Islamic Education in the Perspective of Multicultural Education within Indonesia's Multicultural Society

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to highlight the significant role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in shaping the character of students who are faithful, pious, and possess noble morals, particularly within the context of Indonesia's multicultural society. In a community rich in cultural and religious diversity, IRE is expected to foster a generation that is tolerant and inclusive by promoting values of unity, justice, and mutual respect. This study employs a library research methodology, utilizing both primary and secondary data sources. The analytical method used is descriptive analysis. The findings of this research indicate that IRE can contribute to the creation of a harmonious society, thereby serving as a tool to mitigate potential conflicts arising from differences. Amidst the challenges of diversity, IRE is committed to nurturing a generation that not only adheres to their faith but also thrives in coexistence within a diverse environment.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education, Society, Multiculturalism, Indonesia

1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) plays a crucial role in shaping the character of students who are faithful, pious, and possess noble morals. In a multicultural society like Indonesia, IRE serves to foster understanding, tolerance, and mutual respect among adherents of different religions and cultures. Multicultural-based IRE not only teaches religious dogmas but also instills an understanding of the importance of diversity as a social asset that must be preserved [1].

As a nation comprising various ethnicities, cultures, religions, and languages, the implementation of multicultural education within Indonesia's national education system is essential. Multicultural education focuses not only on recognizing diversity but also on promoting values of togetherness, unity, and mutual respect.

The application of multicultural education in IRE is highly relevant for building a harmonious society, especially given the potential for conflict arising from differences. Inclusive Islamic Religious Education teaches universal values such as justice, equality, and respect for human rights, which can be applied in everyday life within a diverse community.

However, IRE in Indonesia faces significant challenges in integrating religious values with the realities of diversity. IRE must be able to instill a sense of religious pluralism without compromising the fundamental principles of Islamic teachings, thus producing a generation that is tolerant and inclusive in their thinking [2].

The diversity present in Indonesia can be an asset to the nation, but it can also pose a threat of division if not managed properly. The concept of multiculturalism is not new in Islam; the Qur'an has acknowledged and upheld the existence of differences, as stated in Qs 49:13, which emphasizes that humanity is created from different nations and tribes so that they may know one another [3].

The Prophet Muhammad, as a role model for Muslims, demonstrated how to live harmoniously within a multicultural society. History records that during his

migration to Madinah, the Prophet reconciled the warring tribes of Aus and Khazraj, allowing Muslims to live peacefully in Madinah, which was inhabited by various tribes and religions, including Jews and Christians [4].

Thus, IRE, viewed through the lens of multicultural education, is expected to serve as an effective medium for creating a generation that is not only devout in their faith but also capable of coexisting peacefully amidst diversity.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The type of research conducted is qualitative, focusing on library research by referencing several sources, including articles, books, and manuscripts that are relevant to the issues discussed in this study. The data sources utilized by the researcher include both primary and secondary data.

Primary Data refers to the main reference books that provide an analysis of Islamic education within multicultural society in Indonesia. In contrast, Secondary Data consists of books that align with the core issues to be examined in this research [5].

The analytical method employed is descriptive analysis, which reveals the meaning of a statement to determine the relationship between different categories. This involves interpretations that align with the concepts of this study and addresses the issues being examined to achieve a theoretical interpretation that corresponds to the problems being researched.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Understanding Multicultural Education

The term "multicultural society" is composed of three words: society, multi, and cultural. Society refers to a unity of human life that interacts according to certain customs and traditions, characterized by continuous engagement and a shared sense of tolerance. "Multi" means many, and "cultural" refers to culture, which encompasses all human efforts and activities to process and transform nature [6].

Multiculturalism is a belief that emphasizes equality in the rights of cultural differences [7]. Therefore, it can be concluded that a multicultural society consists of various cultural structures and is a process of instilling educational values that are distinctive or have a broad cultural perspective.

Multiculturalism is related to culture, and each culture has its own concepts in applying its values, which are constrained by certain values or interests. Multicultural education, present in Indonesian society, is expected to eliminate intolerant attitudes within this

diverse social environment. Thus, one solution to foster respect for differences is through providing multicultural education [8].

Diversity in communal living has existed since the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Islam, as a religion of mercy to the worlds, acknowledges diversity, as indicated over 14 centuries ago in Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 13. We collectively believe that everyone has their own strengths and weaknesses; from these differences, we can hope to foster mutual respect and appreciation for peaceful coexistence.

In multicultural education, we are taught not to discriminate against groups or individuals with different abilities than our own. This diversity is a natural law (sunnatullah); those who do not accept it are reverting to a state of ignorance (jahiliyyah).

