

The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Implementing Multicultural Education in Schools

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ABSTRACT

Multicultural-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is an approach that integrates faith values with diverse social-cultural realities. This concept aims to shape students who are not only religious, but also possess social awareness, tolerance, and the ability to coexist in differences. This research uses a literature study method to explore the role of PAI teachers in implementing multicultural education in the school environment. The study results show that teachers play an important role as agents of values and change, both through classroom learning and character formation of students outside the classroom. PAI teachers are expected to be able to instill anti-discrimination attitudes, anti-violence, and keep students away from deviant behaviors such as bullying and intolerance. Multicultural education becomes an important strategy to address moral and social crises that emerge among students. Therefore, the development of multicultural-based PAI curriculum needs to be made a priority agenda in the education world in order to produce a generation that is religious, humanistic, and upholds the values of justice and humanity.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an archipelagic country with rich cultural diversity, encompassing aspects of various ethnic groups and nations within the homeland. From the ethnic lands of Sabang to Merauke, there are various cultural values and religious diversity, including Islam, Catholicism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and other traditional beliefs. In accordance with Indonesia's national motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" meaning "different but still one," the positive value is that Indonesia is very rich in cultural diversity (pluralism). However, behind this lies a negative side that emerges, namely that gaps often occur which trigger social conflicts. There are four factors that trigger a culture of violence in Indonesia, namely: First, cultural confusion. Second, the accumulation of hatred in society that begins with wrong prejudice against followers of other religions. Third, Indonesian society has become trapped in an intolerant culture, not accepting plurality of traditions, ways of communicating, perspectives on life, and pressure on traditions. Fourth, politics that do not side with justice being implemented, because the politics being practiced have not yet accommodated the preservation of multicultural-based tolerance values (Huda, 2022).

If these conflict problems are not addressed early, they will have a negative impact on the nation's nationalism. Therefore, the cultivation of pluralism and tolerance values is greatly needed for the next generation of the nation, through the implementation and understanding of

culturalization in the world of education. Currently, the concept of multicultural studies is a concept that promotes moral values and tolerance toward the diversity of human culture (Syarnubi, S., Efriani, A., Pranita, S., Zulhijra, Z., Anggara, B., Alimron, A., & ... & Rohmadi, 2024).

Education is not merely a transfer of knowledge, but also an effort to develop students' potential holistically, so that they can become excellent individuals who contribute positively to society. Education is a strategic means to form a generation that has intellectual competence as well as strong character. One of the important character values in building a harmonious and productive society is the value of cooperation and solidarity. These values serve as the foundation in facing the challenges of the globalization era that demands collaboration and empathy in various aspects of life. Establishing relevant learning strategies is a necessity. Appropriate learning strategies will guide students to think independently, creatively, and adaptively to various existing situations or those that may occur. Good strategies also equip them with the ability to face future challenges with innovation and flexibility.

The concept of multiculturalism is also closely related to social, cultural, political, and democratic values (Huda, 2022). This is a principle that upholds ethics, morals, and protects human rights for minorities. If the multicultural concept is integrated into the educational curriculum, it will be able to encourage student behavior and foster active contribution to the process of living together. Education is an effort to develop all students' potential to the fullest extent possible, both in terms of spiritual aspects and noble character (*akhlakul karimah*) as well as physical and intellectual aspects. With the optimization of all students' potential, education will lead students toward personal maturity that is faithful and knowledgeable. All aspects of students' potential that must be developed are interconnected and cannot be separated - for example, besides having high intellectual capacity, students must also possess noble character (*akhlakul karimah*) (Dina Andriyani, 2022).

