



Toward National Harmonization: A Dialogue Between Islamic Education and Multiculturalism in Indonesia

Hasan Maftuh¹, Muh Saerozi², Ruwandi³, Badrus Zaman⁴, Ana Nurkhasanah Surjanto⁵

^{1,2,3,4} Universitas Islam Negeri Salatiga, Salatiga, Indonesia

⁵ Monash University, Melbourne, Australia

E-mail: hasanmaftuh.iain@gmail.com¹, muhsaerozi@uinsalatiga.ac.id²,
ruwandi@uinsalatiga.ac.id³, badruszaman@uinsalatiga.ac.id⁴,
ananurkhasanahsurjanto@gmail.com⁵

Submission: 22-11-2025	Revised: 23-12-2025	Accepted: 25-01-2026	Published: 28-02-2026
------------------------	---------------------	----------------------	-----------------------

Abstract

This research aimed to examine the synergy between Islamic education and multicultural values as a strategic instrument for achieving national harmonization in Indonesia. Indonesia is a pluralistic nation rich in ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity, yet historically vulnerable to horizontal conflicts. Utilizing a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach, this study explored into the collective experiences of educators and students. Data analysis was grounded based on Talcott Parsons' Structural Functionalism theory (AGIL) and James A. Banks' dimensions of multicultural education. The results indicated that the integration of Islamic education and multiculturalism functioned as an ideological framework that shaped and transformed dogmatic worldviews into inclusive-humanist perspectives. Dialogue strategies implemented through religious moderation and a curriculum repositioning that emphasized equality and prejudice reduction serve as the primary keys to mitigating potential conflict. This study concluded that Islamic education played a vital role as a pillar of social integration in preserving Pancasila values amidst global dynamics and the challenges of the millennial era.

Keywords: Islamic Education, Multiculturalism, National Harmonization

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi sinergi antara pendidikan Islam dan nilai-nilai multikulturalisme sebagai instrumen strategis dalam mewujudkan harmonisasi kebangsaan di Indonesia. Negara Indonesia merupakan bangsa majemuk yang kaya akan keberagaman etnis, suku, dan agama, namun secara historis rentan terhadap konflik horizontal. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif melalui pendekatan fenomenologi, penelitian ini menggali sebuah pengalaman kolektif pendidik dan mahasiswa. Analisis data didasarkan pada teori Struktural Fungsionalisme dari tokoh bernama Talcott Parsons (AGIL) dan dimensi pendidikan multikultural dari James A. Banks. Hasil penelitian yang dihasilkan yaitu menunjukkan bahwa integrasi pendidikan Islam dan multikulturalisme berfungsi sebagai navigasi ideologis yang mampu membentuk dan mentransformasi pola pikir (worldview) dogmatis menjadi inklusif-humanis. Strategi dialog melalui implementasi moderasi beragama dan reposisi kurikulum yang menekankan pada kesetaraan serta pengurangan prasangka menjadi kunci utama dalam meredam potensi konflik. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa pendidikan Islam memiliki peran vital sebagai pilar integrasi sosial guna memelihara nilai-nilai Pancasila di tengah dinamika global dan tantangan era milenial.

Kata kunci: Harmonisasi Kebangsaan, Multikulturalisme, Pendidikan Islam



A. INTRODUCTION

The aspiration for national and communal harmonization constitutes an integral part of a nation's journey. Indonesia is a nation-state that has endured an extensive trajectory of socio-political transformations, specifically originating from the colonial era through the post-independence period. The post-independence era comprises the Old Order, the New Order, and the Post-Reform periods. On one hand, Indonesia is a diverse and pluralistic nation consisting of various ethnicities, cultures, and religions, each possessing distinct cultures, traditions, and languages. Concurrently, this diversity presents significant challenges, as it has the potential to trigger vertical and horizontal conflicts that are detrimental to all parties involved (Prakoso & Wirdanengsih, 2024).

Conflict constitutes a destructive element for any nation, as it yields negative repercussions, most significantly when it pertains to humanitarian issues. Indonesia, recognized as both a pluralistic and multicultural nation, possesses an extensive historical narrative. Geographically, Indonesia is located along strategic land and maritime trade routes that were highly prominent in earlier periods. The convergence of various foreign nations through these routes has shaped the diverse character of this nation. Such diversity is an inseparable reflection of the nation's socio-cultural conditions. Consequently, the distinct characteristics of ethnic diversity, the principle of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), and multiculturalism serve as vital foundations that must be managed with the utmost diligence (Iskandar, 2017).

The phenomenon of multiculturalism is not exclusive to Indonesia; it is also present in other nations, such as Malaysia (Seman et al., 2011). This reality underscores the necessity for diversity to be managed with prudence and wisdom. While diversity often precipitates conflicts perceived as negative, it also holds the potential to generate positive values. In the Indonesian context, the primary challenge lies in upholding the principle of national unity, as enshrined in the third pillar of Pancasila. Nonetheless, factual evidence indicates the persistence of conflicts rooted in various factors, including economic disparity, ethnic, racial, and religious tensions (SARA), as well as emerging socio-political issues.

