

Embedded Peace Education in Public Senior Madrasas in Post-Conflict Aceh: Evidence from Pidie District, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study examines how peace education is practiced in public senior madrasas in Pidie District, Aceh, Indonesia. It focuses on the peace-related values promoted by madrasas, the strategies used to integrate these values into school life, and the challenges encountered in sustaining peace education in a post-conflict setting. This study employed a qualitative case study design involving four public madrasas: MAN 1 Pidie, MAN 2 Pidie, MAN 3 Pidie, and MAN 5 Pidie. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with madrasa principals, curriculum-related personnel, subject teachers, school committee members, student activity supervisors, and other school-related stakeholders. The data were analyzed thematically using the interactive model of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results show that peace education in the selected madrasas is not taught as a separate subject. It is embedded in Civic Education, Sociology, Islamic Cultural History, extracurricular activities, student organizations, and school-based programs. The values promoted include mutual cooperation, tolerance, moral and ethical conduct, nonviolence, leadership, and social responsibility. These values are practiced through curriculum integration, participatory learning, OSIM, scouting, the Youth Red Cross, anti-violence activities, and child-friendly school practices. The findings suggest that peace education in Pidie's public madrasas operates as an embedded institutional and cultural practice shaped by curriculum, pedagogy, student activities, school programs, and Islamic-local moral formation. However, its sustainability remains affected by uneven student participation, uneven institutional coordination, limited teacher preparation, and weak evaluation mechanisms.

Keywords: peace education; public madrasas; post-conflict aceh; islamic education; pidie district.

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1. Introduction

The transition from armed conflict to peace in Aceh has created an urgent educational question: how can schools help reconstruct social trust, cultivate nonviolent interaction, and sustain peaceful coexistence after political violence has formally ended? The 2005 peace agreement marked a major turning point in Aceh, yet the social consequences of conflict continue to shape educational, cultural, and community life. Pidie District is a relevant site for examining this issue because its public madrasas stand within a social setting where the legacy of conflict, Islamic moral authority, state education, and local communal values meet in everyday school life. In this context, madrasas are significant institutions because they operate within the formal education system while also carrying religious, moral, and community expectations. Their role in promoting peace-related values requires closer analysis, especially in relation to how post-conflict reconciliation is translated into school routines, classroom interaction, and student activities.

Peace education provides an analytical framework for understanding this process. Galtung (1996) and Webel and Galtung (2007) conceptualize peace as extending beyond the absence of direct violence to include broader conditions of social justice, well-being, and the transformation of structures that sustain conflict. Bar-Tal and Rosen (2009) link peace education to the cultivation of values, knowledge, and skills needed in societies marked by conflict, while Capistrano (2020) relates peace education to democracy, tolerance, sustainability, and harmonious coexistence. UNESCO (2024a) emphasizes the importance of formal education in preparing young people to live peacefully in diverse societies, and UNESCO (2024b) places peace, human rights, and sustainable development within a shared

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educational agenda. These perspectives indicate that peace education should be examined through concrete educational practices, including curriculum design, pedagogical methods, school culture, and institutional programs.

Existing studies have contributed to this field in several ways. Some studies examine the integration of peace values with religious education and local culture, showing how Islamic education and community traditions can support tolerance, moderation, and social harmony (Mustaqim, 2020; Saimima, 2023; UN Ngani, 2023). Other studies focus on formal schooling, including curriculum, civic education, human rights education, and multidimensional learning environments that cultivate peaceful attitudes among students (Halik et al., 2025; Nurwanto & Habiby, 2020; Syahputra, 2020; Widaningtyas, 2021; Wulandari, 2015). A further body of research discusses peace education in informal and community-based learning spaces, where peace values are transmitted through social movements, local initiatives, and nonformal educational practices (Karnadi, 2018; Sa'diyah & Nurhayati, 2019).

Research on Aceh has also shown that conflict shaped educational development, teacher positioning, and broader social transformation after the conflict period (Amin, 2018; Halik et al., 2023, 2025; Lopes Cardozo & Shah, 2016; Shah & Lopes Cardozo, 2014). However, these studies have given limited attention to how public madrasas in post-conflict Aceh embed peace values in curriculum, pedagogy, extracurricular activities, and school-based programs. They also leave underexplored the institutional and cultural conditions that make embedded peace education possible, stable, or fragile in public Islamic schools located in a post-conflict society. This issue is important because the integration of peace values into school life has already been widely discussed in relation to character education, citizenship education, religious instruction, and extracurricular learning. The unresolved question is how such integration works in a public madrasa context where national curriculum, Islamic moral education, local social practices, student organizations, and post-conflict recovery operate together. Public senior madrasas in Pidie offer a specific case for examining this question because peace-related values are carried through formal lessons, moral formation, school programs, and daily interaction within a district still shaped by the social memory and consequences of conflict.

