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Interpreting Pancasila's First Principle and Religious Inequality in Indonesia: A Cultural Violence Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study examines contested interpretations of Pancasila's first principle and inequalities in religious recognition in Indonesia through Johan Galtung's concept of cultural violence. It employs an exploratory conceptual literature review and thematic analysis of academic publications, legal documents, and religious freedom reports. The findings identify three main patterns. First, ideological contestation and administrative categorization constitute distinct dimensions of religious governance, although the available evidence does not establish a direct relationship between them. Second, institutional barriers and discriminatory practices reveal persistent inequalities in religious recognition, but the reviewed evidence remains insufficient to establish how particular ideological interpretations legitimize these inequalities as a form of cultural violence. Third, critical education and interfaith dialogue provide opportunities for strengthening tolerance and inclusive religious engagement, although their effectiveness in reducing cultural violence remains empirically unverified. These findings underscore the importance of equitable religious recognition and further empirical investigation into the transformative potential of dialogic education. The conceptual contribution of this study lies in distinguishing ideological contestation, structural inequality, and cultural legitimation as analytically distinct dimensions of religious conflict. This distinction highlights the evidentiary limitations of applying Galtung's framework and the need for more explicit operational criteria to identify cultural violence in Indonesia's religious life.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan menelaah kontestasi interpretasi sila pertama Pancasila dan ketimpangan pengakuan keagamaan di Indonesia melalui konsep kekerasan kultural Johan Galtung. Penelitian menggunakan desain studi kepustakaan eksploratif-konseptual dengan analisis tematik terhadap publikasi akademik, dokumen hukum, dan laporan kebebasan beragama. Hasil penelitian mengidentifikasi tiga temuan utama. Pertama, kontestasi ideologis dan kategorisasi administratif merupakan dimensi yang berbeda dalam tata kelola kehidupan beragama, meskipun bukti yang tersedia belum menunjukkan hubungan langsung antara keduanya. Kedua, hambatan institusional dan praktik diskriminasi memperlihatkan ketimpangan pengakuan keagamaan yang masih berlangsung, tetapi bukti yang ditelaah belum memadai untuk menjelaskan bagaimana interpretasi ideologis tertentu melegitimasi ketimpangan tersebut sebagai bentuk kekerasan kultural. Ketiga, pendidikan kritis dan dialog lintas iman menyediakan peluang untuk memperkuat toleransi dan interaksi keagamaan yang inklusif, meskipun efektivitasnya dalam mengurangi kekerasan kultural belum teruji secara empiris. Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya kesetaraan pengakuan keagamaan dan penelitian empiris lebih lanjut mengenai potensi transformatif pendidikan dialogis. Kontribusi konseptual penelitian ini terletak pada pembedaan kontestasi ideologis, ketimpangan struktural, dan legitimasi kultural sebagai tiga dimensi konflik keagamaan yang berbeda secara analitis. Pembedaan tersebut menyoroti keterbatasan pembuktian dalam penerapan kerangka teoretis Galtung serta kebutuhan akan kriteria operasional yang lebih eksplisit untuk mengidentifikasi kekerasan kultural dalam kehidupan beragama di Indonesia.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Freedom of religion or belief constitutes a constitutional right guaranteed under the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Interreligious dialogue and mutual recognition are important elements in sustaining religious coexistence within Indonesia's plural society (Rofiqi & Haq, 2022). Nevertheless, religious intolerance, exclusion, and discrimination remain significant concerns in Indonesian religious life (Setia & Haq, 2023). These problems reveal a discrepancy between constitutional guarantees of religious freedom and their implementation in social and institutional practices. Kaur and Hasan (2026), in a report published by SETARA Institute, documented 221 incidents involving 331 violations of freedom of religion or belief throughout 2025. These figures represent a decline from 2024, when the organization recorded 260 incidents involving 402 violations. Despite this decline, the persistence of violations indicates that religious freedom remains subject to institutional and social challenges. Restrictions on religious activities, opposition to places of worship, and discriminatory practices involving state and nonstate actors illustrate the complexity of these challenges. Accordingly, understanding religious inequality requires attention not only to differences in religious beliefs but also to institutional arrangements, social relations, and the normative frameworks through which religious diversity is recognized and governed.

Pancasila's first principle, *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* (Belief in the One and Only God), occupies a central position in the normative framework of religious life in Indonesia. Although the first principle provides a common ideological foundation for religious coexistence, its meaning and relationship with religious governance remain subject to competing interpretations. At the institutional level, the recognition of religious and belief diversity also depends on legal provisions, administrative classifications, and their implementation. SETARA Institute (2025) reported that state actors committed 159 of the 402 documented violations of freedom of religion or belief in 2024, while nonstate actors committed 243. These figures illustrate the involvement of both public institutions and social groups in documented restrictions on religious freedom. The issue of religious recognition is particularly evident in the experiences of adherents of indigenous beliefs. Constitutional Court Decision No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016, issued on November 7, 2017, expanded the legal basis for their administrative recognition following constitutional challenges to unequal treatment in population registration (Mahkamah Konstitusi Republik Indonesia, 2017). These circumstances highlight the importance of examining ideological interpretations and institutional practices as distinct but potentially related dimensions of religious governance. However, the existence of administrative inequality does not necessarily establish that particular interpretations of Pancasila's first principle constitute its underlying justification.

Previous research on Pancasila and religious conflict in Indonesia has developed along three principal lines of inquiry. The first examines Pancasila as a state ideology, religion–state relations, and competing interpretations of ideological principles. Ismail (2019) explains that historical debates and political compromises concerning the relationship between Islam and the state shaped the acceptance of Pancasila as Indonesia's ideological foundation. Ichwan and Slama (2022) identify competing interpretations of Pancasila's first principle within Islamic political discourses, illustrating how religious actors articulate different understandings of the relationship between religious norms and state ideology. Meanwhile, Suntana et al. (2023) examine ideological trust in relation to religious norms, national law, and state–religion relations. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that Pancasila functions not only as a normative foundation of the state but also as an arena of ideological contestation. Nevertheless, evidence of competing interpretations does not itself establish that a particular interpretation has acquired institutional authority or serves to legitimize discriminatory practices. The distinction between ideological contestation and cultural legitimation therefore remains an important analytical concern.

