

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION
BASED ON ISLAMIC VALUES AT SMP SUMBARRANG**

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Abstract

Multicultural education plays a vital role in promoting moderate and inclusive Islamic values, particularly in pluralistic school environments. This study explores the implementation strategies of multicultural education based on Islamic values at SMP Sumbarrang. Using a descriptive qualitative method, data were gathered through participatory observation, semi-structured interviews with 12 informants (teachers, principal, and students), and documentation analysis. The findings reveal that Islamic values such as tolerance (tasamuh), brotherhood (ukhuwah), justice ('adl), and compassion (rahmah) align with the core principles of multicultural education. However, the implementation remains normative and lacks systematic integration into both learning activities and school programs. The study recommends the development of a multicultural-based Islamic education (PAI) curriculum, targeted teacher training, and enhanced collaboration among schools, parents, and communities. These efforts are essential to cultivating an educational environment that respects diversity. The study contributes to the advancement of a contextual Islamic education model suitable for plural societies.

Keywords: multicultural education, Islamic values, implementation strategy, secondary school, student character

Abstrak

Pendidikan multikultural penting untuk menanamkan nilai-nilai Islam yang moderat dan inklusif, terutama di lingkungan sekolah yang plural. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis strategi implementasi pendidikan multikultural berbasis nilai-nilai Islam di SMP Sumbarrang. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara semi-terstruktur terhadap 12 informan (guru, kepala sekolah, siswa), serta studi dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai-nilai Islam seperti toleransi (tasamuh), persaudaraan (ukhuwah), keadilan ('adl), dan kasih sayang (rahmah) selaras dengan prinsip pendidikan multikultural. Namun, implementasinya masih bersifat normatif dan belum terintegrasi secara sistematis dalam pembelajaran dan program sekolah. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan pengembangan kurikulum PAI berbasis multikultural, pelatihan guru, serta sinergi antara sekolah, orang tua, dan masyarakat. Temuan ini memberi kontribusi dalam pengembangan model pendidikan Islam yang kontekstual dan relevan dengan masyarakat majemuk.

Kata Kunci: pendidikan multikultural, nilai-nilai Islam, strategi implementasi, sekolah menengah, karakter siswa

Introduction

Education serves as a fundamental pillar in shaping the character and identity of the younger generation. In the context of Indonesia's pluralistic society, education is not merely a means of transferring knowledge, but also a strategic medium for instilling social and cultural values that uphold diversity (Muis et al., 2024). As social complexity continues to grow in the era of globalization, the education sector is increasingly required to be adaptive and responsive to the challenges of multiculturalism (Adnyana et al., 2025). In such circumstances, there is an urgent need for educational models that are not only academic in nature but also inclusive, humanistic, and values-based.

Schools, as formal educational institutions, play a pivotal role in shaping students to live peacefully amidst differences (Karadona & Sari, 2025). Education should no longer be viewed solely as instructional activity, but as a transformative process to foster tolerance, inclusivity, and respect for diversity (Rofi'i & Latifah, 2023). Therefore, multicultural education has become a necessity in the national education system, particularly at the elementary and secondary levels, in preparing students with life values needed to navigate a pluralistic society.

SMP Sumbarrang is one such secondary school located in a socially heterogeneous environment, with students coming from diverse cultural, economic, and religious backgrounds—although the majority are Muslim. This situation poses unique challenges for the school in cultivating inclusive attitudes. Educational approaches that merely emphasize cognitive and normative religious aspects are no longer sufficient. A more holistic educational model is required—one that integrates Islamic values with the spirit of multiculturalism so that students not only understand but also embrace and respect diversity as part of *sunnatullah*.

Islamic values such as tolerance (*tasamuh*), brotherhood (*ukhuwah*), justice (*'adl*), and compassion (*rahmah*) are inherently aligned with the principles of multicultural education (Azzahra et al., 2023). However, in practice, these values are often limited to religious memorization, rather than being experienced in students' social interactions. This highlights the need for educational approaches that present Islam not merely as dogma, but as a living and contextual value system relevant to diverse social realities.

Multicultural education in the classroom has the potential to serve as a strategic vehicle for strengthening universal Islamic values (Anzalman et al., 2025). The aim is not to dilute students' Islamic identity, but rather to enrich their understanding that Islam advocates for inclusivity, dialogue, and mutual respect among human beings (Ningsih & Zalisman, 2024). These values must be instilled from an early age to build moderate personalities and to prevent the influence of exclusive or intolerant ideologies (Rohani et al., 2025). In practice, multicultural education can be implemented through collaborative learning, open dialogue, and respect for differing opinions and backgrounds. Teachers play a vital role in creating safe and inclusive classroom environments, while curricula must be designed flexibly to facilitate intercultural dialogue without compromising Islamic teachings.

