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Presenting Inclusive Islamic Education: Shaping a Generation that Values Diversity Amidst Globalization

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive Islamic education has become a strategic necessity in the era of globalization characterized by cross-cultural, religious, and value interactions. This paper aims to analyze the concept, implementation, and implications of inclusive Islamic education in shaping a generation that values diversity. The research method employs a systematic literature review of reputable international journals and relevant books published since 2015. The study results show that inclusive Islamic education can strengthen the values of tolerance, equality, and respect for cultural and religious differences. An inclusive curriculum and a pedagogical approach that is responsive to diversity are key elements in the implementation. The main challenges include teacher readiness, resources, and resistance to changes in the traditional education paradigm. The implications of this research emphasize the need for curriculum reform, educator training, and educational policies that support the implementation of inclusivity to produce a generation of Muslims capable of playing a role in a plural and dynamic global society.

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1. Introduction

The process of globalization has fostered an environment where cultures, ideas, and values interact more rapidly and frequently. This accelerated intercultural interaction has significantly impacted various sectors, particularly education. In the past, education systems were relatively homogeneous, with limited diversity within the classroom. However, the influence of globalization has led to greater cultural pluralism in educational settings, where classrooms are increasingly populated by students from diverse ethnic, religious, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds (UNESCO, 2016). As the landscape of education becomes more varied, challenges emerge, particularly in terms of ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities. UNESCO (2015) underscores that inclusive education is not merely about access but also about equity—ensuring that every individual has the opportunity to succeed in their learning journey without facing discrimination based on their background or abilities.

In light of this, inclusive education must be framed around principles that go beyond the mechanical provision of equal access to schooling. It requires thoughtful strategies that cater to the unique needs of all learners. Within the Islamic tradition, the concept of inclusivity is profoundly embedded in the values of *rahmatan lil alamin* (mercy to all of creation) and *adl* (justice), which advocate for the recognition of human dignity and the equitable treatment of all people, regardless

of their differences. Scholars argue that these Islamic values provide a strong moral foundation for promoting inclusive education, supporting efforts to ensure that educational spaces respect and honor diversity while fostering unity (Abdel-Fattah, 2019; Ahmad, 2020). The ethical framework derived from these principles encourages educational institutions to embrace diversity and work toward providing fair and just educational opportunities for all students, creating environments where individuals of all backgrounds can thrive.

Despite the alignment between Islamic values and the goals of inclusive education, implementing such an approach in Muslim-majority countries presents several challenges. One significant issue is the insufficient preparedness of teachers and educational staff to manage and support a diverse student body. Studies indicate that many educators lack training in diversity and inclusion, which hampers their ability to effectively engage with and support students from varied backgrounds (Hamid, 2019). The limited availability of specialized training for teachers in inclusive pedagogies exacerbates this issue, as teachers are not equipped with the tools and strategies needed to foster an inclusive classroom environment. Furthermore, the absence of a curriculum that is responsive to diversity and inclusion makes it difficult for educational institutions to address the needs of all students adequately (Ali & Khan, 2021). The lack of institutional policies that prioritize inclusivity also contributes to the persistence of exclusionary practices in many schools and universities (Nashit, 2020).

The resistance to change within educational paradigms further complicates efforts to implement inclusive education in Islamic schools. While there is widespread recognition of the need for change, there is often a reluctance to move away from traditional, exclusionary models of education. This resistance is partly due to the deeply entrenched nature of conventional educational practices, which often focus on uniformity rather than diversity. The prevailing mindset among some educators and policymakers is that uniformity in teaching and learning is essential for maintaining discipline and academic standards, which leads to hesitation in adopting more inclusive and multicultural approaches (Alam, 2021). This conservative outlook, coupled with the lack of training and supportive policies, creates barriers that hinder the full realization of inclusive education principles, especially in religiously and culturally conservative environments.