These include conflicts arising from divergent perspectives and the plurality of thought within society (Harahap, 2018). The historical record of conflicts in Indonesia

includes the DI/TII rebellions (1948–1962), PRRI/Permesta (1958–1961), the Republic of South Maluku (RMS), the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), the Free Papua Organization (OPM), the Ambon riots, the Poso conflict, the Sampit tragedy, the Sampang conflict, Papuan demonstrations, the May 1998 riots, and the Situbondo riots, among others. Such complex social conditions require concrete solutions, one of which is the implementation of a dynamic approach. According to data from the Setara Institute (2023), violations of Freedom of Religion and Belief (KBB) remain fluctuating, with a trend of intolerance often involving grassroots community groups. Throughout 2022–2024, agrarian conflicts intersecting with ethnic identity in Eastern Indonesia, alongside post-2024 election tensions, indicate that identity polarization has not fully subsided. Data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs (2024) regarding the Religious Harmony Index (KUB) indeed reflects a relatively favorable score of 76.02; however, a significant disparity exists across regions, where several areas still fall below the national average due to a lack of multicultural literacy.

Through a solution-oriented educational policy, it is anticipated that these aspirations can be realized. The essence of education constitutes an ethical endeavor by humanity, for humanity, and for the benefit of human society (Efrizal Nasution, 2014). The optimization of education's role in fostering communal harmony constitutes a vital pillar for the Indonesian nation to achieve unity and cohesion. The diverse paradigms within society present a significant challenge, as there is a broader vision to influence human behavior. This process commences with a transformation of the mindset (*worldview*), which subsequently evolves into an ideology. Consequently, ideology serves as a crucial navigation tool, enabling a diverse society to instill a collective consciousness in their conduct as citizens of the nation and the state.

In light of the aforementioned rudimentary issues, alongside the persistent emergence of external challenges inherent to the millennial era, a paradigm shift is consistently required. This shift must encompass adaptive and dialogic frameworks to foster national and communal harmonization. The multifaceted challenges resulting from multiculturalism necessitate innovative solutions. A prominent example is the recent conceptualization of 'religious moderation' (*moderasi beragama*) initiated by the government. The dynamics of religious moderation toward social harmony represent a

pressing issue within the context of Indonesia's religious diversity (Anggita Wulansari, Azizah, 2024). Through an institutionalized educational approach, this concept provides a tangible contribution to fostering new perspectives and humanistic behaviour.

The research gap revealed a disconnection between the normative-theological Islamic education curriculum and the pluralistic social reality. Islamic education is frequently confined to the cognitive aspects of worship, yet remains insufficient in responding to issues of discrimination. The root cause lies in the dominance of dogmatic-exclusive perspectives that have yet to transform into humanistic inclusion. Although educational institutions have implemented the symbolization of religious moderation, deep pedagogical internalization has not been achieved. The researcher argued that this constitutes the primary gap: there is an urgent need to examine how Islamic education can function not merely as a subject of study, but as a mechanism for *integration* and *latency* within the social system amidst a pluralistic society

The grand theory employed in this study was Talcott Parsons' structural functionalism. This theory posits that society is a system comprising interdependent parts. It highlights the implementation of the *Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration, and Latency* (AGIL) framework. This concept was essential as Islamic education and multiculturalism are positioned within the functions of *Integration* (unifying differences) and *Latency* (pattern maintenance of Pancasila values). The recurring conflicts in Indonesia can be interpreted as systemic dysfunctions that must be rectified through educational institutions. Furthermore, this research incorporated James A. Banks' multicultural education theory as a developmental framework, which categorizes the dimensions of multicultural education into five aspects: content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture.

To maintain a focused analysis, this research was limited to exploring the collective experiences of educators and students in integrating multicultural values through the lens of Talcott Parsons' AGIL theory. The primary focus was directed toward how dialogue strategies and religious moderation were implemented to reduce social prejudice. The objective of this study was to formulate a new ideological navigation within Islamic education that can serve as a pillar of social integration amidst the challenges of the millennial era. Regarding relevant prior research, the first was a journal

article entitled '*Multiculturalism-Based Islamic Education for Social Harmonization: The Implementation of a Cultural Approach in Islamic Studies*' (2021) by Mujiyatun. This study sought to formulate the concept of multiculturalism as an effort toward harmonization, while simultaneously positioning this concept through Islamic education synergized within educational institutions. (Mujiyatun, 2021). The distinction of this research lay in its contemporary solution-oriented gap for instance, the formulation of policies within Islamic educational institutions regarding the concept of moderation. Furthermore, a research development gap] addressed from a methodological standpoint, specifically by focusing on the internalization of dialogic pedagogy. This implied that the concept of harmonization should not be confined to the formal curriculum; rather, it should be transformative in nature, moving toward social transformation, inter-ethnic encounters, and gender sensitivity

The second research, titled '*Social Harmony from an Islamic Perspective: A Review of Contemporary Society*' (2024), was authored by Ahmad Nilnal Munachifdlil Ula and Hanik Hidayati. This study leaned more toward a social inquiry, examining the understanding of religious teachings in establishing the primary foundation for harmonization within society. This sociologically-oriented research asserted that active participation in religious activities and social contributions are decisive factors in fostering a harmonious society (Ula & Hidayati, 2024). The methodological distinction between the aforementioned study and the current research was substantial, specifically in their respective focus on social studies versus educational research.

The third study, titled '*The Role of Multicultural Education in Building Social Harmonization in Society*' (2023), was authored by Meike Imbar and Romi Mesra. This research was sociologically oriented, aiming to examine the role of multicultural education in fostering social harmony within the community. The fundamental distinction from the current study lay in the methodological framework being developed. The novelty of this research resided in its ontological, epistemological, and axiological exploration of the phenomena of Islamic education and multiculturalism. In terms of methodology and analytical focus, this study proposed a new paradigm (*worldview*) formed through social interaction within educational institutions, as well as how the

concept of religious moderation is interpreted as an ideological navigation to achieve social harmonization.