In reality, SMP Sumbarrang has yet to develop a systematic and planned effort to integrate multicultural education into religious instruction. The Islamic Education (PAI) curriculum still predominantly adopts a normative-doctrinal approach, focusing narrowly on internal religious understanding. In contrast, the surrounding social context demands students to engage constructively and Islamically with differences.

This situation reveals a *research gap*: there is a lack of structured strategies or models for implementing multicultural education based on Islamic values at the secondary school level, particularly in localized contexts such as SMP Sumbarrang. Although numerous studies have emphasized the importance of multicultural education, very few have specifically addressed how Islamic values can be practically integrated into school curricula, pedagogy, and daily educational life (Karadona et al., 2022). Therefore, innovative educational approaches are urgently needed to respond to these challenges through Islamic education that is open, adaptive, and contextual.

This study aims to identify and formulate strategies for implementing multicultural education based on Islamic values at SMP Sumbarrang. The main focus is on analyzing the roles of teachers, curricula, and school activities in internalizing inclusive Islamic values into educational practices. The findings are expected to contribute meaningfully to the development of Islamic educational models relevant to pluralistic societies and to serve as a reference for stakeholders in fostering a harmonious, tolerant, and nationally minded educational climate.

Methods

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at exploring and deeply understanding the urgency and implementation strategies of multicultural education in reinforcing Islamic values at SMP Sumbarrang. This approach was chosen because it is appropriate for investigating social phenomena, religious values, and educational practices that occur naturally and contextually (Wijaya, 2019).

The data sources consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Observations were conducted directly during learning activities and students' social interactions within the school over a period of three weeks. Interviews were conducted with 12 purposively selected informants, including the principal, three Islamic education teachers, two classroom teachers, and six students. Each interview lasted approximately 30–60 minutes. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from books, academic journals, scholarly articles, and official school documents such as the curriculum, vision-mission statements, and instructional planning documents (Pahleviannur et al., 2022).

The data collection process utilized three main techniques: (1) Participant observation, to examine classroom activities and student behavior in the context of diversity; (2) Semi-structured interviews, which allowed flexibility in exploring the informants' perspectives and experiences; (3) Document analysis, to obtain written data related to policies and practices concerning multicultural and Islamic value-based education at the school.

The collected data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, consisting of three main steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data were first organized and grouped into key thematic categories, then presented in narrative form and analyzed to identify patterns and meanings relevant to the study focus (Qomaruddin & Sa'diyah, 2024).

To ensure validity and reliability, this study applied triangulation techniques, including source, method, and time triangulation. Cross-checking among various informants was used to minimize bias, and multiple data collection methods were

employed to enhance the credibility of findings. Additionally, member checking was conducted by verifying the interpreted data with the informants to ensure accuracy and alignment with actual conditions (Abdussamad, 2022).

Through this systematic approach and analysis technique, the study is expected to yield scientifically accountable and contextually relevant findings regarding the reinforcement of Islamic values through multicultural education at SMP Sumbarrang.

Results and Discussion

The Concept of Multicultural Education from an Islamic Perspective

The findings indicate that the concept of multicultural education is strongly rooted in Islamic teachings. In the educational context, multiculturalism refers to an approach that acknowledges and manages cultural, ethnic, religious, and social diversity constructively (Wulandari, 2020). From the Islamic perspective, multicultural values have been present since the early days of Prophet Muhammad's mission, particularly during the establishment of the Medina society through the Charter of Medina, which governed peaceful relations between Muslims and non-Muslims (Anas & Adinugraha, 2017). This demonstrates that Islam inherently promotes inclusive and harmonious community life.

This concept aligns with the principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, which views Islam as a source of mercy for all humanity regardless of their background (Hadi et al., 2023). Values such as justice (*'adl*), brotherhood (*ukhuwah*), and mutual respect form the foundation of an open and humanistic Islamic education. Therefore, Islamic education should not be exclusive or doctrinal, but must instead foster dialogue, cooperation, and tolerance within the learning process.

As a school situated in a socially and culturally diverse environment, SMP Sumbarrang bears a strategic responsibility to instill inclusive Islamic values. The findings show that teachers play a central role in integrating these values, particularly through Islamic Religious Education (PAI). However, the PAI learning process remains largely normative and lacks contextualization with students' social realities.

