

MULTICULTURAL ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE SOCIETY 5.0 ERA: BUILDING RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH SUMATRA

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the implementation of multicultural Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in the Society 5.0 era and its role in building religious tolerance among secondary school students in South Sumatra, Indonesia. This qualitative study employed participatory observation, in-depth interviews with teachers and students, documentation analysis, and student perception surveys. Data analysis used an interactive model with triangulation for validity. The study reveals four key findings: (1) PAI learning integrates multicultural values emphasizing justice, brotherhood, and respect for differences; (2) tolerance values are internalized through dialogical-reflective approaches showing positive student perceptions; (3) digital technology is utilized though not optimally; (4) teachers serve as facilitators and role models. Challenges include limited digital infrastructure and varying teacher competence. This contextual study limited to South Sumatra restricts generalizability. However, it provides important implications for continuous teacher training in multicultural pedagogy and digital technology, improved digital infrastructure, and ongoing dialogue between schools, parents, and communities. This research contributes by positioning Society 5.0 as a socio-humanitarian context emphasizing balance between civilizational progress and human values. It demonstrates that multicultural PAI serves as a strategic instrument in forming social consciousness and peaceful coexistence attitudes, enriching the theoretical framework of multicultural Islamic education and strengthening religious moderation discourse in Indonesia's education system.

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Introduction

The Society 5.0 era brings fundamental changes to the social order, including how society understands diversity, inter-religious relations, and humanitarian values. Society 5.0 is understood not merely as a subsequent phase of technological development, but as a civilizational context that places humans, humanitarian values, and social harmony at the center of development (Narvaez Rojas et al., 2021; Banholzer, 2022). In this context, education plays a strategic role as a space for forming social consciousness, ethics, and attitudes of coexistence within a multicultural society.

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) as part of the national education system has a responsibility not only to transmit normative Islamic teachings, but also to build the character of students who are moderate, inclusive, and tolerant. This becomes increasingly important given Indonesia's plural social reality in terms of ethnicity, culture, and religion. Religious education that is not responsive to the reality of diversity has the potential to produce exclusive attitudes and social conflict, thus requiring a multicultural approach to PAI (Banks, 2019; Rosyad, 2020).

Schools in South Sumatra represent the diversity of Indonesian society. Students come from various ethnic backgrounds such as Malay, Javanese, Sundanese, Buginese, Madurese, and Balinese, and practice different religions including Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. This condition makes schools a strategic social space for instilling values of tolerance and respect for differences. In the Society 5.0 context, the challenge of religious education is no longer limited to mastering teaching materials, but also to the ability to build awareness of peaceful coexistence in diversity (Budirahayu & Saud, 2021; Handoko et al., 2022).

Several studies show that a multicultural approach in PAI contributes positively to strengthening tolerance attitudes and preventing religion-based conflicts (Arikarani et al., 2025; Wahid, 2024). Religious education that emphasizes values of justice, mutual respect, and *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (blessing for all worlds) can form students who have balanced social and religious awareness. In addition, the role of PAI teachers is crucial in contextualizing Islamic teachings to be relevant to the dynamics of plural society (Mashuri & Syahid, 2024; Umar, 2024).

Nevertheless, studies that specifically position Society 5.0 as a socio-cultural context in the implementation of multicultural PAI are still relatively limited, particularly at the secondary education level in areas with high diversity such as South Sumatra. Some research still focuses on methodological aspects or learning technology, without deeply examining how the spirit of Society 5.0—which emphasizes balance between civilizational progress and humanitarian values—influences the strengthening of tolerance and multiculturalism in Islamic religious education. Moreover, empirical research exploring multicultural PAI learning practices, strategies for internalizing religious tolerance values, utilization of digital technology in learning, the role of teachers as facilitators of religious moderation, and implementation challenges in the field is still very limited, even though these aspects are key to the success of inclusive and moderate Islamic religious education in the Society 5.0 era.

