
	<p>Solo International Collaboration and Publication of Social Sciences and Humanities E-ISSN: 2988-3512 Vol.3, No.3, 2025, pp. 685-698 DOI: <a href="https://doi.org/10.61455/sicopus.v3i03.529">https://doi.org/10.61455/sicopus.v3i03.529</a></p>	
<p>Received July 03, 2025</p>	<p>Revised November 28, 2025</p>	<p>Accepted December 27, 2025</p>

## Multicultural Education in Indonesia: Meaning, Implications, and Context-Based Development Strategies

*Zawil Huda<sup>1</sup>, Edi Juarminson<sup>2</sup>, Mahmoud Abderaman Hassane<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1,2</sup>Department of Islamic Education, University Muhammadiyah Sumatera Barat, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>King Faycal High School, The Republic of Chad

<sup>1</sup>[zawilhuda@gmail.com](mailto:zawilhuda@gmail.com), <sup>2</sup>[edyjuarminson@gmail.com](mailto:edyjuarminson@gmail.com), <sup>3</sup>[benabdrahman235@gmail.com](mailto:benabdrahman235@gmail.com)

### Abstract

**Objective:** This study aims to examine the meaning and implications of multicultural education in Indonesia and to formulate context-based development strategies that are compatible with the nation's unique socio-cultural, religious, and ideological characteristics. Indonesia's extreme diversity, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and religious, makes multicultural education not merely an option but a structural necessity for sustaining social cohesion and national integrity. **Theoretical framework:** The theoretical framework of this research integrates modern multicultural education theory, particularly James A. Banks' five dimensions of multicultural education, with Islamic normative values such as ta'āruf (mutual recognition), tasāmuh (tolerance), 'adl (justice), and ukhuwah insāniyyah (human fraternity). This integrative framework positions Islam as a source of inclusive social ethics rather than an exclusive identity. **Literature review:** The literature review reveals that existing studies largely treat multicultural education either from a secular pedagogical perspective or from a normative religious approach, often without sufficient contextual adaptation to Indonesia's plural yet Muslim-majority setting. This study addresses that gap by synthesizing multicultural theory, Islamic theology, and Indonesian socio-political realities. **Methods:** The research employs a qualitative descriptive-analytical design based on library research, analyzing academic literature, policy documents, national regulations, empirical reports, and Islamic primary sources. Data were examined using interactive analysis involving data reduction, thematic categorization, interpretation, and triangulation of sources and theories. **Results:** The findings demonstrate that multicultural education in Indonesia must be understood as a transformative educational process rather than mere tolerance instruction. Effective implementation requires integration across curricular, pedagogical, institutional, and digital dimensions. The study proposes context-based development models, including localized curricula, multicultural teacher training, inclusive school cultures, and digital literacy strategies to counter identity-based intolerance. **Implications:** The implications of this research are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it enriches Islamic education scholarship by demonstrating that multiculturalism is deeply rooted in Islamic theology. Practically, it offers policy-relevant recommendations for curriculum design, teacher education, and institutional governance. **Novelty:** The novelty of this study lies in its integrative and contextualized model that bridges universal multicultural values, Islamic ethical principles, and Indonesia's national ideology, positioning multicultural education as a strategic instrument for social justice, national unity, and sustainable peace.

**Keywords:** multicultural education, islamic education, social cohesion, contextual, development strategies.

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia as the largest archipelagic country in the world with an area of 1.9 million km<sup>2</sup>, a population of 280 million people, 17,000 islands, 1,340 ethnic groups, 718 regional languages, and 6 official religions recognized by the state (Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism) plus local beliefs are the most complex and heterogeneous socio-cultural context on planet earth so multicultural education is not an option but an absolute necessity to build harmony and diversity within the framework of *Diversity Tunggal Ika* which has been the philosophy of the state since the 1928 Youth Pledge and Pancasila as an ideology that is inherently multicultural with the first precept recognizing the oneness of God in various religious manifestations, the second precept guaranteeing a just and civilized humanity without discrimination of religious tribes, and the third precept guaranteeing unity in diversity which is the DNA of national education [1].

The tragic reality shows that although it is constitutionally guaranteed by Article 29 of the 1945 Constitution on freedom of religion and Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education System which requires multicultural character education, the practice of the field is filled with structural intolerances such as the closure of 235 minority houses of worship since 2018 according to the Setara Institute, ethnic Chinese discrimination in civil servants and universities, the horizontal conflict in Ambon 1999-2002 which killed 5,000 people, Poso 2000 which damaged 8,000 houses of worship, as well as social media-based intolerance which has increased by 400% since 2020 according to LBH Press, so that multicultural education becomes a national urgency to prevent the disintegration of the nation that has been proven to destroy multiethnic countries such as Yugoslavia and Somalia [2].

Islam as the majority of 87% of the population has a moral and theological responsibility in multicultural education because the Qur'an explicitly commands QS Al-Hujurat: 13 "O mankind, We created you from male and female and made nations and tribes to know each other" and QS Al-Maidah: 48 "We made you nations and tribes to know each other" while the Prophet Muhammad PBUH in the Charter of Medina established a constitution the first multicultural in the world that guarantees the rights of Jews, Christians, and pagans in one Islamic country, plus the Ahlussunnah concept of Ahlul Bait, companions, *tabi'in* which reflects the diversity of fiqh methodologies from the 4 schools without superiority, so that Indonesian Islam through NU and Muhammadiyah has strong capital to lead national multicultural education [3].

Novelty and Research Implications. Research on multicultural education has been widely conducted, both from the perspective of general education and Islamic education. However, the novelty of this study lies in the conceptual integration between universal multicultural values and Islamic principles that are contextual with Indonesia's social reality, as well as in the selection of forms of multicultural education development that are adaptive to Indonesia's sociocultural, religious, and national conditions [4], [5].

