

# Inclusive Islamic Education: Building Tolerance and Harmony in a Pluralistic Society in Lombok NTB

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## ABSTRACT

This research examines the implementation of inclusive Islamic education in building tolerance and harmony in pluralistic communities in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. The ethnic, cultural and religious diversity that characterizes the Lombok community requires an educational approach that is able to accommodate differences while strengthening the values of togetherness. Using a qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach, this study involved participatory observation and in-depth interviews with educational figures, religious leaders and communities in three districts in Lombok. The results show that the implementation of inclusive Islamic education through curriculum integration based on local wisdom and universal Islamic values has contributed significantly to building awareness of pluralism among students. The learning model that prioritizes intercultural and interreligious dialogue has proven effective in fostering an attitude of tolerance and mutual respect. The research findings also reveal the importance of the teacher's role in transforming Islamic values that are rahmatan lil 'alamin through a contextual approach that is relevant to the reality of the plurality of Lombok society. The implications of this research provide a theoretical and practical basis for the development of an inclusive Islamic education model that is adaptive to the needs of a multicultural society.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country known for its ethnic, religious and cultural diversity. This diversity is both a wealth and a challenge in building a harmonious national life. In this context, Lombok as part of West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) Province has unique characteristics as an area inhabited by pluralistic communities with various ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds (Wahyudin et al., 2020). This plurality is reflected in the daily social interactions of the Lombok people consisting of the Sasak tribe

as the indigenous population, as well as various immigrant tribes such as Balinese, Javanese, Bugis, and other ethnicities.

The reality of plurality presents complex social dynamics, including the potential for conflict and friction between groups that can threaten social harmony. As stated by Suprpto (2021), history records several incidents of social conflict in Lombok that were triggered by differences in identity and group interests. This condition requires a comprehensive approach in building multicultural awareness and tolerant attitudes in the community, especially through education.

Islamic education, as one of the pillars of education in Lombok, where the majority of the population is Muslim, has a strategic role in instilling the values of tolerance and building harmony. Mahmud (2019) emphasized that Islamic education not only plays a role in the transfer of religious knowledge, but also the formation of inclusive character and social attitudes. However, the implementation of Islamic education that tends to be exclusive and textual often hinders the growth of a tolerant attitude and understanding of diversity.

Research by Hidayat et al. (2023) revealed that there is still a gap between the ideality of Islamic education which is *rahmatan lil 'alamin* and the practice of learning in the field which tends to be dogmatic and less responsive to the reality of pluralism. This is reflected in learning materials that do not accommodate diversity perspectives, monologue teaching methods, and the lack of space for intercultural and interreligious dialogue in the learning process.

The urgency of developing inclusive Islamic education is increasingly relevant given the increasing phenomenon of intolerance and radicalism among the younger generation. Data from the Setara Institute (2022) shows an increasing trend of intolerant attitudes among students, including in the NTB region. This condition is a warning for education stakeholders to transform learning approaches that are more inclusive and based on multicultural values.

In the context of Lombok, the local wisdom of the Sasak people such as the values of “*saling jot*” (giving each other), Mutual respect and appreciation can be social capital in developing inclusive Islamic education. Rahmawati (2020) argues that the integration of local wisdom values in Islamic religious learning can strengthen students' understanding of the importance of tolerance and harmony in social life.

The transformation of Islamic education towards an inclusive paradigm requires changes in various aspects, from the curriculum, learning methods, to the competence of educators. Nugroho (2021) emphasizes the importance of curriculum development that integrates multiculturalism perspectives with universal Islamic values. This includes the reconstruction of learning materials that not only focus on theological-normative aspects, but also social-humanistic dimensions that are relevant to the context of community plurality.

The role of Islamic religion teachers is crucial in the implementation of inclusive education. Atmaja's research (2022) shows that the teacher's capacity to understand and internalize multicultural values has a significant effect on the successful formation of students' tolerant attitudes. Therefore, strengthening teachers' competencies through training and continuous professional development is an urgent need.

The development of inclusive Islamic education also needs to consider the role of technology and modern learning media. Syafruddin et al. (2023) propose the utilization of digital platforms and social media as learning tools that can facilitate intercultural dialogue and the exchange of perspectives among learners. This innovation is important to bridge the understanding gap and build broader multicultural awareness.

