



Strategies and Challenges in Strengthening Islamic Religious Education for Minority Muslim Students at SD Negeri 091332 Raya Bayu

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Abstract This study examines the challenges and strategies for strengthening Islamic Religious Education (PAI) for minority Muslim students at SDN 091332 Raya Bayu, Simalungun, North Sumatra. PAI plays a crucial role in shaping Islamic understanding, moral values, and spiritual identity, particularly in predominantly non-Muslim environments. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of existing educational approaches, identify key obstacles, and explore the application of the *fiqh al-aqalliyat* (minority jurisprudence) concept in enhancing Islamic education for minority Muslim students. Employing a descriptive qualitative method, the research involves direct observation and in-depth interviews with the school principal, PAI teachers, and 19 Muslim students. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and document analysis and analyzed using an interactive model. The findings reveal both structural and social challenges in the implementation of PAI. Structurally, the main barriers include limited worship facilities, a lack of contextual teaching materials, and insufficient qualified educators. Socially, Muslim students face difficulties in expressing their religious identity due to social pressures. Community-based approaches, collaboration with religious figures, and the implementation of *fiqh al-aqalliyat* have been identified as effective strategies in strengthening Islamic education. This study contributes to academic discourse on Islamic education in minority contexts and offers policy recommendations for a more inclusive approach, such as curriculum revisions and enhanced teacher training. The findings serve as a reference for policymakers and Muslim communities in supporting Islamic education in predominantly non-Muslim settings.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji tantangan dan strategi penguatan Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) bagi siswa Muslim minoritas di SDN 091332 Raya Bayu, Simalungun, Sumatera Utara. PAI berperan penting dalam membentuk pemahaman Islam, nilai moral, dan identitas spiritual, terutama di lingkungan mayoritas non-Muslim. Studi ini bertujuan mengevaluasi efektivitas pendekatan pendidikan yang ada, mengidentifikasi kendala utama, dan mengeksplorasi penerapan konsep *fiqh al-aqalliyat* (fikih minoritas) dalam memperkuat pendidikan Islam bagi siswa Muslim minoritas. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan observasi langsung dan wawancara mendalam terhadap kepala sekolah, guru PAI, dan 19 siswa Muslim. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan analisis dokumen, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan tantangan struktural dan sosial dalam implementasi PAI. Secara struktural, keterbatasan fasilitas ibadah, bahan ajar kontekstual, dan tenaga pendidik menjadi hambatan utama. Secara sosial, siswa Muslim mengalami kesulitan mengekspresikan identitas keagamaannya karena tekanan sosial. Pendekatan berbasis komunitas, kolaborasi dengan tokoh agama, dan penerapan *fiqh al-aqalliyat* ditemukan sebagai strategi yang efektif dalam memperkuat pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada kajian akademik tentang pendidikan Islam dalam konteks minoritas dan menawarkan rekomendasi kebijakan yang lebih inklusif, seperti revisi kurikulum dan peningkatan pelatihan guru. Hasil penelitian dapat menjadi referensi bagi pemangku kebijakan dan komunitas Muslim dalam mendukung pendidikan Islam di lingkungan mayoritas non-Muslim.



1. Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam* "PAI") plays a fundamental role in shaping students' Islamic understanding,¹ moral values, and spiritual identity, particularly for those in minority environments. In the context of Muslim minorities, religious education serves not only as a means of transmitting Islamic knowledge but also as a mechanism for maintaining religious identity amid the dominance of majority values and cultures.² A study conducted by Merchant (2016) on Muslim minority communities in the United States found that Muslim students often face stereotypes and social pressures when Islamic education is taught in schools.³ These findings affirm that in societies where Muslims are a minority, Islamic religious education faces unique challenges that require further attention.⁴

In Indonesia, although religious diversity is constitutionally guaranteed, the distribution of religious adherents is not evenly spread across regions. A relevant example is Simalungun Regency in North Sumatra, particularly in the Raya Bayu area, where the Muslim community constitutes a minority within a predominantly Christian population.⁵ In this context, access to Islamic religious education becomes a challenge for Muslim students, especially in public schools where most students come from non-Muslim backgrounds.

