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Edu-community practice: what the community means for religious education equality in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Entrenched in Indonesia's context, this research explores the Edu-community practice in society and the religious communities' engagement in religious education for all religions (REFAL) in community-based RE. This research addresses the gap in providing RE for each religion within formal education through community-based education. It aims to address the lack of RE content in formal education. This research includes three characteristic areas: urban (Yogyakarta), rural (Bangka Island) and remote (Kupang and Sabu Island) to explore various contexts of religious communities. It involves 40 interviewees from Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Edu-community is a community educational practice to empower REFAL. Edu-community creates religious educational systems involving religious leaders, youth, parents and children. Each religion has its form of RE, where children, teens and young adults are the target participants.

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SUBJECTS

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Introduction

In developing countries, issues of educational equality persist in some respects. The lack of facilities, multiculturalism and religious contexts, and technological development contribute to educational inequality (Chimombo, 2005). Therefore, this study underlines that multiculturalism and multi-religious contexts can contribute to educational disparities, as in the case of Indonesia. It is part of the practice of religious education for all religions (REFAL) in the context of a multi-religious and multicultural society. The urgency of delivering REFAL in Indonesia has emerged in formal education, which has six religions: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. In the Indonesian context, Protestantism and Catholicism are recognised as separate religions, as noted by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The main differences lie in their worship practices and interpretation of the Holy Bible. Additionally, the Christian community perceives Catholicism and Protestantism differently and has separate church organisations. Consequently, the Indonesian government considers these two distinct Christian traditions. Besides, Islam is the largest religious population that accounts for around 87% of the total population in Indonesia (Indonesian Statistics Information Center, 2022).

The idea of REFAL exists in multi-religious societies to enhance the same opportunity of receiving religious education (RE). As the national policy of Indonesia emphasises REFAL, it is stated in the National Educational System of Indonesia number 20 in 2003 that 'each student has a right to get religious education based on their religion and taught by a teacher who has same religion also' (Act of the Republic of Indonesia on the National Education System, 2003). RE becomes the strategy of the government to build religious tolerance along with moral and ethics education, also preventing religious tension among the religions. It made RE compulsory in the national curriculum for all education levels in Indonesia under the regulation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) and the Ministry of Education and

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Culture (MOEC). RE is also included in the final school assessment. Thus, Indonesians see RE as an essential aspect of formal education.

Utami et al. (2021) find that the community has taken significant involvement in supporting REFAL, such as religious activities. In the previous study, the schools cooperated with community-based RE to provide learning evaluations for religious minority students. Besides, religious customs in each area of Indonesia influence religious activities in the school and the community. Thus, the preliminary investigation results indicate the existing function of religious communities in supporting REFAL, which is later called Edu-community in this study. According to Masrukhin and Supaat (2018), the Ministry of Internal Affairs recorded about 344,039 recognised and 370 unrecognised religious-based communities in Indonesia. It indicates that these communities may have a significant likelihood of supporting REFAL in Indonesia.

Building upon previous research that identified the community's involvement in supporting REFAL, this study aims to further explore and articulate the depth and scope of the community's influence within the educational landscape. It seeks to delineate the extent to which the community actively takes a part in educational processes and the significance of its presence in shaping educational experiences within the community, particularly RE. Additionally, the research aims to demonstrate how the community's educational system addresses RE equality, highlighting the structural supports and policies that promote inclusive education. Furthermore, it will evaluate societal awareness and perceptions of education, emphasising the community's role in fostering an environment where educational equity and awareness are prioritised and promoted. This expanded investigation will contribute to a richer understanding of the multifaceted relationship between the community and education, providing insights into how community-driven support can enhance educational outcomes and societal perceptions. Therefore, a collaborative interview and discussion will be held with a religious community in each target area: Yogyakarta (urban), Bangka Island (rural) and Kupang and Sabu Island (remote).

Literature reviews

The idea of delivering religious education for each religion becomes a concern to the Indonesian government, which has six recognised religions: Islam, Protestant, Catholic, Buddhist, Hindu and Confucian. It is written in the National Educational System No. 20, enacted in 2003. Therefore, Indonesia has Islamic Religious Education (IRE), Christian (Protestantism) Religious Education (CRE), Catholic Religious Education (CaRE), Buddhist Religious Education (BRE), Hindu Religious Education (HRE) and Confucian Religious Education (CoRE). In this context, according to Government Policy No. 55 in 2007 on Religion and Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Dan Pendidikan Keagamaan [The Act of Religious Education], 2007), providing equal RE entails ensuring that RE is provided to each recognised religion mentioned above. It includes providing the RE teacher, learning content, learning activity, learning assessment and religious facility.

However, implementing REFAL in Indonesian formal education faces obstacles, particularly at the elementary and lower high school levels. Hayadin (2017) records that Senior High School has delivered RE for each religion, and the service index of RE in senior high school is in the high category of 7.8 out of 10 scales (Hayadin, 2018). On the other hand, elementary and lower high schools face challenges in serving REFAL in Indonesia, such as a lack of teacher availability, learning assessment, learning facilities and learning activities, especially for religious minorities in rural areas (Utami et al., 2021). There are some barriers to serving REFAL: (a) the minimum number of students, (b) lack of human resources, (c) the school budget and (d) the conditions of the area (Utami, 2022).

The issue of delivering REFAL that appears in formal education in Indonesia has risen to another level in the community to support RE (Utami et al., 2021). Indonesian society must be involved in the religious community that builds the community-based RE. The religious community is essential in creating a religious environment for children and enforcing sustainable RE (Utami, 2024). Therefore, further research is needed to show how community involvement supports religious education equality. Thus, this study investigates the Edu-community practice by including the context in urban, rural and remote areas. It includes non-formal education (NFRE), which is related to community action on RE in certain

circumstances, such as pandemics, minority religious communities, isolated areas, etc. Besides, it tries to explore the religious educational practice in a multi-religious society.

