

## TRANSFORMATION OF EQUALITY IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION: A Multicultural Approach for the Global Generation

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### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggali konsep kesetaraan dalam Islam, menganalisis prinsip-prinsip pendidikan multikultural, dan merumuskan relevansinya bagi pengembangan pendidikan Islam yang progresif dan berorientasi global. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode studi literatur dengan mengkaji berbagai literatur ilmiah, sumber normatif Islam, dan kajian kontemporer tentang pendidikan multikultural. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Islam memiliki landasan teologis yang kuat tentang kesetaraan manusia melalui prinsip-prinsip keadilan, martabat manusia, persaudaraan, dan penghormatan terhadap perbedaan. Temuan penelitian ini juga menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan multikultural dapat menjadi kerangka pedagogis untuk mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai inklusivitas, toleransi, dialog, dan penghormatan terhadap keragaman dalam sistem pendidikan Islam. Kontribusi penelitian ini terletak pada penguatan gagasan transformasi pendidikan Islam berbasis kesetaraan multikultural melalui reformasi kurikulum, peningkatan kompetensi pendidik, dan pengembangan budaya sekolah yang inklusif, adaptif, dan kompetitif bagi generasi muslim global. Implikasi dari penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya lembaga pendidikan Islam untuk membangun kebijakan, kurikulum, dan praktik pembelajaran yang responsif terhadap keberagaman, sehingga mampu menghasilkan mahasiswa yang religius, berpikiran terbuka, toleran, dan siap berpartisipasi dalam kehidupan global secara damai dan konstruktif.

**Kata kunci:** kesetaraan, pendidikan Islam, multikultural, generasi global, inklusivitas.

### Abstract

This research aims to explore the concept of equality in Islam, analyze the principles of multicultural education, and formulate its relevance for the development of progressive and globally oriented Islamic education. This research uses a literature study method by examining various scientific literature, Islamic normative sources, and contemporary studies on multicultural education. The results of the study show that Islam has a strong theological foundation on human equality through the principles of justice, human dignity, brotherhood, and respect for differences. The findings of the study also show that multicultural education can be a pedagogical framework for integrating the values of inclusivity, tolerance, dialogue, and respect for diversity in the Islamic education system. The contribution of this research lies in strengthening the idea of transforming Islamic education based on multicultural equality through curriculum reform, improving educator competence, and developing an inclusive, adaptive, and competitive school culture for the global Muslim generation. The implications of this study affirm the importance of Islamic educational institutions to build policies, curricula, and learning practices that are responsive to diversity, so as to be able to produce students who are religious, open-minded, tolerant, and ready to participate in global life in a peaceful and constructive manner.

**Keywords:** equality, Islamic education, multicultural, global generation, inclusivity.

## Introduction

Islamic education in the global era faces major challenges in line with fast-paced, complex, and multidimensional social changes (Auliya, 2025). Digital transformation, cross-border human migration, cultural mobility, and the intensity of global communication have shaped an increasingly pluralistic society in terms of ethnicity, religion, language, culture, and social values (Aisha et al., 2025). In this context, education is no longer enough to function only as a process of knowledge transfer, but must also be a space for the formation of critical awareness, inclusive attitudes, and the ability to coexist in diversity. The issue of equality is becoming increasingly important because globalization not only opens up opportunities for cross-cultural interaction, but also presents new risks such as discrimination, intolerance, exclusivism, social polarization, and hate speech in the digital space. Islamic education as a value-based education system is required to respond to these changes by presenting an inclusive, humanist, moderate, and equitable educational paradigm without losing the theological and moral foundations of Islam.

A number of literature shows that Islamic education has a strong normative foundation in building human equality. The principle of equality in Islam is reflected in the teachings of human dignity, justice, brotherhood, and respect for differences. QS. Al-Hujurat: 13 affirms that human beings were created into nations and tribes in order to know each other, not to degrade each other (Ali et al., 2015). QS. Al-Isra': 70 also affirms the glory of man as a creature glorified by Allah (Ali et al., 2015). In the history of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad (saw) built a pluralistic society of Medina through the principles of brotherhood, social justice, protection of different groups, and respect for human dignity. Studies on multicultural education also emphasize that education must be able to accommodate the diversity of students, reduce social prejudices, and form tolerant attitudes. In the Indonesian context, the discourse of religious moderation further strengthens the need for Islamic education that not only teaches religious norms, but also forms students who are able to live peacefully in a multicultural society.

