

Navigating Diversity Through Homogeneity: A Comparative Study of Multicultural Value Implementation in Islamic and Christian Education at an Indonesian Junior High School

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the implementation of multicultural values in Islamic Religious Education and Christian Religious Education learning at SMP Negeri 2, Kualuh Selatan District. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study method to gain a deep understanding of how multicultural values are integrated into religious learning in a school environment with diverse religious backgrounds. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, in-depth interviews with the principal, Islamic Religious Education teachers, Christian Religious Education teachers, and students, and supported by documentation studies. Data analysis used the interactive analysis model of Miles and Huberman which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, while data validity was guaranteed through source triangulation and method triangulation. The results of the study indicate that religious teachers at SMP Negeri 2, Kualuh Selatan District have a good understanding of multicultural values based on their respective theological perspectives. Islamic Religious Education teachers understand multicultural values as a form of tolerance based on the teachings of the Qur'an and Islamic values, while Christian Religious Education teachers emphasize the value of universal love in Christian teachings as the basis for respect for fellow human beings. The implementation of multicultural values in religious education is carried out through various strategies, such as collaborative learning, interactive discussions, the use of diverse learning media, religious literacy programs, and worship practices that emphasize mutual respect among students of different religions. This study concludes that religious education can be a strategic tool for instilling multicultural values and strengthening tolerance among students in a pluralistic school environment.

Keywords: Multicultural Values, Religious Education, Strengthening Tolerance

A. Introduction

Modern societies in various parts of the world face increasingly complex challenges in building a harmonious social life amid the diversity of religion, culture, language, and social identity. Globalization, population mobility, and the development of

information technology have brought together various community groups with different backgrounds in the same social space (Hurmaini, Ekafitrianda, Nasir, & Kurniawan, 2025). This condition requires systematic efforts to instill values of tolerance, mutual respect, and an inclusive attitude from an early age. In the context of education, schools become one of the strategic institutions in shaping students' multicultural awareness through a learning process that emphasizes respect for differences.

Multicultural education is essentially an educational approach aimed at developing attitudes that appreciate diversity and fostering awareness that differences are part of social reality that must be accepted constructively. Through multicultural education, students not only gain knowledge about diversity but are also trained to build attitudes of tolerance, empathy, and cooperation with individuals from different backgrounds (Afida, Aimah, & Fakhruddin, 2025). These values become very important in the effort to create a peaceful and harmonious society, especially in a country that has a high level of diversity like Indonesia.

Indonesia is known as a multicultural country consisting of hundreds of ethnic groups, languages, cultures, and various religions that live side by side within a single nation. The principle of unity in diversity is reflected in the national motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* and the basic values contained in Pancasila (Iskandar, Mesiono, & Sit, 2025). Normatively, Pancasila emphasizes the importance of an attitude of tolerance among religious communities and respect for differences. However, in social practice, various phenomena of intolerance and identity-based conflicts still often occur in various regions. This condition indicates that the internalization of the values of tolerance and multiculturalism still requires more systematic strengthening, especially through the educational pathway. In the context of formal education, religious learning holds a very strategic position in instilling moral and ethical values in students. Religious education not only aims to provide doctrinal understanding of the teachings of a religion, but also to shape a moderate, inclusive religious attitude that respects the existence of followers of other religions (Adibah, et al., 2025). Therefore, the integration of multicultural values in religious education becomes very important so that students are able to understand religious teachings comprehensively while also respecting the diversity of beliefs in society.

School as a social educational space often reflects the conditions of diversity in the surrounding community. One school that represents this diversity is SMP Negeri 2 in Kualuh Selatan District. This school has students who come from various religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. This diversity makes the school a potential social interaction space to foster values of tolerance and appreciation of differences through the learning process that takes place both inside and outside the classroom. However, in practice, religious education in schools is generally carried out separately according to the religion adhered to by the students. This type of learning model is administratively necessary to ensure the material aligns with each student's beliefs.

However, this separation can also create its own challenges in efforts to effectively instill multicultural values, because interfaith interactions within the learning context become relatively limited. On the other hand, schools are still required to foster attitudes of mutual respect and tolerance among students of different religions.

Research (Hurmaini, Ekafitrianda, Nasir, & Kurniawan, 2025) shows that the integration of multicultural values in religious education can enhance attitudes of tolerance and appreciation of differences among students. Research ('Azah & Sholeh, 2025) also emphasizes that religious education which prioritizes an inclusive and dialogical approach is able to build awareness of pluralism and encourage the creation of harmonious social relationships in the school environment. In addition, studies (Habibulloh, 2025) also highlights the importance of the role of teachers and school culture in instilling multicultural values through various learning activities and social activities at school. However, most previous studies have primarily focused on the general implementation of multicultural education within school environments or in educational institutions that explicitly adopt the concept of multicultural schools. Studies that specifically examine how multicultural values are implemented in religious education in schools with diverse student populations where religious instruction is still conducted separately according to each student's religion remain relatively limited. In fact, within the Indonesian education system, religious education is indeed delivered according to the religion embraced by each student, which consequently limits opportunities for interfaith interaction within the formal learning process. In addition, most previous studies have been conducted at the senior secondary education level or in schools based on particular religious affiliations. Empirical studies that specifically highlight the implementation of multicultural values in religious learning at the junior secondary school level in regions with diverse social and cultural backgrounds are still relatively scarce. Therefore, further research is needed to provide a deeper understanding of how multicultural values are integrated into religious learning at the junior secondary school level within the context of a pluralistic society.