Thus, multicultural Islamic religious education material becomes an important focus in this research study, as it is very possible for differences in race, religion, and culture to exist among students within the school environment. Islamic education is a series of teaching and learning processes carried out by a teacher toward students so that they can become independent and be formed into *insan kamil* (perfect human beings). This makes Islamic Religious Education one of the appropriate vehicles to guide the growth and development of human life as both individual beings and social beings. The goal of Islamic Religious Education is to realize the figure of *insan kamil* or an independent, intelligent, honest, just personality who upholds tolerance (*At-tasaamuh*), maintains harmony in social relationships (Haris & Auliya, 2019 in (Gusti Rantio, 2022).

The teaching given to students should not be coercive. In fact, authoritarian behavior from leaders or teachers is often unnecessary. Instead, educators need to adopt a nurturing or "among" approach, which prioritizes attitudes of love and understanding. Teachers should not teach knowledge about the world dogmatically. Rather, they should be behind the students, providing encouragement to move forward, specifically guiding them to the right path, and supervising when students face danger or obstacles. This approach allows students to learn more freely, according to their individual characters, while sharpening their conscience. Therefore, the task of an educator is to think about and choose strategies that align with learning objectives and the characteristics of their students.

Through the concept of Multicultural Islamic Religious Education as a subject, students are expected to be able to appreciate differences, show tolerance toward other students, and deepen their religious knowledge without discriminating against each student's respective beliefs. This is in accordance with the Quranic verse in Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13. In this surah, Allah SWT speaks about tolerance and appreciating human differences on this earth (Dadin Ardiansah, Ali Chafizh, 2018).

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۚ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
أَتْقَاهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

Meaning: *"O mankind, 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."* (QS. Al-Hujurat: 13).

The concept of education in any subject, particularly the focus of this research which is Multicultural Islamic Religious Education, greatly depends on educators. Therefore, the role of teachers is very necessary in bridging the delivery of material and understanding to students. In addition, the concrete form of the teacher's role is being able to build awareness of diversity and plurality through Islamic education multiculturalism, which has quite significant relevance in capturing national reality. There is hope that Islamic religious education in schools will make students tolerant and open-minded. Among the goals to be achieved is for students to understand the essence of Islamic education while developing multicultural attitudes in the form of mutual respect and appreciation for existing diversity (Huda, 2022).

METHODS

This research uses a literature review method, which is a library study approach that examines scientific sources such as journals, books, and academic articles relevant to the research focus. Literature selection was conducted purposively, considering topic suitability, source credibility, and information currency. Data were collected from various publications discussing Islamic religious education, multiculturalism, and the role of teachers in character formation (Sugiyono, 2020). Analysis was conducted by examining main findings from each source, identifying patterns, gaps, and conceptual contributions to strengthen the theoretical foundation (Haryono, 2020). The purpose of this study is to evaluate and synthesize developing thoughts in the field of multicultural education and provide conceptual contributions to strengthening tolerance and solidarity values in the context of Islamic education. With this approach, the research is expected to enrich academic discourse and serve as a reference in developing relevant curriculum and learning strategies (Gunawan, 2013).

RESULTS DAN DISCUSSION

A. Multicultural Islamic Religious Education

The concept of multiculturalism specifically has a general difference from the concept of diversity (plurality) (Syarnubi, 2023), more precisely multiculturalism emphasizes culture in equality (Huda, Muallimul, 2022). Multicultural Islamic religious education is a process of transformation and internalization of basic values and ideals of Islamic teachings that seeks to accentuate aspects of human differences and disparities in their broad context as Sunnatullah (God's law/divine decree) that must be accepted with full wisdom and open-heartedness amid the reality of plural multicultural humanity in all its dimensions to realize a just order of life. For example, maintaining an attitude of solidarity - in the context of diversity, solidarity plays a crucial role in overcoming potential conflicts and divisions. By promoting this value, society can better understand and accept differences as wealth that enriches collective life. Solidarity also fosters a spirit of gotong royong (mutual assistance/cooperation), where every member of society feels involved and responsible for collective welfare.

