



Implementation of the Multicultural Islamic Religious Education Curriculum in Madrasah

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Abstract

Indonesia is a country with rich cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity, and education plays a central role in forming attitudes and behaviors that are tolerant and respect differences. However, the existing Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum is often unable to accommodate the needs of inclusive and multicultural education, tending to focus on doctrinal aspects. This research aims to identify and analyze the implementation of multicultural IRE curriculum development strategies at Darut Taqwa Favorite Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs). This research uses a qualitative approach with field research and literature study methods to collect data from in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The research results show that MTs Favorit Darut Taqwa has integrated multicultural values into the IRE curriculum through strategies such as thematic learning, case studies, and extracurricular activities. Challenges faced include limited resources and limited time in the lesson schedule. The proposed strategy includes strengthening teacher training, developing teaching materials, collaborating with the community, and ongoing evaluation and monitoring. The implementation of the multicultural IRE curriculum at MTs Favorit Darut Taqwa has had a positive impact on students' attitudes and social skills, forming a tolerant and inclusive generation and contributing to strengthening multicultural education in Indonesia.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as a country rich in cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity, faces challenges in creating a harmonious and tolerant society. Education plays a central role in shaping the attitudes and behavior of students so they are able to appreciate and respect diversity. Islamic Religious Education (IRE) at Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) has a special responsibility in educating students to not only understand Islamic religious teachings, but also internalize the values of multiculturalism. The characteristics of Islamic religious education have values and spirit to shape and develop individual and social personalities (Bakri, 2020).

The curriculum is a reflection of the community's view of life towards madrasas, both the direction and goals of life (Arifin & Wahyuni, 2024). The curriculum also describes the path taken by educators or teachers together with students to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which become a series of plans and means consisting of objectives, content, subject matter and methods (Astuty & Suharto, 2021) which used to guide educational institutions in achieving the desired educational goals (Mubarak & Yusuf, 2024). Therefore, the curriculum needs to be prepared before the learning process is carried out (Ismail & Sulaiman, 2022), because this curriculum makes it easier for us to know the direction and educational goals we want to achieve.

Therefore, all related parties, such as teachers, students, parents, and the government, are required to understand the curriculum being implemented (Mustaqim, 2014). However, the IRE curriculum implemented in various MTs is often unable to accommodate the need for inclusive and multicultural education. The existing curriculum tends to be homogeneous and focuses on doctrinal aspects, thus providing less space for intercultural dialogue and the development of cross-cultural understanding. This can result in students being less accustomed to and less prepared to face the reality of diversity in everyday life.

Darut Taqwa's Favorite Tsanawiyah Madrasah, as one of the educational institutions that has a good reputation, faces the same challenges. The IRE curriculum at MTs Favorit Darut Taqwa needs to be studied and developed so that it can accommodate the needs of students who come from various cultural backgrounds. An appropriate curriculum development strategy is needed to ensure that students can internalize the values of tolerance, respect for differences, and social harmony well. The development of a multicultural IRE curriculum at MTs Favorit Darut Taqwa not only aims to increase students' understanding of religion but also to equip them with the ability to live in a plural and dynamic society. It is felt that students need to be equipped with multicultural Islam, because it is feared that they will be exposed to radicalism when studying Islam. Whether we admit it or not, the radicalism shown by these groups spread across Indonesia has different religious, ideological backgrounds and different ideological orientations (Bakri & Anas, 2017). A multicultural curriculum is expected to provide a rich learning experience which encourages students to think critically, be open, and appreciate differences.

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) plays an important role in shaping the character and morals of students in Indonesia. In the current era of globalization and cultural diversity, the importance of education that accommodates multicultural values is increasing. Multiculturalism is related to culture in the context of religion, humans are the most powerful and most prominent when compared to other creatures (Hasan, 2016). Darut Taqwa's Favorite Tsanawiyah Madrasah, as one of the leading educational institutions, seeks to respond to this need through developing a multicultural IRE curriculum. However, developing a multicultural IRE curriculum is not an easy task. Appropriate strategies are needed to integrate multicultural values in teaching materials, teaching methods and learning activities in the classroom. Apart from that, another challenge that needs to be faced

is how to measure the effectiveness of the curriculum in improving students' multicultural understanding and attitudes. This research aims to identify and analyze strategies for developing a multicultural IRE curriculum at the Darut Taqwa Favorite Tsanawiyah Madrasah.

