Educating for Tolerance: Multicultural Approaches in Islamic Religious Education

Putri Ayu Lestari[1]

[1]Universitas Sahid, Indonesia

Correspondent: putrial570@gmail.com[1]

ABSTRACT: This narrative review explores the integration of multicultural values within Islamic education in public schools, focusing on how inclusive practices contribute to tolerance and social harmony. The study aims to analyze existing literature on the topic and evaluate the effectiveness of pedagogical and institutional strategies. A systematic search was conducted across Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and Google Scholar using relevant keywords such as "multicultural Islamic education" and "inclusivity in Islamic education." Studies were selected based on relevance, quality, and empirical depth. The results highlight four main themes: curriculum integration, the roles of teachers and leadership, effective teaching strategies, and barriers to implementation. Schools that integrate inclusive values into Islamic education foster students' empathy, tolerance, and interfaith understanding. Teachers and school leaders are key facilitators, while project-based learning and interactive media prove effective in promoting multicultural awareness. However, systemic challenges such as policy gaps, limited teacher training, and community resistance persist. Local contexts significantly influence implementation, indicating a need for adaptable and context-sensitive strategies. The findings suggest that strengthening teacher training, aligning national and local policies, and involving community stakeholders are critical for advancing multicultural Islamic education. These insights offer valuable guidance for future research and educational reforms aimed at building inclusive, pluralistic societies through Islamic schooling.

Keywords: Multicultural Islamic Education, Inclusive Pedagogy, Tolerance in Schools, Religious Education, Curriculum Development, Educational Policy, Cultural Diversity.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary educational discourse, the integration of multicultural values into Islamic education, particularly within public schools, has emerged as a critical response to increasingly diverse societies. This approach aligns with global calls for more inclusive and contextually relevant educational systems that promote mutual respect, tolerance, and democratic citizenship (Saada & Gross, 2016; R'boul, 2021). In Indonesia, where public education operates within a predominantly

Muslim demographic but with significant cultural and religious diversity, the development of multicultural Islamic education has garnered increasing scholarly and policy interest. It serves not only to strengthen religious understanding but also to cultivate interfaith harmony and social cohesion (Raihani, 2017; Marzuki et al., 2020). Institutions such as the Darul Hikmah Modern Islamic Boarding School have exemplified efforts in curriculum development that reflect this dual purpose, emphasizing the need for education to address both spiritual and societal pluralism (Muhajir et al., 2020).

The national and global trends reflect a growing commitment to rethinking Islamic education in light of multicultural realities. At the national level, schools such as Sekolah Tumbuh in Yogyakarta have pioneered initiatives that institutionalize multicultural values into their educational frameworks, demonstrating a shift towards inclusivity (Ma'rifah & Sibawaihi, 2023). Internationally, reforms in Islamic education are being pursued to bridge the gap between traditional religious instruction and modern, pluralistic values, integrating democratic principles and emotional intelligence into religious curricula (Saada & Gross, 2016; R'boul, 2021). In Western contexts such as Canada and the United Kingdom, literature highlights the need for Islamic education to support minority Muslim students in navigating challenges such as social stigma and cultural exclusion (Amatullah, 2024; Bagley & Al-Refai, 2017).

In Indonesia, multicultural Islamic education has also demonstrated its relevance through localized efforts in promoting social awareness and cultural inclusivity among students. At SMA Negeri 9 Yogyakarta, curricular reforms in Islamic religious education have been designed to reflect the socio-cultural diversity of the student body, enabling students to engage with different perspectives in a constructive manner (Afriyanto & Anandari, 2024). These educational efforts not only foster moderation and tolerance but also contribute to the reduction of discriminatory behaviors and the enhancement of social cohesion (Saihu et al., 2022; OK et al., 2023).

Empirical evidence further supports the effectiveness of multicultural Islamic education in addressing pressing societal concerns such as radicalization. For instance, studies conducted in Poso, Sulawesi, a region affected by religious conflict, demonstrate that the integration of multicultural principles into Islamic education can help cultivate more moderate and tolerant perspectives among students (Malla et al., 2021). Similar findings have been observed in other regions, where curriculum innovations have contributed to building students' character and instilling values of empathy, justice, and communal harmony (Marzuki et al., 2020; OK et al., 2023).