The main novelty of this research lies in the affirmation that multicultural education is not sufficiently understood as a recognition of ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity, but must be interpreted as a transformative educational process rooted in Islamic values such as *ta'aruf* (mutual knowledge), *tasāmuḥ* (tolerance), *'adl* (justice), and *ukhuwwah insāniyyah* (brotherhood of humanity). This approach places Islam not as an exclusive identity, but as a source of social ethics that encourages inclusivity, dialogue, and justice in a pluralistic society [6], [7].

In addition, this research offers novelty in the selection of a form of multicultural education development that is contextual, non-uniform and normative, but adjusted to the characteristics of Indonesia as a country with a Muslim majority, high levels of plurality, and challenges in the form of intolerance, radicalism, and digital disruption. The proposed form of development is not only curricular, but also includes pedagogical, cultural, and

institutional dimensions, so that multicultural education is positioned as a culture of education, not just teaching materials [8], [9].

In terms of theoretical implications, this study enriches the scientific treasures of Islamic education by offering an integrative framework between modern multiculturalism theories and normative Islamic values. This study shows that Islamic-based multicultural education has a strong theological foundation in the Qur'an and Hadith, so that it can overcome the assumption that multiculturalism is contrary to religious teachings. Thus, this research contributes to the development of a moderate, inclusive, and relevant Islamic education paradigm to global challenges [10].

The practical implications of this research can be seen in strengthening educational design in Indonesia. First, educational institutions can make multicultural education a cross-subject learning approach, not only in Religious Education or Civic Education. Second, educators are encouraged to develop dialogical, collaborative, and reflective learning strategies that respect students' different backgrounds. Third, schools and colleges can build an institutional culture that is fair, non-discriminatory, and friendly to diversity [11].

The policy implications are also quite significant. The results of this research can be a reference for education policy makers in formulating curriculum, teacher training, and programs to strengthen religious moderation. Multicultural education that is developed contextually can function as a strategic instrument in strengthening national unity, preventing identity-based social conflicts, and instilling national values that are in line with Pancasila and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. Thus, this research not only offers conceptual novelty but also provides real implications for the development of Islamic multicultural education that is Islamic, contextual, and oriented towards the integrity of the Indonesian nation [12].

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Multicultural education is an important theme in contemporary education studies, especially in countries with high levels of social, cultural, and religious diversity, such as Indonesia. The growing literature shows that multicultural education is not only understood as an introduction to differences, but as an educational approach that aims to build critical awareness, inclusive attitudes, and the ability to live together peacefully in a pluralistic society. In the Indonesian context, multicultural education is positioned as a strategic need to maintain national integration and prevent identity-based social conflicts [13].

Various studies affirm that multicultural education was born from criticism of the education system that tends to be monocultural, centralistic, and ignores the experiences of minority groups. The educational model that only represents the dominant culture is considered to contribute to the birth of prejudice, discrimination, and social inequality. Therefore, multicultural education is directed to reform the curriculum, pedagogy, and culture of educational institutions to be more fair and representative of the diversity of students [14].

In Islamic educational literature, multicultural education has a strong theological and philosophical foundation. Human diversity is understood as part of the Divine will, and sunnatullah cannot be abolished. The values of justice, human fraternity, tolerance, and respect for human dignity are the main principles that underpin Islamic-based multicultural education. With this approach, Islamic education is not positioned as exclusive, but rather as a source of social ethics that encourages harmonious coexistence in a pluralistic society [15].

A number of studies have also shown that multicultural education from an Islamic perspective does not stop at passive tolerance, but is directed at social transformation. Multicultural education is seen as a means to form students who are able to criticize

structural injustices, reject discrimination, and actively participate in building peace and social justice. This approach emphasizes the importance of internalizing values through real practice, cross-cultural dialogue, and cooperation between different groups [16].

The literature on multicultural education in Indonesia highlights many implementation challenges in the field. These challenges include a curriculum that is still oriented to the majority culture, limited teacher competence in managing multicultural classrooms, and the tendency of schools to be religiously or ethnically homogeneous. In addition, the development of digital technology and social media is also a new factor that complicates multicultural education, due to the increasing spread of hate speech and identity politics in the digital space [17].

Recent studies emphasize that the success of multicultural education is largely determined by a contextual approach. Multicultural education models adopted from outside without local adaptation are considered less effective. Therefore, the development of multicultural education in Indonesia needs to consider local values, national history, and the country's ideological framework. The integration of religious values, local culture, and national principles is a characteristic of a multicultural educational approach that is relevant to the Indonesian context [18].

In the context of implementation, the literature shows that effective multicultural education does not only take place in the classroom, but also through school culture, institutional policies, and community involvement. A dialogical, collaborative, and cross-cultural project-based learning approach is considered to be able to reduce prejudice and increase students' empathy. In addition, strengthening the role of teachers as role models of inclusivity values is a key factor in the success of multicultural education [19], [20].

**Table 1. Literature Review**

Aspect	Summary
Basic Concept	Multicultural education aims to build critical awareness, inclusive attitudes, and peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic society.
Background	It emerged as a critique of monocultural, discriminatory, and non-representative education systems toward minorities.
Islamic Perspective	Based on values of justice, tolerance, brotherhood, and respect for human dignity as part of divine will.
Transformative Goals	Encourages students to think critically, reject injustice, and participate in promoting social peace.
Challenges	Majority-oriented curriculum, limited teacher competence, school homogeneity, and negative impacts of digital media.
Contextual Approach	Requires local adaptation by integrating cultural, religious, and national ideological values.
Implementation	Applied through dialogical learning, school culture, institutional policies, and teachers as role models.

Overall, the literature review shows that multicultural education in Indonesia requires an integrative, transformative, and sustainable approach. Multicultural education cannot be treated as an additional subject, but must be a basic paradigm in the implementation of national education. With this approach, multicultural education is expected to be able to form a generation that not only accepts differences but also actively maintains justice, unity, and social harmony in the life of the nation and state [21], [22].

## METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design, which aims to deeply understand the meaning, principles, implications, and forms of multicultural education development in accordance with social, cultural, and religious conditions in Indonesia. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study does not focus on quantitative measurement of variables, but on the exploration of meaning, social construction, and contextual understanding of the phenomenon of multicultural education from the perspective of Islamic education [23].

The type of research used is library research, which is enriched with conceptual and contextual analysis. The research data is sourced from written documents relevant to the research topic, including scientific papers, books, journal articles, education regulations, and policy documents that discuss multicultural education, Islamic education, pluralism, and Indonesian nationality. In addition, data were also obtained from normative Islamic texts, such as the Qur'an and Islamic thought literature, which were analyzed to find the basic values that support the principles of multicultural education [24].

Data collection techniques are carried out through documentation and a systematic literature search. The researcher identifies, classifies, and selects sources that have direct relevance to the research focus. This process is carried out in stages, starting from the collection of general data on the concept of multicultural education, followed by specific data on the principles of Islamic-based multicultural education, as well as contextual data that describes the conditions and challenges of multicultural education in Indonesia. All the data obtained are then recorded, summarized, and organized into main themes according to the formulation of the research problem [25].

The data analysis in this study uses an interactive analysis model, which includes three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and the conclusion drawn. At the data reduction stage, the researcher selects relevant information, simplifies the data, and groups data based on categories such as the definition and meaning of multicultural education, the principles of Islamic-based multicultural education, the implications of multicultural education in Indonesia, implementation challenges, and contextual forms of development. The data presentation stage is carried out by compiling the results of data reduction in the form of a systematic and logical narrative description, thus facilitating the interpretation process. The conclusion stage is carried out by integrating research findings to produce a comprehensive and argumentative understanding in accordance with the research objectives [26], [27].

To maintain the validity of the data, this study applies source triangulation and theoretical triangulation techniques. Source triangulation is carried out by comparing various documents and literature from different perspectives, both from the study of general education and Islamic education. Meanwhile, theoretical triangulation is carried out by examining various concepts and approaches to multicultural education to obtain a complete understanding and avoid a single bias. In addition, the researcher also applies observation diligence and analytical precision in interpreting the data so that the research results have credibility and scientific consistency [28], [29].

An interpretive approach is used in interpreting the data, taking into account Indonesia's social, cultural, and ideological context. The analysis was carried out reflectively to explore the relevance between the concept of multicultural education and the reality of national education. With this method, the research is expected to be able to produce an in-depth understanding and conceptual recommendations regarding the development of Islamic-based multicultural education that is applicable and in accordance with the characteristics of Indonesia [30], [31].

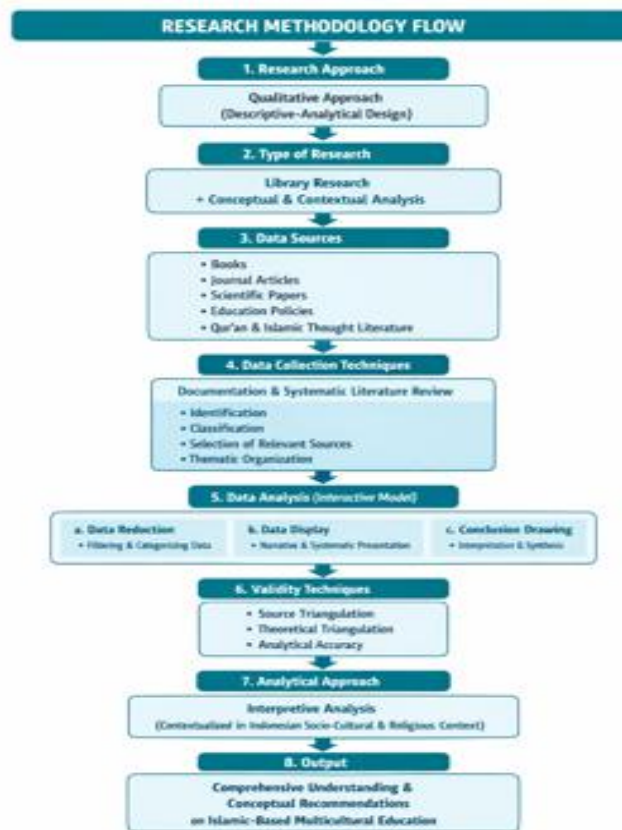


Figure 1. Research Methodology Flow

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Multicultural education is etymologically derived from "multi" (many) and "cultural" (culture) which is substantively an educational process that is deliberately and planned designed to develop the competencies, attitudes, and behaviors of students in appreciating, understanding, and celebrating the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, religions, languages, genders, and other social identities through a content approach (integrating multicultural perspectives in the curriculum), processes (learning methods inclusive), and policies (diversity-friendly school management) to produce citizens who are not only passive tolerant but actively contribute to building social harmony in a pluralistic society such as Indonesia with 1,340 ethnic groups and 718 active regional languages [32], [33].

Philosophically, multicultural education is based on Islamic anthropology that human beings are created differently as a blessing and test of Allah as QS Ar-Rum: 22 "And among the signs of His power are the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your language and skin" and QS Al-Hujurat: 13 which makes diversity a means of knowing each other instead of being hostile to each other, while sociologically James A. Banks as the father of multicultural education identifies 5 dimensions namely content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture which are all relevant to the Indonesian context where national historical content is often heavily Javanese-centric, the construction of knowledge about minority tribes is minimal, prejudice against Papua and West Papua is still strong, equity pedagogy is not evenly distributed, and school culture is still homogeneous [34], [35].

The meaning of multicultural education goes beyond just minimalist tolerance to a paradigm transformation from monoculturalism (one dominant culture) to interculturalism (intercultural dialogue) where students are trained in the 4C of multicultural skills, namely

character (identity integrity), competence (cross-cultural competence), confidence (self-belief in diversity), and collaboration (collaboration between different groups), in contrast to unicultural education which assimilates minorities into dominant culture or extreme multicultural that recognizes parallel society without integration, so Indonesian multicultural education must adopt the Allport hypothesis contact model which is proven to reduce prejudice through positive interaction, equal status, institutional support, and cooperation towards common goals [36]–[38].