This research will explore the various approaches used by schools in developing the curriculum, the challenges faced, and the impact of implementing the curriculum on students. It is hoped that the results of this research can contribute to the development of a multicultural IRE curriculum in other madrasahs in Indonesia. Thus, this research becomes relevant in the context of efforts to improve the quality of Islamic religious education that is able to respond to the diverse socio-cultural dynamics of Indonesian society. An effective curriculum development strategy will not only improve students' academic competence but also shape their character to be more inclusive, tolerant, and respectful of differences.

METHODS

This research is field research that focuses on strategies for developing a multicultural Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum at Darut Taqwa's favorite Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs). Apart from that, this research also involves literature study to strengthen the theoretical basis and support field data analysis.

The approach used in this research is a qualitative approach. This approach was chosen because the aim of the research was to understand and explore strategies for developing an in-depth multicultural IRE curriculum based on the perspectives and experiences of educators, students, and related parties at MTs Favorit Darut Taqwa. This research is empirical in nature using qualitative methods to explore data from the field.

This research also has an ethnographic nature because it seeks to understand the culture and educational practices that exist at MTs Favorit Darut Taqwa in the context of multiculturalism. The data sources for this research consist of primary data obtained directly from the field through in-depth interviews, observations, and focus group discussions (FGD) with teachers, students, school principals, and other related parties at MTs Favorit Darut Taqwa.

Research data sources also consist of secondary data obtained from official school documents, literature, scientific journals, books, and other written sources relevant to the research topic. This research was carried out over a six month period, from January to June 2024. The research location was Darut Taqwa's favorite Tsanawiyah Madrasah, which is located on Jl. Cottage No. 55 Ningbeh Dlanggu Mojokerto.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Multicultural IRE Curriculum

Integration of Multicultural Values in Learning

Islamic religious education as an effort to internalize fundamental, social and moral values, requires an educational curriculum that covers Islamic values holistically and

comprehensively through the learning process (No et al., 2024). A teacher also acts as a class manager, designing and managing a learning environment that is inclusive, safe, and supports student development (Umam & Ferianto, 2023). Developing teaching materials that cover various cultural aspects and values that can support inclusive learning is an important step in developing a multicultural curriculum.

Diverse teaching materials help students understand and appreciate the differences around them. In learning sessions, teachers raise real cases about life in a multicultural environment where various religions coexist. When realizing this multicultural education approach, students are not only given general knowledge but also need to include instilling life values that are a reflection of the character and national identity of the Indonesian nation (Mubin & Bakri, 2021). Because educational institutions should not distance themselves

these values are in society, but it is better if the values found in society are squeezed into an integral part of education (Pratama et al., 2023). For example, a discussion about how people in a particular village work together to celebrate different religious holidays. Students are invited to analyze this situation and relate it to Islamic values such as tolerance and respect for others. Students are invited to work in heterogeneous groups, where they have to collaborate with friends from different cultural backgrounds.

Group discussions, joint projects, and other class activities provide opportunities for students to learn and interact directly with diversity. Teaching materials that include inclusive values and respect for cultural differences are taught in an integrated manner in various subjects. For example, in religious lessons, students are taught about Islamic principles that support tolerance and harmony between religious believers. Students are also involved in social projects aimed at promoting inclusivity in the school and community. These projects include charity work, anti-discrimination campaigns, and diversity outreach programs.

Based on the results of an interview with the Deputy Head of the Madrasah for Curriculum, MTs Favorit Darut Taqwa adopted a thematic learning strategy in the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum which connects Islamic religious teachings with various social situations in students' daily lives. By using relevant case studies, students can see and understand how religious values can be applied in real contexts (Mandasari, 2024). Students are given conflict scenarios involving cultural or religious differences and then asked to resolve them based on Islamic teachings about peace and justice. This helps students understand the importance of maintaining harmony and respecting differences.

According to MTs IRE teacher Zahrina Darut Taqwa, students who are involved in thematic learning show an increase in understanding and application of multicultural values. Teachers also report that this method helps students become more critical and reflective in viewing diversity issues (Zahrina Isthafa Muzayyin, 2024). Teaching materials were developed to include examples from various cultures and religions in Indonesia. For example, folklore, traditions, and celebrations from various regions are included in the curriculum. The use of videos, images, and reading materials that display cultural diversity

helps students understand multicultural concepts better. The integration of multicultural values in IRE learning at MTs Favorit Darut Taqwa shows the school's commitment to promoting tolerance and respect for diversity.

