

Religious Moderation in Elementary Schools: Conflict Management, Legal Basis, and Interpretation of Tolerance Values in Mataram City

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Abstract

This study examined religious moderation in public elementary schools in Mataram City through three interconnected dimensions: conflict management, legal and school-level policy foundations, and teachers' interpretations of tolerance. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was employed across eight public elementary schools involving 58 participants: eight principals, 20 teachers, six education personnel, 16 parents, and eight students. Questionnaire data were summarized descriptively and interview data were analyzed thematically, with source triangulation and member checking used to strengthen credibility. The findings indicate a generally harmonious school climate: all principals reported no open religious conflict during their tenure, 85% of teachers stated that religious issues rarely or never occurred, all parents reported no religious discrimination, and all students felt safe and comfortable interacting across religious differences. Nevertheless, institutionalization remained limited. Only 25% of schools had written policies for managing religious diversity, 75% of principals reported no policy on religious symbols in common areas, 43.75% of parents had never been invited to interfaith-harmony activities, and all student respondents reported the absence of student forums discussing tolerance. Although 80% of teachers promoted active tolerance, only 15% deliberately formed religiously heterogeneous groups. These findings reveal an interpersonal-institutional asymmetry: strong everyday harmony coexists with weak formal governance. The study implies that schools should translate informal inclusive culture into written procedures, participatory parent-student mechanisms, and proportionate guidelines for religious expression and celebrations.

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Introduction

Religious plurality is a defining feature of Indonesian public life and is particularly visible in schools, where children encounter peers, teachers, traditions, and institutional practices that may differ from those experienced at home. In such settings, religious moderation is best understood not as the dilution of religious commitment but as an educational orientation that combines respect for religious identity with non-violence, fairness, civic commitment, and the recognition of legitimate difference. Recent Indonesian studies show that moderation is strengthened when schools connect normative values with concrete practices of inclusion, equitable religious education, and interreligious competence rather than treating tolerance as a purely rhetorical objective (Subchi et al., 2022; Utami, 2022; Wahyono et al., 2022; Mulyana, 2023). Mataram City provides a particularly

relevant context because its population includes Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, and Confucian communities, while its public elementary schools range from highly multireligious to religiously homogeneous environments. Official local statistics therefore provide an important demographic backdrop, but the educational issue is not simply the presence of diversity; it is how schools convert diversity into safe, equitable, and meaningful interaction (Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Mataram, 2023; Subchi et al., 2022; Utami, 2022; Wahyono et al., 2022).

Elementary education is a strategic arena for this process because children's everyday experiences of difference are shaped by classroom norms, friendship patterns, grouping practices, teacher responses, and the broader diversity climate of the school. Research on school diversity and intergroup contact demonstrates that mere co-presence does not automatically produce inclusive attitudes; positive outcomes are more likely when interaction is supported by norms of equality, cooperation, and institutional endorsement (Sincer et al., 2021; Reimer et al., 2021; Reimer et al., 2022; Tropp et al., 2022). Longitudinal and intervention studies further show that structured contact can improve intergroup attitudes among young people, whereas negative contact, exclusion, or weak normative support can reproduce social distance even in ostensibly diverse settings (van Zalk et al., 2021; Smith & Minescu, 2022; Karataş et al., 2023). In Indonesia, elementary-school studies similarly indicate that tolerance is strengthened through teacher modelling, habituation, equitable treatment, contextual learning, and opportunities for students to interact across differences (Nuha et al., 2021; Anggito & Sartono, 2022; Muslih et al., 2024; Wahyono et al., 2022).

