interreligious sharing sessions; co-teaching by teachers of different religions	Deliberately designed
2	Stella Gracia	Interreligious digital projects and group work	Through learning assignments
3	Tunas Daud	Peer support, including social adjustments during Ramadan	Emerged in everyday life
4	Santo Antonius	Coordination among religious education teachers; interreligious social activities	Through teacher coordination

Source: Interviews with PAI teachers, principals or school administrators, and Muslim and non-Muslim students; observations of religious activities; interviews and documents, March–May 2025; observations, March–April 2025; compiled by the authors.

Table 5 illustrates differences in the degree to which interaction was structured. Nusa Alam held scheduled forums and co-teaching sessions. Stella Gracia brought students together through projects and group work. At Tunas Daud, peer support developed in everyday life. Santo Antonius relied on teacher coordination and social activities. These data do not measure changes in students' prejudice; what was recorded were the available forms of interaction and collaboration.

Institutional Accommodation

Table 6. Forms of Institutional Accommodation for Muslim Students

No	School	Accommodation
1	Nusa Alam	Provision of religious education teachers, a place of worship, protection from discrimination
2	Stella Gracia	Inclusion policy, prayer room (*musalla*), guaranteed right to worship
3	Tunas Daud	Prayer room (*musalla*), designated prayer times, freedom to wear the headscarf (*jilbab*)
4	Santo Antonius	Spiritual guidance schedule, guaranteed right to wear the headscarf (*jilbab*)

Source: Interviews with principals or school administrators (KS-NA, KS-SG, KS-TD, KS-SA) and PAI teachers, school policy documents, and observations of worship spaces and schedules; interviews and documents, March–May 2025; observations, March–April 2025; compiled by the authors.

Table 6 shows that all four schools provided support, albeit in different forms. Nusa Alam stood out in providing religious education teachers and protection from discrimination. Stella Gracia

was strongest in its inclusion policy and provision of a prayer room. Tunas Daud focused on providing space and time for worship. Santo Antonius emphasized the spiritual guidance schedule and the right to dress in accordance with one's faith.

School Culture and Challenges

Table 7. School Culture and Key Challenges

No	School	School Culture	Key Challenges
1	Nusa Alam	Collaboration among religious education teachers; interreligious social activities	Time allocation and the school schedule
2	Stella Gracia	Digital culture and collaborative projects	Intensity of the international curriculum
3	Tunas Daud	Support from the foundation and fellow students	Small number of Muslim students; scheduling
4	Santo Antonius	Open communication among religious education teachers; collaborative forums	Conflicts with the foundation's activity schedule

Source: Interviews with principals or school administrators, PAI teachers, and students; schedules and reports of religious programs, March–May 2025; compiled by the authors.

Table 7 shows that each school had its own supportive cultural features as well as its own challenges. Limited instructional time, the intensity of the curriculum, the small number of Muslim students, and the foundation's activity schedules remained problems even though inclusive policies had been implemented.

Discussion

The five patterns described above are not an inventory of discrete practices. Read together, they indicate that multicultural education in PAI, in schools where Muslim students are a minority, is produced by the interaction of three components: religious identity (what is preserved of the teachings and how those teachings are contextualized), pedagogical adaptation (how teachers translate that identity into instruction under local constraints), and institutional accommodation (the time, space, scheduling, and protection that make the right to religious education exercisable). Interreligious interaction and school culture are treated here not as separate dimensions but as arenas in which the three components meet. Banks's five dimensions (Banks & Banks, 2019) are used to interpret each component, while the right to religious education under Law No. 20 of 2003 (Republic of Indonesia, 2003) serves as the normative reference point for assessing whether school arrangements function as a guaranteed right or as a concession (Figure 3).

In all four schools, *aqidah*, *fiqh*, Islamic history, and *akhlaq* remained in the curriculum; what varied was the context used to explain them, namely *rahmatan lil ʿalamin* and the Medinan society at

Nusa Alam, social media ethics at Stella Gracia, personal mentoring at Tunas Daud, and Sasak local wisdom at Santo Antonius (Table 3). Within Banks's framework, this constitutes content integration and knowledge construction: Islamic concepts are applied to examples familiar to students without altering their substance. This interpretation is consistent with Rahman's (2025) conceptual reading of Banks's thought in relation to Islamic education in Indonesia. The present findings extend those of Bakar et al. (2025), who showed that Muslim minority identity can coexist with interreligious harmony within a single madrasah, by demonstrating that the contexts teachers choose vary according to institutional characteristics. They are also consistent with Vika et al. (2026), who found that minority status fosters a fluid and confident identity rather than a withdrawn one, and with the contextualization within Toraja culture reported by Salmiati et al. (2025). Seiple and Hoover's (2021) notion of cross-cultural religious literacy, that is, the ability to understand difference without losing one's own identity, captures the disposition that teachers sought to cultivate.

