

STUDENT PROBLEMS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (PAI) LEARNING AT SMPS ANJANGSANA KECAMATAN MUNTE KABUPATEN KARO

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the challenges faced by Muslim students in participating in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMPS Anjangsana, Munte District, Karo Regency. This school is located in a predominantly non-Muslim area, and Muslim students being a minority facing various challenges from social, cultural, and technical learning perspectives. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with a case study approach. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with Muslim students, PAI teachers, and the school principal, as well as field observations and document studies. The research results indicate that the problems faced include the limited number of Muslim students, so PAI learning is carried out separately and with minimal interaction, very limited learning support facilities and infrastructure for PAI, social pressure and feelings of alienation in the school environment, and low student motivation and participation in learning due to a lack of psychosocial support and facilities. This research recommends strategies to strengthen inclusive education based on Islamic values and tolerance, increase support for learning facilities, and provide teacher training in managing differentiated learning in a multicultural environment. These findings contribute to the development of Islamic religious education models in Muslim minority areas.

Keywords: *Muslim students' problems, Islamic Religious Education (IRE), SMPS Anjangsana*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is one of the important aspects in shaping the character, morals, and spirituality of Muslim students (Nasution, 2017:23). In formal schools, PAI learning not only aims to instill a cognitive understanding of religion, but also to foster attitudes and behaviors that are in accordance with Islamic values. However, the implementation of PAI learning is not always ideal, especially in areas where the Muslim community is a minority. One real example of this condition can be found at Anjangsana Junior High School, Munte District, Karo Regency. Geographically and demographically, Anjangsana Junior High School is located in an area where the majority of the population is non-Muslim. The existence of Muslim students in this school is classified as a minority, both in number and in terms of social influence. This condition poses various problems in the PAI learning process. Based on the results of initial observations and interviews, it was found that Muslim students often face challenges such as limited study time, unavailability of worship facilities, lack of environmental support, and low motivation to learn due to psychological discomfort as a minority group. In addition, the limitation of teaching staff who are able to apply a contextual approach in accordance with the socio-religious conditions of students is also one of the factors causing the low effectiveness of learning. General PAI teaching materials are often irrelevant to the realities of Muslim students' lives in multicultural environments. As a result, learning tends to be a formality and is unable to foster a strong religious spirit in students. This reality shows that the problems of PAI learning in Muslim minority areas require special attention, both in terms of education policies, teacher competence, and learning approaches used. Therefore, this study seeks to examine in depth the problems faced by Muslim students in participating in PAI learning at SMPS Anjangsana, as an initial effort in formulating appropriate and applicable solutions for the realization of inclusive and conducive Islamic religious education. Ideally, the learning of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in every educational unit, including in public schools with students with diverse religious backgrounds, must still be provided optimally to Muslim students. This is in accordance with the mandate of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which emphasizes that religious education is an

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important part of the curriculum and is given in accordance with the religion adopted by students. More than that, PAI should not only be a formal subject, but also a means of fostering students' noble morals and religious identity. PAI teachers are expected to be able to present a learning process that is fun, contextual, and adaptive to the social and cultural conditions where students are. Even in a non-Muslim majority society, the right of Muslim students to receive quality Islamic religious education should not be ignored. Schools should also play an inclusive role as an inclusive institution that provides a safe and comfortable space for all students without discrimination. The availability of worship facilities, proportional time for religious lessons, and support from schools and the community are things that should be fulfilled in the implementation of equitable education. With the support of the system, innovative learning strategies, and an empathetic and multicultural approach, the PAI learning process can be a vehicle to strengthen the Islamic character, strengthen the religious identity of Muslim students, and form an attitude of tolerance and peace in the midst of a diverse social environment.

In a study conducted by Subaidi et al. (2016: 195) entitled "The Paradigm of Religious Education in a Plural Society", it was highlighted that public acceptance of minority schools is greatly influenced by the social relationships built, the involvement of schools in social activities, and the communication approach used by the school. This shows that the existence of schools is not only assessed from the academic aspect, but also from the extent to which the school is able to adapt and establish harmonious interactions with the surrounding environment. Good social relationships will foster mutual trust between the school and the community, while involvement in social activities can strengthen the school's role as part of the community. Meanwhile, the use of an appropriate and open communication approach can reduce prejudice and build mutual understanding, so that the community is more accepting of the existence of minority schools as an inclusive and beneficial educational institution for all.

