Education as an Instrument of Conflict Resolution: Intergroup Relation Practices in Society

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Abstract: Studies on multicultural education and intergroup relations have largely proceeded along separate paths. Most existing research focuses on empirical case studies within conflict-ridden regions, while conceptual syntheses, integrating Islamic educational values (such as al-'adl [justice], rahmah [compassion], tasamuh [tolerance], and ukhuwwah [brotherhood]) into a multicultural education framework as a strategy for preventing social conflict, remain limited. This study aims to analyze the role of education in fostering harmonious intergroup relations and mitigating social conflict. A qualitative literature review was conducted, drawing upon books on the sociology of education, academic articles on multicultural education, and relevant prior research. Data were analyzed using content analysis, involving the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that education serves as a strategic instrument for shaping healthy social interactions by instilling tolerance, care, and openness. Social conflict stems from four primary factors: differences in cultural identity and beliefs, negative intergroup prejudice, economic inequality, and poor management of diversity. The original contribution of this study lies in the formulation of an integrative, Islamic-value-based multicultural education framework that links justice, compassion, tolerance, and brotherhood to conflict prevention and the strengthening of social cohesion. Integrating these values, through both formal instruction and extracurricular interfaith activities, has the potential to bolster social harmony. This study contributes theoretically to the development of Islamic-value-based multicultural education and serves as a practical reference for schools, educators, and policymakers in designing curricula centered on religious moderation and collaborative, interfaith learning.

Keywords: Intergroup relations, social cohesion, social conflict, religious moderation, multicultural education.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the most diverse countries in the world, home to over 1,300 ethnic groups, more than 700 regional languages, and six officially recognized religions coexisting within a framework of pluralism (Statistics Indonesia, 2020). Ideally, this diversity constitutes an invaluable cultural asset that shapes Indonesia's unique identity among the nations of the world, as reflected in the national motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, "Unity in Diversity." Under ideal conditions, ethnic, religious, and cultural differences are managed wisely to foster cooperation, mutual respect, and social cohesion, while schools and other social institutions serve as strategic venues for cultivating tolerance, empathy, and inter-group trust from an early age. However, realizing this ideal vision requires planned and sustained effort, as diversity cannot manage itself.

In reality, diversity that is poorly managed carries the potential for social friction that can suddenly erupt into open conflict. Indonesian history records several horizontal conflicts that claimed lives and tore apart the social fabric: the Dayak–Madurese ethnic conflict in West Kalimantan between 1996 and 2001, communal violence in Maluku and Poso between 1999 and 2002, and various forms of intolerance that persist to this day with varying intensity. These facts position the management of diversity not merely as a cultural issue, but as a fundamental challenge that touches national integrity and long-term social stability.

Over the last decade, identity-based social tension in Indonesia has shown no meaningful decline. The Setara Institute (2023) recorded 271 incidents of violations of freedom of religion and belief during 2022, an increase from 209 incidents in the previous year. More alarmingly, identity-based social polarization has been aggravated by the rise of social media, which enables hate narratives and discriminatory speech to spread widely and rapidly across geographical boundaries. Wateriri (2024) found that in the 2024 regional head election in Yapen Islands Regency, Papua, identity politics based on ethnicity and religion became the main trigger of social tension threatening community harmony; the political dominance of certain ethnic groups generated a sense of injustice among others, which then developed into prolonged social friction. These findings confirm that social conflict in Indonesia is never the product of a single cause, but rather the accumulation of structural inequality, identity sentiment, and weak social foundations that should have been built through education.

A fundamental question therefore needs to be answered: why do identity-based conflicts continue to recur, even in regions that have historically

experienced reconciliation? The answer lies in a root problem frequently overlooked by policy, the way attitudes, perceptions, and views of other groups are formed from an early age. Negative stigma inherited from family, community, or media, if not regularly corrected through education, will survive latently and may erupt at any time when triggered by particular interests. Kurniawan & Miftah (2021) found that in Sambas, West Kalimantan, negative prejudice against the Madurese remained deeply rooted in the collective consciousness even though large-scale physical conflict subsided more than two decades ago. This condition demonstrates that peace which is merely superficial, the mere absence of violence, without transformation of attitudes and perceptions, is a fragile peace that can collapse at the smallest spark of conflict.