Given these challenges, the novelty of this research lies in its attempt to bridge the gap between Islamic values and the practical implementation of inclusive education in Islamic schools. By integrating Islamic philosophical principles, such as justice (*adl*) and mercy (*rahmatan lil alamin*), this study proposes a framework for inclusive education that not only acknowledges the diversity of students but actively embraces it as a source of strength. This perspective encourages educators to view diversity as a positive attribute that enriches the educational experience for all students, rather than as a challenge to be managed or overcome. Furthermore, the research explores how globalization, with its emphasis on interconnectedness and cultural exchange, can serve as a catalyst for transforming traditional educational practices into more inclusive, culturally responsive models (Brown, 2022). The study also aims to assess the feasibility of incorporating multicultural education strategies into Islamic school curricula, drawing on the experiences of other multicultural education models that have successfully navigated similar challenges.

One key area of focus in this study is the development of inclusive curricula that are responsive to the diverse needs of students. A critical element of such curricula is the integration of pedagogies that acknowledge and respect cultural differences while promoting shared values of human dignity, justice, and respect. The research will explore how Islamic educational institutions can adopt strategies from successful multicultural education frameworks, such as differentiated instruction, culturally relevant teaching, and collaborative learning, to create more inclusive and equitable learning environments (Gul & Azhar, 2020). By adopting these strategies, Islamic schools can better support students from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, ensuring that all learners have the opportunity to succeed academically.

Another important dimension of this study is the role of teacher professional development in fostering inclusive education. As mentioned earlier, many educators are not adequately prepared to teach in diverse classrooms, and this lack of training poses a significant barrier to the successful implementation of inclusive education. Therefore, this research proposes the development of comprehensive teacher training programs that focus on the principles of inclusive pedagogy and the practical application of multicultural education strategies in the classroom. These programs would equip teachers with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to create inclusive classrooms that cater to the needs of all students, regardless of their background (Mujtaba, 2021). Additionally, the study will examine the role of educational leaders in promoting inclusive education through policy development, resource allocation, and the establishment of a school culture that values diversity and inclusion (Hassan, 2020).

This research aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on inclusive education by offering a unique perspective that combines the philosophical foundations of Islam with the practical challenges and strategies associated with implementing inclusive education in Islamic schools. By examining the interplay between Islamic values, globalization, and multicultural education, the study provides insights into how educational institutions can create inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive learning environments that promote the success of all students. Furthermore, the research offers recommendations for policy makers, educational leaders, and teachers on how to foster inclusive educational practices that align with the principles of justice and mercy inherent in Islam while addressing the challenges posed by globalization and cultural diversity.

2. Method

This research uses a systematic qualitative literature review method to explore the concepts and practices of inclusive Islamic education thru various secondary scientific sources, including reputable international journal articles, academic books, and education policy documents published since 2015. This approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth analysis of literature that has been empirically and theoretically tested, providing insights into the latest developments in inclusive education that are relevant to the global context and real-world challenges. One of the main advantages of a literature review is its ability to explore ideas that have been tested in various cultural and educational backgrounds, thereby providing a broader and more holistic view of the researched topic (Fletcher & Wang, 2018; Wright, 2020).

The types and sources of data used in this research include international peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and reports from global educational organizations such as UNESCO. Using these international data sources is crucial for providing a global perspective in analyzing challenges and best practices that have been proven in various parts of the world. This also ensures that this research is relevant to educational policies implemented in countries with different cultural contexts, while enriching the understanding of inclusive education within the Islamic education system (Singh & Singh, 2020). UNESCO (2020) states that inclusive education must be based on the principles of justice and equal access for all individuals, without discrimination, which can serve as a guide in analyzing educational policies.