Moreover, the community-based RE relate to the correlation between community action and education. It connects to the community's awareness of the necessity of delivering RE to the children. However, community participation and community education are insufficient to represent the context of community service in education in the community to support REFAL. Community participation in education elaborates on community involvement in formal education. In comparison, community education refers to non-formal adult education by GO/NGOs. Furthermore, it will be thoroughly elaborated further discussions in the next section. Therefore, further investigation is required to understand the practice of community-based education in this study, which is called Edu-community.

Edu-community

Defining a community may require a long explanation to construct what it is and what its function is in society. Community is not merely defined based on a specific physical location, and it has more beyond meaning, including mutual interaction, relationships, having common characteristics and interests, etc. (Louisiana Community Network, 2004). Thus, the community is a part of society that constructs an interaction/relationship and shares common interests and goals with the community members.

Smucker (1960) mentions that a community must be defined as a concrete society. He puts seven characteristics to define community as a social reality: (a) population accumulation, it is the number of people that can be classified in certain variables, such as sex, age, education, religions, occupations, or birth rate and death rate; (b) geographical condition, the feature of geographical location may affect the way of life, such as climates, the area topography, natural environment, etc. that is necessary to describe the concrete meaning of a community; (c) standard life mode, it may consist of particular life patterns, especially in the urban study; (d) need-serving institutions, it is referred whether the availability of institution to meet the living needs; (e) attachment and participation, the characteristic of a community is about the people attach and involve for the community. The sense of how they feel togetherness, solidarity, friendship, loyalty and partnership; (f) heritage and social history, they share the community history and heritage to maintain the culture, tales, legends, stories, etc., then create the contemporary community; and (g) functional interdependence, in the community contains the interrelated activities that impact the whole community itself, such as bank trouble, school hassle, natural disaster, etc.

As previously stated, a community is a gathering of people who unite to satisfy mutual necessities, interact and uphold collective ideologies and customs. It is a place where individuals can connect with like-minded individuals and find support in shared experiences and values. In children's development, the community is one of the places where they can engage and interact to develop social skills (Link et al., 2012). The community shapes how children perceive social reality, especially in multicultural education. Besides, in a multi-religious society, Utami (2024) also adds that the community is one of the factors to develop religious understanding. Thus, the role of the community socially influences the community members in society.

In the realm of education, it has been found that active community engagement can positively impact student achievement. By involving community members in the educational process, students can benefit from additional support and resources, leading to enhanced academic achievement. This approach promotes a collaborative and inclusive educational environment, which can ultimately contribute to the overall improvement of the educational system (Gatt, 2010). This engagement determines community participation in education. Community participation is beneficial to improve the quality of education (Kumar, 2021). Mkhabela (2008) states that the community can be the most suitable place for promoting accessible education for children. Besides, the involvement of local wisdom promotes positive deviance for education continuance during the Pandemic, as in the case of Uganda (Atuhurra et al., 2023). Therefore, the existence of a community is significant in supporting the quality of education, especially in the formal sector.

The idea of an Edu-community is different from community education. Community education is related to community learning and education. It is connected to Structured adult learning (Fitzsimons, 2017) or Non-formal adult education (Connolly, 2010). Samyn et al. (2017) relate community education

to the intervention of school members, such as teachers, students, parents and organisations, in empowering teaching and social involvement in society. It is to respond to the community's needs. Moreover, community education and training in South Africa respond to low-skilled youths and adults to improve their vocational skills, literacy and numeracy (OECD, 2019). However, community education underlies adult education other than formal school and tends to be provided by institutions to educate the community.

Moreover, the Edu-community is derived from the community members' awareness to support education, especially giving the same opportunity to all, which in this study mainly focuses on REFAL. The phrase 'Edu-community' is intimately connected to the educated community and represents a vital aspect of the educational practice within the community. As seen in Figure 1, the distinctions of community participation, community education and Edu-community are simply community participation in that the community participates in education, mainly formal education. Community education can be the effort of a government organisation (GO) or a non-government organisation (NGO) to provide education for the community, especially for adults. However, Edu-community is the community-based education created 'by' the community, 'held' by the community, 'for' the community and 'in' the community. It encompasses community-based educational practices that address gaps in formal education. Through the Edu-community, we can observe how the educational system is constructed in society. Therefore, this study tries to determine how the educational system in the community responds to the REFAL practice and connects the concept of religious inherency formation in society.

Methodology

This research focuses on the Edu-community practice in society, where the religious communities are the main target. It utilises the qualitative case study as the research design. This study tries to find out the educational system in the community and how it works to support REFAL in Indonesia. It is also to see how religious communities, worship places, etc., become a bridge to hold REFAL. Therefore, considering the large multi-religious settings in Indonesia, it is necessary to investigate the cases from different context areas in Indonesia. This study chooses three different characteristic regions. Yogyakarta is an urban area on Java Island with Muslim, Protestant, Catholic and Hindu populations. Then, Bangka Island is a rural area with Muslim, Buddhist and Confucian populations. Also, Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT_East Nusa Tenggara), especially in Kupang City and Sabu Island, are categorised as remote areas. It has Protestants and Catholics as the most significant population in Kupang City and Sabu Island. These three areas are geographically located in different parts of Indonesia. Bangka Island is located in western Indonesia, near Sumatra. Yogyakarta is located on Java Island, which is the central area of Indonesia. Then, Kupang City and Sabu Island are located in the eastern and southern parts of respectively.