However, the relationship between identity and rights is not neutral. Article 12 of Law No. 20 of 2003 guarantees religious education in accordance with the student's own religion, not merely values education that is compatible with interreligious harmony. Comparative studies show how easily the two can drift apart: Muslim students in Catholic institutions in the Philippines experienced inclusion but also faced unmet accommodation needs and doctrines unfamiliar to them (Barihasion et al., 2023); Muslim students attending Catholic religious education in Indonesia negotiated their identity through selective engagement with the material (Ramadona et al., 2026); and the identity of Christian students in Israel is shaped by religious education under two majorities (Agbaria & Obeid Shehadeh, 2022). Because Muslim students in Mataram are taught by PAI teachers of the same faith, the right is formally fulfilled; the critical question thus shifts to whether the substance of that right is preserved when instruction is framed with an emphasis on shared morality, cooperation, and local wisdom. The data indicate that doctrinal content was retained, but they also show a consistent emphasis on its socially harmonious application. Whether this emphasis reflects a pedagogical choice or a strategy for managing minority visibility within non-Islamic institutions cannot be determined from the data, which contain no evidence that teachers avoided theological differences. A comparison with integrated Islamic elementary schools on the same island, where Islamic identity is cultivated comprehensively from an early age (Witriani et al., 2024), suggests that the institutional setting, not only the teacher, determines how visible that identity becomes.

Pedagogical adaptation is the component that links identity to institutional conditions. The variation in methods (Table 4) corresponds to the equity pedagogy dimension of Banks's framework: equity means adjusting to students' needs rather than treating all students identically. Faishol et al. (2026) showed that PAI teachers can shift from transmitters of doctrine to dialogue facilitators and that such initiatives depend on school leadership; the present study adds class size and curriculum type as further conditions. Personal mentoring at Tunas Daud reflects the special attention to minority students recommended by Fihris et al. (2023); The reflective question-and-answer sessions at Santo Antonius resemble the reflective and participatory pedagogy that Sihotang et al. (2024) found to deepen interreligious understanding; and the strategies adjusted to time constraints at Stella Gracia are consistent with the observation of Adibah et al. (2025) that school culture and time shape inclusive pedagogy. Wahyono et al. (2022) documented elementary school teachers' understanding of multicultural education in Yogyakarta; the Mataram data add that, at this level, adaptation is also shaped by class composition and school structure.

Read critically, not all adaptations are pedagogical choices; some are compensatory. At Stella Gracia, digital assignments and portfolios extended learning beyond face-to-face time limited by the international curriculum, and at Tunas Daud, small-group and individualized instruction was a response to classes with only one to three Muslim students. In both cases, teachers absorbed structural constraints through their own effort. Such adaptations keep the right to religious education functioning, but they may also mask deficiencies in accommodation by shifting the burden from the institution to individual teachers. The reliance on digital tools for students in Grades IV and V also warrants caution, because the eight observed lessons do not show how independently students this young were able to use them.

Interreligious interaction reveals the same interconnection. At Nusa Alam, forums and co-teaching by teachers of different religions were deliberately designed and scheduled, resembling the Christian–Islamic *team teaching* that Gmoser et al. (2024) found promising yet practically demanding in Austria; at Tunas Daud, peer support emerged informally in everyday life (Table 5). With respect to prejudice reduction, this study can only state that mechanisms for interaction were in place, because changes in prejudice were not measured. This pattern is consistent with the findings of Nuha et al. (2021) on role modeling and habituation and with the concern of Sirry et al. (2024) about the absence of interreligious education. It also specifies the types of interaction, ranging from scheduled forums to everyday peer support, that elementary schools can use to cultivate respect for

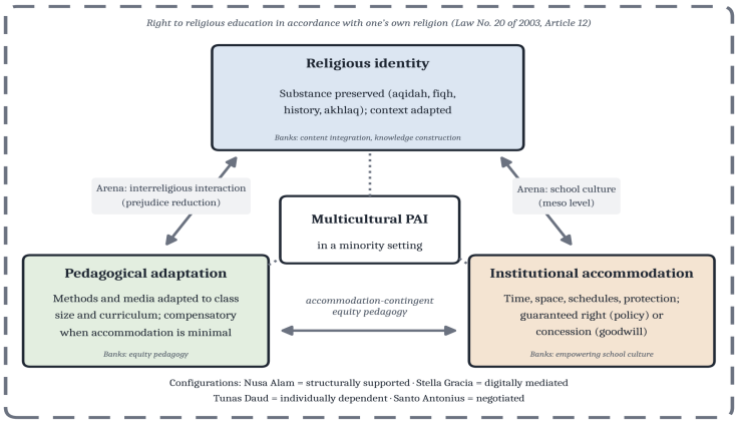
plurality, as discussed by Rukiyanto et al. (2025). Contact does not automatically produce tolerance; intergroup contact-based interventions need to be systematically designed and evaluated (Tondok et al., 2022). When interaction depends on goodwill, as at Tunas Daud, it is valuable but fragile. The perspectives of non-Muslim students, which Mulyana et al. (2022) regarded as important, are only partially represented in this study.