These unresolved issues provide the basis for examining more closely how peace-related values are translated into everyday educational practices within public madrasas in post-conflict Aceh. Against this background, the present study examines how peace education is embedded in the institutional and cultural life of public senior madrasas in Pidie District, Aceh. It addresses three questions: (1) What peace-related values are promoted in these madrasas? (2) How are these values integrated into classroom learning, extracurricular activities, and school-based programs? and (3) What challenges affect the continuity of peace education in a post-conflict setting? In answering these questions, the article argues that peace education in Pidie is institutionalized through the interaction of curriculum-based instruction, participatory pedagogy, student activities, school programs, and Islamic-local moral formation. The Pidie case refines the concept of embedded peace education by showing how peace-related values are distributed across these interconnected areas of madrasa life. It also reveals a central tension: although this broad distribution can strengthen peace-oriented socialization, limited formalization, coordination, teacher preparation, and evaluation may produce uneven implementation across madrasas.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Peace Education: Concept and Educational Forms

Peace education refers to an educational process that develops the knowledge, values, and skills needed for peaceful coexistence. In conflict-affected societies, it is closely linked to the transformation of violence, the rebuilding of social relations, and the cultivation of democratic and tolerant attitudes. Galtung's (1996) distinction between negative and positive peace is useful for this study because it shifts attention from the absence of direct violence to the social conditions that sustain justice, well-being, and nonviolent relations. Bar-Tal (2002) and Bar-Tal and Rosen (2009) further show that peace education in societies affected by conflict must address collective narratives, intergroup attitudes, and the psychological foundations of reconciliation. Peace education is therefore cognitive, moral, and relational: it concerns what students know, how they understand others, and how they act in situations of difference or disagreement.

In school settings, peace education can take several forms. It may enter curriculum content through subjects that discuss citizenship, human rights, ethics, religion, history, and social relations. It may also be practiced through pedagogical methods that encourage dialogue, cooperation, mediation, and reflective discussion. UNESCO (2024a) places peace education within a broader agenda of human rights, sustainability, and peaceful coexistence in formal education. For this reason, peace education should be examined beyond formal subject matter. It also appears in classroom interaction, school routines, extracurricular activities, conflict management practices, and institutional policies (Arystanbek et al.,

2026; Saleh et al., 2025). This broader view is important for analyzing madrasas, where peace-related values are often carried through existing subjects and daily school practices rather than through a separate peace education curriculum.

However, the broad presence of peace values in school life creates an analytical challenge. The existence of peace-related values across subjects, routines, and activities does not by itself explain how those values are organized, sustained, or assessed. Critical peace education scholars caution that peace education becomes weak when it treats peace as a general moral aspiration without examining violence, power, inequality, and institutional conditions (Bajaj, 2008; Bajaj & Hantzopoulos, 2016; Cremin, 2016; Hantzopoulos & Bajaj, 2021). This critique is relevant to embedded peace education because value integration must be examined through the institutional pathways that carry it: curriculum, pedagogy, student participation, school programs, and everyday interaction.

2.2. *Education and Social Reconstruction in Post-Conflict Societies*

Post-conflict education refers to educational practices developed in societies moving from violence toward social and political recovery. In these contexts, schools are expected to address the long-term effects of conflict, including distrust, disrupted social relations, weakened civic institutions, and the possibility of renewed violence. Education becomes part of social reconstruction when it helps students develop tolerance, cooperation, democratic participation, and nonviolent ways of managing conflict (Bar-Tal & Rosen, 2009; Capistrano, 2020; Nesterova et al., 2024). This role depends on more than curriculum content. It also requires school cultures, teacher practices, and student activities that make peaceful interaction part of everyday institutional life. Schools in post-conflict societies should therefore be examined as institutions shaped by social memory, local hierarchy, community expectations, and teacher capacity. Peace education in such settings cannot be assessed only by identifying peace-related content in formal lessons. It also requires attention to how schools manage difference, respond to potential violence, and build routine forms of cooperation among students.

Aceh provides a relevant post-conflict context for examining these issues. The 2005 peace agreement ended the armed conflict politically, but its educational and social consequences continued to shape community life. Lopes Cardozo and Shah (2016) show that teachers occupied a conflicted position during Aceh's independence struggle, while Amin (2018) discusses the influence of conflict on educational development in Aceh. Ikramatoun, Nusuari and Amin (2019) further examine the transformation of the Free Aceh Movement from rebellion into political movement. These studies indicate that education in Aceh cannot be separated from the wider process of post-conflict transformation. For this article, the key issue is how schools, particularly public madrasas, translate peace-related values into institutional practices after conflict.