Within religious education, recent scholarship has increasingly distinguished passive coexistence from more active forms of tolerance. Passive tolerance may prevent overt conflict, yet it does not necessarily require curiosity, mutual understanding, collaboration, or equitable participation. Active tolerance, by contrast, is expressed when school members intentionally learn about one another, cooperate across identity boundaries, and create practices that allow minority students to participate without pressure to assimilate. This distinction is consistent with contemporary work on religious moderation, interreligious competence, and contact-based interfaith education, which emphasizes that durable harmony depends on opportunities for dialogue, reciprocal recognition, and institutionally supported interaction (Mufi et al., 2023; Peacock, 2023; Utami, 2022; Fitriani, 2023). Studies of Indonesian Islamic and multicultural education also show that tolerance is more robust when moderation values are embedded in curriculum, classroom interaction, and school culture rather than conveyed only as abstract moral messages (Mulyana, 2023; Muqowim et al., 2022; Nugroho et al., 2022; Saparudin & Emawati, 2023).

Curriculum and teaching materials are important, but they are only one layer of school-level moderation. Recent analyses have identified gaps between formal curricular aspirations and the contextual articulation of tolerance, non-violence, national commitment, and appreciation of local diversity (Saparudin & Emawati, 2023; Ikhrom et al., 2023; Mulyana, 2023; Haris et al., 2024). Other studies demonstrate that teachers can translate moderation into practice through inclusive assignments, dialogical pedagogy, multicultural resources, and equal treatment of students from different religious backgrounds (Nuha et al., 2021; Wahyono et al., 2022; Muslih et al., 2024; Siregar & Salminawati, 2023). International religious-education research reaches a similar conclusion: religious literacy and worldview education are most educationally productive when they move beyond simplified group categories and enable learners to encounter internal diversity, contested

viewpoints, and the complexity of lived religion (Shaw, 2020; Maxwell & Hirsch, 2020; Cooling, 2020; Kavonius & Ubani, 2020).

A second layer concerns governance. Harmonious interpersonal relations can be fragile if they depend primarily on individual teachers or principals and are not supported by written procedures, clear responsibilities, and consistent mechanisms for addressing tensions. Evidence from inclusive-school and school-climate research shows that leadership, parental participation, and organizational norms shape whether diversity is experienced as equitable and safe (Alinsunurin, 2020; Sincer et al., 2021; Zulkifli et al., 2023). This is especially important for conflict management because low-frequency incidents such as teasing, stereotyping, exclusion, or identity-based grouping can remain invisible in aggregate descriptions of harmony. Intergroup research indicates that school norms and institutional support can either amplify or buffer such micro-level experiences (Reimer et al., 2021; Laurence, 2020; Smith & Minescu, 2022; Karataş et al., 2023). Accordingly, a strong framework for religious moderation should connect preventive classroom practices, responsive conflict management, legal protection, and formal school policy rather than relying exclusively on goodwill or customary routines (Fitriani, 2023; Utami, 2022; Maxwell & Hirsch, 2020).

A third layer is participation. Parents and students are not merely beneficiaries of school policy; they are stakeholders whose voices can reveal whether formal commitments are experienced as fair in everyday life. Research on student voice shows that participation becomes meaningful when students have recurring structures through which they can raise concerns, contribute to decisions, and see their contributions translated into school practice (Caetano et al., 2020; Black, 2020; Jones & Bubb, 2021; Giraldo-García et al., 2021). Indonesian evidence likewise suggests that listening to students can expose forms of exclusion that adults may not recognize and can strengthen the responsiveness of school leadership (Andriana & Evans, 2020; Utami, 2022; Wahyono et al., 2022). Parent participation is similarly associated with inclusive school climates when it is substantive rather than ceremonial (Alinsunurin, 2020; Fitriani, 2023; Zulkifli et al., 2023).

