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Observation-Based Learning in Islamic Religious Education: Developing Spiritual Awareness, Sociological Sensitivity, and Inclusive Attitudes at an Indonesian University

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Abstract. This study examines how observation-based learning supported university students' spiritual awareness, sociological sensitivity, and inclusive attitudes in Islamic Religious Education (IRE). Using a qualitative case study design, the study analyzed a multi-level documentary corpus generated by 120 undergraduate students across three class sections in the History of Islam and Studies of Indonesian Society course at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia. The corpus comprised 36 group observation reports, three classroom discussion documents, and 120 individual reflective writings produced following structured field encounters with diverse religious and social communities. Data were examined through qualitative document analysis and reflexive thematic analysis, with data-source triangulation across group-, class-, and individual-level documents and additional credibility checks used to assess convergent and divergent patterns. Findings indicate that observation-based learning supported movement from predominantly textual and categorical understandings toward interpretation of religion as a lived social reality. Spiritual awareness appeared as reflective-moral self-examination, recognition of prejudice, empathy, and responsibility; sociological sensitivity as historical, cultural, institutional, and socio-political contextualization; and inclusive attitudes as respectful listening, clarification before judgment, resistance to stereotyping, and dialogical engagement. The study contributes to IRE scholarship by conceptualizing observation-

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based learning as a reflective-contextual pedagogy in which direct encounter becomes educationally meaningful through moral reflection, contextual interpretation, and dialogue.

Keywords: Observation-based learning; Islamic religious education; Spiritual awareness; Sociological sensitivity; Inclusive attitudes.

1. Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in higher education plays a strategic role in developing intellectually mature, morally responsible, and socially sensitive students (Afwadzi et al., 2024; Yani et al., 2025). In plural societies, IRE should extend beyond doctrinal and normative transmission (Felsenthal & Agbaria, 2026; Saada & Magadlah, 2021) by helping students understand how religious values are expressed through diverse rituals, traditions, institutions, cultures, and community identities (Thalgi, 2019; Tuna, 2024). This is particularly important because university students will encounter religious and social diversity as future professionals, educators, community members, and public actors (Suresman & Faqihuddin, 2026).

Islamic Religious Education should therefore connect textual knowledge with ethical reflection, social awareness, and inclusive engagement (Rosidin et al., 2024), since textual mastery alone does not necessarily foster spiritual awareness, sociological sensitivity, or inclusive attitudes (Chotimah et al., 2025; Sarea et al., 2026). These dimensions enable religious knowledge to shape students' perceptions, responses to difference, and social responsibility (Muhajir et al., 2025; Saihu et al., 2022). Observation-based learning supports this aim by exposing students directly to religious and social realities (Kistoro et al., 2023; Muhamad et al., 2024), allowing them to understand religion as lived experience rather than knowledge alone (Tuna et al., 2023). It can thus support a shift from doctrinal instruction toward reflective, contextual, and socially responsive IRE (Hamzah et al., 2026; Jenuri et al., 2025).

The urgency of this study lies in the persistent gap between classroom-based religious knowledge, and the religious realities students encounter in society (Hidayat & Ibrahim, 2021; Muhamad et al., 2024). Religious practices, cultural traditions, minority communities, intra-religious differences, and local belief systems often exceed what can be understood through textual categories alone (Rosidin et al., 2024; Tuna, 2024). When religious understanding is detached from social experience, unfamiliar practices may be met with premature judgment, stereotyping, or rejection (Chotimah et al., 2025), while religious conviction without sociological sensitivity may become exclusionary (Muhaemin et al., 2023; Yani et al., 2025).

Although disagreement is inevitable in plural societies (Sijamhodžić-Nadarević, 2023; Thalgi, 2019), the deeper challenge concerns the capacity to interpret religious expression within its social, cultural, historical, and educational contexts (Anwar et al., 2024). Without such contextual understanding, religious learning may reinforce identity without cultivating empathy, humility, and ethical

engagement (Kimanen, 2016; Saihu et al., 2022). This exposes a pedagogical limitation in Islamic Religious Education: students may understand religious values conceptually yet receive limited preparation to examine how those values are practiced, negotiated, and interpreted across diverse communities (Luthfi et al., 2025; Muhajir et al., 2025). Consequently, tolerance, moderation, and respect may remain normative ideals rather than enacted dispositions (Rahmat & Yahya, 2022; Zulfatmi, 2023). Addressing this gap requires pedagogies that expose students to social-religious plurality while prompting critical reflection on prior assumptions (Demirel Ucan & Wright, 2019; Saada & Magadlah, 2021). Observation-based learning responds to this need by transforming direct social encounters into structured educational experiences (Kistoro et al., 2023; Muhamad et al., 2024).

The conceptual foundation of this study integrates observation-based learning, spiritual awareness, sociological sensitivity, and inclusive attitudes (Kistoro et al., 2023). Observation-based learning is understood as an experiential strategy through which students engage directly with real contexts, interpret social realities, and critically reflect on their assumptions rather than remain passive recipients of information (Kistoro et al., 2023; Muhamad et al., 2024; Nailasariy et al., 2023). This approach is particularly relevant to Islamic Religious Education because religion is not only textual or doctrinal, but also lived, practiced, institutionalized, and socially interpreted (Masdin et al., 2025; Syamsuni et al., 2025). Spiritual awareness is conceptualized beyond ritual religiosity or formal piety (Hamzah et al., 2026) as reflective-moral awareness involving recognition of personal bias, humility, empathy, and social responsibility (Amirudin et al., 2026; Khimmataliev et al., 2025).

Sociological sensitivity denotes the capacity to interpret religious practices through social, cultural, historical, educational, and community contexts rather than immediate theological judgment (Chotimah et al., 2025; Hidayat & Ibrahim, 2021), while inclusive attitudes encompass openness, respect for human dignity, attentive listening, resistance to stereotyping, and dialogical engagement (Luthfi et al., 2025; Yahya & Rahmat, 2021). These dimensions are conceptually interconnected (Supriyatno & Ubabuddin, 2019): spiritual awareness informs moral reflection, sociological sensitivity provides contextual understanding, and inclusive attitudes shape ethical responses to difference (Supriyatno & Ubabuddin, 2019). Together, they reflect a broader shift in Islamic Religious Education from predominantly cognitive instruction toward reflective and contextual pedagogy (Felsenthal & Agbaria, 2026), which is essential for preparing university students to engage responsibly with plural social realities (Arifin et al., 2025).