The second line of research examines religious freedom through the perspectives of law, citizenship, and minority recognition. Butt (2020) identifies constitutional and administrative challenges experienced by adherents of indigenous beliefs, particularly in civil registration, education, and employment. Salfutra et al. (2019) further document implementation barriers following the Constitutional Court's recognition of indigenous beliefs, demonstrating that formal legal recognition does not automatically ensure equitable administrative practices. These studies provide important evidence of institutional inequalities affecting religious and belief communities. The third line of research examines education, tolerance, and religious moderation in promoting inclusive religious life. Utami (2022) emphasizes the importance of interreligious competence in achieving equitable religious education in multireligious schools. Mukhibat et al. (2024) document the development and evaluation of religious moderation curricula, while Sirry et al. (2024) identify limitations in teachers' understanding of tolerance and opportunities for interreligious learning. Similarly, Purwanto et al. (2024) examine the potential of reflective learning to strengthen prospective teachers' awareness of religious moderation. Although these studies provide insights into institutional inequality and educational practices, their respective findings address different phenomena and outcomes. Evidence of unequal religious recognition does not necessarily identify its cultural justification, just as educational outcomes related to tolerance do not directly establish reductions in cultural violence.

These three research orientations provide complementary insights into ideological contestation, institutional inequality, and educational responses to religious diversity. However, an analytical gap remains concerning how these dimensions can be distinguished and examined

within the framework of cultural violence. In particular, the reviewed literature provides substantial evidence of competing ideological interpretations and unequal religious recognition but offers more limited evidence regarding the processes through which particular interpretations acquire a legitimizing function. A similar evidentiary distinction emerges in educational research, where findings concerning tolerance, religious moderation, and interreligious engagement cannot automatically be interpreted as evidence of cultural violence reduction. This gap concerns not only the relationship among ideological, institutional, and pedagogical dimensions but also the adequacy of the evidence required to connect them. Accordingly, this study employs Johan Galtung's (1990) concept of cultural violence as an interpretive framework for examining religious inequality while assessing the analytical and evidentiary limitations of its application in the Indonesian context.

This study aims to examine contested interpretations of Pancasila's first principle and inequalities in religious recognition in Indonesia through Galtung's concept of cultural violence. Specifically, it addresses three research objectives. First, it identifies competing interpretations of Pancasila's first principle and examines how religious and belief diversity is recognized through legal and administrative arrangements. Second, it analyzes documented institutional inequalities and discriminatory practices while assessing the extent to which the available evidence supports their interpretation as manifestations of cultural legitimation. Third, it examines the relevance and evidentiary limitations of critical education and interfaith dialogue as potential approaches to addressing religious intolerance and exclusion. Rather than establishing causal relationships or evaluating the effectiveness of educational interventions, this study synthesizes existing literature and documentary evidence to distinguish established findings from theoretical interpretations and prospective approaches to religious conflict transformation.

This study argues that ideological contestation, structural inequality, and cultural legitimation constitute analytically distinct dimensions of religious conflict. Drawing on Galtung (1990), cultural violence refers to aspects of culture, including religion and ideology, that can be used to legitimize direct or structural violence. Accordingly, neither the existence of competing interpretations of Pancasila's first principle nor the presence of institutional inequality is sufficient to establish cultural violence without evidence of a legitimizing function. Although ideological interpretations and institutional practices may intersect, their relationship must be examined rather than presupposed. Similarly, the normative relevance of critical education and interfaith dialogue should be distinguished from their empirically demonstrated effectiveness in transforming cultural justifications for inequality. The conceptual contribution of this study lies in applying this analytical distinction to religious inequality in Indonesia and identifying the evidentiary requirements necessary to connect ideological interpretations, structural conditions, and cultural legitimation. This approach highlights the need for more explicit operational criteria in applying Galtung's concept of cultural violence while retaining its relevance as a theoretical perspective for examining the cultural dimensions of religious inequality.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study examines contested interpretations of Pancasila's first principle and inequalities in religious recognition in Indonesia through Johan Galtung's concept of cultural violence. The units of analysis comprise ideological interpretations, legal and administrative provisions, documented institutional practices, and findings from previous studies on religious inequality and tolerance education. The analysis distinguishes three principal dimensions: ideological contestation, structural inequality, and cultural legitimation. Critical education and interfaith dialogue are examined as prospective approaches to addressing religious intolerance and exclusion. These dimensions serve as analytical categories rather than predetermined causal mechanisms, allowing the study to examine the extent to which the available evidence supports their conceptual and empirical relationships.

This study employs a qualitative approach with an exploratory conceptual literature review design. This design enables the systematic interpretation and synthesis of existing scholarship and documentary evidence concerning ideological contestation, religious recognition, and cultural violence. Snyder (2019) explains that literature reviews can facilitate the integration of existing knowledge, the identification of research gaps, and the development of conceptual understanding. Accordingly, Galtung's (1990) concept of cultural violence is employed as an interpretive framework rather than a causal model to be confirmed. The exploratory orientation enables the study to examine both the relevance and the evidentiary limitations of this framework in explaining religious inequality in Indonesia. The research is not designed to establish causal relationships or directly evaluate the effectiveness of educational interventions.

The study draws on three categories of documentary sources. The first comprises academic publications addressing interpretations of Pancasila, religion–state relations, religious recognition, cultural violence, and tolerance education. Galtung's (1990) work serves as the primary theoretical reference for defining cultural violence and distinguishing it from structural violence. The second category consists of legal and policy documents, including the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, population administration legislation, Constitutional Court decisions concerning the recognition of indigenous beliefs, and regulations governing the establishment of places of worship. The third category comprises institutional reports, particularly publications by SETARA Institute documenting violations of freedom of religion or belief. These sources provide different forms of evidence concerning ideological discourses, normative provisions, institutional arrangements, documented discriminatory practices, and educational initiatives. Their respective evidentiary scope is considered to avoid conflating theoretical arguments, legal provisions, empirical findings, and policy recommendations.

Data collection involved searching for, selecting, and examining academic publications and institutional documents relevant to the research objectives. The selection focused on sources addressing interpretations of Pancasila's first principle, religious and belief recognition, institutional inequality, religious discrimination, critical education, and interfaith dialogue. Sources were selected purposively based on their substantive relevance, publication credibility, and contribution to the analytical focus of the study. Following Bowen (2009), document analysis was employed to identify relevant concepts, arguments, legal provisions, and reported empirical findings while considering the context and purpose of each document. Particular attention was given to distinguishing normative statements from documented practices and empirical observations. This distinction was necessary because legal provisions, theoretical propositions, monitoring reports, and educational studies provide different types of evidence and do not necessarily support equivalent analytical conclusions.