Furthermore, this research takes the religious communities in each target area as the main sources of information. Eight non-formal religious educations (NFRE) have been visited and observed for this research. The main data-collection instruments are observations, interviews and group discussions. Approximately 40 participants were purposively randomly selected for this study, including Muslims, Protestants, Catholics, Hindus, Buddhists and Confucians, as detailed in Table 1. They are the religious leader, religious gatekeeper, NFRE facilitator, NFRE students, religious teacher, etc. The religious leader or

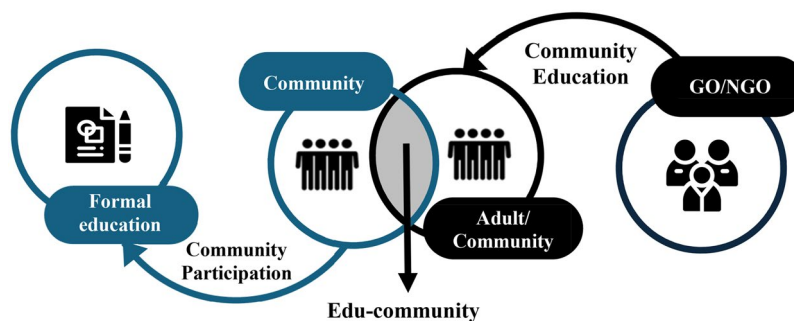


Figure 1. Edu-community framework.

Table 1. List of participants.

Participant	Gender	Religion	Position	Region
P1	Male	Islam	IRE teacher	Yogyakarta
P2	Male	Islam	IRE teacher	Yogyakarta
P3	Male	Protestant	CRE teacher	Yogyakarta
P4	Female	Catholic	CaRE teacher	Yogyakarta
P5	Female	Hindu	HRE teacher	Yogyakarta
P6	Male	Hindu	Student	Yogyakarta
P7	Female	Islam	Student	Yogyakarta
P8	Male	Protestant	Student	Yogyakarta
P9	Male	Catholic	Student	Yogyakarta
P10	Female	Islam	Student	Yogyakarta
P11	Male	Islam	IRE teacher	Bangka Island
P12	Female	Buddha	Student	Bangka Island
P13	Female	Confucian	Student	Bangka Island
P14	Female	Islam	Student	Bangka Island
P15	Male	Protestant	Student	Bangka Island
P16	Female	Catholic	Student	Bangka Island
P17	Male	Islam	Muslim gatekeeper	Bangka Island
P18	Female	Islam	Islam NFRE teacher	Bangka Island
P19	Female	Islam	Islam NFRE student	Bangka Island
P20	Female	Islam	Islam NFRE student	Bangka Island
P21	Female	Catholic	Catholic NFRE teacher	Kupang
P22	Female	Catholic	Catholic NFRE student	Kupang
P23	Female	Catholic	Catholic NFRE student	Kupang
P24	Female	Catholic	Catholic NFRE student	Kupang
P25	Male	Protestant	Protestant gatekeeper	Kupang
P26	Male	Protestant	Protestant NFRE teacher	Kupang
P27	Female	Protestant	Protestant NFRE student	Kupang
P28	Male	Protestant	Protestant NFRE student	Kupang
P29	Female	Protestant	Protestant NFRE student	Kupang
P30	Male	Islam	Muslim gatekeeper	Kupang
P31	Female	Islam	Islam NFRE teacher	Kupang
P32	Female	Islam	Islam NFRE teacher	Kupang
P33	Female	Hindu	Hindu NFRE teacher	Kupang
P34	Female	Hindu	Hindu NFRE teacher	Kupang
P35	Male	Hindu	Hindu gatekeeper	Kupang
P36	Male	Islam	Islam NFRE teacher	Sabu Island
P37	Male	Islam	Islam NFRE teacher	Sabu Island
P38	Male	Islam	Islam NFRE teacher	Sabu Island
P39	Male	Islam	Islam NFRE teacher	Sabu Island
P40	Male	Islam	Islam NFRE teacher	Sabu Island

religious gatekeeper is interviewed to obtain information on the structure and management of community-based education. Moreover, information on learning content and activities within the Edu-community is collected from the NFRE teacher/facilitator and the students.

The research confirms that the data in this article were obtained from all participants and/or their legal guardians, with the permission of the local government and the schools involved in the research. The participants are interviewed using Bahasa (Indonesian), Javanese, Bangka Malay and East Nusa Tenggara dialects. Therefore, the data are analysed using thematic analysis. To align with the study's goal of sharing the edu-community practice, the themes were organised based on religious affiliation. This helps clarify how each religion understands the edu-community practice. Additionally, edu-community practices are categorised as a subtheme, including types of community-based education, target participants, educators, learning content and religious activities. Thus, they are elaborated in the following explanation.

Findings

Edu-community shows the educational practice in the religious community in Indonesia. Edu-community contains the educational system established by the community for the community. The operational funds are mainly from the community. This research focuses more on religious education and its role in establishing community-based education as the complementary social function of RE. This study observes that the religious Edu-community contains religious learning and religious activities. Therefore, religious Edu-community practice in the research sites can be seen in the following explanations by each religion.

Islam

In the context of the religious Edu-community, it has been observed that Islamic religious groups have taken the initiative to establish non-formal education programs. These programs cater to children's spiritual and religious needs. They provide a comprehensive understanding of Islamic beliefs and practices and instil moral values and character building in young minds. Such endeavours by Islamic religious groups have been pivotal in promoting religious harmony and understanding among the younger generation.

In Yogyakarta, NFRE for Muslim children and teens in the Islamic community can be TPA (*Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an* [Qur'an Education Class/Afternoon Islamic School]). The teachers will be the young adults and the *imams* [religious leaders of a mosque]. Generally, TPA is mainly held in the mosque. They have religious activities, such as MTQ (*Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an* [Qur'anic recitation competition; Islamic knowledge competition, calligraphy, etc.]), Islamic lectures, *pesantren kilat* [short Islamic boarding school] and religious celebrations. The TPA curriculum focuses on learning to read and the meanings of the Holy Qur'an and Hadith. There are also stories in Islam, religious history and *akhlak* [Islamic ethics].

Moreover, through the observations, the researcher noted a rising trend on Bangka Island towards community-based education for Muslim children. A thorough analysis indicates that each village requires at least one Non-Formal Religious Education (NFRE) centre to meet the educational needs of young children. There are two types of Islamic NFRE on Bangka Island, from the classical to the private ones. The classical Islamic NFREs are TPA, which merely focuses on Qur'anic recitation and learning and *Madrasah* [Afternoon Islamic School]. *Madrasah* teaching has a broader learning scope, including the Qur'an and *Hadist* [the way of life of Prophet Muhammad], *Aqidah* [Islamic beliefs], *Fiqh* [worshipping and human relationships in the society], *Tarikh Islam* [religious history and stories], Arabic language, *akhlak* [ethics and moral education] and *Khot* [Arabic Calligraphy]. Then, the private Islamic NFRE is the Qur'anic lesson in the evening for children to practice Qur'anic recitation. The religious leader voluntarily serves this private NFRE in their house or *surau/musholla* (small mosque).

