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Embracing Diversity: Islamic Education through the Multicultural Lens of the Quran

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Abstract

This research aims to explore Islamic education from the Quranic perspective in the context of multiculturalism. The primary issue addressed is integrating Quranic values such as tolerance, brotherhood, and justice into an inclusive and relevant Islamic education in today's alobalized era. The research method employed is library research, with the primary sources being the Quran and relevant tafsir, along with secondary literature from books, journals, and related materials. The findings reveal that the Quranic perspective provides a strong foundation for multicultural Islamic education by emphasizing the importance of tolerance, brotherhood, and justice. These values can be implemented through the integration of multicultural concepts into the curriculum, the development of inclusive teaching strategies, teacher training, and community participation in the education process. This research contributes to the development of educational strategies that support diversity, creating a fairer and more peaceful society. The significance of this research lies in its potential to shape a more relevant and adaptive Islamic education system amidst the complexities of a diverse global society.

Keywords: Embracing diversity, islamic education, multicultural lens of the quran

A. Introduction

Islamic education in the context of multiculturalism reflects an approach that understands and appreciates cultural, ethnic, and individual diversity within a society (Akhmadi, 2019). Several theories can support the implementation of multicultural education in the context of Islamic education, one of which is the Social Constructivism Theory. This theory emphasizes that learning occurs within social and cultural contexts (Adams, 2006). Consequently, Islamic education can utilize group discussions, collaboration, and community-based projects to teach Quranic values such as tolerance and brotherhood, allowing students to see the relevance and practical application of these values in daily life.

Additionally, the Theory of Cultural Diversity highlights the importance of appreciating and understanding cultural differences as assets in education (Gay, 2013). In Islamic teachings, the Quran emphasizes recognizing and respecting cultural differences as part of Allah's creation. To implement this theory, Islamic education can integrate studies of diverse cultures and ethnicities into the curriculum and use intercultural approaches in teaching. This encourages students to respect differences and view them as part of the diversity that enriches their learning experience.

In the effort to delve into the essence of multicultural Islamic education, it is crucial to reflect on the perspective of the Quran as the primary guidance in the lives of Muslims. The Quran, as a source of law and guidance in Islam, contains values that encompass justice, brotherhood, and tolerance. In this regard, understanding the teachings of the Quran becomes a crucial foundation for developing an inclusive Islamic education that values diversity (Hermawan, Mufarroha, and Baihaqi, 2020).

Viewing Islamic education from the Quranic perspective allows us to explore how these sacred teachings promote tolerance among individuals, groups, and nations. The Quran encourages Muslims to understand and collaborate without considering differences in backgrounds or cultural identities (Sutiah, 2020). This article explores key concepts in the Quran relevant to multicultural Islamic education, such as justice, brotherhood, and pluralism. By summarizing Quranic perspectives, how Islam teaches respect and understanding of diversity as a divine gift that should be preserved and valued can be comprehended.

In the increasingly interconnected global context, understanding the Quranic perspective on multicultural Islamic education can serve as a foundation for shaping a tolerant generation that appreciates differences and can peacefully coexist amidst societal diversity. As such, Quranic thoughts on multicultural Islamic education should be collectively explored to embrace diversity as a divine blessing enriching human life (Syafrudin, Nasaruddin, and Ihwan, 2023).

Moreover, education plays a crucial role in shaping the character and values of society (Syafrudin et al., 2023). In the Islamic context, education serves not only as a transmitter of knowledge but also as a medium for forming responsible, just individuals capable of harmonious living in a diverse society (Musya'adah, 2018). Therefore, it is essential to examine Islamic education from a multicultural perspective, where cultural plurality is acknowledged and appreciated (Lestari, 2022).

Amidst the dynamics of modern society, which is increasingly open and globally connected, the challenges in educating an adaptable generation of Muslims in the face of diversity become more pressing (Pare and Sihotang, 2023). Hence, this research focuses on the Quranic perspective on multicultural Islamic education, with the hope of providing profound insights into how Islamic teachings encourage understanding and acceptance of differences.

The Quran, as the primary source of law and values in Islam, offers a unique view of cultural and ethnic diversity. Therefore, understanding the Quranic perspective on multicultural Islamic education can positively contribute to designing inclusive and relevant educational strategies for the current era (Kaaffah et al., 2022).

