

Multicultural Education from an Islamic Perspective: Building Intercultural Tolerance in Indonesian Primary Schools

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Abstract: This study aims to explore how multicultural education from an Islamic perspective contributes to building intercultural tolerance in Indonesian primary schools. The research was conducted at SDN Pace 01 in the Silo District of Jember Regency using a qualitative case study design. Participants included teachers, students, parents, and the principal. This case study design was chosen because it allows researchers to deeply explore the processes, interactions, and specific contexts of the school as a cohesive system. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, student surveys, and document analysis. The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model alongside thematic analysis. The findings reveal that Islamic values such as *tasamuh* (tolerance), *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), and *adl* (justice) are consistently integrated into pedagogical practices, including collaborative learning, storytelling, and reflective classroom discussions. Students demonstrated high levels of tolerance toward linguistic, ethnic, and religious diversity, with collaboration emerging as the strongest indicator of this tolerance. However, challenges include limited teacher training in multicultural pedagogy and parental concerns about maintaining Islamic identity. The study concludes that Islamic-based multicultural education provides a practical framework for fostering intercultural competence from an early age while preserving religious identity. The results have significant implications for teacher professional development, curriculum innovation, and community engagement, and suggest directions for future research across broader contexts and with the integration of digital learning platforms.

Keywords: Intercultural Tolerance; Islamic Perspective; Multicultural Education; Pedagogy; Primary Education.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana pendidikan multikultural dari perspektif Islam berkontribusi dalam membangun toleransi antarbudaya di sekolah dasar Indonesia. Penelitian ini dilakukan di SDN Pace 01 di Kecamatan Silo, Kabupaten Jember, menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif. Peserta penelitian meliputi guru, siswa, orang tua, dan kepala sekolah. Desain studi kasus dipilih karena memungkinkan peneliti untuk mengeksplorasi secara mendalam

proses, interaksi, dan konteks spesifik sekolah sebagai sistem yang terintegrasi. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi kelas, survei siswa, dan analisis dokumen. Data dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman bersama dengan analisis tematik. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa nilai-nilai Islam seperti tasamuh (toleransi), ukhuwah (persaudaraan), dan adl (keadilan) secara konsisten diintegrasikan ke dalam praktik pedagogis, termasuk pembelajaran kolaboratif, bercerita, dan diskusi kelas reflektif. Siswa menunjukkan tingkat toleransi yang tinggi terhadap keragaman linguistik, etnis, dan agama, dengan kolaborasi muncul sebagai indikator terkuat dari toleransi ini. Namun, tantangan termasuk pelatihan guru yang terbatas dalam pedagogi multikultural dan kekhawatiran orang tua tentang pemeliharaan identitas Islam. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa pendidikan multikultural berbasis Islam menyediakan kerangka kerja praktis untuk mengembangkan kompetensi antarbudaya sejak usia dini sambil mempertahankan identitas agama. Hasil ini memiliki implikasi signifikan bagi pengembangan profesional guru, inovasi kurikulum, dan keterlibatan komunitas, serta menyarankan arah penelitian masa depan dalam konteks yang lebih luas dan dengan integrasi platform pembelajaran digital.

Kata kunci: *Toleransi Antarbudaya; Perspektif Islam; Pendidikan Multikultural; Pedagogi; Pendidikan Dasar.*

Introduction

In the context of efforts to promote intercultural tolerance through education in Indonesia, targeted cooperation is needed to integrate Islamic values into the framework of multicultural education. Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of tolerance and respect among diverse communities. However, the practical realization of tolerance and coexistence is often hindered by socio-political factors, as well as ideological extremism (Idris et al., 2024). Nevertheless, Islamic teachings have rich principles to encourage harmonious intercultural relations. Ulfa et al., (2022) emphasized the importance of reviewing the multicultural Islamic education model, especially in the context of relations between Muslims and non-Muslims, emphasizing the need for adaptive, inclusive, and participatory learning theories. A similar view is expressed by Hajisoteriou et al. (2018) action research can reform school culture by challenging existing stereotypes and increasing educators' commitment to intercultural education, thereby enabling schools to transform into inclusive learning communities.

The character education through Islamic religious education plays an important role in instilling the values of tolerance and fostering unity among students from diverse backgrounds (Mawadda et al., 2023). With these various findings, integrating Islamic values in multicultural education requires an approach that is not only normative but also applicable and contextual. By combining the principles of Islamic education with modern pedagogical methods, we can create an educational environment that promotes mutual respect and intercultural understanding. This approach aligns with the primary goal of multicultural education within Indonesia's diverse society.

