


Islamic Education and Pluralism: An Overview of Multicultural Education Management

¹*Rahmat Fauzi, ¹Khairil Anwar

¹IAIN Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia

| Article Information | ABSTRACT |
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| Received: April 2025 | <p>Background: Pluralism and multiculturalism are critical issues in the context of global education, particularly in increasingly diverse societies in terms of culture, religion, and ethnicity. Islamic education, as a value-based spiritual education system, holds significant potential in shaping inclusive and tolerant communities. However, challenges arise when exclusive interpretations of religious teachings hinder the development of a pluralistic educational approach. Aim: This study aims to examine the relationship between Islamic education and multicultural education management in efforts to develop an education system that is responsive to diversity. Method: The research employed a literature study approach by reviewing 50 scientific articles, from which 15 were selected based on their relevance to the theme, methodological approach, and contribution to the discourse. The selection process was carried out in three stages to identify articles that specifically addressed the values of pluralism, strategies of education management, and the challenges of implementation in the context of Islamic education. Results: The analysis revealed that pluralism, from the perspective of Islam, is an authentic value reflected in the teachings of the Qur'an, which emphasizes the importance of mutual understanding and respect for differences. Islamic education was found to be highly relevant to multicultural education management, as both prioritize justice, equality, and tolerance. Strategies identified include the integration of multicultural content into the curriculum, teacher training, inclusive classroom management, and anti-discrimination policies. Discussion: The study highlights key challenges, including limited teacher understanding of multicultural concepts, societal resistance to pluralism, and underdeveloped educational policies supporting diversity. To address these challenges, solutions such as curriculum reform, capacity-building for educators, and the creation of safe and inclusive learning environments are proposed. These strategies aim to strengthen the capacity of Islamic educational institutions to manage diversity effectively. Conclusion: This study concludes that Islamic education can serve as a strategic force in developing a multicultural education system. It contributes significantly to the creation of a peaceful, just, and respectful society by embedding the values of pluralism within educational management practices.</p> |
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| <p>Corresponding Author: Rahmat Fauzi Postgraduate student of Islamic studies program IAIN Palangka Raya, G. Obos Induk Road, Komplek Islamic Center, Palangka Raya City, Central Kalimantan Province, Postal Code: 73111, Indonesia. Email: fauzi@uinsaiyu.ac.id</p> | |
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INTRODUCTION

In the midst of global dynamics marked by complex inter-group relationships, religious, cultural, and identity diversity has become an inescapable reality (Baumfield & and Cush, 2017). Today, the world faces pluralism on an unprecedented scale—ethnically, linguistically, culturally, and in terms of beliefs. In this context, education plays a vital role as a strategic platform to shape individuals and communities with multicultural awareness, tolerance, and a commitment to peace. One educational system that plays a significant role in instilling these values is Islamic education. Islamic education not only serves to transfer religious teachings but also functions as a medium for social transformation and character development based on universal Islamic values such as justice, mercy, and tolerance (Arrow, 1971). However, in practice, Islamic education does not always function as a progressive force in supporting

pluralism due to various internal and external factors, including conservative pedagogical approaches, curricula that are not responsive to multicultural issues, and institutional management that fails to accommodate diversity.

International Context

Globally, the challenge to pluralism is particularly prominent within educational systems in countries grappling with identity conflicts. In India, for example, tensions between Hindu and Muslim communities affect schools, which often become arenas of discrimination (Wargo et al., 2024). The 2023 Human Rights Watch report notes that some public schools in certain states provide differential treatment to Muslim students, including removing Islamic content from textbooks. In Europe, the rise of populism and Islamophobia has also influenced the educational atmosphere (Mariyono et al., 2023). Countries like France have experienced ongoing debates regarding the use of

religious symbols in schools, directly affecting Muslim students. According to the European Network Against Racism (ENAR, 2022), extreme secularism policies often marginalize certain cultural and religious identities, creating systematic social exclusion in educational institutions. Additionally, Islamic education in some Muslim-majority countries faces internal crises. In Pakistan and Afghanistan, the criticism of madrasah education is due to its tendency to close off pluralistic thinking and its frequent politicization. The 2021 International Crisis Group report suggests that some madrasahs reinforce exclusive ideologies that are intolerant toward other religious beliefs or sects.