Data analysis employed a theoretically informed thematic approach, drawing on Braun and Clarke (2006) and Galtung's (1990) concept of cultural violence. The analytical procedure involved close reading, coding relevant information, organizing codes into themes, comparing evidence across documents, and developing a conceptual synthesis. The analysis was organized around three thematic areas: contested ideological interpretations and religious recognition; institutional inequality, religious discrimination, and cultural legitimation; and dialogic education and interfaith engagement. Within these themes, ideological contestation was identified through documented differences in ideological interpretations, while structural inequality was examined through evidence of unequal recognition, institutional barriers, and restrictions on rights. Cultural legitimation was assessed by examining whether the available sources documented the use of ideological or cultural meanings to justify unequal treatment or structural violence. Educational studies were examined according to the practices and outcomes they actually documented, distinguishing evidence of tolerance-related learning from evidence of cultural violence reduction. Where the reviewed sources did not establish relationships between these dimensions, such relationships were treated as theoretical possibilities requiring further empirical investigation. The final synthesis therefore emphasizes analytical distinctions, the scope and limitations of the

available evidence, and the operational requirements for applying Galtung's concept of cultural violence in the Indonesian context.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Contested Interpretations of Pancasila's First Principle and Religious Recognition

The analysis of constitutional documents identifies equality, religious freedom, and freedom of belief as fundamental normative principles governing religious life in Indonesia. Pancasila's first principle, *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* (Belief in the One and Only God), provides an ideological foundation for religious life, while the 1945 Constitution establishes constitutional guarantees for the protection of religious and belief diversity. Article 28E, paragraphs (1) and (2), guarantees the freedom to practice religion and hold personal beliefs. Article 28I, paragraphs (1) and (2), protects religious rights and prohibits discriminatory treatment, while Article 29, paragraph (2), guarantees the freedom of individuals to practice their religion and worship according to their religion or belief. Taken together, these provisions establish a normative basis for examining equality in religious recognition and the protection of citizenship rights (Republik Indonesia, 1945). However, the realization of these constitutional guarantees also depends on the legal and administrative arrangements through which religious and belief identities receive institutional recognition. Butt (2020) demonstrates that adherents of indigenous beliefs have encountered unequal treatment in population administration and other areas of public life. The distinction between constitutional guarantees and administrative recognition is therefore essential for understanding religious inequality without attributing such inequality directly to the normative content of Pancasila's first principle.

At the ideological level, interpretations of Pancasila's first principle remain subject to contestation within broader debates concerning religion–state relations. Ichwan and Slama (2022) identify three major discursive positions among Islamic actors regarding Pancasila: acceptance of Pancasila as the state ideology, acceptance accompanied by demands to incorporate Islamic law, and rejection of Pancasila in favor of an Islamic political ideology. These positions have evolved alongside transformations in religion–state relations, particularly following the end of the New Order regime. As explicit opposition to Pancasila and formal demands to supplement it with Islamic law have encountered declining political legitimacy, some actors have reformulated their ideological aspirations through alternative interpretations of the first principle. These discursive developments indicate that formal acceptance of Pancasila does not necessarily entail agreement regarding its normative meaning or its implications for religious governance. Rather, the first principle constitutes an arena of ideological contestation in which religious and political actors articulate different understandings of the relationship between religious norms, national identity, and state authority. Nevertheless, the existence of competing interpretations establishes ideological plurality rather than the institutional dominance of a particular interpretation. Although certain discourses seek to justify particular religious or political agendas, the reviewed evidence does not sufficiently demonstrate how these discourses have been translated into specific administrative classifications or discriminatory institutional practices.

At the administrative level, the reviewed legal documents identify differentiated procedures for recognizing religious and belief identities within Indonesia's population administration system. Law No. 23 of 2006, as amended by Law No. 24 of 2013, regulates the registration of religious identity on the Family Card (*Kartu Keluarga*, KK) and electronic Identity Card (*Kartu Tanda Penduduk elektronik*, KTP-el) (Republik Indonesia, 2006, 2013). Before the Constitutional Court's ruling in 2017, Article 61(2) and Article 64(5) stipulated that the religion field in these documents should remain blank for residents whose religions were not recognized under applicable regulations or who adhered to belief systems (*kepercayaan*), although their information remained recorded in the population database. These provisions established differentiated forms of administrative recognition between citizens whose religious identities could be explicitly recorded and those whose religious or belief identities could not be represented in the same manner. Butt

(2020) identifies several forms of unequal treatment associated with this administrative distinction, particularly in civil registration, education, and employment. These findings illustrate that administrative categorization is not merely a technical procedure for recording population information but also has implications for the institutional recognition of citizens and their access to public services. However, evidence of differentiated administrative treatment must be distinguished from evidence of its ideological justification. The existence of these classifications does not, by itself, establish that a standardized interpretation of Pancasila's first principle constituted their underlying legitimizing rationale.

The implications of differentiated administrative recognition are further documented in Constitutional Court Decision No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016. The constitutional petition was submitted by four adherents of indigenous beliefs representing the Marapu, Parmalim, Pasundan Kawali, and Sapta Darma communities. The petitioners challenged the provisions of the Population Administration Law requiring the religion field on their official identity documents to remain blank, arguing that these provisions adversely affected their constitutional rights. The case documents record several difficulties reported by the petitioners, including obstacles to marriage and birth registration, difficulties obtaining civil registration documents, and barriers to accessing public services and other opportunities. Members of the Marapu community, for example, reported difficulties in registering marriages conducted according to their beliefs and obtaining corresponding population administration documents (Mahkamah Konstitusi Republik Indonesia, 2017). These accounts provide case-specific evidence of the practical implications of unequal administrative recognition. Although the experiences of the four communities cannot be generalized to all adherents of indigenous beliefs in Indonesia, they illustrate how differentiated administrative arrangements can intersect with the exercise of citizenship rights. Analytically, the case provides stronger evidence of institutional inequality than of cultural legitimation because the documented administrative disadvantages do not necessarily identify the ideological or cultural meanings through which unequal treatment was justified.

The Constitutional Court's decision, pronounced on November 7, 2017, introduced a significant change in the legal recognition of religious and belief diversity. The Court ruled that the term *agama* (religion) in Article 61(1) and Article 64(1) of the Population Administration Law was unconstitutional and lacked binding legal force insofar as it did not include *kepercayaan* (belief). The Court also declared Article 61(2) and Article 64(5) unconstitutional and without binding legal force. This ruling expanded the constitutional basis for recognizing belief identities within population administration documents and addressed the legal distinction challenged by the petitioners (Mahkamah Konstitusi Republik Indonesia, 2017). Nevertheless, subsequent research indicates that formal legal recognition does not automatically resolve institutional barriers. In their study of the Orang Lom community in the Bangka Belitung Islands, Salfutra et al. (2019) identify several obstacles to implementing the Court's decision, including inadequate technical regulations, limited public outreach, difficulties associated with electronic identity card registration systems, and sociocultural factors. Their findings indicate that the realization of equal recognition depends not only on changes in legal provisions but also on administrative capacity, implementation procedures, and local social conditions. The persistence of these barriers following constitutional reform further demonstrates the importance of distinguishing normative recognition from its institutional realization. However, the presence of implementation barriers alone does not establish that they originate from a particular interpretation of Pancasila or that they are sustained through cultural legitimation.

