

The Urgency of Multicultural Islamic Education in Developing Tolerance and National Character

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Abstract: This study aims to describe the urgency of multicultural Islamic education in building national tolerance and character. Using a literature-based research method, this study analyzes various documents, books, and previous research results to provide a theoretical foundation for the issues being researched: *First*, the urgency of multicultural Islamic education in promoting tolerance and instilling a moderate religious understanding (*wasathiyah*) lies in its function as a tool for social and spiritual change. Through a multicultural approach, students are encouraged to understand Islamic teachings contextually, appreciate diversity, and reject all forms of extremism. This moderate religious understanding lays a strong foundation for a harmonious, just, and cultured society. *Second*, Islamic education with a multicultural approach plays a crucial role in strengthening the character of the diverse Indonesian nation. By respecting differences, this education instills global values of harmony, justice, and humanity. It not only strengthens students' Islamic identity but also shapes a national character grounded in solidarity and unity. Therefore, multicultural Islamic education serves as the main foundation for realizing an Indonesian society that is religious, moderate, and possesses a strong national character.

Keywords: Multicultural Islamic Education, National Character, Tolerance and Moderate

A. Introduction

Indonesia is one of the largest multicultural countries in the world. The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) spans approximately 13,000 large and small islands, with a population of over 200 million people, consisting of 3,000 ethnic groups speaking nearly 200 different languages. Furthermore, Indonesia has the largest Muslim population (around 87%) compared to any other country (Yusuf, 2018). Education plays a crucial role in shaping a nation's identity, character, and morals. In the learning process, individuals not only acquire knowledge but are also guided to become individuals with faith and morals, capable of relating to diverse backgrounds. In the context of Indonesia's ethnically and culturally diverse society, education plays

a crucial role as a means of fostering mutual respect, strengthening social solidarity, and building national character based on the values of Pancasila.

The diversity of Indonesian society, in terms of religion, culture, ethnicity, and language, is both a blessing and a major challenge. Plurality that is not handled wisely often becomes a source of conflict and division (Menteri Kesehatan, 2005). The phenomena of intolerance, radicalism, and violence in the name of religion that still occur in various regions are evidence that the values of multiculturalism have not been fully internalized in the education system. In this situation, Islamic education has a moral responsibility to be a force that instills the values of peace, justice, and universal humanity (Ma'arif, 2011).

Islamic education actually does not only function as a means to spread religious knowledge, but also as a tool to change a person's values and character. From an Islamic perspective, the purpose of education is to provide love to all creatures, in accordance with the mission of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. This concept shows that Islamic education must produce individuals who have good morals, are able to accept differences, and appreciate the diversity of God's creation. As stated in QS. Al-Hujurat verse 13, humans were created into nations and tribes so that they could understand each other (*lita'arafu*), not to oppress or be hostile to each other.

However, in practice, many Islamic educational institutions have yet to fully implement multicultural values in their curricula. Religious instruction often focuses solely on norms and teachings, without providing an understanding of the context of universal values within Islam. As a result, some students understand religion narrowly and lack appreciation for differences. Meanwhile, the essence of multiculturalism is already present in the history of Islamic civilization, as seen during the golden age of Andalusia, where Muslims, Christians, and Jews lived side by side in harmony and shared knowledge (Abdullah & Multidisiplin, 2020).

From an Indonesian perspective, the need for multicultural Islamic education is increasingly important to strengthen tolerance and national character. This education serves as a means to instill universal human values, such as justice (*'adl*), compassion (*rahmah*), and unity (*ukhuwah*). Through a multicultural approach, students are invited to understand that differences are part of God's power that must be accepted and appreciated. Thus, multicultural Islamic education not only forms individuals who are faithful, but also creates citizens who are moderate, and have noble morals.

In addition, diverse Islamic education provides a very vital contribution to the formation of national character. The values taught in Islam such as honesty, responsibility, collaboration, and empathy are the main foundations in developing national character. Through education that values diverse backgrounds, students not only recognize differences but also learn to respect each other, discuss, and collaborate within a national framework. In other words, a faithful, inclusive, and civilized

generation will produce a strong national character.