The uniqueness of this research lies in the effort to integrate the concept of equality in Islam with a multicultural education approach to build progressive Islamic education oriented towards the formation of a global generation (Agustian, 2019). Different from studies that only discuss equality as a normative concept or multicultural education as a general pedagogical approach, this study tries to bring the two together in the framework of contemporary Islamic education. This research views that equality in Islam is not just a theological teaching, but needs to be transformed into curriculum principles, learning strategies, school culture, and concrete educational practices. Thus, Islamic education is not only understood as an education that maintains religious identity, but also as a space

for social transformation that is able to form students who are religious, inclusive, tolerant, critical, and competitive in a global society (Affan et al., 2026).

Although much has been done on equality in Islam and multicultural education, there are still research gaps that need to be addressed (Ahmadi et al., 2025). First, some studies still separate the discussion between the value of Islamic equality and multicultural education, so that not many have offered a systematic conceptual integration of the two in the context of Islamic education (Awards, 2023). Second, existing studies tend to stop at normative-theological discussions, but it is not enough to explain how the value of equality can be transformed into educational practices, especially in curriculum, educator competence, and institutional culture. Third, there is still limited research that links Islamic education, equality, multiculturalism, and the need to form a global generation within a single analytical framework. In fact, Islamic education today needs a new paradigm that is able to answer the challenges of intolerance, exclusivism, social disparities, and the dynamics of cross-cultural interaction in the global era.

Based on this gap, this study aims to explore the concept of equality in Islam, analyze the principles of multicultural education, and formulate the relevance of both in building a progressive, inclusive, and globally oriented Islamic education. In particular, this research is directed to answer how Islam views human equality, how multicultural education can be a pedagogical approach in Islamic education, and how the integration of Islamic equality values with multicultural education can shape a generation of global Muslims who are adaptive, tolerant, critical, and civilized. With this goal, this research is expected to be able to provide a more comprehensive conceptual framework for the development of Islamic education in a pluralistic society.

The significance of this research can be seen in two main aspects. Theoretically, this research contributes to enriching the treasures of Islamic education studies by offering an integration between the value of Islamic equality and multicultural education as a paradigm of contemporary Islamic education (Mastanah, 2023). The study also expands the discourse of Islamic education from a normative approach to a transformative approach that is responsive to global issues. Practically, this research can be a reference for Islamic educational institutions, educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in designing education that is more inclusive, equitable, and adaptive to diversity. Through curriculum transformation, capacity building of educators, and strengthening a school culture that respects differences, Islamic education is expected to be able to produce a global Muslim generation that has a strong Islamic identity, a moderate attitude, cross-cultural social skills, and a commitment to universal human values.

**Research Methods**

This study uses the Qualitative by the Literature Review or a literature review (Supandi, 2025). This method was chosen because the research aims to explore, analyze, and synthesize various theoretical ideas and findings of previous research on equality in Islam, multicultural education, and its relevance to the transformation of Islamic education in shaping a global generation. Through this approach, research is not oriented to the collection of field data, but to the search and critical analysis of relevant scientific sources.

The research data source consists of primary and secondary literature. Primary literature includes Qur'anic verses, hadiths, as well as academic works that directly address the concepts of human equality, social justice, Islamic education, and multicultural education (Agustian, 2019). Meanwhile, secondary literature includes journal articles, scientific books, research reports, education policy documents, and other academic publications relevant to issues of inclusivity, religious moderation, multiculturalism, and contemporary Islamic education. The selection of sources is carried out purposively by considering the relevance of the theme, the academic authority of the author, the novelty of the publication, and its contribution to the development of the conceptual framework of the research.

The data collection process was carried out through literature search on various academic databases, such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, Scopus-indexed journals, and databases of accredited national journals. Keywords used in the search included equality in Islam, Islamic education, multicultural education, educational inclusivity, religious moderation, global generation, and Islamic multicultural education. The selected literature is a source that is directly related to the research focus, namely the concept of equality, the principles of multicultural education, and the transformation of Islamic education in the context of a global society.