Despite this expanding literature, three limitations remain salient. First, many Indonesian studies focus on curriculum content, teacher roles, or single-school cases, while fewer examine religious moderation simultaneously through conflict management, formal policy, legal foundations, and the distinction between passive and active tolerance (Mulyana, 2023; Nuha et al., 2021; Saparudin & Emawati, 2023; Muslih et al., 2024). Second, multi-stakeholder evidence from elementary schools remains limited; principals and teachers are commonly foregrounded, whereas education personnel, parents, and students are less often analyzed within the same empirical framework (Utami, 2022; Wahyono et al., 2022; Andriana & Evans, 2020). Third, little research has compared schools located within the same urban system but displaying substantially different religious compositions, from highly plural schools to schools whose students are religiously homogeneous. Addressing these gaps, the present study aims to describe interfaith social interaction in public elementary schools in Mataram City, identify existing conflict-management practices, examine the alignment between legal or school-level policy and implementation, explore teachers' interpretations and enactments of passive and active tolerance, and integrate the perspectives of principals, teachers, education personnel, parents, and students to formulate a context-sensitive framework for strengthening religious moderation in elementary education.

Method

This study employed a mixed-methods approach and was reported in the source manuscript as using an explanatory sequential design. The design was selected to combine descriptive quantitative patterns with qualitative accounts of how school actors understood and enacted religious moderation. Contemporary mixed-methods scholarship emphasizes that explanatory sequential studies should make the relationship between strands explicit and should integrate quantitative and qualitative evidence at the level of interpretation rather than presenting two disconnected datasets (Draucker et al., 2020; McCrudden et al., 2021; Haynes-Brown & Fetters, 2021). Fieldwork was conducted in Mataram City from September to October 2024. Eight public elementary schools were purposively selected to represent variation in religious composition: SDN 16 Cakranegara, which included five religions; SDN 24 Mataram, with approximately 75% Hindu and 25% Muslim students; SDN 25 Mataram; SDN 29 Cakranegara; SDN 32 Cakranegara; SDN 33 Mataram; SDN 40 Ampenan, with a 100% Muslim student population; and SDN 9 Mataram, also with a 100% Muslim student population. This variation enabled the study to examine religious moderation across both multireligious and religiously homogeneous school contexts without changing the original sampling frame.

The study involved 58 respondents representing five stakeholder groups. The principal group comprised eight respondents, one from each school, with leadership tenures ranging from one year to more than six years. The teacher group comprised 20 respondents, including 10 homeroom teachers, eight Islamic religious education teachers, and two extracurricular instructors; their teaching experience ranged from less than one year to more than six years. Six education personnel participated, consisting of three administrative staff members and three teachers who also held administrative roles. Sixteen parents participated; their children were primarily in Grades 4–6. Eight students participated, consisting of six Grade 5 students and two Grade 4 students, and the student group included Muslim, Hindu, and Christian participants. Data were collected through questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Questionnaire responses were summarized using descriptive statistics to identify frequencies and percentages across stakeholder groups, while interview material was analyzed thematically. The qualitative analysis was strengthened by attention to patterned meaning and transparent theme development consistent with contemporary guidance for reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Source triangulation was used by comparing information across principals, teachers, education personnel, parents, and students, and member checking was reported as an additional credibility strategy. The quantitative and qualitative findings are presented together in the Results section so that numerical patterns are interpreted alongside stakeholder accounts while retaining the original empirical findings.

Result and Discussion

School Context and Interfaith Social Interaction

The eight schools represented markedly different religious environments, ranging from SDN 16 Cakranegara, where students represented Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Confucianism, to SDN 40 Ampenan and SDN 9 Mataram, where all students were Muslim. SDN 24 Mataram was distinctive because approximately 75% of its students were Hindu and 25% were Muslim. Across these contrasting settings, respondents generally described daily interaction as harmonious. The principal data showed complete agreement that no exclusivist groups operated in

the schools, while 19 of 20 teachers (95%) described interactions among students, teachers, and community members of different religions as harmonious. Five of six education personnel (83.3%) stated that shared spaces such as classrooms, cafeterias, and school fields naturally supported interaction. All 16 parents reported that their children had never reported religious discrimination, and all eight students stated that they felt safe and comfortable making friends regardless of religion and practicing their religion at school.