However, the implementation of inclusive and tolerant educational systems requires collaborative support from various stakeholders, including government agencies, local communities, and educational institutions. Effective teacher training and professional development programs are essential in equipping educators with the skills to deliver multicultural content effectively (Hamdan et al., 2022; Arifin et al., 2023). In this regard, clinical supervision models in teacher training, such as those applied in Ponorogo, have shown promise in enhancing educators' competencies in multicultural pedagogy (Arifin et al., 2023).

Despite these advancements, the field of multicultural Islamic education still faces critical challenges. One major obstacle is the persistence of non-inclusive curricula that fail to reflect the realities of religious and cultural diversity. Additionally, resistance from conservative community

groups towards pluralistic ideals often hampers the broader acceptance and implementation of multicultural education (Marzuki et al., 2020). Misinterpretations or narrow understandings of Islamic teachings can also contribute to exclusivist attitudes and hinder efforts toward inclusive education (Malla et al., 2021).

Another persistent challenge is the lack of institutional support for comprehensive curriculum reforms. While isolated success stories such as Sekolah Tumbuh highlight the potential of multicultural Islamic education, the broader education system often lacks the structural flexibility and resources to replicate such models. Moreover, educators frequently report inadequate guidance and training in managing religious and cultural diversity in classrooms, limiting their ability to facilitate intercultural dialogue and understanding (Afriyanto & Anandari, 2024).

A review of current literature reveals several gaps that justify the need for further scholarly inquiry into this field. Most existing studies focus on specific institutional contexts, such as pesantren or Islamic private schools, leaving the dynamics of multicultural education in public schools underexplored (Marzuki et al., 2020; Muhajir et al., 2020). There is also a lack of comparative research examining how multicultural Islamic education is implemented across various school types and demographic settings (Azkiya et al., 2025). Additionally, insufficient attention has been paid to how national education policies facilitate or impede the integration of multicultural values at the local level (Raihani, 2017; Afriyanto & Anandari, 2024).

This literature review aims to synthesize and critically analyze existing research on the integration of multicultural values into Islamic education, particularly within public school settings. The review seeks to identify key trends, challenges, and opportunities in the implementation of multicultural Islamic education. By evaluating diverse approaches and educational practices, this review endeavors to offer a comprehensive understanding of how Islamic education can support inclusive values and social cohesion in diverse societies (Malla et al., 2021; Raihani, 2017).

The scope of this review includes both national and international contexts, with a particular emphasis on public schools in Indonesia. This focus allows for an in-depth exploration of how geographic and demographic factors influence the implementation of multicultural education within Islamic curricula. Case studies from culturally heterogeneous regions such as Yogyakarta and Kalimantan are examined to understand the interplay between socio-religious diversity and educational practices (Raihani, 2017; Afriyanto & Anandari, 2024).

Furthermore, the review considers socio-economic dimensions that affect the effectiveness of multicultural Islamic education. Variations in students' backgrounds—such as family income, parental education levels, and exposure to diverse communities—can shape their receptiveness to multicultural values. Recognizing these contextual factors is crucial in designing educational interventions that are both inclusive and culturally sensitive (Afriyanto & Anandari, 2024; Arifin et al., 2023). As such, the review incorporates a contextual analysis of how educational strategies must be tailored to address local needs while promoting broader societal goals of pluralism and equity (Tirnaz & Moghaddam, 2023; Takunas et al., 2024).

In conclusion, while significant strides have been made in promoting multicultural Islamic education, considerable gaps remain in research and practice, particularly in public school settings. This review intends to contribute to the development of evidence-based recommendations for

policymakers, educators, and stakeholders seeking to foster inclusive and harmonious educational environments through Islamic teachings. It is imperative that future efforts address existing challenges and build upon best practices to ensure that multicultural Islamic education becomes an integral component of the broader educational landscape in plural societies.

METHOD

This study adopted a systematic literature review methodology to explore the integration of multicultural values within Islamic education in public schools. The review aimed to synthesize existing knowledge, identify patterns, and examine trends in research on multicultural Islamic education from both national and international perspectives. To ensure the credibility and comprehensiveness of the review, a rigorous and transparent search strategy was employed, focusing on peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and grey literature published in reputable academic sources.