The synthesis of the reviewed documents identifies four analytically distinct dimensions of religious recognition: ideological contestation, administrative categorization, constitutional recognition, and institutional implementation. Ideological contestation concerns competing understandings of Pancasila and its relationship with religious norms and state authority. Administrative categorization concerns the legal procedures through which religious and belief identities are recorded and institutionally recognized. Constitutional recognition concerns the protection of citizenship rights and the judicial correction of unequal administrative provisions.

Institutional implementation concerns the practical realization of legal recognition within administrative services and local social contexts. Although these dimensions address related aspects of religious governance, the available evidence supports different conclusions regarding each dimension. Their coexistence does not establish a causal sequence through which ideological interpretations produce administrative inequality or legitimize discriminatory practices. Table 1 presents the principal findings and evidentiary limitations identified in the reviewed documents.

Table 1. Ideological Contestation and Religious Recognition in the Reviewed Documents

Analytical dimension	Documented findings	Evidentiary limitations
Ideological contestation	Competing discursive positions concerning Pancasila, including acceptance, acceptance accompanied by demands to incorporate Islamic law, and rejection in favor of an alternative religious ideology.	Establishes ideological diversity but does not sufficiently demonstrate the institutionalization of a particular interpretation within population administration.
Administrative categorization	Differentiated procedures for recording religious and belief identities, with documented implications for civil registration, education, employment, and access to public services.	Establishes administrative differentiation and associated inequalities but does not independently identify their ideological justification.
Constitutional recognition	Constitutional Court Decision No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016 expanded the legal recognition of belief identities within population administration.	Establishes a change in constitutional and legal recognition but does not demonstrate its uniform implementation or broader transformation of cultural meanings.
Institutional implementation	The Orang Lom community encountered implementation barriers involving technical regulations, public outreach, administrative information systems, and sociocultural conditions.	Provides context-specific evidence of implementation barriers but does not establish their prevalence across Indonesia or their direct relationship with particular interpretations of Pancasila.

Source: Authors' synthesis of Republik Indonesia (1945, 2006, 2013), Mahkamah Konstitusi Republik Indonesia (2017), Salfutra et al. (2019), Butt (2020), and Ichwan and Slama (2022).

As summarized in Table 1, the reviewed documents provide evidence of competing ideological interpretations and differentiated forms of religious recognition, but they do not sufficiently establish the processes connecting these phenomena. The literature on Pancasila identifies ideological contestation, whereas legal documents and studies of indigenous belief communities provide more direct evidence of administrative inequality, constitutional reform, and implementation barriers. This evidentiary distinction is particularly important when applying Galtung's (1990) concept of cultural violence, which concerns the use of cultural elements to legitimize direct or structural violence. The existence of ideological differences does not necessarily indicate cultural violence, just as documented institutional inequality does not automatically establish the cultural justification of that inequality. To identify a particular interpretation of Pancasila's first principle as a manifestation of cultural violence, additional evidence is required to demonstrate how that interpretation functions as a justification for unequal recognition or restrictions on rights. The principal finding of this analysis therefore lies in distinguishing documented inequalities in religious recognition from the still insufficiently established relationship between ideological interpretation and cultural legitimation. Rather than treating ideological standardization as an established source of inequality,

the analysis identifies unequal administrative recognition as a documented institutional problem and the legitimizing role of ideological interpretations as a question requiring further investigation. This distinction provides an analytical foundation for examining broader patterns of institutional inequality and religious discrimination in the following section.

Institutional Inequality, Religious Discrimination, and the Limits of Cultural Legitimation Analysis

While the preceding analysis distinguishes ideological contestation from administrative recognition, the regulation of places of worship provides a further institutional context for examining inequalities in religious freedom. The Joint Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 9 of 2006 and the Minister of Home Affairs No. 8 of 2006 governs the maintenance of religious harmony, the empowerment of the Interreligious Harmony Forum (*Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama*, FKUB), and the establishment of places of worship. Article 14(2) specifies four requirements for establishing places of worship: a list of at least 90 prospective users supported by identity documents, endorsements from at least 60 local residents, a written recommendation from the district or municipal office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and a written recommendation from the district or municipal FKUB. Article 14(3) further requires local governments to facilitate an alternative location when applicants fulfill the minimum-user requirement but cannot obtain sufficient community support. These provisions establish an institutional arrangement in which the establishment of places of worship involves demographic considerations, community endorsement, and administrative authorization (Menteri Agama Republik Indonesia & Menteri Dalam Negeri Republik Indonesia, 2006). Although the regulation formally seeks to maintain religious harmony, its implementation raises questions concerning the extent to which religious communities with different demographic and social characteristics can fulfill the same administrative requirements.

From the perspective of institutional inequality, formally uniform administrative requirements may impose different practical burdens on religious communities. The minimum-user requirement may present additional challenges for religious groups with relatively small populations, while the requirement for local endorsements makes community support a component of the administrative approval process. Article 13(3) allows authorities to consider a broader geographical area when determining the number of religious adherents, indicating that the regulation incorporates provisions intended to accommodate demographic differences. Nevertheless, these provisions do not necessarily eliminate obstacles associated with community opposition and institutional recommendations. SETARA Institute (2025) documents disputes concerning administrative requirements and instances of opposition to places of worship despite applicants reportedly having fulfilled the required procedures. The report also identifies inadequate protection by local authorities in certain cases. These observations indicate that barriers to establishing places of worship may arise from regulatory requirements, their implementation, and social opposition. Analytically, however, the potential for unequal effects within a regulatory arrangement must be distinguished from documented discriminatory actions. Neither the existence of administrative requirements nor evidence of their unequal implementation independently establishes that these practices are justified through particular interpretations of Pancasila's first principle.

The monitoring reports on freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) provide broader descriptive evidence concerning the persistence of religious discrimination and restrictions in Indonesia. SETARA Institute recorded 217 incidents involving 329 violations in 2023, followed by 260 incidents and 402 violations in 2024. In 2025, the recorded figures declined to 221 incidents and 331 violations (SETARA Institute, 2024, 2025; Kaur & Hasan, 2026). Compared with 2023, the number of recorded incidents increased by approximately 19.8% in 2024, while the number of violations increased by 22.2%. In 2025, recorded incidents decreased by 15.0%, and violations decreased by 17.7% relative to the preceding year. Despite these reductions, both indicators remained slightly above their 2023 levels. These figures reveal fluctuations in documented violations rather than a sustained pattern of improvement over the three-year period. Furthermore, the distinction between incidents and violations indicates that a single incident may involve multiple recorded actions or actors. The

monitoring data therefore provide evidence of the persistence and variation of religious freedom violations, but they do not independently establish changes in the cultural meanings, ideological commitments, or social justifications underlying these violations.