Furthermore, multicultural Islamic education can be an effective strategy to stem the tide of globalization, which often brings negative impacts such as moral degradation, individualism, and consumerism (Tilaar, 2004). In this regard, Islamic education with a multicultural perspective serves as a moral bulwark, instilling spiritual values while simultaneously fostering openness to the world's cultural differences. This aligns with the national education vision, which is to develop students' potential to become individuals of faith, piety, and noble character (Kemenag, 2019). Therefore, the value of culturally diverse Islamic education in building tolerance and national character is not merely an academic debate, but rather an urgent necessity to maintain unity and peace in the Indonesian nation. It is hoped that this education can be a cultural and spiritual solution in facing the various challenges of this era, as well as a step towards an Indonesian society that is religious, tolerant, and has a strong character.

B. Methods

This study employs a qualitative research design with a library research method. This approach involves a systematic process of identifying, examining, and evaluating various written sources to provide a solid theoretical foundation for the issues being researched. The data collection technique used in this study is a comprehensive literature review, which includes:

1. Data Gathering: Collecting information from various library materials such as documents, books, academic journals, and historical accounts.
2. Theoretical Grounding: Analyzing previous research results and book references that are similar or relevant to the study to establish a theoretical foothold.
3. Contextual Analysis: Conducting a theoretical study of scientific literature related to cultures, values, and norms that develop within the specific social situations being researched (Sari, 2021).

C. Results and Discussion

The Essence of Multiculturalism

The world is a place for multiculturalism. a region and country is a place for multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is found everywhere on the surface of the earth This. According to May, multiculturalism is an approach that replaces universalism. and who introduces ethnicities that are not necessary and not supportive into the region attention or activity 'society' civil' (Steinberg, 2009). Steinberg to describe that multiculturalism is a multicultural position to address differences related to with race, socio-economic class, gender, language, culture, sex, and disability. Calhoun, Light, & Keller define that multiculturalism is an approach to life in a pluralistic society, which demands find ways for people for understand and relate with Which other which does

not depend on their similarities, but rather on the appreciation of differences they. Adding n that multiculturalism is more than just a thing a prescription for better intergroup relations in America States. It is also known the increasing multicultural nature of social relations in a more integrated world international And global (Calhoun, et. al., 2022; Syas, 2012; Agustin, 2016).

No country in the world is free from multiculturalism. This can be seen in many countries, such as the United States, Canada, Australia, France, the United Kingdom, and Indonesia, which are examples of countries with cultural diversity. In these countries, multiculturalism is seen as a policy, doctrine, philosophy, ideology, and reality that emphasizes the distinctive characteristics of different cultures originating from a number of ethnicities, religions, and nations, yet they have equal status. All individuals come together and live-in harmony and justice in one country. This kind of situation means that every individual or group needs to respect each other's differences of opinion that arise and persist through different experiences and backgrounds (Kasmawati & Asmawati, 2021).

Humans are social creatures who constantly depend on others to fulfill their needs. Without us realizing it, there is a very strong interdependence between us. Human needs can be met when each individual recognizes and respects the rights of others. In our society, real-life situations often arise that demonstrate the differences between individuals. These differences are actually normal. However, these differences often trigger conflict within society. If this conflict cannot be managed well, it can lead to violent actions.

The essence of life is change, and if there is one thing that is eternal in life, it is change. Life would never exist without change, and in that change, tension always arises: the tension between what is to be changed, the changer, and the innovation that arises from the change itself. In social interactions, various kinds of tension are unavoidable. Every community has experienced tension, both among its own members and with other groups. The term tension usually has a negative connotation, because it is often understood as the opposite of harmony, peace, and order. Tension is also often seen as a threat or act of violence. However, if faced wisely, tension does not always lead to violence.

Indonesia as a Multicultural Society

Indonesia is considered an example of a diverse society with a pluralistic outlook because its diverse peoples and cultures, at least in the past, rarely interacted with each other, partly due to its archipelagic geography. Political scientists, such as P. Laslett, may have some validity in the theory that an authoritarian system of government is an adaptation to the arrangement of a diverse society with a large population united as a nation-state on numerous and scattered islands. Reducing such authoritarian power would pose a major challenge to national unity. Criticisms of the

concept of plurality have come in waves, but none have been able to provide a satisfactory answer.

MG Smith developed a theory of diverse societies, adopting Furnivall's concept. He emphasized the importance of plural societies in analysis, particularly in the study of Caribbean societies, and argued that race-based models ignore other factors such as social class or religion. Smith argued that pluralism should be used comparatively in anthropology. However, some anthropologists have criticized his views, noting the lack of explanation of historical context. There are also those who argue that the concept of a pluralistic society is a colonial construct that facilitates racial discrimination (Parekh, 1997).