In Kupang and Sabu Island, the Islamic community is a minority group. Despite this small group, significant mosques are still present within the community. These mosques serve as a place where the practice of Edu-community is observed, enabling community members to come together and engage in meaningful religious practices. In the afternoon, the mosque opens TPA for the children to learn religious education. Furthermore, the researcher visited two TPAs in Kupang and Sabu Island, which were assigned by the religious community. The TPA, located in Kupang, is a valuable educational institution to enrich the knowledge of children and teenagers residing in the village or nearby areas. This program is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of Islam and its teachings, allowing the younger generation to grow and learn in a safe and educational environment. The highly respected *Imam*, who serves as the mosque's religious leader, leads the program with his dedication and commitment, emphasising the significance and teachings of the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, the researcher visited a Muslim community residing on Sabu Island. With its rich religious and cultural heritage, this community boasts only a single mosque that serves as the central hub for religious and educational activities. Because there is only one mosque on this island, community-based Islamic education and activities are centred on it. The mosque also serves as a place for TPA to impart Islamic education to young children. In this TPA, the teachers are primarily religious leaders, volunteers, or responsible adults committed to disseminating knowledge and wisdom to the younger generation. Moreover, in TPA, the student studies the Holy Qur'an, moral education, Islamic beliefs, religious history and the Prophet's stories. The learning activities include interpreting and memorising the Holy Qur'an, playing games, taking Islamic knowledge quizzes, attending Islamic lectures and participating in community service. The *imam* and the teachers also generate an MTQ. It includes other contests, such as Arabic calligraphy, colouring, *adzan* [the call for prayer] competitions, etc.

Protestantism

The Protestant community has implemented community-based religious education programs to cultivate and instil Protestant values among its members. These programs effectively transmit the faith's teachings

and principles to the community, enabling them to deepen their understanding and apply them in their daily lives. Through these programs, members are equipped with the knowledge, skills and values necessary to live a life grounded in the teachings of the Protestant faith. Thus, the program can foster their meaningful contributions to the community. The community also established the NFRE to provide students with a basic understanding of Protestant teaching.

In the case of Protestant NFRE, there is *sekolah minggu* [Sunday Class/school]. Mostly, NFRE has a weekly Sunday class on Saturday or Sunday. The Church assigns Sunday Classes for children, teens and young adults. For the Protestant NFRE, the Church is responsible for providing a teacher. The Church has a specific division that handles the teacher for the Sunday Class. Moreover, the Protestant NFRE may be within or outside the Church, according to the teacher-learner agreement. In Sunday classes, students study the Bible, religious history, narratives about their God and moral learning. Additionally, they learn about the worship process, its execution, and preparation. In Sunday Class, students also participate in religious activities, including worship, religious celebrations and community service. Therefore, there are no significant differences in practices among Protestant NFRE in Yogyakarta and Bangka Island.

Moreover, as the most significant religious population in Kupang, the Protestant community has established healthy practices of NFRE, especially for the Children. The community-based religious education for Protestant children is also called *Sekolah Minggu* [Sunday school] in Kupang. Moreover, the researcher visited a Protestant Sunday school in Kupang. This NFRE opens every Sunday morning at the same time as Monday Prayer in the church. The children's parents will attend the morning prayer, and the children will attend Sunday school. They utilise the elementary classrooms at the nearby church for this *sekolah minggu*. The learning content will be differentiated according to age. Small children will learn about an introduction to Protestant teaching, Jesus's stories, religious history, moral education, worship and an introduction to the Bible. Teens and young adults will learn about Protestant learning, interpreting the Holy Bible, worship, religious history and moral education. Based on the observation, learners learn by conducting case studies or social issue analyses in their surroundings. It stimulates critical thinking ability as they live in a multi-religious society. Additionally, they will begin preparing for worship. Moreover, they are engaged in playful learning activities, both indoor and outdoor, as stated in P27 below. Those activities are supported by the Church and the teachers/facilitators of the *Sekolah Minggu*.

(translated) Yes, we have. Each year, I design and plan programs. Then, I will present it in the meeting with the Church administrator. If it is approved, we will receive some funds from the Church for our activities, but they will not be sufficient. We also set aside some funds from our pockets. I often sell packaged food to support our activities, especially for big events. This is because our activities are not limited to this Sunday school; we also have other outdoor activities, such as camping for the teens. We usually do it in July. Then, we also have picnic or community service for children. Also, on the Christian (Protestant) celebration day, we hold a major event. We prepared a lot of food, presents, and competitions for the children.

....

Catholicism

In the case of the Catholic community, the Church also establishes community-based religious education as the NFRE for Catholic community members. The Catholic community has the privilege of receiving the NFRE. This program is designed specifically for members who follow the Catholic faith and provides a comprehensive understanding of the Church's beliefs, practices and history. With a focus on spiritual growth and development, the NFRE provides a safe and welcoming environment for Catholics to deepen their faith and build meaningful connections with fellow community members, particularly children. The Catholic NFRE is also called *sekolah minggu* and is hosted by the Catholic Church. Therefore, the types of Sunday school for children are presented in the following quotation from P4, a Catholic teacher. She is also a member of BIMAS *Katolik* (the Catholic community guidance in Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta).