Based on this situation, this research is important to analyze the implementation of multicultural Islamic Religious Education in the context of the Society 5.0 era and its role in building attitudes of religious tolerance in South Sumatra secondary school environments. This research is expected to provide conceptual and empirical contributions to the development of PAI models relevant to the dynamics of plural

society, while strengthening the discourse of religious moderation in Indonesia's education system.

Although studies on multicultural Islamic Religious Education and strengthening religious tolerance have been extensively conducted, most research still focuses attention on normative conceptual aspects or on the integration of methods and learning technology. Studies that explicitly position the Society 5.0 era as a socio-humanitarian context—emphasizing balance between civilizational progress, humanitarian values, and social harmony—in the implementation of multicultural PAI are still relatively limited. Moreover, empirical research comprehensively examining critical aspects such as the integration of multicultural values in materials and learning strategies, dialogical-reflective approaches in tolerance internalization, utilization of digital technology as learning support, the strategic role of PAI teachers as facilitators and role models of religious moderation, and implementation challenges including limited digital infrastructure, variation in teacher competence, and community resistance to multicultural approaches, have not been widely found, particularly in regions with high diversity such as South Sumatra at the secondary education level. This gap forms the basis for conducting this research.

Based on this background, this article focuses discussion on the empirical description of the implementation of multicultural Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in the context of the Society 5.0 era. The research problem formulation is directed to describe how multicultural PAI learning is implemented in South Sumatra secondary schools, including the integration of multicultural values in materials and learning strategies; how religious tolerance values are internalized through dialogical and reflective approaches in the learning process; how digital technology is utilized to strengthen multicultural PAI learning; how the role of PAI teachers as facilitators and role models of moderate attitudes in forming students' multicultural awareness; how the social context of student diversity influences the implementation of Islamic religious education in the school environment; and what challenges are faced in implementing digital-based multicultural PAI in the Society 5.0 era.

In line with this problem formulation, the purpose of this research is to comprehensively describe the implementation of multicultural Islamic Religious Education in the Society 5.0 era in South Sumatra secondary schools. Specifically, this research aims to describe the implementation of multicultural PAI learning in building students' religious tolerance attitudes, identify strategies for internalizing tolerance values through dialogical-reflective approaches, analyze the utilization of digital technology in multicultural PAI learning, explain the strategic role of PAI teachers as facilitators of religious moderation, describe the influence of the social context of school diversity in forming inclusive and moderate Islamic religious education practices, and identify challenges in implementing digital-based multicultural PAI along with their implications for developing Islamic religious education models in Indonesia.

Methods

This research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive design aimed at depicting in depth the implementation of multicultural Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in the context of the Society 5.0 era. The descriptive qualitative approach was chosen because this research is not intended to test hypotheses or causal relationships, but rather to describe empirical reality, learning processes, and social meanings formed in

Islamic religious education practices in multicultural school environments (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The research was conducted in secondary schools in South Sumatra Province characterized by ethnic and religious diversity among students. Research subjects consisted of Islamic Religious Education teachers, school principals, and students directly involved in PAI learning. Informant selection was conducted purposively, considering their involvement, experience, and knowledge related to the implementation of multicultural PAI in the school environment.

Data collection was conducted through several techniques. Participatory observation was used to obtain direct description of the PAI learning process, teacher and student interaction, and social dynamics in the classroom. In-depth interviews were conducted with PAI teachers, school principals, and students to explore their views, experiences, and interpretations of multicultural PAI implementation and the strengthening of religious tolerance attitudes. In addition, documentation studies were conducted on learning tools, school policies, and other relevant supporting documents. To complement qualitative data, this research was also supported by student perception surveys to obtain a general picture of their attitudes and responses to multicultural PAI learning (Kawulich, 2005; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Data analysis was conducted descriptively-qualitatively using an interactive analysis model comprising data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing stages (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Analysis was directed to identify patterns, themes, and tendencies related to multicultural PAI implementation, tolerance value internalization, and the influence of the social context of school diversity in the Society 5.0 era.

