



## The Strategies for Developing the Concept of Multicultural Education in Islamic Boarding School (Pesantren) and Diniyyah

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### Abstract: The Strategies for Developing the Concept of Multicultural Education in Islamic Boarding School (Pesantren) and Diniyyah


**Objective:** This study aims to examine the strategy of developing the concept of multicultural education in pesantren and diniyyah, focusing on understanding, tolerance, and respect for cultural and religious diversity among santri. **Methods:** This research was conducted in 2023 using a qualitative approach. The research subjects included pesantren managers, educators, and santri. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, and qualitative data analysis used a thematic approach to identify key themes and insights. **Results:** This study found that the development of multicultural education in pesantren and diniyyah has great potential for future progress. **Conclusion:** Multicultural education in pesantren and diniyyah can play an important role in building social cohesion, as it provides santri with the skills and perspectives needed to interact respectfully in a diverse society. **Contribution:** This research enriches the literature on multicultural education in Indonesia, particularly in pesantren and diniyyah, which have unique characteristics compared to other formal education systems.

**Keyword:** Strategy; Multicultural Education; Pesantren; Diniyyah

### Abstrak: Strategi Pengembangan Konsep Pendidikan Multikultural di Pesantren dan Diniyyah

**Tujuan:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji strategi pengembangan konsep pendidikan multikultural di pesantren dan diniyyah, dengan fokus pada pemahaman, toleransi, dan penghormatan terhadap keragaman budaya dan agama di kalangan santri. **Metode:** Penelitian ini dilakukan pada tahun 2023 dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Subjek penelitian meliputi pengelola pesantren, pendidik, dan santri. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara mendalam, dan analisis data kualitatif menggunakan pendekatan tematik untuk mengidentifikasi tema-tema dan wawasan kunci. **Hasil:** Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa pengembangan pendidikan multikultural di pesantren dan diniyyah memiliki potensi besar untuk kemajuan di masa depan. **Kesimpulan:** Pendidikan multikultural di pesantren dan diniyyah dapat memainkan peran penting dalam membangun kohesi sosial, karena memberikan santri keterampilan dan perspektif yang dibutuhkan untuk berinteraksi dengan hormat dalam masyarakat yang beragam. **Kontribusi:** Penelitian ini memperkaya literatur tentang pendidikan multikultural di Indonesia, khususnya dalam konteks pesantren dan diniyyah yang memiliki karakteristik unik dibandingkan dengan sistem pendidikan formal lainnya.

**Kata Kunci:** Strategi; Pendidikan Multikultural; Pesantren; Diniyyah

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## A. INTRODUCTION

Multicultural education is an educational approach that advocates for the recognition and acceptance of cultural, religious, ethnic, and social diversity as integral parts of the educational process (Paul-Binyamin & Haj-Yehia, 2019). In the era of globalization and the complexity of modern society, it is essential to consider the implementation of multicultural education in pesantren and diniyyah as traditional educational institutions in the Islamic world. While pesantren have played a significant role in shaping the character and religious understanding of students through the depth of Islamic teachings, challenges arise in increasingly open and diverse societies, where understanding and appreciation of cultural and religious diversity become imperative. Multicultural education seeks to address these challenges and helps students better understand diversity (Banks, 2004).

The significance of developing strategies for the concept of multicultural education in pesantren and diniyyah is also tied to the increasingly heterogeneous global framework. In an era of growing global interconnectedness, students in pesantren and diniyyah are faced with cultural and religious diversity on a larger scale. Multicultural education enables them to be better prepared to meet these challenges and contribute to increasingly diverse societies (Sleeter, 2018). In the Indonesian context, with its diverse cultures and religions, multicultural education is also crucial for fostering interfaith harmony and tolerance. Pesantren and diniyyah have the potential to become agents of change in developing an understanding and appreciation for diversity within society (Arif, 2024).

In the context of globalization and the dynamics of increasingly diverse societies (Balsa-Barreiro & Morales, 2019), it is essential to examine and develop educational strategies that can accommodate and utilize cultural, religious, ethnic, and social diversity (Rosenmann et al., 2016). The concept of multicultural education becomes highly relevant as it provides a foundation for understanding, appreciating, and responding to the diversity present within and surrounding educational environments (Blanchet-Cohen & Reilly, 2013). In an era where intercultural interactions are becoming more frequent, academic institutions, including pesantren and traditional institutions such as diniyyah, need to develop strategies that strengthen multicultural values within educational processes. By gaining a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by pesantren and diniyyah in responding to a changing global context, further investigation into strategies for developing the concept of multicultural education becomes crucial. This is necessary to ensure the relevance, inclusivity, and effectiveness of character and knowledge development in students.