Teacher Development Training

Teachers are considered the main agents in education because they are the direct link between knowledge and students. They not only convey lesson material but also shape students' attitudes, values, and understanding. Teachers need to take part in workshops to improve their abilities, because teachers as the main agents in the learning process have a central role in strengthening students' understanding of the values of multiculturalism in the context of the Islamic religion (TANG et al., 2024). The diversity of curriculum development models is basically only to achieve one goal, namely to obtain better change (Herry Hernawan. dkk, 2008). Strengthening teacher training is important to ensure they have the skills and knowledge necessary to teach multicultural material effectively. The development of rich and varied teaching materials will support a more inclusive learning process.

Collaboration with the community can enrich students' learning experiences and provide a broader perspective on diversity. Continuous evaluation and monitoring will help identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum implementation so that improvements can be made systematically. IRE teachers at MTs Favorit Darut Taqwa actively participate in various training and workshops designed to improve their competence in teaching material that reflects multicultural values.

This training focuses on the use of interactive and participatory teaching methods that involve students directly in discussions about multicultural issues. IRE teachers attend training that teaches the use of interactive methods such as group discussions, case studies, and simulations. This method allows students to be more actively involved in learning and voice their views on diversity issues. Teachers take part in workshops that discuss various multicultural issues, such as religious tolerance, human rights and peace. In this workshop, teachers are given the opportunity to share experiences and effective teaching strategies in overcoming the challenges of diversity in the classroom.

From the results of interviews and observations, according to Wakakur MTs Favorit Darut Taqwa, teachers who took part in this training and workshop showed an increase in teaching skills and the ability to deliver material that reflects multicultural values (Mandasari, 2024). These teachers are able to adopt more interactive and participatory teaching methods, so that students are more interested and involved in learning about multicultural issues (Yusuf, 2024). According to one IRE teacher, teachers actively develop teaching materials that reflect the diversity of multicultural values. This teaching material is designed to be inclusive, with a focus on respecting differences and applying life values in an Islamic and social context (Zahrina Isthafa Muzayyin, 2024). After attending various trainings, teachers are more confident in compiling teaching materials that include stories

and examples from various cultures and religions in Indonesia. For example, teaching materials on religious tolerance will include stories from various religions showing how Islamic tolerance values can be applied in different contexts. Teaching materials are also designed to link Islamic teachings with the values of daily life in diverse societies. For example, material about zakat is not only taught as a religious obligation but also as a form of social solidarity that reflects universal human values.

Archipelago Cultural Festival

Extracurricular activities that support multicultural values also play an important role in enriching students' learning experiences. In developing a multicultural-based curriculum, at least based on the opinion of curriculum experts such as Hilda Taba, culture is one of the foundations of curriculum development (Taba, 1963). Favorite MTs Darut Taqwa has organized various extracurricular activities such as cultural festivals (Ifhammulhaq, 2024). This activity is designed to strengthen students' understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity and provide direct experience of interacting with and appreciating differences. The festival showcases various cultures from various regions and religions, with students participating in art performances, food exhibitions, and traditional games (Observation, 2024). This activity allows students to experience firsthand the beauty and cultural diversity that exists in Indonesia.

Based on an interview with IRE MTs Favorit teacher Darut Taqwa, students who follow this multicultural curriculum become more tolerant of cultural and religious differences (Zahrina Isthafa Muzayyin, 2024). In line with this, Wakakur received reports of improvements in students' social skills, such as the ability to communicate, empathize, and work together in diverse groups (Mandasari, 2024). Students who participate in cultural extracurricular activities are more open to and appreciative of differences. They also show improvements in social skills and the ability to work together with peers from different backgrounds. Data from interviews with students and teachers indicate that this activity is very effective in building multicultural awareness and fostering inclusive attitudes among students.