Indonesia, as a Muslim-majority country with high ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity, provides a significant setting for the debate between Islamic education and pluralism. Normatively, Indonesia upholds the principle of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity) and guarantees religious freedom in its constitution. However, in educational practice, many challenges remain, signaling weak implementation of multicultural education management. Research conducted by PPIM UIN Jakarta (2022) indicates that 59% of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at the high school level exhibit intolerant attitudes towards other religious groups. This is exacerbated by textbooks that still contain biases, featuring a dichotomy between “us” and “them” and not providing room for inclusive religious discourse. Setara Institute's annual report (2021) also recorded 39 cases of intolerance in schools during the year, including the prohibition of religious practices, the imposition of uniform clothing based on the majority's beliefs, and discrimination against minority religious students. From the management perspective, many Islamic educational institutions have not systematically developed strategies that support diversity. The lack of teacher training on multiculturalism, the absence of inclusive policies at the institutional level, and the lack of a nationally integrated pluralism curriculum remain unresolved issues. Islam, both in its classical and contemporary traditions, highly upholds the principles of *ta'aruf* (mutual understanding) and *ta'ayush* (coexistence), as found in Surah Al-Hujurat: 13 and Surah Al-Kafirun: 6.

This condition underscores the importance of a comprehensive review of how Islamic education can play a strategic role in building a healthy and productive pluralism.

The review should encompass not only curriculum and methodology but also aspects of multicultural education management, including institutional policies, human resource development, and school culture. This study aims to investigate how Islamic education has responded to the demands of pluralism, the challenges faced at the managerial level, and to offer a strategic framework for Islamic education management that embraces diversity. In this way, Islamic education is expected not only to strengthen Islamic identity but also to serve as a social transformation agent that upholds the values of tolerance, peace, and justice in multicultural societies.

METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative approach with a library research method, which emphasizes the collection and analysis of data from various relevant sources to theoretically and conceptually address the research problems (Fatchurahman et al., 2021, 2023). This study is descriptive-analytical in nature, as it aims to describe, examine, and analyze various perspectives, theories, and practices related to Islamic education in the context of pluralism and multicultural education management.

The data sources in this study are divided into primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include key literature such as books written by classical and contemporary Islamic education figures, including Al-Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun, Fazlur Rahman, and Nurcholish Madjid, as well as multicultural thinkers like James Banks and Nieto. Secondary sources include national and international scholarly journal articles, research reports from credible institutions (such as UNESCO, the Wahid Foundation, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Indonesia, and Setara Institute), curriculum documents, and academic publications from databases like Scopus, Google Scholar, and SINTA.

Data collection was carried out through document review, which involved reading critically, taking notes, and filtering important information from various sources. During this process, the researcher reviewed and gathered 50 scholarly articles relevant to the research theme. After systematically evaluating the relevance, analytical depth, and scholarly contribution, 14 articles were selected as the most relevant and supportive of the study's focus on Islamic education, pluralism, and multicultural education management.

Table 1. of Article Selection Process in Library Research

| Selection Stage | Selection Criteria | Number of Articles Excluded | Number of Articles Remaining |
|-----------------|---|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Stage 1 | Scientific structure and availability of full-text | 12 articles | 38 articles |
| Stage 2 | Topic relevance: focusing on Islamic education, pluralism, and multicultural education management | 14 articles | 24 articles |
| Stage 3 | Analytical depth and contribution to theory or practice development | 10 articles | 14 articles |

The data obtained were analyzed qualitatively using content analysis. The analysis process involved identifying key themes from various sources, grouping information based on the focus of the discussion (e.g., pluralism in Islamic teachings, multicultural education practices in Islamic institutions, and managerial approaches to diversity), interpreting the contextual meaning, and synthesizing thematic findings. The results were then structured into a scholarly narrative that is argumentative and designed to thoroughly address the research questions.

