



# Inclusive Islamic Religious Education for Multicultural Elementary School Contexts

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In the increasingly diverse and global Islamic education system, an inclusive and multicultural model of Islamic education is becoming very necessary and important. Therefore, this study was conducted with the aim of examining how an inclusive Islamic Religious Education (IRE) model has developed for students from various cultural and religious backgrounds, with the main focus on instilling values of tolerance, respecting diversity, and achieving social balance. In addition, this study aims to assess the implementation of a multicultural approach in Islamic education and to identify the issues encountered during its implementation, particularly in elementary schools as the scope of the research. The literature review serves as an approach in this study to analyze various literatures relevant to multicultural and inclusive education. However, challenges such as suboptimal teacher training, limited resources, and rigid teaching methodologies hinder the successful implementation of inclusive Islamic education (PAI) in elementary schools. The findings of this study explain that Islamic Religious Education integrating multicultural themes can promote the formation of a tolerant and inclusive society. This study also indicates that developing an inclusive Islamic Religious Education model is highly necessary as it can help create a peaceful learning environment and encourage cultural diversity. To effectively address the challenges and implement inclusive Islamic education, further research, as well as the involvement and contributions of educators and policymakers, are highly needed.

**Keywords:** Tolerance, Multicultural, Cultural Diversity, Inclusive Islamic Religious Education

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## INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly diverse and global educational landscape, inclusive, multicultural Islamic education in schools is becoming more important. It is very important to use teaching methods that acknowledge and celebrate diversity in the classroom. Islamic Religious Education needs to improve so that it can help students of all faiths and backgrounds, not just Muslims. As society becomes more diverse, it is important to develop teaching methods that not only emphasize Islamic teachings but also consider the diverse religious and cultural backgrounds of students. This will help make the classroom a nice and welcoming place to learn. This method helps Muslim students learn more about their religion and also lets students from other religions or cultures learn about Islam in a way that is more respectful and welcoming. A multicultural approach to Islamic education is crucial for cultivating students' character to be tolerant, moderate, and receptive to diversity (Luthfi et al., 2025); (Saihu, 2020). This method can also help create a calm and welcoming learning environment that helps students grow to their full potential (Moussa, 2025).

Even though a lot of research on education talks about how important it is to have multicultural and welcoming classrooms, there are still a lot of holes in the research that need to be filled. The majority of contemporary research concentrates on higher and secondary education, with insufficient investigation into the implementation of diversity at the elementary level. It's very important to teach kids about tolerance and acceptance when they are in elementary school, because that's when they start to form their personalities. Contemporary educational systems frequently overlook the requirements of students from varied cultural and religious backgrounds (Andini et al., 2020); (Zakiah et al., 2023). Moreover, various modern educational approaches have not completely incorporated this diversity into the Islamic Religious Education curriculum. The teaching of Islam is often standardized and insufficiently attuned to the multicultural context (Sleeter, 2018).

This might make kids feel like they're not getting the help they need or like they're not getting enough of it. We need to do more research to find a multicultural way to help people get along and show more respect for each other. A lot of studies show that we need to look more closely at the teaching methods and strategies used in Islamic education,

especially when it comes to dealing with cultural diversity in the classroom (Rohmat, 2023). On the other hand, Indonesia's education policies are getting better over time. They really care about including everyone and being different. Even with these rules, it can be hard to follow them in class. This is especially true for students who come from different cultures. Teachers may lack sufficient knowledge on adapting Islamic Religious Education materials for students from diverse backgrounds, or they may not possess adequate training to manage classes with students from various backgrounds (Kaweesi et al., 2023).