Table 1. Cross-stakeholder indicators of interfaith interaction and perceived safety

Stakeholder indicator	n/N	Percentage
Principals reporting no exclusivist groups	8/8	100%
Teachers reporting harmonious interfaith interaction	19/20	95%
Teachers identifying early signs of potential religious tension	3/20	15%
Education personnel reporting shared spaces support interaction	5/6	83.3%
Parents reporting no religious discrimination experienced by their children	16/16	100%
Students reporting safety and comfort across religious differences	8/8	100%

The qualitative accounts reinforced this overall pattern but also revealed low-level risks that could be obscured by aggregate descriptions of harmony. Three teachers (15%) identified early signs of potential conflict, including nicknames based on religious attributes, the use of particular terms or prayers to mock peers who made mistakes, one reported case of bullying directed at a Christian student, and a tendency for some students to group, sit, or play with friends of the same religion. One teacher interpreted some same-group clustering as homophily rather than explicit hostility. These findings indicate that the absence of open conflict did not imply the complete absence of identity-related tension.

Frequency of Religious Issues and History of Open Conflict

Perceptions of how often religious issues emerged differed between principals and teachers. Six of eight principals (75%) stated that religious issues or sentiments never occurred in everyday school interaction, while two (25%) stated that they occurred rarely. Teacher responses were more varied: one teacher (5%) selected very often, two (10%) selected often, 12 (60%) selected rarely, and five (25%) selected never. Thus, 85% of teachers reported that religious issues occurred rarely or never, but only 25% of teachers selected the strongest category of never. The difference between the 75% of principals and 25% of teachers who reported that religious issues never occurred constitutes a notable cross-role perception gap.

Table 2. Reported frequency of religious issues or sentiments

Respondent group	Very often	Often	Rarely	Never
Principals (n = 8)	0%	0%	25% (2)	75% (6)
Teachers (n = 20)	5% (1)	10% (2)	60% (12)	25% (5)

All eight principals (100%) stated that no open conflict with religious overtones had occurred during their tenure. This account was consistent with information from teachers and parents. The combined pattern therefore shows high everyday stability at the level of overt conflict while preserving the distinction between open conflict and the lower-level incidents noted by some teachers.benchmarks.

Legal Foundations and Internal School Policy

Principals referred to several legal or administrative foundations when explaining how their schools approached religious diversity. These included character-education activities, ministerial regulations related to religious tolerance, municipal or education-office circulars concerning activities during Ramadan, Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, and Article 29 of the 1945 Constitution. However, the existence of general legal references did not consistently translate into written internal policy. Only two of eight schools (25%) were reported by principals to have written diversity-management policy documents; four schools (50%) had policies that were not written, and two schools (25%) had no policy. Teacher perceptions were similar but included uncertainty: 25% reported written documents, 35% reported unwritten policies, 15% reported no policy, and 25% did not know whether such a policy existed.

Table 3. Institutional policy, religious symbols, and holiday practices

Indicator	Principal perspective	Teacher/other perspective
Internal diversity-management policy	25% written; 50% unwritten; 25% none	25% written; 35% unwritten; 15% none; 25% unaware
Understanding of SOPs	50% everyone understands; 25% most understand; 25% do not understand	75% everyone understands; 25% most understand
Policy on religious symbols in common areas	75% no policy; 25% unwritten policy	65% no policy; 20% written; 15% unwritten
Religious symbols in common areas	—	83.3% of education personnel reported none
Holiday celebration proportionality	50% disagreed; 25% agreed; 25% strongly agreed	—
Fairness toward religious minorities	100% agreed or strongly agreed	—

Policy on religious symbols was even less formalized. Six principals (75%) stated that their schools had no policy governing the display of religious symbols in common areas, while two reported an unwritten policy. Among teachers, 65% reported no policy, 20% reported a written policy, and 15% reported an unwritten policy. In practice, five of six education personnel (83.3%) stated that no religious symbols were displayed in shared school areas. Holiday celebrations revealed another distinction between fairness and proportionality: half of the principals disagreed that celebrations were proportionate across religions, although all principals agreed or strongly agreed that religious minorities were treated fairly.