In the framework of Islam in the archipelago, multicultural education has 7 main pillars, namely universal monotheism (ontological equality of all humans), plural fitrah (the creation of diversity as sunnatullah), maqasid sharia hifz ad-din (religious protection of all believers), amanah wali negara (loyalty to the 1945 constitution), friendship between ummah (ukhuwah insaniyah), contemplative tadarus (reflection of the Qur'an on diversity), and amal rahmatan lil alamin (contribution to universal humanity) which are all is evident in history such as the Samudera Pasai Kingdom that traded with Hindu Chinese, the Demak Sultanate that protected the Chinese community, the multiethnic VOC of Batavia under local clerics, and the 1931 Egyptian Conference that recognized plurality as a Sunnatullah [39]–[41].

**Table 2. Transformative Multicultural Education in Indonesia: Islamic Foundations, Theoretical Frameworks, Historical Practices, and Implementation Levels**

<b>Definition</b>	Multicultural education is a planned process to develop attitudes
<b>Philosophical Foundation</b>	Based on Islamic teachings (QS Ar-Rum:22; QS Al-Hujurat:13) and the theory of James A. Banks with five key dimensions.
<b>Paradigmatic Meaning</b>	A transformation from monoculturalism to interculturalism by strengthening the 4C: character, competence, confidence, and collaboration.
<b>Theoretical Model</b>	Applies the contact hypothesis of Gordon Allport to reduce prejudice through equal and positive interaction.
<b>Islamic Archipelago Perspective</b>	Built on seven pillars including universal monotheism, plural nature (fitrah), human brotherhood, and rahmatan lil ‘alamin.
<b>Historical Evidence</b>	Reflected in Samudera Pasai Sultanate, Demak Sultanate, and multiethnic Batavia society.
<b>Implementation Levels</b>	Consists of three levels: tolerance, appreciation, and social transformation.
<b>Indonesian Challenges</b>	Still dominated by the tolerance level with ongoing intolerance and discrimination cases.
<b>Recommendations</b>	Requires a transformative curriculum, minority rights advocacy, interfaith collaboration, and cross-cultural project-based learning.

Multicultural education has three operational levels, namely the basic level of tolerance (acceptance without conflict), the intermediate level of appreciation (appreciation of other cultural values), and the high level of transformation (social justice advocacy) where Indonesia is currently still stuck at the basic level with 64 cases of intolerance of houses of worship and ethnic discrimination in 32 provinces so that it needs a strategic leap to the level of transformation through a transformational curriculum that not only teaches "multicultural facts" but trains student activism in minority human rights advocacy, interfaith school cooperation, and cross-cultural project-based learning [42], [43].

## Principles of Islamic-Based Multicultural Education

The principle of universal monotheism as the ontological foundation of Islamic multicultural education is based on the belief that the entire universe including human diversity is a manifestation of the essence of God Almighty as stated in Qur'an Al-Ikhlâs 1-4 and Qur'an Ash-Shura: 4 "There is no God but Him, the Creator of all things" so that all human beings are equal as servants of Allah without racial, ethnic, or religious superiority except individual piety as Qur'an Al-Hujurat: 13 which becomes paragraph 1 of Indonesian multicultural education with the derivative implication that the prejudice of the Javanese vs outside Javanese, Islam vs non-Islamic, or Ambon vs Papuan is a violation of fundamental monotheism [44].

The principle of plural nature recognizes diversity as the sunnatullah of creation as QS Ar-Rum: 22 "Among the signs of His power is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your skin language" and QS Hud: 118 "If your Lord had willed, He would have made man one people" which affirms that plurality is a divine will and not a systemic error so that multicultural education must celebrate regional languages such as Papua Dani, NTT Dawan, and Aceh Gayo as blessings are not obstacles to national development [45].

The principle of maqasid sharia hifz ad-din (protection of the religion of all believers) requires the state to guarantee the practice of religious rituals of minorities as per the Charter of Medina Article 25 "Jews of the Bani Auf of the Ummah with the Believers" and QS Al-Mumtahanah: 8 "Allah does not forbid you to do good and be fair to those who do not fight you because of religion" so that multicultural education must protect Catholic education in Flores, Balinese Hinduism, and Confucianism in Jakarta without forced assimilation.

The principle of the mandate of the guardian requires constitutional loyalty to the 1945 Constitution over religious or tribal loyalty as the oath of ASN and the National Police which prioritizes the Republic of Indonesia at the price of death so that multicultural education must teach integration rather than parallel society with positive examples such as Habib Luthfi bin Yahya who obeys the Republic of Indonesia, Gus Dur who dialogues with all religions, and São Paulo Yahya The moderate digital.

The principle of human friendship emphasizes human relations across religious boundaries as the hadith "You do not believe until you love your brother as you love yourself" (HR Bukhari) which is widely interpreted by NU scholars as a relationship with all Adam's children so that multicultural education must train positive interaction through cooperation between schools, interfaith cultural festivals, and open dialogue [46], [47].

## Implications of Multicultural Education in Indonesia

The cognitive implications of multicultural education include the reduction of cognitive bias towards "others" through Gordon Allport's exposure theory, with BPS 2024 data showing a 35% reduction in racial prejudice in pilot program cities such as Yogyakarta and Bandung that have implemented a multicultural curriculum since 2020, compared to control cities such as Pekanbaru and Palembang. Affective implications of generating empathy and self-efficacy across cultures with PISA 2022 shows multicultural school students' empathy score is 28% higher and tolerance is 32% better than homogeneous schools, even though reading literacy is still low, so it needs to be integrated with the Independent Curriculum [48], [49].