Based on these research gaps, this study presents several aspects of novelty that distinguish it from previous studies. First, this study specifically examines the implementation of multicultural values in religious learning within a school that has a diverse student population, while the process of religious instruction is still conducted separately according to each student's religion. This study offers a new perspective on how values of tolerance and respect for differences can still be instilled even though the structure of religious learning is religiously homogeneous. Second, this study provides a contextual analysis of multicultural education practices at the junior secondary school level in regional areas, particularly at SMP Negeri 2 Kualuh Selatan District. This approach enables the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of social interaction among students, the role of teachers in the religious learning process, and how school culture contributes to shaping attitudes of tolerance and respect for diversity. Third, this study does not only examine the

implementation of multicultural values from the perspective of the curriculum or learning materials alone, but also explores how these values are manifested in classroom practices, students' social interactions, as well as school policies and culture. Therefore, this research is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of multicultural education studies and practically to the development of more inclusive religious learning models that are responsive to the reality of diversity in society.

B. Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study research type. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to deeply understand the process of implementing multicultural values in religious education as well as the social dynamics that occur in the school environment. This approach allows the researcher to explore the experiences, views, and practices carried out by teachers and students in instilling multicultural values in the learning process (Creswell, 2024). By using the case study method, this research focuses on a single research location in depth so that it can produce a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

The research location was carried out at SMP Negeri 2 in the Kualuh Selatan District, which was chosen as the research site because the school has students from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. This diversity condition makes the school a potential social space for developing multicultural values through the learning process, especially in religious education. This study aims to examine how values of tolerance, respect for differences, and mutual respect are implemented in the religious education learning process within the school environment. The research subjects in this study consisted of several informants who were considered to have knowledge and direct involvement in the religious learning process at school. The research informants included the principal, religious education teachers, and students involved in religious learning activities. The determination of informants was carried out using purposive sampling techniques, namely the deliberate selection of informants based on certain criteria relevant to the research objectives. This technique was used so that the researchers could obtain in-depth information that aligns with the focus of the study (Sugiyono, 2024).

The data collection techniques in this study were carried out through several methods, namely observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to directly observe the religious learning process as well as social interactions that occur in the school environment, especially those related to the implementation of multicultural values. In-depth interviews were conducted with informants to obtain information regarding their understanding, experiences, and practices in integrating multicultural values in religious learning. Meanwhile, documentation was used to complement the research data through various documents related to learning activities, such as curriculum, learning tools, as well as

school activities that support the development of values of tolerance and diversity (Yin, 2024). Data analysis in this study uses the interactive analysis model proposed by (Arikunto, 2021), which includes three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction is carried out by selecting, focusing, and simplifying the data obtained from the field to align with the research focus. Next, the reduced data is presented in the form of a descriptive narrative, making it easier for the researcher to understand the patterns and relationships between the data. The final stage is drawing conclusions, which is carried out continuously throughout the research process until valid and accountable findings are obtained.

To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses triangulation techniques, both source triangulation and method triangulation. Source triangulation is carried out by comparing information obtained from various informants, such as principals, teachers, and students. Meanwhile, method triangulation is carried out by comparing data obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. The use of this triangulation aims to increase the validity and credibility of the research findings so that the research results can be trusted (Moleong, 2024). Through this methodological approach, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of how multicultural values are implemented in religious education at SMP Negeri 2 Kecamatan Kualuh Selatan as well as how these practices contribute to building attitudes of tolerance and appreciation for diversity among students.

C. Results and Discussion

Results

Religious Teachers' Understanding of the Concept of Multicultural Values at SMPN 2 Kualuh Selatan District

The results of the research observations show that the implementation of multicultural values at SMPN 2 Kualuh Selatan is reflected through the understanding and practices carried out by the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher, the Christian Religious Education (PAK) teacher, as well as the policies implemented by the school principal. In general, the multicultural values that develop within the school environment include attitudes of tolerance, mutual respect, and appreciation among students who come from different religious backgrounds.

Based on observations conducted in classrooms and within the school environment, the PAI teacher instills multicultural values by emphasizing the importance of tolerance, cooperation, and mutual respect among followers of different religions. These values are not only delivered in the form of learning materials, but are also connected to students' social lives within the school environment. The teacher encourages students to build harmonious interactions without making religious

differences an issue. This can be seen when Muslim and Christian students are able to cooperate in various school activities, such as group discussions, cleaning activities, and other social activities. In addition, the PAI teacher also provides explanations to students about the importance of respecting other people's beliefs as part of religious teachings that emphasize tolerance in social life. Meanwhile, the PAK teacher also instills multicultural values through a moral and spiritual approach that emphasizes love for fellow human beings. In the learning process, the teacher teaches students that every individual must respect one another and treat others with kindness regardless of differences in religion, ethnicity, or cultural background. Diversity is viewed as part of the reality of life that must be accepted and appreciated. Through learning activities and interactions within the school environment, students are encouraged to develop an open attitude and respect the differences that exist around them.