In the face of this recurring cycle, education stands as the most strategic instrument for interrupting it. Hermawati et al. (2025) emphasized that education is the process by which the young are prepared for life in society through the internalization of shared values that bind individuals together socially. Schools are not merely sites for the transmission of academic knowledge, but social laboratories in which students learn to interact with peers from different backgrounds, form views of other groups, and construct their social identities. Through daily interaction in diverse school environments, students can experience directly that difference is natural rather than threatening, an experience that, when properly guided by competent teachers, becomes a solid foundation for tolerance and the capacity to manage diversity. Ayub (2011) confirms that intergroup interaction within educational processes shapes attitudes of tolerance and cooperation, forming essential capital for life in a pluralistic society.

However, this enormous potential of education has not been optimally mobilized for social conflict prevention in Indonesia. The existing education system still tends to treat character and multicultural education as supplemental, episodic programs rather than integral components of learning. Sholeh et al. (2024) argue that irregular integration of multicultural content into the curriculum produces only fleeting understanding, without genuine and sustained changes in attitudes. Similarly, Widiatmaka et al. (2023) found that character education detached from students' actual social lives fails to build durable habits of tolerance. In other words, when education merely delivers knowledge about differences without touching empathy and compassion, and without embedding the practice of tolerance in everyday life, its function as an instrument of conflict prevention remains largely rhetorical.

One educational resource whose contribution to conflict prevention remains underexploited is Islamic Religious Education (IRE, or Islamic Religious Education/PAI). As a compulsory subject in schools with a predominantly Muslim student population, IRE has an exceptionally wide reach and strong moral authority in shaping student character. The Islamic values it conveys, *al-'adl* (justice), *rahmah* (compassion), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood), inherently embody principles highly relevant to building harmonious intergroup relations and preventing social conflict. Nevertheless, Baqi & Agustin (2025) observe that the implementation of these values in IRE learning is still largely doctrinal and normative, and has yet to engage the practical-social dimensions required to cultivate authentic tolerance in students' daily lives. In contrast, Fahmi et al. (2025) demonstrated that multicultural Islamic education was grounded in rahmatan lil 'alamin, when implemented consistently and contextually, significantly reduces identity conflict and strengthens social integration among students.

Taken together, previous studies on the relationship between education and the prevention of social conflict remain partial and fragmented. Research on multicultural education is rarely linked directly to value-based religious strategies, whereas research on social conflict tends to concentrate on diagnosing causal factors without offering operational and structured educational recommendations. Rumahuru & Gasperz (2021) show that interreligious dialogue forums alone are insufficient for building long-term peace unless accompanied by educational interventions that address the roots of intergroup perceptions and attitudes. To date, no study is available that comprehensively integrates the diagnosis of social conflict factors with preventive educational strategies, both multicultural education and the values of IRE; within a single, coherent analytical framework applicable in practice.

Meanwhile, the alternative solutions proposed by researchers and policymakers, legal and regulatory enforcement concerning tolerance and the prohibition of hate speech; the strengthening of interfaith and intergroup dialogue forums at the community level; peace initiatives grounded in local wisdom, as demonstrated in Tual, Maluku (Rumahuru & Gasperz, 2021); and economic empowerment to respond to structural inequality (Kinseng, 2021), share the same fundamental weakness: they are reactive and address only the surface of the problem without building long-term foundations in the form of changing mindsets and behavior. Among these alternatives, education as a preventive strategy is considered the most fundamental because it works upstream: shaping character, values, and intergroup mindsets from an early age, long before conflict has the chance to emerge. The novelty of this study therefore lies in constructing an integrative framework that unites three previously separate bodies of

knowledge, the diagnosis of social conflict factors, multicultural education, and the internalization of IRE values (*al-'adl, rahmah, tasamuh*, and *ukhuwwah*), into one operational strategy for preventing social conflict in school settings.