3.2. Islamic Education in Creating a Multicultural Society

Islamic Education (IRE) within a multicultural perspective is a subject that should be included in the curriculum of both formal and non-formal educational institutions in Indonesia. Religious life is an essential aspect of communal living, and it is hoped that it can be realized in a good and integrated manner [9]. Islamic Education in the context of multiculturalism in Indonesian society can be viewed from several aspects:

(1) Cultural and Religious Diversity in Indonesia: Indonesia is a country with a vast diversity of cultures, ethnicities, and religions. This includes various ethnic groups, regional languages, and religions, including Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. In this context, IRE plays a crucial role in educating students about Islamic values while respecting and understanding the religious and cultural diversity around them.

(2) Pancasila as the Ideological Foundation. Pancasila, as the foundation of the Indonesian state, emphasizes values of humanity, unity, and social justice. IRE in Indonesia needs to adapt to the values of Pancasila to support harmony among religious communities and cultures. Thus, religious education should not only focus on the teachings of Islam but also on respecting differences and fostering cooperation in a multicultural society.

(3) Valuing Differences. Multicultural education aims to create a tolerant, just society that values differences. In this context, IRE has a role in teaching students the importance of appreciating religious and cultural differences, as well as fostering inclusive and tolerant attitudes.

(4) Integration of Universal Values. Universal values such as justice, humanity, and peace are integral parts of Islamic teachings. IRE can serve to instill these values

within a multicultural context, teaching students to coexist peacefully and respect one another amidst diversity.

(5) Curriculum and Teaching Methods. The IRE curriculum needs to be designed to include materials relevant to life in a multicultural society. Teaching methods should also be interactive and inclusive, allowing students to engage in dialogue and share experiences about religious and cultural diversity.

(6) The Role of Teachers in Multicultural Education. IRE teachers play a vital role in developing multicultural attitudes and understanding among students. They must possess competencies in multicultural education and be able to convey religious teachings in an inclusive manner that respects differences [10].

From the above exposition, IRE in the perspective of multicultural education in Indonesia strives not only to teach Islamic religious teachings but also to instill attitudes of tolerance, mutual respect, and cooperation among students from various cultural and religious backgrounds. This is essential for building a harmonious and peaceful society amidst diversity.

3.3. Characteristics in the Perspective of Multicultural Islamic Education

Islamic Education in a multicultural context has several important characteristics that support the creation of a harmonious and inclusive society. The following are some of these characteristics: (1) Tolerance and Respect for Differences, Islamic Education promotes a tolerant attitude towards differences in religion, culture, and traditions. This is reflected in teachings that emphasize the importance of mutual respect and understanding. (2) Dialogue and Communication. This education encourages interfaith dialogue to build understanding and reduce conflict. Students are taught to communicate openly with individuals from different backgrounds. (3) Universal Values. Islamic Education teaches universal values such as justice, compassion, and brotherhood. These values are acceptable to all people, regardless of their religious or cultural backgrounds. (4) Openness to New Knowledge. In a multicultural context, Islamic Education encourages students to be open to knowledge and traditions from various cultures. This helps them understand and appreciate diversity.

This education also emphasizes teaching social skills necessary for interaction in a multicultural society, such as conflict resolution and collaboration [11]. The function of education is oriented towards togetherness, peace, and humanity, aiming to develop principles of equality, justice, and democracy in communal and national life. Especially in Indonesia, which is diverse in ethnicity, culture, and religion, a universal life orientation is essential. This universal life orientation serves as a guiding point for multicultural education. Thus, multicultural education opposes practices that undermine the values of togetherness, humanity, and peace, such as individualism, conflict, violence, and hostility.

From a Western perspective, multicultural values are rooted in philosophy and refer to human rights, while multicultural values in the Islamic perspective are derived from revelation [12]. From the explanation above, it can be associated that the perspective of multicultural Islamic education is a process of changing fundamental and conceptual values of Islamic teachings that seeks to provide solutions for aspects of difference and human freedom in a broader view. This is exemplified by the noble character of Prophet Muhammad, which should be embraced with a peaceful heart and wisdom amidst the multicultural realities of humanity, aiming to create a peaceful and just life [13].

The characteristics of multicultural education explain the reality that humanity is not singular but rather diverse, as Allah states in Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 13, that the phrase "O mankind" encompasses all nations, ethnicities, races, and countries, not limited to Muslims alone but mentioned universally. If it were specifically addressed to Muslims or believers, the verse would say "O believers," but since the call here is general, it already encompasses multiculturalism.

Indeed, we have created you from a male and female, reaffirming diversity. The plurality of humanity consists of males and females, with culture evolving from generation to generation. This also represents equality between men and women, as the Quran mentions both to signify partnership, cooperation, mutual support, and covering each other's shortcomings. Then We made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another. The development of humanity's diversity, with the emergence of different ethnicities, cultures, and nations, is meant for mutual recognition.