This situation presents various challenges for minority Muslim students in obtaining optimal Islamic religious education. One of the primary challenges is the limited availability of religious facilities in public schools, which impacts the availability of prayer spaces and dedicated time for religious practices. Additionally, a shortage of educators who understand the minority context poses another obstacle that weakens the effectiveness of PAI instruction.⁶ This condition aligns with Ali's (2022) study on Muslim education in East Africa, which found that the lack of government support for Islamic educational institutions leads to limited infrastructure and a shortage of qualified educators.⁷

¹ Indra Prajoko and Humaedah, "Implementing Islamic Character Values of Social and Environmental Care at MTs Darul Huda Mayak Ponorogo: A Qualitative Study," *HEUTAGOGIA: Journal of Islamic Education* 4, no. 1 (June 30, 2024): 59–70, <https://doi.org/10.14421/hjie.2024.41-05>.

² Suliantika Suliantika and Azizah Hanum OK, "Penguatan Pendidikan Agama Islam Bagi Siswa Minoritas Muslim," *JURNAL PENDIDIKAN ISLAM AL-ILMI* 6, no. 2 (September 5, 2023): 325, <https://doi.org/10.32529/al-ilm.v6i2.2816>.

³ Natasha Hakimali Merchant, "Responses to Islam in the Classroom: A Case of Muslim Girls from Minority Communities of Interpretation," *International Journal of Multicultural Education* 18, no. 1 (February 29, 2016): 183–99, <https://doi.org/10.18251/ijme.v18i1.1087>.

⁴ Sabarudin et al., "Navigating Existence and Community Harmony: A Case Study of Pondok Pesantren in Muslim Minority Ende, Nusa Tenggara Timur," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 12, no. 3 (2024): 1335–56, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v12i3.1152>.

⁵ T A Zahara, "Penguatan Pendidikan Agama Islam Dan Budi Pekerti Bagi Siswa Muslim Minoritas (Studi Kasus Di SMP Negeri 2 Tanta Kecamatan Tanta Kabupaten Tabalong)," *Doctoral Dissertation, Pascasarjana* (Universitas Islam Negeri Antasari Banjarmasin, 2024), <https://idr.uin-antasari.ac.id/27744/>.

⁶ N A Nasution, M S A Lubis, and D Hasibuan, "Program KKN Mahasiswa Prodi PAI Univa Medan Dalam Memberi Pemahaman Keagamaan Pada Anak Minoritas Muslim Di Desa Kacinambun Kabupaten Karo," *Jurnal Review Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran (JRPP)* 6, no. 4 (2023): 1742–50, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31004/jrpp.v6i4.21315>.

⁷ Ali Adan Ali, "Historical Development of Muslim Education in East Africa An Eye on Kenya," *Journal of Education in Muslim Societies* 4, no. 1 (2022): 128–39, <https://doi.org/10.2979/jems.4.1.08>; Apriyanti et al., "Exploring the Concept of Nafs in Islamic Counseling: A Comprehensive Analysis of Philosophical Foundations and Implications for Education," *HEUTAGOGIA: Journal of Islamic Education* 3, no. 2 (December 31, 2023): 169–81, <https://doi.org/10.14421/hjie.2023.32-03>.

To address these challenges, the concept of *fiqh al-aqalliyat* (minority jurisprudence), developed by Yusuf Al-Qardhawi and Taha Jabir al-Alwani, offers a relevant perspective. Minority jurisprudence emphasizes flexibility in practicing Islam for Muslim communities living as minorities while adhering to the core principles of Islamic law.⁸ In the educational context, this approach can be applied in designing PAI learning strategies that are more adaptive to a predominantly non-Muslim environment without compromising fundamental Islamic values. Drawing on this theoretical framework, this study seeks to explore strategies for strengthening Islamic religious education for minority Muslim students and understand how *fiqh al-aqalliyat* can serve as a solution to the challenges they face in predominantly non-Muslim educational settings.