The classification of actors involved in documented violations further illustrates the institutional and social dimensions of religious inequality. Of the 402 violations recorded in 2024, SETARA Institute (2025) attributed 159 violations to state actors and 243 to nonstate actors, representing approximately 39.6% and 60.4% of the recorded violations, respectively. State actors included local governments, police officers, municipal public order agencies (*Satuan Polisi Pamong Praja*), and other public institutions, while nonstate actors included civil society organizations, community groups, individuals, and local community leaders. The report also identifies an increase in acts of intolerance by community members from 26 in 2023 to 73 in 2024, alongside an increase in discriminatory acts by state actors from 23 to 50. These findings demonstrate that documented restrictions on religious freedom are not confined to interpersonal or intergroup disputes but also involve actors exercising institutional authority. However, the analytical significance of these two categories differs. Violations involving state actors raise concerns about the exercise of public authority and the fulfillment of constitutional obligations, whereas violations involving nonstate actors reflect problems of social exclusion and opposition to religious diversity. The presence of both categories establishes the multidimensional character of religious discrimination, but their coexistence in aggregate monitoring data does not necessarily demonstrate coordinated action, shared ideological commitments, or mutually reinforcing mechanisms of cultural legitimation.

The variation in documented violations also indicates that restrictions on religious freedom encompass different institutional and social processes. SETARA Institute (2025) reports that cases involving interference with the establishment and operation of places of worship declined from 65 in 2023 to 42 in 2024, whereas blasphemy-related cases increased from 15 to 42 during the same period. The latter category includes public complaints, the designation of criminal suspects, and prosecution proceedings. The organization also documented 16 acts of opposition to the establishment of places of worship and 13 acts of prohibition of religious worship involving nonstate actors in 2024. These categories concern different aspects of religious freedom. Interference with places of worship primarily concerns access to religious facilities and opportunities to conduct religious activities, while blasphemy-related cases involve disputes over religious expression and the boundaries of acceptable religious interpretation. Although both categories are relevant to the study of religious inequality, their contrasting trends indicate that documented violations cannot be treated as manifestations of a single, uniform process. Identifying the cultural legitimation of these practices would require case-specific evidence concerning the arguments, normative claims, and ideological meanings employed to justify particular restrictions. The aggregate classifications identify the forms and actors of recorded violations but provide limited grounds for attributing them to a common ideological source.

Table 2. Trends in Documented Violations of Freedom of Religion or Belief in Indonesia, 2023–2025

Year	Number of incidents	Number of violations
2023	217	329
2024	260	402
2025	221	331

Source: Compiled from SETARA Institute (2024, 2025) and Kaur and Hasan (2026).

Note: Incidents refer to documented occurrences involving violations of freedom of religion or belief, whereas violations refer to recorded acts within those incidents. A single incident may involve multiple violations or actors. These figures represent documented incidents and violations rather than direct measurements of cultural violence or the overall prevalence of religious discrimination in Indonesia.

As presented in Table 2, the reviewed monitoring reports establish the persistence of documented violations of religious freedom across the three-year observation period. When examined alongside the regulations governing places of worship, the findings identify three principal patterns: administrative conditions affecting access to places of worship, restrictive or discriminatory actions involving state institutions, and social opposition to particular religious activities and identities. These patterns provide evidence of institutional barriers and discriminatory practices operating across different domains of religious life. Nevertheless, their identification does not establish a unified mechanism through which cultural meanings produce or sustain inequality. In particular, the recurrence of discriminatory actions should not be equated with the normalization of discrimination. Recurrence concerns the repeated occurrence of documented practices, whereas normalization concerns the processes through which such practices become accepted, justified, or regarded as legitimate. Establishing normalization therefore requires evidence of the meanings and justificatory practices surrounding discrimination rather than its frequency alone.

This distinction is particularly significant for applying Galtung's (1990) concept of cultural violence. Within his theoretical framework, structural violence concerns social arrangements that constrain the fulfillment of human needs, while cultural violence concerns aspects of culture that can be used to legitimize direct or structural violence. Accordingly, documented institutional barriers and discriminatory practices provide a basis for examining possible manifestations of structural violence when they restrict the fulfillment of rights and basic needs. However, identifying their cultural legitimation requires additional evidence demonstrating the justificatory function of particular cultural elements. For example, establishing that an interpretation of Pancasila's first principle functions as cultural violence would require evidence that the interpretation is invoked to justify restrictions on religious recognition, unequal administrative treatment, or discriminatory institutional decisions. Such evidence could be obtained from official policy rationales, institutional statements, public discourses, or documented arguments surrounding specific discriminatory actions. These sources would enable researchers to distinguish the existence of ideological interpretations from their actual use in legitimizing inequality.

The principal finding of this analysis therefore concerns the distinction between documented religious inequality and the evidentiary requirements for identifying cultural violence. The reviewed regulations and monitoring reports provide evidence of institutional barriers, discriminatory practices, and restrictions on religious freedom, but they do not sufficiently establish how particular interpretations of Pancasila's first principle function as cultural justifications for these conditions. This limitation does not invalidate Galtung's concept of cultural violence, but it highlights the insufficiency of applying the concept as an explanatory framework without explicit operational criteria and context-specific evidence of legitimation. The analytical relevance of the concept lies in directing attention toward the cultural justifications that may sustain inequality, while its explanatory adequacy in this particular context remains to be established. Consequently, efforts to address religious discrimination must distinguish institutional reforms aimed at improving equal rights protection from educational and dialogic approaches intended to influence cultural understandings and social attitudes. The relevance and evidentiary limitations of these educational approaches are examined in the following section.

Dialogic Education and Interfaith Engagement: Possibilities and Evidentiary Limitations

Following the distinction between structural inequality and cultural legitimation established in the preceding sections, the reviewed educational literature provides a basis for examining potential responses to religious intolerance and exclusion. Education constitutes an institutional and social setting in which understandings of religious diversity are transmitted, negotiated, and potentially reconsidered. In Indonesia, religious education and Pancasila education provide

opportunities for introducing religious values, citizenship principles, and respect for diversity. However, the realization of these educational objectives also depends on equitable access to learning opportunities. In a study of multireligious public elementary and junior high schools, Utami (2022) identifies four major barriers to equitable religious education: minimum student enrollment requirements, limited availability of qualified teachers, insufficient school funding, and geographical constraints. These barriers particularly affect the provision of religious education for students belonging to relatively small religious minority groups. The study also identifies the importance of interreligious competence and mutual respect in responding to these institutional limitations. These findings indicate that inclusive religious education encompasses both the equitable provision of educational services and the development of attitudes toward religious diversity. Nevertheless, the identification of educational inequalities and practices of mutual respect does not independently demonstrate changes in the cultural justifications underlying religious discrimination.