Yaya Suryana in Zakiyuddin Baidhawiy as quoted by Edi Susanto details the characteristics of multicultural Islamic religious education, namely: 1) Learning to live in differences 2) Building mutual trust 3) Maintaining mutual understanding 4) Upholding mutual respect, conflict and non-violent reconciliation c. Assumptions of Pluralistic Multicultural Islamic Religious Education. (Suryana, 2015:326) in (Nurhasanah, 2021).

Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System No.7 affirms that educational pathways are vehicles through which students develop their potential in an educational process that aligns with educational goals. In the context of educational strategy, educational pathways function as a framework that guides the learning process, ensuring that every student receives learning experiences that match their needs and educational objectives. Educational strategies implemented in each educational pathway must be designed considering

the principles of relevance, effectiveness, flexibility, and sustainability, so that learning can proceed optimally. Essentially, multicultural PAI (Islamic Religious Education) is able to teach students positive values contained in the Quranic verses:

1. Tolerance (Tasamuh), Islam teaches its followers to live peacefully side by side with those of different beliefs (QS. Al-Kafirun:6).
2. Justice ('Adl), justice in treating all people without regard to their origins (QS. Al-Mai'dah:8).
3. Brotherhood (Ukhuwah), encompassing ukhuwah Islamiyah or among fellow Muslims, wathaniyah (fellow countrymen) and insaniyah (humanity).
4. Consultation (Syura), respecting different opinions and solving problems through dialogue.

B. Teacher's Role

Teachers play an important role in shaping the views and character of their students. Recently, student attitudes about diversity and religious moderation have attracted attention. This is where the importance of a teacher's role lies in shaping holistic and comprehensive attitudes and behaviors as well as having full awareness of the integrity of implementing religious principles that are reflected in social behavior and the surrounding environment. Besides providing knowledge, a teacher's role also includes teaching morality to students so that they develop attitudes and behaviors full of virtue and are not only intellectually educated but also emotionally and spiritually educated. For a teacher, this is an important task, especially for an Islamic education teacher who must have religious qualifications (Jentoroet al., 2020 in (Hani Maghfiroh, 2024). Islamic religious education aims to develop, strengthen, and awaken devotion through the presentation and provision of content that requires cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor components of education. It strives to produce Muslims who are committed to their country and state, who possess morals, noble character, and fear of God Almighty (Mubarak & Muslihah, 2022 in (Hani Maghfiroh, 2024).

The importance of cooperation in various aspects of life that brings benefits to individuals and society at large. This form of cooperation encompasses various fields, such as education, economy, social, and community, all of which play important roles in building a harmonious and prosperous life. In the field of education, cooperation can be manifested in efforts to educate the generation, such as providing scholarships for underprivileged students, free tutoring programs, and collaboration between educational institutions to improve teaching quality. Islam encourages its followers to help each other in seeking knowledge, because knowledge is the path to progress and a blessed life. Students not only acquire technical skills, but also internalize values of togetherness, leadership, and mutual cooperation that are greatly needed in community life, religious life, nation, and statehood.

Choosing the right learning strategy is key to achieving effective and efficient learning objectives. Teachers must be able to plan and implement strategies that are appropriate to student characteristics and learning contexts, so as to create a conducive and empowering learning environment. Planning well. In the context of education, planning and strategy become fundamental aspects in achieving effective and sustainable learning objectives. Planning or strategies related to education encompass various aspects, such as curriculum formulation, learning methods and media, as well as the formulation of clear and directed educational goals. By considering various aspects, the learning process can run more effectively. Therefore, the importance of implementing strategies for educators has a significant role in achieving the ultimate goals of the learning process (Edo Ardo, Arta Diansah, 2024).

C. Character Education

Character Education Thomas Lickona is a famous figure in the field of character education. According to him, character education is a process to shape someone's personality through education whose results are visible in a person's real actions in the form of good

behavior, honesty, responsibility, respecting others' rights, hard work, and so on (Munawarsyah, Muzawir, 2024).