Mutual recognition and interaction among ethnicities, cultures, and religions is a social fact that cannot be denied, as humanity is not solitary but comprises diverse communities. Islamic teachings guide us to know one another, and in this process of knowing, we should maintain ourselves, avoiding prohibited actions or leading others to sin. Indeed, the most noble among you is the one who is righteous. Righteousness, in this sense, means obeying Allah's commands and avoiding His prohibitions. In this process of righteousness, we must steer clear of conflicts, enmity, and hatred towards other ethnicities, cultures, and religions to create a peaceful and prosperous society and nation. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing and All-Aware. Human actions are fully known to Allah, which is why the general principles of multicultural awareness are essential in Islamic education.

According to Zakiyuddin Baidhawy, the principles and characteristics in the perspective of multicultural Islamic education include learning to live with differences, fostering mutual understanding, upholding respect, and building trust. By understanding the characteristics presented above, what is meant by multicultural-based Islamic Education according to Baidhawy can be interpreted as the realization of renewal and innovation in religious education aimed at creating awareness to embrace all kinds of differences in coexisting and living together amidst the diversity of ethnicities, cultures, and religions with a spirit of equality and togetherness, good communication, mutual respect for similarities, trust, understanding, and religious diversity while avoiding intolerant attitudes and conflicts amidst differences and mutual hostility [14].

3.4. Implementation in Multicultural Society Education

In education, the term culture encompasses various ethnicities and tribes. For example, the Javanese, Madurese, Ambonese, and Batak tribes are real communities in Indonesia. The differences in their regions and places of residence lead to various customs, traditions, languages, and ways of dressing, eating, and drinking. This also occurs due to the many regional languages present in Indonesia. These differences should not lead to division but rather serve as a strength for mutual respect, which is the essence of multiculturalism. Additionally, multiculturalism has symbols, natural characteristics, follows models, and is adaptive.

The application of education in a multicultural society should focus on developing understanding, appreciation, and collaboration among cultures. With the right approach, education can be a powerful tool for building a harmonious and respectful society [15].

Education plays a crucial role in shaping a harmonious multicultural society. Here are some ways to implement education in this context: (1) Symbols, Symbols are created by communities and groups. For instance, primitive tribes in Papua have different symbols from their ceremonies and customs. We hope this broadens our understanding. (2) Inclusive Curriculum, developing a curriculum that encompasses various cultures, religions, and traditions. Learning materials should reflect the diversity of society so that students understand and appreciate differences. (3) Character Education. Instilling values such as tolerance, empathy, and mutual respect through character education. These programs can be implemented in schools and communities to strengthen interpersonal relationships. (4) Intercultural Dialogue, Encouraging intercultural and interfaith dialogue through discussions, seminars, and workshops. This helps students learn from the experiences of others and build a deeper understanding of diversity. For example, eating habits may vary; one community may primarily eat corn, while another may eat wheat. Similarly, drinking traditions differ, such as sake in Japan and coffee in the Middle East. These differences are natural. (5) Community-Based Education, integrating education with the local community, including teaching about local culture and traditions. This helps students feel connected to the communities around them. For instance, we can observe the changes in Javanese fashion before and after independence, from hairstyles to pants and shirts. Over time, these styles have evolved; for example, pants that were wide at the bottom in the 1970s have become narrower today. The colors, patterns, and shapes are cultural products that change over time. (6) Adaptive Nature, being adaptive means being able to adjust. Sometimes, foreign influences from the media, the internet, TV, and films create new trends. For instance, popular films among teenagers, like "Spider-Man," lead to merchandise such as T-shirts, bags, keychains, and car stickers featuring Spider-Man. This shows that culture is adaptive, accepting influences from outside. However, to ensure that education in Indonesia is multicultural and rooted in national culture, efforts must be made for preservation. We must not let foreign influences cause our own culture to be forgotten or changed.

4. CONCLUSION

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) plays a strategic role in creating a harmonious multicultural society in Indonesia. In the context of cultural and religious diversity, IRE is not only tasked with teaching religious doctrines but also with instilling values of tolerance, mutual respect, and intercultural understanding. Through an inclusive educational approach, IRE can teach students about the importance of diversity as a social asset that must be preserved and nurtured.

The implementation of multicultural education within IRE encompasses several important aspects, such as developing a curriculum that reflects cultural and religious diversity, fostering open intercultural dialogue, and training teachers who are sensitive to multicultural contexts. In this way, students not only learn about their religious teachings but also understand and appreciate the differences around them.

Education based on universal values such as justice, compassion, and brotherhood is crucial in building an inclusive society. Through teaching that emphasizes shared experiences and collaboration, IRE can serve as a means to unite various backgrounds, foster a sense of togetherness, and prevent conflict.

In the face of challenges encountered by multicultural societies, IRE needs to adapt to the

realities of plurality without compromising the fundamental principles of Islamic teachings. By emphasizing pluralism and an inclusive attitude, IRE is expected to produce a generation that is not only devout in their faith but also capable of interacting and living peacefully alongside others.

Ultimately, through the application of values that promote respect and understanding, IRE can become an effective medium for building a united society amidst diversity. With concrete steps and commitment from all parties, Islamic Education can significantly contribute to creating a peaceful, just, and prosperous society amid differences.

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