Although prior scholarship has emphasized reflective IRE, contextual learning, spiritual formation, religious moderation, and inclusive education, it has not fully explained how encounters with religious difference integrate moral reflection, contextual interpretation, and inclusive engagement within a concrete pedagogical process. This study addresses this gap by conceptualizing observation-based learning as a reflective-contextual pedagogy structured

through direct encounter, reflection, contextual interpretation, and dialogue. Its novelty is relational rather than additive: spiritual awareness represents reflective-moral examination of assumptions and ethical responsibility, sociological sensitivity provides contextual interpretation of religious difference through historical, cultural, institutional, and social conditions, and inclusive attitudes represent ethical-dialogical responses characterized by respect, careful judgment, and constructive engagement. By explaining how these dimensions become pedagogically interconnected, the framework extends experiential approaches and clarifies how encounters with religious diversity can support reflective and socially responsive learning in IRE.

2. Literature Review

2.1 IRE in Higher Education: From Textual Instruction to Reflective Pedagogy

Islamic Religious Education in higher education is increasingly positioned as a formative pedagogy that develops moral agency, intellectual maturity, spiritual insight, and social responsibility. Accordingly, university religious education should extend beyond doctrinal transmission and cognitive mastery toward connecting Islamic knowledge with ethical judgment, civic participation, and social care.

Contemporary scholarship supports this broader role by framing IRE as a space for ethical cultivation, character formation, reflective understanding, and critical engagement with social realities (Saada & Magadlah, 2021; Suresman & Faqihuddin, 2026). Yet predominantly abstract and text-centered instruction may strengthen conceptual knowledge without necessarily developing students' capacity to interpret religious plurality, cultural difference, and lived religious complexity. This limitation becomes evident when religious moderation remains primarily curricular or normative discourse rather than a process that reshapes students' social reasoning and responses to difference (Chotimah et al., 2025).

Alternative approaches partly address this limitation. Multicultural, pluralism-oriented, and contextual models connect religious learning with real social settings and support tolerance, inclusivity, and knowledge-based virtues (Tuna, 2024), while digital, critical-contextual, and design-based approaches emphasize reflection, collaboration, and inquiry to strengthen religious literacy and contextual understanding (Amirudin et al., 2026; Faqihuddin, Sari, et al., 2026; Suresman et al., 2025). Despite their different forms, these approaches converge on the need to relate religious knowledge to social realities. What remains less explicit is how students move from classroom knowledge to reconsidering prior assumptions when encountering lived religious difference. This unresolved process provides the rationale for examining observation-based learning as a bridge between religious knowledge, self-reflection, contextual interpretation, and ethical engagement.

2.2 Observation-Based Learning as Experiential and Contextual Pedagogy

Observation-based learning can be understood as an experiential and contextual pedagogy that shifts learning from passive reception toward direct engagement with social, material, and relational realities. Observation is therefore more than

seeing; it involves visual, embodied, reflective, and relational ways of knowing (Bhat et al., 2025; Isaza Dominguez et al., 2026). This orientation is particularly relevant to IRE because religion is encountered not only through texts and doctrines but also through rituals, ethical conduct, community relations, sacred spaces, cultural practices, and everyday social negotiation. Observation can thus connect classroom knowledge with lived religion by enabling students to examine how religious meanings and values operate in concrete social contexts.

Experiential and contextual Islamic education supports this connection by enabling students to construct understanding through direct experience, reflection, contextual interpretation, and links between Islamic teachings and everyday responsibility (Kistoro et al., 2023; Muhamad et al., 2024). However, direct exposure alone does not ensure meaningful learning. Observation becomes pedagogically significant when encounters are documented, reflected upon, discussed, and interpreted; otherwise, field activity may remain descriptive or reinforce prior assumptions. The issue is therefore not merely whether students encounter religious diversity, but how such encounters are mediated into reflective and contextual learning. In this study, observation-based learning is treated as a structured process integrating direct encounter, ethical presence, reflective documentation, contextual analysis, and dialogue.

2.3 Spiritual Awareness as Reflective-Moral Formation

Spiritual awareness should not be reduced to ritual religiosity, formal piety, or procedural adherence to institutional religion. In educational terms, it is more productively understood as reflective-moral consciousness through which learners construct meaning and connect belief with ethical action. Scholarship associates lived spirituality with sincerity, compassion, moral responsibility, and everyday ethical conduct (Alsuhaymi & Atallah, 2025; Ridho et al., 2026). Spiritual awareness therefore involves self-reflection, humility, empathy, forgiveness, moral responsibility, and concern for others. Cultural and pedagogical traditions further show that moral-spiritual formation can occur through lived example, oral narratives, communal practices, altruism, and social solidarity, indicating that spirituality is both inward and socially embodied (Manggau et al., 2025; Saimun, 2025).

Within IRE, spiritual awareness links religious understanding with ethical formation and social responsibility. Islamic practices such as *ṣalāh* [ritual prayer] and *tazkiyah* [self-purification] can function pedagogically to cultivate humility, patience, sincerity, self-purification, and resilient Muslim identity (Alsuhaymi & Atallah, 2025), while Islamic reformist thought positions spiritual consciousness as a force for public ethics and social renewal rather than withdrawal from social life (Nor Ichwan et al., 2024). These perspectives establish the social relevance of spirituality but give less attention to how encounters with religious difference may trigger spiritual self-examination. Observation-based learning addresses this issue by creating opportunities for students to reconsider assumptions through encounters, dialogue, and reflection (Ridho et al., 2026). Spiritual awareness is therefore examined here not as increased religiosity, but as reflective-moral

formation expressed through humility, empathy, recognition of bias, and responsibility toward others.

2.4 Sociological Sensitivity toward Religious and Cultural Diversity

Sociological sensitivity refers to students' capacity to interpret religious practices through social, cultural, historical, educational, and community contexts rather than through immediate judgment. This capacity is essential in IRE because religion is lived through family traditions, local customs, institutions, minority-majority relations, sacred spaces, and community identities. Research on pluralism-oriented and intercultural religious education indicates that students need interpretive capacities to understand how beliefs and practices are shaped by social contexts (Sijamhodžić-Nadarević, 2023; Tuna, 2024). The literature therefore converges on contextual interpretation as an alternative to binary judgments of unfamiliar religious practices.

This need is particularly relevant in Indonesia, where religious education intersects with multicultural values, local traditions, varied religious practices, and intra-religious diversity. Research on religious moderation and everyday Islamic values similarly indicates that contextual interpretation can support more constructive understandings of diversity (Muhaemin et al., 2023; Syamsuni et al., 2025). However, contextual understanding is often discussed as literacy, moderation, or multicultural competence rather than as a distinct pedagogical capacity connecting moral reflection with ethical response. This study conceptualizes sociological sensitivity as that interpretive bridge: students examine how history, culture, institutions, and social relations shape religious practices before reaching evaluative judgments. Moral openness therefore becomes more educationally meaningful when supported by contextual understanding.

