

Multiculturalism: Unveiling Intercultural Communicative Competence in Modern Islamic Education

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Abstract

This research explores integrating multiculturalism and Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in modern Islamic education. This research method is a qualitative study of existing literature. This research uses a literature review approach to explore the definition and dimensions of ICC, the challenges and opportunities in its integration into Islamic education, and the impact of multiculturalism on forming the Islamic education paradigm using thematic analysis of the Miles and Huberman model. Findings suggest a different understanding of ICC, which includes cultural awareness, cross-cultural sensitivity, and adaptive capacity. Despite efforts, challenges like resistance to Western influence and conceptual barriers still exist in integrating ICC into Islamic education. Promising practices, including collaborative approaches between Islamic and non-Islamic educational institutions, show potential for increased integration. Multiculturalism significantly influences educational approaches, offering opportunities to foster cross-cultural understanding and tolerance. Recommendations for future research include further exploration of effective teaching strategies, the development of inclusive learning methods, and longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of ICC integration in Islamic educational settings.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, Intercultural Communicative, Islamic Education

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi pengintegrasian multikulturalisme dan Kompetensi Komunikatif Antarbudaya (ICC) dalam pendidikan Islam modern. Metode penelitian ini adalah studi kualitatif terhadap literatur yang ada. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan tinjauan pustaka untuk mengeksplorasi definisi dan dimensi ICC, tantangan dan peluang integrasinya ke dalam pendidikan Islam, serta dampak multikulturalisme terhadap pembentukan paradigma pendidikan Islam dengan menggunakan analisis tematik model Miles dan Huberman. Temuan menunjukkan pemahaman yang berbeda mengenai ICC, yang mencakup kesadaran budaya, sensitivitas lintas budaya, dan kapasitas adaptif. Meskipun ada upaya, tantangan seperti penolakan terhadap pengaruh Barat dan hambatan konseptual masih ada dalam mengintegrasikan ICC ke dalam pendidikan Islam. Praktik-praktik

yang menjanjikan, termasuk pendekatan kolaboratif antara lembaga pendidikan Islam dan non-Islam, menunjukkan potensi peningkatan integrasi. Multikulturalisme secara signifikan mempengaruhi pendekatan pendidikan, menawarkan peluang untuk menumbuhkan pemahaman dan toleransi lintas budaya. Rekomendasi untuk penelitian masa depan mencakup eksplorasi lebih lanjut mengenai strategi pengajaran yang efektif, pengembangan metode pembelajaran inklusif, dan studi longitudinal untuk menilai dampak jangka panjang integrasi ICC dalam lingkungan pendidikan Islam.

Kata Kunci: Multikulturalisme, Komunikatif Antarbudaya, Pendidikan Islam

Introduction

Multiculturalism has become an important topic in current social, economic, and cultural discussions. In today's society, multiculturalism shows its increasing relevance due to globalization and intensive population mobility. Multiculturalism plays a crucial role in strengthening tolerance and understanding between individuals who come from diverse backgrounds (Sariyatun & Marpelina, 2024). Through intercultural interactions, individuals gain a broader perspective and deeper understanding of different values and norms, which in turn can reduce prejudice and strengthen social cohesion (Elias & Mansouri, 2020; Parekh, 2001). Thus, in this multicultural context, intercultural communication skills are desirable and an essential prerequisite for social harmony and productive cooperation.

Furthermore, Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is an essential concept in an increasingly global and multicultural world. According to Byram (2021), ICC is the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people from other cultures. This concept includes language knowledge and cultural awareness, which helps individuals understand and interpret different cultures' behaviours and motives (Baker, 2011).

The main dimensions of the ICC can be explained through several vital components. The first is cultural awareness, which refers to understanding and appreciating cultural differences and similarities (Deardorff, 2006). Second is intercultural communication skills, which include listening actively, speaking, reading, and writing in a way that is appropriate to the cultural context of the communication (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Moreover, adaptability is another critical component of ICC. This ability involves the skill to adapt one's communication behaviour and attitudes in response to diverse situations and interactions. This adaptation allows individuals to more effectively interact in various cultural contexts without losing their original identity (Kim, 2008).

In the context of Islamic education, Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) gains significant relevance because this education is not only focused on transmitting religious and moral values but also on forming individuals who can operate effectively in a multicultural society. Islamic education, firmly rooted in traditions that value dialogue and knowledge

exchange between cultures—as demonstrated by Islam's rich history of interactions between civilizations—is now strategically positioned to integrate ICC into its curriculum (Tibi, 2020).