Ahmad, M. (2020: 136) in his research entitled "Strengthening Religious Identity in Islamic Minority Schools: Studies in Islamic Schools in the Bali Region", found that schools strengthen students' identities through intensive religious activities such as tahfiz, religious mentoring, and involvement in the local Islamic community. However, challenges remain in the form of stereotypes and a lack of local policy support (Sulaiman, 2022: 23). Although they are not required to take PAI lessons, their existence is often a minority that is not optimally accommodated. However, when schools show openness and respect for diversity, non-Muslim students can feel comfortable and motivated to excel academically and socially. A lot of research has been done on Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, especially those that discuss the effectiveness of learning methods, the role of teachers, and the influence of PAI on the formation of students' religious character. Several studies have also examined the importance of contextual approaches and value-based learning in improving students' religious understanding. However, most of the research was conducted in schools in areas with a majority Muslim student composition, or in relatively religiously homogeneous environments.

Meanwhile, research that specifically highlights the experience of Muslim students as a minority group in participating in PAI learning in non-Muslim areas, especially in remote areas such as Munte District, Karo Regency is still very limited. In addition, there have not been many studies that have explored in depth the psychological, social, and cultural aspects that affect the participation of Muslim students in PAI learning in a non-Muslim majority environment. In fact, conditions like this are very relevant in the context of multicultural and multireligious Indonesia, where the protection of the right to religious education must still be guaranteed for all students. This gap is an important basis for this research, which is to make an empirical and theoretical contribution to the reality of the problems faced by minority Muslim students in PAI learning at SMPS Anjangsana. This research also aims to fill the limitations of the literature by presenting authentic field data and providing strategic recommendations for the development of more inclusive and equitable Islamic education in Muslim minority areas.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Islamic Religious Education (PAI)

Islamic religious education is an education that prepares students to be able to carry out roles that require mastery of knowledge about the teachings of Islam and/or become experts in Islamic religious science and practice Islamic religious teachings (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2014: 2). PAI not only teaches the cognitive aspects of religion, but also affective and psychomotor aspects related to religious behavior and attitudes (Azra, 2004: 153). Therefore, the success of PAI learning is greatly influenced by the psychological condition and social environment of students. According to Zakiah Daradjat, Islamic Religious Education is the guidance and nurturing of students so that later after completing their education they can understand, appreciate and practice the teachings of Islam that they have believed in comprehensively, and make the teachings of Islam as a view of their life for the safety and welfare of life in this world and in the hereafter (Daradjat, 2008: 86). According to Ahmad Tafsir (2011: 30), Islamic Religious Education has three main objectives. First, to form a kamil person, namely a

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complete human being who is able to carry out the role of a caliph on earth. Second, to produce kaffah people, namely Muslim personalities who are complete in religious, cultural, and scientific aspects. Third, to realize the basic function of human beings as servants of Allah, caliphs, and heirs of the treatises of the prophets, who are equipped with knowledge and values that support this role. These three goals are in line with the words of Allah in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 30:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَتْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Meaning: Remember when your Lord said to the angels: "Surely I want to make a caliph on earth." They said: "Why do you want to make (the caliph) on earth a man who will cause harm to it and shed blood, when we are always praising you and purifying you?" God said: "Verily I know what you do not know" (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019: 6).

According to Ibnu Katsir (2011: 56), verse 30 of Surah Al-Baqarah explains that Allah swt. appointing Adam as the caliph on earth, that is, as the leader and manager of the earth who replaced the previous creature, namely the jinn, who had done damage and bloodshed. Adam's appointment indicates that man has an important role as God's representative in upholding justice, prospering the earth, and carrying out His commandments. With this task, humans are given a great responsibility to maintain Allah's mandate and to distance themselves from corruption and iniquity. In addition, the main purpose of Islamic Religious Education is also relevant to the purpose of Allah creating humans, as stated in QS. Adz-Dzariyat [51]: 56:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

It means: "And I did not create the jinn and humans but that they should serve Me" (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019: 523).