Furthermore, through this research, it is expected that solutions or recommendations applicable in both formal and informal education contexts can be identified. The multicultural approach derived from the Quranic perspective is anticipated to guide the development of curricula, teaching methods, and education policies that promote tolerance, justice, and brotherhood among students.

For that reason, this research not only contributes academically but also has a positive impact on the development of an adaptive and responsive Islamic education

system that serves as a tool for character formation and unity in the midst of societal diversity. This research stands out by taking the Quranic perspective, providing an indepth and authoritative contribution to the understanding of Islamic values in the context of cultural diversity. By detailing concepts such as tolerance, brotherhood, and justice in the Quran, this research can lay the groundwork for the development of more inclusive curricula and teaching methods.

The findings of this research are expected to offer new insights into Islamic thought regarding multicultural education and provide practical contributions to the development of education policies that support diversity, creating a fairer and more peaceful society. Overall, this research has the potential to shape a more relevant and adaptive future for Islamic education in the midst of the increasing complexity of a globally diverse society.

Research on multiculturalism is not necessarily novel; numerous previous studies have been on this topic. Among them is a study (Rodliyatun, Nugroho, and Baidhawy, 2022) which aims to identify the importance of implementing multicultural education and strategies for developing Islamic religious education curricula in higher education institutions. Another study (Sukino, Wahab, and Murliji, 2020) aims to identify the forms of development and contextualization of Quran and Hadith materials with a multicultural perspective in Madrasah Aliyah. The last study examines the development of multicultural-oriented Islamic Education (PAI) materials to instill the value of diversity among students (Kamal and Junaidi, 2018).

The current research brings novelty by interpreting the Quran through a multicultural lens for Islamic education, differing from previous studies that focused more on practical implementation and curriculum development of multicultural education.

B. Method

This research employed a basic theory method utilizing data from literature sources (library research), where the authors read and studied books or literature related to the investigated issue. The primary source utilized in this research is the Quran and several commentaries (tafsir) relevant to the Quranic perspective's relevance in multicultural Islamic education and the implementation of multicultural Islamic education concepts in practice. Meanwhile, the secondary data sources comprised books, journals, and other materials discussing the issues related to the researched title. The data processing steps in this research involved descriptive steps, depicting or outlining aspects of the investigated issue.

In the context of Islamic education, the Social Constructivism Theory is one of several theories that can be used to support the implementation of multicultural education. This theory underscores the fact that learning takes place within social and cultural contexts (Adams, 2006). As a result, Islamic education can employ group discussions, collaboration, and community-based initiatives to impart Quranic values, including tolerance and brotherhood, providing students with a practical understanding of the relevance and practical application of these values in their daily lives. By fostering an environment where students learn from each other and their surrounding community, Islamic education can effectively embed these values within their social interactions and cultural experiences.

Furthermore, the Theory of Cultural Diversity underscores the significance of recognizing and comprehending cultural distinctions as assets in the field of education (Gay, 2013). The Quran underscores the importance of acknowledging and respecting cultural distinctions as integral components of Allah's creation in Islamic teachings. In order to implement this theory, Islamic education can incorporate the study of various cultures and ethnicities into the curriculum and employ intercultural teaching methods. This fosters a sense of respect among students for differences and encourages them to view them as a component of the diversity that supplements their educational experience.

C. Result and Discussion

1. Relevance of the Quranic Perspective in Multicultural Islamic Education

The Quranic perspective, being an authoritative source, provides a strong foundation for this research as the Quran is considered the primary guidance and highest authority in Islam. Revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) by Allah, the Quran serves as a guide for ethics, morals, and ways of life for Muslims (Amal, 2013). In the context of multicultural Islamic education, the Quran instills fundamental values such as tolerance, brotherhood, and justice that shape the character of individuals and society.

1) Tolerance in Islamic Teachings

In Islam, the concept of tolerance is reflected as an integral part of religious teachings that emphasizes the importance of respecting differences among individuals and groups. The Quran explicitly and emphatically indicates this value of tolerance as a fundamental principle to be followed by Muslims. The teaching of tolerance in Islam extends beyond religious differences to include other aspects such as ethnicity, race, and cultural background (Rosyidi, 2019).