ICC in Islamic education is not just about teaching language or cross-cultural communication simply, but more deeply about developing students' understanding of the diversity of different religious interpretations, practices and experiences within Islam and other religions (Abu-Nimer & Smith, 2016; Sujaya, 2022). It includes teaching how values such as empathy, respect, and patience—highly emphasized in Islamic teachings—can be applied in intercultural communication and interaction.

Additionally, ICC helps prepare students in Islamic education to confront and overcome stereotypes and prejudices they may encounter in a pluralistic society (Kinast et al., 2010; Sijamhodžić-Nadarević, 2023). Through a comprehensive approach, Islamic education can utilize ICC to inform students about cultural diversity and train them to participate actively and positively in inter-community dialogue (Khojir et al., 2021). Thus, effective Islamic education in today's global era must involve more than simply teaching dogma or ritual; it must actively incorporate elements of ICC to develop students' skills in navigating and contributing to an increasingly connected and diverse world.

Moreover, modern Islamic education operates in a very diverse context, both culturally and geographically, adapting and responding dynamically to the needs and challenges of various world regions (Tolchah & Arfan Mu'ammar, 2019). The characteristics of Islamic educational institutions are not only influenced by religious texts and traditions but also by the socio-political context in which they exist, which influences the interpretation and implementation of this religious education (Fathurrohman et al., 2023; Taufik, 2020). Hence, modern Islamic education responds to various external and internal factors by adapting Islamic teachings and values to meet contemporary needs and challenges. This diversity of approaches reflects Islamic educational institutions' flexibility and adaptability in changing global and local dynamics.

Although recognition of the importance of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in Islamic education has increased, there needs to be a significant research gap in the academic literature regarding how to integrate ICC into the Islamic education effectively. One critical aspect of this gap is the need for an in-depth analysis examining the theoretical and practical application of ICC in Islamic education. In order to address this gap, there is an urgent need for more comprehensive and methodological research that explicitly explores ICC in the context of Islamic education, using a multidisciplinary approach that combines theory and practice.

This research explores the integration of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) into the Islamic education curriculum, focusing on practical methodologies and educational strategies unique to Islamic pedagogy. In contrast to previous research, which mainly discussed ICC in multicultural or

secular education, this research explores the role of Islamic teachings and principles in fostering intercultural understanding and tolerance. This research highlights how Islamic values can be harmoniously aligned and combined with ICC to foster a more inclusive and tolerant worldview among students. This research also explores the challenges and opportunities in integrating ICC into Islamic education. By analyzing various relevant literature sources, this research will identify obstacles that may be faced and opportunities that can be utilized to increase cross-cultural understanding among students. Furthermore, this research will highlight how Islamic education can open up opportunities for deeper intercultural understanding by applying the principles of multiculturalism. Hopefully, these findings will provide new insights and actionable recommendations to improve the quality of Islamic education in a global, multicultural landscape, thereby contributing to academic literature and practical applications in education policy and curriculum development.

This research used a qualitative approach, especially a literature review approach, as the central methodology. This approach allows the researcher to investigate the concepts relevant to integrating Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in Islamic education by utilizing various data sources such as books, journals, essays, articles and other documents. The use of various literature sources can provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the issues being researched and enrich the analysis with diverse perspectives.

Data analysis in this research used the Miles and Huberman model of thematic analysis (Miles et al., 2014). This approach allows the researcher to identify thematic patterns that emerge from the literature data collected and facilitate in-depth interpretation of key emerging issues. The data analysis process follows the steps outlined by Miles and Huberman, starting from data collection, reduction, and presentation to drawing conclusions and verification. Thus, the methodology used in this research is expected to provide a robust and systematic framework for exploring the integration of ICC in Islamic education and its implications for developing intercultural understanding and tolerance among students.

Conceptualization of ICC in Islamic Education

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is an essential concept in multicultural education. ICC is defined variously, reflecting the breadth of dimensions involved in this competency. ICC refers to a person's ability to interact effectively and politely with individuals from other cultures (Tümen Akyıldız et al., 2021). This ability involves more than just understanding language; Individuals must also understand and appreciate existing cultural differences (Saini & Ardhy, 2023). In addition, the ICC emphasises the importance of adaptability in various social and cultural contexts (Xiaoyan et al., 2024). This adaptability allows individuals to function successfully in varying situations, avoiding misunderstandings and conflicts that may arise due to cultural differences. Having an ICC can bridge cultural gaps and build

more harmonious and productive relationships with people from different backgrounds (Said, 2024). Therefore, the development of ICC becomes a critical aspect of multicultural education, helping individuals to become more competent and empathetic global citizens.