2.5 Inclusive Attitudes, Religious Moderation, and Dialogical Engagement

Inclusive attitudes are central to religious moderation because they enable students to engage in difference through openness, empathy, respect, and dialogical responsibility. Inclusivity does not imply religious relativism or abandonment of Islamic identity; rather, it involves maintaining theological commitment while respecting human dignity, listening without prejudice, avoiding stereotypes, and participating constructively in interreligious and intercultural encounters. In IRE, this orientation aligns with religious moderation as a commitment to balance, justice, tolerance, and ethical restraint in responding to plurality (Rahmat & Yahya, 2022; Zulfatmi, 2023). Inclusive attitudes should therefore be understood as active pedagogical dispositions rather than passive tolerance.

The literature also distinguishes between endorsing moderation normatively and forming inclusive dispositions pedagogically. Religious moderation becomes meaningful when embedded through curriculum integration, reflective experience, critical engagement, and evaluation that shape students' character and social reasoning (Chotimah et al., 2025; Muis, 2026). When effectively integrated, IRE can foster fairness, tolerance, non-violence, empathy, and peaceful conflict resolution, while Islamic higher education can strengthen moderate and

pluralistic identities and interreligious competence (Muhsin et al., 2024). Yet knowledge of moderation discourse alone does not demonstrate how students learn to act inclusively when confronting unfamiliar or contested difference. Accordingly, this study treats inclusive attitudes as ethical-dialogical responses – such as respectful listening, clarification before judgment, resistance to stereotyping, and constructive dialogue—developed through direct encounter, reflection, and contextual interpretation.

2.6 Critical Synthesis and Conceptual Positioning

Contemporary IRE is increasingly expected to move beyond doctrinal transmission toward reflective, contextual, and ethically responsible engagement with religious diversity, yet existing scholarship often treats spiritual formation, contextual interpretation, experiential engagement, and religious moderation separately.

This study addresses that gap by positioning observation-based learning as a reflective-contextual pedagogy that integrates three complementary, non-linear dimensions: spiritual awareness as reflective-moral self-examination, sociological sensitivity as contextual interpretation of religious practices, and inclusive attitudes as ethical-dialogical engagement. Sociological sensitivity functions as a bridge between moral reflection and ethical response, while direct encounter, reflective documentation, contextual interpretation, and classroom dialogue connect these dimensions. Thus, the three dimensions are analytically distinguishable but pedagogically interconnected rather than sequential or causal.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to examine how observation-based learning supported university students' spiritual awareness, sociological sensitivity, and inclusive attitudes in Islamic Religious Education (IRE). The qualitative approach enabled examination of students' meaning-making, reflection, and responses to religious and social diversity rather than statistical measurement of predetermined variables (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The case was bounded by a specific institution, course, participant cohort, and learning sequence (Yin, 2018).

The study was situated in the *History of Islam and Studies of Indonesian Society* course within the IRE program at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia. The case was selected for its analytical and pedagogical relevance because the course integrates Islamic history, sociological interpretation, religious diversity, and structured engagement with Indonesian society. It therefore provided an appropriate setting for examining how direct encounter, reflection, and contextual interpretation were associated with students' emerging spiritual awareness, sociological sensitivity, and inclusive attitudes.

As a single qualitative case, the study does not claim statistical generalizability. Instead, contextual and methodological descriptions are provided to support analytical transferability to comparable IRE settings.

3.2 Research Context, Participants, and Data Sources

The study was conducted in the IRE program at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, within the *History of Islam and Studies of Indonesian Society* course. Its integration of Islamic history, sociological analysis, religious diversity, and structured encounters with religious communities, institutions, houses of worship, local belief communities, and intra-religious groups made it particularly relevant for connecting textual religious knowledge with lived social realities.

The cohort comprised 120 undergraduate students across three existing class sections. The study followed these intact instructional structures rather than recruiting individual participants through purposive sampling. Students formed 36 observation groups, each producing one observation report; the three classes generated three classroom discussion documents; and all 120 students produced individual reflective writings. The qualitative corpus therefore represented group-, class-, and individual-level evidence.

Table 1: Distribution of observation reports by religious and social context

Religious/social context	Observed setting/community	Reports	%
Protestant Christianity	Protestant churches of several denominations	15	41.67
Roman Catholic Christianity	Cathedral, parish churches, and Catholic community settings	5	13.89
Hinduism	Temples, pasraman [Hindu religious schools], and setra [burial/sacred spaces]	5	13.89
Islam	Mosques, Lembaga Dakwah Islam Indonesia (LDII) [Indonesian Islamic Propagation Institute], and Shia-affiliated foundations	3	8.33
Buddhism	Buddhist temples and community settings	3	8.33
Confucianism	Kong Miao [Confucian temple] and Tridharma [Three Teachings] settings	2	5.56
Orthodox Christianity	Orthodox church	1	2.78
Jehovah's Witnesses	Kingdom Hall	1	2.78
Local belief tradition	Sunda Wiwitan [Sundanese ancestral belief tradition] community	1	2.78
Total		36	100

The counts and proportions in Table 1 describe only the composition of the qualitative corpus. They were not treated as quantitative variables, prevalence measures, or inferential evidence, and no statistical comparisons were conducted. The figures therefore function solely as descriptive corpus mapping and do not constitute a quantitative or mixed-methods component.

The corpus comprised 36 group observation reports (D01–D36), three classroom discussion documents (CDD-2A–CDD-2C), and 120 individual reflective writings (SRW-S01–SRW-S120). These represented group-level documentation of field encounters, class-level dialogical meaning-making, and individual-level reflection (Bowen, 2009; Saldaña, 2021). Observation reports captured encounters

and initial interpretations; classroom documents recorded collective comparison and discussion; and reflective writings captured personal self-evaluation, contextual understanding, and ethical responses. Cross-source comparison examined whether interpretations were supported, qualified, or contradicted across these levels, constituting data-source triangulation within the documentary corpus, not methodological triangulation involving formal research interviews or independent researcher observation. Table 2 summarizes the participant structure, documentary data sources, coding system, and analytical roles within the study.