The primary databases selected for the literature search included Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and ERIC (Education Resources Information Center). These platforms were chosen for their comprehensive coverage of academic literature in education, religion, sociology, and cultural studies. Scopus was particularly instrumental due to its wide repository of scholarly articles, citation analysis tools, and inclusion of journals focused on educational reform and religious studies. It provided access to numerous studies that specifically addressed issues of multiculturalism in Islamic educational settings (Malla et al., 2021; Marzuki et al., 2020). Web of Science complemented this search by offering high-quality, peer-reviewed publications that further enriched the review with global perspectives on inclusive education, Islamic pedagogy, and cultural diversity (Hamdan et al., 2022).

Google Scholar was utilized to expand the scope of the search and include grey literature, theses, and working papers that may not have been indexed in Scopus or Web of Science. Despite its limitations in standardization, Google Scholar proved useful for identifying relevant studies with broader or unconventional keywords (Muhajir et al., 2020; Arifin et al., 2023). Lastly, ERIC was selected as a specialized education database that provided targeted access to journal articles and reports related to pedagogical strategies and educational policy frameworks. This database was particularly useful in identifying studies that focused on multicultural practices in classroom settings (Ma'rifah & Sibawaihi, 2023; OK et al., 2023).

A carefully curated set of keywords was employed during the search process to capture the multidimensional aspects of the topic. The search terms were designed to identify studies that focus on both Islamic education and multiculturalism, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of their intersections. Among the core terms used were: "Multicultural Islamic Education," "Islamic Religious Education and Multiculturalism," "Inclusivity in Islamic Education," and "Preventing Religious Radicalism through Education." These terms helped locate studies that discuss the relationship between Islamic teachings and cultural diversity, particularly in the context of school curricula (Tirnaz & Moghaddam, 2023; Afriyanto & Anandari, 2024; Malla et al., 2021).

Other critical search terms included "Religious Harmony and Education in Islam," which enabled access to research on the promotion of interfaith understanding through Islamic pedagogy, and "Civic Education in Islamic Contexts," used to investigate how civic values are integrated into Islamic curricula (Raihani, 2017; Azkiya et al., 2025). Additionally, keywords such as "Teaching Tolerance in Islamic Schools," "Diversity and Religious Education," and "Cultural Competence in Islamic Education" targeted literature discussing pedagogical strategies and teacher preparedness for diverse learning environments (Ma'rifah & Sibawaihi, 2023; Mashuri et al., 2024; Burga & Damopolii, 2022). For a more localized analysis, the Indonesian-specific phrase "Sekolah Negeri Islam Multikultural" was also employed to identify case studies and policy discussions from national sources (Harits et al., 2016).

The literature search was limited to sources published between 2010 and 2024 to ensure relevance and capture the most recent developments in the field. All retrieved studies were subjected to a set of predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure quality and focus. The inclusion criteria specified that eligible studies must: (1) be published in peer-reviewed academic journals or recognized educational reports, (2) focus explicitly on Islamic education in public or formal school settings, and (3) address the incorporation of multicultural values, including tolerance, diversity, interfaith dialogue, or civic education. Studies that were theoretical, empirical, or review-based were all considered, provided they met the thematic focus.

Conversely, exclusion criteria were applied to eliminate studies that: (1) focused exclusively on Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) without relevance to public school systems, (2) did not incorporate multicultural dimensions into their analysis, and (3) lacked empirical or conceptual depth in addressing educational practices. This approach ensured that only studies with substantive contributions to the understanding of multicultural Islamic education in public schools were retained.

The literature screening process was conducted in multiple stages. First, titles and abstracts of the retrieved documents were reviewed to determine their relevance to the research questions. Studies that met the inclusion criteria at this stage were then subjected to full-text review to assess the quality and depth of their contributions. Duplicates and low-quality articles were removed during this stage to maintain the integrity of the review. The final pool of selected literature was evaluated using thematic analysis, identifying recurrent concepts, patterns, and frameworks that inform the field of multicultural Islamic education.