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## METHODS

This study employs a literature review to pinpoint knowledge deficiencies and rigorously evaluate current research, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of inclusive Islamic religious education for students from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. As noted by Renner (Renner et al., 2022). Literature reviews are essential for integrating findings from scholarly sources, as Zed (Zed, 2008), emphasizes that this approach enables the gathering of theoretical and argumentative evidence through the examination of books, journals, and official documents. The literature review in "Inclusive Islamic Religious Education Learning Model for Students of Diverse Religions and Cultures: A Multicultural Approach in Education" analyzes the convergence of educational theory, multicultural principles, and the practical challenges and opportunities associated with the implementation of inclusive education in heterogeneous classrooms. This study identifies patterns, trends, and

discrepancies in the existing research on inclusive education models by gathering, assessing, and integrating pertinent materials, such as journal articles, policy reports, and dissertations. The selected literature is evaluated for its relevance to inclusive and multicultural education, its quality from reputable publications and authoritative texts, and the expertise of the authors. The literature selected for this review is contemporary, focusing on publications from the last 5-10 years, thereby ensuring the study aligns with the latest developments in the field. The subsequent phases utilized in the literature review methodology are as follows:

[Figure 1. about here]

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. The Idea of Sufism

The results shown in Table 1 show that Islam-based intercultural education not only teaches religious knowledge but also helps to create a more welcoming, peaceful, and tolerant society.

[Table 1. about here]

### B. Inclusive Education and Cultural Diversity

Inclusive education values diversity and makes sure that all students, no matter what their differences are, have the same right to an education. Inclusive education is based on the ideas of valuing differences, using personalized instruction, encouraging teamwork, making the classroom a safe place, and participating in teacher reflection and professional development. These ideas help schools value differences in culture, language, and social status, which helps all kids do well in school and in life (Kapcia, 2024);(Oranga et al., 2024). The idea of valuing diversity stresses how important it is to make sure that all students are treated with respect, no matter where they come from.

Individualized education meets the needs and learning styles of each student. Collaborative partnerships help students, teachers, and the community support each other. Inclusive environments recognize cultural and social differences, and constant

reflection is important. But inclusive education is often hard. It might be hard for all students to learn together, especially in classrooms with a lot of different types of students. This is because there aren't enough resources, teachers aren't well-trained, and there are strict rules about how to teach. To address these challenges, we must continue to support educators and enhance the curriculum's flexibility and accessibility for all (Abdulah et al., 2025);(Sepadi, 2024).

Making the classroom a friendly place that values equality and cultural diversity can help everyone feel more equal and give students more power. To attain this favorable result, it is essential to implement best practices, including "teacher professional identity" and comprehensive methodologies (Shabir et al., 2025);(Gelizon, 2024). Inclusive education is very important in today's schools because it promotes social justice and cultural diversity. By using best practices and dealing with these problems, inclusive education could help make society more fair and open.

### C. Multicultural Approach in Education

Multicultural education, then, helps to cut down on fights and make the classroom a better place to learn. It helps students learn about other cultures and do things that make them more open, accepting, understanding, and adaptable in how they think, act, and feel (Muhajir et al., 2025). However, implementing inclusive learning methodologies in various educational institutions presents considerable challenges. Unstable educational systems, inflexible intercultural education frameworks, and insufficiently trained educators constitute significant impediments (Akhyar et al., 2025). For instance, it might be hard for teachers to talk about sensitive topics that have to do with differences in religion and culture. This could mean teaching about adab in Islam, which some religious beliefs might not agree with, or talking about things on the internet that aren't allowed in schools (Yusoff, 2024). Also, parents not being involved or understanding enough can make it hard to make education more inclusive (Green et al., 2015).

There are a lot of good things about teaching in a multicultural way, even with these problems. Multicultural education helps students learn more and get ready to live and

work in different cultures. It also strengthens the foundation that will help society become more fair and united (Shabir et al., 2025). This method helps kids learn how to get along with people from other cultures while also keeping their own culture. It makes people proud of their culture and helps them accept others (Akhyar et al., 2025). A multicultural perspective is at the heart of an inclusive educational framework. It includes basic things like recognizing diversity, encouraging tolerance, and building character. This plan makes learning better and society more fair and welcoming by teaching people to respect each other and celebrate their differences. But it can be hard to do because teachers don't get enough training and they have to think about cultural and religious differences when they teach.