Table 2: Research participants and data sources

Source	Participants/documents	Number	Code	Role
Students	Students enrolled across three course sections	120	S01–S120	Learning participants
Observation groups	Groups conducting structured field observation	36	G01–G36	Observation/report units
Observation reports	Group field-observation reports	36	D01–D36	Primary documentary data
Classroom discussion documents	Post-observation class records	3	CDD-2A–CDD-2C	Class-level reflection
Reflective writings	Individual post-observation reflections	120	SRW-S01–SRW-S120	Individual reflective data
Observation sites	Religious and social settings visited	36	OS01–OS36	Field contexts; not research participants

Group-, class-, and individual-level documents enabled systematic cross-source comparison, supplemented by member checking, peer debriefing, coding and theme cross-checking, and external review, as detailed in Section 3.5.

3.3 Observation-Based Learning Procedure

The observation-based learning procedure comprised four stages: orientation to objectives, ethics, and respectful engagement; field observation of religious practices, institutions, symbols, community activities, and social interactions; group report writing with reflection; and classroom discussion with individual reflective writing. Dialogues with community representatives supported learning but were not formal research interviews, and the representatives were not research participants. Together, these stages integrated concrete experience, reflection, conceptualization, and interpretation consistent with experiential learning (Kolb, 1984; Kistoro et al., 2023).

3.4 Data Analysis

Data was analyzed through qualitative document analysis and reflexive thematic analysis across six phases: familiarization, initial coding, candidate-theme development, theme review and refinement, theme definition, and analytical

writing (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2021). All 36 observation reports, three classroom discussion documents, and 120 reflective writings were repeatedly examined across group-, class-, and individual-level accounts. Coding involved two iterative cycles combining deductive and inductive strategies: the first coded students' experiences, interpretations, reflections, and ethical responses using spiritual awareness, sociological sensitivity, and inclusive attitudes as sensitizing constructs while remaining open to emergent meanings; the second compared and consolidated codes into broader analytical patterns and candidate themes. Theme development remained iterative rather than predetermined, with codes related to bias, self-correction, empathy, humility, and responsibility informing reflective-moral formation; historical, cultural, institutional, minority, and non-binary interpretations informing contextual religious understanding; and listening, clarification, respect, and dialogue informing ethical-dialogical engagement.

Candidate themes were reviewed against the complete corpus for coherence, distinctiveness, and relevance, incorporating both convergent and divergent evidence. Research-team cross-checking examined inconsistencies and alternative interpretations for analytical scrutiny rather than statistical intercoder agreement. Coding and data organization were conducted manually in Microsoft Word, while interpretation, code refinement, and theme development remained researcher led. Table 3 illustrates how initial codes were progressively organized into broader analytical patterns across the three conceptual dimensions.

Table 3: Illustrative progression from coding to analytical interpretation

Dimension	Illustrative evidence	Initial code	Analytical pattern
Spiritual awareness	Avoiding negative labels toward different beliefs	Recognition of bias	Reflective self-correction
Spiritual awareness	Linking religious commitment with care for others	Moral responsibility	Reflective-moral formation
Sociological sensitivity	Sunni-Shia difference interpreted historically	Historical contextualization	Contextual religious understanding
Sociological sensitivity	Unfamiliar practices interpreted contextually before judgment	Avoidance of binary judgment	Contextual interpretation
Inclusive attitudes	Listening before expressing judgment	Active listening	Dialogical engagement
Inclusive attitudes	Clarifying contested differences before judging	Clarification before judgment	Ethical-dialogical engagement

3.5 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was strengthened through data-source triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, coding and theme cross-checking, external review, divergent-case analysis, audit trails, reflexive memos, and contextual description. Credibility was supported by comparing 36 observation reports, three classroom discussion documents, and 120 reflective writings across group-, class-, and individual-level accounts, while member checking, peer debriefing, team cross-

checking, and external review examined interpretive adequacy and alternative explanations. Discrepant evidence was retained to refine themes. Dependability and confirmability were supported through audit trails, reflexive memos, peer scrutiny, and iterative review of analytical coherence (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017; Saldaña, 2021), while contextual description supported transferability. These procedures constituted **data-source triangulation**, not methodological triangulation; the corpus comprised student-generated documents and excluded formal research interviews and independent researcher observation. Findings were therefore interpreted within the bounded documentary and pedagogical context.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations guided the research throughout. Observation reports, classroom discussion documents, and reflective writings were analyzed with attention to confidentiality, anonymity, respect, and responsible interpretation. Codes rather than students' names were used in reporting. Religious communities and institutions were identified only where necessary to describe observation contexts, while analysis focused on students' learning rather than evaluating the communities themselves. Dialogues with community representatives formed part of the learning activity and were not analyzed as formal research interviews; these representatives were therefore not research participants. The study also avoided deficit-based or stereotypical representations because the research addressed sensitive issues of religion, identity, and social diversity.

4. Results and Findings

4.1 Overview of Students' Observation-Based Learning Experiences

The observation-based learning activity involved 120 students organized into 36 groups, generating 36 observation reports, three classroom discussion documents, and 120 individual reflective writings. The observation contexts represented interreligious, intra-religious, denominational, minority, and local belief settings. Rather than functioning as equivalent sources, these documents captured different layers of the learning process: observation reports primarily documented field encounters; classroom discussions enabled comparison across observation contexts, and individual reflections revealed how students interpreted those encounters in relation to their prior assumptions and ethical positions. Figure 1 illustrates the diverse religious and social settings in which students conducted their observation activities.



Figure 1: Documentation of students' observation activities at diverse religious sites

Cross-source analysis revealed three interconnected patterns. First, field encounters expanded the object of religious learning from doctrines and formal identities to lived practices, symbols, institutions, community relations, and ethical conduct. Second, comparison across observation contexts made religious diversity more concrete by exposing students to differences within as well as between religious traditions. Third, classroom discussion and individual reflection transformed these encounters from descriptive observations into occasions for interpretive comparison and self-evaluation. The analytical significance of the activity therefore lay not simply in students' exposure to diverse communities, but in the movement from encountering difference to interpreting its social meaning and reconsidering prior assumptions. Table 4 summarizes these patterns and their representative evidence.