2.3. *Madrasas, Islamic Moral Education, and Local Culture*

Madrasas are Islamic educational institutions that operate within Indonesia's formal education system while maintaining a strong orientation toward religious and moral formation. They combine general subjects, religious instruction, and character-oriented learning. This institutional position gives madrasas a distinctive role in peace education because they are connected to state curriculum requirements and to community expectations regarding morality, discipline, and religious conduct. Studies on peace education in Muslim educational contexts show that religious values and local traditions can support tolerance and social harmony when connected to respect, dialogue, and social responsibility (Faizol et al., 2024; Muslim et al., 2024; Mustaqim, 2020; Noe et al., 2026; Saimima, 2023; UN Ngani, 2023).

In Aceh, the relevance of madrasas is strengthened by the close relationship between Islamic identity, local culture, and public life. Previous studies have shown that peace education in Indonesia is commonly developed through the integration of religious values, character education, multicultural learning, and community-based educational practices (Karnadi, 2018; Nurwanto & Habiby, 2020; Sa'diyah & Nurhayati, 2019; Wulandari, 2015). Other studies have highlighted the role of schools and Islamic educational institutions in promoting tolerance, social cohesion, and nonviolent conflict resolution, particularly in culturally diverse and post-conflict settings (Mustaqim, 2020; Saimima, 2023; Syahputra, 2020; UN Ngani, 2023; Widaningtyas, 2021). These studies confirm that religious and cultural values can support peace education, but they also leave an important question unresolved: how are those values translated into concrete institutional practices within public madrasas? Islamic moral education and local culture do not automatically become peace education. Their contribution depends on how teachers, school leaders, student organizations, and school programs connect moral values with dialogue, cooperation, respect, nonviolence, and social responsibility.

While these studies demonstrate the importance of educational institutions in fostering peaceful social relations, limited attention has been given to how public madrasas in post-conflict Aceh operationalize peace education through everyday educational practices. Building on this body of scholarship, this article employs the perspectives of peace education, post-conflict schooling, and Islamic-local moral formation to examine how public madrasas in Pidie integrate peace-related values into teaching, student activities, and institutional programs. In this article, embedded peace education is understood as the distribution of peace-related values and practices across existing structures of madrasa life: classroom learning, participatory pedagogy, student organizations, extracurricular activities, school-based programs, and Islamic-local moral formation. This perspective helps explain how peace education can have a broad presence in school life while still facing problems of coordination, teacher preparation, continuity, and evaluation.

3. Methods

3.1. Research Design and Site

This study used a qualitative case study design to examine the implementation of peace education in public senior madrasas in Pidie District, Aceh. A case study approach was selected because the research focused on a bounded educational setting where peace-related values are practiced through curriculum, pedagogy, extracurricular activities, and institutional programs. This design allowed close examination of how madrasas interpret and implement peace education within the social and cultural conditions of a post-conflict district (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Pidie District was selected because of its historical relevance to the Aceh conflict and its continuing significance in post-conflict social reconstruction. The district is also relevant because public madrasas in this setting operate at the intersection of formal state education, Islamic moral formation, local communal values, and school-based socialization after conflict. The study focused on four public senior madrasas: MAN 1 Pidie, MAN 2 Pidie, MAN 3 Pidie, and MAN 5 Pidie. These madrasas were selected purposively because they represent formal Islamic educational institutions under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and provide relevant cases for examining the integration of peace values in school life. The selected institutions also reflect urban and rural educational contexts within the district, allowing the study to capture variation in educational practices across public madrasas.

3.2. Participants and Data Sources

Participants were selected through purposive sampling. This sampling strategy was used because the study required participants who were directly involved in educational planning, curriculum implementation, classroom learning, student activities, and school-based programs related to peace values. Purposive sampling is appropriate in qualitative research when participants are selected for their knowledge of, or direct experience with, the phenomenon under study (Patton, 2015). The study involved 28 participants across the four madrasas. Each madrasa was represented by seven participants: the madrasa principal, curriculum coordinator, teachers of Sociology, Civic Education, and Islamic Cultural History, one student activity supervisor, and one school committee member or school-related stakeholder. This composition allowed the study to examine peace education from the perspectives of school leadership, curriculum planning, classroom pedagogy, student activities, and community-school relations.

The participant groups were chosen because each role provided access to a different dimension of embedded peace education. Madrasa principals provided information on school policy and institutional programs. Curriculum coordinators explained how peace-related values were linked to curriculum planning and subject implementation. Teachers of Sociology, Civic Education, and Islamic Cultural History provided information on classroom-based integration of cooperation, tolerance, ethics, citizenship, nonviolence, and social responsibility. Student activity supervisors provided information on organizations and extracurricular activities, such as OSIM, scouting, and the Youth Red Cross. School committee members or school-related stakeholders provided contextual information on community-school relations and the broader social expectations surrounding madrasa education.