Data collection techniques were carried out thru systematic searches in various academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and Scopus using keywords such as inclusive education, Islamic education, multiculturalism, and diversity. This structured search approach ensures that only relevant and high-quality literature is included in the analysis, which is a fundamental principle of systematic qualitative literature reviews. The researchers also ensure that the selected articles make significant contributions to the development of the concept of inclusive education, particularly those related to Islamic education and multiculturalism (Thompson & Barlow, 2019; Jackson et al., 2021).

In terms of data analysis, this research employs an iterative method in reading and categorizing thematic findings from various selected studies. This process helps to organize the main themes related to the practices and theories of inclusive Islamic education, as well as to evaluate the

similarities and differences between various sources of literature. By synthesizing findings from different studies, this research aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the application of inclusive principles in Islamic education, as well as the challenges faced in its implementation (Harrison & Khan, 2022). This process not only allows researchers to understand the theoretical context of inclusive Islamic education but also to assess its practical application in various educational systems around the world.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Concept of Inclusive Islamic Education in the Context of Globalization

Inclusive education focuses on achieving equal access for all learners, without exception, and involves the acceptance of differences as part of the learning process. UNESCO (2017) states that inclusive education is not just about providing access to education for individuals with special needs, but also recognizing and celebrating the differences that exist in society, such as religious, cultural, and social background differences. In the context of rapid globalization, where interactions between cultures and religions are becoming more intense, it is important for education to accommodate this diversity. Globalization has changed the way societies interact, so education must be able to meet this challenge by promoting inclusive values that respect every individual without discrimination (Lynch & Lake, 2019). In this regard, inclusive Islamic education becomes relevant, considering the profound Islamic values of social justice and respect for the diversity of humanity.

Islam teaches the importance of rahmah (compassion) and adl (justice), two core values that underpin the concept of inclusive Islamic education. These values emphasize the importance of respecting human dignity and equality of rights in obtaining education. As taught in the Qur'an and Hadith, rahmah includes sincere concern for the welfare of all beings, regardless of religion, race, or social status (Nasr, 2016). Adl, as a principle of justice, encourages equal treatment for all people, including in the context of education. In Islamic education, these two values guide the development of an inclusive education system, which not only provides access to those with the same academic potential but also to those with differences in physical, social, and cultural abilities (Khan & Shams, 2020). Therefore, inclusive Islamic education not only focuses on diversity in the context of religion but also appreciates differences in cultural and linguistic backgrounds present in society.

In educational literature, the concept of multicultural education also supports the formation of attitudes of tolerance and appreciation for differences in diverse societies. James A. Banks, an important figure in multicultural education, states that education must integrate the values of pluralism into the curriculum to achieve social justice (Banks, 2019). In Banks' view, multicultural education is not just about studying the history and culture of certain groups, but more about developing skills to interact with various different groups, as well as fostering attitudes of mutual respect and appreciation for one another. This is in line with Islamic principles that emphasize the importance of mutual understanding and good interaction despite differences. Inclusive Islamic education, if implemented well, will provide a strong foundation for students to understand and appreciate differences, which is fundamental in building a more just and democratic society.

One of the main challenges in implementing inclusive education in Muslim countries is the readiness of the education system to accommodate the diverse needs of students. Many educational institutions still operate within a homogeneous system that does not consider the needs of students from various social and cultural backgrounds. Research by Ali and Sulaiman (2018) shows that the implementation of inclusive education in many educational systems in developing countries is still limited, both in terms of policy and practice. Therefore, it is very important to develop a curriculum that not only appreciates diversity but also adapts teaching methods to the diverse characteristics of students. Inclusive Islamic education in the context of globalization requires a more flexible and adaptive approach, integrating Islamic values with the principles of multicultural education. The influence of globalization on inclusive Islamic education cannot be overlooked either. Globalization has opened up opportunities for broader cultural exchange, but it has also posed challenges related

to identity and local values. In Islamic education, teaching about pluralism and diversity needs to be wisely adapted to remain in line with Islamic teachings. Considering the importance of global integration and the influence of social media and information technology, Islamic education must develop approaches that can facilitate cross-cultural understanding without compromising religious principles. For example, in teaching the Islamic religious curriculum, it is very important to include materials that support the development of a deeper understanding of human rights, social justice, and respect for the rights of individuals from various backgrounds (Nasr, 2021).