Based on the background and issues elaborated above, this study pursues three objectives: first, to identify and analyze the crucial factors causing social conflict in Indonesia's pluralistic society; second, to examine the role of education in fostering harmonious intergroup relations through the cultivation of tolerance, empathy, and conflict-resolution skills; and third, to explain the operational application of IRE values as a concrete strategy for preventing social conflict in schools. In this study, intergroup relations are defined as patterns of social interaction among communities or groups distinguished by ethnicity, religion, culture, or social class, interactions that may result in either cooperation and solidarity or competition and conflict, while social conflict prevention is understood as planned and structured educational efforts to reduce the likelihood of conflict before it manifests as open violence. Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute an integrative analytical framework linking the sociology of education, intergroup relations theory, and the study of social conflict within a coherent conceptual structure. Practically, its findings may serve as a reference for curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers in designing programs that are more responsive to the challenges of diversity and the dynamics of social conflict in Indonesian society.

METHOD

This research was conducted at a public elementary school in Palembang during the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. The school was selected because it was conducting a trial implementation of deep learning for two semesters: the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year and the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year.

This study employed a qualitative approach using a library research design. This design was selected because the study pursues an analytical–interpretative objective, namely to understand socio-educational phenomena in depth through a systematic examination, synthesis, and interpretation of existing literature rather than through the collection of primary field data. A library research design is considered appropriate as it enables the integration of theories, concepts, and empirical findings on education, intergroup relations, and social conflict into a single coherent analytical framework.

The data sources consist of primary and secondary materials. Primary data included (1) textbooks on the sociology of education and social conflict; (2) peer-reviewed journal articles addressing multicultural education,

character education, and intergroup relations; and (3) relevant prior studies published between 2015 and 2025. Secondary data consisting of research reports and national education policy documents. Data collection proceeded in three stages: (1) identification and screening of relevant literature using the keywords multicultural education, intergroup relations, social conflict, Islamic religious education, and tolerance within the Google Scholar and SINTA databases; (2) thematic categorization of the selected literature into three groups, factors of social conflict, educational strategies for conflict prevention, and the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) values; and (3) data extraction from each selected source. Sources were included if they were published between 2015 and 2025, directly addressed the research themes, and were accessible in full text.

The collected data were analyzed using content analysis complemented by comparative analysis. Content analysis was applied to identify the principal themes within each source, whereas comparative analysis was employed to examine findings across studies in order to reveal patterns, points of consistency, and contradictions. The trustworthiness of the findings was ensured through source triangulation, whereby every major claim was verified against at least three independent sources before being incorporated into the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The thematic synthesis of the reviewed literature yielded four major findings. First, social conflict in Indonesia's pluralistic society originates from four interrelated root factors: identity differences, intergroup prejudice, economic inequality, and weak management of diversity. Second, education functions as a strategic arena for forming harmonious intergroup relations through the internalization of tolerance, empathy, and cooperative behavior. Third, effective conflict prevention requires synergy between formal curricular learning and extracurricular cross-faith engagement. Fourth, the values of Islamic Religious Education (IRE); *al-'adl* (justice), *rahmah* (compassion), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood), constitute an operational normative foundation for conflict prevention. Two findings deserve emphasis as the distinctive contributions of this study: the multi-layered causality of conflict, and the integrative framework uniting multicultural education with IRE values.

Intergroup relations refer to patterns of social interaction between individuals or groups distinguished by ethnicity, religion, culture, or social

class. Such interactions carry a dual potential: they may generate cooperation, solidarity, and social integration, but they may also breed competition and friction that escalates into open conflict (Ayub, 2011). This duality positions education in an ambivalent situation, schools can either reproduce social boundaries or dissolve them, depending on how diversity is managed within the learning process.

The findings indicate that schools function as social laboratories in which students from diverse social, cultural, and economic backgrounds engage in daily interaction. Beyond transmitting academic knowledge, schools effectively instill and disseminate social values and norms through learning activities and everyday encounters. Within such environments, students learn to communicate, collaborate, and appreciate differences, experiences that gradually shape attitudes of tolerance, mutual respect, and the capacity to exchange ideas across group boundaries. These dispositions constitute essential capital for harmonious intergroup relations and for minimizing the potential for social conflict.