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative design with a phenomenological approach to explore the essence of collective experience and consciousness regarding the dialogue between Islamic education and multiculturalism in Indonesia. This approach was applied to uncover the *lebenswelt* (life-world) of educational actors in responding to the reality of national plurality, which frequently encounters the challenges of polarization. The research method focused on Islamic educational environments, specifically *madrasas* and Islamic higher education institutions, involving educators and students as the primary subjects and key pillars in the internalization of diversity values.

In its implementation, the researcher functioned as the primary instrument, supported by semi-structured interview protocols and participant observation guides. Data collection techniques were conducted through in-depth interviews to capture the transformation of individual mindsets into a humanistic collective ideology, alongside direct observation of social interactions within educational institutions. Furthermore, secondary data were gathered through documentary studies of religious moderation policies, Islamic education curricula, and historical records of conflict dynamics in Indonesia to provide the contextual background.

The data analysis technique was conducted through rigorous phenomenological procedures, commencing with the *epoche* (bracketing) stage to suspend the researcher's preconceptions and maintain objectivity. The subsequent step involved phenomenological reduction to identify the core essence or 'horizon' of the subjects' experiences, followed by imaginary variation to discern the essential structure of the phenomenon. This process culminated in a synthesis of meaning that described the essence of national harmonization. To ensure data credibility and validity, the researcher employed source and method triangulation. This was carried out by cross-referencing data from interviews, observations, and documents to ensure that the resulting narrative accurately reflected the objective reality of Islamic education's strategic role in constructing inclusive discourse within the millennial era

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

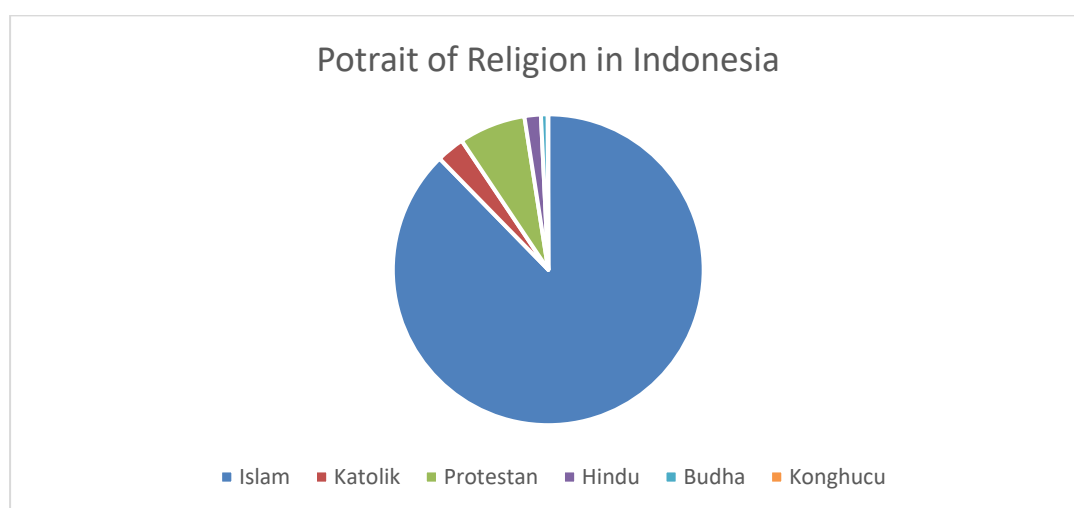
Results

1. The Integration of Islamic Education and Multiculturalism

The proposed concept was particularly significant as it advocated the active involvement of Islamic education within the sphere of multiculturalism. Indonesia, as a prominent nation characterized by diverse cultural entities, requires a systematic conceptualization toward harmonization. Multiculturalism, as a social phenomenon, presents both a strategic advantage and a significant challenge for the religious community and the nation. The landscape of Indonesian multiculturalism is reflected in the existence of nearly 300 ethnic groups and more than 200 distinct languages, alongside a variety of religions, belief systems, ethnicities, and social affiliations. Consequently, Indonesian society requires a strategic and continuous approach to ensure that these deeply rooted diversities are transformed into a robust harmonization. Such diversity must be positioned as a primary key to achieving national unity and cohesion (Purba & Albina, 2025).

The landscape of religious diversity and belief systems in Indonesia was presented as follows:

Table 1:



Source: <https://samarindakota.bps.go.id/id/statistics-table/1/MzI0IzE=/agama-di-indonesia-2024.html>

The landscape of religious diversity in Indonesia reflected a profoundly multicultural condition; furthermore, various indigenous belief systems continued to thrive, albeit in limited numbers. These include *Kejawen* (Jawa), *Sunda Wiwitan* (Sunda), *Kaharingan* (Dayak), *Parmalim* (Batak), *Marapu* (Sumba), and *Tonaas Walian* (Minahasa). The emergence and development of these indigenous beliefs were rooted in local cultures that emphasize harmony with nature and ancestry heritage. In some context, these belief systems were recognized as possessing legal standing equivalent to that of the officially recognized religions.

As a unique nation-state, Indonesia faces considerable challenges in achieving social harmonization. These challenges included religious plurality and cultural diversity, the complexities of multiculturalism and social change, as well as the pressures of globalization (Beddu, 2023). These fundamental problems could be addressed through strategic solutions, primarily through education. One paradigmatic proposal introduced by Amin Abdullah in response to millennial-era challenges emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary dialogue. For instance, it was no longer sufficient for social sciences to operate in isolation when addressing complex social issues, such as multicultural conflicts.