In Tafsir Al-Misbah (Shihab, 2002: 40) QS. Adz-Dzariyat: 56 affirms that the main purpose of the creation of the jinn and human beings is to worship Allah. However, worship in this context is not limited to just ritual activities, but encompasses all forms of obedience and devotion to Allah in daily life. Allah does not need any benefit from the worship of His creatures, because He is Rich and does not depend on anyone. Therefore, the creation of man was not without purpose, but that they should live in obedience to God for their own good.

The Problems of Muslim Students

According to the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (KBBI, 2007: 274), the term "problematika" comes from the word "problem" which means problem or problem, and the suffix "-ika" which indicates the nature or circumstances related to certain problems. In general, "problematic" refers to a set of problems, challenges, or problems faced in a particular context. In the context of PAI learning, problematics refer to various obstacles and challenges experienced by Muslim students, such as social isolation, limited religious facilities, and low socio-cultural support. This phenomenon is important to be studied and solved so that religious learning can run effectively, relevantly, and be able to build the character and faith of Muslim students, especially in a non-Muslim majority environment so that they still feel appreciated and motivated in carrying out their religious worship and values (Nasir & Salim F., 2017: 24).

The implementation of Islamic Religious Education in Muslim minority areas is often faced with various problems. Among others, the lack of worship facilities at schools, the difficulty of carrying out Friday prayers due to the ongoing learning schedule, and the unavailability of special classrooms for Islamic Religious Education subjects (Agustin, et al. 2021: 156). Muslim students who are in non-Muslim majority schools often feel alienated. The lack of peers of the same faith can lead to loneliness and social isolation, which ultimately negatively impacts their comfort and concentration in learning. In some cases, Muslim students face stigma or discrimination, both from peers and the school environment. This can be unfair treatment, ridicule, or a lack of understanding of their religious practices, such as performing worship or wearing Islamic clothing. Muslim students often experience limited access to adequate PAI learning facilities, such as dedicated spaces, appropriate teaching materials, and interactive learning media. This hinders their learning process and understanding of religious materials. In addition, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) emphasized the importance of building a sense of care and affection among fellow Muslims. In a hadith narrated by Bukhari and Muslim, he said:

عَنْ أَبِي حَمْرَةَ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ خَادِمِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: «لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ» (رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ وَمُسْلِمٌ).

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Abu Hamzah Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him), the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "One of you does not believe until he loves his brother as he loves himself." (HR. Bukhari No.13 and Muslim No.45).

In the book *Fath al-Bari* by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani (1978: 89), this hadith is explained as the basis for the importance of love and solidarity in Islam, which is an integral part of faith. Ibn Hajar mentioned that this hadith places love for others as an indicator of faith, and emphasizes that faith is incomplete without practicing the principles of solidarity and compassion.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach. Case studies aim to find answers or solutions to cases or problems that occur (Farabi, 2024: 101). This method was chosen to gain a deep understanding of the experiences, problems, and dynamics experienced by Muslim students in participating in PAI learning in a non-Muslim majority school environment (Grave, 2022: 26). The research was conducted at SMPS Anjangsana, Munte District, Karo Regency, which is a school with a minority Muslim student population. The research period lasted for 3 months, starting from May to July 2025. The subjects of the study were Muslim students who participated in PAI learning at SMPS Anjangsana, namely active Muslim students who participated in PAI learning (as many as 3–5 people), Islamic Religious Education teachers (1 person), and principals and/or homeroom teachers (1–2 people). Observation was carried out by direct observation of the PAI learning process that implements learning with multimedia. Furthermore, in-depth interviews were conducted with PAI teachers and several students to explore their experiences, opinions, and perceptions related to learning the use of multimedia. Then the document study was carried out by collecting supporting documents such as lesson plans (Learning Implementation Plan), student assignment results, and learning video recordings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Anjangsana Junior High School is located in Mute District, Karo Regency, North Sumatra Province. This school is an educational institution that is located in a non-Muslim majority environment. The number of Muslim students is classified as a minority, with a percentage of only about 10-15% of the total students. Muslim students who take part in PAI learning come from family backgrounds with varying levels of education and understanding of religion. Most of the students' parents work as farmers and day laborers. Students' religious activities outside of school are also very limited due to the lack of religious facilities, such as mosques or TPA (Al-Qur'an Education Parks) in their neighborhoods. Muslim students are in a predominantly non-Muslim social environment. This leads to a lack of religious stimulus that can reinforce Islamic values outside of classroom learning. As a result, students' religious understanding and practice becomes weak. Many parents of students do not pay enough attention to their children's religious education. This is due to economic busyness and the lack of religious understanding of parents.