Conflict Management and the Enactment of Active Tolerance

When tensions arose, teachers most commonly responded through immediate corrective action. Direct reprimand was the first step reported by 45% of teachers, followed by private discussion (25%), class discussion (20%), and a more comprehensive response involving individual guidance on tolerance (10%). Most teachers (80%) stated that they promoted active tolerance in the classroom. One teacher characterized passive tolerance as a stance of non-interference essentially, 'I do not bother you' whereas active tolerance involved deliberate engagement and getting to know others. Nevertheless, classroom grouping practices showed that explicit religious heterogeneity was

not a dominant organizing principle: 45% of teachers prioritized friendship when forming groups, 30% academic ability, 10% gender, and only 15% deliberately used religious heterogeneity.

Table 4. Conflict-management responses and classroom enactment of tolerance

Practice	Percentage
Direct reprimand as first response to tension	45%
Private discussion as first response	25%
Class discussion as first response	20%
Comprehensive individual guidance on tolerance	10%
Teachers reporting promotion of active tolerance	80%
Group formation prioritizing friendship	45%
Group formation prioritizing academic ability	30%
Group formation prioritizing gender	10%
Group formation deliberately using religious heterogeneity	15%
Teachers regularly holding class discussions on tolerance	85%
Teachers integrating tolerance outside Religion and Civics	75%
Teachers including tolerance indicators in lesson plans	75%

Tolerance was also integrated into instructional practice. Eighty-five percent of teachers reported regularly conducting class discussions about tolerance, 75% incorporated tolerance values beyond Religion and Civics subjects, and 75% included tolerance indicators in lesson plans. Religious-education teachers described adapting assignments so that non-Muslim students could use experiences from their own places of worship rather than being required to describe Muslim worship, and another teacher emphasized universal moral values. These examples illustrate concrete inclusive practices while leaving visible the gap between teachers’ broad endorsement of active tolerance and the relatively low proportion who intentionally create religiously heterogeneous learning groups.

Cross-Stakeholder Participation

The stakeholder data identified participation as the least institutionalized dimension of the moderation framework. Education personnel described teachers as the main actors in conflict management and reported that worship facilities were available only for the majority religion. Seven of 16 parents (43.75%) stated that they had never been invited to activities specifically intended to strengthen interfaith harmony. All eight students stated that there was no student forum, including OSIS- or Rohis-type structures, that discussed tolerance. Thus, while parents and students reported positive everyday experiences, their formal involvement in the governance and deliberation of religious diversity remained limited.

Discussion

The first major finding is the coexistence of strong interpersonal harmony with low but non-zero signs of identity-related tension. The absence of open religious conflict across all eight principal accounts, together with high levels of perceived safety among parents and students, is consistent with Indonesian studies showing that moderation can be sustained through everyday practices of respect, equitable treatment, and inclusive interaction (Utami, 2022; Wahyono et al., 2022; Nuha et al., 2021; Muslih et al., 2024). However, the 15% of teachers who observed teasing, bullying, or same-religion grouping demonstrate why harmony should not be equated with the complete absence of risk.

International intergroup research similarly shows that positive and negative contact can coexist and that the quality, norms, and institutional framing of contact matter more than diversity alone (Sincer et al., 2021; Reimer et al., 2021; Reimer et al., 2022; Tropp et al., 2022). The teacher principal difference in the category 'never' is therefore analytically important: classroom teachers may have greater exposure to micro-interactions that are not visible at the leadership level.