"Political, economic, and cultural approaches are essential for resolving the problematic issues arising from diverse ideologies, perspectives, and plurality. This included the role of education in fostering and internalizing the values of plurality and multiculturalism within students. Such an endeavour represented a concrete and viable step toward achieving social unity. The fundamental Islamic perspective on navigating a multicultural society is reflected in the Qur'an, specifically in surahs Al-Furqan: 67, Al-Isra': 29, Al-Isra': 110, and Al-Qashash: 77. These verses provide a form of legitimacy and a mandate for adopting a moderate stance, known as *wasathiyah*.

"The concept of *wasathiyah* in Islam, derived from the term *wasatha*, denoted moderate, justice, balance, humility, and consistency (*istiqamah*). It entailed adhering to moderate principles in both worldly affairs and the hereafter. When the concept of *wasathiyah* is internalized in daily life, individuals are deterred from adopting extremist

stances. Furthermore, *wasathiyah* can be understood by reflecting on the principles of moderation (*tawassuth*), tolerance (*tasamuh*), balance (*tawazun*), and justice (*i'tidal*). The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) instructed his followers to consistently seek the middle path, which is regarded as the optimal solution. This underscores that Islamic tradition is inherently characterized by moderation (Nisa et al., 2021)

National harmonization originates from the transformation of an inclusive worldview within educational institutions. Islamic education is no longer perceived merely as the transfer of dogmatic teachings, but rather as an ethical instrument for instilling a collective consciousness in confronting the ethnic, tribal, and religious plurality of Indonesia. Through a dialogic and dynamic approach, this integration functions as an ideological navigation to mitigate potential vertical and horizontal conflicts that frequently arise from differing perspectives. The process of internalizing multicultural values synergized with educational institutions enables the formation of a humanistic 'civic association,' where educators and students mutually understand the diversity of social status, language, and gender sensitivity. Ultimately, this synergy becomes a vital pillar in actualizing religious moderation, ensuring that the values of national unity within Pancasila remain preserved amidst the increasingly complex challenges of the modern era.

2. Dialogue Strategies for Achieving Harmonization

To achieve national harmonization, appropriate strategies were required. Within the perspective of Islamic education, harmonization is realized through moderation efforts. This concept was constructed, in part, through a dialogue between Islamic education and the solutions developed via religious moderation within a diverse society. Diversity, in this context, manifests in the modes of worship characterized by an individual's level of knowledge, belief, practice, and internal realization of their religious teachings (Ahmad Yani Nasution, 2019). This is defined as an act of self-devotion to a particular power beyond oneself, expressed through daily activities and practices. Furthermore, religious diversity is understood as individual behavior that originates either directly from sacred texts (*nass*) or indirectly from them.

The multicultural condition of the nation necessitates a moderate perspective characterized by mutual respect among adherents of different faiths. Religion is frequently marginalized and depicted as a primary source of conflict. Following the Reformation era, Indonesia's national figures advocated for the concept of pluralism as a strategic response to the nation's multicultural reality. However, certain interpretations of pluralism are often perceived as being in tension with established religious doctrines in Indonesia. Each religion possesses distinct and specific rituals; consequently, the syncretic blending of sacred religious rites with those of other faiths is often regarded as a form of desecration, despite shared claims of sanctity. In this regard, M. Rasjidi asserted that religious matters are non-negotiable, particularly concerning the preservation of faith and identity (Dzakie, 2014).

The emergence of pluralism as a vital discourse is driven by geographical factors, cultural history, social and political dynamics, as well as internal diversity. The post-Reform era is perceived as a socio-political condition that remained susceptible to instability. According to Larry Diamond, the post-New Order period required democratic consolidation between civil society and robust institutions to sustain democracy following an authoritarian regime. In this context, fostering an awareness of plurality was urgently needed. There was a paradigm shift from an authoritarian political climate toward a cultural approach. National luminaries such as Nurcholish Madjid, Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), and other Reform figures sought a new methodology. Franz Magnis-Suseno regards pluralism as an explanation of social reality, yet he rejects its application as a theological stance. This perspective aligns with Moh. Shofan's view, which posits that pluralism is an effort to construct social consciousness rather than being limited to theological dimensions. Terminologically, pluralism is generally defined as an individual's outlook, thought, attitude, and stance toward the various realities and facts of such diversity (Busyro, Aditiya Hari Ananda, 2019).

As presented in the journal article titled: *Membumikan Multikulturalisme di Indonesia*, Achmad Fedyani Syaifuddin argued that the issue of multiculturalism emerged in 2002 as a potent alternative for a new national adhesive and a novel strategic approach. The political phenomena of the New Order era were characterized by a strong emphasis on centralism, power-oriented politics, and authoritarianism. Following the

Reformation, the landscape of diversity in Indonesia was revitalized by a more relevant unifying framework. The rise of multiculturalism resulted from the realization that national unity and integration previously maintained through a policy of cultural uniformity were increasingly perceived as irrelevant to the current conditions. Furthermore, the spirit of regional autonomy (decentralization) and regionalism intensified in tandem with these political reforms (Achmad Fedyani Syaifuddin, 2006).

From a different perspective, developed nations have integrated multiculturalism into their educational systems. In the United States, John Dewey pioneered this movement, which even extended into radical social action. The implementation in the American context was primarily aimed at dismantling the racial discrimination dichotomy between Black and White populations. Similarly, in Malaysia, historical education is utilized as a strategic tool to foster national consciousness. In this case, education is positioned to promote racial tolerance and the acceptance of diverse identities. In contrast, multiculturalism in Indonesia is normative in nature, as enshrined in the 1945 Constitution, which acknowledges that the Indonesian people comprise various ethnic groups that have collectively built the nation. While the phenomenon of pluralism is a historical and national reality, multicultural education represents a strategic endeavor to cultivate perspectives of tolerance, harmonization, and globalization.