(translated) In the Church, we have many. PIA is Faith education for children. PIR is faith education for teens. PIA is for young children through elementary. PIR is for teens to high school age. Then, there is OMK, the Young Catholic Organisation. It is for adults, such as college students. Also, there is another Catholic community for women or young mothers. For example, I am a woman and included in Catholic Women. There are

also other religious communities, and you can join whatever you want, wherever you are. If you are in the small scope area, there is also the Catholic community. So, the smallest Catholic community of the Church is the social environment of the Church. Then, those environments will be categorised into Region Catholic community. The regions will be classified into one *Stasi*. After *Stasi*, it will become *Paroki*/Parish. Some Parishes will become a Diocese. Here, we are included in the Semarang archdiocese. It supervised hundreds of Dioceses in Central Java and Yogyakarta.

As mentioned by P4, there are many types of religious education for Catholics, from very young children to adults. From the quotation above, it is stated that the PIA (*Pendidikan Iman Anak* [Children Faith Education]) is for kids in the age of kindergarten to primary level, PIR (*Pendidikan Iman Remaja* [Teen Faith Education]) is for teens in the age of junior and high school level, OMK (*Organisasi Muda Katolik* [Young Catholic Organisation]) is for the young adults in higher education age, and Women Catholic community is for the young mother and married woman. Moreover, P4 mentions that the Catholic community comprises multiple levels. It can be at the area, regional, *stasi*, *paroki* (parish), diocesan and archdiocesan levels. Therefore, P4 tells us that in the Catholic community, there are types of NFRE for different age Catholics. Moreover, the Catholic community has a systematic community-level system for ensuring the practice of Catholic teaching.

There are a few distinct practices within the Catholic edu-community in Yogyakarta, Bangka Island, Kupang and Sabu Island. However, in Kupang, the Catholic community has implemented a community-based approach to religious education to impart the teachings of the Catholic faith, particularly to children, who constitute a significant proportion of the population. This initiative aims to ensure the continuity of Catholic knowledge and values within a predominantly Catholic community. In the case of Catholic NFRE, the Church holds Sunday classes for children, adolescents and young adults, as in other areas such as Bangka and Yogyakarta. By providing religious education at the community level, the Catholic community hopes to instil a strong foundation of faith in the younger generation, thus ensuring the preservation of Catholic traditions and beliefs for years to come.

On the other hand, the researcher observes a Catholic Sunday school in the refugee camp for Timor Leste in Kupang. They live in the refugee camp, a broken, abandoned building. There are more than 50 households in this refugee camp. In this refugee camp, a significant portion of the population identifies as Catholic or Protestant, including the children. To meet their spiritual education needs, the church has appointed a teacher specialising in imparting knowledge of Catholic beliefs and practices. This initiative aims to foster a comprehensive understanding of the faith, enabling children to lead fulfilling lives aligned with the principles of Catholicism. Through this program, the church aims to cultivate a sense of spiritual growth and development among the younger generation, fostering a deeper connection to their faith and values.

Hinduism

Indonesia is one of the homes of a vibrant Hindu community with a rich cultural and traditional heritage, especially on Bali Island. Children in this community are taught the importance of Hindu customs and beliefs from an early age, ensuring the continuation of their religious practices for generations to come. The Yogyakarta Hindu community, like many others, has established the NFRE organisation to provide a safe and nurturing environment for children to learn and grow in their faith. This organisation allows young Hindus to connect with their community, learn about their cultural heritage, and understand their beliefs. The Hindu community established a weekly class, *pasraman*, for children. It primarily concerns the practice of HRE, such as the traditional culture of Hinduism. Therefore, the role of *pasraman* is to teach the children the missing aspect of HRE. The facilitator of the *pasraman* is the responsibility of the religious leader in *Pura/Pure* [Hindu temple] or someone in charge of the *pasraman* administrator. The facilitator can be the HRE teacher in formal education or someone off duty for teaching in formal education.

In addition, *Pasraman* is often held in *Pura/Pure*. The learning content in *pasraman* includes worship (how to prepare and worship), the Veda, Hindu culture (traditions, dance, *ndamel* [creating the offering for God], *gamelan* [traditional music in Java], etc.). Additionally, they also practice and present what they learn in the Hindu celebration. Therefore, the Hindu community formulates NFRE to support RE in

society. It moves both individually and in groups, supported by the religious leader of each religious community. The religious community and the funds also establish the operational system. This effort demonstrates the community's awareness and concern regarding the provision of RE to children.

In Kupang's case, Hindu learning in the *pasraman* is divided into two sessions. In the first session, the children will engage in an extensive study of the theoretical foundations of Hindu teachings. This will enable them to better comprehend the intricacies of this ancient religion and provide a solid foundation for their future studies. Through this theoretical exploration, the student will gain a deeper understanding of the key concepts and principles that underpin Hinduism and be better prepared to apply this knowledge in practice. They will learn about Hindu beliefs, the *Veda*, worship, and the important days for prayer in Hinduism.

Moreover, in the second session, the children have practical learning. They will learn the traditional dance, the *shloka* (a sacred chant in Sanskrit contained in the Hindu holy book, *the Bhagavad Gita*), play the *gamelan* (the traditional musical instrument of Java), and study the Balinese language. The activities previously mentioned are thoughtfully curated to foster a deep connection between young children and the essential principles and traditions of Hinduism. These activities are designed to engage children meaningfully and to encourage them to practice and uphold Hinduism's fundamental values and customs. Through these activities, children can better understand the rich cultural heritage of Hinduism, thereby helping them develop a strong sense of identity and belonging.

The Hindu community strongly emphasises the provision of Hindu Religious Education (HRE) through NFRE. This organisation serves as a vital platform for imparting religious teachings and promoting positive activities among students. As a result, the presence of NFRE holds immense significance for the Hindu community, as it helps to preserve the rich cultural and spiritual heritage of the religion.

Buddhism

Even though the population of Buddhists is hard to find in Yogyakarta, Kupang and Sabu Island, Bangka Belitung province is home to a significant Buddhist community, which comes after Muslims. Within their Vihara (Buddhist praying place), the Buddhist community have set up a Buddhist religious education (BRE) to impart Buddhist teachings and principles, focusing on educating children. This initiative is a testament to the community's commitment to preserving and sharing their religious beliefs with the younger generation. It can be seen in the quotation below.