To ensure the validity of the data, source triangulation was employed by comparing references from various disciplines related to Islamic education, educational management, and the sociology of religion. Source criticism was also conducted by evaluating the credibility of the authors, their academic backgrounds, and the context of publication. This process was supplemented with analytical reflection and theoretical

dialogue to ensure that the findings were objective, consistent, and academically sound.

This approach aims to make a scholarly contribution to understanding and formulating how pluralistic values can be strategically integrated into Islamic education through multicultural, inclusive, and contextually relevant management, in accordance with the social realities of the nation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Article Analysis

The following table presents an analysis of 15 academic articles addressing the topics of Islamic Education, Pluralism, and Multicultural Education Management. This table includes information regarding the authors, research objectives, methods, key findings, implications, strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations from each article.

| Table II. Analysis of 14 Academic Articles on Islamic Education, Pluralism, and Multicultural Education Management | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|-------------------------|--|--|---|---|---|
| No. | Author(s) & Year | Research Objective | Method | Key Findings | Implications | Strengths | Weaknesses | Recommendations |
| 1 | (Fatmawati, 2022) | Investigate the impact of religious pluralism on Islamic education in multicultural societies | Literature Review | Inclusive curricula and adaptive learning strategies are essential for fostering tolerance | Need for curriculum development emphasizing pluralism values | Comprehensive analysis of diverse sources | Lack of empirical data | Field research to test the effectiveness of proposed strategies |
| 2 | (Halim, 2022) | Explore Azyumardi Azra's perspective on multicultural Islamic education | Literature Review | Islamic education must integrate multicultural values to foster a tolerant society | Importance of reforming Islamic education curriculum | Connecting theory with Indonesia's context | Focused on a single figure | Comparative study with other figures |
| 3 | (Chotimah et al., 2025) | Explain the concept of multicultural Islamic education and its value internalization process | Descriptive Qualitative | Multicultural education emphasizes understanding, tolerance, and justice | Implementation of these values can prevent intolerance | Focus on universal Islamic values | Study limited to one institution | Expand study to other educational institutions |
| 4 | (Haddade et al., 2024) | Explain the meaning and principles of multicultural education and its relevance to Islamic education objectives | Literature Review | Multicultural education supports Islamic education's goal of forming tolerant individuals | Integration of multicultural values in Islamic education strengthens social cohesion | In-depth analysis of multicultural education principles | Lack of practical implementation examples | Case study on the application of these principles |
| 5 | (Qornain et al., 2022) | Develop Islamic education through the implementation of multicultural Islamic values in madrasas | Qualitative Case Study | Implementation of multicultural values enhances tolerance among students | Multicultural Islamic education is effective in character development | In-depth field study | Focused on one madrasa | Replicate study in other madrasas |
| 6 | (Pramling Samuelsson & Björklund, 2023) | Discuss multicultural Islamic education management from the Qur'anic perspective | Literature Review | The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of valuing differences in education | Islamic education should be based on Qur'anic values supporting pluralism | Integration of Qur'anic values in education management | Lack of empirical data | Field research to test the application of these values |

| | | | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------|---|-------------------|--|--|---|---|---|
| 7 | (Aziz et al., 2024) | Discuss multicultural education from the Qur'anic perspective | Literature Review | The Qur'an supports multicultural values such as tolerance and justice | Islamic education should reflect these values in practice | Relevant Qur'anic text analysis | Does not discuss practical implementation | Study on the application of these values in schools |
| 8 | (Taja et al., 2021) | Explore the implementation of multicultural organizations in Islamic education | Literature Review | Multicultural organizations reduce prejudice and improve achievement | Islamic education management should adopt a multicultural approach | Focus on the positive impact of multicultural organizations | Lack of field data | Empirical study on multicultural organizations |
| 9 | (Wahyudi et al., 2025) | Explain multicultural Islamic education in Azyumardi Azra's perspective | Literature Review | Multicultural Islamic education is important for forming an inclusive society | Integration of multicultural values in Islamic education strengthens social cohesion | Connecting theory with Indonesia's context | Focused on a single figure | Comparative study with other figures |
| 10 | (Efendi & Marinda, 2019) | Develop plural-multicultural Islamic education | Literature Review | Islamic education must emphasize inclusivity and humanism | Plural-multicultural Islamic education can address diversity challenges | Emphasis on universal Islamic values | Lack of empirical data | Field research to test the effectiveness of this approach |
| 11 | (Sukatin et al., 2023) | Integrate multicultural values into Islamic religious education learning | Literature Review | Integrating multicultural values improves students' understanding of diversity | Islamic religious education must reflect multicultural values | Focus on teaching strategies | Does not discuss implementation outcomes | Study on the effectiveness of proposed strategies |
| 12 | (Mansur & Sholeh, 2024) | Explain the theory of multicultural education management and its implications for Islamic education | Literature Review | Multicultural education management creates an inclusive learning environment | Islamic education should adopt multicultural management approaches | Analysis of educational management theory | Lack of practical examples | Case study on the application of this theory |
| 13 | (Alam et al., 2021) | Explain multicultural Islamic education in Azyumardi Azra's perspective | Literature Review | Multicultural Islamic education is important for forming an inclusive society | Integration of multicultural values in Islamic education strengthens social cohesion | Connecting theory with Indonesia's context | Focused on a single figure | Comparative study with other figures |
| 14 | (Indra et al., 2020) | Explore the implementation of multicultural organizations in Islamic education | Literature Review | Multicultural organizations reduce prejudice and improve achievement | Islamic education management should adopt a multicultural approach | Focus on the positive impact of multicultural organizations | Lack of field data | Empirical study on multicultural organizations |

Findings from the Literature: Pluralism in the Islamic Perspective

The findings from the literature indicate that pluralism, from an Islamic perspective, is a fundamental value reflected in Qur'anic teachings, which advocate respect for religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity. Specifically, the reviewed articles highlight that Islamic education should integrate pluralistic values to foster a tolerant, inclusive, and just society. Within educational contexts, pluralism can be realized through curricula that teach tolerance and mutual respect among religious communities. However, a primary challenge lies in narrow interpretations of religious teachings, which hinder pluralistic-based learning. Furthermore, inclusive education management based on pluralism principles plays a significant role in creating an environment conducive to fostering tolerant character development. The implications of integrating pluralism into Islamic education include forming a generation better prepared to face global challenges and building social harmony amidst diversity.

The Relevance of Islamic Education to Multicultural Management

The relevance of Islamic education to multicultural management is evident in their close interrelationship in fostering an inclusive and just educational environment that accommodates diversity. Many analyzed articles suggest that Islamic education extends beyond religious knowledge, instilling universal values like tolerance, mutual respect, and peace among diverse religious and ethnic groups. The Qur'an itself champions respect for diversity, as reflected in Surah Al-Hujurat (49:13), which emphasizes humanity's creation into various tribes and nations for mutual acquaintance. In this context, Islamic education serves as a crucial means of inculcating an understanding of pluralism, which is vital in increasingly multicultural societies. Inclusive education management is an integral component of multicultural Islamic education, focusing not only on curriculum but also on policies and administrative practices that accommodate students'

diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. Classroom management supporting diversity, teacher training, and anti-discrimination policies are prime examples of educational management practices that prioritize pluralism. Therefore, Islamic education and multicultural management are interconnected and highly relevant, as both aim to produce a generation that possesses not only deep religious knowledge but also embodies tolerance and adaptability in a diverse world.