Multiculturalism serves as an ideology and a strategic tool to elevate human equality and dignity. At the State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Bengkulu, multiculturalism has been integrated into the curriculum through the 'Multicultural Islamic Education' course. The objective is to transform education by internalizing multicultural awareness, thereby mitigating conflict and disintegration. While the concept of multiculturalism was originally developed by immigrant nations, Zakiyuddin Baidhawi defines multicultural education specifically as a methodology for 'teaching diversity.' Education based on multiculturalism assumes equal opportunities for every student to realize their full potential. It prepares students to participate fully in an intercultural society and equips educators to facilitate effective learning regardless of cultural similarities or differences. Furthermore, it demands the active participation of schools in eliminating all forms of oppression. Such education must be student-centered

prioritizing the aspirations and experiences of learners. Consequently, educators, activists, and stakeholders must take a more proactive role in re-examining all educational practices, including learning theories, instructional approaches, evaluations, psychology, counseling, and educational materials (Bukhori, 2019).

The process of grounding multiculturalism is a compelling and significantly challenging phenomenon. Multiculturalism, which assumes the acceptance of diverse cultures, is regarded as *sunnatullah* (a natural divine law) that is inherently unavoidable. Consequently, a continuous process is required to implement this acceptance through persistent efforts to ground multicultural principles. This process can be achieved through cultural transmission, involving methods such as socialization, enculturation, and internalization. These efforts must begin from the smallest unit of society—the individual and extend to larger societal structures, including educational institutions, government agencies, and civil society organizations. The core concept of multiculturalism advocates for the unconditional acceptance of others and different groups, regardless of differences in gender, ethnicity, tribe, culture, or religion (Mubarok & Bakri, 2021).

The essence of multicultural education is delineated as follows:

Table 2:

The Essence of Multicultural Education
Text and Fact Integration (Content Integration)
.
Knowledge Construction
.
Prejudice Reduction
.
Equal Education
.
Empowerment of school culture and school structure
.

3. Conflict Patterns and Solutions to Reduce Them

Multicultural education encompasses several objectives, including attitudinal goals, cognitive goals, and instructional goals. Its core principles are rooted in the

recognition of human equality and the pursuit of individual intellectual excellence and technological mastery. Furthermore, the principle of globalization should not be perceived as a threat, provided a nation possesses a clear sense of direction and can discern between beneficial and detrimental values. In Indonesia, various phenomena of social-religious dynamics (multiculturalism) emerge, including groups outside the mainstream such as the Ahmadiyya and An-Nadzir. The religious activities of these groups can potentially trigger social-religious conflicts, as they are often perceived as deviating from the dominant religious teachings (Zainal Said, 2012).

These social conflicts can escalate into acts of violence under the pretext of religious blasphemy, triggered by the social-religious activities of specific communities or adherents of certain religious ideologies perceived as deviant (*non-mainstream*) from the generally practiced teachings (*mainstream*) in Indonesian society. Recent conflicts in Indonesia frequently exhibit complex dimensions. It can be argued that political motives remain dominant influences, alongside deep-seated disappointments and long-standing feelings of social suppression

Table 3:

No	Incident	Phenomeon	Conflict Patterns
1	Glodok Market Burning	The Black May Event in Jakarta	Social and Religious
2	Ambon Maluku Incident	The Bugis-Butin-Makassar-Ambon ethnic conflict. Islam clashes with Christians there.	Social and Religious
3	The Sambas and Palangkaraya incidents	The problems that occurred between the Malay, Dayak	Social and Religious

		and Chinese tribes against Madura	
4	Poso incident	The incident of problems between Islam and Christianity in Poso was triggered by external factors.	Social and Religious
5	Aceh incident	Problems that occur between Acehese people and transmigrants in Java	Socio-Economic
6	Ahmadiyya Conflict	Destruction of Ahmadiyah mosques in Parung, Bogor.	Social and Religious
7	Papuan Conflict	The existence of the mission and issues of the Free Papua Movement	Political-Economic
8	Sampit and Madura Conflict	Tribal conflict between Sampit and Madura	Socio-Economic

The first instance of interreligious conflict was the riot that occurred in Ambon, Maluku, on January 19, 1999. This conflict was triggered by a relatively minor incident

involving a rejection by two Muslim individuals toward a Christian resident. The tension escalated rapidly due to the proliferation of provocative rumors that incited animosity between both the Muslim and Christian communities. According to available reports, the Ambon conflict resulted in 12 fatalities and hundreds of injuries. The situation eventually subsided following reconciliation efforts initiated by the local government (Ismail, 2020). The Poso riots in Central Java also serve as a significant example of interreligious conflict with serious societal impacts. The protracted conflict between Muslim and Christian communities persisted through three distinct phases due to inadequate initial intervention. These stages include Poso I (December 25–29, 1998), Poso II (April 17–21, 2000), and Poso III (May 16–June 15, 2000). While the exact number of casualties and the extent of material losses remain unverified, the situation in Poso gradually stabilized following the signing of the Malino Declaration on December 20, 2001. This peace agreement between the conflicting parties was initiated by Jusuf Kalla (Sulhan & Januri, 2022).

