

**THEOLOGICAL BASIS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MULTICULTURAL VALUES FROM AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

Nadhifatul Azizah<sup>1</sup>, Fery Diantoro<sup>2</sup>, Sina Anjani<sup>3</sup>, Wahyu Dafiq Saputra<sup>4</sup>, and Muhammad Hasan Al Ilyas<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Ageng Muhammad Besari, Ponorogo, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Ageng Muhammad Besari, Ponorogo, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Ageng Muhammad Besari, Ponorogo, Indonesia

<sup>4</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Ageng Muhammad Besari, Ponorogo, Indonesia

<sup>5</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Ageng Muhammad Besari, Ponorogo, Indonesia

**Corresponding Author:**

Nadhifatul Azizah,

Department of Islamic Religious Education, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Kiai Ageng Muhammad Besari State Islamic University, Ponorogo.

Email: [nadhifaazizah5@gmail.com](mailto:nadhifaazizah5@gmail.com)

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**Abstract**

This study aims to explore the concept and implementation of multicultural Islamic education as a strategic solution in facing the reality of Indonesia's diversity. Multicultural Islamic education is understood as an educational strategy that utilizes the diversity of students' cultures, ethnicities, religions, and social backgrounds to create an inclusive and effective learning process. The theoretical basis of this study includes James A. Banks' five dimensions of multicultural education and the Islamic perspective of rahmatan li al-'ālamīn, which views differences as sunnatullah. The method used is a literature review analyzing various literature related to multicultural values in Islam and educational practices. The results of the discussion show that the main values of multiculturalism in Islam are rooted in the principles of equality (al-musāwah), justice (al 'adālah), tolerance (al-tasāmuḥ), and deliberation (al-shūrā). The implementation of this concept in educational institutions requires the restructuring of school culture, the development of an inclusive religious paradigm, gender sensitivity, and the elimination of all forms of ethnic and ability discrimination. In conclusion, the integration of multicultural values in Islamic education plays a crucial role in shaping a young generation that is tolerant and capable of becoming agents in reducing ethnic, religious, and racial conflicts as well as radicalism.

**Keywords:** Islamic Education, Multiculturalism, Implementation of Education, Tolerance



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## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a nation with a very high level of diversity, both in terms of ethnicity, language, culture, and religion. This diversity is an unavoidable social reality and a hallmark of Indonesian society. However, this plurality also has the potential to give rise to conflict if not managed through an inclusive social and educational system. In this context, education plays a strategic role as a means of character formation and instilling the values of tolerance, justice, and respect for differences.

Multicultural education emerged as a response to the reality of a pluralistic society. According to James A. Banks, multicultural education is an educational reform that aims to provide equal learning opportunities for all students from various racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds through content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equality pedagogy, and empowerment of school culture (Banks, 2014). Multicultural education not only emphasizes the recognition of diversity but also seeks to transform educational structures to be more just and inclusive.

From an Islamic perspective, diversity is understood as a divine law. The Qur'an emphasizes that humans were created into tribes and nations so that they might know one another (QS. Al-Hujurat [49]: 13). This principle demonstrates that Islam recognizes plurality as part of Divine decree. The concept of Islam as rahmatan lil 'alamin (blessing for all the worlds) places universal humanitarian values such as justice (al-'adālah), equality (al-musāwah), tolerance (al-tasāmuh), and deliberation (al-shūrā) as the foundation of social life.

Zakiyuddin Baidhawy also developed the idea of Islamic education with a multicultural perspective, emphasizing that religious education must internalize the principles of pluralism as something commonplace (plural is usual), equality as an inevitability (equal is usual), and a moderate attitude toward diversity (Mustafida, 2020). This view demonstrates that Islamic education should not be exclusive, but rather must build an inclusive and dialogical paradigm of religiosity.

Furthermore, the critical approach to education, as proposed by Paulo Freire, emphasizes the importance of education as a process of liberation from structures of injustice through dialogue and critical awareness (Castilho, 1909). This approach is relevant in the context of multicultural Islamic education because it encourages students to become agents of change capable of responding to social realities reflectively and constructively.