Data validity was maintained through source and method triangulation, namely by comparing data obtained from various informants and data collection techniques. In addition, member checking was conducted to ensure compatibility between research findings and research subjects' experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Yin, 2017). With this methodological design, the research is expected to present a comprehensive and contextual description of multicultural Islamic Religious Education practices in the Society 5.0 era.

Results

1. *Integration of Multicultural Values in PAI Learning*

Research findings indicate that the implementation of multicultural Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in South Sumatra secondary schools occurs contextually and adaptively to the reality of students' social diversity. The Society 5.0 context as a civilizational paradigm that places balance between technological progress, humanitarian values, and social harmony provides a conceptual foundation for strengthening PAI learning that is not only oriented toward normative aspects of Islamic teachings, but also toward developing universal humanitarian values, tolerance, inclusivity, and students' social competence in plural society (Narvaez Rojas et al., 2021; Banholzer, 2022; Fuadi et al., 2024).

PAI learning in South Sumatra secondary schools has substantively integrated multicultural values into materials, methods, and learning strategies. PAI teachers no longer merely convey Islamic teachings in a normative-doctrinal framework, but contextualize these teachings with the reality of religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity in

the school and community environment. Classroom observations show that materials on morality, Islamic history, muamalah, and fiqh ibadah are often linked to universal values such as justice, compassion, ukhuwah insaniyah (human brotherhood), and respect for differences (Banks, 2019; Rosyad, 2020).

One practice found is the discussion of the concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (blessing for all worlds) which is interpreted as Islam's commitment to peace, justice, and universal welfare without discriminating by ethnicity, religion, or race. Teachers emphasize that inclusive attitudes and respect for differences are an integral part of true Islamic teachings. In the Society 5.0 context that emphasizes social harmony and humanitarian values, this approach becomes highly relevant as a foundation for forming moderate and tolerant student character (Wahid, 2024).

Furthermore, PAI learning also encourages students to explore local wisdom and cultural traditions living in their environment. For example, in Islamic history materials in the archipelago, teachers discuss how Islam adapted to local Malay, Javanese, Sundanese, and other ethnic cultures without losing the substance of its teachings. This approach not only enriches students' insights about the diversity of Islamic culture, but also builds awareness that differences are a reality that must be respected and maintained.

2. Internalization of Religious Tolerance Values through Dialogical and Reflective Approaches

The internalization of religious tolerance values in PAI learning does not occur through one-way transmission processes, but through dialogical and reflective approaches involving active student participation. Teachers provide space for open discussion and dialogue where students can share experiences of interacting with friends from different religions and cultures, both in the school environment and outside school (Mezirow, 2000).

Student perception survey results show positive tendencies toward multicultural PAI learning. Most students state that PAI learning helps them understand the importance of respecting religious and cultural differences, and makes them more open in interacting with friends of different beliefs. Surveys also show that students feel more comfortable and safe in school environments that respect diversity (Budirahayu & Saud, 2021; Handoko et al., 2022).

Critical reflection processes also become an important part of multicultural PAI learning. Teachers encourage students to reflect on how the Islamic values they learn can be applied in daily life, particularly in the context of plural social interactions. Students are invited to question stereotypes, prejudices, and discriminatory attitudes they may hold, and build new understandings that are more inclusive and empathetic. This approach aligns with transformative learning principles aimed at forming critical awareness and changing student perspectives (Mezirow, 2000; Wahid, 2024)

3. Utilization of Digital Technology in PAI Learning in the Society 5.0 Era

In the Society 5.0 context, the utilization of digital technology becomes one of the important elements in strengthening multicultural PAI learning. This research found that PAI teachers have begun integrating various digital learning media such as educational videos, interactive presentations, mobile learning applications, and online learning platforms to enrich teaching materials and make learning more engaging and contextual (Warsita, 2008; Spulber & Nesterova, 2023).

