

# The Development of Implementing Multicultural Education at an Indonesian Islamic Boarding School

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## Abstract

Islamic Boarding School is an educational institution that fulfills religious values and social intelligence through multicultural education. Currently, Islamic Boarding School pays less attention to the two concepts of religious values and social intelligence. This study aims to explore the implementation of multicultural Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. The research method is descriptive qualitative. This research was conducted at the Darusy Syahadah Simo Islamic boarding school, Boyolali district, Central Java. This study involved the principal, Islamic religion teacher, head of the curriculum, the learning section, and students. Data obtained using interviews, observation, and documentation. Data sources are classroom implementation, school teaching materials, learning guide books, syllabus, curriculum, and lesson plans. The data were analyzed using a descriptive exploratory model, namely data reduction, data presentation, and interpretation. The results showed that Islamic Boarding schools played an important role in multicultural education. The multicultural values in teaching at Islamic Boarding School include tolerance, togetherness, democracy, solidarity, peace, love, respect, understanding, and apologies. The teaching and learning process must incorporate multicultural values into learning materials, methods, places, and assessments. Teachers must be able to place students as learning subjects in finding methods, locations, and assessments.

## Keywords

Development, Education, Multicultural, Islamic Boarding School,

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## Introduction

Islamic boarding schools are Islamic education institutions that provide a twenty-four-hour educational service about morality, religiosity, and piety. However, these institutions have been the scapegoat of particular violence or radicalism-based religion, although none of the existing religions in the world, including Islam, serve such purposes. These false claims are emboldened by the sequences of terrorist acts that include the Bali bombing and J.W Marriot Hotel Bombing in Jakarta, all of which were committed by alumni of Islamic boarding schools. Other evidence can also be seen from the rejection of the Indonesian flag ceremony during Independence Day promoted by an Islamic teacher, an Islamic boarding school (Youngman, 2020). Murder and shooting of police officers in Solo Central Java Indonesia and vandalism committed by some radical Islamic mass organizations involving alumni of Islamic boarding schools and the claim are also indicated by violence against the senior students by their juniors Islamic schools (Khairil et al., 2021). Many of the cases are often directly associated with an Islamic educational institution. Evidenced by a study carried out by Maarif Institute in 2011 involving education institutions from four different religions, namely Pandeglan, Cianjur, Yogyakarta, and Solo. It was found that the education institutions play roles in the dissemination of any school of thoughts or ideologies, not to mentioned religious radicalism (Mietzner & Muhtadi, 2018).

Drawing on the cases mentioned above, it is inevitable that Islamic education institutions lack the concept of learning to understand, honor, and respect socio-cultural and religious diversities. There remains egoism, underestimating and overvaluing self. The other believers often lead to intolerance and exclusiveness, resulting in anarchism, extremism, and terror (Harahap et al., 2019). The question is why such cases often involve Islamic boarding schools, notably known as Islamic education institutions? Current literature shows that there are various reasons why vandalism or terrorism often involves Islamic boarding school graduates. The teaching and learning processes in Islamic schools often stress the individual rather than collective merits as a whole beyond their religious group interests (Amri et al., 2018). The classrooms do not facilitate the democratic system of learning, in which the students' perspectives or voices can be negotiated during the learning process (Dinh-Thai et al., 2020). This system results in the indoctrinated learning. Most Islamic boarding schools often emphasize the attainment of ritual (Baily et al., 2017). It was competence and Tawhid (the concept of oneness of God), with a single option: the right and wrong, or bad and good. Another factor relates to the normative system of education. Islamic education stresses the norms in the absence of socio-cultural tenets, leading to the lack of students' awareness of the religion as the living values in their everyday lives (Hummelstedt-Djedou et al., 2018).

The four factors above result in a whole way of thinking. Such indoctrinated and normative learning may lead to absolute rightness, stereotyping, and prejudice, at the expense of diverse perspectives, ushering into the denial of possible truth of other perspectives (Shannon-Baker, 2018). As a result, it is easier for them to justify the terrors and violence for the sake of their interests. Islamic boarding schools are home to multi-culture, languages, ethnicities, and races (Hasbiyallah et al., 2017). Despite being home to Islamic education and preaching, they are recently referred to as radicalism and intolerance (Sari, 2016). Such evil ideologies are entirely contradictory to the Islamic teachings and values and multicultural and state law (Chapter III, Article 4, Paragraph 1) pertinent to the Indonesian education system, which states that education is carried out in democratic and fairways. It should not be discriminative against human rights, religious values, and state diversity. Such accounts show a severe challenge to Islamic boarding schools to maintain the value of "Rahmatan Lil Alamin" (universal peace), which inherent anti-hostility, crime, and other negative values. If the Islamic boarding schools can address the challenges mentioned above, they will restore their fame as the centre to better understand Islamic principles.