Based on this description, multicultural Islamic education is urgently needed in the national education system. The integration of multicultural values into Islamic education is expected to shape a young generation that is tolerant, inclusive, and committed to social peace. However, previous studies have tended to discuss multicultural Islamic education primarily at the conceptual and normative level, while studies integrating these concepts with practical implementation in educational institutions in Indonesia are still limited. This situation indicates a gap between theory and practice in the development of multicultural Islamic education.

Therefore, this study offers a novelty in the form of an integrative framework that combines multicultural values in Islam with implementation strategies in educational settings. This study aims to comprehensively examine the concept and implementation of multicultural Islamic education as a strategy in responding to the diversity of Indonesian society and

strengthening the role of education in building a tolerant, inclusive, and social peace-oriented generation.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with library research. This method was chosen because the focus of the research is a conceptual analysis of multicultural Islamic education based on relevant literature sources.

According to John W. Creswell, qualitative research aims to explore and understand the meanings derived from social or humanitarian issues through in-depth textual analysis and interpretation (Banks, 2014). In this context, research data was obtained from books, scientific journal articles, academic documents, and Islamic normative sources discussing multicultural education and Islamic values.

Data collection techniques were conducted through documentation studies, namely by reviewing literature related to multicultural education theory, Islamic educational thought, and the concept of multiculturalism from an Islamic perspective. Data analysis was conducted descriptively and analytically, namely by identifying key concepts, categorizing multicultural values in Islam, and integrating them with modern multicultural education theory, particularly the five dimensions proposed by James A. Banks.

The analysis stages included: (1) data reduction through selection of relevant literature; (2) data presentation in the form of conceptual descriptions; and (3) systematic drawing of conclusions based on the relationship between Islamic theory and normative perspectives. With this method, the research is expected to produce a comprehensive understanding of the concept and implementation of multicultural Islamic education in the context of educational institutions in Indonesia.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Theoretical Foundations of Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is an important approach in today's education system, aiming to create a learning system that respects students' diverse cultures, ethnicities, religions, languages, and social backgrounds. Theoretically, multicultural education stems from the understanding that today's society is diverse and constantly changing, making it impossible for education to adhere to a single, unified view of culture. In this context, education plays a role not only in imparting knowledge but also instilling values of tolerance, social justice, and respect for differences (Azhari & Albina, 2024). Therefore, understanding the theoretical foundations of multicultural education is crucial so that its implementation in schools is not merely symbolic but truly brings about sustainable change. In an epistemological context, multicultural education challenges claims about the objectivity of knowledge, which is singular and European-oriented. This approach posits that knowledge is not neutral; it is influenced by the social position, history, and power interests of those who create it. Therefore, its theoretical basis emphasizes the importance of "knowledge construction," where students are encouraged to investigate how cultural biases can influence the formation of theories, principles, and concepts across various disciplines (Ilham et al., 2024). In this way, education shifts from simply instilling a single value into a critical dialogue that allows for the interaction of diverse perspectives and deepens collective understanding of complex social realities.

This thinking is also heavily influenced by progressivist and humanist philosophies, which view students as active individuals, not empty vessels ready to be filled. John Dewey, a leading figure in educational philosophy, emphasized that schools are miniatures of society that should reflect democratic values through direct experience. In a multicultural context, this means that schools should become sites of social experimentation where differences are

managed as sources of learning, not as obstacles (Ilham et al., 2024). This theory asserts that without recognizing the diversity of human experiences, education will fail to fulfill its purpose of humanizing people and preparing citizens capable of peaceful coexistence in an increasingly divided society.

One of the most influential theoretical frameworks in this research is the five dimensions of multicultural education developed by James A. Banks. The first dimension is content integration, which concerns the extent to which instructors utilize examples and materials from various cultures to explain key concepts in their subject areas. The second dimension is the process of knowledge construction, which helps students understand, investigate, and evaluate how unspoken cultural assumptions influence the way knowledge is constructed. The third dimension is prejudice reduction, which focuses on students' racial attitudes and how these attitudes can be changed through appropriate teaching methods and materials to foster greater tolerance.