Understanding the patterns of conflict in Indonesia is a crucial initial step before formulating solutions through educational channels. From a sociological perspective, conflicts in Indonesia are rarely triggered by a single factor. Although they frequently surface as religious or ethnic sentiments (SARA), the root causes typically involve a complex intertwining of economic inequality, political marginalization, and the failure of cultural communication. The patterns of conflict in Indonesia can be categorized into two primary dimensions: vertical and horizontal. Vertical conflicts generally occur between regional communities and the central government, often revolving around issues of unjust resource distribution or political aspirations, as evidenced by the long history of conflict in Aceh and Papua. Meanwhile, horizontal conflicts occur between different social groups, such as the tragic events in Poso, Ambon, and Sampit.

A frequently recurring pattern is the presence of a 'minor trigger' such as an individual dispute which subsequently escalates into mass rioting due to long-standing, deep-seated collective prejudices. In this context, the role of hoaxes and hate narratives in the millennial era acts as a highly dangerous catalyst. Without multicultural awareness, minor differences can easily be politicized to fuel national disintegration. Furthermore, observed patterns of socio-religious conflict in Indonesia generally manifest in two types

of incidents: peaceful protests, characterized by non-violent demonstrations in response to ongoing religious tensions, and violent actions, which result in human fatalities or significant material losses (Takdir, 2017).

Discussion

1. Views on Diversity and Tolerance

Within socio-cultural and religious contexts, tolerance is defined as an attitude and practice that prohibits discrimination against others within society. Tolerance serves as a fundamental form of mutual respect, precluding the imposition of one's will upon others. Conversely, individuals who perceive themselves as inherently superior, better, or more righteous tend to develop anti-tolerant dispositions (Fitriani, 2020). Diversity or plurality is an ontological reality that is unavoidable in the national life of Indonesia. As a nation built upon thousands of islands with hundreds of ethnicities, languages, and various beliefs, the perspective on diversity is not merely an acknowledgment of physical differences, but rather a theological and sociological consciousness. Within the perspective of Islamic education that aligns with multiculturalism, diversity is perceived as *sunnatullah* (divine law) intended for humanity to know one another (*li-ta'arafu*), as implied in the universal messages of the Qur'an (Amin Abdullah, Khoiruddin Nasution, Abd Rachmad Asegaf, Imam Machali, Janan Asifudin, Sembodo Ardi Widodo, 2014).

In the Qur'an, Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13, Allah SWT declares that 'verily, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing and All-Acquainted.' Multicultural Islamic Education is an approach that aims to integrate Islamic values (*rahmatan lil alamin*) with the pluralistic realities of students and society. Its primary foundations are the implementation of the principles of Justice (*Al-'Adl*) and Equality (*Al-Musawah*). The essence of diversity as a strength dictates that the perspective on pluralism in Indonesia must transcend beyond formal statistical data. Religious diversity encompassing Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, as well as indigenous beliefs such as *Kejawen* and *Sunda Wiwitan* constitutes a profound intellectual and cultural wealth.

However, challenges arise when these differences are interpreted narrowly by exclusive groups, triggering horizontal conflicts such as the Poso events or the Ambon riots of the past. Consequently, Islamic education bears an ethical responsibility to

reposition the meaning of diversity. Education must no longer be confined to teaching closed dogmatic aspects; instead, it must introduce an 'inclusive theology' a worldview that recognizes that personally held religious truths can coexist with an acknowledgment of the rights to exist and the truths held by others within the public sphere.

In this context, tolerance must not be perceived merely as 'passive tolerance' characterized by simply permitting others to exist or enduring discomfort. The tolerance required for national harmonization is active tolerance, which involves sincere dialogue and cross-identity collaboration. From a multiculturalist perspective, tolerance signifies the recognition of human equality; no ethnicity or religion should dominate in terms of citizenship rights. Within the educational sphere, active tolerance is implemented through 'dialogical pedagogy.' Educators must go beyond lecturing on harmony; they must facilitate cross-identity encounters within the classroom. When students from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds engage in dialogue regarding shared social issues such as poverty or environmental concerns prejudice is naturally diminished. This aligns with what James A. Banks identifies as the 'prejudice reduction' dimension of multicultural education.

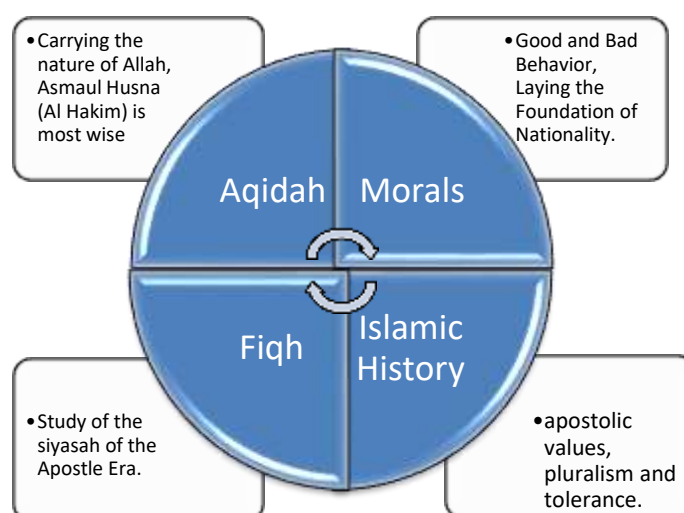
Religious Moderation as Navigation: A healthy perspective on diversity culminates in the concept of religious moderation (*wasathiyah*). Moderation does not imply a dilution of religious teachings; rather, it represents a 'middle path' to avoid falling into right-wing extremism (radicalism) or left-wing extremism (liberalism that disregards religious values). Moderation serves as an ideological navigation that ensures one's devotion to God is directly proportional to one's love for humanity and the nation

2. Implementation of the Concept of Religious Moderation, an Islamic Education Perspective

The learning curriculum must be restructured to explicitly integrate multicultural values, ensuring that every student feels represented and understood. The objective is to foster a generation that upholds tolerance, respects diverse identities, and is capable of collaborating within an inclusive global society. Every student is entitled to equitable treatment and equal learning opportunities without exception. Schools are obligated to ensure that all voices are heard, needs are met, and potential is developed equitably.