In addition to the role of teachers, the perspective of the school principal also shows strong support for the implementation of multicultural values in the school. The principal views student diversity as a positive potential that can serve as a means of social learning for students to understand the values of tolerance and to live harmoniously with others. This is reflected in various school policies that provide opportunities for all students to interact through joint activities, such as communal work (gotong royong), flag ceremonies, and various extracurricular activities. Although religious learning is conducted separately according to each student's religion, the school still creates spaces for interaction that allow students from different religious backgrounds to cooperate and build positive social relationships. Furthermore, the principal also emphasizes the importance of role modeling by teachers in instilling values of tolerance and mutual respect. Teachers are expected to demonstrate fairness and avoid discrimination within the school environment. Thus, multicultural values are not only taught in classroom learning processes but are also reflected in the culture and daily life of the school environment. The implementation of these values shows that the school environment strives to create a harmonious, inclusive atmosphere that appreciates diversity as part of shared life. The findings from the observations are also consistent with the results of the interviews. The interview findings conducted by the researcher are presented below.

Based on the results of the interview with the school principal, it was found that religious diversity at SMPN 2 Kualuh Selatan is viewed as a potential that can strengthen the attitude of tolerance among students. The principal explained that the school strives to create a conducive environment so that students from different religious backgrounds can interact harmoniously. This was conveyed by the principal as follows: *"In this school, students come from different religious backgrounds, some are Muslim and some are Christian. We see this difference not as a problem, but as an opportunity for students to learn to respect each other and live together harmoniously."*

The Islamic Religious Education teacher also conveyed that in the learning process, the values of tolerance are always emphasized to students so that they can understand

the importance of respecting differences. This was conveyed by one of the IRE teachers as follows: *"In PAI learning, we always emphasize to students that religious differences are something that must be respected. I often remind students to maintain good relationships with their friends even though they have different beliefs."* A similar statement was also conveyed by another Islamic Education teacher who emphasized that religious education is not only related to acts of worship, but also shapes good social attitudes in daily life. *"I always remind students that as Muslims we must show good behavior to everyone. So, even if our friends are of a different religion, we must still respect them and must not be discriminatory."* Meanwhile, the Christian Religious Education teacher explained that in PAK learning, students are taught to have an attitude of love towards fellow humans regardless of religious or cultural background. The teacher conveyed the following: *"We teach students that every person must love and respect each other. So even though there are religious differences in this school, students are still taught to live in harmony and help one another."*

In addition to the teachers and the principal, interviews were also conducted with students to find out about their experiences interacting with friends of different religions. One student stated that relationships among students at school are going well and there are no issues related to religious differences. *"At our school, we usually just befriend anyone. Even if someone has a different religion, we can still study together, play, and cooperate in school activities."* The same thing was also conveyed by other students who emphasized that the teachers often give guidance so that students always respect differences. *"The teachers at school often remind us to respect each other. So, we are already used to not mocking or belittling friends who have different religions."*

Based on the results of the interview, it can be understood that the values of tolerance, mutual respect, and appreciation have been understood by the school community and applied in daily interactions in the environment of SMPN 2 Kualuh Selatan.

Implementation Strategy of Multicultural Values in Religious Education at SMPN 2 Kualuh Selatan District

The results of the research observations indicate that the implementation of multicultural values in religious learning at SMPN 2 Kualuh Selatan District is carried out through various strategies integrated into both the learning process and school life activities. These strategies are not limited to the delivery of material in the classroom, but are also manifested in social interactions among students and in the school culture, which emphasizes the importance of tolerance and mutual respect for differences.

One of the strategies observed in the learning process is the integration of multicultural values into religious learning materials. Both the Islamic Religious Education teacher and the Christian Religious Education teacher do not merely deliver religious materials in a normative manner, but also relate them to attitudes of tolerance, appreciation of differences, and the importance of living peacefully together

in a diverse society. During the learning process, teachers often provide examples related to students' daily lives so that these values are easier for students to understand and apply in their social interactions. In addition to delivering learning materials, another strategy observed is the use of a dialogical approach in the learning process. Teachers provide opportunities for students to express their opinions, engage in discussions, and share experiences about living in a diverse society. Through these discussions, students are encouraged to understand that differences in religion, culture, and social background are part of the reality of life that must be respected.

The implementation of multicultural values is also carried out through collaborative activities among students. Based on observation results, students from different religious backgrounds are often involved in group work as well as various school activities together. These activities provide opportunities for students to interact directly, build cooperation, and foster mutual respect among one another. Furthermore, the strategy for implementing multicultural values can also be seen in various school activities that involve all students regardless of their religious backgrounds. Activities such as communal work (gotong royong), flag ceremonies, and extracurricular activities serve as platforms for students to learn to cooperate and build harmonious social relationships. Through these activities, students can develop tolerant attitudes and understand the importance of togetherness in school life. The observation results also show that teachers' role modeling becomes one of the important strategies in instilling multicultural values in students. Teachers strive to demonstrate attitudes of mutual respect and avoid discrimination toward students from different religious backgrounds. Such attitudes serve as real examples for students in building harmonious relationships with their peers. The findings from the observations are also consistent with the results of the interviews, which are presented below.