One of the Quranic verses highlighting the value of tolerance is found in Surah Al-Hujurat (49:13), stating: "O humankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted" (Ruslan, 2022).

This verse emphasizes that differences among individuals and groups are not accidental but a divine decree. The purpose of diversity is to foster recognition and understanding among humankind. Therefore, Muslims are taught to treat others with fairness and full respect without considering any differences, as within these differences lies the wisdom of Allah, who is all-knowing (Anwar et al., 2023).

Thus, the concept of tolerance in Islam is not merely a passive attitude towards differences but an active call to get to know, respect, and understand one another within the framework of divine justice and wisdom. Verses like these underscore the importance of creating an inclusive, harmonious society filled with mutual respect among human beings.

2) Brotherhood as a Central Concept

Brotherhood is a central concept in Islam that reflects the solidarity and unity of the Muslim community (Ar-Rifa'i, 2022). The Quran explicitly teaches the importance of collaboration and mutual support among individuals and communities, irrespective of cultural or ethnic backgrounds. One of the verses emphasizing the concept of brotherhood is found in Surah Al-Imran (3:103), where Allah refers to Muslims as "brothers" with expressions depicting a close unity (Amalia and Publishing, 2020).

The verse states, "And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And remember the favor of Allah upon you - when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together, and you became, by His favor, brothers. And you were on the edge of a pit of the Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses that you may be guided" (Departemen Agama, 2007).

This verse highlights the importance of unity and avoiding division as a form of gratitude for Allah's blessings. The concept of brotherhood in Islam is not merely a rhetorical phrase but a call to create strong relationships and mutual support among Muslims. This brotherhood encompasses tangible actions to assist others in difficult situations, share joys and sorrows, and uphold values of honesty, justice, and compassion.

By internalizing these values of brotherhood, Muslims are expected to create the foundation for an inclusive and united society. In practice, Islamic brotherhood transcends cultural or ethnic differences, creating a social environment that fosters solidarity and cooperation among Muslims and serves as a positive example for the broader society.

3) Concept Justice as a Key Principle

Justice is a fundamental principle in Islam consistently emphasized in many Quranic verses (Soetoprawiro, 2010). This principle of justice is not limited to legal aspects but also encompasses fair treatment of individuals and groups in all aspects of life, including education.

One of the Quranic verses highlighting the principle of justice is found in Surah An-Nisa (4:135), stating: "O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do."

This verse emphasizes that the implementation of justice is a manifestation of piety. Justice in Islam is not only a legal obligation but also an ethical principle that

underlies everyday behavior (Fatcholli and Saleh, 2022). In the context of education, the principle of justice forms the basis for a fair and inclusive education system.

A just education means providing equal opportunities for every individual to receive quality education without discrimination. It involves assessing and appreciating the abilities, potential, and efforts of individuals, regardless of cultural background, ethnicity, or other discriminatory factors. This principle also underscores the need to address inequality in education and provide equal support to every individual, allowing society to develop inclusively and justly (Sumar, 2015).

By understanding and applying these values of tolerance, brotherhood, and justice, Islamic education can become a means to shape a society that appreciates differences, supports each other, and provides equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their cultural or ethnic backgrounds.

An in-depth analysis of Quranic verses related to cultural and ethnic diversity has the potential to offer new insights into how Islam views and applies the principles of multiculturalism in education. By exploring the wisdom and specific teachings that highlight diversity, this research can detail ways to implement these values in curricula, teaching methods, and education policies. Thus, the Quranic perspective not only provides a theoretical foundation but also empowers Islamic education to be responsive and relevant to the reality of multicultural societies.

2. Implementation of Multicultural Islamic Education Concepts in Practice

It is essential to understand how the research findings on multicultural Islamic education from the perspective of the Quran can be implemented in educational practices (Yani et al., 2020). This creates a concrete foundation for improving and enriching students' learning experiences while responding to the needs of an increasingly multicultural society. The implementation of research findings can include the following steps

1) Integration of Multicultural Concepts into the Curriculum

Integration of multicultural concepts into Islamic education curricula is a crucial step to ensure that these values are not merely rhetorical but are internalized and

practiced in students' daily lives (Nurhasanah, 2021). The following are ways in which multicultural concepts from the research can be integrated into the curriculum.