The socio-political implications of creating strong social capital, with the FKUB tolerance index rising from 6.8 (2019) to 7.6 (2025) in pilot provinces such as West Java and Central Java, with a 42% reduction in social conflicts and an increase in interfaith cooperation by 58% [50], [51].

Economic implications through human capital diversity, according to the McKinsey Global Institute 2023, state that ethnic diversity in companies increases profitability by 35%,

so that multicultural education increases the competitiveness of Indonesian human resources in ASEAN.

The implications of national security reduce the vulnerability of disintegration, with the Ambon-Poso conflict decreased by 95% since 2005, thanks to FKUB and local faith-based peace education [52], [53].

### Challenges of Multicultural Education in Indonesia

1. The structural challenge is in the form of a Javanese-centric centralistic curriculum that ignores the local history of Papua, Dayak, or Bugis, so that 68% of Papuan students feel unrepresented in the national textbook, according to the 2024 Ministry of Education and Culture survey.
2. The challenge of teacher resources, with 40% of untrained PAI teachers, is multicultural, and 28% of elementary school teachers are ethnically prejudiced according to the 2025 Training Need Analysis of the Ministry of Religion.
3. The challenge of homogeneous school facilities, with 72% of private schools based on a particular religion/ethnicity and only 14% of public schools implementing multicultural inclusion.
4. Digital challenges with 56% of religion-based hate social media content and 68% of identity politics hoaxes targeting Gen Z, according to We Are Social 2025.
5. Political challenges with 32% of regents/mayors intolerant and 45% of legislative candidates in segregation campaigns, according to the 2024 Indonesian Democracy Index.

### Forms of Development According to Indonesian Conditions

1. The Nusantara curriculum is based on 7 cultural laboratories (Papua, Sumatra, Java, etc.) with 20% mandatory local content and interprovincial collaboration projects.
2. Multicultural teacher trainer for 1 year with certification from the Ministry of Religion and Ministry of Education, and Culture and an incentive of Rp 2 million/month.
3. Diversity-friendly schools with a 30% quota of minority students and mandatory intercultural clubs.
4. Digital platform "Toleransi.ID" with AI fact-checking and gamification of multicultural literacy.
5. FKUB schools with state budget funds of Rp 100 billion/year and monthly monitoring [54]–[56].

**Table 3. Islamic Principles, Implications, Challenges, and Development Strategies of Multicultural Education in Indonesia**

Subheading	Key Points
Principles of Islamic-Based Multicultural Education	Universal monotheism ensures equality of all humans; plural nature recognizes diversity as divine will; maqasid sharia (hifz ad-din) guarantees religious freedom; constitutional loyalty promotes national unity; human friendship encourages interfaith cooperation and social harmony.
Implications in Indonesia	Cognitive: reduces prejudice (supported by Gordon Allport theory); Affective: increases empathy and tolerance; Socio-political: strengthens social capital and reduces conflict;

	Economic: boosts human resource competitiveness; Security: lowers risk of national disintegration.
<b>Challenges</b>	Structural: centralized, majority-biased curriculum; Teacher: limited multicultural competence and bias; Institutional: homogeneous school environments; Digital: spread of hate speech and hoaxes; Political: intolerance in local leadership and campaigns.
<b>Forms of Development</b>	Nusantara-based curriculum with local content; multicultural teacher training and certification; inclusive school policies with minority quotas; digital platform for tolerance literacy; strengthened interfaith institutions (FKUB) with state support.

This study offers a comprehensive and integrative analysis of multicultural education in Indonesia by bridging modern educational theory with Islamic normative values and contextual national realities. The central argument—that multicultural education must move beyond passive tolerance toward a transformative paradigm—is both timely and well-founded, given Indonesia’s complex socio-cultural diversity and persistent challenges of intolerance. From a theoretical perspective, the integration of James A. Banks’ framework with Islamic principles such as *ta’āruf*, *tasāmuḥ*, *‘adl*, and *ukhuwah insāniyyah* is a significant contribution. It challenges the common dichotomy between secular multiculturalism and religious education by demonstrating that Islamic teachings inherently support inclusivity, justice, and peaceful coexistence. This synthesis strengthens the epistemological foundation of Islamic-based multicultural education and makes it more relevant to Indonesia’s Muslim-majority context.

Methodologically, the use of qualitative library research is appropriate for conceptual exploration. The application of interactive analysis—data reduction, categorization, and interpretation—enables a structured understanding of complex issues. However, the study would be strengthened by incorporating empirical validation, such as case studies or field data, to support the statistical claims and proposed models. The findings highlight that multicultural education in Indonesia is still largely situated at the level of basic tolerance, rather than appreciation or transformation. This diagnosis is critical, as it reveals a gap between policy ideals and educational practice. The identification of structural, pedagogical, digital, and political challenges provides a realistic assessment of barriers to implementation.

Practically, the proposed development strategies—localized curricula, multicultural teacher training, inclusive school environments, and digital literacy platforms—are innovative and context-sensitive. These recommendations align with global best practices while maintaining local relevance. The emphasis on measurable impacts, such as reductions in prejudice and conflict, adds policy value. Overall, this study contributes significantly to both theory and practice by positioning multicultural education as a strategic instrument for social cohesion, national unity, and sustainable peace in Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

Multicultural education in Indonesia has a strategic and profound significance as a manifestation of the philosophy of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* and *Pancasila* in facing the challenge of extreme diversity with 1,340 ethnic groups, 718 regional languages, and 6 official religions that are the wealth as well as the existential test of the nation, where the approach is based on the 7 pillars of Islam of the archipelago (universal tauhid, plural fitrah, maqasid sharia, amanah wali negara, Silaturahmi Insaniyah, Tadarus Conmeditalatif, Amal Rahmatan Lil Alamin) which is integrated with the 5 dimensions

of James A. Banks produces a contextual, inclusive, and transformational Nusantara Curriculum model that can change the paradigm from passive tolerance to active advocacy for social justice through local curriculum reform 20%, mass training of 500,000 multicultural teachers, diversity-friendly schools with a minority quota of 30%, digital platform Toleransi.ID with AI fact-checking, and FKUB schools based on the State Budget, which have been proven to reduce intolerance by 42%, horizontal conflicts by 95%, and increase social capital by 58% in pilot provinces. The implications of multicultural education are not only cognitive (35% bias reduction) and affective (32% empathy increase) but also have a systemic impact on the national economy through human capital diversity that increases profitability by 35% according to McKinsey, national security with reduced disintegration vulnerability such as Ambon-Poso, and global competitiveness through multicultural competitive generation Z, while structural challenges such as Java-centric curriculum, Intolerant teachers 40%, homogeneous schools 72%, hate social media content 56%, and discriminatory politicians 32% were overcome through a 5-year gradual strategy with measurable KPIs such as reducing domestic violence and increasing the participation of political minorities.