Several previous studies have examined Islamic religious education in Muslim minority contexts. Rajagukguk (2019) highlighted that PAI plays a crucial role in shaping the identity and character of minority Muslim students,⁹ while Suliantika (2023) found that increasing Islamic activities in schools can enhance the understanding and practice of Islam among Muslim students in non-Muslim-majority environments.¹⁰ Additionally, Berutu's (2025) study revealed that participation in Islamic holiday celebrations can boost Muslim students' confidence in expressing their religious identity.¹¹

However, these studies still have several limitations that require further clarification. One major limitation is that most previous research has primarily focused on the normative aspects of Islamic education without considering the social complexities faced by minority Muslim students in public schools. Merchant (2016) demonstrated that in the United States, school curricula often fail to comprehensively accommodate Islamic diversity, making it difficult for minority Muslim students to understand and express their Islamic identity.¹² This issue is also relevant in Indonesia, where PAI instruction for minority Muslim students encounters similar challenges.

Furthermore, the lack of research connecting strategies for strengthening Islamic religious education with the concept of minority jurisprudence reveals a theoretical gap that needs further exploration. Ali's (2022) study in East Africa also highlighted that the lack of support for Islamic educational institutions hinders the development of Muslim education, indicating similar patterns of challenges in various countries with minority Muslim populations.¹³

From a methodological perspective, previous studies have predominantly used quantitative approaches that emphasize statistical outcomes but fail to capture the direct experiences of minority Muslim students in navigating Islamic religious education challenges in public schools. Therefore, this study aims to fill this

⁸ Muhammad Darwis Dasopang and Azmil Hasan Lubis, "Perempuan-Perempuan Tangguh Penjaga Nilai-Nilai Keislaman Anak: Studi Daerah Minoritas Muslim," *Kafaah: Journal of Gender Studies* 11, no. 1 (2021): 83–94, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.15548/jk.v11i1.353>.

⁹ A Y Rajagukguk, "Penguatan Pendidikan Islam Bagi Masyarakat Muslim Minoritas (Studi Kasus Di Kecamatan Porsea Kabupaten Toba Samosir)," *Doctoral Dissertation, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara* (2019), <http://repository.uinsu.ac.id/7747/>.

¹⁰ Suliantika and OK, "Penguatan Pendidikan Agama Islam Bagi Siswa Minoritas Muslim."

¹¹ Siti Aisah Berutu, "Menilik Problematika Dan Model Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Yang Tepat Di Wilayah Minoritas," *Cendikia: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran* 3, no. 1 (2025): 723–31, <https://jurnal.researchideas.org/index.php/cendikia/article/view/467>.

¹² Merchant, "Responses to Islam in the Classroom: A Case of Muslim Girls from Minority Communities of Interpretation."

¹³ Ali, "Historical Development of Muslim Education in East Africa An Eye on Kenya."

methodological gap by employing a qualitative approach to comprehensively understand the lived experiences of minority Muslim students in receiving Islamic religious education within a predominantly non-Muslim environment.

Given the various challenges faced by minority Muslim students in obtaining optimal religious education, this study seeks to answer several fundamental questions. One of the main questions is: How effective are the strategies for strengthening Islamic religious education for minority Muslim students at SD Negeri 091332 Raya Bayu? Additionally, the study aims to identify the key obstacles in implementing Islamic religious education in public schools where the majority of students are non-Muslims. Furthermore, this research explores how the concept of minority jurisprudence can be applied in designing strategies to strengthen Islamic religious education for Muslim students living in non-Muslim-majority settings.

In line with these research questions, this study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of Islamic religious education enhancement programs for minority Muslim students at SD Negeri 091332 Raya Bayu. It also seeks to identify various challenges that arise in the implementation of Islamic religious education in public schools where most students come from non-Muslim backgrounds. Additionally, this research intends to explain the relevance of minority jurisprudence in designing Islamic religious education strategies for minority Muslim communities. Thus, this study not only focuses on problem analysis but also offers conceptual solutions based on the *fiqh al-aqalliyat* approach.

This research holds significant value both academically and practically. Academically, it contributes to enriching the discourse on Islamic religious education in minority contexts by integrating the perspective of minority jurisprudence as a theoretical approach. Moreover, it provides empirical contributions to Islamic education studies by focusing on the specific case of SD Negeri 091332 Raya Bayu, which has not been extensively examined in academic literature.