Digital technology enables students to access various learning resources about Islam and cultural diversity from various perspectives. For example, through documentary videos about harmonious inter-religious life in various countries, students can directly see how tolerance and religious moderation are practiced in different contexts. Online learning platforms also facilitate collaboration and discussion among students, allowing them to learn from and appreciate diverse viewpoints (Barbour & Hodges, 2024).

However, the utilization of digital technology in PAI learning still faces several constraints. Limited technology infrastructure in some schools, such as unstable internet access and limited availability of digital devices, becomes a major obstacle. In addition, variation in teachers' digital competence also affects the effectiveness of technology use in learning. Some teachers still require further training and mentoring to optimally utilize technology in multicultural PAI learning contexts (Warschauer & Matuchniak, 2010; Petko et al., 2025).

Nevertheless, this research found that teachers with good digital competence are able to create more innovative and meaningful learning experiences. They use technology not merely as a tool, but as a means to build students' digital literacy while strengthening multicultural values and religious moderation. This aligns with the spirit of Society 5.0 that emphasizes technology integration with humanitarian values to create a more inclusive and harmonious society.

4. Strategic Role of PAI Teachers as Facilitators and Role Models of Religious Moderation

The role of PAI teachers proves to be highly strategic and determines the success of multicultural PAI implementation. Teachers not only function as instructors delivering materials, but also as learning facilitators, moral guides, and role models of moderate and inclusive attitudes for students. The attitudes, behaviors, and ways PAI teachers interact with students and the school community as a whole have a significant influence on character formation and students' attitudes toward diversity (Suryani & Muslim, 2024; Umar, 2024).

Research findings show that PAI teachers with broad multicultural perspectives and open attitudes are able to create learning atmospheres conducive to strengthening tolerance and appreciation of differences. They not only teach tolerance values conceptually, but also practice them daily, both inside and outside the classroom. For example, teachers who show respectful and appreciative attitudes toward students from various religious and cultural backgrounds provide concrete examples easily emulated by students (Mashuri & Syahid, 2024; Amin, 2025).

Furthermore, PAI teachers also function as agents of religious moderation who contextualize Islamic teachings to be relevant to plural society dynamics. Teachers teach Islam not as an exclusive and closed religion, but as a religion upholding values of justice, peace, and universal humanity. In the Society 5.0 context, the teacher's role as an agent of religious moderation becomes increasingly important to prevent radicalism, extremism, and intolerant attitudes among students (Rosyad, 2020; Umar, 2024).

However, not all PAI teachers have adequate multicultural competence. Some teachers still tend to teach Islam in a more exclusive framework and less responsive to diversity reality. This indicates the need for strengthening PAI teacher capacity through continuous training, workshops, and mentoring on multicultural education and religious moderation (Hanggara, 2024; Wahid, 2024).

5. Challenges in Implementing Multicultural PAI in the Society 5.0 Era

Although the implementation of multicultural PAI in South Sumatra secondary schools shows positive development, this research also found several challenges requiring serious attention. Main challenges identified include limited technology infrastructure, variation in teacher competence, resistance from some communities toward multicultural approaches, and lack of comprehensive policy support from local governments and educational institutions (Warschauer & Matuchniak, 2010; Bucăța & Tileagă, 2024).

First, limited technology infrastructure becomes a significant constraint in utilizing digital technology for PAI learning. Not all schools have adequate internet access, and not all students have personal digital devices usable for learning. This causes digital divides impacting PAI learning quality, particularly in the Society 5.0 context emphasizing technology integration in daily life.

Second, resistance from some parents and communities toward multicultural approaches in PAI remains a distinct challenge. Some communities still hold mistaken understandings that multicultural education will weaken students' religious identity or lead to religious syncretism. In fact, multicultural education aims to strengthen students' religious identity while building awareness for peaceful coexistence with adherents of other religions (Hetharion, 2024; Haluti et al., 2025).