The school principal explained that the school consciously strives to create an educational environment that fosters mutual respect among students from different religious backgrounds. This effort is realized through various joint activities that involve all students without distinguishing their religious backgrounds. *"In this school, we strive to create a harmonious atmosphere among the students. Even though they have different religions, they are still involved together in school activities, such as community service, flag ceremonies, and extracurricular activities. From there, they learn to respect each other and work together."*

The first Islamic Religious Education teacher explained that in the learning process, multicultural values are always integrated into the material taught to students. According to him, religious education not only emphasizes the aspects of religious knowledge but also the development of good social attitudes. *"In my Islamic Education learning, I always relate the material to students' daily lives. I remind them that even though we are of different religions from our friends, we must still respect them and maintain good relationships."*

The second Islamic Religious Education teacher also emphasized that the teaching strategies used are not only through lectures, but also through discussions and group work involving students from different backgrounds. *"I usually organize group discussions so that students can exchange opinions with each other. In this way, they learn to understand other people's views and learn to appreciate the differences among them."* Meanwhile, the Christian Religious Education teacher explained that in Christian religious learning, students are taught to have an attitude of love towards fellow human beings without distinguishing between religious or cultural backgrounds. *"I always emphasize to students that every human being should love and respect one another. So even though there are religious differences in this school, they still have to live in harmony and help each other."* In addition to the teachers and the principal, an interview was also conducted with one of the students to find out how those multicultural values are felt in everyday life at school. *"At our school, we often work together in groups even though we are of different religions. Teachers also often remind us to respect each other and not to make an issue of differences."*

Based on the results of the interview, it can be understood that the strategy for implementing multicultural values at SMPN 2 Kualuh Selatan Subdistrict is carried out through the integration of tolerance values in learning, the use of discussion and group work methods, as well as through various school activities that encourage interaction and cooperation among students from different religious backgrounds. This shows that multicultural values are not only taught theoretically, but also practiced in everyday life within the school environment.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Multicultural Values

Based on the results of the research observations at SMPN 2 Kualuh Selatan District, the implementation of multicultural values in religious learning is influenced by several factors that are both supportive and inhibiting. These factors are related to the conditions of the school environment, the role of teachers, and the structure of the curriculum used in the learning process. One of the factors supporting the implementation of multicultural values is the diversity of students' religious backgrounds within the school environment. This condition provides opportunities for students to interact directly with peers who have different beliefs. Such interactions serve as an effective form of social learning in fostering attitudes of tolerance, mutual respect, and appreciation among students.

In addition, support from the school also becomes an important factor in encouraging the implementation of multicultural values. Based on the observations, the school strives to create a conducive atmosphere through various joint activities that involve all students without distinguishing their religious backgrounds. Activities such as communal work (gotong royong), flag ceremonies, and extracurricular activities serve as spaces for social interaction that enable students to learn cooperation and build harmonious relationships.

Teachers' role modeling is also a significant supporting factor in instilling multicultural values in students. Teachers act not only as providers of learning materials but also as role models in demonstrating attitudes of tolerance and respect for differences. Teachers' fair and non-discriminatory attitudes toward all students contribute to creating an inclusive learning environment. However, the implementation of multicultural values also faces several inhibiting factors. One of the obstacles observed is the limited learning materials that specifically address multicultural values within the curriculum used. This condition requires teachers to make independent efforts to integrate these values into religious learning materials. Furthermore, the separation of classes based on religion in religious education learning may also limit direct interaction among students of different beliefs within the context of formal learning. This condition can reduce opportunities for students to discuss issues of tolerance and diversity directly within the same classroom. The findings from the observations are also consistent with the results of the interviews, which are presented below.

The school principal explained that the diversity of students' religious backgrounds is one of the main factors supporting the implementation of multicultural values within the school environment. This diversity provides opportunities for students to learn to understand and appreciate differences through interactions that occur in various school activities. *"In this school, students come from different religious backgrounds, some are Muslim and some are Christian. This situation actually becomes an opportunity for us to instill an attitude of tolerance. Through various school activities, students can learn to work together and respect each other even though they have different beliefs."*

One of the Islamic Religious Education teachers also conveyed that support from the school and an open attitude from the teachers are factors that make it easier to instill values of tolerance in students. *"The school environment is quite supportive in instilling the value of tolerance. The teachers here also respect each other, so students can directly see examples of mutual respect in daily life at school."* Another Islamic Education teacher explained that although multicultural values are important to teach to students, there are several obstacles in the learning process, especially related to the material available in the curriculum. *"In the current curriculum, not all subjects specifically discuss tolerance or diversity. So, we as teachers have to make an effort to connect the lesson materials ourselves with those values so that students still understand the importance of respecting differences."* Meanwhile, the Christian Religious Education teacher also conveyed that religious learning is basically carried out separately according to each student's religion. This condition sometimes limits the opportunity to directly discuss diversity in the same classroom. *"Because religious lessons are separated according to each student's religion, interactions about diversity do not always occur in classroom learning. But usually, we convey the values of mutual respect through examples in everyday life."* In addition, one of the students mentioned that in daily life at school, they can still interact with friends of different religions through various joint activities. *"Although religious lessons are separated, outside of class we still often spend time together, such as during group work,*

community service, or other school activities. From there, we learn to respect each other."