The dialogue between the existence of Islamic education and the phenomenon of multiculturalism is vital as a form of social engineering. A harmonious society constitutes the social capital necessary to create favorable conditions. This represents a long-standing ideal aligned with the nation's historical foundation. Continuous efforts are being presented, such as the creation of new discourses through the concept of moderation and various initiatives to synthesize the learning curriculum with multicultural experiences beyond the classroom. This dialogue is profoundly positive and must be manifested within the new face of Islamic education in Indonesia. Although initiated in the post-reformation era, this mission extends forward into the new millennium and beyond.

Table 4:



Religious moderation is far more than a mere political slogan; it constitutes a crucial ideological navigation for the preservation of Indonesia's pluralistic nationhood. Within the context of educational institutions, the implementation of this concept demands a fundamental paradigm shift, ranging from curriculum restructuring to the transformation of school culture. The primary objective is to cultivate an educational ecosystem that produces individuals who are not only intellectually proficient but also socially wise and religiously moderate.

The Reconstruction of a Multicultural Curriculum, the most strategic initial step in implementing religious moderation is the reorientation of the curriculum. The learning curriculum must be overhauled to explicitly integrate multicultural values. This implies

that instructional materials should no longer be exclusive or solely emphasize the perspective of the majority group. This integration can be achieved through an 'Infusion' approach, wherein values such as *tawasut* (taking the middle path), *tawazun* (balance), and *tasamuh* (tolerance) are embedded across various subjects, both religious and general.

Through an inclusive curriculum, every student regardless of ethnic background or religious affiliation will feel represented and understood. For instance, in history or religious education, the narrative must emphasize common ground (*kalimatun sawa*) and the collective contributions of various groups in building civilization, rather than sharpening differences that trigger an 'us versus them' sentiment.

Pedagogy of Equality and Learning Justice, the implementation of religious moderation is intrinsically linked to the principles of social justice within the classroom. Every student is entitled to equitable treatment and equal learning opportunities without exception. Teachers serve as facilitators who ensure that 'all voices are heard.' In a moderate classroom, dissenting opinions are not viewed as threats, but as intellectual assets.

Schools are obligated to ensure that the emotional and identity needs of every student are met. When a student from a minority group feels their voice is valued equally to those of the majority, the seeds of tolerance will grow naturally. This is a concrete manifestation of 'Equity Pedagogy' as proposed by James A. Banks, where teaching methods are adapted to facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse social and cultural groups.

Toward an Inclusive Global Society, the ultimate goal of implementing religious moderation in schools is to cultivate a generation capable of collaborating within an inclusive global society. In the millennial era, challenges are no longer confined by geographical boundaries. Students will interact with a much broader world through digital spaces. Without a strong foundation of moderation, they will be easily swept into the currents of extremism or, conversely, lose their moral identity.

Schools must transform into 'miniature laboratories' of national life. By ensuring that the potential of every student is developed equitably, schools lay the first stone for social harmony. Religious moderation internalized through Islamic education will

produce citizens who are not only individually pious but also socially righteous individuals capable of appreciating identity diversity as a divine wealth to be celebrated, not debated.

D. CONCLUSION

This study concluded that the pursuit of national harmonization in Indonesia necessitates a dynamic and sustained dialogue between Islamic Education and Multiculturalism. The core conclusions were as follows:

Paradigm Transformation (Worldview): National harmonization cannot be achieved solely through formal-legalistic approaches; it must begin with a shift in the worldview within educational institutions. Islamic education plays a pivotal role in transforming closed, dogmatic mindsets into inclusive and humanistic ones, which subsequently evolve into a collective ideology to preserve national unity.

Paradigm Transformation (Worldview): National harmonization cannot be achieved solely through formal-legalistic approaches; it must begin with a shift in the worldview within educational institutions. Islamic education plays a pivotal role in transforming closed, dogmatic mindsets into inclusive and humanistic ones, which subsequently evolve into a collective ideology to preserve national unity.

Religious Moderation as Navigation: The implementation of religious moderation within Islamic educational institutions is a concrete strategy to mitigate the potential for both vertical and horizontal conflicts. This strategy is manifested through the five dimensions of multicultural education: content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture.

Synergy between Education and Social Reality: Islamic educational institutions are not merely venues for the transfer of religious knowledge; they function as 'civic associations' and social laboratories for the internalization of tolerance, gender sensitivity, and social justice to address the challenges of the millennial era and globalization.