The final two dimensions in Banks' typology extend beyond the classroom and touch on the overall organizational structure of the school. Equity pedagogy emerges when instructors adapt their teaching methods to support the academic achievement of students from diverse races, cultures, and social classes. The final dimension is empowering school culture and social structure, which requires restructuring the school organization to provide students from diverse groups with a sense of empowerment and equal status (Firtikasari & Andiana, 2024). The combination of all these dimensions creates an educational system that not only teaches diversity but also implements equity in every aspect of an educational institution's operations, from evaluation policies to social interactions among staff.

Multicultural education is closely linked to Critical Theory, which aims to expose and challenge oppressive power structures. From this perspective, education is seen as a tool in the political struggle to achieve social justice for groups marginalized by the existing education system. This theoretical foundation drives the creation of a transformational curriculum, which not only includes the inclusion of ethnic minority figures in textbooks but also truly transforms students' perspectives on societal structures (Agustian, 2019). Students are encouraged to become agents of change, capable of analyzing injustice, uncovering the roots of systemic racism, and taking concrete steps to create a more just and equitable social order for all individuals.

The concept of liberation in multicultural education also emphasizes the importance of student voices and their experiences as a crucial part of the learning material. Lessons. Paulo Freire, through the concept of "problem-focused education," provides a foundation for multicultural educators to reject the one-way approach of "banking education" (Agustian, 2019). By valuing students' native languages, dialects, and local traditions, educational institutions convey the message that their identities have significant intellectual value. This is crucial for building the self-confidence of minority students, who often feel alienated or inferior when their cultures are not recognized or even prohibited in schools. This ultimately has a positive impact on their motivation and overall learning outcomes.

Cultural pluralism serves as a foundation that opposes the concept of a "melting pot" or assimilation, which forces individuals to abandon their identities to blend into the dominant culture. This theory introduces the idea of a "salad bowl," where each cultural element retains its own distinctiveness and integrity but blends together in beautiful harmony. In the educational context, pluralism requires schools to value diversity without trying to conform students to a single cultural norm. This impacts language policies, holiday celebrations, and even dress codes, which must provide opportunities to express diverse identities without discrimination or stigma from the school.

Furthermore, an understanding of acculturation is crucial in building the theoretical basis for effective multicultural education. Acculturation is seen as a process of cultural and psychological change that arises from the interaction between two or more distinct cultural groups. Multicultural education aims to support positive acculturation, where students can manage both their home culture and their community culture without compromising their identity (bicultural competence) (Kurniawan & Astutik, 2025). Teachers need to be aware of the stress that immigrant or minority students may experience so they can provide appropriate psychosocial support to help them adapt without facing lasting identity challenges.

Multicultural education is particularly concerned with how children and adolescents' ethnic identities develop, as this significantly impacts how they learn and interact. The theoretical foundations of developmental psychology suggest that children begin to recognize racial and ethnic differences early on, and if unaddressed, they can be influenced by negative stereotypes around them. Therefore, a multicultural curriculum must be designed based on students' cognitive and affective developmental stages, so that messages about diversity are conveyed in an age-appropriate manner (Nafi'ah, 2020).

Psychologist Jean Phinney states that a strong and positive ethnic identity is associated with better mental health and higher academic achievement. This theory provides scientific evidence for the importance of culturally responsive teaching (Wiranto & Waston, 2021). When learning materials reflect the face, history, and contributions of students' own ethnic groups, it strengthens student engagement in the learning process. Schools that ignore this dimension of identity risk creating a psychological distance between students and the learning materials, which is often a major cause of low academic achievement in certain groups who feel education is irrelevant to their lives.