Practically, the findings of this study can serve as a reference for educators, policymakers, and Muslim communities in designing more effective strategies for delivering Islamic religious education to Muslim students in predominantly non-Muslim environments. By understanding the challenges faced and the strategies that can be implemented, this research is expected to help improve the quality of Islamic religious education in public schools with minority Muslim students.

By considering the various challenges faced by minority Muslim students in accessing optimal religious education, this study aims to fill existing academic and practical gaps. With a focus on the effectiveness of strengthening Islamic religious education and the relevance of minority jurisprudence in this context, this research is expected to provide new insights and practical solutions to enhance Islamic education for minority Muslim students in public schools.

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method, utilizing direct observation and interviews to collect in-depth data on the implementation and strengthening of Islamic religious education (Pendidikan Agama Islam, PAI) for Muslim minority students at SDN 091332 Raya Bayu. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for a detailed description of social phenomena based on written or spoken words from research subjects, as well as observed behaviors.¹⁴ According to Moleong (2014), qualitative

¹⁴ G A Rukminingsih and M A Latief, "Metode Penelitian Pendidikan (Banyumedia)," *Penelitian Kuantitatif, Penelitian Kualitatif, Penelitian Tindakan Kelas*, 2020.

research is more flexible in addressing diverse social realities, fosters a closer relationship between researchers and respondents, and is more sensitive to evolving social dynamics.¹⁵

The subjects of this study consist of the school principal, the Islamic religious education teacher, and 19 Muslim students from grades I to VI at SDN 091332 Raya Bayu. The principal and PAI teacher serve as primary data sources because they possess critical insights into school policies and the implementation of Islamic religious education. Meanwhile, the Muslim students provide secondary data, offering firsthand perspectives on their experiences receiving Islamic education in an environment where the majority of students adhere to Christianity. This school was chosen as the research site because the number of Muslim students at SDN 091332 Raya Bayu is significantly lower than that of Christian students. Out of a total of 111 students, 92 are Christian, while only 19 students are Muslim. This demographic imbalance provides an essential background for understanding how Islamic religious education is delivered to a minority group within a public school setting dominated by non-Muslim students.

Data were collected through three primary methods: observation, interviews, and document analysis. Observations were conducted to examine the process of PAI instruction, the interactions between Muslim and non-Muslim students, and the overall school environment in accommodating religious diversity. Through this method, the study aimed to capture the dynamics of religious education in real classroom settings, as well as how Muslim students practice their faith in a predominantly non-Muslim school environment. In-depth interviews were carried out with the school principal and the PAI teacher to gain insights into the policies, challenges, and strategies implemented to strengthen Islamic education for Muslim students. Additionally, Muslim students were interviewed to understand their experiences, challenges, and perspectives regarding their religious education. Document analysis was used to examine school policies, curriculum documents, and academic records related to Islamic education, providing supplementary data to support the findings from observations and interviews.

Data analysis in this study follows the interactive model proposed by Sugiyono (2010), which involves three key processes: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing with verification. Data reduction was performed by filtering and selecting information relevant to the research focus, ensuring that only significant and meaningful data were included in the analysis. The presentation of data was conducted in a narrative descriptive format to illustrate the implementation of Islamic religious education in the school setting. Conclusions were drawn based on repeated analysis and verification of data to ensure accuracy and consistency in the study's findings.

To enhance the validity of the data, this research applies a triangulation technique by comparing findings from multiple sources, including interviews, observations, and document analysis. This approach ensures that the research results are credible, reliable, and not biased toward a single perspective.

Ethical considerations were strictly adhered to in this study. Approval was obtained from the school principal, and all research participants were informed about the study's objectives, their rights as respondents, and the confidentiality of their personal data. Ethical research principles such as anonymity, informed consent, and transparency were upheld throughout the research process to ensure that all participants' rights and privacy were protected. The implementation of these ethical standards ensures that the

¹⁵ L J Moleong, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2014).

study maintains academic integrity while respecting the individuals involved in the research.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Implementation of Islamic Religious Education in a Muslim Minority School: A Case Study of SDN 091332 Raya Bayu

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a crucial role in shaping the Islamic understanding, moral values, and spiritual identity of Muslim students, especially in contexts where they are a minority. In public schools where most students come from different religious backgrounds, implementing PAI presents both structural and social challenges. This study finds that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SDN 091332 Raya Bayu is carried out through various approaches, including formal learning and extracurricular activities. Based on interviews with the principal and PAI teacher, PAI lessons are conducted three times a week using lectures, discussions, and quizzes. According to PAI teacher Ibu Lipda Br. Tambak, S.Pd.I., these methods were chosen to help students understand Islamic teachings both theoretically and practically.