Thomas Lickona states that since Plato's time, moral or character education policies have been formulated to be integrated into school curricula. Civility and moral education must have the same urgency as intelligence and literacy education to improve social life and create more quality life patterns (Dyan Nur Hikmasari, 2021).

In current educational institutions, a concept is needed that can encompass social and cultural teachings, not just developing formal materials. Schools are the most appropriate scope for forming moral character for the nation's next generation, namely within students. As seen, the decline in student morals is beginning to show from the loss of morality, tolerance toward others, and tolerance for differences (ethnicity, race, and religion). Efforts to implement multicultural education methods in schools to introduce students earlier, one of which is through the cultivation of faith teachings that would be more appropriate when applying multicultural education concepts. Islamic Religious Education subjects are one of the basic sciences about Islam taught to all Muslim students regarding the rules and essence of that religion.

Through learning the concept of Multicultural Islamic Religious Education, this is a form of process for cultivating a number of relevant values so that students can live side by side peacefully and harmoniously in the reality of plurality and behave positively. So as to be able to achieve progress in thinking without obscuring and eliminating religious values, self-identity and culture (Huda, 2022). The context of Multicultural Islamic Religious Education actually emphasizes Islamic teachings that Islam is laden with teachings that highly value pluralist and multicultural values. This part can indirectly serve as a systematic effort to prevent and overcome conflicts of religious radicalism, separatism, and national disintegration. According to a study by Balitbang Jakarta in 2009, multicultural-based Religious Education is something that is very relevant. The relevance of religion to multiculturalism can be seen from four dimensions of Islamic religious teachings, which are as follows (Gusti Rantio, 2022):

1. Dimension of Wholeness, In this regard, religion contains teachings about absolute truth regarding the essence of humans as God's servants who are obedient and civilized, which differs from the ways of life of other God's creatures.
2. Dimension of Religious Teachings on Tolerance, Tolerance can be defined as an attitude of mutual respect and honor among people, beliefs and faiths, including differences in stance and opinion.
3. Dimension of Consultation Teachings, The Importance of Consultation to Achieve Consensus. Consultation forms democratic attitudes, openness to differences of opinion and views, respecting each other's aspirations and upholding truth values in realizing a peaceful and dignified pluralist society
4. Dimension of Justice Teachings, Multicultural education helps students to understand and accept the existence of cultural differences and customs. Therefore, students need to be invited to see other cultural values, so they understand deeply and can eventually appreciate them. The model is not by hiding other cultures. Recognition of cultural pluralism is a condition to reduce boundaries or barriers, but the goal is to create an atmosphere full of friendship and peace.

The implementation of applying Multicultural Islamic Religious Education teaching materials certainly requires the role of teachers. In this case, the teacher's role is very important in delivering material to students. According to Suwanto, 2013, 2017, the role and function as a teacher and educator means that teachers have a very important role, namely a role that will describe the expected behavioral patterns in various interactions. Starting from various activities carried out by teachers, they certainly devote much time and energy to matters related to the teaching and learning process. So to carry out the teacher's role, teachers must have pedagogical, social, professional, and leadership competencies. There are seven basic teacher attitudes so that

teaching materials can be delivered well to students: as informant, organizer, motivator, director, initiator, facilitator, and evaluator (Dina Andriyani, 2022).

D. Discussion

The connection and important role of teachers, especially Multicultural Islamic Religious Education teachers toward students in delivering material needs to be very careful as what is done with words when teaching becomes an example for their students. Social interactions that occur in cooperation are also very beneficial for students. They learn to communicate, negotiate, and collaborate with others, which will greatly help them in social and professional life in the future. The ability to work with others is one of the skills that is highly valued in the workplace and society. As multicultural education highly upholds cultural and religious values across all ethnicities. By providing this learning concept to students, students will gain knowledge provisions for their lives, both in environmental and spiritual aspects. To achieve the goal of a conducive learning system that can reach its objectives, educators are needed who also need to understand the multicultural education concept.