REFERENCES

- Achmad Fedyani Syaifuddin. (2006). Membumikan Multikulturalisme di Indonesia. *Jurnal Antropologi Sosial Budaya*, II. No. 1(1), 3–11.
- Ahmad Yani Nasution. (2019). Harmonisasi Keberagamaan dan Kebangsaan bagi Generasi Millenial: Keberagamaan yang Moderat. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Harmonisasi Keberagaman Dan Kebangsaan Bagi Generasi Milenial Lembaga Kajian Keagamaan, Universitas Pamulang*, 173–181. <https://doi.org/10.15575/jra.v1i3.15100>
- Amin Abdullah, Khoiruddin Nasution, Abd Rachmad Asegaf, Imam Machali, Janan Asifudin, Sembodo Ardi Widodo, T. M. (2014). Implementasi Pendekatan Integratif-Interkonektif dalam Kajian Pendidikan Islam (Maragustam (ed.)).
- Anggita Wulansari, Azizah, M. Z. (2024). Tantangan Dan Dinamika Dalam Moderasi Beragama Menuju Harmoni Sosial. *Al-Iktiar: Jurnal Studi Islam*, 01, N(<https://journal.salahuddinal-ayyubi.com/index.php/ALJSI/issue/view/21>), 157–164. <https://journal.salahuddinal-ayyubi.com/index.php/ALJSI/article/view/69/62>
- Beddu, M. J. (2023). Tantangan Penyuluh Agama Di Era Perubahan: Wujudkan Moderasi Agama Melalui Penguatan Harmoni Sosial. *Addayyan*, 18(1), 54–66. <https://jurnalstaiibnusina.ac.id/index.php/AD/issue/view/20>
- Bukhori, I. (2019). Membumikan multikulturalisme. *HUMANISTIKA: Jurnal Keislaman*, 5(1), 13–40.
- Busyro, Aditiya Hari Ananda, A. S. T. (2019). MODERASI ISLAM (WASATHIYYAH) DI TENGAH PLURALISME AGAMA INDONESIA. *FUADUNA: Jurnal Kajian Kegamaan Dan Kemasyarakatan*, Vol. 03 No(01), 1–12. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30983/fuaduna.v3i1.1152>
- Dzakie, F. (2014). Fatonah, Meluruskan Pemahaman..... *Jurnal Studi Lintas Agama (Al Adyan)*, Vol. 9 No.(<https://ejournal.radenintan.ac.id/index.php/alAdyan/issue/view/91>), 79–94. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24042/ajsla.v9i1.1408>
- Efrizal Nasution. (2014). Problematika Pendidikan di Indonesia Oleh : *Jurnal Dakwah*,

- Komunikasi Dan Pengembangan Ekonomi Masyarakat (Mediasi), Vol. 8. No.1(<https://jurnal.iainambon.ac.id/index.php/MDS/issue/view/45>), 1–10. <https://jurnal.iainambon.ac.id/index.php/MDS/article/view/273>
- Fitriani, S. (2020). Keberagaman dan Toleransi Antar Umat Beragama. Analisis: Jurnal Studi Keislaman, 20. No. 2,(2), 179–192.
- Harahap, S. (2018). Konflik etnis dan agama di indonesia. Jurnal Ilmiah Sosiologi Agama (JISA), 1(2), 1–19.
- Iskandar, J. (2017). Etnobiologi dan keragaman budaya di indonesia. Umbara, 1(1).
- Ismail, R. (2020). Resolusi Konflik Keagamaan Integratif: Studi Atas Resolusi Konflik Sosial Keagamaan Ambon. Living Islam: Journal of Islamic Discourses, 3(2), 451–469.
- Mubarok, R., & Bakri, M. (2021). Membumikan multikulturalisme sebagai upaya pencegahan sikap radikalisme beragama. Risâlah Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Studi Islam, 7(2), 252–266.
- Mujiyatun, M. (2021). Pendidikan Islam berbasis multikulturalisme untuk harmonisasi sosial:(penerapan pendekatan kebudayaan dalam studi Islam). JURNAL AN-NUR: Kajian Ilmu-Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Keislaman, 7(01), 11–28.
- Nisa, M. K., Yani, A., Andika, A., Yunus, E. M., & Rahman, Y. (2021). Moderasi beragama: Landasan moderasi dalam tradisi berbagai agama dan implementasi di era disrupsi digital. Jurnal Riset Agama, 1(3), 731–748.
- Prakoso, E. A., & Wirdanengsih, W. (2024). Harmonisasi Sosial Masyarakat Beragam Sukubangsa. 6(1), 35–44.
- Purba, F. A., & Albina, M. (2025). Pendidikan Islam Berwawasan Multikultural di Sekolah/Madrasah. Journal of Multidisciplinary Inquiry in Science, Technology and Educational Research, 2(2), 2828–2836. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32672/mister.v2i2.3042>
- Seman, A. A., Ahmad, A. R., Aziz, Z., & Ayudin, A. R. (2011). The effectiveness of teaching and learning history based on multicultural towards national integration in Malaysia. Procedia Computer Science, 3, 1588–1596. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2011.01.054>
- Sulhan, M., & Januri, M. R. (2022). Esensi Agama Dalam Konflik Sosial Di Kabupaten Poso

- Menggunakan Teori Karl Marx: Sebuah Literatur Review [the Essence of Religion in Social Conflict At Poso Regency Using the Theory of Karl Marx: A Literature Review]. *Acta Islamica Counsenesia: Counselling Research and Applications*, 2(1), 15–28.
- Takdir, M. (2017). Identifikasi Pola-Pola Konflik Agama dan Sosial (Studi Kasus Kekerasan Berbasis Sektarian dan Komunal di Indonesia. *Ri'ayah: Jurnal Sosial Dan Keagamaan*, 2(01), 45–64.
- Ula, A. N. M., & Hidayati, H. (2024). Harmoni Sosial dalam Perspektif Islam: Tinjauan Terhadap Masyarakat Kontemporer. *Jurnal Keislaman*, 7(1), 170–182. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.54298/jk.v7i1.252>
- Zainal Said. (2012). KONFLIK SOSIAL KEAGAMAAN ISLAM NON-MAINSTREAM DALAM MASYARAKAT MAJEMUK DI INDONESIA. *Al-Ulum*, 12, Nomor, 419–436.