Existing scientific studies have made significant contributions to understanding multicultural education, particularly in highlighting its role in promoting equality and fostering cultural identity. Banks asserts that multicultural education creates a pathway to equality and democratic participation (Zhao et al., 2021), which is the foundation for inclusive educational practices. This view is reinforced Alves et al., (2020) states that multicultural education serves to affirm cultural identity and dignity, an important element in fostering mutual respect among diverse learners. In the context of Islamic education, Yusoff, (2023) explained that principles such as

tasamuh (tolerance) and *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) not only reflect Islamic values but also provide a strong moral basis for the creation of inclusive education. [Hanafi et al., \(2021\)](#) argues for the integration of Islamic teachings into the educational curriculum to foster intercultural dialogue, especially at the elementary school level, where attitudes toward diversity are formed. However, most existing research remains conceptual or focuses on secondary and tertiary education, leaving a gap in empirical evidence regarding the actual application of multicultural education based on Islamic pedagogy at the primary school level. As stated by [Şahin, \(2018\)](#), further research is needed to examine how these pedagogical principles can strengthen intercultural tolerance from an early age in the classroom environment. By filling these gaps, future research can bridge theoretical frameworks with real practice, thereby enriching the treasures of multicultural education in the context of Islamic education.

Although previous research has highlighted the importance of Islamic education, especially in the context of religious teaching, it often overlooks the important linkage between Islamic values and multicultural pedagogy in everyday learning practices. [Warapsari et al., \(2023\)](#) emphasized that education must function as a means of transferring values and knowledge by integrating religious values, especially in Islamic religious education, in order to bridge the dichotomy in the education system. Meanwhile, research conducted by [Putri et al., \(2024\)](#) focuses on the development of religious tolerance as a fundamental aspect of multicultural education, emphasizing that such tolerance can provide a new color that becomes an experience and insight to respect, appreciate, accept, and be open to religious and group differences. However, despite these findings, significant gaps remain in the literature regarding pedagogical mechanisms that foster tolerance, learners' real-life experiences, and societal views in basic education. [Hadiati et al., \(2024\)](#) note that most of the existing literature has not highlighted the life experiences of teachers, students, and parents within a particular school context, despite this being crucial for understanding how tolerance can be developed practically. Therefore, qualitative research is crucial for exploring these dynamics more deeply, thereby producing a more comprehensive understanding and laying the groundwork for the development of a multicultural curriculum that genuinely reflects the diversity of learning experiences within the context of Islamic education.

This article aims to provide empirical insight into how multicultural education, from an Islamic perspective, is applied practically to foster intercultural tolerance in primary schools in Indonesia, with a special focus on SDN Pace 01 in Silo District, Jember Regency. In contrast to previous studies that tended to be theoretical, this study departed from the assumption that the integration of multicultural values in education can increase tolerance and appreciation for diversity among students ([Futaqi & Mashuri, 2023](#)). In line with this [Kharisma et al., \(2021\)](#) emphasized that integrating local wisdom and multicultural values in education plays a crucial role in strengthening national unity amidst diversity, as well as helping students learn to coexist despite their differences. The results of the study show that an effective pedagogical strategy is essential to create a school culture that fosters tolerance and inclusivity ([Aquino et al., 2021](#)). In addition, the emphasis on integrating values in the school curriculum aligns with the view that schools should actively build an environment that reflects multicultural principles to prepare students for a diverse society ([Yanti et al., 2024](#)).

Therefore, this study aims to fill the gaps by documenting the real experiences of teachers, students, and parents, and examining how these community perspectives influence the process of instilling tolerance in the classroom. By highlighting these

personal experiences, this study provides contextual and in-depth evidence that expands the scientific treasures beyond mere theoretical framework "Formation of Social Tolerance Among Future Teachers" (Nagovitsyn et al., 2018). Ultimately, this research is expected to make a meaningful contribution to the development of Islamic education practices and policies in the future.

The main argument in this article is that Islamic-based multicultural education, when effectively integrated into basic education, serves as a transformative pedagogy that not only encourages intercultural tolerance but also strengthens Islamic identity. Through a qualitative case study approach, this study shows that the integration of multicultural values into Islamic education is critical to foster students' critical thinking skills while maintaining their religious identity (Suprianto, 2020). As stated by Majid et al., (2023) religious education institutions play a crucial role in internalizing Islamic identity and have the potential to actualize these values within school culture, thereby strengthening students' connection to their religion as well as to diverse cultural contexts. This premise is reinforced by Djamaluddin et al., (2024) state that a curriculum based on multicultural Islamic education can foster an attitude of coexistence and mutual understanding, which in turn strengthens tolerance among students. These findings suggest that tolerance and religious identity are not mutually exclusive but can be mutually reinforcing through pedagogical practices that integrate Islamic teachings with a multicultural perspective.

The importance of practical application was emphasized Zuhdi, (2018), highlight the reciprocal relationship between Islamic schools and Muslim communities, and called for the creation of an educational environment that reflects contemporary social demands without abandoning Islamic values. Thus, this article aims to provide empirical insights that bridge the gap in existing studies, demonstrating how an effective pedagogical strategy can foster the harmonious development of intercultural tolerance and strengthen Islamic identity within the framework of basic education.