Accordingly, the implementation of multicultural education must involve practical strategies such as promoting tolerant behavior, cross-class discussions, and the integration of multicultural materials into the curriculum. When students are accustomed to dialogue and collaboration with peers from different backgrounds, they indirectly practice the Islamic values of *ta'aruf* (mutual acquaintance) and *ta'awun* (mutual assistance).

Additionally, it is essential for schools to foster an educational climate that supports Islamic multiculturalism. This can be achieved through teacher training, inclusive school policies, and character development programs aligned with Islamic values. Religious activities such as study groups or Islamic holidays can incorporate messages of tolerance, peace, and respect. As a result, students do not only learn Islam as a doctrine, but also as a social ethic that guides their interaction in a pluralistic society.

Nevertheless, the challenges in implementing multicultural education are considerable. Some educators still hold narrow, textual interpretations of Islam and

resist adopting more open learning approaches. Therefore, continuous teacher development and curriculum evaluation are needed to ensure multicultural Islamic education moves beyond discourse into real practice. Collaboration with parents and local communities is also vital in shaping a school culture that appreciates diversity within an Islamic framework.

By integrating multicultural education with Islamic values, SMP Sumbarrang can actively shape a generation that is not only ritually religious but also socially aware—one that contributes to building a peaceful, just, and civilized Indonesian society. This form of education is not only relevant for the present but also serves as a long-term investment in developing a humanistic and universal Islamic civilization.

The Urgency of Multicultural Education at SMP Sumbarrang

SMP Sumbarrang is located in a socially diverse environment, with students from various cultural, economic, and lifestyle backgrounds. This diversity makes the school a microcosm of a pluralistic society, requiring educational approaches that embrace difference while fostering unity. In this context, multicultural education is not only a response to social realities but also a strategic tool for creating a harmonious and inclusive learning climate.

If not managed wisely, such diversity can lead to social friction or discrimination within the school, such as stereotyping, differences in perspective, or economic disparity affecting social interactions. Multicultural education, therefore, serves as a social buffer that instills core Islamic values such as *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Muslim brotherhood) and *ta'awun* (mutual support). Through this approach, students learn to value differences as blessings rather than threats, and to build social relations grounded in justice, empathy, and compassion.

The urgency of multicultural education at SMP Sumbarrang is also closely linked to character development in the face of contemporary challenges. In an era of globalization and social media influence—which often promote values contrary to Islamic teachings—an open yet faith-based education becomes essential. When harmonized with Islamic values, multicultural education can shape students who are intellectually capable, emotionally mature, and socially respectful, both toward fellow Muslims and those of other backgrounds.

Moreover, multicultural education offers a safe and inclusive space, especially for students from minority social or economic groups. Schools must be nurturing, not segregating. An inclusive environment promotes a sense of belonging and equality, ensuring that all students have the same opportunities to grow academically and spiritually. This is consistent with Islamic principles that prioritize justice and equity in education.

Thus, the urgency of multicultural education at SMP Sumbarrang lies not only in social dimensions but also in Islamic and humanitarian imperatives. This approach positions the school as a pioneer in applying Islamic values in a pluralistic context. Multicultural education becomes a path for strengthening character, building brotherhood, and promoting solidarity across differences.

The findings align with Izzah (2020), who emphasizes that multicultural education is vital for ensuring equal rights and treatment for all students regardless of ethnic, cultural, or religious background. It teaches respect for diversity and provides space for minority groups to access fair and inclusive education. Therefore, schools must design responsive learning systems, inclusive curricula, fair

assessment methods, and develop educators with multicultural competence to shape students who appreciate diversity and reinforce national unity.

The Role of Teachers and Curriculum in Implementing Multicultural Education

Teachers play a central role in education—not only as instructors but also as agents of character and worldview transformation. The study's findings underscore the importance of teachers' multicultural awareness and their inclusive interpretation of Islamic teachings. Teachers must serve as role models for tolerance, openness, and fairness toward all students, regardless of their backgrounds.

As value facilitators, teachers should integrate Islamic teachings with multicultural principles during the learning process. For instance, in Islamic Religious Education (PAI), themes such as social justice, interfaith brotherhood, and respect for difference as divine wisdom should be emphasized. Teachers must also be sensitive to the dynamics of a diverse classroom, create spaces for dialogue, and encourage students to engage in mutual understanding. This shifts the learning process from merely cognitive to affective and social dimensions.