The first causal factor is the manipulation and salience of cultural, religious, and group identity. The analysis reveals two distinct mechanisms. In the first, religious or ethnic issues are instrumentalized to wrap deeper and more complex problems such as crime, resource competition, or identity politics; ethnic and religious diversity is frequently blamed as the source of conflict when the actual roots lie elsewhere (Rumahuru & Gaspersz, 2021). In the second mechanism, identity differences become a direct source of conflict when one group perceives itself as dominated by another in access to power, employment, or public services. Wateriri (2024) documented this pattern in Yapen Islands Regency, Papua, where identity politics based on ethnicity and religion became the primary trigger of tension during the 2024 regional election, as the political dominance of certain ethnic groups generated perceived injustice among others.

The second factor consists of negative stereotypes, prejudice, and intergroup anxiety. In Sambas, West Kalimantan, the community still harbors the stigma that their region is unsafe for the Madurese ethnic group, although large-scale physical violence subsided more than two decades ago (Kurniawan & Miftah, 2021). Stereotypes of this kind originate from direct experience and the social environment (Ledang, 2016), then harden into prejudice and anxiety that may erupt into conflict at any time. This finding demonstrates that prejudice is transmitted intergenerationally and survives latently long after violence ends, rendering peace without attitudinal transformation inherently fragile.

The third factor is economic disparity and the contestation of interests and power. In coastal communities, conflicts concentrate on access to livelihoods: technological change, government policy, and the entry of mining and tourism companies have transformed the distribution of benefits and ignited disputes between small and large fishers, as well as between fishers, the state, and corporations (Kinseng, 2021). Geographically, patterns of violent conflict across Indonesian cities correlate closely with socio-economic inequality, including land ownership, poverty, and social status. Even religiously framed conflicts are not purely doctrinal: the Sunni–Shia conflict in Madura was driven more by political and economic factors, as the presence of the Shia minority was perceived as threatening the long-standing socio-political and economic dominance of the Sunni majority (Hadi et al., 2024).

The fourth factor is the weak role of diversity management and education. In West Kalimantan, dialogue forums alone proved insufficient because inter-ethnic stereotypes remained untouched; multicultural education in schools was therefore also essential to correct stereotypes and cultivate appreciation of diversity (Pradana & Setowara, 2024). Conversely, in Tual, Maluku, community-based approaches grounded in local wisdom, public meeting spaces, joint economic and hobby groups, and community initiatives, effectively dismantled prejudice and built cross-faith and cross-ethnic trust (Trisnani et al., 2026). Taken together, the four factors reveal the study's first distinctive finding: social conflict is never monocausal but multi-layered, in which identity issues, prejudice, structural inequality, and weak educational responses reinforce one another.

Regarding the role of education, the first strategy is the cultivation of tolerance, empathy, and character. Value induction begins with theoretical discussion of diversity and conflict in the classroom, but comprehension alone is insufficient; it must be accompanied by structured practice in school life, such as routine communal work programs, which train students to live cooperatively and appreciate differences in direct experience. Widiatmaka et al. (2023) demonstrated that character education implemented through youth community organizations builds the social character of the younger generation through communal work, spiritual activities, and assistance to communities in difficulty. Early multicultural education that teaches respect for differences is thus the key to ensuring that tolerance becomes a lived habit rather than memorized doctrine.

The second strategy is strengthening communication and conflict-resolution competencies. Active listening, negotiation, and mediation skills can be developed from primary to secondary education through active and

collaborative learning methods such as role-playing, case studies, and mediation, which simultaneously form peaceful patterns of conflict settlement within the school environment. The third strategy, curricular, extracurricular synergy, is summarized in Table 1 and constitutes the study's second distinctive finding: formal instruction and cross-faith extracurricular engagement are mutually reinforcing, and neither alone is sufficient.

Table 1. Synergy of Curricular and Extracurricular Activities in Preventing Social Conflict

Core Practices	Impact on Students	Reference
Integration of multicultural content across core subjects (Indonesian Language, History, Civic Education, IRE)	Understanding of diversity, reduced conflict, inclusive environment	Sholeh *et.al.* (2024)
Integration of local cultural values and *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (Multicultural Islamic Education)	Reduction of identity conflicts, strengthening of social integration	Fahmi *et.al.* (2025)
Dialogue, community service (Interfaith Extracurricular)	Tolerance, reduction of prejudice, understanding of social harmony	Mahmudah (2021)

Table 1 above demonstrates that effective social conflict prevention requires synergy between curricular and extracurricular activities. Research by Sholeh et al. (2024) and Fahmi et al. (2025) confirms that integrating multicultural content into core subjects not only enhances students' cognitive understanding of diversity but also tangibly reduces the intensity of conflict within the school environment. Meanwhile, Mahmudah (2021) demonstrate that interfaith extracurricular activities, such as dialogues, community service, and collaborative projects, effectively foster tolerance and reduce intergroup prejudice.