Second, the data support a contact-based interpretation of active tolerance. Eighty percent of teachers reported promoting active tolerance, yet only 15% deliberately formed religiously heterogeneous groups. This discrepancy suggests that active tolerance was more strongly articulated as a value than systematically designed as a structure for contact. Experimental and longitudinal studies indicate that positive intergroup outcomes are more likely when contact is cooperative, supported by class norms, and facilitated by teachers rather than left to spontaneous friendship patterns (van Zalk et al., 2021; Smith & Minescu, 2022; Karataş et al., 2023; Reimer et al., 2021). Peacock (2023) similarly shows that contact-based interfaith programmes can expand religious knowledge and interaction, while warning that programmes need to represent the complexity of religious and non-religious worldviews. For Mataram elementary schools, this means that active tolerance can be strengthened through purposeful mixed-group tasks, collaborative problem solving, and dialogue rather than relying solely on a generally friendly atmosphere.

Third, the most substantial institutional weakness lies in the gap between broad legal awareness and written school-level policy. Only 25% of schools had written diversity-management policies according to principals, and 75% had no policy concerning religious symbols in common areas. This pattern parallels research showing that school climate depends not only on individual attitudes but also on organizational norms, leadership practices, and consistency in policy implementation (Alinsunurin, 2020; Sincer et al., 2021; Zulkifli et al., 2023). Indonesian religious-education research likewise indicates that moderation becomes more durable when values are embedded in institutional and curricular arrangements rather than depending on isolated teacher initiatives (Mulyana, 2023; Muqowim et al., 2022; Fitriani, 2023; Haris et al., 2024). The finding that half of principals questioned the proportionality of religious-holiday celebrations while simultaneously perceiving treatment of minorities as fair further shows that procedural fairness and proportional representation are related but distinct policy questions.

Fourth, the instructional findings reveal both progress and a curriculum-practice gap. Regular tolerance discussions (85%), cross-subject integration (75%), lesson-plan indicators (75%), and inclusive religious-education assignments show that many teachers have translated moderation into classroom practice. These patterns are consistent with studies emphasizing contextualized teaching, equal treatment, and integration of tolerance across curriculum and school culture (Mulyana, 2023; Nuha et al., 2021; Nugroho et al., 2022; Saparudin & Emawati, 2023). At the same time, studies of textbooks and religious education warn that moderate values can remain abstract, decontextualized, or unevenly represented if teachers are not supported by adequate materials and pedagogical frameworks (Ikhsom et al., 2023; Saparudin & Emawati, 2023; Maxwell & Hirsch, 2020; Cooling, 2020). The Mataram data add an important practical indicator to this literature: teachers may endorse active tolerance and discuss it frequently while still organizing routine learning groups mainly around friendship or academic ability.

Fifth, parent and student participation emerges as a critical area for development. The fact that 43.75% of parents had never been invited to interfaith-harmony activities and all student

respondents reported no tolerance-focused student forum indicates that moderation was largely adult-directed and teacher-centered. Student-voice research shows that formal opportunities for participation can strengthen belonging and school responsiveness when students have recurring, credible channels for contribution rather than symbolic consultation (Caetano et al., 2020; Black, 2020; Jones & Bubb, 2021; Giraldo-García et al., 2021). Indonesian research also demonstrates that listening to student experiences can reveal exclusionary practices that principals and teachers may otherwise overlook (Andriana & Evans, 2020; Utami, 2022; Wahyono et al., 2022). Parent participation can likewise strengthen inclusive school climates when schools treat families as partners in interpreting and sustaining diversity-related norms (Alinsunurin, 2020; Fitriani, 2023; Zulkifli et al., 2023).

Sixth, the findings on religious symbols, worship facilities, and holiday celebrations highlight the need for religious literacy in school governance. Religious literacy does not require schools to neutralize or erase religious expression; rather, it requires decision makers to understand how religious identities and practices are experienced differently by majorities and minorities and to create rules that are transparent, educationally justified, and non-discriminatory (Shaw, 2020; Maxwell & Hirsch, 2020; Kavonius & Ubani, 2020; Vilà Baños et al., 2020). The predominance of majority-religion worship facilities and the absence of written symbol policies therefore should not automatically be read as evidence of discrimination, because parents and students in this study reported high safety and comfort. Instead, these findings identify an area in which explicit guidance could reduce ambiguity and protect the currently positive climate from future leadership or demographic changes.