#### **D. Islamic Education in the Context of Diversity**

In a diverse setting, Islamic education stresses justice, cultural awareness, and knowledge to create a welcoming place to learn. Islamic ethics, exemplified by al-'adl, promote the recognition of cultural diversity and equitable leadership, essential for cultivating an environment that honors varied cultural backgrounds (Ramzy et al., 2022). Moreover, multicultural education in Islamic education promotes unity and diversity by integrating local values into the curriculum, thereby enhancing social cohesion and fostering tolerance and intercultural understanding (Idris, 2020);(Fahmi, Nuruzzaman, Hilmy, et al., 2025). Islamic education encourages diversity by teaching students to value differences and develop empathy and tolerance. Islamic courses can help people learn how to be accepting and tolerant of differences. In contrast, educators of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) employ a methodology that synthesizes distinctions to illustrate the diversity of Islamic beliefs (Aderibigbe et al., 2023; Putkonen, 2023).

Even so, the professionalization of Islamic education and problems in the education system make it very hard to teach Islamic education in different cultural settings. The school system needs to change so that it can teach diversity in a way that is more open to everyone and handle authoritarian leadership (Sahin, 2018; Tuna, 2020). Multicultural Islamic education has many benefits, such as teaching people to be

open-minded about other religions, understand different cultures, and keep a balance between religions in a diverse community. But there are also some problems that need to be fixed. Islamic education promotes a cohesive and inclusive community through the incorporation of these principles into the curriculum (Muhajir et al., 2025; Takunas et al., 2024). The published research findings delineate five pertinent areas of discourse concerning the "Inclusive Islamic Religious Education Learning Model for Students of Diverse Religions and Cultures: A Multicultural Approach in Education."

#### **E. Multicultural Education in a Diverse Society**

The research by Putkonen & Poulter (Putkonen, 2023), emphasizes identifying commonalities among individuals with diverse backgrounds to facilitate the implementation of Islamic education in Finnish schools. These schools cater to a highly diverse Muslim community, encompassing various cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds. To deal with religious diversity, teachers use a dialogical approach that looks at both the differences and similarities within Islam. This study shows how important it is for people of different religions to talk to each other so that everyone feels welcome. This goes along with the idea of building schools that bring people together and celebrate their differences (Fahmi, Nuruzzaman, & Hilmy, 2025) examined the impact of multicultural Islamic education on social cohesion in Indonesia, particularly in culturally diverse regions such as Bali and Southern Thailand. This study demonstrated that the integration of local cultural elements, including the Balinese language and the participation of Hindu educators, into Islamic education may alleviate identity conflict and promote communal cohesion.

#### **F. Inclusive Education and Tolerance within the Framework of Islam**

Aderibigbe (Aderibigbe et al., 2023), emphasizes that Islamic education fosters tolerance and an appreciation for diversity among students. This study elucidates the integration of Islamic principles into the curriculum of the United Arab Emirates to foster compassion, understanding, and respect for diversity among students. This is in line with the idea of

multicultural Islamic education, which aims to promote peaceful cooperation and an appreciation for differences. Islamic education employs cooperative learning methodologies (Efendi & Lie, 2021) to promote diversity within educational institutions. This idea brings people from different ethnic groups together, which makes it easier for them to understand and accept each other. In a multicultural setting, these social attitudes are very important for getting people from different cultures to get along.

## G. Implementation of Multicultural Islamic Education

The application of Multicultural Islamic Education highlights the crucial function of families in fostering concepts of tolerance and inclusivity, as evidenced by research conducted by Mukhsin (Mutaqin & Nasir, 2024). This study emphasizes the crucial role of parents in fostering early multicultural education for children, which influences their social attitudes and equips them for interfaith and intercultural collaborations. The study by Sechandini (Sechandini et al., 2023) examines the efficacy of multicultural-based Islamic education in improving students' social attitudes through the integration of multicultural principles. The dialogic learning process, wherein students from varied backgrounds interact with Islamic teachings and each other's traditions, may diminish the probability of conflict and foster social cohesion.

## H. Curriculum Development and Policy for Inclusivity

Umamah (Umamah et al., 2025) asserts that the incorporation of multicultural principles into the Islamic school curriculum is vital for fostering societal cohesion. This paper asserts that educational institutions should offer curricula that acknowledge student diversity and promote tolerance and respect for all ethnic and religious backgrounds. The authors assert that curriculum development and teacher education are essential for the successful application of these principles. Kühle and Larsen (Kühle & Larsen, 2021), discovered that religious practices in minority communities must adapt to the digital era, particularly when conventional methods are unfeasible, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic. This shows that Islamic education can still help people get along with each other, even when things are tough.