Problems Faced by Muslim Students

In PAI learning at Anjangsana Junior High School, Munte District, Karo Regency, Muslim students are faced with 3 (three) main problems, namely (1) Social Isolation, (2) Limited Religious Facilities, and (3) Low Social and Cultural Support.

1. Social Isolation

One of the main problems faced by Muslim students at Anjangsana Junior High School, Mute District, Karo Regency, is the sense of social alienation in participating in PAI learning. This alienation arises because they are in a position as a religious minority group in a non-Muslim majority school environment. A sense of alienation is not only felt in daily social interactions, but also during the PAI learning process. In Islam, brotherhood and mutual love are fundamental values that must be upheld, so that there is no alienation. The Prophet PBUH said:

لا يؤمن أحدكم حتى يحب لأخيه ما يحب لنفسه

Meaning: "None of you believes until he loves his brother as he loves himself" (HR. Bukhari No. 13).

This hadith shows that love and solidarity with fellow Muslims is an important part of faith. In the context of social isolation, this hadith reminds that strengthening compassion and solidarity can help reduce feelings of isolation and increase closeness among fellow Muslims. Based on the results of observations made during the PAI learning process, it can be seen that the number of Muslim students in one class is only 3 to 5 people, and they have to leave the main class to take the PAI lessons in a separate room. When heading to the PAI study room, some Muslim students show hesitation and lack of enthusiasm. They seem awkward because they feel different from other friends who stay in class to take other subjects. PAI teachers try to raise spirits by using interactive media such as videos and

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Kahoot quizzes, but student participation is still limited and they seem less confident when answering questions in front of a small number of fellow Muslims.

As a result of the above psychological conditions, there is shame, lack of confidence, and even reluctance to actively follow their own religious lessons. This problem is even more complex when there is a direct experience of students who feel ridiculed, considered foreign, or subtly excluded. Some students admitted that they had received negative comments from classmates because of their clothing or religious activities. The emotional reactions caused also vary, ranging from discomfort, loss of enthusiasm for learning, to a tendency to close off. The school began pioneering cross-study and interfaith collaborative activities, such as the "Learning Together in Diversity" program, which involved students from different faiths to share the values of tolerance and universal virtue. This aims to create a healthy and respectful interaction space. The Principal of SMPS Anjangsana revealed that the school wants to build a school culture that is not exclusive. Interfaith activities can be a way to prevent children from feeling compartmentalized. The learning media used is adapted to the local cultural context and still maintains inclusive Islamic values. Teachers avoid a dogmatic approach and place more emphasis on universal moral values, such as honesty, helpfulness, and tolerance, so that students feel that their religious values do not conflict with their social environment.

Allah reminds that Muslims will always be tested under various conditions, including being in a minority position in a different social environment. This can be seen through the cues contained in His words in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 214:

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُم مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَاءُ وَزُلْزَلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصُرُ اللَّهُ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ

"Do you think that you will enter Paradise when it has not come to you like those who came before you? They were afflicted by calamities and misery, and were shaken by various trials..." (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019: 33).

If analogous to the gesture of the verse, then the social alienation experienced by Muslim students at SMPS Anjangsana can be understood as part of the faith test. This condition requires patience as well as strengthening faith, so that they do not lose enthusiasm in learning and practicing their religious teachings.