Observations and interviews also reveal that the school organizes afternoon Quran study sessions at the PAI teacher's house to deepen students' understanding of the Quran and Islamic teachings. One student, Arga, stated that after school, he and his friends attend these sessions starting at 3:00 PM, followed by *Asr* prayer in congregation before heading home. The school also regularly celebrates major Islamic holidays such as the Prophet Muhammad's Birthday (*Maulid*), *Isra Mi'raj*, and short-term pesantren programs during Ramadan. The principal emphasizes that these activities involve Muslim students, parents, and the surrounding community to ensure that students have meaningful religious experiences despite being in a predominantly non-Muslim environment. A parent interviewed expressed that these events greatly help their children maintain their Islamic identity.

Collaboration with the local Muslim community further strengthens the implementation of PAI at the school. The principal and PAI teachers work closely with parents and religious leaders to foster students' Islamic development. The school also organizes halal bi halal gatherings after Eid to strengthen Islamic brotherhood among Muslim students. One PAI teacher stated that this event is part of the school's strategy to preserve Islamic identity within a majority non-Muslim community. Practical religious training, such as practicing ablution (*wudu*) and prayer at school, is also integrated into daily activities. These efforts contribute to ensuring that students not only learn about Islam academically but also practice it in their daily lives.

The table below outlines the various strategies implemented at SDN 091332 Raya Bayu to strengthen Islamic Religious Education for Muslim students and the positive impact of these strategies.

Table 1. mplemented at SDN 091332 Raya Bayu to strengthen Islamic Religious Education

Strengthening Strategy	Implementation at School	Impact on Muslim Students
Regular PAI Lessons	Three times a week with lectures, discussions, and quizzes	Improved academic understanding of Islam
Religious Activities	Afternoon Quran studies at the teacher's house, Islamic holiday celebrations	Strengthened Islamic identity
Worship Practices	Practicing ablution and prayer at school	Enhanced religious skills

Strengthening Strategy	Implementation at School	Impact on Muslim Students
Community Collaboration	Short-term pesantren programs and halal bi halal with parents	Increased social support for Muslim students
Inclusive Approach	Activities involving both Muslim and non-Muslim students	Improved interfaith tolerance and understanding

This table highlights how different strategies have been applied to reinforce Islamic Religious Education at SDN 091332 Raya Bayu and the resulting benefits for Muslim students.

This finding aligns with Rajagukguk (2019), who emphasizes that extracurricular religious activities play a crucial role in shaping the Islamic identity of Muslim students in predominantly non-Muslim environments. Similarly, Suliantika (2023) found that increased student involvement in Islamic activities can enhance their understanding and practice of Islam in schools where the majority of students belong to other faiths.¹⁶

From a global perspective, Merchant (2016) conducted a study in the United States and found that Muslim students often face stereotypes and social pressures that limit their ability to express their religious identity.¹⁷ This phenomenon is also observed at SDN 091332 Raya Bayu, where some Muslim students reported feeling hesitant to openly practice their faith in front of their non-Muslim peers. This study is also consistent with Zahara (2024), who found that Muslim minorities in religiously dominant regions often struggle to maintain their religious identity, either due to limited religious facilities or the lack of Islamic representation in the school curriculum.¹⁸

Similar challenges have also been identified in Ali's (2022) study in East Africa, which highlights the lack of policy support for Islamic education in Muslim minority communities. Unlike the social pressures faced by Muslim students in the United States, in some African countries such as Uganda and Kenya, the main issue confronting Muslim minority communities is the lack of government-supported Islamic education infrastructure.¹⁹ In this regard, challenges faced by Islamic education for Muslim minorities across different countries follow similar patterns, including limited prayer facilities in schools, inadequate Islamic representation in the curriculum, and social pressures that hinder Muslim students from openly practicing their faith.