Data analysis is carried out through several stages. First, the researcher identifies literature that is relevant to the research topic. Second, the researcher conducts a selection by assessing the suitability of the content, academic quality, and contribution of each source to the formulation of the problem. Third, the researcher conducts thematic classification based on the main categories, namely the concept of equality in Islam, the principles of multicultural education, contemporary Islamic education problems, and the orientation of the formation of a global generation. Fourth, the researcher conducts a critical synthesis to find a conceptual relationship between Islamic equality values and multicultural educational approaches. Fifth, the researcher develops a conceptual interpretation to formulate the contribution of research to the development of inclusive, progressive, and globally oriented Islamic education.

To maintain the validity of the study, this study applies the principle of Source credibility, Conceptual relevance, and Interpretative consistency (Moleong, 2004). The credibility of sources is maintained by prioritizing academic literature derived from reputable journals, scientific books, and relevant official documents. Conceptual relevance is done by ensuring that each literature analyzed has a direct connection to the focus of the research. Meanwhile, interpretive consistency is carried out by comparing various perspectives of the literature so that the resulting synthesis is not partial, but reflects a comprehensive understanding.

By literature review method (Dr. Rukin) This research is expected to be able to produce a strong conceptual framework regarding the transformation of equality in Islamic education based on a multicultural approach. This framework is the basis for understanding how the values of equality in Islam can be integrated into the curriculum, learning strategies, competencies of educators, and the institutional culture of Islamic education in order to form an inclusive, tolerant, critical, and civilized generation of global Muslims.

### **Research Findings and Discussion**

#### **Equality in an Islamic Perspective: Theological and Philosophical Foundations**

Equality is a universal principle in Islam that is the basic foundation in social relations. Islamic teachings place human beings as beings who have dignity (karāmah) regardless of social, ethnic, cultural, and gender backgrounds. This is affirmed in QS. Al-Isra' (17:70) which states that Allah glorifies all the descendants of Adam. This verse is the theological foundation that Islamic education should not be a space for discrimination.

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) also displayed the practice of equality through the leadership style and coaching of his people. Among the evidence:

1. Bilal bin Rabah, a former black slave, was appointed as the chief muezin,
2. Shalman Al-Farisi from Persia and Suhaib Ar-Rumi from Rome got important positions in da'wah,
3. Women, such as Aisyah RA, have become international scientific references (Mulyasa, 2022).

These foundations show that Islam was a transcultural religion from the beginning, not bound by a specific space and nation. Thus, the concept of equality has been a core value in Islamic education since the time of the Prophet.

#### **1. Islamic Education in a Multicultural Perspective (Fadhli, 2025): Theory, Values, and Objectives**

Multicultural education aims to build understanding, tolerance, and appreciation for diversity. In the context of Islamic education, multiculturalism is not only a pedagogical approach, but part of the Islamic mission as rahmatan lil-'alamin.

Multicultural values in Islamic education include:[2]

1. Tolerance (tasāmuḥ): opening up a space for dialogue and respecting differences,
2. Justice ('adl): providing equal opportunities for all students,
3. Brotherhood (ukhuwwah insāniyyah): building positive relationships with fellow human beings,
4. Musyawah (dialogue): prioritizing discussion in problem solving,
5. Anti-Discrimination: rejecting all forms of sectarianism, racism, and exclusivism (Irfan et al., 2021).

Objectives of multicultural Islamic education:

1. Preparing a generation of Muslims who are able to live in harmony in the midst of diversity,
2. Forming the character of openness without losing Islamic identity,
3. Develop critical thinking skills in dealing with plurality issues,
4. Equipping students to become competitive and empathetic citizens of the world,
5. Thus, a multicultural approach is not just an addition to education, but a fundamental need in the era of globalization (Luthfi, 2016).

The Transformation of Equality in Islamic Education: An Analysis of Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Policy

The transformation of equality in Islamic education must be carried out through systemic changes, including:

#### 1. Transformation of the Islamic Education Curriculum

A curriculum that is still homogeneously oriented often ignores the background of students.