The Islamic boarding school of Darusy Syahadah Simo Boyolali Indonesia, where this study took place, is one of the Islamic boarding schools accused of transferring radicalism to its students. Its involvement in alumni has been evidenced in some terrorist attacks (Sarkadi et al., 2020). Like other Islamic boarding schools, the education system in Darusy Syahadah Simo Boyolali uses two systems of learning, outside and inside classrooms, which were the focus of this

research. Aimed to seek an alternative and a precautionary measure for the Islamic boarding school to anticipate and minimize the possible thrive of radicalism, intolerance, and exclusiveness through multicultural learning. The multicultural values are of paramount importance to incorporate into the teaching and learning process in the Islamic school to serve the abovementioned purposes. Based on the rationales above, this study aimed to explore the learning activities in the Islamic boarding school of Darusy Syahadah, which could be a reference for the actualization of multicultural learning in other Islamic schools.

## Methodology

The research method is descriptive qualitative. This research was conducted at the Darusy Syahadah Simo Islamic boarding school, Boyolali district, Central Java. This study involved the principal, Islamic religion teacher, head of the curriculum, the learning section, and students. Data obtained using interviews, observation, and documentation. Data sources are classroom implementation, school teaching materials, learning guide books, syllabus, curriculum, and lesson plans. This research was anchored in the qualitative content analysis research approach, which aimed to look into the characteristics of certain books, magazines, and other documents. It has been widely adopted in the study of culture and communication. This research analyzed the contents to unveil the multicultural values in the learning materials used in the Islamic boarding school of Darusy Syahadah.

The observation was performed to discover the data related to the teaching and learning process in the classrooms, social interaction between the students and Islamic education teachers either in co-curricular or extracurricular activities in the Islamic school. The interview was carried out to collect information regarding the history, vision, and mission of the Islamic school and the process of teaching and learning in the classroom. The document analysis was aimed to analyze the handbooks of Islamic education, curriculum, syllabus, and lesson plans. The data were analyzed using a descriptive exploratory model, namely data reduction, data presentation, and interpretation. The three data analysis procedures were interactive. The data were categorized and grouped into the most important, meaningful, and relevant research objectives for interpretation during the first stage. During the second stage, the data were presented thematically using graphics, matrix, and tables. It was done to help the researcher and readers interpret the data more efficiently. In the interpretation stage, the data were located for patterns, themes, relations, and similarities. An in-depth data analysis was performed to gain internal validity, including triangulating the data from different sources and discussion with research partners and confirmed by the respondents. For the sake of external validity, the data were reported in detail, systemic and precise, so that the research outcomes can be applied in different contexts.

## Result And Discussion

### Learning Materials

The multicultural values should not be the subjects but can be integrated into the learning materials through the curriculum. The learning materials comprising the multicultural values contain the values such as anti-racism, prejudice, discrimination, violence, injustice, stereotyping (Arsal, 2019). With these multicultural values, it is expected that the students could learn from the teachers and develop a comprehensive knowledge of ethnic and cultural diversities either on the individual or collective levels (Subandi et al., 2019).

To select learning materials with multicultural values, schools of teachers should thoroughly analyze the contents of the textbooks to avoid bias. It was to minimize the possibility of using books containing various bias learning contents. Textbooks consist of six types of bias, namely invisible bias, labeling, selectivity (imbalance), inauthenticity, division (isolation), and language (Mustakim & Lateh, 2020). With this regard, it is found that multicultural values are comprised of the value of togetherness, solidarity, democracy, love and respect, respect, forgiveness, tolerance, and peace. These values were evident in the contents of the learning materials

used in the Islamic boarding school Darusy Syahadah (Muhajir et al., 2020). This study also unveiled various multicultural values found in the learning materials of Islamic education, especially in the topic of morals. It contained 12 issues related to multicultural values: (1) attitude to other creatures; (2) attitude toward different perspectives; (3) honesty; (4) patience; (5) kindness and thoughtful; (6) unity; (7) generosity; (8) humbleness; (9) pluralism; (10) forgiveness; (11) willingness to sacrifice; (12) disgrace towards others. Meanwhile, four topics about multiculturalism were also found in the subject of Islamic civilization and history lessons, namely; (1) the strategies of the preaching of the prophet Muhammad (siriya & jahriyah); (2) the government of the Caliph Rosyidin; (3) a peace agreement between the Muslims and the Jews (peace of a ceasefire); (4) the brotherhood of Ansor and Muhajirin (migrating to Yastrib).