The empirical data sources consisted of interview transcripts from participants in the selected madrasas. School-related information mentioned by participants during the interviews was used as contextual material to support the interpretation of curricular, extracurricular, and institutional practices. Relevant literature was used to build the conceptual framework and to position the findings within debates on peace education, post-conflict schooling, and Islamic moral education; it was not treated as an empirical data source.

3.3. Data Collection

Primary data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews. The interviews explored participants' understanding of peace education, the values promoted in the madrasas, the strategies used to integrate these values into learning and school activities, and the challenges encountered in implementation. Semi-structured interviews were used because they allowed the researcher to follow a common set of themes while giving participants space to explain specific practices and experiences in their own terms. For example, principals and curriculum coordinators were asked, "How are peace-related values incorporated into school policy, curriculum planning, and institutional programs?", while subject teachers were asked, "Can you describe a lesson or classroom activity through which students practice tolerance, dialogue, cooperation, or nonviolent conflict resolution?"

The interview questions were developed from the conceptual framework of peace education and focused on three areas: values, strategies, and challenges. The values explored included mutual cooperation, tolerance, moral and ethical behavior, nonviolence, leadership, and social responsibility. The strategies explored included curriculum integration, classroom methods, extracurricular activities, and school-based programs. The challenge-related questions explored participation, institutional support, teacher preparation, coordination, and evaluation of peace-related practices. Interviews were conducted face-to-face, recorded with participants' consent, and transcribed verbatim to preserve the accuracy of participants' statements. During the interviews, participants were asked to provide concrete examples of how peace values were promoted in lessons, student organizations, extracurricular activities, school routines, and anti-violence or child-friendly school programs. This procedure helped connect general statements about peace education with specific practices in each madrasa.

3.4. Data Analysis, Trustworthiness, and Ethics

The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2019), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data condensation was conducted by reading the interview transcripts repeatedly, identifying relevant statements, and coding them according to recurring themes. The initial codes were developed from the research focus and refined through close reading of the data. These codes included peace values, curriculum integration, participatory learning, extracurricular activities, school-based programs, and implementation challenges.

Data display was conducted by organizing the coded material into thematic categories. These categories allowed comparison across the four madrasas and helped identify patterns in how peace education was promoted and practiced. The final stage involved drawing conclusions by linking the themes to the research questions and to the broader literature on peace education, post-conflict education, and Islamic moral education. The analysis was interpretive rather than statistical, with emphasis on meaning, pattern, and contextual explanation.

Cross-case comparison across MAN 1 Pidie, MAN 2 Pidie, MAN 3 Pidie, and MAN 5 Pidie was used to identify practices that appeared across more than one madrasa and to distinguish them from practices that were more specific to particular institutional settings. Trustworthiness was strengthened through source triangulation and cross-site comparison. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from principals, curriculum coordinators, subject teachers, student activity supervisors, school committee members, and school-related stakeholders. Cross-site comparison was conducted by comparing patterns across the four madrasas. These procedures supported credibility and dependability by reducing reliance on a single participant group or a single institutional perspective (Nowell et al., 2017). Ethical considerations were observed by informing participants about the purpose of the study, conducting interviews with consent, and protecting participants' identities by referring to them through institutional roles rather than personal names.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Results

4.1.1. Peace Values Promoted in Public Madrasas

Public senior madrasas in Pidie District promote peace-related values through classroom learning, school routines, and student activities. The most visible values are mutual cooperation, tolerance, moral and ethical conduct, nonviolence, leadership, and social responsibility. These values do not appear as a separate subject labeled peace education. They

are embedded in existing subjects, daily interaction, and institutional practices. Peace education in the selected madrasas therefore operates through integration rather than curricular separation.

Mutual cooperation is one of the values most frequently emphasized. In the local context, it is closely associated with gotong royong, a collective ethic of shared work, mutual assistance, and social responsibility. A Sociology teacher at MAN 1 Pidie explained:

“We instill many peace education values, such as mutual cooperation, helping each other, respecting others’ opinions, and teamwork in both intra- and extracurricular activities. We integrate these values into every learning activity and daily life at the madrasa.” (Interview with Sociology Teacher, MAN 1 Pidie, June 2024)

Cooperation is cultivated across classroom and non-classroom settings. Learning tasks, school cleaning, charity work, and other collective routines give students repeated exposure to shared responsibility. In these activities, cooperation is practiced as a social habit rather than presented only as moral instruction.