The types of studies included in this review varied in methodological approach. Qualitative studies predominated, particularly those employing ethnographic methods, case studies, and interviews with teachers, students, and administrators. These studies provided rich insights into lived experiences, pedagogical practices, and institutional challenges related to multicultural Islamic education (Raihani, 2017; Amatullah, 2024). Quantitative research, though less frequent, offered statistical evidence on the impact of multicultural curricula on student attitudes and behaviors (OK et al., 2023). Mixed-methods studies were also included when they provided integrative perspectives on both outcomes and implementation strategies (Afriyanto & Anandari, 2024).

Studies from diverse geographical contexts were incorporated to ensure a balanced perspective. While the majority of literature focused on Indonesia, due to its unique position as a Muslim-

majority country with high cultural diversity, studies from Canada, the UK, and the Middle East were also analyzed to draw global comparisons and highlight transferable best practices (Amatullah, 2024; Bagley & Al-Refai, 2017).

In conclusion, the methodology employed in this literature review ensured a comprehensive and systematic exploration of multicultural Islamic education in public schools. By using multiple academic databases, applying rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria, and employing a diverse set of search terms, the study captured a wide range of perspectives and empirical evidence. This methodological framework lays the foundation for a nuanced analysis of how Islamic education can support social inclusion, cultural understanding, and democratic values in multicultural settings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The integration of multicultural Islamic education in public schools reflects an evolving educational paradigm aimed at promoting tolerance, inclusivity, and respect for religious and cultural diversity. A comprehensive review of the literature reveals four principal themes that frame the discussion on this topic: curriculum integration, the role of teachers and school leadership, teaching and learning practices, and the challenges and barriers in implementation. Each theme offers critical insights into how multicultural Islamic education is theorized, implemented, and experienced across diverse educational contexts.

In terms of curriculum integration, educational institutions in Indonesia have begun to revise Islamic education curricula to better reflect the multicultural realities of the nation. Schools such as SMA Negeri 9 Yogyakarta have modernized Islamic religious education by incorporating multicultural content that highlights interfaith harmony and pluralism. This approach aligns with findings from Afriyanto and Anandari (2024), who reported that curriculum adaptations that incorporate interreligious understanding and collaborative activities enhance students' appreciation of diversity. Similarly, Marzuki et al. (2020) emphasized that the inclusion of pluralistic perspectives in Islamic texts enables students to engage with complex societal realities and develop a more tolerant worldview.

In Islamic boarding schools or pesantren, efforts to instill multicultural values are seen in critical interpretations of religious texts and daily social interactions that emphasize mutual respect (Hamdan et al., 2022). OK et al. (2023) noted that project-based learning activities, including community service programs and intergroup collaborations, help operationalize these values, making them an everyday part of student life. These approaches contribute to fostering students who are not only religiously grounded but also socially aware and tolerant.

Globally, the integration of multiculturalism into Islamic education follows diverse curricular models. In Canada and the United Kingdom, Islamic education is often integrated within broader national curricula that emphasize civic responsibility and cultural understanding. Bagley and Al-Refai (2017) as well as R'boul (2021) reported that Islamic schools in these contexts promote intercultural competencies and democratic engagement, preparing students for active participation in diverse societies. In Finland, Rissanen (2012) described a dialogical pedagogical approach where

Islamic education intersects with sociology, economics, and cultural studies, fostering critical thinking and an inclusive mindset.

In Turkey, the curricular approach is adapted to local cultural and social realities. Omar et al. (2014) reported that contextual teaching practices, where religious lessons are intertwined with contemporary social issues, encourage inclusivity and adaptability among students. Despite differing pedagogical models, these international examples share a commitment to cultivating students who are empathetic, culturally competent, and socially responsible.

The role of teachers and school leadership is pivotal in realizing multicultural Islamic education. Teachers act as facilitators of dialogue, using inclusive pedagogical methods that promote cultural awareness and mutual respect. Malla et al. (2021) noted that teachers who incorporate multicultural themes across various subjects, including Islamic education, create learning environments that are respectful and engaging. Marzuki et al. (2020) highlighted that teacher-led discussions on tolerance and interfaith respect contribute to more meaningful student engagement and social learning.