Other subjects containing the multicultural values include the fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), aqidah (belief), Qur'anic exegesis, and Hadith. In the subject of fiqh are six topics related to multicultural values: (1) alms management, (2) trading, (3) hajj and religious tourism, (4) Qurban and Aqiqah (Animal sacrifice), (5) economic cooperation, (6) praying together. On the other subject, the Qur'anic exegesis and Hadith are ten topics related to multicultural values, namely (1) familial relationship Q.S. Nur 58-64, (2) the nature of true Muslims Q.S.al-Anfal 72-75 & at-Taubah 1-29, (3) Prophetic attitudes Q.S. al-Qolam 1-7, (4) hadith on relationship maintenance, (5) polite utterance, (6) forgiveness, (7) positive thinking, (8) Itsar (attitudes of prioritizing others), (9) discussion, (10) tolerance. Also, one topic was found related to the multicultural values in Aqidah, which is Asmaul Husna (the ninety-nine names of God).

## Learning Methods

The learning method is a critical aspect of the teaching and learning process since it enables the transfer of knowledge from the teachers to students. As pedagogical practices, three factors determine the success of the teaching and learning process in the classroom, namely physical, environmental, and teacher instructional style factors (Jumintono et al., 2018). To create a comfortable and safe physical environment, teachers should consider classroom management, including positioning the chairs or tables, lighting, color of the class, and plants. Meanwhile, for the sake of a safe and comfortable social environment, the teacher can use the chosen language style, sympathetic relationship between students, and fair treatment of students who are diverse in culture, ethnicity, language, and religious understanding (Syafei et al., 2020). The factor of teaching styles should be fun and engaging for the students. The teacher uses three teaching styles: authoritarian, accessible, and democratic (Bisri & Husni, 2020).

The authoritarian teaching style does not allow the students to share ideas. What is taught in the classroom is solely determined by the teacher in the absence of students' needs. On the other side of the coin, the democratic instructional styles allow the students and teacher to determine the learning materials (Marzuki et al., 2020). For the free teaching styles, the students determine the learning materials themselves in the class (Supeni et al., 2019). Hence, it can be concluded that the most appropriate instructional styles for the teaching of multicultural values in the classroom are the democratic way of teaching, which facilitates the teacher to implement teaching strategies, such as simulation, observation, role play, case study, and dialogues (Nordin et al., 2020). In addition to that, it can also incorporate the so-called critical thinking strategy, making use of intellectual potential to analyze, consider, and make a decision appropriately and apply it correctly. In the marriage between dialogues and critical thinking elements, the students are expected to be cognizant of themselves and others, leading to understanding the diversities (Mangunjaya & Praharawati, 2019).

The multicultural values were also evidenced in the teaching methods used by the Islamic religion teachers at the Islamic boarding school of Darusy Syahadah. Two methods were prominently applied in the classrooms by the teachers, namely the conventional and alternative methods (Mustafa et al., 2019). The first instructional method allowed the interaction between the Islamic teachers and the students to take place during the teaching and learning process during which the teachers treated the students as adolescences who were involved in the learning activities, allowing the students to question, give opinions,

suggestions, and critique (Balakrishnan et al., 2020). This method helps the teachers avoid using an authoritarian system of instruction, which often imposes a will on the students during the pedagogical process (To Khuyen et al., 2020). It also develops the sense of mutual recognition, accepts and honors the cultural diversities among the students as parts of multicultural values. The second method, the alternative method, was questions and answers, discussion, practices, and exercises. It was shown by the democratic attitude of the Islamic school teachers, who gave opportunities for the students to create a discussion forum and perform presentations followed by a dialogic discussion during which various questions were proposed (Gezer, 2018). Giving the chances to students indicates that the Islamic religion teachers trust and admission on all the students' presence and ability regardless of their ethnic background. This attitude represents one of the multicultural values.

The attitude of the Islamic religion teachers to acknowledge and accept the presence of the students has positively contributed to the students' confidence (Cho, 2017). Therefore, the students prefer the teachers who applied the democratic, fair, tolerant, and communicative way of instruction. Such an instructional method corresponds to the multicultural values, such as the principles of justice, equality, and democracy (Ambaw & Meher, 2019). Furthermore, this alternative method can create a respectful and mutually supportive atmosphere in the teaching and learning process. It can be seen from the teachers' giving appreciation and adulation to the students during the class hours, group discussions, and practices. This mutually supportive and appreciative learning atmosphere is one factor that leads to the successful attainment of the learning objectives. It creates a democratic and conducive learning environment (Choi & Mao, 2021). This account shows that the Islamic religion teachers have adequate social skills and correspond to the multicultural values, such as an attitude of mutual recognition, acceptance, and respect.