Challenges in Developing a Multicultural IRE Curriculum

The curriculum of Madrasahs is often a benchmark for the quality and implementation of education, and the good and bad aspects of the curriculum will greatly determine the good and bad aspects of education (Gunawan, 2012). Some of the challenges faced in developing a multicultural IRE curriculum at MTs Favorit Darut Taqwa include: *First*, limited resources such as books and teaching materials that support multicultural values. Limitations in terms of books and teaching materials that support multicultural education are the main challenge in developing a multicultural IRE curriculum at MTs Favorit Darut Taqwa. The availability of adequate resources is essential to support effective teaching. Many schools have difficulty obtaining textbooks and teaching materials specifically designed to teach multicultural values. Many teachers at MTs Favorit Darut Taqwa find it

difficult to access teaching materials that support multicultural education. Interviews with teachers revealed that they often had to create their own teaching materials or look for additional resources on the internet. Collaboration with the government and related parties was identified as a potential solution to overcome this problem.

Second, limited time in the lesson schedule. This is because MTs Darut Taqwa is an Islamic boarding school-based school, where school hours are limited because they have to collaborate with Islamic boarding school activities. Apart from that, integrating multicultural values into an already busy lesson schedule is a challenge for schools. Limited time for each subject makes it difficult to add additional content without sacrificing existing material.

Development Strategy

Gaffer expressed the opinion that strategy is a big job for an organization that ensures the sustainability of an institution that cannot be ignored. The most prioritized strategy is increasing resources because with it everything that is the goal can be achieved (Fauzi, 2009). To overcome these limitations, collaboration between schools and the government is needed. The government can help by providing additional resources and facilitating training for teachers to develop appropriate teaching materials.

However, MTs Faforit Darut Taqwa has also tried to implement several strategies to develop a multicultural IRE curriculum including strengthening teacher training, developing teaching materials, collaborating with the community, and ongoing evaluation and monitoring. A dense curriculum with multiple core subjects makes it difficult to include multicultural content explicitly in every lesson. One of the proposed solutions is to integrate multicultural values not only in IRE lessons but also in various other subjects. For example, these values can be included in history, Indonesian language and arts and culture lessons.

Based on an interview with the Deputy Head of Madrasah for Curriculum, teachers at MTs Favorit Darut Taqwa try to integrate multicultural values in other lessons to overcome time constraints. For example, in history lessons, teachers discuss the contribution of various ethnic and religious groups in the development of Indonesian history. This helps students to see the importance of diversity in a broader context (Mandasari, 2024). Ensuring teachers have adequate skills and knowledge to teach multicultural material effectively is one of the key strategies in developing a multicultural curriculum. Teacher training aims to improve their competence in teaching multicultural values and using effective teaching methods.

Development Implications

The implementation of the multicultural IRE curriculum at MTs Favorit Darut Taqwa has a positive impact on students' attitudes and social skills. Students show more tolerant attitudes, respect differences, and have better social skills in interacting with peers from various cultural backgrounds. This positive impact shows that the development of the

multicultural IRE curriculum at MTs Favorit Darut Taqwa has been successful in forming students' attitudes and character that are tolerant and inclusive. A better understanding of diversity helps students to live harmoniously in a plural and dynamic society. This research underlines the importance of support from all parties, including the government, schools, teachers, parents and society, in developing and implementing a multicultural curriculum.

The implication of this research is that the development of a multicultural IRE curriculum must be a priority in Islamic religious education in Indonesia. The experience of MTs Favorit Darut Taqwa shows that with the right strategy, the IRE curriculum can be an effective tool for forming tolerant and inclusive student attitudes and character. This research makes an important contribution to efforts to strengthen multicultural education in Indonesia and equip the younger generation with the values necessary to live in a diverse society.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the development of a multicultural Islamic Religious Education (IRE) curriculum at Darut Taqwa's Favorite Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) through teachers raises real cases about life in a multicultural environment, students are given conflict scenarios involving cultural or religious differences, and cultural performance festivals from various regions have succeeded in forming tolerant and inclusive student attitudes and character. The implementation of a multicultural IRE curriculum shows a positive impact on students' attitudes and social skills, such as more tolerant attitudes, appreciation for differences, and better social skills in interacting with friends from various cultural backgrounds. Apart from IRE, multicultural values also need to be integrated in various other subjects. This can help overcome time constraints in the curriculum and ensure that multicultural values are taught thoroughly. Support from all parties, including government, schools, teachers, parents and the community, is very important in developing and implementing a multicultural curriculum. Curriculum implementation needs to be evaluated and monitored on an ongoing basis to identify strengths and weaknesses, so that improvements can be made systematically. This will ensure that the curriculum remains relevant and effective in forming tolerant and inclusive student attitudes and character.

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