The novelty of this study lies in identifying two interconnected asymmetries through a multi-stakeholder elementary-school dataset that spans highly plural and religiously homogeneous schools within the same city. The first is an interpersonal-institutional asymmetry: everyday relations are strongly harmonious, yet formalized policy, stakeholder participation, and written procedures are comparatively weak. The second is an active-tolerance implementation gap: teachers largely endorse and discuss active tolerance, but deliberate structures for cross-religious grouping and participatory dialogue remain limited. Previous Indonesian studies have typically emphasized curriculum, teacher strategy, moderation values, or single-site implementation (Mulyana, 2023; Nuha et al., 2021; Wahyono et al., 2022; Muslih et al., 2024). By integrating principals, teachers, education personnel, parents, and students, the present study demonstrates that a school can be socially harmonious without yet having fully institutionalized the mechanisms needed to sustain that harmony.

The findings have practical implications for school leadership and local education policy. Schools should convert successful informal norms into concise written standard operating procedures that clarify preventive responses to teasing and identity-based bullying, escalation pathways, documentation responsibilities, and communication with families. Guidelines for religious symbols, worship accommodation, and holiday activities should be developed transparently with attention to fairness and proportionality. Teacher development should move beyond conceptual discussion of moderation toward classroom strategies for cooperative mixed-group learning, facilitated dialogue, and early identification of micro-level exclusion. Schools should also establish recurring parent engagement and age-appropriate student forums so that religious moderation becomes a shared governance practice rather than a teacher-only responsibility. These recommendations are consistent with evidence that inclusive climates are strengthened through

coordinated leadership, supportive norms, structured contact, and meaningful participation (Alinsunurin, 2020; Reimer et al., 2021; Caetano et al., 2020; Peacock, 2023).

Several limitations should guide interpretation. The study was conducted in eight purposively selected public elementary schools in one city; consequently, the findings are context-specific and should not be generalized statistically to all elementary schools in Mataram or Indonesia. The stakeholder subsamples were modest, particularly among students and education personnel, and the data relied heavily on self-report, which may be affected by social-desirability pressures when respondents discuss sensitive religious issues. The cross-sectional design cannot establish how school climate or policy changes over time, and the study did not include systematic independent auditing of all school policy documents or direct observational measurement of classroom interactions. In addition, the student sample represented Muslim, Hindu, and Christian perspectives but not every religious group present in the wider city. Future research should use larger multi-site samples, longitudinal designs, classroom observation, document analysis, and more balanced representation of minority religious groups to test whether the two asymmetries identified here persist across settings and over time.

Conclusion

This study shows that religious moderation in the eight public elementary schools investigated in Mataram City is characterized by strong everyday harmony but incomplete institutionalization. All principals reported no open religious conflict during their tenure, 85% of teachers stated that religious issues rarely or never occurred, all parents reported no discrimination experienced by their children, and all students described themselves as safe and comfortable in interreligious interaction. At the same time, only 25% of schools had written diversity-management policies, 75% of principals reported no policy on religious symbols in common areas, half questioned the proportionality of religious-holiday celebrations, 43.75% of parents had never been invited to interfaith-harmony activities, and all student respondents reported the absence of a tolerance-focused student forum. Teacher practice also showed a gap between endorsement and structured enactment: 80% promoted active tolerance, but only 15% deliberately formed religiously heterogeneous groups. The study therefore concludes that the sustainability of the current harmonious climate depends on converting inclusive interpersonal culture into explicit governance mechanisms. Written SOPs, clearer guidance on religious expression and celebrations, purposeful cross-group learning, and formal channels for parent and student participation are needed to strengthen preventive conflict management and active tolerance while preserving the positive social relations already evident in the schools.

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