(translated)

Interviewer: In Vihara, what kind of NFRE do you attend? Is it Sunday school?

P12: Yes... but it is not regular.

Interviewer: Who is the teacher?

P12: There is a mentor

Interviewer: In Buddhist community education, what do you learn there?

P12: About how to worship and learn about the Holy book.

According to P12, the Buddhist community also conducts weekly classes called *sekolah minggu* (Sunday class), specifically catered to children practising Buddhism. These classes aim to provide comprehensive teachings and practical applications of Buddhist principles understandable and engaging way for young learners. This class is often held in the *Vihara* [a Buddhist monastery]. However, depending on Vihara's schedule, the Sunday class does not meet regularly. In the case of the facilitator, the monks and some mentors take responsibility for teaching the children. The children will learn about *Tripitaka* [a Holy Book in Buddhism], worshipping and Buddhist beliefs. Additionally, students are involved in the worship rituals practised in the Vihara. Therefore, the *sekolah minggu* in the Buddhist community aims to instil in children the religious and cultural practices of Buddhist teachings.

Confucianism

There is a small population of Confucians in Indonesia. This is because Confucianism has recently been recognised as a new belief in Indonesia. Most of the Confucian population resides in Bangka Belitung

Province, which is designated as the target area for this research. In Confucian communities, the children often come to *Sekolah Minggu* [Sunday school] for Confucians. It can be seen from the quotation below.

(translated) For Confucians, we have a Sunday class also. Usually, it will be held twice a month.

According to P13, the Confucian Sunday Class is held twice a month. *Sekolah Minggu* serves as a dedicated space for young Confucian individuals to learn the fundamental beliefs, ethical principles and various worship practices associated with the religion. This institution aims to provide a comprehensive educational experience for children and adolescents who wish to deepen their understanding of Confucianism in a safe and supportive environment. The teacher is mainly the religious leader in the *Kelenteng* [Confucian Temple]. Moreover, according to Basri (2018), Confucian Sunday school includes learning materials about worshipping, *Si Shu* [The Holy book in Confucianism/*Khonghucu*], Khonghucu beliefs, the stories of Prophet Kongzi, moral stories for children, the history of the Prophets and Kings, days and the meaning of worship, etc. This Sunday school is held weekly, on the 1st and 5th days of the Lunar calendar. Therefore, the practice of Edu-community within the Confucian community is exemplified by *Sekolah Minggu*.

Discussions

The educational practices of the Edu-community within each religion have been described in the previous section. Each religious community has different strategies to engage children, teens and young adults in the Edu-community. In the Islamic community, religious leaders in each village take the initiative to organise community-based RE by involving community members in the transmission of religious values and knowledge. It is more like a volunteer-based RE. Besides, the Edu-community can be NFRE and semi-formal RE, as seen in the Bangka Island case. Moreover, in the context of Protestantism and Catholicism, the religious community is more organised compared to other religions. Every Church is interconnected with the others. Therefore, the Edu-community practices in Protestantism and Catholicism are more structured and well-organised. On the other hand, the Hindu community centralise the Edu-community practice in their *Pura*. Engagement from adult and religious leaders is essential to establishing the Hindu NFRE and ensuring that religious cultures and values are passed to the younger generation. However, in Buddhism and Confucianism, the NFRE relies on religious leaders within their communities and engages monks in religious settings. Buddhism and Confucianism are the smallest religious communities in Indonesia, compared with other religions. Therefore, it depends on members of the religious community to sustain the practice of Edu-community.

It has been explained that each religious community establishes the NFREs in society to support RE. Each religious community inserts religious teaching, culture, tradition and moral education into NFREs. In Yogyakarta, Bangka Island, Kupang and Sabu Island, both the majority and Minority religions consider community-based religious education necessary, particularly for children, adolescents and young adults. The practice of Edu-community is viewed from five perspectives: types of community-based education, target participants, educators, learning content and religious activities. Therefore, Edu-community practices will be displayed in Tables 2, 3 and 4. Table 2 shows the edu-community practices in Yogyakarta, which include Muslim, Christian (Protestant), Catholic and Hindu communities. Whereas Table 3 shows the edu-community practices in Bangka, which include Muslim, Confucian, Buddhist, Christian (Protestant) and Catholic communities. Then, Table 4 presents the edu-community practices in Kupang and on Sabu Island, including the Christian (Protestant), Catholic, Muslim and Hindu communities.

Furthermore, Tables 2, 3 and 4 summarise the Edu-community practice in Yogyakarta, Bangka, Kupang and Sabu Island. It has been observed that religious communities have initiated educational programs tailored to their communities' needs. The Edu-community focuses on the younger generation, particularly children and adolescents. The aim is to provide them with relevant and practical knowledge to help them navigate life's challenges and become responsible adults. Such programs are deemed essential in promoting the values and beliefs of the religious community while also contributing positively to the broader society. Besides, the funds of Edu-community practice are also supported by religious members

Table 2. The Edu-community practice in Yogyakarta.