### **Multicultural Values from an Islamic Perspective**

Islam as a religion of rahmatan lil 'alamin places diversity as sunnatullah which cannot be avoided in human life. The Qur'an emphasizes that differences in ethnicity, nation, language and culture are part of God's will for humans to know each other, not to demean each other. This principle becomes the normative basis for the growth of multicultural values from an Islamic perspective. Thus, multiculturalism in Islam is not a foreign concept, but is related to the teachings of monotheism which emphasizes the unity of origin and human dignity.

Multicultural values in Islam are rooted in the teachings of equality (*al-musāwah*), justice (*al-'adālah*), tolerance (*al-tasāmuḥ*), and deliberation (*al-shūrā*) which are the foundation of the social interaction of Muslims in a pluralistic society. The value of equality (*al-musāwah*) emphasizes that all humans have the same level before Allah, regardless of ethnic background, race or social status. This is in line with QS. Al-Hujurat [49]: 13 which emphasizes that a person's glory is determined by his piety, not his primordial identity (Mustafida, 2020).

The second value is justice (*al-'adālah*). Islam commands its followers to act fairly even towards groups of different beliefs. Justice in a multicultural context means providing equal rights, respecting differences, and not discriminating in social life. In the educational context, this value is realized through equal treatment of students from religious cultural and social backgrounds (Sa'dan, 2020).

Apart from that, tolerance (*al-tasāmuḥ*) is the main value in the Islamic multicultural perspective. Tolerance does not mean mixing beliefs, but an attitude of respecting the existence and rights of other people in carrying out their beliefs. Islamic religious education with a multicultural perspective must instill an open, dialogical attitude and respect for differences as part of forming an inclusive student character. This attitude is important to prevent the birth of exclusivism and radicalism in religious life (Mahuri, et al., 2024).

Then there is the value of deliberation (al-shūrā) which is also part of multicultural practices in Islam. Deliberation encourages dialogue and participation of all parties in decision making, thereby creating a democratic atmosphere and respecting diversity of views. In the educational context, this can be realized through collaborative learning which provides space for differences in opinions and students' cultural backgrounds (Halimatussa'diyah, 2020).

Thus, multicultural values in an Islamic perspective include equality, justice, tolerance and deliberation. These values are not only normative-theological, but also applicable in social life and education. Its implementation in Islamic religious education is very important in building a harmonious, inclusive and civilized society amidst the reality of the pluralism of the Indonesian nation.

Table 1. Comparison of James Bank Dimensions and Islamic Values

James A. Bank Dimensions	Main Focus	Islamic Values	Integration Explanation
Content Integration	Course materials encompass diverse cultures and perspectives	Al-Musāwah (Equality)	All cultures are treated equally in teaching materials; not only the dominant culture is considered important.
Knowledge Construction	Knowledge is understood as a socio-cultural construct	Al-'Adālah (Justice)	Epistemic justice: students are encouraged to assess bias in knowledge and not discriminate against sources/views of certain groups.
Prejudice Reduction	Reducing stereotypes, racism, and discrimination	Al-Tasāmuḥ (Tolerance)	Islam teaches respect and openness, so social prejudice can be reduced through education.
Equity Pedagogy	Learning methods are made equitable for all students	Al-Shūrā (Deliberation)	A democratic and participatory school culture aligns with the principle of shura, where all parties are involved in school decisions.
Empowering School Culture	Reforming the school system to be inclusive and non-discriminatory		

### Integration of Islamic Education and Multiculturalism Concepts

Education is a process of developing human resources to achieve optimal social skills and individual development, fostering strong relationships between individuals and their communities and cultural environments (Ibrahim et al., 2013). Multiculturalism, on the other hand, is derived from the word "multi," meaning many, diverse, or various, and "kultur," meaning culture, politeness, and reason. Thus, the meaning of multiculturalism is cultural diversity, diverse politeness, and diverse reason. Multicultural Islamic education, in general, is an educational concept and practice that seeks to provide an understanding of racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity within a society. The goal of this concept is to enable people to coexist peacefully across diverse communities. Furthermore, multicultural Islamic education is an educational practice that seeks to foster tolerant, respectful, and democratic social interactions among people of diverse backgrounds. Broadly defined, multicultural Islamic education encompasses not only formal education but also non-formal and informal education (Hadi, 2021).