Method

The research method is a crucial component of this study, as it provides a systematic framework for achieving the research objectives. Given that the focus of this research is to understand how Islamic-based multicultural education can foster intercultural tolerance in the context of elementary schools, it is necessary to design a research design that can capture the complex social interactions, cultural values, and real experiences of participants in their natural environment. The methodological options described below encompass the type of study, research design, participants, instruments, data collection techniques, and data analysis procedures, all of which are carefully designed to yield in-depth and contextual findings.

1. Type of Research

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a case study design (Creswell, J. W., 2009). The qualitative method was chosen to gain in-depth insights into how multicultural education from an Islamic perspective is practiced building intercultural tolerance at SDN Pace 01, Silo District, Jember Regency. Case study design is best suited for allowing research teams to study the processes, interactions, and specific contexts of schools as a single system in depth. In contrast, phenomenology addresses individual, subjective matters; ethnography allows for intensive and sustained immersion in another culture by the researcher; case studies are a more appropriate context for investigating the implementation of educational programs or practices in a particular institutional setting. Thus, this design enables

an in-depth understanding of the dynamics in the real world, with a particular focus on the institutional context relevant to this research.

2. Research Design

The research employed a single-site case study design, focusing on the lived experiences of teachers, students, and parents within a single primary school. The design enabled the researcher to capture contextualized practices, challenges, and interpretations related to Islamic-based multicultural education.

3. Research Subjects and Objects

To provide a clearer understanding of the focus and scope of this study, it is important to present the research subjects and objectives that form the basis of data collection. The participants were carefully selected through purposive sampling to ensure their relevance to the study's objectives, representing diverse perspectives from teachers, students, parents, and the school leadership. In addition, the research object highlights the practical implementation of Islamic-based multicultural education in fostering intercultural tolerance within classroom activities at SDN Pace 01. The details are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Research Subjects and Objects

Category	Description	Number of Participants	Notes
Teachers	Classroom teachers involved in multicultural practices	6	Selected through purposive sampling
Students	Students from grades 4–6	60	Representing diverse cultural and religious backgrounds
Parents	Parents of students are actively engaged in school activities	10	Provide perspectives on home–school collaboration
Principal	School leader responsible for policy and vision implementation	1	Key informant for institutional perspective
Object of Research	Implementation of Islamic-based multicultural education in fostering intercultural tolerance	–	Focused on classroom teaching and learning activities at SDN Pace 01

Source: *Fieldwork Data*, 2024

Table 1 presents the subjects and objects of research, comprising six classroom teachers, 60 students from grades 4–6, 10 parents, and one principal, all of whom were selected through purposive sampling techniques to ensure their suitability with the research objectives. The research focuses on the application of Islamic-based multicultural education in fostering intercultural tolerance through teaching and learning activities at SDN Pace 01. Thus, the participants act as key informants who provide complementary perspectives from the teaching level, students, parents, and school institutions.

4. Research Instruments

The instruments employed in this study consisted of interview guidelines designed for teachers, parents, and the principal to explore their perspectives on multicultural education; observation checklists used to record classroom interactions and school activities related to tolerance practices; student questionnaires aimed at assessing

perceptions of diversity and intercultural tolerance; and document analysis sheets that facilitated the review of school vision-mission statements, lesson plans, and policy documents to identify the integration of Islamic values within multicultural education.

5. Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using multiple techniques to ensure triangulation:

Table 2. Data Collection Techniques

Technique	Description	Participants / Sources	Purpose
Semi-structured Interviews	Guided interviews with open-ended questions to explore perspectives	Teachers, Principal, Parents	To understand experiences, perceptions, and challenges in implementing multicultural education
Participant Observations	Direct observation of classroom learning and school activities	Classroom interactions, School events	To capture real practices and behavioral dynamics in tolerance-building
Student Surveys	Closed-ended questionnaires distributed to students	60 Students (Grades 4–6)	To assess students' attitudes toward diversity and intercultural tolerance
Document Analysis	Review of institutional and pedagogical documents	Vision-mission statements, Lesson plans, Policy documents	To identify formal integration of Islamic values in multicultural education

Source: *Fieldwork Data, 2024*

Table 2 outlines the data collection techniques employed in this study, which combine interviews, observations, surveys, and document analysis to ensure comprehensive and triangulated findings. Semi-structured interviews with teachers, the principal, and parents provided insights into experiences and challenges, while participant observations captured real classroom practices and school events related to tolerance-building. Student surveys provided quantitative evidence of attitudes toward diversity, and document analysis revealed the formal integration of Islamic values into the school's policies, lesson plans, and vision and mission. Together, these methods enriched the data and strengthened the validity of the research results.

6. Data Analysis Techniques

The study employed the interactivity analysis model developed by [Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña \(2014\)](#) to analyze the data, including data condensation, data presentation, and drawing and verifying conclusions. Data condensation was done manually by thematic analysis that includes a coding process and the existence of codes related to themes such as Islamic values (*tasamuh*, *'adl*, *ukhuwah*), pedagogical strategies, and tolerance practices. On the other hand, they were presented in matrices, comparative tables, and diagrams to facilitate the identification of patterns from various participants. The final stage of drawing conclusions involved linking the empirical file to theories and previous findings to ensure consistency and validity of interpretation. Meanwhile, surveys from students will also be analyzed descriptively, which requires statistical approaches to strengthen and complement the qualitative analysis results.