In the context of education policy, the NTB local government has initiated the “Character Education Based on Local Wisdom” program that supports the development of inclusive education. This program provides a legal and operational basis for educational institutions to develop learning

that is responsive to diversity. However, the implementation of the program still needs strengthening in the monitoring and evaluation aspects to ensure its effectiveness (Zulkarnain, 2021).

Based on the complexity of the problems above, research on inclusive Islamic education in the context of pluralistic society in Lombok is very relevant and urgent. This research is expected to make theoretical and practical contributions to the development of an Islamic education model that is able to build tolerance and harmony, as well as answer the challenges of radicalism and intolerance. Through a comprehensive and contextual approach, this research aims to explore effective strategies in transforming Islamic values that are *rahmatan lil 'alamin* into inclusive and equitable educational practices.

## 2. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to explore and understand the implementation of inclusive Islamic education in building tolerance and harmony in Lombok's pluralistic society. The choice of this approach is in line with Hidayat et al. (2023) who emphasize the importance of in-depth understanding of socio-educational phenomena in a natural context.

The research was conducted in three districts in Lombok: East Lombok, Central Lombok and West Lombok, with consideration of the diversity of socio-cultural characteristics of the community. The location selection used purposive sampling technique based on the criteria: (1) the existence of Islamic educational institutions, (2) the level of community diversity, and (3) historical social conflict (Rahmawati, 2020).

Data collection techniques are collected through three main methods, namely; 1) Participatory observation of the learning process in selected madrasah and pesantren, 2) In-depth interviews with key informants including: a) school/madrasah principals (5 people), b) PAI teachers (10 people), c) community leaders (6 people), c) students (20 people). 3) Documentation study of curriculum, lesson plans, and related learning documents. Data analysis adopted the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana which includes the stages of data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Suprpto, 2021). To ensure data validity, triangulation of sources, techniques, and time was carried out as recommended by Zulkarnain (2022).

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Implementation of Inclusive Islamic Education in Lombok

#### a. Inclusive learning model

The research results show that the implementation of inclusive Islamic education in Lombok has undergone a significant transformation in the last five years. Based on observations in three districts, three dominant inclusive learning models were found:

- 1) Local Wisdom Integration Model Islamic education institutions in Lombok have integrated Sasak local wisdom values such as "saling jot", "saling perilaku", and "saling ajinin" into the PAI curriculum. As stated by Rahmawati (2020), this integration strengthens the relevance of learning to the local socio-cultural context. The data shows that 78% of PAI teachers have used contextual examples from local culture in explaining the concepts of tolerance and harmony.
- 2) Intercultural Dialogue Model The development of an intercultural dialogue-based learning model has been implemented through the "Budaya School" program in several madrasahs. Suprpto (2021) notes that this program is effective in building students' multicultural awareness. The results of interviews with students show an increased understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity.
- 3) Collaborative Learning Models The implementation of collaborative learning across religions and cultures has resulted in increased positive interactions between students. Hidayat et al. (2023) confirmed that this model contributed to reducing prejudice and negative stereotypes between

groups. The implementation of inclusive Islamic education in Lombok has experienced significant development through various learning models that are adaptive to the local context. Based on research by Hidayat et al. (2023), there are three main learning models that have been implemented with varying degrees of success.

#### b. Teachers' Role in Learning Transformation

The transformation of inclusive Islamic education in Lombok relies heavily on the strategic role of teachers as agents of change. Hidayat et al. (2023) identified several crucial aspects of teachers' roles in implementing inclusive learning. The development of teachers' multicultural competence is the main foundation in the transformation of learning. Rahmawati (2020) noted that PAI teachers who have a good multicultural understanding are able to: 1) Integrate universal Islamic values with local wisdom, 2) Manage diversity in the classroom effectively, 3) Facilitate intercultural and interreligious dialog, 4) Apply a contextualized learning approach.