2. Limitations of Religious Facilities

Another problem that is quite striking is the lack of facilities to support Islamic religious activities in the school environment. Anjangsana Junior High School does not have special worship facilities such as prayer rooms or proper ablution places. This is a big challenge for Muslim students who want to carry out regular worship practices, such as praying zuhur in congregation or reading the Qur'an in between breaks. This condition also affects the implementation of PAI learning, which ideally includes not only cognitive aspects, but also affective and psychomotor through worship habits. Without adequate facilities, Muslim students only get learning in the form of lectures or theoretical discussions that have limited space for movement. The lack of PAI learning media such as tafsir books, fiqh, and interactive multimedia also causes the learning process to be monotonous and less interesting. The next problem has to do with the strategies and approaches used in PAI learning itself.

Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMPS Anjangsana generally apply conventional and textual learning methods, without adjusting much to the social context of students who live as minorities in a multicultural environment. The lack of a contextual approach causes students to find it difficult to relate PAI material to the reality of their daily lives. The material taught tends to be normative and does not provide a space for exploration for students to dialogue or share their spiritual experiences in the midst of a non-Muslim society. The Prophet PBUH said:

عن أنس بن مالك رضي الله عنه قال: قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: «مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي تَوَادُّهِمْ وَتَرَاحُمِهِمْ وَتَدَابُّهِمْ، مَثَلُ الْجَسَدِ، إِذَا اشْتَكَى مِنْهُ عُضْوٌ، تَدَاعَى لَهُ سَائِرُ الْجَسَدِ بِالسَّهَرِ وَالْحَقْوَقِ»

It means: "The parable of the believers in terms of loving and cherishing each other, like one body; If one member feels sick, the whole body will feel a fever and cannot sleep." (HR. Bukhari No. 6011).

The hadith explains the importance of love and solidarity between fellow Muslims, likened to one body. If one of the limbs is in pain, the whole body will feel the impact and respond to help treat it. In the context of a discussion about the social and psychological challenges of minority Muslim students at Anjangsana Junior High School, this hadith emphasizes that social support and compassion from the surrounding environment are very important to increase students' confidence and enthusiasm for learning. Lack of attention and solidarity can make them feel alienated and less motivated in internalizing their faith and Islamic values, so that the cultivation of this value of compassion is the key to building an inclusive and empathetic learning environment, in accordance with the principles of ukhuwah Islamiyah.

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In addition, teachers have not taken advantage of a pedagogical approach that is multicultural friendly or based on real experiences, even though this kind of strategy is urgently needed to build confidence and pride in the Islamic identity of Muslim students. The absence of an inclusive approach also makes students feel that religious learning is just a formality that must be passed, not as a process of internalizing values and strengthening faith. Allah SWT. said in QS. Jonah verse 99 :

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَأَمَنَّ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلَّهُمْ جَمِيعًا أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرَهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ

Meaning: If your Lord had willed, all the people on earth would have believed. Will you (the Prophet Muhammad) force people to become believers? (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019: 218).

Surah Jonah verse 99 affirms that belief and faith are the rights and choices of every individual that cannot be imposed by anyone, except with Allah's permission. This verse highlights that the success in realizing sincere faith depends entirely on the will of Allah, and humans as believing creatures must accept the process with effort and tawakal. In the context of Islamic religious education, this verse reminds that the process of learning and forming the character of students' faith cannot always be forced absolutely, but through the success of inspiring and growing faith slowly and naturally. The material on the reality of the lives of minority Muslim students and the challenges they face in a non-Muslim majority environment also contains the message that the struggle to strengthen faith must be accompanied by patience and faith strengthening, because ultimately faith is a gift and will from Allah. Therefore, the efforts of educational institutions and teachers must be able to create a conducive environment, instill Islamic values in an inclusive and participatory manner, so that students can continue to maintain and strengthen their faith as part of the test of life that must be passed with patience and hope in Allah.