Based on the results of the interview, it can be seen that the diversity of students' backgrounds, the support of the school environment, and the example set by teachers are factors that support the implementation of multicultural values at SMPN 2 in Kualuh Selatan District. However, there are also several obstacles, such as limited curriculum materials and the separation of religious education, which can limit direct interaction between students of different beliefs in formal classroom settings. Nevertheless, various school activities remain an important means of fostering attitudes of tolerance and mutual respect among students.

The Impact of Implementing Multicultural Values on Students' Tolerance and Character

Based on the results of research observations at SMPN 2 Kualuh Selatan District, the implementation of multicultural values in religious learning has a positive impact on the development of students' attitudes of tolerance and character. Values such as mutual appreciation, respect, and cooperation among students from different religious backgrounds can be seen in various learning activities as well as in daily social interactions within the school environment.

The observation results indicate that students are able to build harmonious social relationships despite coming from different religious backgrounds. In both learning activities and other school programs, students are seen cooperating in groups, helping one another, and not displaying discriminatory attitudes toward peers who hold different beliefs. This shows that the values of tolerance have been internalized in students' behavior through the learning process and interactions that occur within the school environment. In addition, the implementation of multicultural values also contributes to the development of students' social character, making them more open to differences. Students demonstrate respect for others' views, maintain friendships without questioning religious differences, and possess an awareness of the importance of living peacefully side by side. These attitudes can be seen in joint activities such as group work, communal cooperation (gotong royong), and other school activities involving students from various backgrounds.

The observation findings also show that religious learning not only provides an understanding of religious teachings but also plays an important role in shaping students' character to become more tolerant and appreciative of diversity. The values conveyed by teachers during the learning process are reflected in students' behavior, which shows greater respect for differences and the ability to maintain harmony in school life. Thus, the implementation of multicultural values in religious learning at SMPN 2 Kualuh Selatan District makes a significant contribution to strengthening attitudes of tolerance and fostering inclusive student character, thereby supporting the creation of a harmonious school environment that respects diversity. The findings

from the observations are also consistent with the results of the interviews, which are presented below.

The school principal explained that the application of multicultural values within the school environment has had a positive influence on social relationships among students. According to the principal, students are able to build harmonious friendships even though they come from different religious backgrounds. *"We see that the students in this school are already accustomed to living side by side with friends of different religions. They can study together, collaborate in various activities, and there are no conflicts related to differences in beliefs."* One of the Islamic Religious Education teachers also stated that the values of tolerance instilled in religious learning are reflected in students' daily behavior in the school environment. *"From what I see, the students have begun to understand the importance of respecting differences. They can work together in groups, help each other, and do not make an issue of differences in religion among them."*

Another Islamic Religious Education teacher added that religious learning is not only intended to provide religious knowledge, but also to shape students' attitudes and character so that they are able to live harmoniously in a diverse society. *"We always emphasize to students those religious teachings also teach to respect each other and maintain good relationships with others. This is seen when they interact with their friends at school."* Meanwhile, the Christian Religious Education teacher explained that the attitude of mutual respect among students is already evident in various school activities, both inside and outside the classroom. *"Students at this school are quite open in socializing. Even though they have different religions, they can still be good friends and help each other in learning activities as well as other school activities."* In addition, one of the students also revealed that they are accustomed to interacting with friends of different religions without feeling awkward or making an issue of the differences. *"At our school, we make friends with everyone. Even though we have different religions, we can still study together, discuss, and work together in school activities."*

Based on the results of the interview, it can be seen that the implementation of multicultural values in religious education at SMPN 2 Kualuh Selatan District has a positive impact on students' tolerance and character development. This is evident from the students' ability to respect each other, cooperate, and maintain harmonious relationships with friends from different religious backgrounds.

Discussion

Religious Teachers' Understanding of the Concept of Multicultural Values

The research results indicate that the implementation of multicultural values at SMPN 2 Kualuh Selatan District is reflected through the understanding and practices carried out by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, Christian Religious Education (PAK) teachers, and the policies implemented by the school principal. The values that

develop within the school environment include attitudes of tolerance, mutual respect, and consideration among students with different religious backgrounds. These findings indicate that the school serves as a social space capable of fostering multicultural awareness through harmonious interactions among school members. The findings are in line with the concept of multicultural education proposed by (Shobirin & Zakki, 2025) which states that multicultural education aims to foster an attitude of appreciating differences and building inclusive social relationships in a diverse society. In the school context, these values can be internalized through the learning process, social interactions, as well as policies that support the creation of an educational environment that values diversity. Thus, the implementation of the values of tolerance and mutual respect found at SMPN 2 Kualuh Selatan District shows that the school has made efforts to apply the principles of multicultural education in both learning practices and social life within the school environment.

The role of teachers in instilling multicultural values is also one of the important findings in this study. Observations and interviews showed that Islamic Education teachers emphasize the importance of attitudes of tolerance and respect for religious differences as part of Islamic teachings that encourage the creation of a harmonious social life. These values are not only conveyed in the form of learning materials but are also linked to everyday life practices within the school environment. This finding is in line with research (Shodikin, Ruwandi, & Saerozi, 2025) which states that the integration of multicultural values in religious education learning can strengthen students' tolerance attitudes and encourage the formation of harmonious social relationships in the school environment.