Tolerance and mutual respect also emerge as central values. They are promoted through classroom discussion, student interaction, and the school’s attempt to create an inclusive environment. A Civic Education teacher at MAN 2 Pidie stated:

“Tolerance, cooperation, and collaboration are strongly emphasized at our school, especially in interactions among students from diverse backgrounds. We strive to create an inclusive environment that respects diversity.” (Interview with PPKn Teacher, MAN 2 Pidie, June 2024)

Tolerance is treated as a practical condition for managing difference among students. Madrasas bring together students from different social, family, and community backgrounds, making respectful interaction an everyday requirement. In post-conflict Pidie, this emphasis gives tolerance a specific social function: it supports routine interaction while reducing the possibility of hostility in school life.

Moral and ethical conduct forms another important dimension of peace education. In the selected madrasas, moral formation is linked to Islamic instruction, historical narratives, and everyday conduct. An Islamic Cultural History teacher at MAN 3 Pidie explained:

“Peace education values, such as tolerance and mutual respect, are integrated into the curriculum, especially in the study of Islamic civilization history, which emphasizes the importance of ethics and morals in daily life.” (Interview with SKI Teacher, MAN 3 Pidie, June 2024)

Islamic Cultural History becomes a curricular space for connecting historical knowledge with ethical reflection. Teachers use religious and historical content to guide students toward respectful conduct, moral responsibility, and peaceful relations. Peace education is therefore closely tied to Islamic moral education rather than introduced as an external framework.

Nonviolence and peaceful conflict resolution are promoted through participatory learning. A Sociology teacher at MAN 5 Pidie described the use of dialogue, mediation, role-playing, and case simulations:

“We teach students the importance of dialogue and mediation as ways to resolve conflicts. Through role-playing and case simulations, they are trained to develop these skills.” (Interview with Sociology Teacher, MAN 5 Pidie, June 2024)

Role-playing and simulation introduce students to practical ways of responding to disagreement. Students are trained to listen, negotiate, and mediate instead of responding through hostility. Peace education in this setting is therefore not confined to moral advice. It also includes structured exercises through which students rehearse nonviolent responses to conflict.

Leadership and social responsibility are developed through student organizations and social activities. At MAN 1 Pidie, OSIM provides a space for students to practice responsibility, teamwork, and public engagement. An OSIM supervisor explained:

“We always encourage students to be active in organizations and social activities, so they develop leadership skills and a sense of responsibility for themselves, their madrasa, and their community.” (Interview with OSIM Supervisor, MAN 1 Pidie, June 2024)

The emphasis here is less on formal leadership status than on participation in collective tasks. Students are encouraged to contribute to school and community life through organized activities. In this form, leadership becomes part of peace education because it trains students to act responsibly, work with others, and participate in shared social life.

4.1.2. *Pedagogical and Institutional Strategies for Integrating Peace Education*

The second finding concerns the strategies through which peace education enters madrasa life. Four strategies are most visible: integration into subject content, participatory learning methods, extracurricular activities, and school-based programs. Together, these strategies show that peace education in public madrasas in Pidie is distributed across several institutional spaces rather than located in a single program.

The first strategy is curriculum integration. Peace values are embedded in subjects such as Civic Education, Sociology, and Islamic Cultural History. These subjects provide formal spaces for discussing citizenship, human rights, democracy, tolerance, social interaction, ethics, and conflict resolution. A Civic Education teacher at MAN 2 Pidie stated:

“We actively incorporate material on human rights, democracy, and peace into PPKn lessons. Students are encouraged to discuss and understand the importance of respecting differences and resolving conflicts peacefully.” (Interview with PPKn Teacher, MAN 2 Pidie, June 2024)

Civic Education serves as one of the main curricular spaces where peace values enter formal learning. Through topics such as rights, democracy, and peaceful conflict resolution, students are introduced to civic values that support nonviolent social relations. In post-conflict Aceh, this connection between citizenship education and peaceful coexistence gives the subject particular relevance.

The second strategy is participatory and interactive learning. Teachers use group discussions, constructive debates, role-playing, and simulations to develop students’ ability to listen, express opinions, negotiate, and solve problems. A Sociology teacher at MAN 3 Pidie explained:

“We use group discussions, constructive debates, and simulations to involve students in learning. They are encouraged to express their opinions, listen to others, and find solutions together.” (Interview with Sociology Teacher, MAN 3 Pidie, June 2024)

Through these activities, students practice listening, disagreement management, and shared problem solving as part of the learning process. Group discussion and simulation create situations in which students must respect different views and search for common solutions. This makes peace-oriented learning experiential rather than purely declarative.