## Learning Site

Multicultural learning places the students as the learning subject, while the teacher plays a role as the learning facilitator (Arphattananon, 2018). For that reason, the teacher takes into account the students' preferences, including determining the learning site according to the students' needs (Parkhouse et al., 2019). In addition, a teacher should treat the students as an adult who could independently learn and evaluate their learning (Maksum et al., 2020). The multicultural learning model can also be seen from the learning site. To some extent, the Islamic boarding school of Darusy Syahadah has adopted multicultural values in the classes and beyond the schooling wall. The classes started from 07:00 am to 12.00 pm because the students were physically and psychologically fitter in the morning. From the physical perspective, the Students could fully participate in the learning activities because they remained physically fresh and had less fatigue. At the same time, psychologically speaking, it was evidenced that they were more enthusiastic and fuller of motivation in participating in learning. Thus, to some degree, the learning site was so effective that it could fit the physical and psychological state of the students. With this regard, the learning situation represents multicultural values, such as togetherness, humanity, and peace.

The multicultural values were also evidenced in the learning activities outside the classrooms, such as in mosques, libraries, halls, the garden of Islamic boarding school, and multimedia laboratories. The choice of the learning sites was based on the students' physical and psychological needs (Sumardjoko & Musyiam, 2018). Physically, the students needed to recover from getting too tired and sleepy in participating in teaching and learning, especially when the classes started at noon. Psychologically, the students preferred fun and exciting learning spots (Jaspersen & Montibeller, 2020). Therefore, the Islamic religion teachers considered these students' physiological and psychological needs to divert the learning activities from early in the morning to the mosque, hall, library, multimedia laboratory, and the courtyard of the school garden at noon.

The procedure for choosing the learning site shows that the Islamic school teachers adopted a democratic attitude. From such a democratic learning attitude, the teachers believed that learning should be carried out in a fun and exciting circumstance (Ma'Arif, 2018). It was evidenced by the responses of the teachers to accept the students' learning preferences. With

such a democratic attitude, Islamic religion teachers could adopt multicultural values, such as the principles of democracy, justice, and equality in their learning (Malla et al., 2021). Furthermore, the multicultural values were visible from how the Islamic religion teachers reacted to the students coming late, sleeping, and not wearing uniforms during the teaching and learning process. Some other Islamic religion teachers, however, punished the students without taking into account their reasons. Nonetheless, it was also found that there are some of the teachers who were tolerant enough by waking up sleepy students to take ablution water without punishing them as such is considered indirectly as a punishment for unintended mistakes. Such treatment makes the students feel sincere and willing to carry out the request of the Islamic religion teachers without any sense of revenge, which as the opposite treatment would generate the feeling of revenge. With this wise and tolerant attitude, although to a certain extent, not all of the Islamic religion teachers embraced those teaching attitudes, the Islamic boarding school Darusy Syahadah was trying to develop a multicultural learning process geared toward humanity, togetherness, and peace.

### Evaluation of learning outcomes

The objectives of multicultural learning to measure the success of attaining evaluation are needed. If the competence of multicultural learning is oriented toward the rewarding self and others, the evaluation of learning should also project the orientation. Pointed out that achievement tests could be used to evaluate multiculturalism. They are used to measure the students' competence regarding their mastery of the subject matter, either oriented toward personal rewards or others. Advocated that prestigious tests could be enacted to evaluate multicultural learning using a case study and observation modified utilizing role plays. The teachers can use a case study technique to test the students' perceptions and understanding about themselves and others. Additionally, the teachers can use the observation technique to observe the communication model performed by the students during their daily interaction at the school (Ambaw & Meher, 2019).

Also opined that the monitoring and observation techniques over the students' attitudes related to the issues of multiculturalism could be enacted internally by the teachers and the students' parents, making use of checklists and anecdotal notes prepared by the teachers. We are drawing on the students' learning outcomes at the Islamic school of Islam Darusy Syahadah. It is evidenced that there were some multicultural values, namely diversities, such as the various models of evaluation forms that include daily tests, mid-term tests, and final tests. For the daily tests, the school gave the Islamic religion teachers freedom to carry them out independently, which means that they can evaluate their learning based on their assessment plan. The tests were also varied from oral, written, exercises, assignment, and performance tests. The variety in the forms of the tests enables the students to gain a more comprehensive score.

### Conclusion

Islamic boarding schools have multicultural values, such as tolerance, togetherness, democracy, solidarity, peace, love, respect, honor, understanding, and apologies. Multicultural values such as togetherness, diversity, and democracy are also seen in teaching methods, democratic interactions between teachers and students to determine the place of learning or group discussions, and the teaching and learning process. Other findings also show that the diversity value exists in the diversity of assessments to measure student learning outcomes. Namely daily tests, midterm tests, and final tests, along with various formats such as oral tests, written tests, practice questions, and performance tests for job jobs.

Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia play crucial roles in promoting multicultural education. This study encapsulates that multicultural education in Islamic schools and other educational institutions is regarded as the most effective comprehensive. Therefore, the teaching and learning process should incorporate multicultural values into the learning materials, methods, learning sites, and assessment. The first step could be selecting the learning materials comprising multicultural and non-multicultural values. Subsequently, the teaches place the

students as the learning subject in locating the methods, sites, and assessment.

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