The theory of plural societies ignores the polyethnic characteristics of most societies in the Third World and thus has little influence on the tendency of studies. postcolonial and ethnic studies. While continuing to adapt to the criticisms leveled at him, Smith's theory experiencing conceptual setbacks due to pressure from theories cultural pluralism. The development of theories of cultural pluralism is driven by, among other things: a) The birth of new independent countries after World War II; b) The advancement of communication technology has liberated previously isolated societies; c) Increasing awareness of the rights of a nation in the world order; d) Strengthening and the spread of democratic thought and human rights throughout the world.

These four driving factors also underlie the development of theories. cultural pluralism which practically requires recognition of equal rights as citizens of world culture. Cultural pluralism encompasses the idea that historical cultural differences between various communities should be respected by the authorities (read: government) who guarantee their equal rights in the national society. Many people then believe that the concept of cultural pluralism can be applied more universally than the model of a pluralistic society. compound which is considered to maintain the status quo of colonial power.

Multiculturalism in Indonesia

Indonesia is a country known as the largest archipelagic country in the world consisting of approximately 13,000 large and small islands. So that from so many islands have various ethnic groups, religions, tribes, cultures and so on, with a population currently recorded at approximately 278.69 million people. Quoting from Will Kymlica's opinion that the true meaning of Multiculturalism is a form of cultural pluralism that is different and has its own integrity and challenges (Dewantara, 2019; Rahman, et. al., 2020; Riyadi et al., 2024). Multiculturalism in Indonesia is contained in Article 32 of the 1945 Constitution which states that national culture is a culture that arises as a cultural effort of the entire Indonesian people (Suardi, 2017).

Indonesian society is multicultural. In a multicultural context, efforts to prevent conflict and the perception that conflict is negative are completely irrelevant. Conflict is not something that can be avoided or hidden; its existence must be acknowledged, managed, and transformed into a force for positive change. Indonesia as a country inhabited by a multicultural society is demonstrated by, among other things: 1) More than 700 languages are used daily by every group of speakers; 2) The population of different religions consisting of Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism and Buddhism; and 3) Tradition which comes from the ancestors of each ethnic group.

The diversity of Indonesian society is reflected in the national motto, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity). This motto reflects the cultural differences that have been the foundation of national policy, doctrine, philosophy, ideology, and reality since the early formation of the Indonesian nation and state. Cultural diversity, the nation-state, and the spirit of nationalism. A nation like Indonesia can be said to have been born and grown simultaneously with the rise of nationalism worldwide, particularly in the first half of the 20th century. The concept of nationality itself is based on three elements: an awareness of shared identity, an ideology of shared history and a sense of shared destiny, and the existence of collaborative social movements to achieve common goals. Nationalism will be strengthened if all of these elements are strengthened by external threats that are perceived as detrimental. The presence of an external enemy, for example, can strengthen this sense of nationalism.

Concept and Foundation of Multicultural Islamic Education

Muhammad Tholchah Hasan said that, basically, multiculturalism is a concept that emphasizes the recognition of differences, diversity, and plurality of culture, religion, language, and race in the midst of a culturally diverse or multicultural society. The concept of multiculturalism also provides us with the understanding that a pluralistic nation is one that lives side by side, respecting, appreciating, and tolerating each other despite having diverse customs, cultures, traditions, religions, and languages. Therefore, the idea of multiculturalism here emphasizes the importance of respecting and appreciating the diverse ethnicities, cultures, religions, languages, and traditions of others. While we have our own identities and characteristics, we also need to be able to live together harmoniously, respecting each other, and collaborating within a society rich in cultural, traditional, religious, and linguistic diversity.

In his view on multicultural Islamic education, Hasan stated that there are five normative principles which are considered as the foundation of multicultural Islamic education, especially in the context of religion, including: a) recognition of the aspects of God and His great power, b) the truth of God's revelation conveyed to His Prophet, c) the existence of Prophets and Apostles, d) diversity and differences in social and cultural aspects as part of God's provisions, and d) freedom to embrace religion.

These five normative foundations have become the main basis for religious life. In the

aspect of divinity, if we look again from a historical perspective, all the heavenly religions brought by the Prophets, all teach to believe in one God, namely Allah SWT. From this we can see that religious diversity has become God's will. Then, in terms of the truth of revelation, all religions teach us to live in peace, harmony, tolerance and mutual respect. Neither of the Prophets and Apostles taught violence. This shows that every religion highly upholds multicultural values.