The teacher's primary role requires them to be able to deliver material that is easily absorbed and provide examples of wise behavior. Therefore, it is important for educators to create a learning environment that encourages cooperation among students. This can be done through various group activities, collaborative projects, and cooperation-based learning methods. Thus, students not only achieve their academic goals, but also develop social and emotional skills that will help them live better and more meaningful lives in the future (Rosita, Ita, 2015). Moreover, Islamic religious beliefs are also implemented and practiced. This encourages teachers to prepare teaching materials and teaching processes in the form of implementation of religious learning which has so far emphasized more on cognitive aspects (transfer of knowledge) rather than affective and psychomotor aspects. To implement multicultural perspective religious education, several aspects need to be considered such as:

1. Planning, In planning the implementation of multicultural-based religious education, PAI teachers are required to have a complete understanding of the multicultural education concept. If PAI teachers have understood the multicultural concept, then PAI teachers are expected to become professional in developing multicultural-oriented learning tools (Balitbang Pendidikan Agama Jakarta, 2009 in (Gusti Rantio, 2022)gus,
2. Curriculum, Multicultural education does not mean the compilation of multicultural education subjects. As a center of culture, the entire spirit and activities of educational institutions are illuminated by multicultural values (Tilaar, 2004 in (Gusti Rantio, 2022)). Materials, The scope of PAI (Islamic Religious Education) includes Al-Qur'an & Hadith, Aqidah (Islamic creed), Akhlaq (moral conduct), Ibadah/Syariah (worship/Islamic law), and history, which apparently have close connections with the development of multicultural education.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that learning theory is a fundamental concept in understanding how individuals interact within a group, including in educational environments. This theory emphasizes that the way goals are structured within a group will determine how its members interact, whether cooperatively, competitively, or individualistically.

Therefore, in implementing Multicultural Islamic Religious Education, teachers need to teach multicultural values that are in accordance with the guidance of the Al-Quran and the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, including mutual respect and high tolerance. Concretely, a teacher needs to provide examples and learning to students in the form of:

1. Able to integrate lesson material with multicultural education, especially in the area of tolerance.
2. Be democratic, both in attitude and speech, so as not to be discriminatory.
3. Have a high level of concern for incidents involving SARA.

4. Able to explain that the core teachings of religion are to create peace and prosperity for all of humanity.
5. Provide an understanding of the importance of dialogue and deliberation in resolving various issues of cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity.

So we can see that the role of teachers in teaching multicultural-based PAI (Islamic Religious Education) is very strategic because it not only shares or transfers knowledge, but also forms student character that has religious attitudes, tolerance, and is ready to live harmoniously in society or within the diverse school environment. Then we also have to look at the student side when understanding and being able to apply PAI teachings in their lives, for example appreciating differences, being open to other perspectives by being willing to listen and consider other people's viewpoints and not wanting to judge, behaving inclusively, having social awareness, avoiding stereotypes and thinking critically about information.

CONCLUSION

This research confirms that multicultural Islamic religious education is effective in fostering moral values, tolerance, and appreciation for differences among students. The role of teachers is very crucial, not only as deliverers of material, but also as role models who integrate multicultural values in learning. Teachers must understand the concept of multicultural education deeply and prepare learning materials that align with these principles. The practical implication of this research is the need for continuous training for teachers so they can implement learning strategies that support the formation of tolerant character and solidarity. This research has limitations in scope and method, so further research using empirical approaches with broader samples is recommended to strengthen the generalization of results.

This research contributes to deepening understanding about the effectiveness of strategies for forming tolerant character and student solidarity through Multicultural Islamic Religious Education learning. As a suggestion for further research, it is recommended to conduct direct empirical studies in the field to test the implementation of these strategies and their quantitative impact on student behavior, as well as explore supporting and inhibiting factors for multicultural education implementation from the perspectives of students and parents.

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