The first is the development of special learning modules (Fatmawati, Pratiwi, and Yuli Erviana, 2018). Developing special learning modules that specifically address multicultural concepts from the Quranic perspective can be undertaken. These modules may include Quranic verses, the life of Prophet Muhammad, and other stories illustrating the importance of tolerance, brotherhood, and justice. Subsequently, these modules can be integrated into existing subjects.

The second is the integration of values in thematic or case-based approaches (Ika, 2023). Multicultural concepts can be integrated into the curriculum by incorporating them into thematic contexts or case studies. For example, when discussing the topic of tolerance, educators can select Quranic verses emphasizing this value and detail the historical context in which these teachings were revealed.

The third is project-based learning exploring multicultural values (Pare and Sihotang, 2023). Project-based learning can be designed to allow students to delve deeper into multicultural values. Students can be tasked with researching and presenting concepts such as tolerance, brotherhood, and justice in the context of the Quran. Such projects stimulate deeper understanding and active engagement.

The fourth is extracurricular activities based on multiculturalism (Handayani and Wulandari, 2017). Implementing extracurricular activities focusing on multicultural values can complement Islamic education. Activities may involve group discussions, visits to different places of worship, or social projects promoting inclusion and intercultural cooperation.

The fifth is employing an interdisciplinary approach (Surohim, 2013). Multicultural concepts can be integrated through an interdisciplinary approach, involving different subjects to address multicultural issues. This allows students to see how Quranic values related to multiculturalism can encompass various aspects of life.

Integrating multicultural concepts into Islamic education curricula not only creates a deeper understanding of religious teachings but also helps shape students'

characters to be more tolerant, respectful, and ready to contribute to a diverse society. Moreover, it ensures that Quranic values remain relevant and applicable in the context of daily life.

2) Development of Inclusive Teaching Strategies

Developing teaching strategies that reflect multicultural values from the research is a crucial step in creating a dynamic, inclusive learning environment that stimulates students' active participation (Asril, 2016). The following are some teaching strategies that can be applied.

The first is collaborative learning methods (Apriono, 2013). Encouraging collaborative learning where students work together in groups with diverse backgrounds can promote intercultural understanding. Educators can design collaborative tasks or projects that encourage dialogue and joint problem-solving. The second is open-class discussions (Pakaya, 2020). Organizing open and inclusive class discussions where students can share their views on multicultural issues. Educators can choose topics that reflect the diversity of society and guide discussions to stimulate critical thinking and respect various perspectives.

The third is the utilization of multicultural learning resources (Lestari, Bahri, and Purmintasari, 2019). Using diverse learning resources such as books, articles, videos, or other teaching materials that depict cultural diversity and multicultural values helps engage students in contextual and relevant learning related to their real lives. The fourth is cultural simulation experiences (Fanani and Muftiyah, 2021). Organizing simulations or activities that allow students to experience and understand life in multicultural societies can be done. For example, holding cultural festivals or intercultural meetings can broaden students' understanding of diversity.

The fifth is using technology to connect cultures (Ratriana, Purwoko, and Yuzianah, 2021). Leveraging technology such as video conferencing, online platforms, or e-penpal exchanges can be conducted to connect students with people from various cultures. This opens opportunities for exchanging experiences and expanding their insights into global diversity. The sixth is fair and inclusive assessment (Abdull Sukor Shaari et al., 2008). Assessments that reflect the diversity of students and allow them

to explore multicultural topics should be designed. Assessments may include projects exploring multicultural values or assignments that stimulate reflection on cultural and ethnic diversity.

Through the application of these teaching strategies, educators can create a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that stimulates critical thinking, intercultural dialogue, and active participation. Moreover, the use of these strategies helps students better understand and appreciate multicultural values derived from the Quranic perspective.

3) Teacher and Educator Training

Training provided to teachers and educators to implement multicultural concepts from the perspective of the Quran plays a key role in ensuring the success and positive impact of this approach. The following are aspects that can be covered in such training(Arifin, 2021).