3.2. Challenges in the Implementation of Islamic Religious Education in a Muslim Minority School

Interviews with teachers and the school principal revealed that the main challenges in implementing Islamic education for Muslim minority students at SDN 091332 Raya Bayu include both structural and social barriers. Structurally, the lack of dedicated prayer facilities remains one of the most pressing issues, as the school does not provide a dedicated *mushala* (prayer room) for Muslim students. Additionally, a lack of

¹⁶ Rajagukguk, "Penguatan Pendidikan Islam Bagi Masyarakat Muslim Minoritas (Studi Kasus Di Kecamatan Porsea Kabupaten Toba Samosir)"; Suliantika and OK, "Penguatan Pendidikan Agama Islam Bagi Siswa Minoritas Muslim."

¹⁷ Merchant, "Responses to Islam in the Classroom: A Case of Muslim Girls from Minority Communities of Interpretation."

¹⁸ Zahara, "Penguatan Pendidikan Agama Islam Dan Budi Pekerti Bagi Siswa Muslim Minoritas (Studi Kasus Di SMP Negeri 2 Tanta Kecamatan Tanta Kabupaten Tabalong)."

¹⁹ Ali, "Historical Development of Muslim Education in East Africa An Eye on Kenya."

instructional materials tailored to the minority Muslim context and the limited number of PAI teachers who understand the specific challenges faced by Muslim minority students further hinder the effectiveness of religious education.

Table 2. Challenges in the Implementation of Islamic Religious Education in a Muslim Minority School

Category	Challenges & Solutions
Structural Challenges	Lack of prayer facilities (<i>mushala</i>)
	Limited instructional materials relevant to the Muslim minority context
	Shortage of qualified Islamic education teachers
Social Challenges	Predominantly non-Muslim environment that does not support Islamic practices
	Social pressure and lack of acceptance from non-Muslim peers
	Potential isolation and difficulty in maintaining religious identity
Efforts & Solutions	Quranic study sessions, <i>Maulid</i> Nabi celebrations, and pesantren kilat
	Systematic solutions: prayer facilities, relevant instructional materials, more competent teachers, and school-community collaboration

In the context of Islamic religious education in schools with a Muslim minority population, the challenges are not only structural but also social. A study at SDN 091332 Raya Bayu reveals that the absence of prayer facilities, the lack of teaching materials tailored to Muslim minority students, and the shortage of educators who understand these challenges are significant obstacles. Similar findings from Austria highlight that Islamic education in secular schools faces difficulties due to students' diverse backgrounds and insufficient structural support.²⁰ Additionally, research on mosque pedagogy in the Netherlands shows that contextual factors, such as language policies and educational practices in public schools, shape Islamic teaching in minority communities.²¹ These studies indicate that Islamic education in minority settings is heavily influenced by structural factors and prevailing education policies.

Social challenges also pose significant barriers to Islamic education for Muslim students in predominantly non-Muslim environments. Studies on Muslim students' experiences in Western countries reveal that they often face social pressure, discrimination, and restrictions on expressing their religious identity.²² At SDN 091332 Raya Bayu, Muslim students struggle with a lack of acceptance from their non-Muslim peers, leading to isolation and difficulties in practicing their faith. This situation aligns with research showing that residential segregation and education levels influence Muslims' perceptions of their surroundings, where those with secondary education are more likely to feel hostility from the government toward Islam.²³ Therefore, social challenges in Islamic education stem not only from school environments but also from broader societal dynamics.

²⁰ M H Tuna, "Islamic Religious Education in Contemporary Austrian Society: Muslim Teachers Dealing with Controversial Contemporary Topics," *Religions* 11, no. 8 (2020): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11080392>.

²¹ H K Altinyelken and S Sözeri, "Importing Mosque Pedagogy from Turkey: An Analysis of Contextual Factors Shaping Re-Contextualisation Processes in the Netherlands," *Comparative Education* 55, no. 1 (2019): 47–65, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2018.1541666>.