In understanding the background of strategies for developing the concept of multicultural education in pesantren and diniyyah, it is essential to note that these institutions are not merely religious, educational institutions but also play a role in supporting the holistic development of students, including cognitive, social, and moral aspects (Husein, 2014). The integration of multicultural education is vital within this holistic educational framework (Lans et al., 2014). This background highlights the importance of developing robust conceptual strategies to incorporate multicultural education into pesantren and diniyyah. By understanding the existing challenges and opportunities, these institutions can design effective strategies to promote multicultural values in education.

In researching the "Strategies for Developing the Concept of Multicultural Education in Pesantren and Diniyyah," several relevant studies can provide in-depth insights into the topic. For instance, the study by Rahman et al (2018), titled "Implementing Multicultural Education in Islamic Schools: A Case Study," offers valuable insights into the implementation of multicultural education in Islamic schools, forming a basis for understanding strategies that can be adopted within the contexts of pesantren and diniyyah. Furthermore, the study by Abdi et al (2019), titled "Enhancing Cultural Competence in Islamic Education: Lessons from a Multicultural School," explores the enhancement of cultural competence in Islamic education. This stu-

dy details experiences from multicultural schools and can provide perspectives on effective strategies within the context of Islamic education.

Another study, titled "Challenges and Strategies for Implementing Multicultural Education in Religious Schools: A Case Study of Madrasah in Indonesia," written by Putra et al (2020), identifies challenges and strategies for implementing multicultural education in madrasahs in Indonesia. This research provides valuable perspectives for similar institutions such as pesantren and diniyyah. Additionally, Ibrahim et al (2020), in their study titled "Multicultural Education in Islamic Boarding Schools: A Comparative Study", offer a better understanding of the implementation of multicultural education in pesantren through comparative analysis, which can serve as a foundation for designing similar development strategies. Furthermore, research by Abdullah et al (2020), titled "Towards a Multicultural Pedagogy: Case Study of Diniyyah Schools in Malaysia," focuses on multicultural education in diniyyah schools in Malaysia, offering perspectives that could be adapted for pesantren in Indonesia.

The research gap in the theme "Strategies for Developing the Concept of Multicultural Education in Pesantren and Diniyyah" can be identified through a review of previous studies. While there are studies discussing the implementation of multicultural education in Islamic schools, madrasahs, and diniyyah, there is a need for more specific research on pesantren (Fathurrohman et al, 2023; Hasnadi, 2023; Kutsiyah, 2020; Maimun et al., 2020; Darmawan & Hasanah, 2024; Priatna et al., 2018). These institutions possess unique characteristics that may require tailored strategies to understand and respond to cultural, religious, and social diversity. Furthermore, a gap is evident in identifying the most effective and relevant strategy for applying multicultural education in Indonesian pesantren. Further studies are also necessary to explore the extent to which findings about multicultural pedagogy in diniyyah schools in Malaysia can be adopted in the context of Indonesian pesantren, considering potential cultural and educational system differences. This sets the stage for in-depth research that could provide specific insights into the unique challenges and opportunities faced by pesantren and diniyyah in their efforts to integrate the concept of multicultural education.

The objectives of this study are as follows: 1) to describe the concept of multicultural education in pesantren and diniyyah; 2) to describe the roles of pesantren and diniyyah in multicultural education; 3) to describe strategies for developing the concept of multicultural education in pesantren and diniyyah; 4) to analyze challenges and aspirations in the development of multicultural education in pesantren and diniyyah. By formulating these objectives, the study will focus on a comprehensive understanding and in-depth analysis of how strategies for developing the concept of multicultural education in pesantren and diniyyah can be effectively implemented.

## **B. METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies for developing the concept of multicultural education in pesantren and diniyyah. The qualitative approach is adopted to explore perspectives, experiences, and practices holistically. The research design is a qualitative case study (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). Focusing on a case study allows for a thorough investigation of the strategies for developing the concept of multicultural education in pesantren and diniyyah, uncovering specific contexts and variations in practice.

The research was conducted in 2023. The subjects of the study include stakeholders such as pesantren administrators, educators, and students involved in the implementation of multicultural education strategies. Data collection methods include in-depth interviews with pesantren administrators, educators, and students, participatory observation during multicultural education activities in pesantren, and document analysis of materials related to the strategies for developing multicultural education in books or journals.