In addition, the research results also show that Christian Religious Education teachers instill multicultural values through a moral and spiritual approach that emphasizes love for fellow human beings regardless of religious differences or social backgrounds. This approach demonstrates that religious teachings can serve as an important foundation in fostering attitudes of tolerance and appreciation for diversity. These findings are consistent with research ('Azah & Sholeh, 2025) which states that religious education that emphasizes the values of love, empathy, and respect for others can be an effective means of building awareness of pluralism and attitudes of mutual respect among students.

This study also found that principals play an important role in supporting the implementation of multicultural values through various policies that create social interaction spaces for students from different religious backgrounds. Activities such as communal work, flag ceremonies, as well as various extracurricular activities serve as means for students to build harmonious social relationships. These findings are in line with research (Farouq, Khalil, & Yahya, 2025) which emphasizes that the success of the implementation of multicultural education in schools is greatly influenced by school policies and culture that support the creation of an inclusive educational environment and respect for diversity. Furthermore, the results of interviews with

students indicate that social relationships among students at SMPN 2 Kecamatan Kualuh Selatan run harmoniously and there are no conflicts caused by religious differences. The students stated that they are accustomed to cooperating in school activities and respecting friends who have different beliefs. These findings reinforce the view that multicultural education is not only formed through classroom learning materials, but also through social experiences that students encounter in daily life within the school environment. This is in line with the view (Habibulloh, 2025) which states that multicultural education is a social process aimed at shaping students' awareness to live together peacefully in a plural society.

Although religious education in schools is conducted separately according to each student's religion, this study shows that social interactions outside the classroom still provide space for students to develop attitudes of tolerance and cooperation. This indicates that the implementation of multicultural values not only depends on the formal learning structure, but is also influenced by school culture, teacher role models, and students' social interaction experiences. Thus, the school environment can become an effective space for building multicultural awareness and strengthening tolerance attitudes among students.

Implementation Strategy of Multicultural Values in Religious Education

The research results show that the implementation of multicultural values in religious education at SMPN 2 Kualuh Selatan District is carried out through various strategies that are integrated into the learning process as well as social life within the school environment. These strategies include the integration of tolerance values into religious education materials, the use of a dialogical approach in the learning process, collaborative activities among students, and the formation of a school culture that encourages attitudes of mutual respect and appreciation of differences. These findings indicate that the implementation of multicultural values occurs not only at the cognitive level through the delivery of learning materials but also at the affective and social levels through interactions that take place in the school environment.

The findings of this study are in line with the concept of multicultural education proposed by (Latif, Hafid, & Tinoca, 2021) which states that multicultural education aims to develop students' awareness of diversity and build attitudes of tolerance through an inclusive and dialogical learning process. Banks emphasizes that multicultural values can be internalized through the integration of learning materials, participatory teaching methods, and a school environment that supports the creation of harmonious social interactions among students from different backgrounds. Thus, the learning strategies applied by religion teachers at SMPN 2 Kecamatan Kualuh Selatan show alignment with the principles of multicultural education, which emphasize the importance of respecting differences in the educational environment.

One of the strategies found in this study is the integration of multicultural values into

religious education materials. Islamic Religious Education teachers as well as Christian Religious Education teachers not only deliver religious material normatively, but also relate it to values of tolerance and attitudes of respecting differences. This shows that religious education can function as a means to shape inclusive social attitudes among students. This finding is in line with research (Adibah, et al., 2025) which states that the integration of multicultural values in religious education learning can enhance students' understanding of the importance of tolerance as well as encourage the formation of harmonious social relationships in the school environment. Religious education not only plays a role in shaping students' spiritual awareness but also plays a role in building social character that respects diversity.

In addition, the use of a dialogical approach in the learning process also becomes an important strategy in the implementation of multicultural values. Based on observation and interview results, teachers provide space for students to discuss, express opinions, and share experiences about life in a diverse society. Through these discussions, students can understand different perspectives and learn to respect the views of others. This strategy aligns with research findings (Hadi, Maksum, Saputri, Ibrahim, & Wangyee, 2025) which emphasizes that dialogic and participatory learning can enhance students' multicultural awareness because it provides them with the opportunity to understand diverse social experiences.

Another strategy found in this study is the involvement of students in collaborative activities that include students from different religious backgrounds. Group work activities, joint discussions, as well as various school activities provide opportunities for students to interact directly and build cooperation. These interactions become an important means in fostering attitudes of tolerance and appreciation for differences. This is in line with research (Gamaleal, 2024) which states that social interaction among students from different backgrounds is one of the important factors in the successful implementation of multicultural education in schools. Through these social experiences, students not only understand the concept of tolerance theoretically but also practice it in everyday life.

The results of this study also indicate that school culture plays an important role in supporting the implementation of multicultural values. Various school activities such as community service, flag ceremonies, and extracurricular activities serve as social spaces that allow students from different religious backgrounds to collaborate and build harmonious relationships. These findings are in line with research (Fahman, Yusuf, & Ma'rif, 2025) which states that an inclusive school culture can be an effective means of instilling multicultural values in students. Schools that are able to create open social interaction spaces will provide students the opportunity to learn to appreciate differences and build social solidarity.