Islam is a religion taught by the Prophet Muhammad SAW, with the Quran as the main guideline for Muslims which aims to provide safety and security for all of nature. Muslims should be able to maximize the function of religion in creating unity and integration. The multicultural approach in Islam includes acceptance of other groups as a whole, regardless of cultural, ethnic, or religious differences. Religious values also need to be instilled from an early age, as religious teachings teach mutual respect between religions, including Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. In this way, it is hoped that future generations will have the qualities of tolerance (*Tasamuh*), moderation (*Tawasuth*), mutual assistance (*Ta'awun*), and living in harmony (*Tawazun*). This is clearly stated in QS. Al-Baqarah verse 213, which is translated as follows: "Mankind was (formerly) one community (in monotheism). (After disagreements arose,) then Allah sent the prophets (to) convey good news and warn. Allah sent down with them the Book containing the truth to decide between people in matters in which they differed. No one disagreed about it except those who were given (the Book) after clear evidence had come to them, out of envy among themselves. So, by His will, Allah guides those who believe in the truth in which they differed. Allah guides whom He wills to the straight path (based on their readiness to receive guidance)(Kemenag, 2022).

The verse above explains that Islam came with a very strong sense of multiculturalism. Therefore, in the Islamic perspective, multiculturalism is a form of respect and recognition given to other cultures in a normative and truthful manner. In Islam, multiculturalism is categorized into three parts:

Multiculturalism in a Theological Perspective

In the Qur'an there are many verses that examine multicultural life which is *sunnatullah*. In the Al-Quran surah al-Hujarat verse 13, it means: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from a man and a woman. Then, We made you into nations and tribes so that you may know each other. Indeed, the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most pious. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing, Most Accurate." (*Al-Hujarat*, 13).

Abdullah Yusuf Ali, in *The Holy Qur'an*, states that the verse is addressed to all mankind, both Muslims and non-Muslims. Verse 13 of QS. al-Hujarat above clearly demonstrates that Islam believes in and considers every human being to be born in pairs and to have the goal of getting to know and understand others, regardless of

their skin color, ethnicity, and so on.

Multiculturalism in Historical Perspective

At the beginning of the Prophet Muhammad's Hijrah to Medina, he found that the social conditions of the people there were very bad, there were various disputes between several groups so that the Prophet Muhammad made a decision and agreement at that time, quoted from the book *Fiqh al-Tasamuh fi al-fikr al-Arabi al-Islami: Tsagafah wa al-Dawlah*, Abdulk Husein Sya'ban he stated that the contents of the Medina charter were the highest peak of Islamic tolerance so that each group respects differences and can live safely.

Multiculturalism in Sociological Perspective

This perspective can be seen in the religious practices of Muslims throughout the world. Islam has 5 (five) large groups known as Madzhab with different founders as well, Imam Shafi'i with his Qauljadid and Qadim, Imam Hanafi, Imam Hambali, Abu Hanifah and Imam Ja'far. Likewise with the schools of kalam science, Imam al-Asy'ari, and Maturidy are called the founders of *Ahlussunnah (Sunni)*, Wasil bin Atho' with his Mu'tazilah. The internal diversity of Islam is also found in the social, political and educational models. This can be seen with historical facts, namely the Ottoman Empire, the Mughal Dynasty and so on, this is evidence of Multiculturalism in the very diverse religion of Islam (Novayani, 2017; Mulyono, 2019; Arifin, & Kartiko, 2022).

The Urgency of Multicultural Islamic Education in Building Tolerance

Interfaith tolerance is one of the characteristics of diversity in Indonesia. Therefore, society should maintain this attitude of tolerance and not destroy it. In the context of a diverse society, a key element to building a harmonious life is to practice tolerance. By maintaining such an attitude, intolerant actions can be reduced or even disappear completely. Many incidents that have occurred recently are caused by the low level of tolerance among our people. Another important factor is that education in our society is very minimal, many prefer to work rather than pursue education.

Tolerance, or tasamuh, in Islam is not an attitude that liberates or obscures beliefs, but rather a strong recognition of the existence of other faiths, accompanied by respect for the rights of their adherents (Azra, 2017). Multicultural Islamic Education is important to develop tolerance for the following reasons:

Deconstructing Prejudice and Stereotypes

Islamic education is not only focused on achieving aspects of religious knowledge, but also aims to form a comprehensive and moral character. In the diverse situation of

Indonesian society - both in terms of religion, ethnicity, and culture - Islamic education needs to be developed with a multicultural approach. Multicultural Islamic education means education that values variation, acknowledges diversity, and encourages an attitude of tolerance in everyday social interactions. The importance of this approach becomes increasingly apparent when faced with social realities that are still influenced by prejudice and stereotypes among various groups in society.