The final finding concerns the operational implementation of IRE values as a conflict-prevention strategy, summarized in Table 2. Baqi & Agustin (2025) affirm that the four values serve as the main pillars in forming inclusive character within multicultural environments. Effective implementation demands whole-concept understanding followed by internalization through classroom learning, extracurricular activities, school culture, and national curriculum policy. When these values are integrated consistently, the documented impacts include the reduction of negative stereotypes, the growth of mutual respect, and a substantial contribution to building peace in pluralistic societies.

Table 2. Implementation of IRE Values in Preventing Social Conflict

IRE Value	Forms of Educational Implementation	Conflict-Prevention Impact
Al-'adl (justice)	Integrating justice into the IRE curriculum; equitable treatment of all students without discrimination; teacher-led guidance on fairness	Students hold a perspective that respects the rights of others; a reduction in discrimination and violence.
Rahmah (compassion)	Instilling teachings of compassion within learning materials; strengthening a school culture rooted in empathy; implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC).	Creation of a harmonious learning environment; reduction in bullying behavior.
Tasamuh (tolerance)	Reflective, dialogic, and contextual Islamic religious education; revitalization of tolerance values through curriculum reform; transformative learning in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools).	The development of mutual respect; acceptance of differences; reduction of prejudice.
Ukhuwwah (brotherhood)	Instilling the values of brotherhood (*ukhuwah Islamiyah* and *ukhuwah insaniyah*); interfaith mutual cooperation and social service activities.	The growth of social solidarity; the strengthening of social cohesion in a pluralistic society.

Table 2 outlines the operational implementation of the four Islamic Religious Education values within educational practice and their impact on conflict prevention. Thus, the implementation of Islamic Religious Education values for preventing social conflict requires a comprehensive understanding of the concepts themselves: *al-'adl* (justice), *rahmah* (compassion), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood). These four values must be internalized through various educational strategies, including classroom instruction, extracurricular activities, school culture, and national curriculum policies. Recent research indicates that integrating these values leads to a reduction in negative stereotypes and fosters mutual respect and appreciation; furthermore, they play a significant role in building peace and preventing social conflict within the community.

Discussion

The finding that schools serve as arenas for forming intergroup relations can be deepened through the contact hypothesis (Rohmah, 2023), which holds that intergroup contact reduces prejudice only under optimal conditions: equal group status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and institutional support. The findings of this study suggest that ordinary classroom diversity does not automatically produce tolerance; Rather, it is the deliberately structured interaction, collaborative projects, shared communal work, cross-

faith activities, that approximates these conditions. This interpretation is consistent with Akifah & Cangara (2025) meta-analysis showing that structured, cooperative contact yields significantly stronger prejudice reduction than mere exposure, and it explains why education in the reviewed studies succeeds only when practice accompanies instruction.

The identity-based conflicts documented in Yapen (Wateriri, 2024) align closely with social identity theory (Wahono et al., 2021), which explains how individuals derive self-esteem from group membership and consequently favor their in-group while devaluing out-groups. Political mobilization of ethnicity and religion sharpens category boundaries, converting benign social categorization into competitive antagonism. Educational implications follow from the common ingroup identity model Firmansjah & Gunawan (2026) schools can reduce bias by recategorizing "us and them" into a superordinate identity, students as one school community, or as citizens of a pluralistic nation. The *ukhuwwah* insaniyah dimension of IRE values operates precisely as such a superordinate identity, offering a religiously grounded route to recategorization that secular formulations alone rarely achieve in Muslim-majority settings.