Third, lack of comprehensive policy support from local governments and educational institutions also becomes an obstacle. Although national policies on religious moderation and strengthening Pancasila already exist, their implementation at the school level is still not optimal. More concrete and operational policies are needed to support teachers and schools in implementing multicultural PAI consistently and sustainably (Arikarani et al., 2025).

Fourth, variation in teacher competence regarding multicultural pedagogy and digital literacy also becomes a challenge that needs to be addressed through continuous training and professional development programs. PAI teachers need to be equipped with knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to teach Islam in multicultural perspectives and effectively utilize technology in learning (Hanggara, 2024; Petko et al., 2025).

Discussion

1. Multicultural PAI as Response to the Society 5.0 Paradigm

The findings of this research confirm that the implementation of multicultural Islamic Religious Education in South Sumatra secondary schools aligns with Society 5.0 characteristics that place humans, humanitarian values, and social harmony at the center of civilizational development (Narvaez Rojas et al., 2021; Banholzer, 2022). In this context, PAI is no longer understood merely as transmission of normative-doctrinal teachings, but as a strategic instrument in forming social consciousness, inclusive character, and attitudes of peaceful coexistence in multicultural society.

The integration of tolerance, inclusivity, and respect for differences found in PAI learning in South Sumatra schools demonstrates awareness that religious education must be responsive to the socio-cultural context of increasingly plural society. This aligns with Society 5.0 principles emphasizing the importance of balance between technological progress and humanitarian values, and the importance of building inclusive and harmonious society (Banholzer, 2022).

In theoretical perspective, these findings strengthen James Banks' multicultural education theory emphasizing that cultural and religious diversity should be positioned as constructive learning resources, not as threats or obstacles (Banks, 2019). Multicultural education aims to build students' critical awareness of injustice, discrimination, and prejudice, and develop competence to live in plural society. In the PAI context, this approach means teaching Islam not as an exclusive and superior religion, but as a religion upholding universal humanitarian values such as justice, peace, and compassion (Rosyad, 2020; Wahid, 2024).

Furthermore, the concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* which becomes one of the focuses of multicultural PAI learning in South Sumatra schools aligns with Society 5.0's vision of inclusive and harmonious society. The principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* emphasizes that Islam is present as a blessing for all worlds, without discriminating by ethnicity, religion, or race. This principle becomes the moral foundation for forming tolerant, inclusive, and moderate student attitudes (Azra, 2019).

2. Tolerance Internalization through Transformative Learning

The internalization of tolerance values through dialogical and reflective approaches found in this research demonstrates that multicultural PAI learning is effective in forming students' critical awareness and moderate attitudes. The dialogical approach provides space for students to express their views, experiences, and doubts regarding diversity and religious tolerance issues. Through open dialogue, students not only passively receive information, but also actively build new understanding and awareness about the importance of respecting differences (Mezirow, 2000).

These findings strengthen previous research stating that multicultural approaches in religious education significantly contribute to strengthening religious tolerance and preventing religion-based social conflicts (Arikarani et al., 2025; Budirahayu & Saud, 2021; Hoon, 2017). Learning emphasizing dialogue, critical reflection, and active student participation proves more effective in forming tolerant attitudes and behaviors compared to indoctrinating and one-way learning.

In the perspective of Jack Mezirow's transformative learning theory, critical reflection processes occurring in multicultural PAI learning enable students to question assumptions, stereotypes, and prejudices they hold about other religions and cultures. Through this process, students experience fundamental perspective changes—from initially exclusive and closed to more inclusive and open (Mezirow, 2000).

Moreover, student perception surveys showing positive tendencies toward multicultural PAI learning indicate that students feel this learning is relevant to their daily lives. They feel more prepared and confident in interacting with friends from various religious and cultural backgrounds, both in school environments and outside school. This confirms that multicultural PAI learning is not only conceptually effective, but also has real practical impacts on students' social lives (Handoko et al., 2022).

3. Digital Technology as Means of Strengthening Multicultural PAI

The utilization of digital technology in PAI learning in the Society 5.0 era provides great opportunities to strengthen multicultural education. Technology enables more interactive, collaborative, and contextual learning, allowing students to explore various religious and cultural perspectives more openly and critically (Spulber & Nesterova, 2023; Warsita, 2008).