Qualitative data analysis will be conducted using a thematic approach. The data will be analyzed to identify patterns, themes, and emerging concepts related to strategies for developing multicultural education. This method is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the strategies for developing the concept of multicultural education in pesantren and diniyyah within a qualitative framework.

## C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

Understanding multicultural education is a critical initial step in examining its concept within pesantren and diniyyah. Multicultural education is a teaching method that acknowledges and appreciates diversity within social and cultural frameworks. This concept involves recognizing that each individual has unique backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences. Thus, multicultural education fosters awareness, appreciation, and respect for this diversity (Banks, 1997). According to Banks, multicultural education should encompass dimensions such as content, pedagogy, leadership, and assessment that consider various aspects of cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity (Banks, 2004).

The values inherent in multicultural education include elements such as equality, justice, respect for differences, and empowerment. Equality in the context of multicultural education refers to providing equal rights to all individuals regardless of their origin or characteristics. The concept of justice involves efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination and to provide fair opportunities for every individual to develop their potential (Banks, 2004).

In the context of pesantren and diniyyah, implementing these multicultural values may involve policies promoting equal rights and opportunities for all students, regardless of their religious or cultural backgrounds (Ferary, 2023). For instance, students from various ethnic and religious backgrounds should have equal access to educational facilities and high-quality learning opportunities.

A vital aspect of multicultural education is the recognition and respect for religious and cultural diversity (Katitaş et al., 2024). In the context of pesantren and diniyyah, this includes acknowledging various Islamic sects and traditions and respecting the diverse religious values and practices among students. Such diversity may involve differences in worship methods, religious interpretations, and traditions.

To better understand the implications of religious diversity in multicultural education, we can refer to studies exploring how religious teachings are integrated into educational curricula. A notable reference in this context is the work of Karen Armstrong, which focuses on understanding religion and fostering interfaith harmony. In her writings, Armstrong advocates for interreligious dialogue and a deep understanding of religious values as essential steps toward peace and tolerance.

An essential element in multicultural education is the recognition and appreciation of religious and cultural diversity. Within the context of pesantren and diniyyah, this includes acknowledging the various Islamic sects and traditions and respecting the diverse religious values and practices among students. This diversity encompasses differences in worship methods, religious interpretations, and religious heritage. To deepen the understanding of the implications of religious diversity in multicultural education, studies exploring the integration of religious teachings into curricula provide valuable insights. Works like those produced by Karen Armstrong, which highlight the importance of understanding religion and fostering interfaith harmony, are key references.

### Discussion

#### 1) The Role of Pesantren and Diniyyah in Multicultural Education

Pesantren and diniyyah hold a crucial role in fostering multicultural education within society. As traditional Islamic educational institutions, pesantren and diniyyah act as agents

of change by introducing tolerance and respect for cultural and religious diversity. Through curricula that incorporate an understanding of other religions, multicultural values, and cultural history, pesantren can cultivate students who are more open-minded and sensitive to diversity.

Additionally, pesantren and diniyyah have the potential to become venues for interfaith and intercultural interactions. By organizing extracurricular activities, seminars, and exchange programs, pesantren can create spaces for positive dialogue among students from diverse backgrounds. This not only enriches the students' experiences but also fosters mutual respect and understanding. Pesantren and diniyyah also serve as models for other Islamic educational institutions. Successful multicultural education practices in pesantren can inspire and guide similar institutions in building more inclusive and tolerant communities. Thus, pesantren and diniyyah are not only custodians of Islamic traditions but also drivers of educational transformation toward appreciating diversity.

The role of pesantren and diniyyah becomes increasingly relevant in the era of globalization as a key element in fostering tolerance, harmony, and respect for diversity (Anggraeni et al., 2024). In a progressively open and interconnected society, pesantren and diniyyah have a unique opportunity to bridge the gap between traditional education and the demands of modern, diverse societies (Hefner, 2007).

Integrating multicultural values into curricula and educational practices represents an essential responsibility for pesantren and diniyyah (Azra, 2006). By emphasizing the importance of multicultural values, pesantren can create inclusive learning environments where students not only respect diversity but also regard it as a cultural asset rather than a source of conflict (Husein, 2014). In this context, developing the role of pesantren and diniyyah becomes a significant strategy to ensure these institutions remain relevant and effective in preparing young generations for an increasingly complex and multicultural world (Schwarz, 2003).