The reviewed literature also identifies limitations in the pedagogical implementation of tolerance education. Sirry et al. (2024), drawing on interviews with 152 teachers from 28 senior high schools in Batu, Jember, Lamongan, and Nganjuk, as well as focus group discussions with education stakeholders in Surabaya, find that educators have not fully internalized the principles of tolerance. Their study also identifies limited opportunities for interreligious learning as a challenge to developing more inclusive educational practices. These findings reveal a distinction between the formal recognition of tolerance as an educational objective and its realization through learning experiences that enable students to engage with diverse religious perspectives. The inclusion of tolerance within educational curricula does not necessarily ensure that students have opportunities to examine religious differences critically or understand the experiences of other religious communities. Similarly, Purwanto et al. (2024) identify reflective learning as a potentially relevant approach to developing prospective teachers' awareness of religious moderation. Taken together, these studies suggest that educational practices incorporating reflection and interreligious engagement deserve further consideration. However, their findings primarily concern pedagogical conditions, educators' perspectives, and tolerance-related learning rather than changes in the cultural legitimation of religious inequality.

At the higher education level, religious moderation curricula illustrate a more structured approach to integrating diversity-related values into formal educational practices. Mukhibat et al. (2024) examine the development and evaluation of a religious moderation curriculum at the State Islamic Institute of Ponorogo through a qualitative case study involving 18 lecturers and 97 students. The study employs interviews, observations, focus group discussions, and document analysis to examine the implementation of a two-credit course on Islam and Religious Moderation. The curriculum incorporates four indicators of religious moderation: national commitment, tolerance, nonviolence, and acceptance of local culture. Following one semester of instruction, the evaluation reports an average student score of 81.9 out of 100, alongside reported developments in students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes concerning religious moderation. These findings provide evidence of curriculum implementation and assessed educational outcomes within a specific institutional context. Nevertheless, an academic evaluation score cannot independently establish sustained attitudinal change, behavioral transformation, or reductions in discriminatory practices. The reported outcomes must therefore be interpreted according to the scope of the educational assessment rather than treated as direct indicators of cultural violence reduction. Establishing such a relationship would require additional evidence concerning whether students subsequently question, reject, or refrain from reproducing cultural justifications for unequal treatment.

Beyond formal educational institutions, community-based learning and interfaith engagement provide alternative settings for interaction among religious groups. Through a literature review of religious moderation in Indonesia, Maulana et al. (2024) identify interfaith initiatives, religious institutions, and education as relevant components of efforts to develop inclusive interreligious relationships. More context-specific evidence is provided by Putra et al. (2025), whose study of community-based tolerance education in Temanggungan Village, Bogor, identifies three principal

components: nonformal learning, community leadership involvement, and collaborative activities among religious groups. Drawing on in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, the study documents interfaith social services and cultural exchange activities involving local residents and younger generations. These practices illustrate that interfaith engagement extends beyond formal theological dialogue and may also occur through everyday interaction, shared social activities, and community participation. From a pedagogical perspective, such activities provide opportunities for participants to encounter religious diversity through direct social experience. However, participation in interfaith activities does not necessarily demonstrate that participants have reconsidered ideological assumptions or cultural meanings previously used to justify discriminatory practices. The documented activities therefore establish the existence of dialogic and collaborative practices, while their transformative effects on cultural legitimation remain open to empirical investigation.

The relevance of informal education and civil society participation also emerges in local peacebuilding initiatives. Susanto (2025), in a study of peacebuilding practices in Nglinggi Village, Central Java, documents inclusive communication, social networks, intergenerational learning, and cross-cultural activities as components of community-based efforts to strengthen tolerance. These practices include learning through everyday encounters, sharing experiences across generations, community peace education, and developing digital literacy to respond to information that may provoke social tensions. At the policy level, Kaur and Hasan (2026) emphasize collaboration between government institutions and civil society organizations as a prospective direction for strengthening local tolerance ecosystems. Their report recommends using religious freedom monitoring findings to inform policy development and collaborative community initiatives. Although both sources highlight the relevance of community participation, they provide different forms of evidence. The study of Nglinggi Village documents locally implemented practices, whereas the institutional report primarily offers policy assessments and recommendations. Neither form of evidence independently establishes the general effectiveness of these approaches in reducing cultural violence. Their contribution lies instead in identifying existing practices and possible institutional arrangements that may inform future educational and peacebuilding interventions.

The synthesis of the reviewed literature identifies three principal areas of educational and dialogic engagement: equitable access to religious education and interreligious learning; curriculum-based development of tolerance and religious moderation; and community-based dialogue and collaborative participation. These areas encompass different educational settings, actors, practices, and intended outcomes. Formal education provides institutional opportunities for developing knowledge and reflective capacities, while community-based initiatives create opportunities for social interaction across religious boundaries. Policy recommendations further identify possible forms of institutional support for these activities. Nevertheless, the reviewed studies differ in their methodological designs, analytical objectives, and reported outcomes. Their findings cannot therefore be combined into a uniform conclusion concerning the effectiveness of dialogic education in transforming religious conflict. Table 3 summarizes the documented educational and dialogic practices alongside their respective evidentiary limitations.

Table 3. Educational Practices, Interfaith Engagement, and Their Evidentiary Limitations

Educational or dialogic approach	Documented findings	Evidentiary limitations
Multireligious education	Barriers to equitable religious education include minimum student enrollment requirements, teacher availability, school funding, and geographical constraints.	Establishes institutional challenges to educational equality but does not measure reductions in cultural violence.