Curriculum transformation should include:

- a. The integration of multicultural material in religious subjects, Islamic history is presented as a global history, not Arab-centric. Fiqh is presented with a diversity of schools to avoid an exclusive attitude. Morals are taught with a universal and humanist perspective.
- b. Strengthening the value of equality in the learning module, Material on equal rights, anti-discrimination, and the value of tolerance, Case studies from various Muslim cultures (Asia, Africa, Europe), Interfaith dialogue as part of social learning.
- c. The use of technology as a global bridge, international virtual classes to expand students' cultural experiences. Collaboration with schools from other countries is project-based learning. An inclusive curriculum like this helps students understand their identity, but remain open to the world's culture (Purnomo et al., 2024).

#### 2. Transformation of Pedagogy and Teacher Competence

Teachers are the main actors in creating equality in the classroom. Therefore, teacher competence must be directed to:

- a. Multicultural Pedagogical Competencies: Ability to understand students' cultural backgrounds, Heterogeneous classroom management without bias, Maintaining inclusive and non-discriminatory communication.
  - b. Emotional and Interpersonal Competencies, Teachers must have empathy, cultural sensitivity, and the ability to mediate social conflicts that may occur in the classroom.
  - c. Strengthening Religious Moderation for Teachers, Through training: anti-radicalism, interfaith dialogue, development of tolerant Islamic materials. Teacher transformation will have a direct impact on the creation of an equal and safe learning space for all students (Abror, 2020).
3. Transformation of the School Environment and Culture, the School must be a miniature multicultural society with culture.

Respect diversity, reject violence and bullying, support students' freedom of expression in a positive way. Examples of implementation: "Multiculturally Friendly Schools" programs, holding cultural, artistic, and language sharing activities, interfaith/cultural dialogues and forums either through student council activities, scouts, or other student organizations, strictly enforced religion- or race-based anti-bullying policies, and egalitarian schools will train students to become tolerant individuals and ready to become global citizens.

4. Challenges of Implementing Equality in Multicultural Islamic Education (Kafid, 2023)

Despite having a solid foundation, its implementation faces several challenges:

- d. Internal challenges, teacher bias and social stereotypes, Teachers often unconsciously bring prejudice against certain cultures, Limited curriculum, Not all Islamic educational institutions have adequate multicultural materials, Monotonous learning methods, Still dominant lectures and teacher-centered, Lack of multicultural training for teachers.
  - e. External Challenges, Globalization Flows that Have the Potential to Erode Identity, If Not Balanced by Strong Moral Education, The Phenomenon of Intolerance and Hate Speech on Social Media that Often Enter the Classroom, Socio-Economic Differences of Students That Affect Access to Education.
5. Opportunities for Equality Transformation for the Global Generation, Despite the challenges, there are great opportunities to develop multicultural Islamic education:

Technology opens up opportunities for international collaboration and increased cultural literacy:

- a. The Government supports religious moderation programs that are very much in line with Islamic multicultural education.
- b. Strengthening the center of modern Islamic studies, Islamic universities have developed a lot of multiculturalism research.
- c. The needs of the global world of work, encouraging Islamic education to give birth to a generation of creative, critical, and communicative people across cultures.

## Conclusion

The transformation of equality in Islamic education through a multicultural approach is an urgent need in facing the dynamics of an increasingly plural, complex, and interconnected global society. This research confirms that Islamic education has a strong normative foundation in building human equality through the values of justice, human dignity, brotherhood, tolerance, and respect for differences. The findings of the study show that a multicultural approach can be a relevant pedagogical framework to translate Islamic equality values into curriculum, learning strategies, educator-student relations, and inclusive and equitable school culture. The contribution of this research lies in strengthening the integrative idea between the universal values of Islam and the principles of multicultural education as the basis for the development of progressive, moderate, and globally oriented Islamic education. This study shows that Islamic education not only functions as a medium for the transmission of religious teachings, but also as a space for social transformation that is able to form a global Muslim generation that is tolerant, adaptive, critical, competitive, and committed to peace and social justice. Practically, the results of this study imply the need to reform the Islamic education curriculum that is more inclusive, improve the competence of educators in managing diversity, and strengthen an institutional culture that respects differences. Islamic educational institutions also need to develop dialogical, humanist, and contextual learning strategies so that students are able to live productively in a multicultural society.

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