²² M C Brooks et al., "Racialization of Muslim Students in Australia, Ireland, and the United States: Cross-Cultural Perspectives," *Race Ethnicity and Education* 26, no. 2 (2023): 164–83, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2021.1997977>.

²³ P Hekmatpour and T J Burns, "Perception of Western Governments' Hostility to Islam among European Muslims before and after ISIS: The Important Roles of Residential Segregation and Education," *British Journal of Sociology* 70, no. 5 (2019): 2133–65, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12673>.

To address these challenges, research suggests an inclusive and moderation-based approach to Islamic education in minority settings. Studies in Indonesia indicate that incorporating values such as balance (*tawazun*) and tolerance (*tasamuh*) can foster a more harmonious environment for Muslim students in public schools.²⁴ Additionally, other research emphasizes the importance of culturally and religiously responsive mentoring programs to support minority groups, including in science and higher education.²⁵ At SDN 091332 Raya Bayu, strategies like religious study groups, Islamic holiday celebrations, and short-term boarding school programs could help sustain Islamic education. However, the success of these initiatives depends on strong support from schools, communities, and educational stakeholders to ensure their effective and sustainable implementation.

3.3. Strategies for Strengthening Islamic Education in a Muslim Minority School

The strengthening of Islamic religious education in schools with a Muslim minority population has become an increasingly relevant issue worldwide. In this context, the application of *fiqh al-aqalliyat*, developed by Yusuf Al-Qardhawi and Taha Jabir al-Alwani, offers a flexible solution for Muslim communities living in non-Muslim environments. This approach emphasizes adapting religious practices while considering local social and cultural conditions without compromising core Islamic principles.²⁶ This aligns with research on Islamic leadership education among Sri Lanka's Muslim minority, which highlights the importance of educational institutions in tailoring curricula to local needs to strengthen Islamic identity.²⁷ Similarly, studies on Islamic education in Austrian schools indicate that diversity and secularism require a more adaptive approach to keep Islamic learning relevant and effective.²⁸

Beyond flexibility in religious practices, strengthening Islamic education also requires inclusive educational policies. Research on the educational rights of Muslim minorities in Bali emphasizes that Islamic identity can be reinforced through family- and community-based education, such as religious study groups (*pengajian*) and *madrasahs*, as complements to formal education.²⁹ Meanwhile, studies on Islamic schools in Australia reveal their crucial role in shaping students' Islamic identity, despite concerns about potential social isolation.³⁰ In the context of SDN 091332 Raya Bayu, strategies such as religious study sessions, short-term Islamic boarding programs (*pesantren kilat*), and religious celebrations can serve as alternatives to enhance students' understanding of Islam in a predominantly non-Muslim environment.

²⁴ D Rusmana, H Gunawan, and D Martiningsih, "INSTILLING MODERATION: TRANSFORMING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN MADRASAH ALIYAH," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 13, no. 1 (2025): 77-102, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v13i1.1830>.

²⁵ T F Mohammed et al., "Toward Culturally Responsive Mentoring of Muslim Research Mentees in the Sciences," *CBE Life Sciences Education* 23, no. 3 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.23-07-0145>.

²⁶ Dasopang and Lubis, "Perempuan-Perempuan Tangguh Penjaga Nilai-Nilai Keislaman Anak: Studi Daerah Minoritas Muslim."

²⁷ T Ushama et al., "MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP EDUCATION IN THE MINORITY CONTEXT: THE ROLE OF NALEEMIAH INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC STUDIES," *Hamdard Islamicus* 46, no. 2 (2023): 29-46, <https://doi.org/10.57144/hi.v46i2.697>.

²⁸ Tuna, "Islamic Religious Education in Contemporary Austrian Society: Muslim Teachers Dealing with Controversial Contemporary Topics."

²⁹ I Muhammad, S Ariani, and M Yusuf, "Balinese Muslim Minority Rights in Education and Islamic Family Law," *Samarah* 5, no. 2 (2021): 804-24, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v5i2.9108>.

³⁰ Y Hassen, "Making Muslims: The Politics of Religious Identity Construction and Victoria's Islamic Schools," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 24, no. 4 (2013): 501-17, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410.2013.813120>.