Tolerance is the key to a peaceful and harmonious social life. From the perspective of multicultural Islamic education, tolerance is not simply a passive attitude of tolerating differences, but rather an active form of respect for human dignity (Assegaf, 2010). Through the educational process, values such as deliberation, empathy, and social justice can be systematically instilled in students.

The implementation of multicultural Islamic education includes learning that emphasizes social experiences across identities. Students are encouraged to get to know, understand, and interact with individuals or groups from diverse backgrounds. This interaction fosters critical awareness that each group possesses equal values and culture (Azra, 2017). When students are accustomed to seeing differences as inevitable, a tolerant attitude will emerge that is rooted in understanding, not just a social formality.

Prejudice and stereotypes are two things that often hinder harmonious relations between groups. Prejudice arises from negative generalizations about other groups without any objective basis, while stereotypes are labels unfairly attached to certain groups (Kusmiadi et al., 2008). In the context of a pluralistic society, these two things are often reinforced by social, political, and media factors that produce discriminatory narratives.

Multicultural Islamic education can be an effective means of deconstructing prejudice and stereotypes through a dialogical and reflective approach (Ma'arif, 2011). By introducing Islamic values that reject discrimination, such as the principles of *'adl* (justice) and *ihsan* (goodness), students are encouraged to judge individuals based on their behavior, not group identity. Furthermore, learning activities that emphasize cross-cultural experiences can help students correct narrow views of the "other." (Ummah, 2019; Purnanda, 2024).

Developing Cross-Cultural Empathy

Islamic education actually does not merely function as a medium for conveying religious knowledge, but also as a tool for forming character and universal human values. In a modern society influenced by diverse religions, cultures, and ethnicities, Islamic education faces significant challenges in fostering a sense of tolerance and empathy between diverse cultures. The concept of multicultural Islamic education emerged as a solution to meet this need, namely an educational approach that values

diversity and supports the formation of harmonious and mutually respectful social relationships.

Tolerance is a key value in Islam and serves as a moral foundation for building peaceful social relations. In the context of education, tolerance means not only accepting the existence of others, but also understanding, respecting, and putting oneself in their shoes (Abdullah, 2012). This is where the concept of *cross-cultural empathy emerges*, namely the ability to feel and understand the experiences of individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Through multicultural Islamic education, students are guided to understand diversity not only theoretically, but also to experience and internalize the values of unity amidst differences. The role of teachers is vital in guiding interactions between students from different ethnicities, languages, or cultures, fostering a process of mutual learning (Azra, 2017). Social experiences like this are an effective way to build empathy between cultures that is based on a sense of shared humanity.

To encourage empathy between cultures, Islamic education must incorporate a multicultural approach in the curriculum, teaching techniques, and school atmosphere. First, the curriculum needs to demonstrate the values of diversity and mutual respect through accessible materials, such as stories about various Islamic civilizations and the contributions of Muslims from various ethnic backgrounds. Second, teaching techniques should focus on dialogue and collaboration to help students understand different cultural perspectives. Third, the school or Islamic boarding school environment should be built as a safe social environment for diversity. This approach can foster intercultural empathy by providing students with opportunities to understand reality from another person's perspective. When someone can experience conditions in another culture, they tend to be more open, less quick to make negative decisions, and can foster balanced social interactions.

Mainstreaming Moderate Religious Insight

Seeing the increasingly complex situation of global society, Islamic education faces major challenges due to the emergence of various extreme and closed religious ideologies. This incident not only endangers the unity of the people, but also reduces the universal humanitarian values that are the core of Islamic teachings. Therefore, the development of multicultural Islamic education is very important, especially to create tolerance and emphasize moderate religious understanding.

Moderate religious insight (*wasathiyah al-Islamiyah*) is an approach to religion that emphasizes a balance between text and situation, as well as between adherence to religious law and openness to social change. Multicultural Islamic education plays a crucial role in fostering this insight by encouraging students to understand Islam holistically, not just from a narrow perspective but also within a dynamic context (Kemenag, 2019). Through an interactive and introspective learning approach,

students are guided to develop an understanding of religion that does not incite hatred against other groups. An Islamic education curriculum that emphasizes principles of moderation such as justice, balance, and discussion will create a generation that can bridge differences, not cause conflict.