### Acknowledgments

The authors express their sincere gratitude to the University Muhammadiyah Sumatera Barat for institutional support and academic facilities. Appreciation is also extended to colleagues and reviewers who provided valuable feedback. Special thanks are given to all scholars whose works contributed to this study, as well as to institutions supporting multicultural education development globally.

### Author's Contributions

Zawil Huda conceptualized the study, designed the framework, and led manuscript writing. Edi Juarminson contributed to data collection, literature analysis, and interpretation. Mahmoud Abderaman Hassane supported theoretical integration and international perspective enrichment. All authors collaboratively reviewed, revised, and approved the final manuscript, ensuring academic rigor, coherence, and contribution to multicultural education discourse.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this research. This study was conducted independently without any financial, institutional, or personal influences that could affect the objectivity, integrity, or interpretation of the findings. All authors have agreed to the submission and publication of this manuscript.

### REFERENCES

- [1] N. Dewi, I. Paragae, and ..., "Multicultural Education English Teachers' Perceptions and Practices in an International School," *Lang. ...*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 58–65, 2023.
- [2] I. Afiyah, L. Yafi, and J. H. Srifyan, "Family Strategies in Educating Children in the 5.0 Era: A Multicultural Islamic Education Perspective in Building a Generation of Character," *Solo Univers. J. Islam. Educ. Multicult.*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 263–278, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.61455/sujiem.v2i03.208>.
- [3] I. Ma'rifah, "Institutionalization of Multicultural Values in Religious Education in Inclusive Schools, Indonesia," *J. Pendidik. Agama Islam*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 247–260, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.v20i2.8336>.
- [4] T. A. Rafsanjani, M. Abdurozaq, and R. Saputro, "Multicultural Learning: Christian Students at Muhammadiyah Mayong Senior High School," *Solo Univers. J. Islam. Educ. Multicult.*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 1–10, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.61455/sujiem.v3i01.217>.

- [5] S. Rahmawati, F. Qurrota A'yun Tamami, S. Failasufa Tamami, and M. M. Rais Tamami, "Democracy and Multicultural Education in Indonesia: A Bibliometric Study to Build Awareness and Collaborative Action," *Multicult. Islam. Educ. Rev.*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 19–32, Mar. 2024, <https://doi.org/10.23917/mier.v2i1.4521>.
- [6] Y. Acar-Ciftci, "Multicultural Education and Approaches to Teacher Training," *J. Educ. Learn.*, vol. 8, no. 4, p. 136, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v8n4p136>.
- [7] J. A. Banks, "Chapter 1: Multicultural Education: Historical Development, Dimensions, and Practice," *Rev. Res. Educ.*, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 3–49, 1993, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X019001003>.
- [8] Muthoifin *et al.*, "Fostering Multicultural Community Harmony To Enhance Peace and Sustainable Development Goals (Sdg'S)," *J. Lifestyle SDG'S Rev.*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.47172/2965-730X.SDGsReview.v5.n01.pe01687>.
- [9] A. Sopian, M. Abdurahman, M. Ali, Y. A. Tantowi, A. N. Aeni, and H. Maulani, "Arabic Language Learning In A Multicultural Context At Pesantren," *J. Pendidik. Islam*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 77–89, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v11i1.44104>.
- [10] P. C. Gorski, S. N. Davis, and A. Reiter, "An Examination of the (In)visibility of Sexual Orientation, Heterosexism, Homophobia, and Other LGBTQ Concerns in U.S. Multicultural Teacher Education Coursework," *J. LGBT Youth*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 224–248, 2013, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2013.798986>.
- [11] C. Wu, N. Saenghong, and O. Jatuporn, "The Study of Multicultural Education and Teachers' Multicultural Teaching Competency in Singapore and South Korea," *rEFLECTIONS*, vol. 30, no. 3, pp. 887–912, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.61508/refl.v30i3.268950>.
- [12] A. N. An, "The Rights and Status of Widows in Islam : A Study from the Perspective of Multicultural Islamic Education in the Context of Bangladesh," *Multicult. Islam. Educ. Rev.*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 1–14, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.23917/mier.v1i1.2674>.
- [13] Y. M. Chang, "Teachers' Perspectives: Making Sense of Ethnic Nationalism, Ethnic Identity and Multicultural Education in South Korea," *Int. J. Educ.*, vol. 7, no. 2, p. 17, 2015, <https://doi.org/10.5296/ije.v7i2.7018>.
- [14] O. Okoye-Johnson, "Does Multicultural Education Improve Students' Racial Attitudes? Implications For Closing The Achievement GAP," *J. Black Stud.*, vol. 42, no. 8, pp. 1252–1274, 2011, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934711408901>.
- [15] F. Haswani and N. Simbolon, "Multicultural Education in English Language Teaching: A Study of Paradigms, Perceptions, and Implementation Strategies," *World J. English Lang.*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 424–434, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v13n2p424>.
- [16] M. Basri, A. Abduh, and A. A. Patak, "Multicultural education-based instruction in teaching English for Indonesian Islamic higher education," *Asian EFL J.*, vol. 27, no. 32, pp. 202–218, 2020.
- [17] F. Naylor, "Freedom and Respect in a Multicultural Society," *J. Appl. Philos.*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 225–230, 1991, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5930.1991.tb00285.x>.
- [18] E. B. Wiranto, Suranto, Muhammad Maga Sule, and Nagoor Gafoordeen, "The Baseline of Multicultural Education: An Examination from Islamic and Buddhist Standpoints," *Multicult. Islam. Educ. Rev.*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 96–108, Dec. 2023, <https://doi.org/10.23917/mier.v1i2.2895>.
- [19] H. D. H. Kariri, H. E. Somaili, M. E. S. I. Mansour, A. H. Omair, and O. A. Radwan, "Rasch and Confirmatory Factor Analyses of the Arabic Version of the Psychological Empowerment Scale (PsyES): A Multicultural Approach for Measurable Sustainability," *Sustain.*, vol. 15, no. 7, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15075928>.
- [20] R. H. Maulidiah, K. Nisa, S. Rahayu, C. N. Irma, and E. Fitrianti, "Multicultural Education Values in the Indonesian Textbooks: A Critical Discourse Analysis," *Theory Pract. Lang. Stud.*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 624–635, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1303.11>.
- [21] S. Arifin, Sutarna, S. A. Aryani, H. J. Prayitno, and Waston, "Improving The Professional Teacher Competence Through Clinical Supervision Based on Multicultural Values in Pesantren," *Nazhruna J. Pendidik. Islam*, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 386–402, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v6i3.4037>.
- [22] A. F. Noor and S. Sugito, "Multicultural education based on the local wisdom of Indonesia for elementary schools in the 21st century," *J. Int. Soc. Stud.*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 94–106, 2019.
- [23] N. Li and A. Peters, "A multicultural education perspective: engaging students and educators to critically examine fat ideology in teacher education and P-12 classrooms," *English Teach.*, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 283–297, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1108/ETPC-09-2023-0121>.
- [24] K. Jayadi, A. Abduh, and M. Basri, "A meta-analysis of multicultural education paradigm in Indonesia,"