	Islam	Protestant	Catholic	Hindu
Kind of community-based RE	TPA (<i>Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an</i> [Qur'an Education Class/ Afternoon Islamic School]).	<i>Sekolah Minggu</i> [Sunday Class] is assigned by the Church. Some Church also has LC or Love Community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sekolah Minggu</i> is hosted by the Catholics Church:PIA (<i>Pendidikan Iman Anak</i> [Children Faith Education]), • PIR (<i>Pendidikan Iman Remaja</i> [Teen Faith Education]) and • OMK (<i>Organisasi Muda Katolik</i> [Young Catholic Organization]). 	<i>Pasraman</i> , a Sunday class held in <i>Pura/Pure</i> [temple].
Target participant	Children and teens	Children, teens and young adults.	PIA → Children, PIR → teens, OMK → young adults	Hindu children
Educator	Young adults or the <i>imams</i> .	Someone assigned by the Church, volunteer.	Someone who is assigned by the Church and volunteers.	Adults, volunteer
Learning content	Holy Qur'an and <i>Hadist</i> , stories in Islam, religious history, and <i>akhlak</i> [ethics]	Bible, religious history, stories about their God, moral learning, and worshipping process, how to do it, and the preparation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PIA → the introduction of Catholicism, the Bible, religious history, stories about their God and moral learning. • PIR → Bible, religious history, stories about their God and moral learning. • OMK → practise <i>kebaktian</i> [community service] for preparing the worship or religious celebration for the Church. 	Worshipping (how to prepare and to worship), the Veda, the Hindu cultures (traditions, dance, <i>ndamel</i> [creating the offering for God], <i>gamelan</i> [traditional music in Java], etc.)
Religious activity	MTQ (<i>Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an</i> [Qur'anic reciting competition; Islamic knowledge competition, calligraphy, etc.]), Islamic lectures, <i>pesantren kilat</i> [flash Islamic boarding school] and religious celebrations.	Worship, religious celebration and community service.	Worship, religious celebration and community service.	Practice and present what they learn (dance, <i>ndamel</i> and <i>gamelan</i>) for Hindu celebration and worshipping.

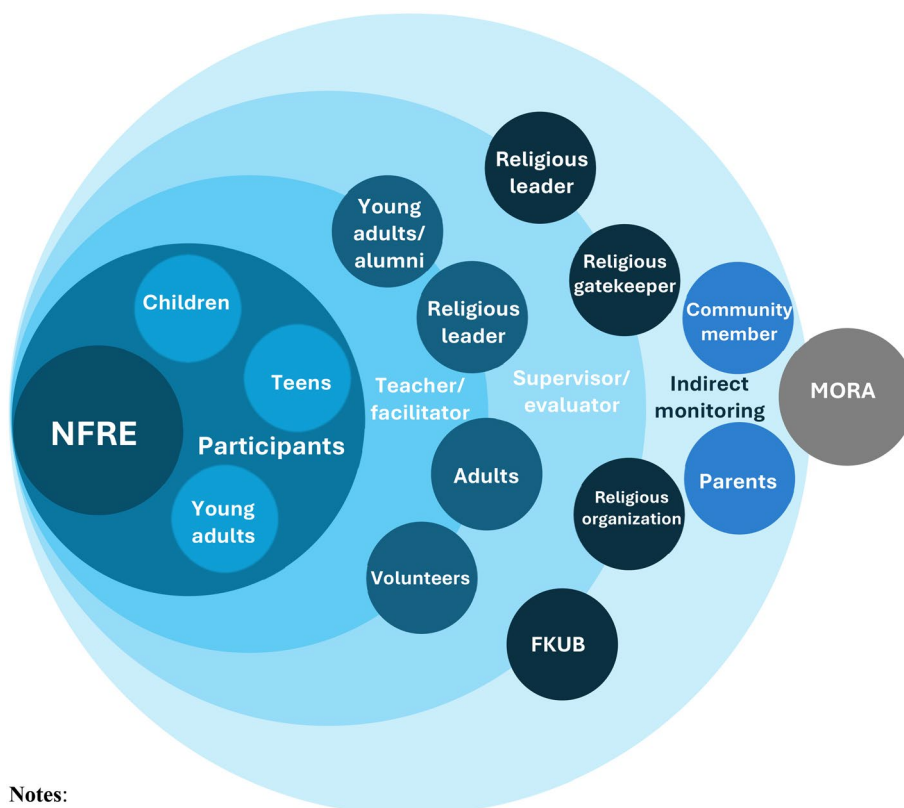
Table 3. The Edu-community practice in Bangka.

	Islam	Buddhism	Confucian	Protestant and catholic
Kind of community-based RE	TPA and <i>madrasah</i>	Weekly classes for Buddhist children in the <i>Vihara</i> [a Buddhist monastery].	<i>Sekolah Minggu</i> [Sunday school/ class] in Xue Tang and Litang	<i>Kelas minggu</i> or <i>sekolah minggu</i> [Sunday school/ class].
Target participant	Children and teens	Children and teens	Children and teens	Children and teens
Educator	The alumni, young adults in the village and religious leaders.	Monks	Religious leader or adult	Priest, adults, volunteer
Learning content	the Qur'an and <i>Hadist</i> , <i>Aqidah</i> [Islamic beliefs], <i>Fiqih</i> [worshipping and human relationships in the society], <i>Tarikh</i> Islam [religious history and stories], Arabic language, <i>akhlak</i> [ethics and moral education] and <i>Khot</i> [Arabic Calligraphy].	<i>Tripitaka</i> [Holy Book in Buddhism], worshipping and Buddhism beliefs.	Confucian beliefs, worshipping and ethics. Confucian Sunday school includes learning materials about worshipping, <i>Si Shu</i> [The Holy book in Confucianism/ Khonghucu], Khonghucu beliefs, the stories of Prophet Kongzi, moral stories for children, the history of the Prophets and Kings, days and the meaning of worship, etc. It is held once a week and every 1st and 5th day of the Lunar calendar (Basri, 2018).	reading and interpreting the Holy Bible, worshipping, religious history, etc.
Religious activity	Community service, <i>pesantren kilat</i> [flash Islamic boarding school] and religious celebrations.	Worship, religious celebration	Worship, religious celebration and community service.	Singing spiritual songs and celebrating religious days, such as Christmas, easter day, the ascension of Jesus, etc.

and religious organisations. In the religious Edu-community, the religious community supports all the educational aspects of NFREs. Therefore, religious communities have sufficient delivery practices across five aspects: types of community-based education, target participants, educators, learning content and

Table 4. The Edu-community practice in Kupang and Sabu Island.