The finding that economic inequality and power contestation underlie religious conflicts resonates with Rohmadi & Laksono (2026) distinction between direct, structural, and cultural violence, and with relative deprivation theory (Gumilar et al., 2026). The Madura case (Putri et al., 2025) illustrates how structural inequality is expressed through cultural-religious framing: the Shia minority became a symbol upon which anxieties over political-economic dominance were projected. This theoretical dialogue sharpens the study's multi-layered causality finding: education cannot directly redistribute economic resources, but it can dismantle cultural violence, the stereotypes and narratives that legitimize domination, and thereby complement, rather than substitute for, structural and economic policy interventions.

The persistence of anti-Madurese prejudice in Sambas two decades after violence (Kurniawan & Miftah, 2021) provides an Indonesian illustration of the distinction between negative peace (the mere absence of violence) and positive peace (the presence of justice and harmonious relations). The fragility of peace without attitudinal transformation corroborates Ruagadi et al. (2024) argument that sustainable peacebuilding requires the reconciliation of relationships and the healing of perception, not merely the cessation of hostility. Dialogue forums fail precisely because they address elites and adults while the perceptual roots of prejudice are formed in childhood socialization; education therefore occupies the most upstream position in

the peacebuilding architecture, a position that community-based initiatives in Tual are accidentally occupied by reaching everyday social life.

Tusriyanto & Basri (2024) conception of education as the socialization of the young into shared moral values provides a functionalist explanation for why character education matters: schools are society's moral apparatus, and the internalization of collective values is the precondition of social solidarity. However, the findings caution against a purely functionalist reading. When shared values are taught doctrinally, as observed in the normative, doctrinaire IRE implementation noted by Baqi & Agustin (2025), internalization fails and values remain cognitive possessions rather than behavioral dispositions. Durkheim's framework is thus validated only conditionally: moral socialization prevents conflict when it is experiential, dialogical, and embedded in the lived culture of the school.

The finding that episodic multicultural content produces only fleeting understanding (Sholeh et al., 2024) is best explained through Rahman et al (2024) typology of multicultural curriculum reform. Additive approaches, inserting diversity content into existing subjects without transforming pedagogy, correspond to exactly the superficial outcomes documented in the literature. By contrast, the successful practices identified in this study, transformative learning in Islamic boarding schools, empathy-based school cultures, cross-faith service projects, map onto Banks's higher dimensions: prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture. The failure of multicultural education in Indonesia is therefore not a failure of the concept but of its implementation depth.

The demonstrated effectiveness of IRE values finds robust international cooperation in Aghaei et al (2025) field experiment in Iraq, published in the American Economic Review, which showed that Islamic education was designed for inclusiveness improved Muslim students' prosocial behavior toward Christians without imposing assimilation. This parallel validates the study's central claim that religious education, far from being inherently divisive, can be a powerful engine of intergroup cohesion when its universal ethical values, justice, compassion, tolerance, brotherhood, are activated contextually (Fahmi et al., 2025) on *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. The distinctive contribution of the present study is to systematize this insight into four operational values with concrete pedagogical forms, moving beyond the general assertion that "religious moderation matters."

The superiority of the curricular–extracurricular synergy is theoretically legitimate through Mousa et al (2026) principle that genuine learning arises from experience, and Mousa (2018) experiential learning cycle. Classroom

instruction provides the conceptual scaffolding for diversity, but cross-faith extracurricular activities supply the concrete experience, reflection, and behavioral experimentation through which attitudes actually change. Mahmudah (2021) finding that students displayed tolerance through respectful interaction in interfaith activities illustrates this cycle: cognition (knowledge of diversity), affect (empathy), and behavior (cooperative practice) are integrated only when formal and informal learning environments reinforce one another. This integration constitutes the mechanism that classroom-only multicultural education lacks.

Synthesizing the foregoing dialogue, this study proposes an integrative framework for education-based conflict prevention consisting of three interlocking components: (a) a diagnostic component, mapping the four root factors of conflict; (b) a pedagogical component, drawing on multicultural education's structured contact and experiential strategies; and (c) a normative-motivational component, supplied by the IRE values of al-'adl, rahmah, tasamuh, and ukhuwwah. The framework's originality lies in its claim that the religious component is not decorative but functional: religious values furnish the moral authority and internal motivation that make tolerant behavior self-sustaining, while multicultural pedagogy furnishes the methods that prevent those values from collapsing into doctrine. Conflict prevention, in this framework, is the product of diagnosis, pedagogy, and normative formation operating simultaneously through formal and extracurricular channels.