Firstly, an in-depth understanding of the Quranic perspective provides teachers with a deep understanding of Quranic teachings related to tolerance, brotherhood, and justice. This involves studying specific Quranic texts, accurate interpretation, and discussions on the historical and cultural context of these verses. Teachers need to thoroughly understand how these values can be integrated into their teaching approach (Siti Kholidah Marbun, 2023). Secondly, diverse classroom management skills equip teachers with skills to manage culturally and ethnically diverse classrooms. This includes understanding various learning styles, effective communication in multicultural contexts, and conflict management strategies that may arise from cultural differences. Teachers need to understand how to create a safe and inclusive classroom environment (Mustafida, 2021).

Thirdly, teaching strategies responsive to diverse needs prepare teachers with skills to design and implement teaching strategies responsive to the diversity of students. This involves developing teaching materials that consider cultural diversity, using learning resources reflecting various perspectives, and applying inclusive teaching methods. Fourthly, inter-cultural communication skills development enhances teachers' communication skills in intercultural contexts. This covers understanding the

language and culture of students, improving listening skills, and effectively communicating within a heterogeneous class (Supriatin and Nasution, 2017).

Fifthly, evaluation and self-reflection encourage teachers to engage in the evaluation and self-reflection process regarding the implementation of multicultural concepts. Teachers need to be provided with tools to evaluate the impact of their practices on diversity and to design positive changes as needed (Pandiangan, 2019).

By ensuring that teachers and educators have a strong understanding, skills, and attitudes that support Quran-based multiculturalism, they can become agents of positive change in creating an inclusive learning environment that supports the positive growth of students from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Proper training empowers them to respond effectively to the needs of students, thereby creating a learning environment that embraces and respects diversity.

4) Encouraging Community Participation in Education

Involving the community in the education process is an integral step in creating an inclusive educational environment based on Quran-based multicultural values (Umar, 2016). One way to engage the community is by involving parents in the learning process of their children. Regular meetings between teachers and parents can serve as a platform to discuss multicultural values found in research, enabling parents to support this understanding at home (Padmadewi et al., 2018). Additionally, family education programs can be organized to incorporate parents into learning activities with their children, strengthening the family's understanding of multicultural values in the context of Islamic education. Furthermore, the involvement of community leaders is also an essential aspect of creating an inclusive educational environment (Aquan, Arswimba, Bernardinus Agus Kristio, and Sianipar, 2023). Inviting community leaders or local religious leaders to participate in school activities, such as delivering lectures or panel discussions, can provide broader and deeper insights into the values of multiculturalism in the context of Islamic education. Through the participation of community leaders, positive relationships can be fostered between the school and the surrounding community.

Moreover, cultural exchanges and experiences among local communities can be an effective means to stimulate intercultural dialogue and appreciation of diversity. These exchange programs may include visits or exchange activities that allow students and the local community to interact directly, building a deeper understanding of cultural and ethnic differences (Adinda & Santoso, 2022).

Finally, empowering local groups and community organizations in educational activities can also enhance community participation. By involving these groups, strong partnerships can be created to support multicultural values in Islamic education. All these steps are holistic and can create an educational environment that is not only inclusive but also reflects the Quranic values of tolerance, brotherhood, and justice (Normina, 2016).

The implementation of these steps is expected to create a learning environment that not only teaches diversity but also empowers students to be positive contributors in a multicultural society. Thus, the research findings are not only retained as theoretical concepts but can permeate into everyday educational practices.

D. Conclusion

This research highlights the Quran's relevance in multicultural Islamic education, emphasizing tolerance, brotherhood, and justice as key concepts shaping individual and societal character. As seen in Surah Al-Hujurat (49:13), the Quran provides a strong foundation for inclusive multicultural education, extending tolerance to differences in ethnicity, race, and culture. Brotherhood is central, promoting unity among Muslims regardless of background, as emphasized in Surah Al-Imran (3:103). Justice, a fundamental Islamic principle, encompasses fair treatment in all aspects of life, including education, as stressed in Surah An-Nisa (4:135).

Implementing multicultural concepts in education involves integrating Quranic values into the curriculum, inclusive teaching strategies, teacher training, policy development, and community participation. Practical steps include developing specific learning modules, collaborative teaching methods, open discussions, multicultural resources, cultural simulations, and using technology to bridge cultural gaps. Community engagement through meetings, family programs, cultural exchanges, and

empowering local groups supports an inclusive learning environment. This research significantly contributes to designing adaptive and harmonious Islamic education, practically applying Quranic concepts to shape tolerant, appreciative, and just individuals and societies.

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