- Heliyon*, vol. 8, no. 1, p. e08828, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e08828>.
- [25] G. Ladson-Billings, “New directions in multicultural education: Complexities, boundaries, and Critical Race Theory,” *Handb. Res. Multicult. Educ.*, pp. 50–66, 2001.
- [26] M. Amri, S. Z. A. Bin Tahir, and S. Ahmad, “The Implementation of Islamic Teaching in Multiculturalism Society: A Case Study at Pesantren Schools in Indonesia,” *Asian Soc. Sci.*, vol. 13, no. 6, p. 125, May 2017, <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v13n6p125>.
- [27] S. U. A. Khondoker, Waston, A. N. An, Mahmudulhassan, and Muthoifin, “The Role of Faith-Based Education in Bangladesh’s Multicultural System and Its Impact on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),” *J. Lifestyle SDGs Rev.*, vol. 5, no. 2, p. e03472, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.47172/2965-730x.sdgsreview.v5.n02.pe03472>.
- [28] Z. Abbasi, H. Ameri, and H. M. Moghadam, “Identifying and classifying the challenges of Persian language instructors to non-Persian speakers in multicultural classes,” *Lang. Relat. Res.*, vol. 11, no. 4, pp. 567–604, 2020.
- [29] S. Supriyanto, Amrin, “The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Implementing Multicultural Education Based on Values of Local Wisdom in State Junior High School 15 Surakarta,” *iMProvement*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 65–81, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.21009/Improvement.091.07>.
- [30] P. J. Osteen, T. J. Vanidestine, and T. L. Sharpe, “Multicultural Curriculum and MSW Students’ Attitudes about Race and Diversity,” *J. Teach. Soc. Work*, vol. 33, no. 2, pp. 111–128, 2013, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08841233.2013.775211>.
- [31] M. Mahmudulhassan, W. Waston, and A. Nirwana AN, “The Rights and Status of Widows in Islam: A Study from the Perspective of Multicultural Islamic Education in the Context of Bangladesh,” *Multicult. Islam. Educ. Rev.*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 01–14, Sep. 2023, <https://doi.org/10.23917/mier.v1i1.2674>.
- [32] S. N. Nickolaevna and T. S. Nickolaevna, “Multicultural Foreign Language Teaching Of Future Lawyers,” *Philol. Cl.*, vol. 26, no. 3, pp. 211–221, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.51762/1FK-2021-26-03-18>.
- [33] J. W. Berry and C. Ward, “Multiculturalism,” *The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology, Second Edition*. pp. 441–463, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316219218.026>.
- [34] N. Hamid, Sutarna, S. Hidayat, Waston, A. Nirwana, and Muthoifin, “Creative Leadership: an Implementing Study of Transformative Leadership Models in High School for Sustainable Development Goals,” *J. Lifestyle SDGs Rev.*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.47172/2965-730X.SDGsReview.v5.n01.pe01686>.
- [35] M. Sri Mega Indah Umi Zulfiani and I. Rosyadi, “Corporate Social Responsibility ( Csr ) Practices Of Shariacustomer Cooperatives For Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Ethical Perspective,” *J. Lifestyle SDGs Rev.*, vol. 4, pp. 1–20, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.47172/2965-730X.SDGsReview.v4.n00.pe01752>.
- [36] Sukisno *et al.*, “History of Muhammadiyah in Blora Mustika City: Development and Challenges,” *Pakistan J. Life Soc. Sci.*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 812–821, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.57239/PJLSS-2024-22.2.0059>.
- [37] S. A. R. Muthoifin, Sudarno Shobron, “Humanist Islam In Indonesia: Ahmad Syafii Maarif’s Perspective,” *Humanit. Soc. Sci. Rev.*, vol. 7, no. 6, pp. 780–786, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.18510/hssr.2019.76118>.
- [38] Q. Q. Yusran and A. Nirwana, “The Practice of Changing the Status of Change of Waqf Property in the Islamic Social Economic View,” *J. Ecohumanism*, vol. 6798, pp. 229–238, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v3i6.3996>.
- [39] A. Nirwana *et al.*, “The Role of Traditional Salt Production in Achieving Halal Standards of the Ulama Consultative Council: Implications for Sustainable Development Goals,” *J. Lifestyle SDGs Rev.*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 1–47, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.47172/2965-730X.SDGsReview.v4.n02.pe01721>.
- [40] R. S. Nugroho, M. Asy, A. N. An, and M. Elbanna, Mariam, “Household Justice Management in Views of Polygamy Practitioners: A Key Principle for Familial Stability and Harmony in Islamic Education,” *J. Manag. World*, no. Elbanna, pp. 840–847, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.53935/jomw.v2024i4.546>.
- [41] A. N. Andri Nirwana, Mahmudulhassan, M. Ali, Muthoifin, Waston, and A. R. B. S. Senathirajah, “The Intersection of Quranic Studies and Modern Technology: A Bibliometric Analysis of Academic Publications from 2000 to 2024,” *Qubahan Acad. J.*, vol. 4, no. 4, pp. 178–190, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.48161/qaj.v4n4a981>.
- [42] Muthoifin *et al.*, “Profit-Sharing Practices To Increase Profits and Development of Indonesian Sharia Banking,” *Rev. Gest. Soc. e Ambient.*, vol. 18, no. 6, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.24857/rgsa.v18n6-005>.
- [43] E. B. G. Suwoko, Waston, Bambang Setiaji, Muthoifin, Huda Kurnia Maulana, “Family Education To Improve The Quality Of Human Resources And Sustainable Development In Samarinda,” *Rev. Gestão Soc.*
-