Table 4: Summary of students' observation-based learning experiences

Finding area	Empirical pattern	Representative evidence	Data source
Encounter with lived religion	Students observed religion through rituals, sacred spaces, symbols, institutional practices, community activities, and everyday ethical conduct.	Observation reports described worship practices, temple and church spaces, mosque activities, community discipline, and religious symbols as part of lived religious life.	D01/OS01; D15/OS15; D22/OS22; D29/OS29
Exposure to religious and social diversity	Students encountered interreligious, intra-religious, denominational, minority, and local belief contexts in concrete social settings.	Students observed Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, intra-Islamic, Jehovah's Witness, and Sunda Wiwitan contexts.	D14/OS14; D23/OS23; D25/OS25; D28/OS28; D34/OS34
Recognition of contextual religious life	Students began to understand that religious practices are shaped by history, culture, institutions,	Students interpreted religious practices in relation to cultural identity, institutional history, sacred	D08/OS08; D17/OS17; D20/OS20; D34/OS34

	community identity, and social interaction.	space, community ethics, and minority experience.	
Reflective comparison	Students compared classroom knowledge and prior assumptions with field-based realities.	Classroom discussions showed that students reconsidered assumptions after comparing different observation contexts and listening to peer presentations.	CDD-2A; CDD-2B; CDD-2C
Emerging ethical awareness	Students identified ethical values such as compassion, discipline, sincerity, social care, respect, and peaceful coexistence across different communities.	Reflective writings showed that students connected religious understanding with empathy, humility, and responsibility toward others.	SRW-S01; SRW-S05; SRW-S06; SRW-S20

4.2 Moving Beyond Textual Understanding of Religion

A central analytical pattern was a shift from categorical understanding toward contextual interpretation. Students' retrospective reflections suggested that some prior understandings of religious difference were organized through formal categories, inherited assumptions, or simplified public representations. Field encounters complicated these categories by showing that religious life was simultaneously doctrinal, ritual, cultural, institutional, historical, and social. The relevant change was therefore not the abandonment of textual religious knowledge, but an expansion of the interpretive frame through which that knowledge was applied to lived religious realities. Figure 2 illustrates students' direct dialogical encounters with religious and community representatives during field observations.



Figure 2: Dialogical encounters between students and religious or community representatives during field observations.

This pattern was visible across substantially different observation contexts. In the Sunda Wiwitan context, spirituality was interpreted in relation to nature, food sovereignty, ancestral values, and cultural identity (D34/OS34; SRW-S01), while Hindu practices were connected to sacred space, family ethics, naming traditions, and regional culture (D08/OS08; SRW-S11). Although these communities differed

religiously, the same analytical movement was evident: practices that could initially be approached as unfamiliar religious forms became intelligible when students considered the cultural and social meanings surrounding them.

The contrast was particularly visible in contested intra-Islamic contexts. Reflections concerning LDII moved from public assumptions about exclusivity toward interpretation of ritual caution, purity, mosque ethics, and organizational discipline (D29/OS29; SRW-S02). Similarly, reflections on a Shia-affiliated foundation situated Sunni-Shia difference within histories of religious authority, communal identity, and minority experience rather than relying primarily on public labels (D25/OS25; SRW-S04). Across these cases, observation functioned as a form of assumption testing: inherited categories were compared with field-based evidence and subsequently qualified through contextual information. Figure 3 shows the post-observation classroom discussion through which students compared, reflected on, and contextualized their field experiences.



Figure 3: Post-observation reflective classroom discussion.

Thus, the movement beyond textual understanding did not mean replacing doctrine with social explanation. It involved adding interpretive layers through which doctrines, symbols, institutions, and differences could be understood within lived contexts. As summarized in Table 5, the recurring analytical movement was from categorization to contextualization, providing an interpretive foundation for the reflective-moral, sociological, and inclusive patterns examined in the following sections.

Table 5: Students' movement from textual to contextual understanding

Initial tendency	Field-based encounter	Emerging understanding	Representative data source
Religion was understood mainly as doctrine, rules, or formal identity.	Students observed rituals, sacred spaces, institutional practices, symbols, and community activities directly.	Religion was understood as lived, practiced, symbolized, and socially organized.	D01/OS01; D15/OS15; D22/OS22
Difference was viewed through binary judgment or inherited public stereotypes.	Students encountered intra-Islamic and minority religious contexts through structured observation.	Religious difference was interpreted more contextually and less judgmentally.	D25/OS25; SRW-S04; D29/OS29; SRW-S02
Contested intra-Islamic communities were often understood through public suspicion or labels of deviance.	Students observed Muslim communities whose teachings or practices are contested by some other Muslim groups.	Students began to interpret contested Muslim communities through history, religious authority, ritual ethics, organizational identity, and social stigma.	D25/OS25; SRW-S04; D29/OS29; SRW-S02; D36/OS36; SRW-S03
Minority or unfamiliar traditions were initially understood through limited information.	Students observed local belief, Confucian, Jehovah's Witness, and Shia-affiliated communities.	Students recognized the complexity of Indonesian religious life and the need for careful interpretation.	D14/OS14; D23/OS23; D25/OS25; D34/OS34
Religious symbols were vulnerable to external misinterpretation.	Students observed sacred objects, statues, architectural arrangements, and ritual spaces in context.	Symbols were understood as carriers of memory, respect, devotion, identity, and moral meaning.	D01/OS01; D14/OS14; D17/OS17; D22/OS22
Religious institutions were seen mainly as places of worship.	Students observed community services, education, leadership structures, and social activities.	Houses of worship were understood as social, educational, and ethical community centers.	D15/OS15; D21/OS21; D29/OS29; CDD-2B

4.3 Development of Spiritual Awareness through Reflective Encounter

Spiritual awareness emerged analytically as reflective-moral formation rather than increased ritual or doctrinal certainty. Across the reflective writings, the relevant pattern was a change in the object of moral evaluation: students increasingly directed evaluation toward their own assumptions, prejudices, and responsibilities rather than only toward the religious practices they observed. Spiritual reflection therefore became visible through self-correction, empathy, and recognition of moral responsibility toward religious others.

The first dimension of this pattern was recognition of personal bias. Reflections associated with Sunda Wiwitan and contested intra-Islamic contexts emphasized avoidance of negative labeling, critical examination of the quality of one's tolerance, and *tabayyun* [verification or clarification] before judgment (D34/OS34; SRW-S01; D29/OS29; SRW-S02; D36/OS36; SRW-S03; D25/OS25; SRW-S04). Analytically, these responses indicate more than acceptance of diversity: they show a shift from evaluating others to evaluating the ethical adequacy of one's own response to difference.

A second dimension connects spirituality with social responsibility. Reflections relating love for God to care for marginalized people (D30/OS30; SRW-S05) and *hablum minallah* [relationship with God] to *hablum minannas* [relationships among human beings] (D22/OS22; SRW-S06) positioned religiosity as socially consequential rather than exclusively private. A third pattern extended this moral recognition beyond students' own traditions: a Christian observation prompted recognition that differences in worship did not necessarily imply differences in sincerity or moral commitment (D15/OS15; SRW-S07).

Taken together, these patterns distinguish spiritual awareness from generalized tolerance. The analytical change lay in moral self-examination: encounters with religious difference provided material through which students reconsidered prejudice, responsibility, empathy, and the relationship between religious commitment and treatment of others. Table 6 presents representative evidence supporting this interpretation.