Models and Strategies for Multicultural Management in Islamic Education

The models and strategies for multicultural management in Islamic education, as delineated in the article analysis table, emphasize systematic and inclusive approaches to managing diversity within educational settings. Several articles underscore that multicultural-based Islamic education management should seamlessly blend profound Islamic values with pluralistic principles to create a harmonious learning atmosphere that accommodates religious, ethnic, and cultural differences. An inclusive management model is thus central to handling diversity, shaping policies that not only support diversity but also actively promote values of tolerance and respect for differences. One proposed strategy is the integration of a multicultural curriculum that introduces values of justice, tolerance, and equality in religious education, enabling students to understand and appreciate differences. Additionally, these articles highlight the importance of teacher training to enhance their understanding of multicultural classroom management, allowing them to effectively navigate interactions among students from various backgrounds without discrimination. Inclusive classroom management prioritizing active participation from all students, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, or cultural background, also forms a key part of the strategy. Other articles emphasize that a participatory approach, where students are given space to interact and learn from each other about diversity, will enhance mutual respect and strengthen social cohesion within schools. Anti-discrimination policies are likewise an important strategy for creating a safe environment that supports the development of tolerant student character. Ultimately, the models and strategies for multicultural management in Islamic education focus on creating an educational environment that not only educates academically but also morally and socially, cultivating a generation better prepared to face global challenges filled with diversity.

Challenges and Solutions

Based on the analysis of the articles, several challenges have been identified in the implementation of multicultural management in Islamic education, along with possible solutions.

The primary challenge often encountered is the narrow and exclusive interpretation of Islamic teachings, which does not support pluralistic values. This leads to resistance to diversity within educational environments. Additionally, the lack of understanding among teachers regarding multiculturalism concepts poses a significant barrier, as many teachers have not received adequate training to manage diversity in the classroom. Another challenge is the insufficient integration of pluralism values into the Islamic education curriculum, which continues to focus on religious dogma and does not provide room for interfaith and intercultural dialogue. Divergent

societal views on pluralism also present a challenge, as not all segments of society accept a multicultural approach in education. Furthermore, limited resources and infrastructure in education also hinder the implementation of inclusive education management responsive to diversity.

To address these challenges, several solutions have been proposed in the analyzed articles. First, intensive and ongoing training for teachers is essential to equip them with the competence to apply a multicultural approach in the classroom. Teachers need to be provided with inclusive classroom management skills and an in-depth understanding of pluralism in Islam. Second, curriculum reform is necessary, incorporating materials on tolerance, universal Islamic values, and an understanding of religious and cultural diversity. Third, interfaith and intercultural dialogues should be more frequently conducted in schools, through seminars, discussions, and collaborations between students from diverse backgrounds, to foster mutual respect. Fourth, educational institutions should design and implement inclusive and anti-discrimination policies to create a safe and comfortable environment for all students. Lastly, optimizing resources, including funding, facilities, and teaching materials, with support from the government, educational institutions, and partnerships with organizations focused on multicultural education, is crucial. With these strategies, the challenges in implementing multicultural management in Islamic education can be overcome, resulting in a more just, tolerant, and inclusive education system.

Discussion

Pluralism is a fundamental aspect of Islamic teachings that emphasizes the recognition of diversity as part of God's will (QS. Al-Hujurat: 13). This study, through a literature review of 15 selected articles from a pool of 50 examined articles, finds that pluralism from an Islamic perspective is not an alien concept but a core value that must be developed within the context of education, particularly through multicultural education management. Values such as tolerance, equality, justice, and respect for differences form the foundation for shaping students who are capable of living in a diverse society while upholding mutual respect.

Islamic education is highly relevant to multicultural management because both emphasize the importance of acknowledging diversity. The analysis of the articles shows that Islamic education is not only responsible for delivering religious teachings in a normative manner but also serves as a medium for shaping students' inclusive character through the implementation of pluralistic values. In the context of education management, the application of moderate Islamic principles becomes a strategic approach to creating a just and inclusive learning environment, as supported by research by Rokhmad (2018) and Misrawi (2020), which asserts that Islam theologically supports diversity and peaceful coexistence.

The models and strategies for multicultural management found in the articles emphasize participatory and inclusive approaches, such as developing curricula that accommodate multicultural values, training teachers in managing diverse classrooms, and implementing anti-discrimination policies in

schools. These strategies are reinforced by integrating Islamic values such as justice (*'adl*), mercy (*rahmah*), and tolerance (*tasāmuḥ*). Strengthening the capacity of teachers is crucial since they are key actors in shaping students' learning experiences in multicultural classrooms. Furthermore, interfaith and intercultural dialogues facilitated by educational institutions play a vital role in creating constructive and respectful interaction spaces among students.