However, the biggest challenge in implementing inclusive Islamic education is the resistance to change within the existing education system. Many Islamic schools still maintain traditional education systems, which focus on homogeneity and are not sufficiently responsive to the needs of diversity (Abdul Rauf, 2020). Therefore, to achieve a more effective inclusive Islamic education, stronger policy support from the government and educational institutions is needed, as well as intensive training for educators so that they can implement teaching methods that are inclusive and responsive to diversity. This paradigm shift in education will take time, but with strong commitment from all parties, inclusive Islamic education can be implemented more widely.

Successful inclusive Islamic education must also be able to encourage the development of students' character who appreciate other social and cultural values. By integrating Islamic values and multicultural education principles, Islamic education can create a more just, harmonious, and open space for all students. This is important not only in shaping individuals who are competent in the academic world but also in fostering a strong sense of social responsibility toward others. As stated by Banks (2019), the goal of multicultural education is to create a just society, where every individual, regardless of any differences, can contribute positively to social and cultural progress. In this regard, inclusive Islamic education plays a very important role in preparing future generations who are not only academically intelligent but also wise in social actions.

3.2. Globalization and the Challenges of Diversity in Islamic Education

Globalization has accelerated the process of cultural exchange, ideas, and human mobility, which directly affects education systems worldwide. In the context of education, globalization not only focuses on access to information or technology but also on how culture, values, and social identities interact in the classroom. As the social, ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds of students become increasingly diverse, education must be able to accommodate these differences to create an inclusive environment that prioritizes principles of justice (UNESCO, 2020; Nasr, 2021). One significant impact of globalization is the increasing openness of society toward diversity, which requires education that can appreciate differences and build tolerance.

Diversity in Islamic education has become an important issue in the context of globalization, as increasingly diverse classrooms involve not only cultural differences but also differing perspectives on moral, social, and religious values. In the context of Islamic education, this diversity is not only viewed from an ethnic or religious standpoint but also includes differences in understanding religious teachings and practices. Therefore, Islamic education must be able to create a space that not only accommodates differences but also provides opportunities for every student to fully participate in the educational process without discrimination (Lynch & Lake, 2019). This poses a unique challenge for the Islamic education system, especially in countries with high religious and cultural pluralism, such as Indonesia, where globalization introduces a broader concept of diversity. However, globalization also brings its own challenges. One of them is the potential emergence of stereotypes and polarization. When the education system fails to respond with an inclusive approach, globalization can actually exacerbate tensions between groups. In many cases, understanding of diversity is often distorted by narrow views or even intolerance toward differences (Sutrisno et al., 2025). If Islamic education fails to respond to diversity wisely, the impact could further exacerbate social polarization, which not only harms inter-religious relations but could also lead to prolonged conflicts. Therefore, it is important to adopt an inclusive and multicultural approach in Islamic

education to ensure that every individual, regardless of their religious or social background, has the same opportunity to develop.

An inclusive approach in Islamic education must accommodate not only access but also full participation from every student. This concept of inclusion demands a change in the perspective toward education. It's not just about providing educational access for those with special needs, but also about ensuring that every student can actively participate in the learning process without feeling marginalized (Samsudin, 2025). In Islamic education, this means that every student, regardless of their religion, ethnicity, or social background, must be treated fairly and equally, so that they can experience the Islamic values of justice (adl) and compassion (rahmah). These principles should serve as the foundation for a more inclusive Islamic education system, which not only accommodates diversity but also values each individual as an equal creation of God (Khan & Shams, 2020). Several studies indicate that Islamic education needs to adapt to the developments of globalization and the challenges of diversity. For example, research by Sutrisno et al. (2025) shows that the implementation of multicultural values in Islamic education in Indonesia faces several challenges, such as resistance to change and limited educational resources. Nevertheless, multicultural Islamic education can be an effective means of fostering tolerance between religions and cultures. In this regard, the Islamic education curriculum must introduce the values of pluralism and respect for differences as part of religious teachings, not as a threat to the integrity of Islam itself. Inclusive Islamic education, which combines a multicultural approach, can be a powerful tool to strengthen the sense of tolerance amidst the increasing diversity (Rizieq & As'ad, 2025).