Table 6: Representative evidence of spiritual awareness in students' reflections

Indicator of spiritual awareness	Representative evidence	Data source
Self-reflection	A student reflected on the need to become more self-aware and avoid giving negative labels to people of different beliefs.	D34/OS34; SRW-S01
Active moral tolerance	A student questioned whether tolerance had been practiced as an active moral commitment or only as passive coexistence.	D29/OS29; SRW-S02
Clarification before judgment	Students emphasized <i>tabayyun</i> , or ethical clarification, to avoid being shaped by stigma and second-hand narratives.	D36/OS36; SRW-S03; D25/OS25; SRW-S04

Empathy as spiritual expression	A student interpreted love for God as requiring love, care, and responsibility toward visible human beings.	D30/OS30; SRW-S05
Spirituality as social responsibility	A student connected <i>hablum minallah</i> with <i>hablum minannas</i> and understood religiosity as responsibility for social harmony.	D22/OS22; SRW-S06
Recognition of sincerity in other traditions	A student reflected that differences in worship practices do not necessarily mean differences in religious sincerity.	D15/OS15; SRW-S07

4.4 Development of Sociological Sensitivity toward Religious and Cultural Diversity

Sociological sensitivity was reflected in students' increasing ability to move from surface description to multi-layered contextual explanation. Across the corpus, this involved three related interpretive shifts: from isolated theological difference to historical-cultural contextualization; from ritual description to recognition of institutional and structural conditions; and from inherited public labels to inquiry into community identity and social experience.

The first shift involved historical and cultural contextualization. Christian denominational differences were interpreted through historical, political, cultural, and civilizational developments (D28/OS28; SRW-S08), while Sunni-Shia difference was situated within debates over leadership, religious authority, and communal memory (D25/OS25; SRW-S09). Other reflections connected Sunda Wiwitan practices with food sovereignty and cultural resilience (D34/OS34; SRW-S10), Hindu identity with family and regional culture (D08/OS08; SRW-S11), and *xiao* [filial piety] in Confucianism with intergenerational responsibility and social order (D14/OS14; SRW-S12). Despite their different contexts, these accounts shared an interpretive pattern: religious practices became more intelligible when situated within histories, cultures, and social relationships.

The second shift extended contextual interpretation from culture to structure. Students linked minority religious experiences with administrative recognition, identity documentation, discrimination, social acceptance, and practical access to worship (D34/OS34; SRW-S13; D21/OS21; SRW-S14). This broadened the analytical object from what communities believe or practice to the institutional and socio-political conditions under which religious life occurs.

The third shift concerned publicly contested or unfamiliar communities. Rather than treating public labels as sufficient explanations, students interpreted Shia and LDII contexts through religious authority, ritual ethics, organizational identity, majority-minority relations, and social stigma (D25/OS25; SRW-S09; D29/OS29; SRW-S02). Similar contextual restraint appeared when Jehovah's Witness community boundaries were interpreted as expressions of religious identity rather than simply as unfamiliar behavior (D23/OS23; SRW-S16). The recurring pattern was therefore not simple acceptance of difference, but interpretive restraint grounded in contextual inquiry.

Sociological sensitivity consequently functioned as more than awareness of diversity. It involved asking how religious life becomes historically formed, culturally embedded, institutionally organized, and socially positioned before reaching evaluative conclusions. Table 7 summarizes the different forms of contextual interpretation identified across the corpus.

Table 7: Representative evidence of sociological sensitivity in students' reflections

Dimension of sociological sensitivity	Representative evidence	Data source
Historical contextualization	Christian denominational diversity was interpreted as the result of historical, political, cultural, and theological development.	D28/OS28; SRW-S08
Intra-Islamic contextual understanding	Sunni-Shia difference was understood in relation to historical debates over leadership, religious authority, and communal identity.	D25/OS25; SRW-S09
Interpretation of contested Muslim communities	Students interpreted contested Muslim communities through historical narratives, ritual ethics, organizational identity, and social stigma rather than through inherited labels of deviance.	D25/OS25; SRW-S09; D29/OS29; SRW-S02; D36/OS36; SRW-S03
Local-cultural interpretation	Sunda Wiwitan practices were interpreted through food sovereignty, ancestral values, and cultural resilience.	D34/OS34; SRW-S10
Cultural and regional sensitivity	Balinese Hindu naming traditions were understood as part of the interaction between religion, family, and local culture.	D08/OS08; SRW-S11
Family and ethical structure	The Confucian concept of <i>xiao</i> , or filial piety, was understood as an ethical structure for family responsibility and social order.	D14/OS14; SRW-S12
Structural awareness of minority experience	Local belief communities were linked to administrative challenges in official identity documents, including KTP [national identity card] and KK [family card].	D34/OS34; SRW-S13
Awareness of worship rights	A minority Christian community was linked to practical challenges related to discrimination, social acceptance, and permits for houses of worship.	D21/OS21; SRW-S14
Institutional and educational function	A church was understood not only as a place of worship, but also as a center for social service, education, and community development.	D15/OS15; SRW-S15
Non-judgmental interpretation of unfamiliar practices	The social boundaries of Jehovah's Witnesses were interpreted as part of religious identity and ethical choice.	D23/OS23; SRW-S16
Cultural-linguistic sensitivity	The use of <i>amang</i> [a Batak respectful form of address for an adult male] in an <i>Huria Kristen Batak Protestan</i> (HKBP) [Batak Protestant Christian Church] church context was interpreted as cultural integration within religious life.	D20/OS20; SRW-S17

4.5 Development of Inclusive Attitudes through Dialogical Engagement

Inclusive attitudes emerged as ethical-dialogical dispositions rather than passive tolerance or unrestricted acceptance of religious differences. Across the reflective writings, inclusivity was expressed through restraint from premature judgment, willingness to listen and clarify, constructive engagement with contested difference, and recognition of professional responsibility as future IRE teachers. This distinction is analytically important because students did not describe inclusion as abandoning theological commitment; instead, they increasingly framed it as regulating how religious conviction is expressed in encounters with others.

The first pattern involved movement from judgment toward ethical restraint. Reflections following Sunda Wiwitan and Christian observations emphasized avoiding negative labels and withholding premature judgment (D34/OS34; SRW-S18; D15/OS15; SRW-S19). The second pattern moved beyond non-judgment toward active dialogue. Students described tolerance through listening, respectful curiosity, and willingness to encounter perspectives outside their own experience (D08/OS08; SRW-S20; D04/OS04; SRW-S21; D18/OS18; SRW-S22). Inclusivity therefore involved not simply refraining from hostility but actively creating conditions for understanding.