The third strategy is extracurricular engagement. Activities such as scouting, the Youth Red Cross, OSIM, and cultural clubs provide spaces for developing discipline, empathy, teamwork, leadership, and social responsibility. A scout leader at MAN 5 Pidie explained:

“Through scouting activities, students learn about solidarity, discipline, and responsibility. They are trained to work as a team, face challenges together, and respect nature and each other.” (Interview with Scout Leader, MAN 5 Pidie, June 2024)

Extracurricular activities extend peace-oriented learning beyond the classroom. They place students in situations that require cooperation, discipline, care for others, and respect for shared rules. These activities complement formal instruction by turning peace-related values into repeated social practice.

The fourth strategy is the use of school-based programs that support a culture of peace. The article identifies programs such as the Child-Friendly School Program, anti-bullying campaigns, workshops, and seminars on anti-violence and tolerance. The principal of MAN 1 Pidie stated:

“We implement the Child-Friendly School Program to create a safe and welcoming environment for all students. Additionally, we hold workshops and seminars on anti-violence and the importance of tolerance.” (Interview with Principal, MAN 1 Pidie, June 2024)

These programs give peace education an institutional form by linking it to school policy, safety, and student welfare. Anti-violence activities, tolerance workshops, and child-friendly school practices help create a safer and more inclusive environment. The available data suggest, however, that these programs are not yet presented as a systematic peace education curriculum across the selected madrasas.

4.1.3. Challenges in Sustaining Peace Education

The third finding concerns the challenges of sustaining peace education in the selected madrasas. Although peace-related values are promoted through several strategies, the available data point to uneven student participation, socioeconomic differences, the need for sustained teacher preparation, and the limited visibility of explicit mechanisms for evaluating outcomes.

Participation is not evenly distributed across activities. Some peace-related practices depend heavily on extracurricular engagement, including scouting, OSIM, the Youth Red Cross, social service, and inter-school activities. These activities provide important spaces for leadership, cooperation, discipline, and social responsibility, but students may not participate in them with the same intensity. This means that students can have different levels of exposure to peace-oriented learning outside the classroom. The available data suggest that socioeconomic differences may affect students' ability to participate consistently in extracurricular activities designed to cultivate leadership, cooperation, and social responsibility.

A second challenge concerns institutionalization. Peace education appears in several subjects and programs, but it is often embedded implicitly within character education, religious instruction, civic learning, and extracurricular activities. This integrated pattern allows peace values to enter many areas of school life. At the same time, it may leave implementation dependent on individual teachers, student activity supervisors, or specific school programs. Without a clearer institutional framework, continuity can vary across madrasas. The issue found in the data is therefore not the absence of peace values, but the uneven organization of those values within school structures. When peace education is carried by many subjects and activities without a shared framework, its implementation may vary across teachers, programs, and madrasas.

Teacher capacity is another important issue. Teachers play a central role in translating peace values into classroom interaction and student activities. However, teaching tolerance, nonviolence, dialogue, and mediation requires pedagogical sensitivity. Teachers need the capacity to manage discussion, respond to disagreement, and connect peace values with students' lived experiences. The data indicate teacher commitment, but systematic professional development specifically focused on peace education is not clearly described. This condition suggests that peace education may depend substantially on the personal initiative and pedagogical sensitivity of individual teachers.

A further challenge concerns evaluation. The data show how peace values are promoted and practiced, but they do not show clear mechanisms for assessing whether these practices influence students' attitudes, behavior, or conflict management skills over time. Anti-violence activities, child-friendly school practices, classroom discussion, and student organizations provide spaces for peace-oriented socialization, but the selected madrasas do not appear to have explicit indicators for evaluating peace education outcomes. The challenges show that peace education in the selected madrasas has entered several areas of school life, but its sustainability remains uneven. Peace-related values are present in lessons, routines, organizations, and school programs, yet their continuity depends on student participation, teacher capacity, institutional coordination, and evaluation practices.

4.2. Discussion

Peace education in public senior madrasas in Pidie is embedded in existing educational practices and is not organized as a separate subject. Peace-related values enter madrasa life through Civic Education, Sociology, Islamic Cultural History, student organizations, scouting, school routines, and anti-violence programs. This pattern suggests that peace education in a post-conflict setting may operate through everyday institutional practices, although its visibility as a structured program remains limited. The contribution of this finding lies in specifying the form of embeddedness found in public madrasas: peace education is distributed across state curriculum subjects, Islamic moral instruction, participatory pedagogy, extracurricular engagement, and school-based programs. This finding is consistent with the view that peace education involves values, skills, and social practices that extend beyond curriculum content (Arystanbek et al., 2026; Danesh, 2006, 2008; Harris *, 2004; Harris, 2011; Kester, 2010). In the selected madrasas, peace is taught through repeated social interaction, moral formation, and structured participation in school life.