Furthermore, cultural awareness is essential to Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) (Deardorff, 2006). It involves a deep understanding of the norms and values that apply in various cultures. This understanding is factual knowledge and an intuitive understanding of how these norms and values influence human behaviour (Ilie, 2019). By having cultural awareness, individuals can recognise the differences and similarities between various cultures, which in turn helps them interact more effectively and meaningfully with others from different cultural (Deardorff & Jones, 2012). In addition, cultural awareness also includes the ability to observe and respond appropriately to cultural nuances in the behaviour and attitudes of others (Rokos et al., 2023). This ability is critical in creating and maintaining effective communication across cultures. Understanding the cultural context allows people to adapt their behaviour and communication to avoid misunderstandings and conflict. It allows them to build more harmonious and productive relationships with individuals from various cultural backgrounds, which is the essence of success in intercultural communication (Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005).

Moreover, cross-cultural sensitivity, as an essential dimensions of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), involves recognising and appreciating cultural differences and similarities (Awang-Rozaimie et al., 2013; Barker, 2016). It includes skills such as empathy and sensitivity, which enable individuals to understand and respond appropriately to the perspectives and experiences of others. This ability is essential because it helps create an inclusive and harmonious environment where all individuals feel valued and understood, regardless of their cultural background (Bećirović & Čeljo, 2018; Kowalski, 2023). In modern Islamic education, cross-cultural sensitivity becomes increasingly valuable because students often interact with peers from various cultural backgrounds. Inclusive Islamic education must consider the importance of developing cross-cultural sensitivity among students (de Meijer et al., 2022). Students can more effectively communicate and collaborate in multicultural environments by cultivating empathy and sensitivity to diverse perspectives. It enhances their learning experience and prepares them to become more tolerant and well-rounded global citizens.

Adaptability, as one of the essential dimensions of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), also refers to the capacity of individuals to adapt their behaviour and attitudes to suit different cultural contexts (Gutiérrez-Santiuste & Ritacco-Real, 2023). This adaptation does not mean giving up on one's cultural identity but finding effective ways to communicate and interact in diverse environments. This adaptation process involves a deep understanding of the norms and values of another culture, as well as the ability to adapt communication styles and behaviour to be more appropriate

and acceptable in that context (Byram, 2021; Trang & Phuong, 2023; Tri, 2024). Thus, individuals with good adaptability can reduce the potential for misunderstandings and conflicts arising due to cultural differences.

This adaptability is essential in Islamic education, promoting universality and brotherhood principles. Effective Islamic education can significantly benefit from ICC integration, where students are taught to appreciate and adapt to various cultures without sacrificing their identity. In this way, they can interact harmoniously with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, creating an inclusive learning environment and strengthening the principles of universality and fraternity. Developing these adaptive skills helps students become more competent and empathetic global citizens, able to bridge cultural differences and collaborate effectively in an increasingly connected world (Szczepaniak-Kozak, 2014).

In the context of modern Islamic education, the importance of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is increasingly emphasized, especially in an increasingly diverse society. Students are expected to have not only solid religious competencies but also the ability to communicate effectively in a variety of cultural environments. An education that includes ICC helps students act as intercultural bridges, facilitating cross-cultural dialogue and understanding, essential in building an inclusive and harmonious society. This ability allows them to understand and appreciate cultural differences and voice and articulate their views in a way that is respected and understood by others from different cultural backgrounds.

Therefore, practical education in this context must involve teaching that strengthens religious competence and enriches students with intercultural communicative competence. It is essential to increase global awareness and tolerance among students. By instilling cultural adaptability and cross-cultural sensitivity, students can be better prepared to face global challenges and work with people from various parts of the world. This learning process should include training in practical skills such as cultural negotiation, conflict resolution, and intercultural diplomacy, which will prepare them to be influential leaders and responsible global citizens.