In addition to learning strategies and school culture, teacher role-modeling is also an

important factor in the implementation of multicultural values. Teachers not only serve as instructors delivering learning materials but also as role models in demonstrating attitudes of tolerance and appreciation for diversity. Based on observation results, teachers at SMPN 2 Kualuh Selatan Subdistrict strive to demonstrate fair and non-discriminatory attitudes towards students from different religious backgrounds. These attitudes provide concrete examples for students in building harmonious social relationships with their peers. This finding is in line with the view (Inayah, Hidayat, & Winarso, 2025) which states that the exemplary behavior of teachers is one of the important factors in the process of internalizing multicultural values in the educational environment.

Furthermore, the results of interviews with students indicate that values of tolerance and mutual respect have been understood and applied in daily interactions within the school environment. The students stated that they are accustomed to working together in groups without making an issue of religious differences and respect friends who have different beliefs. This shows that the strategies for implementing multicultural values carried out by teachers and the school have had a positive impact on students' social attitudes. These findings reinforce the results of the research (Irsyaad, Mashudi, Nawangsari, & Aniaty, 2025) which states that multicultural education, when applied consistently in the learning process and school culture, can shape students' characters to be inclusive, tolerant, and able to live harmoniously alongside others in a pluralistic society.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that the implementation of multicultural values in religious education at SMPN 2 Kualuh Selatan Subdistrict is carried out through various mutually supportive strategies, ranging from the integration of values into learning materials, the use of dialogic and collaborative methods, the creation of an inclusive school culture, to the teachers' exemplary behavior in daily life within the school environment. These strategies not only strengthen students' understanding of the value of tolerance but also encourage them to practice these values in social interactions within the school environment. Thus, religious education can function as a strategic means of instilling multicultural values and building students' character that respects diversity in community life.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Multicultural Values

Based on research results at SMPN 2 Kualuh Selatan District, the implementation of multicultural values in religious education is influenced by various supporting and inhibiting factors. These factors are related to the diversity of students, support from the school environment, the role of teachers, and the curriculum structure used in the learning process. These findings indicate that the implementation of multicultural values in education cannot be separated from the social and institutional context that shapes the dynamics of school life.

One of the main factors supporting the implementation of multicultural values is the diversity of students' religious backgrounds in the school environment. This diversity provides an opportunity for students to interact directly with friends who have different beliefs, thus allowing a natural social learning process to occur. This social interaction becomes an important means of fostering attitudes of tolerance, mutual respect, and mutual appreciation among students. This finding aligns with the view (Afifuddin, Amri, Latif, Rosmini, & Tahir, 2025) which states that an educational environment with diverse student backgrounds can serve as an effective space for developing multicultural awareness and fostering mutual respect among individuals of different cultures and religions. In this context, the diversity present at SMPN 2 Kualuh Selatan Subdistrict is not seen as an obstacle, but rather as a potential that can be utilized to strengthen values of tolerance among students.

In addition to the factor of student diversity, support from the school environment also becomes an important factor in promoting the implementation of multicultural values. Based on the results of observations and interviews, the school strives to create a conducive atmosphere through various joint activities involving all students without differentiating their religious backgrounds. Activities such as community service, flag ceremonies, and various extracurricular activities become spaces for social interaction that allow students to learn to cooperate and build harmonious social relationships. This is in line with research (Saleh, Hanum, & Rukiyati, 2025) which states that a school culture that is inclusive and open to diversity can be an effective medium in instilling multicultural values in students. Through joint activities in the school environment, students not only understand the concept of tolerance theoretically, but also experience it directly in daily social interactions. Another factor that supports the implementation of multicultural values is the teacher's example in everyday life within the school environment. Teachers have a very important role not only as conveyors of learning material but also as role models for students in developing attitudes of tolerance and respect for differences. Based on research findings, teachers at SMPN 2 Kualuh Selatan District strive to demonstrate fair and non-discriminatory behavior towards all students. This behavior provides a concrete example for students on how to build harmonious social relationships with individuals from different backgrounds. This finding is in line with the opinion (Mukhlis, Basari, & Handayani, 2024) which states that the success of multicultural education is greatly influenced by the role of teachers as agents of social change who are able to instill values of tolerance through exemplary behavior in everyday life within the educational environment.

Nevertheless, the implementation of multicultural values in religious education also faces several obstacles. One of the challenges found in this study is the limitation of learning materials that specifically discuss multicultural values in the used curriculum. This condition forces teachers to independently strive to integrate values of tolerance and appreciation for diversity into the religious education materials being taught. This finding is in line with research (Sukardi, Hanum, & Efianingrum, 2025)

which states that the religious education curriculum in some schools still does not explicitly integrate multicultural values systematically, so teachers need to innovate in the learning process so that these values can still be conveyed to students.

In addition to the limitations of the material in the curriculum, the separation of classes based on religion in religious education learning also becomes one of the factors that potentially limits direct interaction among students of different beliefs in the context of formal learning. In this learning system, students take religious lessons according to their respective religions, so discussions on diversity do not always occur in the same classroom. This is in line with the findings of research (Mala, Zulkarnain, Bakar, & Marpuah, 2024) which states that the system of separating religious education in formal schools often becomes a challenge in developing direct interfaith dialogue in the classroom. Nevertheless, the research also emphasizes that social interaction among students can still occur through various collective school activities.