However, challenges in implementing multicultural education management in Islamic education environments remain significant. Among these challenges are the strong currents of exclusive religious thinking, low pluralism literacy among educators, suboptimal policies that mainstream diversity, and limited educational resources. These findings align with Amir's (2021) study, which emphasizes that many Islamic educational institutions are not structurally or culturally ready to fully implement a multicultural approach.

To address these challenges, several solutions are offered, including strengthening teacher training focused on multiculturalism, reformulating curricula to emphasize character education based on pluralism, reinforcing school policies that support diversity, and collaborating with external parties such as NGOs or religious organizations with tolerance missions. The implications of integrating Islamic education and multicultural management are broad, including the formation of a generation that possesses not only spiritual and intellectual excellence but also an adaptive, humanistic, and tolerant social character in national and state life.

The practical implication of this research is the importance of Islamic educational institutions adopting multicultural management approaches as an integral part of the educational system. This can be realized through the development of more inclusive educational policies, enhancing teacher capacity, and evaluating curricula that consider diversity aspects. Additionally, the theoretical implication is the expansion of the discourse of Islamic education from an exclusive paradigm to an integrative one, focusing not only on theological aspects but also on strengthening national and humanistic social values.

The novelty of this research lies in the systematic approach to integrating the concept of Islamic pluralism with the principles of multicultural educational management through a rigorous and selective literature review. Few previous studies have explicitly linked these three domains—Islamic pluralism, education, and management—together in a unified and operational manner. This study also offers an article selection pattern and content analysis that can serve as a replicable model in similar academic literature reviews. Relevant research on the theme of pluralism in Islamic education and multicultural management shows that Islamic education has great potential in shaping a tolerant and inclusive society. Misrawi (2020) emphasizes that pluralism is a fundamental value in Islam and can be realized through education that instills the spirit of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence. Rokhmad (2018) supports this view by showing that moderate Islamic

education, open to diversity, can shape students' character to be not only religious but also humanistic. Amir's (2021) research highlights the challenges faced in implementing multicultural education management in Islamic environments, such as the strong exclusive interpretations of religious texts and the lack of teacher training in handling diversity. In this regard, school leadership and inclusive policies are key factors in overcoming these barriers. Meanwhile, Ali (2017) emphasizes the importance of a humanistic approach in teaching that instills values of love, justice, and equality to foster cross-cultural awareness among students. Overall, these findings affirm that Islamic education is not only compatible with pluralism and multiculturalism but can also serve as a transformative force in creating a peaceful, just, and respectful society in the face of global diversity.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of a literature review of 15 selected articles from 50 examined articles, it can be concluded that Islamic education plays a strategic role in realizing multicultural education management. Pluralism, from an Islamic perspective, is a foundational value taught in the Qur'an, which encourages humanity to get to know one another, appreciate differences, and live together in peace. Islamic education, when implemented with a moderate and inclusive approach, can serve as an effective means of instilling values of tolerance, justice, and respect for diversity. The multicultural management strategies identified include strengthening a pluralistic curriculum, teacher training, inclusive classroom management, and the development of anti-discrimination educational policies. However, significant challenges remain, such as narrow religious interpretations, social resistance to pluralism, and the limited capacity of educators and educational institutions. Therefore, systematic efforts need to be made to strengthen the integration of pluralistic values into the Islamic education system, to create a generation that is not only religious but also possesses a strong multicultural awareness. To strengthen the integration of Islamic education and multicultural management, concrete steps are needed, including: (1) developing an Islamic education curriculum that incorporates materials on pluralism, human rights, and interfaith tolerance; (2) conducting professional training and development for teachers and educators to ensure they have a deep understanding of multicultural approaches and skills in managing diverse classrooms; (3) developing inclusive institutional policies that ensure protection for students from various backgrounds; (4) strengthening cooperation between educational institutions, the government, and civil society organizations to promote a culture of tolerance and intercultural dialogue; and (5) conducting further empirical research to examine the effectiveness of implementing Islamic-based multicultural education management at various educational levels. In this way, Islamic education can transform

into a driving force for harmonious social change in the midst of global societal diversity.

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