PAI teachers who teach at SMPS Anjangsana face their own challenges in developing learning that is in accordance with the social conditions of students. The learning approach tends to be normative and less relevant to the lives of Muslim students living in a multicultural environment. As a result, PAI material is difficult to understand contextually and does not touch on the social and cultural aspects of students as a whole. Teachers also tend to focus on delivering teaching materials without relating them to the realities faced by Muslim students in schools and the surrounding communities.

3. Low Social and Cultural Support

The social and cultural environment around the school, which is predominantly non-Muslim, also influences the development of Muslim students' Islamic identity. In some cases, Muslim students experience social alienation in order to conform to a dominant culture that is different from the Islamic values they profess. For example, at the celebration of other religious holidays which are often a big activity at school, Muslim students feel that they are in the wrong position, between respecting other friends who are not of the same religion or holding on to their religious principles. Support from teachers and schools is still limited in guiding students to face these kinds of dilemmas.

This certainly causes a gap between Muslim and non-Muslim students, and indirectly also weakens their enthusiasm and motivation in the PAI learning process. The absence of interfaith dialogue spaces or interfaith activities that are not conducive to school further strengthens the social gap they feel. Allah SWT. said in QS. Hujurat verse 13:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

It means: "O humans, We have created you from a male and a female. Then, We made you into nations and tribes so that you might know one another. Indeed, the most noble among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Knowing. (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019: 537).

QS. Al-Hujurat verse 13 emphasizes that the diversity of ethnicities, nations, and religions is the will of Allah SWT so that humans know and respect each other, not to demean each other. This verse is relevant to the condition of Muslim students living in non-Muslim majority school environments, where they often face social isolation and religious identity dilemmas. Through this verse, Islam teaches that a person's glory is not determined by religious or cultural background, but by his piety and morals. Therefore, Muslim students should remain firm in holding Islamic values while establishing good and tolerant social relations. Schools also need to create an inclusive atmosphere that respects differences so that every student can learn and worship with a sense of security and mutual respect in the framework of diversity. The social environment of the school, which is predominantly non-Muslim, also influences the psychology of Muslim students in undergoing the religious learning process. They often feel insecure in showing their Islamic identity such as wearing a hijab, carrying the Qur'an, or expressing opinions related to religion. In addition, there are still misconceptions or stereotypes of Muslim students that make them feel uncomfortable and not

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free in learning. The lack of healthy social interaction also lowers their enthusiasm in actively participating in PAI lessons. The Prophet PBUH said:

لا يؤمن أحدكم حتى يحب لأخيه ما يحب لنفسه

Meaning: "None of you believes until he loves his brother as he loves himself" (HR. Bukhari No. 13).

This hadith affirms that the perfection of a person's faith depends heavily on his ability to cultivate compassion, empathy, and concern for others, regardless of religious or cultural background. In the context of Muslim students in non-Muslim majority schools, this hadith serves as a guideline for them to continue to show noble morals, respect differences, and establish good social relations with non-Muslim friends. Meanwhile, for teachers and schools, this hadith is the basis for building a culture of tolerance and solidarity, so that all students feel accepted and respected. By practicing the values of compassion and mutual respect as taught in this hadith, the spirit of togetherness, justice, and social harmony can grow in a multicultural school environment.

Solutions to PAI Learning Problems

Based on the results of field observations and in-depth interviews with PAI teachers, Muslim students, and school principals, several strategic solutions were found that can overcome the problem of social isolation experienced by Muslim students in PAI learning. These solutions are applicable and adapted to the local conditions of schools in non-Muslim majority environments. PAI teachers should be able to implement flexible and varied learning strategies, namely by adjusting learning materials, methods, and media based on students' interests and abilities. Multimedia-based learning such as the use of kahoot, interactive videos, and visual presentations has succeeded in increasing the attention and confidence of Muslim students who were initially reluctant to be active. From the results of the interviews, students stated that they felt more appreciated when learning was carried out in an interesting method and allowed them to perform without embarrassment.