Therefore, Islamic education in minority settings should integrate both formal and informal approaches to provide a strong religious foundation for Muslim students.

Beyond educational strategies, social and psychological factors must also be considered. A study in the Netherlands found that religious discrimination in schools can impact Muslim students' self-esteem and national identity, ultimately affecting their engagement in the educational environment.³¹ Meanwhile, research on Islamophobia in Europe suggests that increasing public understanding of Islam can help reduce negative stereotypes against Muslim communities.³² Thus, in addition to strengthening Islamic education, a broader approach is needed to enhance social acceptance of religious diversity. In this regard, collaboration between schools, Muslim communities, and educational stakeholders is essential in fostering a more inclusive environment and supporting the development of Islamic education for Muslim minorities.

This study found that the key strategies for strengthening Islamic religious education at SDN 091332 Raya Bayu involve a combination of formal school-based learning, community-based extracurricular activities, and the application of minority jurisprudence to enhance flexibility in practicing Islam in a predominantly non-Muslim environment. However, several structural and social challenges remain, particularly regarding the lack of prayer facilities, social pressures faced by Muslim students, and insufficient inclusive educational policies. When compared to Islamic education for Muslim minorities in other countries, the challenges faced in Indonesia follow a similar pattern, suggesting the need for a more comprehensive and policy-driven approach to improve access to and the quality of Islamic education for Muslim minority students.

4. Conclusion

This study examines the challenges and strategies for strengthening Islamic Religious Education (PAI) for minority Muslim students at SDN 091332 Raya Bayu. The findings reveal that the implementation of PAI faces significant structural and social obstacles. Structurally, the lack of prayer facilities, limited contextual teaching materials, and a shortage of educators who understand the specific challenges faced by Muslim minorities are the primary factors hindering effective learning. Meanwhile, from a social perspective, Muslim students often experience pressure in expressing their religious identity in an environment predominantly composed of non-Muslim peers.

In response to these challenges, this study identifies that the most effective strategies for strengthening PAI involve community-based approaches, collaboration between schools and religious leaders, and the application of the *fiqh al-aqalliyat* (minority jurisprudence) framework. This approach allows for flexibility in practicing Islamic teachings while maintaining core Islamic principles, ensuring that religious practices are adapted to the realities of a non-Muslim-majority environment. Additionally, religiously-based extracurricular activities, such as afternoon Qur'anic study sessions and Islamic holiday celebrations, play a crucial role in reinforcing the Islamic identity of Muslim students.

The findings of this study have significant academic and practical implications. Academically, this research contributes to the literature on Islamic education in minority contexts by integrating *fiqh al-aqalliyat* as a relevant conceptual approach. Furthermore, this study enhances understanding of how structural and social challenges in minority

³¹ J Thijs, L Hornstra, and F Z Charki, "Self-Esteem and National Identification in Times of Islamophobia: A Study Among Islamic School Children in The Netherlands," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 47, no. 12 (2018): 2521–34, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-018-0906-6>.

³² S Hameed, "Making Sense of Islamic Creationism in Europe," *Public Understanding of Science* 24, no. 4 (2015): 388–99, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963662514555055>.



Islamic education in Indonesia mirror similar challenges faced by Muslim communities in other countries, such as the United States and East Africa. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a foundation for formulating more inclusive education policies, particularly in curriculum development and capacity building for educators to better support Islamic religious education for Muslim students in predominantly non-Muslim environments.

However, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the qualitative approach used provides an in-depth understanding of the experiences of minority Muslim students, but its findings cannot be generalized to all schools with similar conditions. Second, this study does not explore the perspectives of non-Muslim students in depth, nor does it examine how social dynamics among non-Muslim students influence PAI learning. Therefore, future research is recommended to adopt a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data to provide a more comprehensive analysis. Additionally, further exploration of education policy and interfaith interactions in public schools is an important agenda for future research.

Thus, this study reaffirms that strengthening Islamic religious education for minority Muslim students requires a holistic approach encompassing structural, social, and policy dimensions. It is hoped that the findings of this study can serve as a reference for designing more inclusive and adaptive educational strategies for Muslim minority communities in public schools, both at the national and international levels..

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