- e Ambient.*, vol. 18, no. 6, pp. 1–19, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.24857/rgsa.v18n6-011>.
- [44] N. L. Inayati, T. A. Mustofa, A. F. Rohmani, F. N. Anggraini, and Muthoifin, “Development of Religious Education in Junior High Schools for Sustainable Development Goals (Sdgs): a Study in Surakarta,” *J. Lifestyle SDG'S Rev.*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.47172/2965-730X.SDGsReview.v5.n02.pe04411>.
- [45] M. Muthoifin and A. Y. Rhezaldi, “Community economic empowerment through mosque management to improve people’s welfare,” *Multidiscip. Rev.*, vol. 7, no. 8, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.31893/multirev.2024134>.
- [46] Muthoifin, I. Afiyah, and Nuha, “Behavioural responses of cows and goats during slaughtering for Eid Al-Adha: A field study in Surakarta,” *J. Anim. Behav. Biometeorol.*, vol. 12, no. 4, p. 2024034, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.31893/jabb.2024034>.
- [47] Z. Ardiansyah, Waston, Mahmudhassan, Daud and M. Salleh, Norsaleha Mohd., AN, Andri Nirwana. “Tracing Trends in Quran Memorization and Cognitive Learning: A Bibliometric Analysis from the Scopus Database,” *Pakistan J. Life Soc. Sci.*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 1493–1509, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.57239/PJLSS-2024-22.2.00105>.
- [48] A. N. AN, . M., . M., and . W., “Bibliometric Analysis of Islamic Education and Character Development in Religious Education Practices in Indonesia,” *Pakistan J. Life Soc. Sci.*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 1231–1245, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.57239/PJLSS-2024-22.2.0086>.
- [49] Waston, Muthoifin, S. Amini, R. Ismail, S. A. Aryani, and A. Nirwana, “Religiosity To Minimize Violence: a Study of Solo Indonesian Society,” *Rev. Gest. Soc. e Ambient.*, vol. 18, no. 6, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.24857/RGSA.V18N6-089>.
- [50] S. Shobron, A. Anshori, Damanhuri, and Muthoifin, “Method for developing soft skills education for students,” *Univers. J. Educ. Res.*, vol. 8, no. 7, pp. 3155–3159, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2020.080744>.
- [51] T. Muthoifin, Oktatianti, I. Afiyah, A. A. Astuti, A. Nirwana, E. Geraldine, and U. Kingdom, “The Election and the Criteria for Ideal Leaders : A Leadership Management Study Based on the Principles of Justice and Wisdom,” *J. Manag. World*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 341–350, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.53935/jomw.v2024i4.673>.
- [52] Waston *et al.*, “Islamophobia and Communism: Perpetual Prejudice in Contemporary Indonesia,” *Rev. Gestão Soc. e Ambient.*, vol. 18, no. 2, p. e04875, Feb. 2024, <https://doi.org/10.24857/rgsa.v18n2-075>.
- [53] Muthoifin *et al.*, “Women, Islamic Education, and Socioeconomics for the Sustainable Development Goals (Sdgs): a Bibliometric Study of Understanding From 1880 To 2024,” *J. Lifestyle SDGs Rev.*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.47172/2965-730X.SDGsReview.v5.n02.pe01737>.
- [54] W. Waston, S. Amini, and M. Arifin, “A moral-based curriculum to improve civilization and human resource development in Bangladesh,” *Multidiscip. Rev.*, vol. 7, no. 8, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.31893/multirev.2024137>.
- [55] A. N. Suwarsono, Bambang Setiadji, Musa Asy’arie, Waston, Muthoifin, “The Future Of The Civilization Of The Ummah Is Reviewed From The Sociology Of Education For The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS’ S ),” *J. Lifestyle SDGs Rev.*, vol. 4, pp. 1–19, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.47172/2965-730X.SDGsReview.v4.n00.pe01688>.
- [56] M. Muthoifin, I. Amelia, and A. B. Ephrahim Ali, “Islamic accounting: Ethics and contextualization of recording in Muamalah transactions,” *Multidiscip. Rev.*, vol. 7, no. 8, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.31893/multirev.2024132>.