Furthermore, it is important to introduce value-based education within the framework of Islamic education. Education based on the values of compassion and justice, as taught in Islam, can shape individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also possess strong character in facing global challenges. This value-based education can enhance students' ability to respond to diversity with a positive and constructive attitude. In this regard, the implementation of a value-based curriculum can be an effective solution to improve the quality of Islamic education amidst the rapid globalization (Hidayatulloh & Afiyah, 2025). Thru this approach, students are not only taught religious knowledge but also equipped with social skills that are important for living in an increasingly pluralistic society. In addition, a major challenge faced by Islamic education in addressing diversity is the lack of adequate resources and training for educators. A study by Al Musyarrofi and Rofiq (2025) revealed that despite efforts to integrate multicultural values into Islamic education, the lack of teacher training and the limited availability of appropriate learning media remain major obstacles. Therefore, it is important for Islamic educational institutions to provide training to educators so that they can be more effective in teaching multicultural values and creating inclusive learning environments. Training programs focused on enhancing multicultural teaching competencies can help teachers become more sensitive to the diversity needs in the classroom and create a more inclusive and harmonious learning environment.

In conclusion, globalization presents significant challenges for Islamic education regarding diversity, both in cultural, religious, and perspective aspects. Therefore, Islamic education must be able to adapt by adopting an inclusive and multicultural approach that values differences. This approach will not only enrich students' learning experiences but also prepare them to face global challenges with attitudes of tolerance, empathy, and respect for differences. Inclusive and multicultural Islamic education has great potential to create a more harmonious and respectful society, as well as to prepare future generations to become agents of peace amidst the world's diversity.

3.3. Pedagogical Strategies in Inclusive Islamic Education

Inclusive Islamic education, which focuses on creating classrooms that accept and appreciate differences, plays an important role in building a more just and harmonious society. One of the main aspects of inclusive education is a pedagogical approach that can accommodate diversity, both in

terms of social, cultural, and religious backgrounds. An inclusive pedagogical approach includes various strategies, such as collaborative learning, intercultural dialog, and the development of activities that emphasize empathy and appreciation for differences. Empirical studies show that these strategies not only enhance student participation in the learning process but also strengthen mutual respect among students from various backgrounds (Samsudin, 2025; Hidayatulloh & Afiyah, 2025). Collaborative learning is one of the most effective pedagogical strategies in inclusive Islamic education. Thru this approach, students are encouraged to work together in diverse groups, which allows them to learn from each other and share perspectives. In the context of Islamic education, such collaboration reinforces the understanding of pluralistic values taught in Islamic teachings, such as rahmah (compassion) and adl (justice). According to research by Putri Ayu Lestari (2024), collaborative learning conducted in the context of Islamic education enables students to develop important social skills, such as empathy and openness to differences. Thus, this strategy not only focuses on academic aspects but also on character development and attitudes that appreciate diversity. Collaborative learning can also enhance students' understanding of multicultural values that are fundamental in Islamic education, making them more prepared to interact with various different groups in daily life (Hakim & Muhid, 2025).