School principals play a strategic role in institutionalizing multicultural values. Takunas et al. (2024) illustrated how school leaders can promote policies that encourage inclusivity and cross-cultural understanding. OK et al. (2023) argued that strong leadership that champions multicultural education enhances collaboration among teachers, students, and parents, fostering a school culture rooted in respect for diversity. Moreover, school leaders serve as advocates for pluralism, influencing broader policy dialogues within educational institutions.

Professional training for teachers is an essential component in preparing educators to manage diverse classrooms effectively. Arifin et al. (2023) noted that professional development programs focusing on multicultural pedagogy have empowered teachers to design inclusive curricula and address discrimination. Marzuki et al. (2020) described training initiatives in pesantren that enhance teachers' capacities to integrate pluralistic Islamic teachings. Despite these efforts, Azkiya et al. (2025) observed that such programs remain limited in scope and coverage, calling for more context-sensitive training that equips educators with practical tools for multicultural instruction.

Effective teaching and learning practices form the backbone of multicultural Islamic education. Project-based learning, problem-based learning (PBL), and the integration of digital technologies are prominent methods used to engage students in exploring multicultural values. Malla et al. (2021) reported that students involved in social action projects developed a deeper understanding of diversity and cooperation. Hamdan et al. (2022) found that PBL fosters collaborative problem-solving and empathy by encouraging students to address real-world issues through inclusive approaches.

Digital media, including animated videos and online platforms, has proven effective in facilitating critical thinking and cultural awareness. These tools allow students to access diverse viewpoints and engage with multicultural themes interactively (Malla et al., 2021). In particular, integrating such technologies into Islamic education helps students contextualize religious values within modern, pluralistic societies.

Several educational institutions in Indonesia offer successful examples of inclusive Islamic pedagogy. SMA Negeri 9 Yogyakarta has implemented character education programs centered on

tolerance and intercultural understanding (Afriyanto & Anandari, 2024). Similarly, pesantren have embraced inclusive teaching that emphasizes inter-sectarian respect and openness to differing theological perspectives (Marzuki et al., 2020). Programs such as the Student Leadership Basic Training at Darul Muhajirin Praya High School illustrate how leadership education rooted in multicultural values fosters responsible, inclusive student leadership (Hamdan et al., 2022).

Despite these advancements, significant challenges persist in implementing multicultural Islamic education. One of the primary obstacles is the lack of coherent policy support. Raihani (2017) observed that national educational frameworks often fail to provide clear guidelines for integrating multiculturalism, resulting in inconsistencies in implementation. Teachers and school leaders may struggle to balance institutional mandates with the need to adapt to local cultural dynamics.

Community resistance also hinders progress. In regions with strong conservative influence, multicultural initiatives may be perceived as threatening to traditional religious values (Marzuki et al., 2020). This tension often manifests in reluctance among stakeholders to fully embrace inclusive curricula. Tirnaz and Moghaddam (2023) emphasized the importance of aligning educational reforms with community values to minimize resistance and ensure sustainable change.

Teacher preparedness remains a critical issue. Many educators lack sufficient training in multicultural education, limiting their ability to facilitate inclusive learning environments (Arifin et al., 2023). Muhajir et al. (2020) highlighted that outdated teaching materials and insufficient professional development opportunities exacerbate these challenges. Moreover, resource constraints, including limited access to inclusive textbooks and teaching aids, further hinder effective implementation.

Cross-national comparisons reveal that challenges vary significantly depending on the sociocultural and political context. In Western countries like the United Kingdom and Canada, issues such as discrimination and minority marginalization shape the discourse on Islamic education (Afriyanto & Anandari, 2024; Raihani, 2017). In these contexts, educators often face difficulties in addressing Islamophobia while promoting inclusive curricula. Conversely, in Muslim-majority countries like Indonesia, the primary challenge lies in negotiating between traditional religious interpretations and progressive educational models that embrace diversity (Mashuri et al., 2024).

Within Indonesia, regional differences further complicate implementation. Urban centers such as Yogyakarta have shown greater openness to multicultural educational reforms, benefiting from more progressive local cultures and institutional support (Saihu et al., 2022). In contrast, rural and conservative areas often exhibit higher levels of resistance, necessitating more localized and culturally sensitive strategies (Malla et al., 2021).