Tolerance education and reflective learning	Limited internalization of tolerance among educators and insufficient opportunities for interreligious learning; reflective learning is identified as a potentially relevant pedagogical approach.	Provides evidence concerning pedagogical conditions and tolerance-related awareness but does not establish sustained behavioral or cultural transformation.
Religious moderation curriculum	An educational evaluation involving 97 university students reported an average score of 81.9 out of 100 following one semester of instruction.	Establishes assessed learning outcomes within a specific educational setting but does not directly demonstrate reductions in discriminatory practices or cultural legitimation.
Community-based dialogue and education	Nonformal learning, community leadership, interfaith social services, and collaborative activities provide opportunities for interreligious engagement.	Documents participatory practices and learning opportunities but does not establish their causal effects on religious discrimination or cultural violence.
Local peacebuilding practices	Inclusive communication, community peace education, intergenerational learning, and cross-cultural activities are documented in local peacebuilding initiatives.	Provides context-specific evidence of community practices but does not establish their general effectiveness across different social settings.
Civil society–government collaboration	Institutional reports recommend stronger collaboration between government institutions and civil society to support local tolerance ecosystems.	Constitutes a policy recommendation rather than empirical evidence of intervention effectiveness.

Source: Authors' synthesis of Utami (2022), Sirry et al. (2024), Mukhibat et al. (2024), Maulana et al. (2024), Purwanto et al. (2024), Putra et al. (2025), Susanto (2025), and Kaur and Hasan (2026).

As summarized in Table 3, the reviewed literature provides evidence of educational practices, institutional challenges, assessed learning outcomes, and community-based initiatives relevant to religious inclusion. However, these forms of evidence operate at different analytical levels. Educational practices concern the activities and learning experiences provided to participants, whereas learning outcomes concern the knowledge, competencies, and attitudes assessed within particular educational settings. Behavioral transformation concerns changes in how individuals and groups interact with religious diversity beyond those settings. Cultural transformation, within Galtung's (1990) framework, would additionally require evidence of changes in the cultural meanings and justificatory practices through which direct or structural violence acquires legitimacy. These analytical levels should not be treated as equivalent. Improvements in religious moderation scores, opportunities for interfaith interaction, and participation in collaborative activities may be relevant to inclusive religious life, but they do not independently demonstrate that cultural justifications for inequality have been weakened or transformed.

This distinction also reveals an important limitation in positioning dialogic education as a response to cultural violence. As established in the preceding sections, the reviewed evidence has not sufficiently identified the specific ideological interpretations or cultural justifications underlying documented institutional inequalities. Consequently, the present study cannot establish whether existing educational and dialogic practices directly address the cultural elements through which these inequalities acquire legitimacy. Demonstrating such a relationship would require identifying the relevant justificatory meanings and examining whether educational engagement produces observable changes in their acceptance, reproduction, or use. Depending on the research context, this

could involve examining changes in participants' interpretations of religious diversity, their responses to discriminatory arguments, and their behavior toward minority religious and belief communities. Such evidence would provide a stronger basis for assessing the relevance of dialogic education to cultural violence reduction. Without these analytical and empirical connections, the transformative potential of dialogic education remains a theoretically plausible proposition rather than an established research finding.

The principal finding of this analysis therefore concerns the distinction between the documented relevance of educational and interfaith practices and their unverified effectiveness in addressing cultural violence. The reviewed literature identifies opportunities for strengthening interreligious competence, reflective learning, tolerance-related attitudes, and collaborative engagement. These opportunities provide a basis for considering dialogic education as a prospective pedagogical approach to religious intolerance and exclusion. Nevertheless, educational initiatives cannot substitute for institutional reforms addressing unequal recognition, administrative barriers, and discriminatory practices. Their respective contributions concern different dimensions of religious inequality and require distinct forms of evaluation. Accordingly, this study positions critical education and interfaith dialogue as complementary approaches that warrant further empirical investigation rather than as established mechanisms of cultural violence reduction or positive peace. This conclusion reinforces the importance of distinguishing normative relevance, documented educational practices, and empirically demonstrated transformative outcomes when applying Galtung's framework to religious conflict in Indonesia.

Discussion

The findings highlight the importance of distinguishing ideological contestation from the institutional arrangements through which religious and belief diversity is recognized in Indonesia. Ichwan and Slama (2022) demonstrate that Pancasila's first principle remains subject to competing interpretations within religious and political discourses, while Butt (2020) identifies institutional inequalities associated with the administrative recognition of indigenous beliefs. Read together, these studies reveal two distinct analytical domains: the contestation of ideological meanings and the institutional distribution of recognition and citizenship rights. Although these domains may intersect within religious governance, the reviewed evidence does not sufficiently establish how particular interpretations of Pancasila's first principle acquire institutional authority or become justifications for unequal treatment. This distinction is reinforced by the Constitutional Court's decision concerning the administrative recognition of indigenous beliefs and the subsequent implementation barriers documented by Salfutra et al. (2019). These findings suggest that religious inequality cannot be adequately understood through ideological interpretation alone because legal arrangements, administrative capacity, and local social conditions also require consideration. Within Galtung's (1990) framework, the analytical significance of ideological interpretations lies not in their diversity or dominance per se but in their potential function in legitimizing direct or structural violence. Accordingly, the presence of competing interpretations of Pancasila's first principle should be distinguished from evidence that these interpretations are employed to justify discriminatory institutional arrangements. This distinction prevents the conflation of ideological contestation with cultural violence and establishes a more precise basis for examining religious inequality in the Indonesian context.

The findings concerning administrative requirements for places of worship, discriminatory practices, and violations of religious freedom further emphasize the distinction between structural conditions and their cultural legitimation. Butt's (2020) analysis of administrative discrimination and SETARA Institute's (2024, 2025) documentation of religious freedom violations provide evidence of institutional barriers and restrictive practices involving both state and nonstate actors. These findings are consistent with Galtung's (1990) understanding of structural violence insofar as institutional arrangements systematically constrain the fulfillment of basic needs and opportunities. However, identifying structural inequality does not automatically establish the

existence of cultural violence. Although cultural and structural violence may reinforce one another, demonstrating such a relationship requires evidence of the cultural meanings through which unequal arrangements are justified or rendered acceptable. In this respect, the recurrence of discriminatory practices must be distinguished from their normalization. Recurrence refers to the repeated occurrence of restrictive or discriminatory actions, whereas normalization involves processes through which such actions become socially acceptable, legitimate, or taken for granted. The available monitoring data provide evidence of the former but remain insufficient to establish the latter. Consequently, the application of Galtung's framework requires attention not only to the institutional consequences of discriminatory practices but also to the discursive and normative processes that may sustain them. Without evidence of these justificatory processes, cultural violence remains a possible theoretical interpretation rather than an empirically established explanation of the documented inequalities.