Contested intra-Islamic observations made this distinction particularly visible. Students emphasized *tabayyun*, contextual understanding, and careful engagement before evaluating communities that were publicly stigmatized or contested (D36/OS36; SRW-S03; D25/OS25; SRW-S24). Here, inclusivity did not mean suspending judgment indefinitely; it meant making judgment more ethically disciplined by listening, verifying, and contextualizing before reaching conclusions.

A further pattern linked these dispositions with students' emerging professional identities. Reflections concerning objectivity, teaching religious moderation, non-imposition, and communication bridge-building indicate that students began to connect personal engagement with diversity to their anticipated responsibilities as future religious educators (D33/OS33; SRW-S23; D25/OS25; SRW-S24; D14/OS14; SRW-S25; D36/OS36; SRW-S26). Inclusive attitudes therefore appeared not only as personal orientations but also as emerging pedagogical dispositions. Table 8 summarizes the representative evidence underlying these patterns.

Table 8: Representative evidence of inclusive attitudes in students' reflections

Indicator of inclusive attitudes	Representative evidence	Data source
Non-judgmental attitude	A student emphasized the need to avoid negative labeling and to identify shared moral values behind ritual differences.	D34/OS34; SRW-S18
Open perspective as future educator	A student stated that prospective Islamic Religious Education teachers should be more open and avoid judging religious differences too quickly.	D15/OS15; SRW-S19
Dialogical openness	A student described tolerance as leaving one's comfort zone, sitting with people of different beliefs, listening, and understanding.	D08/OS08; SRW-S20
Respectful curiosity	A student reflected that curiosity accompanied by respect can open positive spaces for interreligious dialogue.	D04/OS04; SRW-S21
Active listening	A student emphasized listening to others' perspectives before expressing personal opinions.	D18/OS18; SRW-S22
Objective professional identity	A student stated that prospective religious educators should understand differences objectively and without prejudice.	D33/OS33; SRW-S23
Teaching tolerance and moderation	A student connected openness to difference with the future responsibility to teach tolerance and religious moderation.	D25/OS25; SRW-S24
Ethical engagement with contested intra-Islamic diversity	Students emphasized <i>tabayyun</i> , careful listening, and contextual understanding before judging Muslim communities whose teachings or practices are publicly contested by some other Muslim groups.	D36/OS36; SRW-S03; D25/OS25; SRW-S24; D29/OS29; SRW-S02
Non-imposition and constructive dialogue	A student emphasized that future religious educators should avoid imposing beliefs and should build constructive interreligious dialogue.	D14/OS14; SRW-S25
Communication bridge-building	A student emphasized objectivity, empathy, direct interaction, and building communication bridges across groups.	D36/OS36; SRW-S26

4.6 Synthesis of Findings

Across the documentary corpus, observation-based learning was associated with a movement from direct encounter to reflection, contextual interpretation, and ethical response. Field observations complicated predominantly textual or categorical understandings of religion, while reflective writings and classroom discussions prompted examination of assumptions, prejudice, empathy, and moral responsibility. Contextual interpretation situated religious difference within historical, cultural, institutional, administrative, and socio-political conditions, and dialogical engagement was expressed through respectful

listening, clarification before judgment, resistance to stereotyping, and constructive engagement.

The findings indicate that spiritual awareness, sociological sensitivity, and inclusive attitudes were analytically distinct but empirically interconnected: spiritual awareness reflected moral self-examination, sociological sensitivity enabled contextual interpretation, and inclusive attitudes represented ethical-dialogical responses. Sociological sensitivity functioned as a bridge between moral reflection and ethical response by grounding openness in contextual understanding. These relationships were recurring rather than fixed, uniform, or causal, supporting observation-based learning as a reflective-contextual pedagogical process linking encounter, self-examination, contextual understanding, and ethical-dialogical engagement in Islamic Religious Education.

5. Discussion

5.1 Observation-Based Learning as Pedagogical Mediation between Text and Lived Religion

The central implication of the findings is that the value of observation-based learning lies not in exposure to religious diversity alone, but in how that exposure is pedagogically mediated. Experiential and contextual approaches to IRE have already emphasized connecting religious concepts with concrete life situations (Kistoro et al., 2023; Muhamad et al., 2024). The present study extends this argument by showing that direct encounter becomes educationally meaningful when students are required to document what they encounter, compare it with prior assumptions, interpret it contextually, and discuss its significance with others. Observation therefore operates less as a field visit than as a structured interpretive process.

This distinction also qualifies critiques of text-centered religious education. Previous scholarship has argued for more reflective and contextual forms of IRE (Saada & Magadlah, 2021; Suhayib & Ansyari, 2023), but the present findings specify a mechanism through which classroom knowledge can be reworked rather than simply supplemented. Students did not abandon doctrinal categories; instead, those categories became less self-sufficient when confronted with religious practices embedded in cultural, historical, institutional, and social contexts. The pedagogical contribution is therefore not a replacement of textual learning with experience, but the creation of a recursive relationship between text and context, in which lived encounters provide material for reconsidering how religious knowledge is interpreted and applied.

This interpretation differs from a simple contact-based assumption that encountering diversity automatically produces greater openness. The findings indicate that encounter itself is insufficient: without reflection and contextualization, observation could merely reproduce existing stereotypes. What appears educationally consequential is the sequence of encounter, reflective documentation, contextual inquiry, and dialogue. Observation-based learning is therefore best understood as mediated experiential learning, rather than exposure alone.

5.2 Connecting Moral Reflection, Contextual Interpretation, and Ethical Response

A second contribution concerns the relationship between spiritual awareness, sociological sensitivity, and inclusive attitudes. Existing literature often addresses spiritual formation, contextual understanding, and inclusive engagement through separate conceptual traditions. The findings suggest that their educational significance becomes clearer when they are interpreted relationally. Spiritual awareness represented the reflective-moral capacity to question assumptions and recognize responsibility, whereas sociological sensitivity provided the contextual-interpretive capacity to understand why religious practices and identities take particular historical and social forms. Inclusive attitudes represented the ethical-dialogical expression of these processes in students' responses to difference.

This relational interpretation extends understandings of spiritual formation that emphasize self-purification, moral responsibility, and identity formation (Alsuhaymi & Atallah, 2025; Nor Ichwan et al., 2024). In the present case, spiritual reflection was stimulated not only through inward religious practice but also through encounters with religious others. The analytical significance is that spirituality became relational: students' moral self-evaluation concerned how religious commitment shaped prejudice, empathy, responsibility, and recognition of others. Spiritual awareness therefore functioned less as an increase in personal religiosity than as a capacity for ethical self-examination in conditions of difference.