Institutional accommodation determines whether the first two components can be sustained. Prayer rooms, worship times, spiritual guidance schedules, freedom to wear the headscarf, and protection from discrimination (Table 6) illustrate the material dimension of equity pedagogy: a formally recognized right becomes meaningful only when resources are available to realize it. Raihani (2015) articulated the right of minority groups to religious education in Indonesia, Idris et al. (2022) documented problems of availability and accessibility in predominantly non-Muslim regions, and Utami (2022) showed that teacher shortages and budget constraints hinder equitable service provision; the Mataram findings show that space, time, and school coordination are the concrete means of realizing that right. Harjatanaya (2025), who studied six schools in Jakarta and Bali, likewise found that accommodation is negotiated among school policies, teachers, principals, student needs, and local culture and does not always meet the needs of minority groups. Sulaiman (2021) described a Catholic senior high school that facilitated PAI for Muslim students, a model comparable to the spiritual guidance schedule at Santo Antonius.

The critical point is the origin of this accommodation. In schools run by Christian and Catholic foundations, time and space for the minority religion are granted by institutions with a different religious identity. Accommodation can therefore function either as a right guaranteed by policy or as a concession dependent on goodwill. The data show both: the inclusion policy at Stella Gracia and the protection from discrimination at Nusa Alam resemble guaranteed rights, whereas the scheduling conflicts with foundation activities at Santo Antonius and the reliance on peers at Tunas Daud indicate arrangements that can be renegotiated. The data do not reveal whether these arrangements were written or merely verbal, or whether they would survive a change of teacher or principal. This is why Hasan (2024) called for affirmative policies and collaborative governance, and why Ginting and Limbong (2025) emphasized a strong institutional framework. School culture, in Banks's sense of an empowering school culture and social structure, thus operates at the meso level identified by Fitriani (2023). It determines who is given time, space, and opportunity.

Overall, the four schools exhibit different configurations of the three components (Figure 3). Where accommodation has been institutionalized and interaction is designed, as at Nusa Alam, teachers' adaptation can focus on enrichment, and identity is sustained by structure. Where accommodation is adequate but instructional time is compressed by the curriculum, as at Stella Gracia, adaptation occurs largely through digital media, where the group of Muslim students is very small, as at Tunas Daud, adaptation and interaction depend heavily on individual teachers and peers. Where coordination among religious education teachers is strong, but schedules compete with foundation activities, as at Santo Antonius, the strengthening of identity depends on negotiation. These configurations are interpretive patterns, not causal relationships.

Figure 3. Interrelationship of Religious Identity, Pedagogical Adaptation, and Institutional Accommodation in PAI



Source: Synthesized by the authors from the research findings (Tables 3–7).

The common thread is a proposition that extends Banks's framework to minority religious education: equity pedagogy in PAI is contingent on accommodation. Banks views the school as an agent of equity; in schools where Muslim students are a minority, the equity available to the minority religion depends on the accommodation granted by an institution with a different identity. Multicultural PAI therefore does not require the weakening of Islamic identity, but it does require alignment among identity, adaptation, and accommodation. Where accommodation is minimal, adaptation functions as compensation, and support for identity rests on individuals rather than on the school.

This study does not propose an intervention model; the relationships among the findings are interpreted as patterns emerging from the data, not as causal relationships. In practical terms, PAI teacher competencies should include the ability to read the social context of the school, implement differentiated instruction, and design interreligious interaction with clear pedagogical objectives.

School leaders and foundations should codify accommodation in written policies covering adequate time, worship space, coordination among religious education teachers, and protection from discrimination, so that the right to religious education does not depend on individual goodwill, in line with Hasan's (2024) recommendation on collaborative governance. This study has several limitations: it covers only four sites; the percentages of Muslim students are estimates; student numbers were taken from Ministry school profiles recorded after the fieldwork period; *member checking* was limited to key informants; non-Muslim students were only partially represented, and parents were not involved; and changes in students' attitudes were not measured empirically.

CONCLUSION

In four elementary schools in Mataram City where most students are non-Muslim, PAI was implemented by preserving the substance of the teachings while adapting examples, methods, and media to the context (Research Question 1). These practices aligned with the principle of respect for diversity through interreligious interaction designed in the form of forums, projects, and teacher coordination, with the caveat that attitudinal change was not measured (Research Question 2). Developing PAI that supports interreligious harmony requires alignment among three components, namely religious identity, pedagogical adaptation, and institutional accommodation, so that teachers can contextualize learning materials and schools can secure time, space, schedules, and the protection of rights as guaranteed rights rather than as concessions (Research Question 3). Conceptually, this study shows that equity pedagogy in minority religious education is contingent on accommodation. Future research could examine these configurations in a larger number of schools and develop instruments to measure learning experiences, students' sense of safety in practicing their religion, and the quality of interreligious interaction.

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