Interpreted through Galtung's (1996) distinction between negative and positive peace, the findings suggest that the madrasas work with a broader normative understanding of peace. They do not address peace only as the absence of violence. They promote cooperation, tolerance, ethical conduct, leadership, and social responsibility as conditions for peaceful coexistence. These values correspond to the orientation of positive peace, where education is expected to support social relations that reduce hostility and strengthen more just forms of interaction. However, the available data do not establish whether these values have produced measurable changes in students' behavior or conflict management

skills. This caution is important because peace education research has been criticized when it treats peace as a normative aspiration without examining how violence, power, and institutional conditions shape educational practice (Bajaj, 2008; Bajaj & Hantzopoulos, 2016; Cremin, 2016; Hantzopoulos & Bajaj, 2021). For this reason, the Pidie case should be read as evidence of how peace education is organized and practiced in public madrasas, not as evidence of long-term peacebuilding outcomes among students.

The data also show that peace education in madrasas is shaped by the institutional character of Islamic schooling. Madrasas occupy a dual position as formal educational institutions and moral-religious spaces. This position helps explain why peace values are linked to Islamic moral education, civic learning, and local social practices. Islamic Cultural History provides narratives of ethics and moral responsibility, while Civic Education and Sociology introduce students to rights, democracy, social interaction, and peaceful conflict resolution. This finding supports studies that view religious education and local culture as resources for tolerance and social harmony (Mustaqim, 2020; Saimima, 2023; Santoso & Khisbiyah, 2021; UN Ngani, 2023). The Pidie case adds that these resources become educationally meaningful when they are translated into school routines, classroom interaction, and student participation. Islamic moral values and local communal values function as practical resources for peace education when they are connected to concrete practices of respect, cooperation, and nonviolent interaction.

The integration of gotong royong, teamwork, student organizations, and social service indicates that peace education in Acehese madrasas is culturally mediated. Peace values are not introduced only through abstract universal categories. They are translated into practices that students recognize within local moral and social life. This cultural mediation is important in a post-conflict society because reconciliation requires educational forms that resonate with community norms and local memory. UNESCO's (2024a, 2024b) emphasis on peace, human rights, and sustainable development in formal education becomes more contextually grounded when schools connect those principles to practices already present in students' social environment. Similar findings in post-conflict Poso show that multicultural religious education can support sustainable peace when it is tied to local learning strategies and intergroup relations (Mashuri et al., 2024). In this sense, public madrasas connect broader peace education principles with locally recognizable moral practices.

The study also clarifies the pedagogical and institutional routes through which peace education enters madrasa life. The selected madrasas rely on curriculum integration, participatory learning, extracurricular engagement, and school-based programs. This pattern supports the view that peace education requires more than the transfer of normative messages. Students need learning situations that allow them to practice dialogue, negotiation, cooperation, and shared problem solving. Discussion, constructive debate, role-playing, and case simulation support this practice-oriented dimension. These methods correspond with literature that emphasizes relational learning, cooperation, conflict resolution, human rights education, and the transformation of conflict attitudes in peace education (Bajaj, 2015; Bar-Tal & Rosen, 2009; Capistrano, 2020; Jones, 2006; Saleh et al., 2025). The findings therefore refine the idea of embedded peace education by showing that embeddedness operates through several institutional routes at once: curricular, pedagogical, organizational, and programmatic.

Extracurricular activities extend this process beyond formal lessons. OSIM, scouting, the Youth Red Cross, and cultural clubs place students in social situations where discipline, cooperation, leadership, and responsibility are practiced repeatedly. These activities matter because they make peace learning less dependent on classroom explanation alone. Students encounter similar values in organizational tasks, collective activities, and peer interaction. At the same time, the distribution of peace education across many spaces creates a practical risk. When peace education is embedded everywhere but formalized nowhere, its continuity may depend heavily on individual teachers, supervisors, or school leaders. This risk is central to the Pidie case. The broad distribution of peace values gives embedded peace education institutional reach, but limited formalization may weaken continuity, coordination, and accountability across madrasas.

The challenges identified in this study reveal a central tension in embedded peace education. Integrating peace-related values across subjects, student organizations, extracurricular activities, and school programs allows these values to enter everyday madrasa life, but it may also make their implementation less visible as a coordinated institutional agenda. Uneven student participation, socioeconomic constraints, dependence on individual teachers or supervisors, limited teacher preparation, and weak evaluation mechanisms may consequently produce different levels of exposure and continuity across madrasas. This tension is especially relevant in Aceh, where education has been closely connected to post-conflict social transformation, school governance, teacher positioning, and broader struggles over social change (Lopes Cardozo & Shah, 2016; Shah & Lopes Cardozo, 2014). The findings therefore indicate that peace education in Pidie is broadly present but unevenly institutionalized. Comparable implementation barriers have also been reported in

secondary-school peace education elsewhere, including financial constraints, limited implementation time, and weak parental involvement (Ndwandwe, 2024).