The analysis of the data was done using [Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña \(2014\)](#) interactive model with detailed coding processes: the first step consisted of multiple

reviews of all interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents to gain an in-depth understanding, where open coding based on the judgment of researchers was operationalized to highlight important units of meaning; the next step consisted of axial coding in grouping the initial codes into categories wider concerning the definitions of codes, rules of inclusion/exclusion, and samples of quotations, all of which were specified in a codebook so as to establish consistency; the next step was one of selective coding, where an integration of the categories into main themes in line with the research objectives was made; throughout the process, analytical memos were made to monitor the interpretations and decisions regarding the categorization; to increase the accuracy, two researchers verified the data sample to gain an inter-coder agreement on the application of the codes; and finally, all the coding results were uploaded in and managed with NVivo software facilitating the creation of matrices, thematic querying, and visualizing inter-code relationships. Categories/themes were illustrated as follows: (1) Islamic Values (subcategories: *tasamuh*, *ukhuwah*, *adl*), (2) Pedagogical Strategies (subcategories: dialogic learning, collaborative, integration of RPP), (3) Tolerance Indicators (subcategories: attitudes toward linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity, willingness to collaborate), (4) Context of the Institutions (subcategories: teacher training, role of the parents, vision/mission of the school).

Result and Discussion

Result

The research results section must present the data obtained (test results, questionnaires, interviews, or documents) in accordance with the order of the problem formulation or based on the most significant research findings. Researchers need to include data sources, such as interviews or observations, when presenting relevant data. It is recommended to use graphs, figures, and tables that are easy to understand to clarify the study's results. All tables, figures, and graphs should be placed in the center and numbered sequentially. Additionally, the results section can include subtopics that are directly related to the research's focus.

1. Understanding of Multicultural Education from an Islamic Perspective

These are the findings thus far: teachers in SDN Pace 01 conceive multicultural education strictly in terms of Islamic values, which can be seen from the interview results as multicultural practices associated with *tasamuh*, *ukhuwah*, and *adl*. According to one of the interviewees, the aspect of respecting diversity is regarded as honoring God's creation and is, therefore, implicitly integrated into daily classroom activities (Teacher Interview, 2024). This is further supported by the analysis of the school's vision and mission, where the value of inclusion is linked to Islamic moral foundations, thereby aligning it with teachers' interpretations. Findings suggest that teacher understanding and school policy are mutually reinforcing in developing a well-organized system that incorporates Muslim values into multicultural education.

Interviews with teachers revealed that multicultural education is perceived as inseparable from Islamic values such as *tasamuh* (tolerance), *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), and *adl* (justice). A teacher explained:

"Islam teaches us to respect diversity as part of God's creation. At school, we integrate these values into daily classroom interactions so that students learn tolerance naturally." (Teacher Interview, 2024)

Document analysis of the school's vision and mission also highlights inclusivity, explicitly linking multicultural practices with Islamic moral foundations.

Table 3. Integration of Islamic Values into Multicultural Education Practices

Data Source	Key Findings	Supporting Evidence
Teacher Interviews	Multicultural education is inseparable from Islamic values such as <i>tasamuh</i> (tolerance), <i>ukhuwah</i> (brotherhood), and <i>adl</i> (justice).	"Islam teaches us to respect diversity as part of God's creation. At school, we integrate these values into daily classroom interactions so that students learn tolerance naturally." (Teacher Interview, 2024)
Document Analysis	The school's vision and mission emphasize inclusivity and explicitly link multicultural practices with Islamic moral foundations.	Vision-mission documents highlight respect for diversity as an Islamic responsibility.

Source: *Field Data Analysis, 2024*

Table 3 illustrates how Islamic values are deeply embedded in the practice of multicultural education at SDN Pace 01. The results of interviews with teachers showed that concepts such as *tasamuh* (tolerance), *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), and *adl* (justice) were consistently integrated into classroom learning interactions, enabling students to internalize the attitude of respecting diversity as part of their daily learning process. These findings are reinforced by the results of document analysis, which show that the school's vision and mission explicitly link the value of inclusivity with the moral foundation of Islam, confirming that tolerance is understood not only as a social need but also as a religious obligation.

2. Pedagogical Practices for Building Intercultural Tolerance

As much as the findings of this research suggest, the pedagogical practices adopted by teachers are geared toward enhancing students' capacity for intercultural tolerance. The observations of the classes show that dialogical and participatory learning served as methods through which students were habitually exposed to internal discussions of differences and the realization of diverse outlooks. Group work, which involved students from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, consistently led to interactions characterized by mutual esteem and shared accountability. These practices show that the pedagogic methods employed by teachers shaped well the behavioral outcomes, thereby ensuring the students developed their capacity to work harmoniously across differences, a promising indicator of growing intercultural tolerance. Observations revealed that teachers consistently employed dialogical and participatory approaches to promote tolerance. For example, students from different cultural and religious backgrounds were encouraged to collaborate in group projects.