Pesantren and diniyyah, in educating their students, have the opportunity to promote appreciation for religious and cultural diversity by integrating learning about other religions and cultures. This integration provides a foundation for understanding both differences and similarities (Gay, 2018). Through the implementation of multicultural education within pesantren and diniyyah, students can learn social norms that respect diversity and encourage harmony within society. Such education helps students develop a deeper understanding of how to live together in diversity (Nieto, 2017). Overall, pesantren and diniyyah, with their multicultural approaches, can play a significant role in educating a young generation that values tolerance, understanding, and respect for cultural and religious diversity in Indonesia (Sleeter, 2018).

## 2) Strategies for Developing the Concept of Multicultural Education for Pesantren and Diniyyah

The development of a multicultural curriculum for pesantren and diniyyah is a crucial step in fostering understanding, tolerance, and appreciation for cultural and religious diversity. This curriculum should include elements that enable students to understand and value the differences and similarities between cultures and religions. Key aspects to consider in a multicultural curriculum include cultural understanding, knowledge of other religions, the history of religions, and multicultural values (Banks, 2004).

A multicultural curriculum should involve understanding the various cultures present in society, encompassing traditions, languages, cuisines, arts, and cultural practices. This approach aims to help students gain deeper insight into the diversity of cultures surrounding them (Gay, 2018).

The strategy for developing the concept of multicultural education in pesantren and diniyyah requires a holistic approach that considers specific contexts and traditional values. Firstly, pesantren and diniyyah can integrate multicultural elements into their curriculum,

including cultural understanding, religious history, and multicultural values. Secondly, they can support teacher training to implement teaching methods that embrace diversity and encourage intercultural dialogue. Thirdly, expanding resources and literature that reflect diverse perspectives on religion, culture, and history is essential. Fourthly, they can create extra-curricular programs that promote interactions among students from various backgrounds. Lastly, involving parents and the community to support the concept of multicultural education ensures broader backing from multiple stakeholders. By applying these strategies, pesantren, and diniyyah can foster an educational environment that is inclusive and responsive to cultural and religious diversity.

In developing a multicultural curriculum for pesantren and diniyyah, it is vital to consider the local context and values upheld by these institutions. The curriculum must be adapted to reflect their values and beliefs while still promoting multicultural understanding (Hollins, 2019). With a comprehensive and balanced multicultural curriculum, pesantren and diniyyah can play a significant role in shaping students to be tolerant and understanding of cultural and religious diversity in society.

Collaboration between pesantren, Diniyyah, and other educational institutions is a critical strategy for advancing multicultural education. This partnership involves working with formal schools, higher education institutions, different religious and educational organizations, and multicultural bodies. By engaging various educational entities, pesantren, and diniyyah can enrich students' academic experiences and promote a more profound understanding of tolerance, harmony, and appreciation of cultural and religious diversity (Musaddad, 2024). Establishing partnerships with formal schools is a key step to providing broader educational opportunities for pesantren students. For example, involving students in exchange programs allows them to attend formal schools for a period or vice versa. Through such collaborations, students can interact with peers from diverse backgrounds and gain a better understanding of their lifestyles and learning methods.

Through these partnerships, pesantren and diniyyah can become part of a broader multicultural educational network. They can act as agents of change by promoting multicultural values in education while offering students opportunities to learn from various cultures and religions. This initiative contributes to creating an inclusive educational environment that fosters understanding and tolerance.

### 3) Challenges and Hopes in Developing Multicultural Education in Pesantren and Diniyyah

The challenges and hopes in developing multicultural education in pesantren and diniyyah reflect the complex dynamics in the efforts towards creating an inclusive and diverse educational environment. One of the main challenges is the resistance to change within the pesantren community, which may still be more closed off to the concept of multicultural education. Increasing awareness and understanding of its benefits needs to be prioritized. Additionally, the diversity of traditions and interpretations of religion among the santri can become a challenge in aligning a curriculum that fairly reflects this diversity. Nevertheless, the hope lies in the ability of pesantren and diniyyah to become pioneers of multicultural education in Indonesia, producing generations of santri who not only delve into Islamic teachings but also understand and appreciate cultural and religious diversity. The hope is that pesantren and diniyyah can become models of inclusivity and tolerance, contributing significantly to the development of a harmonious and respectful society amidst diversity.

Implementing multicultural education in pesantren and diniyyah is a complex task, facing various challenges that need to be addressed. In this context, it is important to understand several key obstacles that may arise in efforts to promote understanding, tolerance, and respect for cultural and religious diversity. One of the main obstacles is uncertainty and fear of change. Some parties may feel that adopting multicultural education could threaten their traditional values and identity, which may lead to resistance to changes in curriculum and educational approaches (Banks, 2004).