Sociological sensitivity adds an important dimension to this process. Intercultural and pluralism-oriented religious education emphasizes contextual understanding of religious identity (Sijamhodžić-Nadarević, 2023; Tuna, 2024), but the present findings suggest that contextual interpretation also performs a bridging function between moral intention and ethical response. Empathy alone does not necessarily prevent stereotyping if unfamiliar practices remain socially unintelligible. By interpreting difference through history, culture, institutions, minority experience, and social power, students gained a basis for responding more carefully. Sociological sensitivity therefore appears not merely as religious literacy, but as an interpretive discipline that makes moral openness more informed.

The three dimensions should nevertheless not be understood as a fixed developmental sequence. The data do not demonstrate that spiritual awareness causes sociological sensitivity or that sociological sensitivity causes inclusive attitudes. Rather, the findings indicate recurring interaction among reflective-moral, contextual-interpretive, and ethical-dialogical processes. Their contribution lies in this interdependence rather than in any single dimension considered separately.

5.3 From Normative Religious Moderation to Enacted Inclusive Engagement

The findings also refine the pedagogical meaning of religious moderation. Existing studies warn that moderation may remain superficial when it functions mainly as policy language, curriculum content, or a normative expectation (Chotimah et al., 2025; Zulfatmi, 2023). The present study extends this critique by

indicating what moderation looks like when it is enacted within a learning process. Students' inclusive responses were expressed through listening, clarification before judgment, resistance to premature labeling, and willingness to engage unfamiliar or contested perspectives. Moderation therefore appeared not simply as agreement with tolerant principles, but as a discipline of engagement.

This distinction is important because inclusive engagement did not require students to suspend their own theological commitments. Rather, students increasingly differentiated between holding a religious judgment and the process through which that judgment is formed and communicated. Practices such as *tabayyun* [verification or clarification], active listening, and contextual inquiry made judgment more ethically disciplined by requiring students to examine information and social context before responding. In this respect, the findings extend multicultural and dialogical approaches that associate IRE with tolerance and inclusive religious understanding (Muhajir et al., 2025; Rahmat & Yahya, 2022; Yahya & Rahmat, 2021).

The pedagogical implication is that religious moderation should not be taught only as a set of values to endorse. It can also be cultivated as a repertoire of practices through which students learn how to encounter disagreement responsibly. This shifts the emphasis from knowing moderation to performing moderation through ethical listening, clarification, contextualization, and constructive dialogue.

5.4 Implications for the Formation of Future Islamic Religious Education Teachers

The findings have particular significance because the participants were prospective Islamic Religious Education teachers. Observation-based learning appeared to influence not only how students personally approached religious diversity, but also how they imagined their future pedagogical responsibilities. This extends the contribution of the study from individual attitude formation to professional pedagogical formation.

Research on future Islamic educators emphasizes the need to connect religious literacy with contextual understanding, tolerance, and socially responsible educational practice (Faqihuddin, Islamy, et al., 2026; Faqihuddin et al., 2024). The present findings add that these capacities may require prospective teachers to experience the interpretive demands they will later ask of their own students. Encountering unfamiliar religious realities, recognizing personal assumptions, contextualizing difference, and practicing dialogical restraint positioned students not merely as recipients of moderation discourse, but as future educators responsible for mediating religious difference in classrooms.

This has a broader implication for teacher education. Prospective IRE teachers may reproduce exclusionary reasoning even when they possess substantial doctrinal knowledge if they have limited opportunities to examine how their own assumptions operate in plural social contexts. Conversely, reflective-contextual experiences can provide a pedagogical rehearsal for responding to difference with conviction, contextual understanding, and ethical responsibility. Observation-

based learning therefore contributes not only to what future teachers know, but also to the professional dispositions through which they may teach religious diversity.

5.5 A Reflective-Contextual Model of Observation-Based Islamic Religious Education

Taken together, the findings support a case-grounded reflective-contextual model of observation-based IRE that distinguishes pedagogical processes from analytical dimensions. Direct encounter, reflective documentation, contextual interpretation, and classroom dialogue constitute the processes through which students engage with lived religious realities, while spiritual awareness, sociological sensitivity, and inclusive attitudes represent the reflective-moral, contextual-interpretive, and ethical-dialogical dimensions of that engagement.

The model's contribution is relational rather than additive: it explains why encounter alone is insufficient and how pedagogical mediation connects moral self-examination, contextual understanding, and ethical response, thereby integrating doctrinal, experiential, and moderation-oriented concerns through the interpretive processes between encounter and response. As a case-grounded conceptual proposition rather than a universal or causal theory, the model identifies recurring relationships within students' documentary accounts and suggests that observation-based learning is most educationally significant when lived encounters are transformed into reflective-moral examination, contextual interpretation, and ethical-dialogical engagement.

5.6 Practical Implications, Limitations, and Future Research

The findings suggest that structured observation in IRE should function as a mediated learning sequence integrating ethical orientation, contextual observation, reflective writing, and classroom dialogue rather than as field exposure alone. Several limitations bound this interpretation: the study involved one course within one IRE program at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, relied on student-generated documents without formal research interviews or independent researcher observation, did not assess the persistence of identified dispositions beyond the course, and included unevenly represented observation contexts.

Accordingly, the findings support analytical transferability rather than statistical generalization. Future research should examine the model's transferability and durability through comparative, longitudinal, and mixed-methods designs, including pre- and post-learning measures, and investigate how specific components—direct encounter, reflective documentation, contextual interpretation, and dialogue—operate across institutional and cultural contexts.

6. Conclusion

This study shows that observation-based learning can connect textual religious knowledge with lived realities in university-level IRE through three interconnected dimensions: spiritual awareness as reflective-moral self-examination, sociological sensitivity as contextual interpretation, and inclusive

attitudes as ethical-dialogical engagement. Its value lies not in exposure to diversity alone, but in mediation through reflective documentation, contextual inquiry, and classroom dialogue.

The study contributes a case-grounded reflective-contextual model linking encounter, moral reflection, sociological interpretation, and inclusive engagement within one pedagogical architecture, treating the three dimensions as analytically distinct but pedagogically interconnected rather than causally sequenced. Practically, observation-based learning should integrate ethical orientation, structured field engagement, reflective writing, contextual analysis, and dialogue. Given the single-course, student-generated documentary corpus, the model is proposed for analytical transferability rather than universal generalization and warrants comparative, longitudinal, and mixed-methods examination across other IRE contexts.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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