Table 4. Pedagogical Practices Supporting Intercultural Tolerance

No	Pedagogical Strategy	Description of Practice	Source (Data)
1	Group-based collaborative learning	Students of diverse cultural backgrounds are assigned to mixed groups.	Classroom Observation
2	Integration of Islamic values	Teachers link subjects to <i>Qur'an</i> verses on justice and respect.	Lesson Plan Document
3	Storytelling and local wisdom	Teachers use local folktales to highlight cultural diversity and tolerance.	Interview with Teachers
4	Reflective discussions after conflict	Teachers facilitate class discussion to resolve conflicts peacefully.	Observation & Student Notes

Source: *Field Data Analysis, 2024*

Table 4 presents the various pedagogical strategies employed at SDN Pace 01 to foster intercultural tolerance through Islamic-based multicultural education. Classroom observations reveal that teachers employ group-based collaborative learning, enabling students from diverse cultural backgrounds to interact and work together. The lesson plan document (RPP) shows the integration of Qur'anic values of justice and respect in the subject matter. At the same time, the results of interviews with teachers reveal the use of storytelling methods and local wisdom to foster cross-cultural understanding. In addition, the results of the students' observations and notes confirm that reflective discussions are used as a means of peaceful conflict resolution, thereby allowing students to truly practice the values of tolerance in their daily learning experiences.

3. Students' Attitudes toward Intercultural Tolerance

Survey data (n = 60 students) revealed a high level of intercultural tolerance, especially in respecting differences in language, ethnicity, and religious practices.

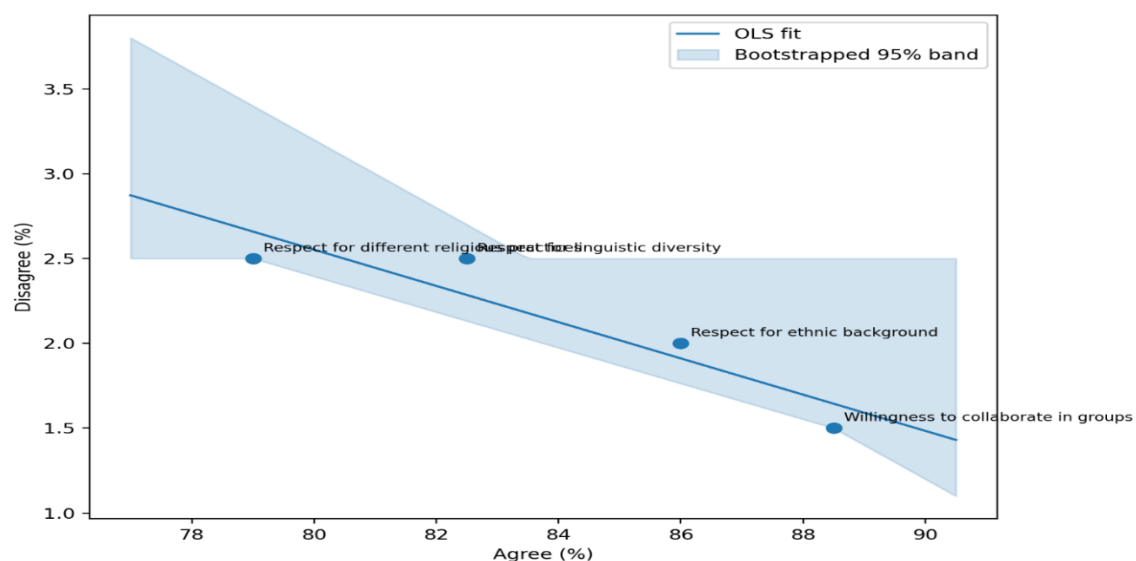


Figure 1. Students' Perceptions of Intercultural Tolerance

The results of the survey, presented in Figure 1, show that students at SDN Pace 01 exhibit a high level of intercultural tolerance in various aspects. Most students agreed with respect for linguistic diversity (82.5%) and ethnic background (86.0%). In comparison, 79.0% acknowledged the importance of respecting differences in religious practices, although a slightly higher percentage of respondents (18.5%) expressed neutral responses on this aspect. The strongest indicator of tolerance was observed in students' willingness to work together in groups, with 88.5% agreeing and only 1.5% disagreeing. These findings demonstrate that multicultural education grounded in Islamic values is effective in promoting an inclusive attitude, particularly in fostering collaboration and respect for cultural and religious diversity. Thus, most students have internalized the values of tolerance positively, with the willingness to collaborate being the most prominent indicator.

4. Challenges in Implementation

Despite these positive outcomes, challenges remain. Some parents expressed concern about overemphasizing diversity at the expense of Islamic identity. A parent stated:

"We support tolerance, but we are also worried that our children may forget their Islamic identity if too much focus is on diversity." (Parent Interview, 2024)

Teachers also reported receiving limited training in multicultural pedagogy, particularly in striking a balance between religious teachings and cultural inclusivity.