In summary, the literature underscores the multifaceted nature of multicultural Islamic education in public schools. While curriculum reforms, inclusive pedagogies, and leadership initiatives have advanced the cause of pluralistic education, persistent challenges in policy support, community acceptance, and teacher training remain. Comparative insights from international contexts further highlight the importance of culturally responsive strategies tailored to local realities. As such, ongoing efforts must focus on building institutional capacity, fostering stakeholder engagement, and promoting inclusive values through evidence-based educational practices.

The findings of this study align with a growing body of literature that underscores the value of integrating multicultural values into Islamic education, particularly within public school settings. The integration of diverse teaching strategies, inclusive curricula, and intercultural engagement mirrors the conclusions of earlier studies that emphasize the transformative power of multicultural Islamic education. Malla et al. (2021), for instance, highlighted the effectiveness of animated media in instilling inclusive and moderate perspectives among students, a theme reflected in this review's emphasis on interactive and innovative pedagogical methods. Similarly, Marzuki et al. (2020) demonstrated that pesantren that actively integrate multicultural principles foster openness and tolerance among students. This mirrors the evidence gathered in public school contexts, reinforcing the broader applicability of these practices beyond specialized Islamic institutions.

The implications of these findings are multifaceted, especially for educational policymakers in Indonesia and countries with significant Muslim populations. The observed necessity for stronger policy support and enhanced teacher training, as noted by Tirnaz and Moghaddam (2023), indicates that current educational frameworks may be inadequate in addressing the practical realities of multicultural instruction. Policymakers must respond by implementing structured support systems that include curriculum reforms, accessible resources, and sustained professional development programs. R'boul (2021) further emphasized the need for collective action to overcome institutional barriers to inclusion, especially in European contexts where Muslim minority students often face systemic discrimination. By incorporating multicultural Islamic education into mainstream educational policy, governments can promote mutual understanding and social cohesion.

One key lesson from this review is the urgent need to empower educators through professional development tailored to multicultural contexts. As shown in Hamdan et al. (2022), strategies such as problem-based learning can significantly enhance students' collaborative and empathic capacities. Teachers equipped with inclusive pedagogical skills are more capable of navigating classroom diversity and fostering respectful dialogue among students. Furthermore, the development and integration of multicultural content in learning materials are critical. The success of interactive media and culturally relevant resources, as highlighted by Malla et al. (2021), points to the importance of aligning teaching content with the lived experiences and cultural identities of students. This can make education more engaging and contextually relevant.

The systemic context of national and local education policies plays a critical role in shaping the effectiveness of multicultural Islamic education. At the national level, Indonesia's education policy framework, as outlined in Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, endorses democratic and non-discriminatory principles that theoretically support multicultural education (Burga & Damopolii, 2022). However, the lack of explicit policies mandating the integration of multicultural values into religious education has limited practical implementation. Raihani (2017) identified a disconnect between policy formulation and school-level execution, a gap that continues to hinder the consistent adoption of multicultural practices across public schools and pesantren. Similarly, Marzuki et al. (2020) found that while some pesantren adopt modern educational models, they often overlook the deliberate inclusion of multicultural content, resulting in fragmented and inconsistent practices.

Local policy environments further shape how multicultural Islamic education is enacted in daily school operations. Regional education offices and community norms significantly influence the scope and form of curriculum implementation. In some progressive districts, support for multicultural programs manifests in school initiatives that promote intergroup cooperation and cultural appreciation (Malla et al., 2021). Conversely, in conservative regions, educational stakeholders may resist inclusive curricula due to concerns about cultural erosion or religious dilution. OK et al. (2023) illustrated how proactive local policy and school-based initiatives can successfully internalize multicultural values when they align with community expectations and are backed by administrative commitment.

The interplay between national and local policy dynamics underscores the complexity of implementing multicultural Islamic education. While national policies may advocate for inclusion, their effectiveness is contingent upon localized adaptation and stakeholder buy-in. Burga and Damopolii (2022) argued that educational policies must be contextually responsive, integrating local cultural sensitivities with national inclusivity goals. Successful implementation thus requires a coordinated policy approach that combines top-down mandates with bottom-up community engagement. Educational institutions must collaborate with local leaders, parents, and cultural organizations to develop curricula and practices that resonate with their immediate social environments while remaining aligned with national objectives.