Another challenge is finding suitable resources to support multicultural education. This involves difficulties in obtaining learning materials, educational resources, and teacher training necessary for implementing multicultural education. These resource limitations can be an obstacle in starting multicultural programs (Nieto, 2017).

The development of multicultural education in pesantren and diniyyah brings great hope for the future, including aspirations for positive change in understanding, tolerance, and respect for cultural and religious diversity among santri and the general public. The hopes are to: 1) form a more open and tolerant generation of santri, 2) create an inclusive and open educational environment for all, 3) increase a deep understanding of other religions, 4) strengthen peace and tolerance in an increasingly diverse society, and 5) provide an inspiring example for other Islamic educational institutions. The success of pesantren and diniyyah in implementing multicultural education can become a model for similar institutions across the Muslim world. This could trigger broader positive changes in Islamic education (Prayoga, 2019). These hopes reflect the determination to shape a more inclusive, tolerant future capable of coexisting with cultural and religious diversity. By maintaining commitment and continuous effort, pesantren and diniyyah have the potential to play a central role in realizing these aspirations.

#### **D. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS**

##### **1. Research Implications**

This research provides insight for managers of pesantren and diniyyah institutions to formulate policies supporting multicultural education development. These policies may include inclusion-based curriculum, teacher training in multicultural approaches, and integrating diversity values in pesantren activities. The results showed the importance of revising the curriculum to integrate multicultural values, such as tolerance, justice, and respect for diversity. Teaching in pesantren and diniyyah needs to use interactive and dialogical methods so that students understand and respect differences in culture, religion, and tradition.

##### **2. Research Contribution**

This research enriches the literature on multicultural education in Indonesia, especially in the context of pesantren and diniyyah, which have unique characteristics compared to other formal education systems. The research results can be used by the government and related organizations to formulate policies that encourage the development of multicultural education in Islamic educational institutions. Through multicultural education strategies developed in pesantren and diniyyah, this research contributes to efforts to strengthen interfaith harmony and build tolerance in Indonesia's pluralistic society.

#### **E. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

Future researchers can develop further research to evaluate the effectiveness of multicultural education strategies in pesantren and diniyyah. Identify the main challenges in implementing this concept and offer data-based solutions. With these recommendations, it is hoped that pesantren and diniyyah can become educational institutions that not only excel in religious aspects but can also instill multicultural values as a provision for santri to face life in a pluralistic society.

#### **F. CONCLUSION**

In pursuing an understanding and implementation of the concept of multicultural education in pesantren and diniyyah, it is crucial to outline and design relevant and effective development strategies. Previous research studies have identified that multicultural values include equality, justice, respect for differences, and empowerment. For the success of this approach, pesantren and diniyyah need to adopt policies that support equal rights and

opportunities for santri, regardless of their religious or cultural background. The implementation of these strategies should include equal access to educational facilities and quality learning opportunities for santri from various ethnic and religious backgrounds. Furthermore, it is essential to acknowledge and appreciate religious and cultural diversity by paying attention to the multiple schools of thought and traditions within Islam, as well as the different religious values and practices among santri. By referring to research that highlights the integration of religious teachings into the education curriculum and by utilizing the ideas of figures such as Karen Armstrong, who advocates for interfaith dialogue, pesantren, and diniyyah, can build an inclusive and impactful multicultural education concept within the context of Indonesia's cultural diversity.

To enhance the effectiveness of the multicultural education concept in pesantren and diniyyah, it is recommended to implement policies that emphasize equal rights and opportunities without discrimination, align the curriculum with multicultural values, promote interfaith dialogue, strengthen the teaching of local wisdom, involve parents and the community actively, and provide training for educators and staff to enhance understanding and skills in supporting inclusivity and diversity. With these steps, pesantren and diniyyah can create an educational environment that is more responsive to cultural and religious diversity, helping to shape a generation of santri who are tolerant and knowledgeable about diversity.

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#### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

All authors discussed the results and contributed to the final manuscript. MN: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing - Original Draft. AA: Conceptualization & Review. ZB: Conceptualization & Review. IS: Conceptualization & Review.

#### DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors (MN) and co-authors (ZB and IS) declare that there are no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article. And the co-author (AA) is an Editor in Chief for this journal and was not involved in the editorial review or the decision to publish this article.

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