Table 5. Challenges in Balancing Multicultural Education and Islamic Identity

Theme	Description	Evidence/Implication
Tension between Inclusivity and Identity	Balancing the promotion of diversity with maintaining a strong Islamic identity remains a key challenge.	Parents worry that focusing too much on diversity may overshadow Islamic values.
Framing of Multicultural Education	Multicultural education should be positioned as a reinforcement of Islamic teachings, not a replacement.	Islam emphasizes justice, respect, and peaceful coexistence as foundations of tolerance.
Broader Societal Discourse	The integration of multicultural principles in Muslim-majority contexts raises issues of authenticity.	Questions arise about preserving faith and cultural identity while embracing diversity.

Source: *Field Data Analysis, 2024*

Table 5 highlights the key challenges in implementing multicultural education within Islamic schools, particularly the tension between promoting inclusivity and preserving a strong Islamic identity. Parents expressed concerns that an excessive focus on diversity might overshadow religious values, suggesting the need to frame multicultural education as a reinforcement rather than a replacement of Islamic teachings. This aligns with the principle that Islam inherently upholds justice, respect, and peaceful coexistence. At the same time, the findings reflect a broader societal discourse in Muslim-majority contexts, where embracing multicultural principles often raises debates about cultural authenticity and faith preservation.

Additionally, the teachers' acknowledgment of limited training in multicultural pedagogy highlights a practical barrier to implementation. Although they strive to integrate Islamic values with inclusive practices, the lack of structured professional development hampers their ability to adopt innovative teaching strategies. This gap suggests the importance of continuous capacity-building programs that equip educators with the skills to address diversity while upholding Islamic identity. Strengthening institutional support, providing targeted training, and engaging parents in dialogue could serve as critical steps toward overcoming these challenges and ensuring the sustainability of Islamic-based multicultural education in primary schools.

5. Synthesis of Findings

What the synthesis of findings suggests is that the implementation of Islamic multicultural education in the SDN Pace 01 was able to put a strong foundation for the development of intercultural tolerance as manifested in the matching of value-oriented pedagogy by teachers, participatory practices in the classroom, support from the institution, and positive student attitudes toward diversity. This convergence suggests that Islamic moral principles, when incorporated into the learning process through collaborative interactions and guided by academic policies, shape students' approach to learning and appreciating differences across cultures and religions in a respectful manner. These kinds of findings, when combined, will provide strong support for proceeding with a discourse to discuss how Islamic values serve not only as religious principles but also as practical pedagogical tools in enhancing multicultural competence in primary education. Overall, findings suggest that

Islamic-based multicultural education at SDN Pace 01 effectively fosters intercultural tolerance among students, supported by:

1. Integration of Islamic moral values in pedagogy. This integration ensures that principles such as *tasamuh* (tolerance), *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), and *adl* (justice) are not only taught theoretically but also practiced in daily classroom interactions. As a result, students internalize Islamic teachings as a foundation for respecting and embracing diversity.
2. Active, participatory, and collaborative learning models. Through these models, students from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds are encouraged to work together in mixed groups, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation. Such practices foster an inclusive classroom environment where tolerance is naturally developed through shared learning experiences.
3. Institutional commitment as reflected in school documents.
4. Positive student attitudes toward diversity. Survey findings revealed that most students demonstrated respect for linguistic, ethnic, and religious differences, with collaboration being the strongest indicator of tolerance. This demonstrates that multicultural education framed by Islamic values effectively shapes students' inclusive attitudes from an early age.

However, the findings also reveal structural challenges related to teacher professional development and parental concerns about maintaining religious identity. Overall, these findings confirm that Islamic-based multicultural education offers a robust framework for fostering tolerance and inclusivity at the primary school level; however, its sustainability hinges on addressing existing challenges. Strengthening teacher professional development is essential to equip educators with the pedagogical skills needed to balance Islamic teachings with multicultural practices. Engaging parents in meaningful dialogue can also help ease concerns over identity preservation. By fostering collaboration between schools, families, and communities, multicultural education in Islamic contexts can evolve into a holistic model that not only prepares students to respect diversity but also reinforces their religious and cultural identity, ensuring harmony between inclusivity and faith-based values.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight that multicultural education at SDN Pace 01 is effectively framed through an Islamic perspective to foster intercultural tolerance among students. This section discusses the implications of these findings by situating them within existing theories and prior research, while also offering the researcher's interpretative insights.

1. Multicultural Education through Islamic Values

The research results have presented the argument that the application of *tasamuh* (tolerance), *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), and *adl* (justice) becomes a normative framework for multicultural education practices at SDN Pace 01. The values are not only taught as moral concepts but also operationalized in classroom interactions, collaborative student learning, and contemplation on conflict resolution. The pattern is argued to be found in [Memon \(2011\)](#), who contended that Islamic-based schools possess the capacity to create inclusive citizenship and community among Muslim students ([Arar & Yilmaz, 2022](#)). However, this does not directly exhibit the link between these values and multicultural education. Apart from that [Kilavuz \(2023\)](#) regarding the use of justice and brotherhood values in Islamic education; this study, however, goes

beyond just theorized accounts to demonstrate the practicality with which these values are applied in actual learning contexts (Muhajir, A. et al., 2025).