	Protestant	Catholic	Islam	Hindu
Kind of community-based RE	Sunday school	Sunday class.	TPA	Pasraman or Hindu Sunday school and Hindu basic education
Target participant	Kindergarten-age children to young adults	Children, teens and young adults.	Children and teens	Children until young adults
Educator	The alumni, young adults are assigned by the Protestant Church.	Volunteer or someone who assigned by Church. In a Catholic Sunday school in the refugee camp of Timor Leste in Kupang, the Catholic Church assigns teachers from the Church member that has the willingness to teach the child refugees.	The religious leaders/ gatekeepers, adults, or volunteers	Religious leader and the adults.
Learning content	Jesus's stories, religious histories, moral education, worshipping and Bible introduction. Protestant learning, interpreting the Holy Bible, worshipping, religious histories, moral education through case learning, etc.	The Holy Bible, religious history, moral stories about Jesus and worshipping using an approved textbook by the Church.	The Holy Qur'an, moral education, Islamic beliefs, religious history and the Prophet's stories.	Hindu beliefs, Veda, worshipping, important days for prayer, Hindu culture, such as dances, <i>gamelan</i> , traditions, etc. The children come with their parents to Pura for praying and attending the <i>pasraman</i> .
Religious activity	Worship, religious celebration, singing, games and community services.	Religious singing, playing, games, religious celebration, etc.	Interpreting and memorizing Holy Qur'an, games, quizzes, MTQ (<i>Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an</i> [Qur'anic reciting competition]), Islamic lectures and community service.	



Notes:

- NFRE : Non-formal Religious Education.
- FKUB : FKUB (*Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama*) is the inter-religious cooperation forum
- MORA : Ministry of Religious Affairs

Figure 2. Stakeholders in Edu-community.

religious activities. Thus, these practices may boost the missing content of religious education in formal education, as in Utami et al. (2021) and Utami (2022).

This Edu-community practice establishes the religious educational system that exists in a religious society. As shown in Figure 1, the edu-community is different from community participation and community education. The edu-community is more centralised within the community itself. It involves the stakeholders from each religious community. The researcher explains the Edu-community stakeholder generally in Figure 2. Therefore, the participants of the Edu-community are children, adolescents and young adults. Then, the teachers and facilitators comprise young adults, NFRE alumni, adults, religious leaders and some volunteers. Moreover, the supervisors and evaluators of NFREs have included teachers, religious leaders, gatekeepers, religious organisations (Church, Mosque, Vihara, Pura and Kelenteng) and FKUB. FKUB (*Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama*) is the interreligious cooperation forum responsible for the multi-religious program. It comprises representatives of each religious community to ensure religious equality in a multi-religious society. Besides, it shows that the Edu-community does play a significant function in forming religious inherency as in Utami (2024).

Therefore, in order to establish and reinforce religious inherency, educational practices within the edu-community play a crucial role. These practices not only transmit religious values to students and members but also impart the associated religious culture. It aims to shape the community's spiritual identity. The dissemination and preservation of these religious values and cultural elements significantly contribute to strengthening the community's inherent religious character. Ensuring that it remains a deeply rooted and enduring aspect of their collective identity. The findings indicate that religious community members are aware of the need to address the lack of religious education in formal education by establishing NFRE within the community.

Conclusion

In the Edu-community practice, religious communities of each religion have established a good community educational system of RE, even in rural areas like Bangka or remote areas like Kupang and Sabu Island. Despite the unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic, the religious community has remarkably persevered and survived. Each religious community provides NFRE for children to learn the religious teachings of their respective faiths; for example, the Muslim community has TPA and *madrasah*; the Protestant, Catholic, Buddhist and Confucian communities have *Sekolah Minggu*; and the Hindu community has *Pasraman*. In these NFRESs, children primarily learn about their Holy Books, religious teachings, religious culture, religious history, ethics and morals, and worship. They engage in numerous religious activities, including religious celebrations, community services and worship practices. However, formal education faces challenges with REFAL, but the Edu-community uses NFRE to support it. Community participation is fostered by society's awareness of RE and may serve as the basis of the Edu-community. Therefore, NFRE practice within the religious community is sufficient to address the challenges posed by REFAL in formal education.

Moreover, this study also portrays the educational system of RE in the religious community. It includes the stakeholders involved in the Edu-community practice for providing religious education within the religious community. This system provides essential information for the multi-religious public school to direct them on involving the religious community in supporting the REFAL practice. Besides, the Edu-community is one of the places to construct religious cultures and values, especially for the children to form religious inherency. Therefore, it may clearly describe how a religious community sustains community-based education and influences religious inherency formation. However, several limitations of the current study should be considered caveats. This study is limited to three different areas: Yogyakarta, Bangka Island, and Kupang and Sabu Island, which may be insufficient to generalise the context of a multi-religious country, Indonesia. A further investigation should consider a broader portrait of Indonesia's religious majority and minority, such as Aceh, a region governed by Islamic law, or the Bali context, a predominantly Hindu island. Besides, edu-community is an independent educational system within the community. The educational practice is self-supported and organised by the religious community. Therefore, further research is needed to explore governance

partnerships between formal schools and communities to achieve religious educational equality and sustainability.

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As the collaborator researcher, the applicant is in charge of researching religious education equality practices. It sounds the religious aspects of the society through the community to depict the essence of the new Muslim reformation in the eyes of equal delivery of religious education based on the Indonesian context.

Ethical approval

The research has been approved and conducted in accordance with the relevant research ethics guidelines and regulations of the country in which this research is conducted. It has also been approved by the research ethics committee at Hiroshima University (ethical number HR-HUM-000815), where the authors are affiliated. It involved the human subject as the interviewee in the data-collection process. All information is provided confidentially and will not be disclosed by the researcher to any third party except as required by law.

Informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all participants and/or their legal guardians, following a thorough explanation of the research objectives, procedures, potential risks and benefits. This consent was secured with the explicit permission of the local government authorities and the schools' administrations involved in the research. Consent was documented both verbally and in writing to ensure clarity and record-keeping purposes.

Author contributions

CRedit: **Pratiwi Tri Utami**: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing; **Tatsuya Kusakabe**: Funding acquisition, Project administration, Software, Supervision, Validation.

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Data availability statement

The datasets generated and/or analysed during the current study are available in the [Harvard Dataverse] repository, under the name Pratiwi Tri Utami dataverse: <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/8JCU2D>

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