Mahmud (2019) revealed that PAI teachers in Lombok have developed various inclusive learning innovations: 1) Project-Based Learning with the theme of diversity, 2) Collaborative Learning across groups, 3) Story-telling based on local wisdom. 4) Role-playing to build empathy. The research revealed the crucial role of PAI teachers in transforming inclusive values:

- 1) Multicultural Competency Development Data shows that 65% of PAI teachers have attended multicultural competency development training. Mahmud (2019) emphasized that the improvement of this competency is positively correlated with the effectiveness of inclusive learning.
- 2) Innovation of Learning Methods Teachers have developed various innovative methods such as:
  - Project-based learning with the theme of diversity
  - Story-telling based on local wisdom
  - Role-playing conflict situations and their resolution

### 3.2 Impact of Inclusive Islamic Education on Tolerance and Harmony

#### a. Changes in Attitudes and Behavior of Learners

Research by Hidayat et al. (2023) revealed a significant transformation in students' tolerance attitudes after attending inclusive Islamic education. These changes can be seen from: 1) Increased acceptance of differences (82%), 2) Strengthening multicultural awareness (75%), 3) The development of the ability to empathize (70%). Rahmawati (2020) identifies changes in social behavior which include: 1) Increased participation in cross-cultural activities, 2) Reduced stereotypes and negative prejudices, 3) Strengthened conflict resolution skills, 4) Growing initiative in building intergroup dialog. Mahmud (2019) noted several indicators of strengthening multicultural awareness: 1) Cognitive: a) deep understanding of diversity, b) ability to think critically about social issues. 2) Affective: a) sensitivity to discrimination, b) respect for cultural differences. 3) Psychomotor: a) intercultural communication skills, b) cross-group collaboration skills. Suprpto (2021) revealed the positive impact on social relations: 1) Strengthening social cohesion in the school environment, 2) The development of cross-identity friendship networks, 3) Increased cooperation in learning activities, 4) Decreased conflict based on differences. Zulkarnain (2022) emphasizes the importance of sustaining change through: 1) Continuous mentoring program, 2) Regular monitoring and evaluation, 3) Strengthening school and family support systems.

The results showed significant changes in students' attitudes and behavior:

- 1) Increased Tolerance A survey of 240 students showed:
  - 82% experienced an increase in tolerant attitude
  - 75% better understand the importance of respecting differences
  - 68% are active in cross-cultural and religious activities

2) Strengthening Multicultural Awareness Zulkarnain (2022) noted that learners exposed to inclusive Islamic education showed:

- The ability to think critically about issues of diversity
- Sensitivity to discrimination and injustice
- Better conflict resolution skills

b. Impact on the Social Environment

Inclusive Islamic education has shown a significant role in shaping a tolerant and harmonious society. The implementation of inclusive values in Islamic education has a positive impact on the character building of students and the social dynamics of society more broadly.

Research by Hidayat et al. (2020) shows that the implementation of an inclusive Islamic education curriculum in madrasah has succeeded in increasing students' tolerance attitudes by 67% compared to before implementation. This is reflected in the increasing willingness of students to interact with friends of different faiths and respect the worship of other religions.

Inclusive Islamic education contributes to building social cohesion through developing values of togetherness and respect for diversity. Rahmawati (2023) found that schools implementing inclusive Islamic education recorded a 45% reduction in conflicts between students within two years of implementation. According to Aminullah (2021), inclusive Islamic education plays an important role in shaping moderate religious understanding. His research shows that 78% of inclusive Islamic education alumni have more open views and are able to build constructive dialogue with groups with different views.

The implementation of inclusive Islamic education has a positive impact on the social environment through: 1) Increased participation in interfaith social activities, 2) Strengthening cooperation between community groups, 3) Reduced potential for religious-based conflict, 4) The formation of a more inclusive social network. Inclusive Islamic education has proven effective in building a tolerant and harmonious society. The impact is not only limited to the educational environment but also extends to the wider social realm, creating harmony in diversity.

The implementation of inclusive Islamic education has a positive impact on the wider social environment:

1) Strengthening Social Cohesion Research shows an increase in positive interactions between groups within schools and communities. Nugroho (2021) identified:

- Increased participation in cross-group social Activities
- Reduced identity-based conflicts
- Strengthened intergroup social networks

2) Revitalization of local values The inclusive education program has contributed to:

- Reviving the tradition of gotong oyong
- Strengthening inclusive cultural identik
- Developing community social capit

### 3.3 Challenges and Development Strategies

a. Implementation Challenges

Rahmawati, S. (2023). Inclusive Islamic Education and its Impact on the Social Cohesion of Urban Communities. *Journal of Education and Islamic Studies*, 7(1), 23-40. The implementation of inclusive Islamic education faces various challenges that require a comprehensive and sustainable development strategy. According to Mahmudah's research (2022), there is resistance from 45% of educators to the concept of inclusive Islamic education due to concerns about the erosion of Islamic values. This challenge requires a sensitive and gradual approach in the implementation process.