In the perspective of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) theory, the effectiveness of technology use in learning greatly depends on teachers' ability to harmoniously integrate technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge (Petko et al., 2025). Research findings show that PAI teachers with good digital competence are able to creatively utilize technology to convey multicultural values and religious moderation. For example, through documentary videos, students can see concrete examples of harmonious inter-religious life in various parts of the world, which can inspire them to practice these values in daily life (Barbour & Hodges, 2024).

However, limited digital infrastructure and variation in teacher competence indicate that digitalization of religious education still requires significant policy support and investment. Local governments and educational institutions need to provide adequate technology infrastructure, and conduct continuous training and mentoring for PAI teachers so they can optimally utilize technology in learning (Bucăța & Tileagă, 2024; Warschauer & Matuchniak, 2010).

Furthermore, the utilization of digital technology in PAI learning must also be balanced with critical digital literacy. Students need to be equipped with the ability to distinguish valid and credible information from invalid information, and to identify content containing hate speech, radicalism, or intolerance. In a digital era filled with diverse and sometimes misleading information, digital literacy becomes a very important competence to prevent the spread of extremist and intolerant ideologies among students.

4. PAI Teachers as Agents of Religious Moderation and Social Transformation

The role of PAI teachers as facilitators and role models of religious moderation becomes a key factor in the success of multicultural PAI implementation. Research findings show that teachers with multicultural competence are able to contextualize Islamic teachings according to students' social reality, making learning more meaningful and relevant (Amin, 2025; Suryani & Muslim, 2024; Umar, 2024).

In the perspective of social change agent theory, teachers not only function as instructors, but also as agents of social transformation bringing positive change to society. PAI teachers with critical awareness and commitment to universal humanitarian values can become agents of religious moderation teaching Islam in inclusive, tolerant, and humanistic perspectives. They do not merely teach normative texts, but also invite students to reflect on the meaning and relevance of Islamic teachings in the context of plural social life (Hanggara, 2024; Mashuri & Syahid, 2024).

Furthermore, PAI teachers' attitudes and behaviors in daily life also have significant influence on student character formation. Teachers showing open attitudes, respecting differences, and practicing tolerance values in social interactions will become strong role models for students. Conversely, teachers showing exclusive and intolerant attitudes can actually strengthen prejudice and discriminatory attitudes among students (Umar, 2024).

However, not all PAI teachers have adequate multicultural competence. This indicates the need for strengthening teacher capacity through pre-service education programs and continuous professional education focusing on developing multicultural competence and religious moderation. Teacher education institutions (LPTK) and related institutions need to design comprehensive curriculum and training programs to equip prospective teachers and PAI teachers with knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to teach Islam in multicultural perspectives (Wahid, 2024).

5. Challenges and Development Strategies for Multicultural PAI in the Society 5.0 Era

Resistance from some communities toward multicultural approaches indicates continued misunderstanding of the concept of multicultural education in Islam. Some communities still consider that multicultural education will weaken students' religious identity or lead to religious relativism. In fact, multicultural education aims to strengthen students' religious identity while building awareness for peaceful coexistence with adherents of other religions (Haluti et al., 2025; Hetharion, 2024).

In sociological perspective, this resistance can be understood as a response to rapid and complex social change. Communities accustomed to exclusive and doctrinal religious education may feel threatened by more inclusive and open multicultural approaches. Therefore, continuous dialogue is needed between schools, parents, and communities to strengthen understanding of the urgency of multicultural PAI as part of strengthening religious moderation in the Society 5.0 era (Arikarani et al., 2025; Parkhouse et al., 2019).

Besides dialogue with communities, comprehensive policy support from local governments and educational institutions is also very important. Policies supporting multicultural PAI implementation must include provision of technology infrastructure, development of curriculum responsive to diversity, provision of quality teaching materials, and continuous training and mentoring for PAI teachers. Without strong policy support, multicultural PAI implementation will be difficult to sustain and expand (Bucăța & Tileagă, 2024).