Each of these limitations points to a corresponding institutional or policy response. Because participation in extracurricular activities is uneven and may be constrained by socioeconomic differences, madrasas should not rely exclusively on voluntary activities to provide peace-oriented learning. Core practices related to dialogue, cooperation, tolerance, and nonviolent conflict resolution should also be incorporated into compulsory classroom and school-wide activities so that all students receive comparable opportunities for participation. To reduce dependence on individual teachers and activity supervisors, principals and curriculum coordinators should establish a shared implementation framework connecting Civic Education, Sociology, Islamic Cultural History, student organizations, extracurricular activities, and school-based anti-violence programs (Faizol et al., 2024; Kosim et al., 2024). Such coordination would allow peace-related practices to continue even when individual personnel or programs change.

Limited teacher preparation also requires a specific response. Teachers need sustained professional development in dialogue-based pedagogy, mediation, the facilitation of sensitive discussions, and the management of disagreement in the classroom (Halik et al., 2025). Evidence from Sukma Bangsa School Pidie similarly indicates that school culture and teacher professional development are closely connected in post-conflict peace education practice (Wibowo, 2022). At the district level, the relevant educational authorities could support cross-madrasa training and the exchange of contextually appropriate practices. This implication is consistent with research in East Aceh showing that the sustainability of integrated peace education depends on clearer institutional models and more consistent implementation (Zainal et al., 2019, 2021). Weak evaluation mechanisms require a different institutional response. The selected madrasas need practical and context-sensitive procedures for reviewing the implementation of peace-related practices. These procedures could examine the reach of student participation, students' perceptions of safety and inclusion, the continuity of peace-related programs, and documented school responses to interpersonal conflict. Such indicators should be used for reflective institutional review rather than as evidence that the programs have already produced long-term behavioral change. The present data document how peace values are promoted and practiced, but they do not establish measurable changes in students' attitudes, behavior, or conflict-management skills over time.

The Pidie case thus presents embedded peace education as a culturally mediated institutional practice whose strength and vulnerability arise from the same condition. Its distribution across curriculum, participatory pedagogy, student organizations, school programs, and Islamic-local moral formation gives peace education broad institutional reach. However, limited coordination, teacher preparation, inclusive participation, and evaluation may weaken its continuity. This interpretation refines the concept of embedded peace education while maintaining an important analytical boundary: the findings explain how peace-related values are organized and practiced in public madrasas, but they do not demonstrate that these practices have already produced measurable long-term peacebuilding outcomes.

5. Conclusion

This study examined peace education in public senior madrasas in Pidie District, Aceh, where the legacy of conflict continues to shape the social meaning of schooling. The findings indicate that peace education in the selected madrasas does not operate as a separate subject. It is embedded in curriculum content, classroom interaction, extracurricular activities, student organizations, and school-based programs. Mutual cooperation, tolerance, moral and ethical conduct, nonviolence, leadership, and social responsibility are promoted through Civic Education, Sociology, Islamic Cultural History, OSIM, scouting, the Youth Red Cross, anti-violence activities, and child-friendly school practices.

The study clarifies an embedded pattern of madrasa-based peace education. In this pattern, peace values are carried through curriculum-based instruction, participatory pedagogy, extracurricular engagement, school programs, and Islamic-local moral formation. The findings show how public madrasas translate peace education into ordinary school practices through the interaction of state curriculum, Islamic moral instruction, student participation, and local communal values. This pattern also clarifies the position of madrasas as institutions where religious values, civic learning, and local cultural practices are connected to everyday peacebuilding.

At the same time, the study shows that embedded peace education requires stronger institutional support. Its broad presence across madrasa life does not automatically ensure continuity, consistency, or assessable outcomes. Uneven student participation, socioeconomic constraints, dependence on teacher and supervisor initiative, limited professional preparation, and weak evaluation mechanisms may affect the sustainability of peace education across madrasas. For this reason, public madrasas do not necessarily need to create a separate peace education subject, but they need clearer coordination among existing subjects, student organizations, extracurricular activities, and school-based anti-violence

programs. They also need practical indicators for reviewing how peace-related values are practiced by students in everyday school life.

The scope of this study is limited to public senior madrasas in Pidie District. It does not include private madrasas, pesantrens, or schools in other post-conflict regions. The data also document how peace values are promoted and practiced, but do not measure long-term changes in students' attitudes, behavior, or conflict management skills. Further research should examine a wider range of Islamic educational institutions, compare different post-conflict districts, and use longitudinal or mixed-method designs to assess how peace education shapes students' dispositions over time.

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