Relative to prior scholarship, this study advances the field in three respects. Against studies that only diagnose conflict factors (Wateriri, 2024), it supplies operational educational responses; against studies that examine multicultural education or religious education in isolation (Sholeh et al., 2024), it demonstrates their necessary complementarity; and towards community-level peacebuilding studies (Rumahuru & Gaspersz, 2021; Zusman, 2023), it translates community success principles into school-based strategies. The framework is thus positioned as a conceptual bridge between conflict studies, the sociology of education, and Islamic pedagogy; an integration that, to the best of the authors' knowledge, has not previously been articulated in the Indonesian context.

This study carries theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it contributes an integrative analytical framework connecting the sociology of education, intergroup relations theory, and conflict studies with Islamic educational values, thereby extending both multicultural education scholarship and the literature on religion and social cohesion. Practically,

the framework offers curriculum development a blueprint for embedding al-'adl, rahmah, tasamuh, and ukhuwwah across subjects rather than confining them to religious instruction; it offers school leaders a rationale for institutionalizing cross-faith extracurricular programs; and it offers policymakers an evidence-informed foundation for operationalizing the religious moderation agenda at the school level, shifting conflict prevention from reactive state intervention to proactive educational formation.

Several limitations must be acknowledged. As a library-based study, this research relies entirely on secondary sources and does not generate primary empirical data on how these strategies perform in actual school settings; its conclusions are therefore conceptual syntheses rather than empirically tested causal claims. The restricted database coverage (Google Scholar and SINTA) may have omitted relevant international studies, and the exclusive focus on Islamic Religious Education limits the framework's generalizability to other religious education contexts in Indonesia. These constraints qualify the strength of the recommendations and delineate the boundary between what the synthesis establishes and what remains to be verified in the field.

Future research should proceed in three directions. First, empirical validation is essential: quasi-experimental and longitudinal studies should test whether the integrated framework actually reduces prejudice and strengthens intergroup cohesion compared with conventional multicultural instruction. Second, Research and Development (R&D) studies should translate the four IRE values into validated curriculum models, teaching materials, and teacher-training modules suitable for conflict-prone regions. Third, subsequent reviews should broaden database coverage (Scopus, ERIC, Web of Science) and extend comparative analysis to religious education in non-Islamic contexts; Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist education in Indonesia, to examine whether the integrative framework holds across faith traditions, thereby strengthening its contribution to global peacebuilding scholarship.

CONCLUSION

This study sets out to analyze the role of education in fostering harmonious intergroup relations and in preventing social conflict in Indonesia's pluralistic society. The synthesis of the literature yields three principal conclusions. First, social conflict originates from four interlocking factors; identity differences, intergroup prejudice, economic inequality, and weak diversity management, and these factors operate in layers rather than in isolation. Second, education functions as the most upstream and

sustainable instrument of prevention, but only when it moves beyond doctrinal instruction toward experiential, dialogical, and contextually grounded practice. Third, and most distinctively, the integration of multicultural education with the IRE values of *al-'adl, rahmah, tasamuh*, and *ukhuwwah*, delivered through the synergy of formal learning and cross-faith extracurricular engagement, constitutes the most effective strategy for building durable social cohesion, because it unites pedagogical method with religiously grounded moral motivation.

Theoretically, this study contributes an integrative framework that bridges the sociology of education, intergroup relations theory, and conflict studies within the Indonesian religious-educational context; Practically, it offers a reference for schools, educators, and policymakers in designing curricula and programs responsive to diversity. Accordingly, this study recommends: (1) the systematic integration of the four IRE values across subjects and school culture, rather than their confinement to religious instruction; (2) the institutionalization of structured cross-faith extracurricular activities as a mandatory component of school life, particularly in conflict-prone regions; (3) the incorporation of conflict-resolution skills, active listening, negotiation, and mediation, into teacher training; and (4) the alignment of national religious moderation policy with school-level implementation frameworks. As a library-based study, its conclusions await empirical validation, and future research employing experimental, longitudinal, and R&D designs is strongly encouraged to test and refine the proposed framework.

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