Challenges and Opportunities of ICC Integration in Islamic Education

In integrating Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in Islamic education, we encounter several complex problems that require in-depth understanding. The results of theoretical analysis from existing literature show that although there are efforts to integrate ICC into Islamic education, this process has significant challenges. One of the main challenges is resistance to "Western-centric" approaches in education (Ahmad & Ahmad, 2015; Bastos & Araújo e Sá, 2015). Many in the Islamic community see this approach as a potential threat to their religious and cultural identity. Islamic education often functions as a potent form of religious identity. Adopting elements from Western educational approaches can be considered a threat to long-held religious and cultural integrity (Alkouatli et al., 2023; Baytiyeh, 2018).

In addition, the challenges in integrating the ICC also reflect the complex identity dynamics within Islamic societies. ICC-focused approaches must often navigate between maintaining traditional values and adopting new methods to increase intercultural awareness and capabilities (Ghantous & Belkhiria, 2023). This approach requires a careful balance not to alienate parts of the community who may see these changes as a rejection of their cultural and religious heritage. Therefore, the integration of ICC in Islamic education must be carried out with sensitivity to cultural and religious contexts and involve constructive dialogue between various stakeholders to ensure that this process is accepted and appreciated by the wider community (Nadeem et al., 2020).

Second, the conceptual challenges of integrating Islamic values with the principles of multiculturalism highlight the need for a more holistic and inclusive approach. Islam, as a religion that covers many aspects of life, demands careful thinking about how the values of this religion can be interpreted dynamically and relevantly in the context of an increasingly multicultural society (Sahin, 2018). It is challenging as it involves reinterpreting religious texts and long-standing traditions, considering contemporary social and cultural realities (Nynäs, 2018). This challenge requires open and collaborative dialogue between ulama, educators and community leaders to find ways for Islamic values to support and enrich the principles of multiculturalism.

In addition, developing a theoretical framework that allows a harmonious combination of Islamic traditions with the principles of modern multiculturalism is essential. Educators in this field must strive to create an educational model that maintains the integrity of Islamic values and encourages students to appreciate diversity. This model must reflect a balance between respect for religious identity and openness to new ideas from diverse cultures. Thus, Islamic education can function as a platform that promotes inclusivity and tolerance, preparing the younger generation to participate actively and positively in a global, multicultural society.

However, within these challenges, there are also meaningful opportunities to increase the integration of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in Islamic education. One of these opportunities is through collaboration between Islamic and non-Islamic educational institutions. This collaboration can become a forum for mutually beneficial cultural exchange, where both parties can learn and adapt the best aspects of each other's education systems. For example, Islamic educational institutions can adopt interactive and project-based teaching methods commonly used in Western institutions. In contrast, non-Islamic institutions can learn the holistic approach to character education emphasized in Islamic educational traditions.

In addition, this collaboration paves the way for developing educational approaches that are more inclusive and responsive to the increasing cultural diversity in global society. By collaboration, educational institutions can create a curriculum that respects religious values and accommodates the principles of multiculturalism and pluralism. It will help students not only to understand

and appreciate their own cultural identity but also to learn to live in harmony with people from different cultural backgrounds. Thus, this collaboration enriches students' educational experiences and prepares them to become more tolerant and well-rounded world citizens.

Multiculturalism and Islamic Education: Opening Opportunities for Intercultural Understanding

The influence of multiculturalism on Islamic education shows that this factor has substantially influenced teaching approaches and methods in this context. Multiculturalism has encouraged Islamic educational institutions to revise and update their curriculum frameworks to be more inclusive and responsive to cultural diversity (Moussa et al., 2023). It means that educational material includes religious teachings, knowledge, and skills that enable students to interact effectively with various cultures. This change reflects the realization that in an increasingly connected world, understanding and appreciating cultural differences is a critical skill.

Furthermore, multiculturalism is also changing educational philosophies in Islamic institutions, leading to the adoption of more inclusive and culturally responsive approaches (Wakano et al., 2020). This approach follows Islamic values of harmony, cooperation and understanding between humans. Thus, Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) has become very relevant and essential in modern Islamic education. ICC helps build bridges between diverse cultural groups, promoting dialogue and more profound understanding among students from different backgrounds (Ghantous & Belkhiria, 2023). By integrating ICC, Islamic education maintains religious values and prepares students to contribute positively to a global, multicultural society.

In the current global context, Islamic education faces significant challenges in integrating traditional values with the dynamic multicultural needs of a pluralistic society. This combination requires a careful balance in which core Islamic values are respected while accommodating cultural diversity's realities. Islamic educational institutions are tasked with creating curricula that reflect vital religious teachings while equipping students with the skills to interact in a diverse society (Memon et al., 2021; Muqowim & Lessy, 2021). It calls for a more holistic and inclusive educational approach that focuses not only on religious instruction but also on developing critical cross-cultural competencies.