Beyond the teacher's role, curriculum design is equally crucial in the success of multicultural education (Sibaweh et al., 2024). Curriculum development must not rely solely on national academic standards but should also be responsive to local social realities. At SMP Sumbarrang, the curriculum should be developed integratively—merging Islamic and multicultural content into meaningful and contextual learning experiences. For instance, in social studies, students should learn not only about history or geography but also about social harmony and intercultural collaboration.

Revising and adapting the curriculum also involves integrating multicultural values into extracurricular activities and character-building programs. Initiatives such as community service, inter-class dialogue, religious competitions, and student discussion forums can simultaneously reinforce both Islamic and multicultural values. These efforts help form students who are not only intellectually competent but also socially aware and culturally sensitive.

To ensure alignment between teachers and the curriculum, continuous professional development is needed. As Hajar & Wahyuni (2024) emphasize, teacher training should equip educators with the skills to apply Islamic-based multicultural pedagogy. When teachers and curricula synergize within the spirit of Islamic and multicultural education (Supriatin & Nasution, 2017), SMP Sumbarrang will truly reflect Islam as *rahmatan lil 'alamin* in a diverse society.

Strategies for Strengthening Islamic Values through Multicultural Education

Efforts to strengthen Islamic values through multicultural education at SMP Sumbarrang must adopt a comprehensive and contextual approach. One effective strategy is collaborative learning, which allows students to work in diverse groups. Through interaction, discussion, and problem-solving, students cultivate habits of respecting differing opinions and backgrounds. Islamic values such as *ukhuwah*, *musyawarah*, and *tasamuh* are naturally embedded in such learning environments.

Beyond classroom instruction, extracurricular activities designed with a socio-religious approach play a key role. Programs such as Islamic spiritual groups (Rohis), religious assemblies, preaching practice, and community-sharing activities help

students embody Islamic teachings in real-life contexts. These foster empathy, solidarity, and social responsibility.

Service learning or community engagement is also a relevant strategy for multicultural Islamic schools. Activities such as cleaning places of worship, tutoring underprivileged children, or running environmental campaigns reflect Islamic principles like *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*, environmental stewardship (*khalifah fil ard*), and serving others regardless of their background.

Another vital strategy is integrating Islamic and multicultural values into school literacy and media content. Reading materials, audiovisual aids, and digital learning content should reflect diversity and promote universal Islamic messages of peace, justice, and compassion. Teachers can also incorporate stories of the Prophet and his companions that model interactions with diverse communities as examples of respectful engagement.

For these strategies to be effective, support from all school stakeholders is essential—from principals, teachers, and staff to students' parents (Nurasiah et al., 2025). Strong coordination among these actors will foster a school culture that supports the implementation of Islamic-based multicultural education. With a systematic and sustainable approach, SMP Sumbarrang can become not only academically excellent but also a role model for nurturing a generation of Muslims who are tolerant, just, and morally upright in a diverse society.

Conclusion

Multicultural education has proven to be a strategic approach in addressing the challenges of social diversity faced by the education sector, particularly at SMP Sumbarrang. The findings of this study affirm that schools are not merely institutions for knowledge transmission, but also serve as arenas for character formation, cultivating students who are tolerant, inclusive, and grounded in Islamic values.

Islamic values such as *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *tasamuh* (tolerance), *'adl* (justice), and *rahmah* (compassion) must be instilled not merely through theoretical instruction or rote memorization of religious texts, but through contextual and experiential learning. In this regard, teachers play a central role as facilitators of both Islamic and multicultural values in the learning process. The curriculum must also be designed in an integrative and adaptive manner, reflecting the diverse social realities of students.

Collaborative learning strategies, dialogical approaches, and socio-religious extracurricular activities have been shown to be effective in reinforcing these values. Moreover, support from all elements of the school—principals, teachers, staff, parents, and the wider community—is essential in cultivating an inclusive, harmonious, and equitable school culture.

The integration of multicultural education with Islamic values, as implemented at SMP Sumbarrang, demonstrates significant potential in shaping a young generation that is not only religious in a spiritual sense but also socially sensitive and prepared to live in a pluralistic society. This study contributes to the development of a contextual Islamic education model that is relevant to the dynamics of modern society and can serve as a reference for other schools across Indonesia in strengthening character education rooted in diversity. Such an educational model

represents a tangible contribution to building a nation's civilization that is peaceful, just, strong in character, and grounded in the universal and humanistic values of Islam.

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