These evidentiary limitations raise a broader question concerning the analytical and explanatory adequacy of Galtung's (1990) concept of cultural violence. The concept offers an important theoretical perspective by directing attention toward the symbolic and normative dimensions of violence that may otherwise remain obscured in analyses focused exclusively on physical harm or institutional inequality. Nevertheless, its broad conceptual scope presents challenges when researchers attempt to identify cultural violence within specific empirical contexts. The identification of religion, ideology, or other cultural elements as possible sources of legitimation does not, by itself, provide sufficient grounds for determining when and how these elements perform a legitimizing function. Applying the concept without explicit analytical criteria risks producing circular reasoning in which the existence of structural inequality is interpreted as evidence of cultural violence, while cultural violence is subsequently invoked to explain that same inequality. Avoiding this problem requires independent evidence of the relevant cultural meanings, their justificatory function, and their relationship with documented forms of violence or inequality. The Indonesian case examined in this study illustrates this challenge: competing interpretations of Pancasila's first principle and institutional inequalities are documented, but the relationship between them remains insufficiently established. This limitation does not invalidate Galtung's theoretical framework. Rather, it indicates that its interpretive relevance should be distinguished from its explanatory adequacy in a particular research context. The explanatory application of the concept requires more explicit operational criteria and context-specific evidence than the identification of cultural differences or structural inequalities alone.

A comparable analytical distinction emerges in the examination of critical education and interfaith dialogue. Utami (2022) emphasizes interreligious competence and equitable educational provision, while Sirry et al. (2024) identify limitations in tolerance education and opportunities for interreligious learning. Mukhibat et al. (2024) document assessed learning outcomes associated with religious moderation curricula, and Purwanto et al. (2024) examine the relevance of reflective learning in developing prospective teachers' awareness of religious moderation. Community-based studies further identify collaborative activities, inclusive communication, and interreligious engagement as components of local tolerance and peacebuilding initiatives (Putra et al., 2025; Susanto, 2025). Collectively, these studies provide a basis for considering dialogic education as a prospective response to religious intolerance and exclusion. However, the educational outcomes documented in these studies should be distinguished from changes in cultural legitimation. Knowledge of religious moderation, tolerant attitudes, and participation in interfaith activities do not necessarily demonstrate that participants have rejected cultural justifications for unequal recognition or discriminatory treatment. Moreover, because the present study has not sufficiently identified the specific cultural justifications underlying the documented institutional inequalities, it cannot establish whether existing educational practices directly address those justifications. The relevance of dialogic education to cultural violence reduction therefore remains a theoretically plausible proposition requiring further investigation. Its normative appeal as an inclusive pedagogical approach should not be equated with empirically demonstrated effectiveness in transforming cultural violence or achieving positive peace.

Based on the synthesis of these findings, the conceptual contribution of this study lies in distinguishing ideological contestation, structural inequality, and cultural legitimation as analytically distinct dimensions of religious conflict. Ideological contestation concerns competing interpretations of religious and political values, including the normative meanings attributed to Pancasila's first principle. Structural inequality concerns institutional arrangements and social practices that restrict equal recognition, access to resources, or the exercise of rights. Cultural legitimation concerns the justificatory function of cultural meanings through which direct or structural violence may become acceptable or legitimate. These dimensions are not proposed as sequential causal mechanisms but as analytical distinctions that require different forms of evidence. Ideological contestation can be examined through documented discourses and competing interpretations; structural inequality through legal arrangements, institutional practices, and their documented consequences; and cultural legitimation through evidence demonstrating how cultural meanings are used to justify or normalize violence and inequality. The contribution of this distinction is not to introduce a new causal theory of cultural violence but to clarify the evidentiary requirements for applying Galtung's concept within the context of religious governance in Indonesia. By distinguishing what the reviewed documents establish from what remains theoretically possible, the study identifies the need for more explicit operationalization of cultural legitimation and a more cautious interpretation of the relationship between ideology, institutional inequality, and cultural violence.

The findings also carry practical and methodological implications for research and policy concerning religious inequality in Indonesia. At the institutional level, documented administrative barriers and discriminatory practices provide grounds for strengthening equitable religious recognition, improving policy implementation, and protecting constitutional rights. Such reforms are relevant independently of whether the cultural legitimation of these inequalities has been empirically established. At the pedagogical level, critical education and interfaith dialogue warrant further consideration as complementary approaches to developing inclusive religious understanding, rather than as substitutes for institutional reform. Future research could strengthen the application of Galtung's framework through comparative case studies, discourse analysis of institutional and public justifications, and interviews with religious communities, policymakers, and other relevant actors. Research on educational interventions could also distinguish immediate learning outcomes from sustained behavioral changes and changes in the acceptance or reproduction of discriminatory justifications. These approaches would provide stronger empirical foundations for evaluating the relationship between ideological interpretations, structural inequality, and cultural transformation. Ultimately, the significance of the present literature-based study lies in clarifying the boundaries of existing evidence and identifying the conditions under which cultural violence can be examined more rigorously, rather than claiming to have established its underlying mechanisms or demonstrated the effectiveness of particular transformative interventions.

4. CONCLUSION

This study identifies three principal findings concerning contested interpretations of Pancasila's first principle and inequalities in religious recognition in Indonesia. First, ideological contestation and administrative categorization constitute analytically distinct dimensions of religious governance, although the reviewed evidence does not establish a direct relationship between them. Second, institutional barriers, unequal administrative recognition, and discriminatory practices involving state and nonstate actors reveal persistent challenges to religious equality. However, the available evidence remains insufficient to establish how particular interpretations of Pancasila's first principle function as cultural justifications for these inequalities. Third, critical education and interfaith dialogue provide opportunities for developing interreligious competence, tolerance, and inclusive social engagement, but their effectiveness in reducing cultural violence remains empirically unverified within the reviewed literature. These findings emphasize that neither ideological

contestation nor structural inequality alone constitutes sufficient evidence of cultural violence. Identifying cultural violence requires evidence demonstrating the legitimizing function of particular cultural meanings in relation to direct or structural violence.

The conceptual contribution of this study lies in distinguishing ideological contestation, structural inequality, and cultural legitimation as analytically distinct dimensions of religious conflict and clarifying the evidentiary requirements for examining their relationships. This distinction highlights the interpretive relevance of Galtung's concept of cultural violence while identifying limitations in establishing its explanatory adequacy without more explicit operational criteria and context-specific evidence. The study underscores the importance of strengthening equitable religious recognition and protecting constitutional rights while positioning critical education and interfaith dialogue as complementary pedagogical approaches that warrant further investigation. The exploratory conceptual literature review design and the scope of the reviewed documents limit the study's capacity to establish causal relationships, identify specific mechanisms of cultural legitimation, and assess educational intervention effectiveness. Future research should therefore employ comparative case studies, discourse analysis, and in-depth interviews to examine the justificatory functions of ideological interpretations, alongside longitudinal evaluations of educational and interfaith initiatives to assess changes in discriminatory attitudes, social practices, and cultural justifications for inequality.

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