Research shows that Islamic educational institutions that successfully adopt a multicultural approach tend to be more effective in promoting intercultural understanding and tolerance among their students. These institutions can create learning environments that value and promote intercultural dialogue, strengthening students' religious identities while preparing them to become empathetic and ethical global citizens. These students gain a deeper understanding of their own religion and learn to appreciate and understand other cultural perspectives. In this way, they

become individuals who can interact and contribute positively to a diverse society, bringing Islamic values into a global, multicultural context constructively and peacefully.

Furthermore, Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is crucial in helping students understand and appreciate diversity in their and other religious contexts (Byram, 2021). Education involving ICC components teaches students communication skills and how to act and respond effectively and sensitively to diverse cultural perspectives and practices (Sevimel-Sahina, 2020). This approach emphasises the importance of empathy, tolerance and respect for differences, which are the basis for building harmonious relationships in a multicultural society. By understanding the dynamics of different cultures, students can develop the ability to interact constructively with people from diverse backgrounds, which in turn strengthens social cohesion and interfaith understanding.

Effective Islamic education in this multicultural era must involve a curriculum that focuses on religious content and developing social and emotional skills that help build bridges between different communities (Saihu et al., 2022). This holistic curriculum should include multiple aspects of education that teach students how to interact with empathy and understand different perspectives. Developing interpersonal competencies such as listening with empathy and managing conflict tactfully becomes very important in this case. The ability to listen actively and understand the feelings and perspectives of others are basic skills that help students build harmonious and constructive relationships in multicultural environments (Dalib et al., 2018)

Apart from that, Islamic education integrated with the principles of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) must also encourage students to work together in multicultural teams. Students must learn to collaborate effectively with individuals from various cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. This approach prepares students to become more competent, empathetic, and adaptive world citizens and enhances their ability to contribute positively in an increasingly complex global environment. By combining religious content with the development of social and emotional skills, Islamic education can produce balanced individuals who can maintain their religious values while remaining open and responsive to the cultural diversity that exists in the world.

Moreover, the importance of integrating Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in Islamic education is also reflected in the ability of these educational institutions to respond critically and constructively to global issues. One of the biggest challenges faced is confronting the stereotypes and misunderstandings that often appear in the media and public discussions about Islam. An education that includes ICC components can give students the tools and knowledge necessary to overcome these stereotypes in a thoughtful and fact-based manner. With a deeper understanding of various cultures and traditions, students can articulate more accurate Islamic perspectives and correct erroneous views in public discussions.

Through education that includes ICC, Islamic educational institutions can play an active role in forming a more informative and nuanced discourse about Islam in a global context. These institutions can contribute to creating a more positive and inclusive narrative about Islam, emphasising not only the religious aspects but also the human and universal aspects of Islamic teachings. Thus, Islamic education integrated with ICC not only benefits individual students but also plays a role in promoting broader understanding and tolerance in society. It helps reduce prejudice and increase interreligious and intercultural dialogue, especially in an increasingly connected and multicultural world.

Conclusion

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) has become an important aspect that must be addressed, especially in the Islamic education system, which often interacts with multicultural societies. The ICC facilitates dialogue and understanding between individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, allowing for a more effective and empathetic exchange of ideas and values. In Islamic education, integrating ICC into the curriculum is crucial to prepare students to face challenges and take advantage of opportunities in a pluralist society. Research results reveal that while efforts have been made to implement ICC in Islamic educational institutions, significant challenges still need to be overcome, including the need for more adaptive and inclusive teaching approaches.

Islamic education, when enriched with the values of multiculturalism, not only increases students' awareness but also deepens cross-cultural respect and tolerance, which is very much in line with Islamic teachings regarding harmony and understanding between people. This research shows that there are still areas for improvement in the existing literature, especially in developing an effective ICC teaching methodology and evaluating its long-term impact in the context of Islamic education. Therefore, practical recommendations for educators and policymakers include emphasizing the importance of teacher training, inclusive curriculum development, and international cooperation to strengthen the effectiveness of Islamic education in the face of global diversity. Overall, the integration of ICC in Islamic education is essential and highly relevant for preparing future generations who can operate successfully in a global and diverse society, making Islamic education a powerful tool for promoting peace and intercultural understanding.

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