According to M. Amin Abdullah, a moderate paradigm in Islamic education must be based on an integrative epistemology, namely combining religious, social, and humanities sciences to understand religious reality holistically (Abdullah, 2012). With this approach, students not only understand religion from a theological aspect, but also from a social and humanitarian aspect.

The Role of Multicultural Islamic Education in Strengthening National Character

Islamic education has a major mission in forming people who are faithful, knowledgeable, and have noble morals. In the context of Indonesia's pluralistic nation, this mission cannot be separated from the responsibility to instill the values of tolerance, togetherness, and respect for diversity. Therefore, Islamic education needs to be developed within a multicultural framework to produce a generation that is both religious and possesses a strong national character (Assegaf, 2010).

The concept of Islamic education, based on multiculturalism, highlights the importance of respecting diverse cultures, ethnicities, and religions as part of God's gifts and will. In the Quran, Allah affirms that humans were created into various nations and ethnicities so that they might get to know one another (QS. Al-Hujurat: 13). This verse provides a theological foundation for Islamic education that values diversity, as understanding these differences fosters mutual respect, appreciation, and strengthens bonds of brotherhood.

Multicultural Islamic Education and the Foundation of National Character

The character of a nation is a reflection of the ethical, spiritual, and social values instilled through education (Aswati, 2021). In this regard, strengthening national character in Indonesia is closely linked to the values of diversity, cooperation, and social justice. Multicultural Islamic education plays a crucial role in strengthening these values by teaching a spirit of tolerance and equality. Through a multicultural approach, Islamic education can develop students' awareness that being a true Muslim means respecting fellow human beings, regardless of religious or ethnic differences (Yaqin, 2005). Thus, Islamic education not only forms individuals who are religiously devout, but also citizens who have a high social and moral awareness of national life.

Multicultural Islamic Education as an Instrument of Social Integration

Indonesia is a country of great diversity, which often triggers the possibility of social

conflict and division due to differences in perspective, religion, or ethnicity. In such circumstances, Islamic education that upholds multicultural values can serve as a tool to unite society and strengthen a sense of nationalism and unity (Yaqin, 2005). Through Islamic teachings that emphasize universal principles such as justice, love, and peace, students are encouraged to view religion as a moral guide, not a barrier. An inclusive, dialogic, and participatory learning process enables students to see diversity as a national treasure that must be preserved, not something to be avoided. Thus, Islamic education that emphasizes multiculturalism serves as a bridge between religiosity and nationalism, where both aspects can support and collaborate.

Strengthening Character Values through Multicultural Islamic Education

National character is not formed instantly, but rather through a long process involving the internalization of moral and national values. Multicultural Islamic education contributes significantly to this process by integrating Islamic and humanitarian values into the curriculum (Bagir, 2017). Values such as tolerance, empathy, honesty, and social responsibility are introduced through intercultural social interactions in schools and Islamic boarding schools. Teachers and educators play a crucial role as role models in implementing these multicultural values. Furthermore, a diverse Islamic education curriculum also enhances students' understanding of the diverse history of Islamic civilization, such as the golden age in Andalusia and Baghdad, where interfaith tolerance was fundamental to civilization's progress.

D. Conclusions

The urgency of multicultural Islamic education in promoting tolerance and moderate religious understanding (*wasathiyah*) lies in its function as a tool for social and spiritual transformation. By implementing a multicultural approach, students are encouraged to understand Islamic teachings contextually, appreciate diversity, and reject all forms of extremism. This moderate understanding provides a strong foundation for building a harmonious, just, and cultured Islamic society. Multicultural Islamic education plays a strategic role in strengthening the character of the diverse Indonesian nation. By fostering respect for differences, this education instills universal values such as harmony, justice, and humanity. This approach not only solidifies a student's Islamic identity but also shapes a national character grounded in solidarity and national unity. Multicultural Islamic education plays a strategic role in strengthening the character of the diverse Indonesian nation. By fostering respect for differences, this education instills universal values such as harmony, justice, and humanity. This approach not only solidifies a student's Islamic identity but also shapes a national character grounded in solidarity and national unity. In conclusion, multicultural Islamic education serves as the main foundation for realizing an Indonesian society that is religious, moderate, and has a strong character.

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