Unlike the previous study carried out by Aly (2019) and Abdullah (2021), both of which have discussed the role of Islamic education in making peace, promoting and understanding among cultures, this research empirically demonstrates how the values can be modularized into pedagogical steps, for example, into lesson plans focusing on attitudes towards diversity, collaborative learning, and reflective discussions. The findings, which align with those of [Djamaluddin et al. \(2024\)](#) and [Kholida et al. \(2025\)](#), underscore the need to incorporate coexistence and conflict resolution values into the curriculum. Furthermore, this study extends this approach to demonstrate consistent application from the elementary school level.

This study like [Gracia et al. \(2017\)](#) empathy and respect for diversity are the foundational elements of intercultural competence, further establishes that arelah-based *tasamuh* (compassion) and *ukhuwah* (brotherhood)-based *adl* (justice) can equally thrive in an inclusive school culture. This novelty in research is that it incorporates Islamic values with contemporary pedagogy, not just as a normative teaching but as a measurable practice proven to enhance the students' tolerance. By recording the real practices, this study offers a fresh empirical contribution that embellishes the discourse on multicultural education within Islamic-based primary schools.

2. Pedagogical Shifts and Student Agency

Research findings indicate that pedagogical shifts towards dialogical and participatory methods align with Vygotsky's (1978) model of social constructivism, yielding new empirical data on how this strategy fosters student agency within Indonesia's diverse religious and ethnic contexts. Unlike previous models that were predominantly conceptual, this study demonstrates how heterogeneous student grouping creates opportunities for active involvement in knowledge construction and real-life practice of tolerance. This reinforces [Chang \(2023\)](#) argument that cultural education should extend beyond simply recognizing diversity in practice, and also supports [Nieto's \(2010\)](#) view that educational practices should be geared toward equality and justice.

Survey data indicating that 88.5% of students reported a high willingness to collaborate strongly point out that this approach to pedagogy develops student agency-that is, students' ability to take initiative, work with each other without adult intervention, and influence the social dynamics in the classroom. These findings support [Ladson-Billings' \(1995\)](#) culturally relevant pedagogy framework, which highlights the development of academic success, cultural competence, and socio-political awareness through meaningful learning interactions ([Marosi et al., 2021](#)). In the Indonesian context, where the nation's history is marked by coexistence among diverse religious and ethnic groups, the ability of students to collaborate despite their differences becomes an important form of social capital that is enhanced through collaborative pedagogy. Education development, which facilitates social justice, empowers students with social skills to challenge prevailing inequalities in society, as stated by [Jayadi et al. \(2022\)](#). Thus, this research contribution not only represents a new direction in mapping different strategies for pedagogical purposes but also provides empirical evidence that dialogic and collaborative methods develop students' agency towards empathy from the elementary school level, a very relevant achievement insofar as it strengthens tolerance in Indonesia's diverse context.

3. Tension between Inclusivity and Identity

The findings of this investigation suggest that some parents' fears of Islamic identity may reflect tensions inherent in a pluralistic society that accommodates multiple identities. As [Tariq \(2007\)](#) inclusivity in a pluralistic society is often associated with a particular identity. This indicates that in Islamic schools, multicultural education is not viewed as a dichotomy between diversity and identity, but rather as a process of negotiation among teachers, parents, and educational institutions. The aforementioned role of teachers is an integral one, not only to uphold Islamic values, but also to facilitate dialogue across cultures, a principle underscored by [Ulfa et al. \(2021\)](#) argue that teachers are critical to the realization of religious multiculturalism without compromising religious values. The alignment of Islamic principles with cross-cultural dialogue, as reflected in school practices, is further affirmed by the findings of [Adiyono & Anshor \(2024\)](#), which suggest that inter-group dialogue can enhance mutual understanding within the classroom. Additionally, parental and institutional involvement in this manner provides cultural and religious boundaries that facilitate the growth of tolerance based on shared values, as argued by [Arsal \(2019\)](#), who emphasizes the necessity of collaborative participation among multiple stakeholders. In relation to the mentioned study, this investigation would be interpreted conceptually into a new thought as the balancing act between religious identity and inclusivity is not a stagnant point of meeting but more of an adaptive practice informed by the local socio-religious context, a finding that would enrich the literature on multicultural education in Muslim- dominated societies.