To address implementation barriers, several policy and pedagogical strategies emerge from this review. Strengthening the multicultural content of Islamic education curricula is essential. Muhajir et al. (2020) advocated for curriculum design that reflects the diverse cultural and religious realities of students, promoting egalitarianism and inclusivity. Embedding multicultural perspectives within religious instruction helps students see religion as a vehicle for unity rather than division. Practical implementation should involve social learning activities that encourage cooperation across differences.

Professional development for teachers remains a linchpin in the success of multicultural education. Arifin et al. (2023) emphasized the role of clinical supervision in cultivating teacher competencies in diversity-sensitive pedagogy. Professional training must equip educators with both conceptual understanding and practical tools to manage multicultural classrooms effectively. This includes exposure to case-based scenarios, reflective practice, and inclusive curriculum planning. Expanding access to such programs, particularly in under-resourced regions, is critical for nationwide impact.

Moderation and tolerance must also be institutionalized through educational policy. Burga and Damopolii (2022) called for policy initiatives that embed cultural and religious diversity into the educational ethos. These policies should empower schools to conduct diversity appreciation events, support interfaith dialogues, and encourage cross-cultural student collaboration. Such practices help normalize diversity and reinforce inclusive norms among the school community.

Collaborative and project-based learning approaches further enrich multicultural Islamic education. Malla et al. (2021) demonstrated that social projects that address real-world diversity challenges can foster empathy and cooperation among students. These pedagogies allow learners to engage directly with multicultural issues, developing both cognitive understanding and

emotional intelligence. When implemented thoughtfully, such methods transform classrooms into microcosms of inclusive society.

Community and parental involvement is another vital factor in the effective implementation of multicultural education. OK et al. (2023) underscored the benefits of school-community partnerships in reinforcing inclusive values. Parents and community leaders play a role in legitimizing multicultural curricula and fostering environments conducive to respectful cultural exchanges. Engaging these stakeholders through outreach programs, workshops, and participatory governance can build a shared vision for inclusive education.

Despite the promise of these strategies, limitations in current research must be acknowledged. Much of the existing literature is context-specific, often focusing on single schools or districts without offering comparative insights. Furthermore, there is limited longitudinal data on the sustained impact of multicultural Islamic education initiatives. As noted by Raihani (2017), the absence of rigorous policy evaluation frameworks makes it difficult to assess whether interventions lead to enduring changes in student attitudes and school cultures. Future research should prioritize comparative studies across diverse geographic and cultural contexts, as well as employ longitudinal designs to track educational outcomes over time.

The integration of multicultural values into Islamic education presents both opportunities and challenges. This review confirms that inclusive curricula, empowered educators, and supportive policies are essential to the success of this endeavor. However, systemic constraints, including policy gaps, community resistance, and capacity limitations, continue to hinder progress. A multidimensional strategy that combines educational innovation, policy alignment, and stakeholder engagement offers the most promising path forward. Further scholarly inquiry is needed to refine these approaches and ensure that multicultural Islamic education can fulfill its potential as a catalyst for social cohesion and democratic citizenship.

CONCLUSION

This review has highlighted the significance of integrating multicultural values within Islamic education in public schools, revealing that inclusive curricula, responsive pedagogies, and proactive leadership play central roles in fostering tolerance, empathy, and social harmony among students. The findings underscore how institutions that embed multicultural principles into religious education contribute to shaping students who are both spiritually grounded and culturally competent. Effective approaches, such as project-based learning, interactive media, and teacher empowerment through professional development, demonstrate strong potential to overcome barriers related to discrimination, conservatism, and lack of policy coherence.

Despite these promising outcomes, systemic challenges persist, particularly the gap between national policy frameworks and their localized implementation, as well as limited teacher capacity and community resistance. These issues signal an urgent need for comprehensive educational reforms that prioritize cultural inclusivity. Policymakers must consider integrating multicultural

education into the national Islamic education curriculum, strengthening regional collaboration, and institutionalizing moderation and diversity within policy directives.

Future research should explore longitudinal and comparative studies to evaluate the long-term impact of multicultural Islamic education across different socio-cultural contexts. Attention should also be given to assessing the effectiveness of community and parental involvement in supporting inclusive education.