## I. Challenges and Opportunities in Multicultural Education

This research highlights the significant problem of resistance to variation in particular contexts. Umamah's research (Umamah et al., 2025), indicates that cultural resistance among specific educators and students may impede the implementation of multicultural education. To fix this problem and make inclusive practices better, teachers, schools, and communities need to work together (Fahmi, Nuruzzaman, Hilmy, et al., 2025) contends that local customs in multicultural Islamic education are essential for promoting social cohesion. Combining local cultural norms with Islamic principles helps to bring together differences between minority and majority religious groups, which reduces cultural tensions in communities with a lot of different religions.

This article, "Inclusive Islamic Religious Education Learning Model for Students of Diverse Religions and Cultures: A Multicultural Approach in Education," talks about how important it is to make an Islamic education model that works for people of all religions and cultures. But the models that are out there right now have some problems. Most of the time, current models don't consider the different needs of students, especially in primary school, when it's important for them to grow as people. The study suggests that modern teaching methods may not adequately include cultural diversity in the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum. This leads to a single method that doesn't work well in a school setting with students from different backgrounds. Because of this, students from different religious and cultural backgrounds may feel like the curriculum doesn't support them enough (Sleeter, 2018).

Colleges and universities often teach about different cultures, but elementary schools don't do it enough. There has not been enough research or practice to show that the ideas behind multicultural education, like respect, tolerance, and cultural awareness, have been fully integrated into early learning experiences. The lack of exploration in elementary school leads to missed chances to teach kids to accept and respect others from a young age (Andini et al.,

2020). The study demonstrates that challenges exist in enhancing educational accessibility, including insufficient teacher training and inadequate resources. Most teachers don't know how to make the IRE curriculum more welcoming to students from different cultural backgrounds.

It might be hard to talk about touchy issues that come up when people come from different cultures and religions. This is very important at a school where students come from many different backgrounds (Kaweesi et al., 2023).

The deficiencies in the existing paradigm arise from inadequate incorporation of multicultural issues into the curriculum, insufficient training for educators, and an excessive focus on higher education that neglects the primary school level. These problems make it very hard to put into place an inclusive Islamic education framework that promotes tolerance and social cohesion among students from different backgrounds.

[Figure 2. about here]

## CONCLUSIONS

The main finding of this study is that current Islamic Religious Education (IRE) models often fail to meet the diverse needs of children, particularly in elementary schools, where character development is crucial. While higher education places a strong emphasis on multicultural education, its application in elementary schools has not been adequately scrutinized. The study shows that adding multicultural ideas to IRE can help people be more tolerant and open-minded. However, problems like not enough teacher training, not enough cultural diversity in the curriculum, and not enough variety in teaching methods make it hard to put this plan into action. The study emphasizes the imperative for a more comprehensive IRE framework that not only conveys religious principles but also promotes societal cohesion, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence. It requires further examination and practical guidance for educators and policymakers to enable the execution of inclusive and multicultural Islamic education (Refer to Figure 2).

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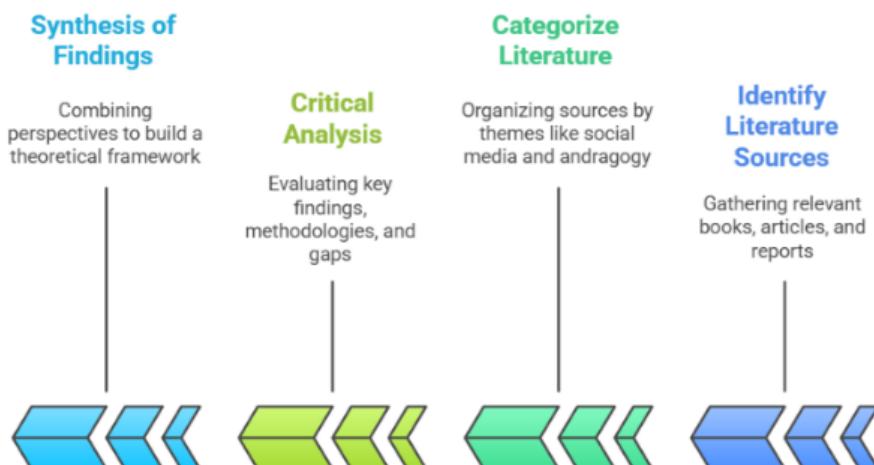
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**Table 1** / Summary Of Inclusive Islamic Religious Education Learning Model for Students of Diverse Religions and Cultures.