4. Implications for Policy and Practice

The study's findings suggest three operational policy implications. We view teacher professional development as structured training that enables educators to apply multicultural pedagogy sensitive to Islamic values. In that case, it may be of some help in cultural and religious mediation, as outlined in [Ladson-Billings' \(1995\)](#) model of culturally relevant pedagogy and [Hooker \(2018\)](#) approach to negotiating educator identity. Second, instead of being deemed additional content, curriculum design itself must explicitly integrate multicultural competence into daily learning, as emphasized by [Nieto \(2015\)](#); [Holmes & Kohm, \(2024\)](#), regarding the significance of an inclusive curriculum through meaningful learning experiences. Third, community empowerment needs to be strengthened with regular dialogue between the school, parents, and local leaders to ensure that multicultural programming meets the cultural and religious expectations of the community, following the argument of [Modood \(2007\)](#) and [McCarty & Lee \(2014\)](#) on the key role played by the community in maintaining educational authority.

This approach aligns with [Banks \(2015\)](#) within that vision, systemic reform of multicultural education could have teachers, the curriculum, and the community as interlinked parts ([Cherng & Davis, 2019](#)). In a broader sense, this implementation model has the potential to be localized across other Islamic schools: strengthening teachers' capacity as agents of tolerance, designing a curriculum that marries Islamic values with cross-cultural competence, and building sustainable partnerships with the community ([Arroyo-Rojas, F. et al., 2024](#)). In this sense, the implications of this research not only propose practical steps for SDN Pace 01 but also provide an applicable framework for other Islamic educational institutions that intend to balance inclusivity with their religious identity in the conduct of their educational endeavors.

5. Contributions and Future Research Directions

This study contributes to the scholarship by contextualizing multicultural education within Islamic pedagogy, offering empirical evidence from an Indonesian primary

school. Unlike much of the literature, which focuses on Western contexts, this research demonstrates how Islamic values can serve as both a foundation and a pedagogical resource for building intercultural tolerance.

Future research could expand this inquiry in several directions:

1. Comparative studies across different regions of Indonesia or other Muslim-majority countries to examine variations in implementation.
2. Longitudinal research tracking how multicultural values shape students' attitudes over time.
3. Exploring the role of digital and AI-based learning environments in supporting Islamic-based multicultural education.

The development direction is consistent with the perspective of [Low and Merry \(2010\)](#), who argue that multicultural education should be examined within various cultural and institutional contexts. This approach is essential for understanding the distinct dynamics and challenges that exist in each environment ([De Meester et al., 2025](#)). Comparative studies between regions or countries can provide a deeper understanding of how local traditions and policies influence the integration of Islamic values into pedagogical practice. [McGee Banks & Banks, \(1995\)](#) also highlight that "in order for multicultural education to be implemented effectively, teachers and administrators need to pay attention to issues such as equitable integration of content and pedagogy." This statement suggests that the effectiveness of a multicultural approach is highly dependent on both contextual factors and the readiness of educators.

The longitudinal approach is also in line with [Banks, \(2015\)](#) view that the values of tolerance and democracy are a gradual process of development; therefore, it is essential to track how students' attitudes evolve through continuous exposure to multicultural education. The findings of ([Durmuş and Korkmaz 2023](#); [Molosiwa A., 2009](#)) also reinforce this by showing that a comprehensive teacher education curriculum needs to include "an understanding of one's and others' cultural knowledge" as well as the development of multicultural pedagogical skills. Furthermore, the exploration of digital and artificial intelligence (AI)-based environments underscores the importance of adapting educational frameworks to accommodate technology, thereby creating a more personalized and inclusive learning experience ([Adiyono et al., 2025](#); [Alam & Mohanty, 2023](#)). By integrating these dimensions, future research can enrich the global discourse on multicultural education while positioning Islamic pedagogy as a distinctive yet adaptive framework in the 21st-century learning landscape. This approach offers a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in implementing multicultural education in diverse contexts.

This study offers substantive novelty by providing empirical evidence on how multicultural education is operationalized through Islamic pedagogical practices in elementary school contexts. This area remains underexplored compared to studies in Western settings. It provides new conceptual insights by demonstrating that Islamic values serve not only as a moral foundation but also as an active pedagogical tool for fostering intercultural tolerance ([Aderibigbe et al., 2023](#)). Furthermore, the study advances the field by demonstrating how teacher practices, societal expectations, and cultural-religious identities dynamically interact to shape the implementation of multicultural education in Muslim-majority contexts.

Conclusion

Introducing Islamic values into multicultural education contributes to establishing a practical and contextually grounded teaching model that promotes intercultural tolerance among Indonesian primary schools, as clearly demonstrated at SDN Pace 01 through dialogical, collaborative, and reflective classroom practices centered on *tasamuh*, *ukhuwah*, and *adl*. The study advances a new understanding by demonstrating the use of Islamic values as living pedagogical tools, rather than inert moral ideals, that shape students' intercultural competence in a Muslim-majority context. It offers principled new learning that confirms, rather than merely extends, existing theory. The challenges posed by limited teacher training and parental concerns about balancing inclusivity with Islamic identity, however, highlight the need for sustained professional development, innovative curricula, and strong school-community collaboration. In general, this research therefore contributes to theoretical deliberations on multicultural pedagogy by positioning Islamic education as an emancipatory model for harmonizing identity and diversity, offering insights that may be relevant not only to Indonesia but also to global discourses on education, pluralism, and peacebuilding in culturally diverse societies.

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