Ultimately, this study affirms that empowering teachers, strengthening curricula, and fostering culturally responsive school environments are essential strategies for achieving inclusive and harmonious educational outcomes in increasingly diverse societies.

REFERENCES

Afriyanto, I., & Anandari, R. (2024). Reforming Islamic education curricula to promote tolerance and interfaith understanding. *Journal of Multicultural Education*, 18(1), 45–60.

Amatullah, T. (2024). Addressing identity and inclusion through Islamic education in Western contexts. *International Journal of Islamic Studies*, 22(2), 112–128.

Arifin, Z., Suryadi, A., & Widodo, H. (2023). Enhancing teacher competencies in multicultural pedagogy through clinical supervision. *Education and Society*, 31(3), 215–230.

Azkiya, F., Ramli, M., & Wahyuni, S. (2025). Institutional readiness for multicultural Islamic education: A comparative case study. *International Journal of Comparative Education*, 17(1), 14–32.

Bagley, C., & Al-Refai, M. (2017). Inclusion and exclusion: Intercultural education and Muslim students in the UK. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 20(4), 450–465. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2016.1248833

Burga, S., & Damopolii, I. (2022). The role of policy in supporting religious and cultural diversity in Indonesian schools. *Indonesian Journal of Educational Policy*, 10(1), 22–36.

Hamdan, A., Zubaidi, S., & Pratama, A. (2022). Problem-based learning for promoting inclusive Islamic education. *Journal of Educational Research and Innovation*, 6(2), 101–117.

Harits, M., Sulaiman, M., & Najib, H. (2016). Multicultural values in Islamic public schools in Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education*, 4(2), 93–108.

Ma'rifah, S., & Sibawaihi, A. (2023). Integrating multicultural values into Islamic school management: The case of Sekolah Tumbuh. *Journal of Islamic Educational Studies*, 12(4), 278–293.

Malla, A. R., Nasution, S., & Ahmad, T. (2021). Promoting religious tolerance through animated learning media in conflict-prone areas. *Journal of Peace Education and Social Justice*, 9(1), 39–55.

Marzuki, A., Yuliana, S., & Hanifah, M. (2020). Rethinking pesantren education: Multicultural practices and barriers. *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education*, 8(1), 56–74.

Mashuri, A., Fauzan, R., & Nugroho, D. (2024). Negotiating Islamic identity and cultural pluralism in Indonesian education. *Cultural and Religious Education Review*, 11(1), 65–80.

Mohammad, W. (2023). The role of AI Waifu characters in supporting Weaboos with post-traumatic relationship syndrome (PTRS). *Sinergi International Journal of Education*, 1(2), 77–96.

Muhajir, A., Latifah, N., & Siregar, D. (2020). Curriculum reform and inclusive Islamic education in pesantren. *Journal of Islamic Pedagogy*, 5(3), 144–159.

OK, S., Prasetyo, A., & Widyaningsih, D. (2023). Project-based learning and interfaith collaboration in Islamic schools. *Journal of Education and Human Values*, 13(2), 98–112.

Omar, M., Yilmaz, H., & Aydin, T. (2014). Teaching Islam in contemporary Turkey: A case for contextual pedagogy. *Turkish Journal of Education and Culture*, 7(3), 123–137.

Raihani. (2017). Education for multicultural citizens in Indonesia: Policies and practices. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 47(1), 38–55. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2016.1134957

R'boul, H. (2021). Teaching democratic values through Islamic education in European Muslim schools. *Intercultural Education*, 32(5), 551–567. https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2021.1938752

Rissanen, I. (2012). Teaching Islamic education in Finnish schools: A case of dialogical pedagogy. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 34(3), 225–239. https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2012.687363

Saihu, M., Wijayanti, N., & Kurniawan, F. (2022). Character education for religious moderation in urban Islamic schools. *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*, 12(1), 45–59.

Takunas, A., Rahayu, F., & Wibowo, S. (2024). School leadership and inclusive educational policies: Evidence from Islamic public schools in Java. *Educational Management Perspectives*, 14(1), 88–103.

Tirnaz, R., & Moghaddam, R. (2023). Cultural resistance to educational reform in conservative Muslim communities. *International Journal of Islamic Thought and Reform*, 9(2), 123–138.