Multicultural Islamic education is a way to teach about diversity. Understanding multicultural Islamic education as an educational strategy applied to all subjects by utilizing the cultural differences existing among students, such as ethnicity, religion, language, gender, social class, race, ability, and age, to facilitate the learning process (Rahayu, 2023).

Thus, the concept of multicultural Islamic education did not emerge in a vacuum, but rather has strong historical roots in the early history of Islam, which has interacted with diverse social and cultural realities from the beginning. Since its inception, Islam has been a religion constantly in contact with other religions. In its early growth and development, Islam encountered the culture and civilization of the Arab people of ignorance, who adhered to pagan beliefs. The Prophet Muhammad, as the bearer of Allah's message (risalah) and teachings, sought to rectify the beliefs of the Arab people at that time by maintaining good relations with them. Although conflicts with the ignorant people often arose during his preaching, these conflicts and wars were actually resorted to only as a last resort after all other peaceful means had failed. Therefore, Islam never taught its followers to be hostile to other religions. On the contrary, Islam encourages humans to establish cooperation and good relationships with anyone and everywhere to build a better human civilization (Julaiha, 2014).

Essentially, Islam views humans and humanity positively and optimistically. According to Islam, all humans originate from the same origin, namely the Prophet Adam and Eve. Although they share the same ancestors, over time, they have divided into tribes, tribes, or nations, each with its own unique culture and civilization. These differences then encourage people to get to know each other and develop a mutual appreciation. This is what Islam then uses as the basis for the perspective of "universal humanity," which in turn fosters solidarity among people. Islam, as a religion of rahmatan lil 'alamin (blessing for all the worlds), has a constructive perspective on peace and harmony (Muhlasin, 2019).

Islam, a mercy for all the worlds, must instill in its followers good attitudes and behavior. Goodness, in essence, involves behaving well in their relationship with God in worship and in their relationships with others in the context of social interactions. Heru Suparman argues that there are four multicultural messages in the Quran, including: (Alhasbi et al., 2024)

First, all humans were created from the same origin. Furthermore, the purpose of human creation is not to hate one another, but rather to get to know and interact with one another. Furthermore, what differentiates humans is not their social group or ethnicity, but rather the inherent value of piety. Second, all humanity was once a unified whole, but due to conflict, Allah sent a Messenger to warn and bring good news to humanity. Third, the Quran emphasizes the importance of mutual trust, understanding, and respect for one another, and refrains from all forms of prejudice, especially seeking fault with others. Fourth, the Quran also requires Muslims to prioritize peace and provide a sense of security for all humanity by avoiding acts of injustice that could lead to conflict.

In his book, "Religious Education with a Multicultural Perspective," In his speech, Zakiyuddin Baidhaway explained that there are at least three main principles in Islam regarding multiculturalism. First, the principle of plural is usual. This principle explains that diversity is something that is normal or common and does not need to be debated. Second, equal is usual, in this principle Islam tries to show that diversity is something that is normal. And the third principle is the principle of modesty in diversity. Being mature in diversity is a moderate attitude that ensures wisdom in thinking and acting, far from fanaticism that often leads to violence. Furthermore, Baidhaway explained that multiculturalism in Islam can be developed by spreading trust and husnudzan in fostering togetherness, mutual forgiveness, building Islamic brotherhood and Islamic brotherhood to create a peaceful life in accordance with the vision and mission of Islam itself, namely as a religion of mercy for all nature.

### **Implementation of Multicultural Islamic Education in Educational Institutions**

The implementation of multicultural Islamic education in educational institutions is a strategic step in responding to the social realities of pluralistic Indonesian society. Multicultural Islamic education does not stop at the conceptual level but must be actualized in institutional policies, curricula, learning processes, and school culture. Thus, universal Islamic values such as justice, tolerance, brotherhood, and respect for diversity are not only understood cognitively

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but also internalized in the daily lives of students. According to Nana Najmina (Permatasari, 2020), the implementation of multicultural education in education can be realized through several important aspects.