Intercultural dialog also plays a very important role in creating inclusive education. This dialog allows students to openly discuss their cultural and religious differences, which in turn can reduce existing stereotypes and prejudices in society. In Islamic education, this dialog can be guided by Islamic teachings that emphasize the importance of mutual respect and understanding differences as part of divine destiny. For example, Islamic schools in Indonesia have begun to integrate intercultural dialog into their curricula to foster mutual respect among students from various religious and cultural backgrounds (Samsudin, 2025). This approach also demonstrates that Islamic education is not only about teaching religion but also about shaping individuals who can live harmoniously in a diverse society (Novanto, Arifin, & Ishomuddin, 2025).

Furthermore, strategies for developing activities that emphasize empathy and appreciation for differences are also very important in inclusive Islamic education. Activities based on the principles of rahmah and adl can encourage students to better understand other people's perspectives and strive to see the world from different viewpoints. A study by Putri Ayu Lestari (2024) shows that students who engage in activities promoting empathy and tolerance are more likely to develop a positive attitude toward religious and cultural differences. In the context of Islamic education, these activities can include various forms of engagement such as discussions on religious tolerance, collaborative projects involving groups from different cultural backgrounds, and social activities that involve interfaith and ethnic interactions. Such activities not only enrich students' learning experiences but also help them build respect for the diversity around them.

Adapting teaching methods that consider special needs, cultural backgrounds, and individual abilities of students is also part of the strategy to make learning more inclusive and equitable. Every student has different needs and learning styles, and it is important for educators to understand and adapt their teaching methods to meet those needs. In Islamic education, this means that teaching methods must be able to accommodate various cultural and social backgrounds of students, as well as consider differences in abilities and learning speeds. A study by Hidayatulloh & Afiyah (2025) revealed that adapting teaching methods to consider special needs can increase student participation in class and ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to learn and develop. This is in line with the fundamental principles of Islamic education, which emphasize justice and equal rights for every individual, regardless of their background.

The importance of developing intercultural skills in inclusive Islamic education cannot be overlooked. In an increasingly globally connected world, the ability to interact with people from various cultures and religions becomes a very important skill. Inclusive Islamic education can provide a space for students to develop these skills thru project-based learning, class discussions that involve different perspectives, and extracurricular activities that introduce students to other cultures. Research by Lestari (2024) highlights the importance of project-based education and interactive

media in teaching multicultural values to students. Thus, Islamic education can serve as a tool to build a more tolerant and respectful society, which not only sees differences as challenges but as opportunities to learn and grow together.

Finally, although there are many challenges in implementing inclusive pedagogical strategies in Islamic education, research shows that this approach can bring significant changes in creating a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. The main challenges faced by many educators are the lack of training in multicultural education and the limited resources available to implement inclusive teaching methods. Therefore, it is important for Islamic educational institutions to provide better training for teachers and to increase the availability of resources that support the implementation of inclusive education (Fahman, Yusuf, & Ma'ruf, 2025). With continuous efforts to enhance teaching capacity and create a more inclusive learning environment, Islamic education can play an important role in shaping individuals who are not only intelligent but also empathetic and ready to face an increasingly diverse world.

Conclusion

Inclusive Islamic education is an important educational strategy in facing the challenges of globalization and social plurality. A comprehensive literature review reveals that the principles of Islamic education, such as rahmatan lil alamin, justice (adl), and respect for humanity, align with the concept of inclusive education, which emphasizes access, participation, and appreciation of diversity. Inclusive Islamic education not only provides a learning space for all individuals without discrimination but also facilitates learning that appreciates cultural, religious, and social differences. Globalization has brought new dynamics to increasingly diverse classrooms, demanding an education system that is responsive, adaptive, and transformative. An integrative curriculum with multicultural values, pedagogy that respects differences, and teacher training are essential elements in achieving inclusive Islamic education. Main challenges such as resistance to traditional educational culture, teacher readiness, and resource limitations need to be addressed thru multisectoral cooperation and supportive educational policies. Thru such a strategic approach, inclusive Islamic education can shape a generation that not only adheres to Islam spiritually but is also capable of appreciating differences and contributing positively to a diverse and dynamic global society.

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