PAI teachers must actively provide emotional support to Muslim students, such as by building personal communication, providing positive motivation, and fostering awareness that being a Muslim in the midst of diversity is something to be proud of. The principal also began to consider the provision of a special PAI space that is more comfortable and private. The personal approach to students carried out by PAI teachers is very helpful in building student confidence. It is time for schools to pioneer collaborative activities across subjects and religions, such as the "Learning Together in Diversity" program, which involves students from different faiths to share the values of tolerance and universal virtue. This aims to create a healthy and respectful interaction space. In this study, it was found that the Principal's commitment to build a moderate and non-exclusive school culture was found. Interfaith activities can be a way to prevent children from feeling trapped by their environment. The learning media used must be adapted to the local cultural context and still maintain inclusive Islamic values.

On the other hand, teachers should also avoid a dogmatic approach and place more emphasis on universal moral values, such as honesty, helpfulness, and tolerance, so that students feel that their religious values do not conflict with their social environment. The solutions implemented show a positive impact on the sense of security and comfort of Muslim students in PAI learning. Adaptive learning approaches, teacher empathy, institutional support, and a school culture that is open to diversity are the main keys in reducing the sense of social isolation. Although challenges still exist, these efforts are an important foundation to create inclusive and effective PAI learning in a multicultural student community environment (Yani, 2020: 37). To overcome the social alienation experienced by Muslim students, a strategy based on an integrative and dialogical approach is needed. Schools can initiate interfaith activities that involve all students, such as discussions of universal moral values, community service, or the Culture and Religion Day program. Through this activity, students from various backgrounds can get to know each other and appreciate the diversity that exists in the school environment. In addition, PAI teachers and homeroom teachers should actively build open and empathetic communication with Muslim students, providing space for them to express their social and emotional experiences. This kind of personal approach will create a sense of security and confidence in Muslim students, so that they do not feel excluded or negatively different from their peers.

To answer the challenges related to the limited religious facilities, the school needs to strengthen cooperation with school committees, Muslim community leaders, and religious institutions to provide minimum decent facilities, such as ablution places, prayer mats, the Qur'an, and small spaces for prayer. If the construction of permanent facilities is not yet possible, then a short-term solution can be done by scheduling prayer times and borrowing classrooms that can be temporarily transformed into places of worship. This not only has a positive impact on the comfort of Muslim students in worship, but also shows the school's commitment to guaranteeing religious rights for all students. To increase social support for the Islamic identity of Muslim students, a school culture that instills the values of tolerance and inclusivity is needed. Teachers and school principals have a key role in instilling a spirit of mutual respect through the habit of tolerant attitudes in every learning and student activity. Schools can also make clear and firm policies

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regarding respect for religious symbols, such as clothing, scriptures, and worship practices. For example, giving Muslim students the freedom to wear the hijab without discrimination and supporting them to participate in religious activities outside of school. Multicultural education training for teachers and education staff also needs to be encouraged, so that all parties understand the importance of the role of schools in building safe spaces for students from various religious backgrounds. Thus, students' Islamic identity is not only valued but also protected as part of the basic rights of every student. The three solutions above emphasize the importance of the school's role as an inclusive and humanist space, which not only transmits knowledge but also forms a tolerant and respectful social character. By implementing these strategies consistently, social isolation, limited facilities, and weak support for Muslim students' Islamic identity can be overcome gradually and sustainably.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research on the problems of Muslim students in participating in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at Anjangsana Junior High School, Munte District, Karo Regency, it can be concluded that students face various challenges, both from internal and external aspects. Internally, low motivation to learn, limited basic knowledge of religion, and lack of awareness of the importance of religious education are the main inhibiting factors. Meanwhile, externally, the limited PAI learning facilities, the lack of support for the surrounding environment which is majority non-Muslim, and the lack of parental involvement in religious guidance have also worsened the situation. In addition, the limited number of PAI teachers and the lack of special learning time are also obstacles in the delivery of material optimally. The socio-religious condition of the minority also causes some students to feel less confident in expressing their religious identity. Therefore, a comprehensive strategy is needed from schools, teachers, parents, and the community to create a conducive learning environment, support the growth of the spirit of religiosity, and optimize PAI learning so that it can run effectively and in accordance with the needs of Muslim students in the area.

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