Fadilah et al. (2021) identified that 67% of Islamic education institutions experience limited resources, both in terms of human resources and infrastructure, in implementing inclusive education

programs. Rahman (2023) found a gap in understanding among education stakeholders regarding the concept and implementation of inclusive Islamic education, with 58% of respondents showing different understandings.

Capacity building strategies through continuous training and professional mentoring have shown effectiveness in improving educators' understanding and skills (Nurhasanah, 2024). The adoption of an integrated curriculum that blends inclusive values with Islamic teachings has been shown to reduce resistance and increase program acceptance (Fadilah et al., 2021). The establishment of cooperative networks between educational institutions, communities and other stakeholders is key to successful implementation (Rahman, 2023).

Research identified several key challenges:

- 1) Structural challenges
  - Limited resources and infrastruktur
  - Inconsistency of education policies
  - Resistance from conservative groups
- 2) Cultural Challenges Syafruddin et al. (2023) identified:
  - The strong paradigm of exclusivism in religious understanding
  - Deep-rooted stereotypes and prejudices
  - Intergenerational understanding gap

#### b. Development Strategies

Based on the research findings, several development strategies were formulated:

- 1) Strengthening Institutional Capacity
  - Integrated curriculum Development
  - Improving educators' competence
  - Strengthening the monitoring and evaluation system
- 2) Optimizing the Role of Stakeholders Atmaja (2022) emphasizes the importance of:
  - Triple helix collaboration (education-government-community)
  - Empowerment of religious and cultural leaders
  - Media involvement in socializing inclusive values

### 3.4 A sustainable development model

#### a. Development Framework

The research produces a sustainable framework for inclusive Islamic education development:

- 1) Curriculum Aspects
  - Integration of universal Islamic values
  - Contextualization of learning material
  - Development of holistic assessments
- 2) Methodology Aspects
 

Wahyudin et al. (2020) recommend:

  - Transformative learning approaches
  - Experiential learning methods
  - Utilization of digital Technology

#### b. Policy recommendations

Based on the research findings, policy recommendations are formulated:

- 1) Macro Level
  - Strengthening inclusive education regulations
  - Development of standard operating procedures
  - Adequate budget allocation

## 2) Micro Level

- Development of flagship programs based on locality
- Strengthening inter-institutional cooperation Networks
- Empowerment of school communities

### 3.5 Theoretical and Practical Implications

#### a. Theoretical Implications

This research contributes to the development of:

- Transformative Islamic education theory
- Multicultural learning model
- Inclusive education evaluation frameworks

#### b. Practical Implications

The research findings have implications for:

- Development of contextual PAI curricula
- Improvement of teacher competencies
- Strengthening community-based education systems

## 4 CONCLUSION

Based on the research results on the implementation of inclusive Islamic education, this study reveals that the implementation of inclusive Islamic education in Lombok has undergone a positive transformation through three main models: (1) integration of local wisdom, (2) intercultural dialogue, and (3) collaborative learning. These models have successfully transformed the paradigm of Islamic education from being previously exclusive to becoming more inclusive and contextual. The implementation of inclusive Islamic education shows significant effectiveness in: a) Increasing students' understanding and tolerant attitudes (82%), b) Strengthening multicultural awareness in the educational environment, c) Reducing the potential for identity-based conflicts, which confirms the positive correlation between inclusive education and the strengthening of social harmony. The success of the implementation is supported by several key factors: a) Commitment from education stakeholders, b) Integration of local wisdom values, c) Continuous development of teacher competencies, which affirm that the synergy of these factors acts as a catalyst in the transformation of inclusive Islamic education. The research identifies the main challenges including: 1) Limited resources and infrastructure, 2) Resistance from conservative groups, 3) Policy inconsistency. To address these challenges, a systemic approach is recommended that involves strengthening institutional capacity and optimizing the role of stakeholders. Based on the research findings, it is recommended: a) Strengthening inclusive education policies at the macro and micro levels b) Developing an integrated curriculum based on local wisdom c) Enhancing educators' capacity through continuous training d) Strengthening inter-institutional cooperation networks. Inclusive Islamic education plays a strategic role in fostering tolerance and harmony in Lombok's diverse society. The successful implementation of this model can serve as a prototype for the development of inclusive Islamic education in other regions with similar characteristics.

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