Furthermore, collaboration among various stakeholders—government, schools, civil society, religious institutions, and academics—is also needed to create an educational ecosystem supporting the strengthening of multicultural PAI. This collaboration can include development of contextual multicultural PAI learning models, formulation of implementation guidelines, and continuous evaluation and monitoring to ensure the effectiveness and impact of multicultural PAI implementation on strengthening tolerance and social harmony.

6. Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, the findings of this research enrich discourse on multicultural education, particularly in the context of Islamic religious education in the Society 5.0 era. This research demonstrates that multicultural PAI is not merely a pedagogical approach, but also a strategic response to the challenges of increasingly complex plural society. The integration of multicultural values in PAI learning aligns with Society 5.0 principles emphasizing balance between technological progress and humanitarian values (Banholzer, 2022).

Practically, the findings of this research have several important implications. First, strengthening PAI teacher capacity through continuous training and mentoring on multicultural education, religious moderation, and utilization of digital technology in learning is needed. Second, schools need to develop PAI curriculum and teaching materials more responsive to students' diversity reality. Third, local governments need to provide adequate technology infrastructure and comprehensive policy support to support multicultural PAI implementation. Fourth, continuous dialogue with parents and communities is needed to build shared understanding of the importance of multicultural PAI as part of strengthening religious moderation and social harmony (Arikarani et al., 2025; Hanggara, 2024; Wahid, 2024).

This research also opens space for further studies examining more deeply the long-term impacts of multicultural PAI on forming tolerant character and behavior in students, and how multicultural PAI practices can be developed and expanded in various educational contexts in Indonesia. Comparative studies between regions with different diversity levels will also provide more comprehensive understanding of factors influencing the success of multicultural PAI implementation in the Society 5.0 era (Rosyad, 2020; Banks, 2019; Hoon, 2017).

Conclusion

This research demonstrates that the implementation of multicultural Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in South Sumatra secondary schools in the Society 5.0 era has successfully integrated tolerance, inclusivity, and respect for differences as core values in learning. This approach not only strengthens students' Islamic religious understanding, but also forms their awareness and attitudes toward peaceful coexistence in a plural society. The findings indicate that multicultural PAI learning utilizes dialogical-reflective approaches enabling students to actively engage in building critical awareness about the importance of respecting diversity.

Digital technology utilization in PAI learning, although still facing infrastructure limitations and variation in teacher competence, has shown positive potential in enriching learning materials and expanding students' perspectives on diversity. PAI teachers play a strategic role as facilitators and role models of religious moderation, though strengthening multicultural competence through continuous training and professional development remains necessary.

The main challenges faced include limited digital infrastructure, variation in teacher competence, resistance from some communities toward multicultural approaches, and lack of comprehensive policy support. To address these challenges, concrete efforts are needed including strengthening PAI teacher capacity, developing responsive curriculum and teaching materials, providing adequate technology infrastructure, and conducting continuous dialogue with parents and communities.

This research contributes to enriching multicultural education discourse, particularly in the Islamic religious education context in the Society 5.0 era. Practically, research findings provide important implications for educational policy development supporting the implementation of multicultural PAI as part of strengthening religious moderation and social harmony in Indonesia. Further research is needed to examine the long-term impacts of multicultural PAI and develop contextual learning models in various diversity contexts.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

Zainuddin Zainuddin contributed to the study conceptualization, research design, data collection and analysis, and manuscript writing. Ani Nafisah contributed to the theoretical framework and methodological development. Bakhrum Amir contributed to data collection and validation as well as initial drafting of the manuscript. Hesta Rafmana contributed to supporting data analysis and manuscript revision. All authors approved the final version of the manuscript..

Data availability statement

The qualitative data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to ethical and confidentiality considerations.

Declaration of interests statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper..

Additional information

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