Authors	Title	Journal	Methodology	Findings
Mukhsin., et al. (2024)	The Implementation of Multicultural Islamic Religious Education in the Families of Primary School-age Children	Dinamika Ilmu, 24 (2), December 2024	Qualitative, Interviews, Observations	Parents in Putrajawa emphasize both Islamic values and cultural diversity, promoting tolerance and respect for others through daily practices and teachings.
Hosnan., et al. (2024)	Empowering Diversity: A Multicultural Approach to Inclusive Islamic Education	IJSSHR, Volume 07 Issue 03 March 2024	Case Study, Interviews, Observations	Multicultural Islamic education promotes tolerance, cultural respect, and social harmony, with the objective of encouraging coexistence among various religious and cultural communities.
Sechandini., et al. (2023)	Multicultural-Based Learning of Islamic Religious Education for the Development of Students' Social Attitudes	At-Tadzkir: Islamic Education Journal	Qualitative, Case Study	Implementing multicultural-based Islamic education helps develop social attitudes like cooperation, mutual respect, and empathy among students.
Moch. Yusuf Efendi1, & Hsi-Nancy Lie. (2021)	Implementation of Multicultural Education Cooperative Learning to Develop Character, Nationalism and Religious	Journal of Teaching and Learning in Elementary Education	Case Study	Local communities play a pivotal role in promoting multicultural education and instilling values of tolerance, cooperation, and respect in students.
Lene Kühle., et al. (2021)	'Forced' Online Religion: Religious Minority and Majority Communities' Media Usage During the COVID-19 Lockdown	Religions	Survey, Data Analysis	Religious education in multicultural settings must adapt to contemporary challenges, fostering inclusivity even in virtual environments.
Choirul Umamah ., et al. (2025)	Strengthening Inclusivity Through Multicultural Islamic Education in Secondary Schools: A Qualitative Literature Analysis	JSRET (Journal of Scientific, Research, Education, and Technology)	Literature study with a qualitative approach, analyzing various sources of literature	Multicultural Islamic education in secondary schools has great potential in building an inclusive society, but continuous commitment from all parties is needed. The recommendation of this study is the need for synergy between the government, schools, and the community in implementing education oriented to inclusivity and <i>at-ta'ayush as-silmi</i> (peaceful life together)
Made Saihu. (2020)	Creating Harmony in the Educational Environment Through a Multicultural Islamic Learning Approach Model	Andragogi Journal	Qualitative Ethnographic Study	The multicultural Islamic education method makes it easier for students of different religions to get along with each other at school. This method teaches kids how to be open-minded and accepting of others.
Fahmi., et al. (2025)	Multicultural Islamic Education as Strategy for Strengthening Social Cohesion in Islamic Schools	Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam	Field Study, Qualitative	Islamic education based on multiculturalism strengthens social cohesion among varied students, promoting ideals of tolerance and unity.
Aderibigbe., et al. (2023)	Fostering Tolerance and Respect for Diversity through the Fundamentals of Islamic Education	Religions Journal	Qualitative Literature Review, Comparative Analysis	Islamic religious education based on multicultural principles promotes an awareness for diversity and nurtures an inclusive environment within educational institutions.
Niina Putkonen & Saily Poulter. (2023)	Balancing Differences through Highlighting the Common: Religious Education Teachers' Perceptions of the Diversity of Islam in Islamic Religious Education in Finnish State Schools	Religions Journal	Survey, Interviews	Islamic education teachers in Finland emphasize the commonalities in Islamic teachings to ease diversity differences and create an inclusive classroom.