First, building an inclusive religious paradigm in the school environment. This means schools instill an open, tolerant, and non-exclusive religious perspective. Students are encouraged to understand that differences in religious understanding and practice are a social reality that must be respected, not contested. Teachers serve as role models, demonstrating a moderate and dialogical attitude.

Second, respecting linguistic diversity in schools. Linguistic diversity reflects diverse cultural backgrounds. Schools need to create an atmosphere that respects the use of regional languages as cultural identity, without neglecting the function of Indonesian as a unifying language. This attitude can foster self-confidence and respect for each student's identity.

Third, foster gender-sensitive attitudes in schools. Multicultural education requires an awareness that men and women have equal rights and opportunities in education. Teachers and schools need to avoid gender stereotypes in the distribution of roles, leadership opportunities, and learning activities, to create a just and equitable environment.

Fourth, foster critical understanding and empathy for injustice and social differences. Schools can develop discussions, case studies, or social activities that encourage students to critically understand the reality of social inequality. The goal is for students to not only understand theory but also develop concern and empathy for disadvantaged groups.

Fifth, foster an anti-ethnic discrimination attitude. The school environment must be free from discriminatory treatment based on ethnicity, race, or cultural background. Schools need to instill values of equality and brotherhood to create a harmonious atmosphere among the school community.

Sixth, respect differences in abilities. Every student has different potential and intelligence. Therefore, the learning approach should not standardize student abilities, but rather provide space for each student's development according to their talents and interests. Seventh, respect age differences. Schools need to foster a culture of mutual respect between younger and older students, both in interactions between students and between students and teachers.

Exclusive Islamic religious education materials will only foster claims of truth, which in turn will lead to the emergence of intolerant attitudes. Therefore, patterns of interaction between people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds should receive at least a proportional portion. The primary goal of multicultural education is to develop the younger generation as agents of mitigating intergroup conflict (SARA), which often involves radical movements that frequently occur in Indonesia. Being able to serve as role models who accept differences with tolerance is a teacher's duty as an educator. This must be balanced with a comprehensive understanding of the concept of multiculturalism. This is because they are equipped with attitudes of tolerance, respect, and sincerity toward the diversity that exists in Indonesian society. This way, differences in ethnicity, customs, race, and religion will not become a springboard for radicalism (Fauzi, 2022).

## CONCLUSION

Multicultural Islamic education is a relevant educational approach to address the challenges of Indonesia's diverse society. Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that James A. Banks's concept of multicultural education, with its five dimensions, can be harmoniously integrated with Islamic principles that place diversity as a divine law. This integration reinforces the idea that education serves not only as a means of transferring knowledge but also as a space for developing inclusive social character. Islamic multicultural values, such as equality (*al-musāwah*), justice (*al-‘adālah*), tolerance (*al-tasāmuḥ*), and

deliberation (al-shūrā), have proven to be a strong normative foundation for supporting the development of anti-discriminatory education.

These values are not only theological but can also be implemented within the education system through the curriculum, learning strategies, and school culture. The implementation of multicultural Islamic education demands real changes in the educational institution environment, such as the development of an inclusive religious paradigm, respect for cultural and linguistic diversity, strengthening gender sensitivity, and eliminating discrimination based on ethnicity and student abilities. Thus, multicultural Islamic education can play a strategic role in forming a young generation that is tolerant, moderate, and capable of becoming agents of social peace, especially in reducing SARA conflicts and the potential for radicalism in society. As a suggestion, it is hoped that further research will focus more on empirical studies through direct observation in schools or madrasas, testing how effective the application of Banks dimensions is in teaching Islamic religious education, and designing a curriculum model and strategy for implementing multicultural Islamic education that is more practical and measurable.

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