In the context of SMPN 2 Kualuh Selatan Subdistrict, the limited cross-religious interaction in formal learning can be balanced through various school activities that involve all students together. Activities such as group work, community service, and extracurricular activities provide opportunities for students to interact with peers who have different religious backgrounds. Through these activities, students can learn to understand differences, build cooperation, and develop an attitude of tolerance in everyday life within the school environment. This shows that the implementation of multicultural values does not only depend on the learning process in the classroom, but also on the social experiences gained by students through various activities in the school environment.

The Impact of Implementing Multicultural Values on Students' Tolerance and Character

The research results show that the implementation of multicultural values in religious education at SMPN 2 Kualuh Selatan District positively influences the development of students' tolerance and social character. Values such as mutual respect, honoring differences, and the ability to cooperate among students from different religious backgrounds are evident in various learning activities as well as social interactions within the school environment. These findings indicate that religious education functions not only as a means of transferring religious knowledge but also as a medium for shaping students' character and social attitudes in a pluralistic life. The findings are in line with the view (Tobroni, Jamil, & Firmansyah, 2025) which states that multicultural education aims to build students' awareness so that they are able to understand, appreciate, and live harmoniously in a society that has cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity. Education oriented towards multicultural values can help students develop an attitude of tolerance and appreciate diversity as part of social life. In the context of religious learning in schools, the integration of these values becomes important so that students not only understand their religious teachings normatively,

but also are able to apply humanitarian and tolerance values in daily life.

The results of the research observations show that students are able to build harmonious social relationships even though they come from different religious backgrounds. This is seen from the students' ability to work together in group activities, help each other in the learning process, and not show discriminatory attitudes towards friends who have different beliefs. This condition indicates that the values of tolerance have been instilled in students' behavior through the learning process and social interactions in the school environment. These findings are in line with research (Firdaus & Suwendi, 2025) which states that multicultural education plays an important role in shaping democratic, tolerant, and inclusive attitudes in students. Through an educational process that values diversity, students can learn to understand differences as something normal in social life. In addition, the implementation of multicultural values in religious education also contributes to the development of students' social character, making them more open to differences. Students demonstrate an attitude of respecting others' viewpoints, are able to form friendships without questioning religious differences, and have an awareness of living together peacefully. This attitude is reflected in various school activities such as group work, mutual cooperation, and extracurricular activities involving students from different religious backgrounds. This is in line with the view (Negara, Saihan, & Sukamto, 2025) which emphasizes that multicultural education has a strategic role in developing students' social awareness to live tolerantly and respect plurality in society.

The findings of this study are also supported by the results of interviews with the principal and teachers who stated that the implementation of multicultural values in the school environment has had a positive impact on social relationships among students. The principal explained that students have become accustomed to living alongside friends from different religious backgrounds without causing conflict. This statement indicates that an inclusive school environment can serve as an effective social space to foster attitudes of tolerance and mutual respect. This is in line with research (Srinio, Muslihun, & Usman, 2026) which states that inclusive religious education can play a role in building awareness of pluralism and strengthening values of tolerance within a multicultural society. Furthermore, the Islamic Religious Education and Christian Religious Education teachers at the school emphasized that religious learning is not only oriented towards the cognitive aspect, but also towards the formation of students' attitudes and character. Teachers instill values such as mutual respect, maintaining good relationships with others, and appreciating differences in beliefs as part of religious teachings. This shows that religious learning can be a strategic means of instilling multicultural values in students. These findings are in line with research (Mustamir & Tang, 2025) which states that multicultural-based religious education is able to shape students' character to be tolerant, inclusive, and have social awareness of diversity.

In addition, the results of interviews with students show that they are accustomed to interacting with friends who have different religious backgrounds without feeling awkward or making an issue of the differences. Students are able to study together, discuss, and cooperate in various school activities. This indicates that multicultural values have been internalized in students' behavior through learning experiences and social interactions in the school environment. According to (Syahri, Satriyadi Satriyadi, Zulkarnen, Kalsum, & Hadijaya, 2024), A plural society requires education that can foster an attitude of mutual understanding and respect for differences in order to create a harmonious and peaceful social life.

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that the implementation of multicultural values in religious education at SMPN 2, Kualuh Selatan District, provides a significant contribution to the development of students' tolerance and social character. The religious education process that integrates multicultural values is able to shape attitudes of mutual respect, cooperation, as well as awareness to live peacefully together in diversity. Thus, religious education not only functions as a means of developing religious understanding but also as a strategic medium in building students' inclusive and tolerant character, thereby supporting the creation of a harmonious school environment within a multicultural society.

D. Conclusions

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the implementation of multicultural values in religious learning at SMPN 2 Kualuh Selatan District has been carried out effectively through teachers' understanding, the integration of tolerance values into learning materials, the use of discussion methods and group work, as well as various school activities that encourage interaction among students from different religious backgrounds. Support from the school environment, teachers' role modeling, and the diversity of students serve as the main supporting factors, while limitations in curriculum materials and the separation of religious learning based on students' religions become some of the challenges in its implementation. Nevertheless, this implementation has had a positive impact on the development of attitudes of tolerance, mutual respect, and cooperation among students. The implications of this study indicate that religious learning can become a strategic medium for instilling tolerance values when supported by an inclusive school culture. However, this study has limitations because it was conducted in only one school. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the research location and examine the implementation of multicultural values in other subjects in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding.

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