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MULTICULTURAL APPROACH IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION ON STUDENTS' LEARNING OUTCOMES AND UNDERSTANDING OF PLURALISM IN INDONESIAN SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACTS

Background: Multicultural education serves as a reflective critique and exploration of these issues to pave the way for cross-cultural communication and promote fair and constructive engagement with cultural diversity; (2) **Purpose of the Study:** This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the multicultural approach in Islamic religious education on students' learning outcomes and understanding of pluralistic values; (3) **Methods:** The research employs a mixed-methods approach with an explanatory sequential design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The study was conducted at MI Muhammadiyah Bontobodda, SDN 23 Centre Takalar, and SD Inpres Bone, involving a sample of 30 third-grade students from each school, selected through purposive sampling. The learning approaches examined in this study include multicultural, humanistic, and constructivist approaches; (4) **Results:** The Kruskal-Wallis test showed significant differences in learning outcomes ($p = 0.004$), particularly between the multicultural and constructivist approaches ($p = 0.009$) and the humanistic and constructivist approaches ($p = 0.005$). Thematic analysis further revealed that the multicultural approach enhanced students' understanding of tolerance and inclusivity, while the humanistic approach emphasized character-building and self-reflection in Islamic education; and (5) **Conclusions:** The humanistic and multicultural approaches were more effective in enhancing learning outcomes and pluralism understanding compared to the constructivist approach. The study's findings highlight the need to strengthen instructional strategies that integrate humanistic and multicultural elements to improve the effectiveness of Islamic religious education in elementary schools.

A. INTRODUCTION

In the context of Islamic education, the multicultural approach has increasingly gained attention as a response to the cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity in modern society. Islam itself teaches the values of inclusivity and tolerance, as stated in the Qur'an and Hadith, emphasizing the importance of respecting differences (QS. Al-Hujurat: 13). However, in practice, Islamic education often remains oriented toward homogeneity, providing limited space for strengthening the understanding of pluralistic values that are essential in social life. Multicultural-based education can serve as an effective means to enhance students' understanding of diversity and positively influence their learning outcomes (Ginanjar et al. 2024). Multicultural education helps students understand, accept, and appreciate people from different ethnicities, cultures, values, and religions, fostering an attitude of mutual respect for differences ("agree in disagreement") and the ability to coexist peacefully ("to live together"). In other words, students are encouraged to value and even uphold pluralism and heterogeneity. According to (Tamphu et al. 2024), the paradigm of multicultural education suggests that students learn together with others in an atmosphere of mutual respect, tolerance, and understanding to develop: a) self-transformation, b) school and teaching-learning process transformation, and c) societal transformation.

Multicultural education challenges all forms of untested assumptions, biases, and falsehoods about human differences and similarities. It serves as a reflective critique and exploration of these issues to pave the way for cross-cultural communication and promote fair and constructive engagement with cultural diversity (Fuadi and Shohib 2024; Alfarisi and Darmiyanti 2023; Bahri, Ghony, and Busri 2023; Djubaedi et al. 2022; Anurogo et al. 2023). For practical and ethical reasons, students and teachers today need to learn how to communicate, coexist, and collaborate effectively and peacefully with people from different cultural backgrounds. Through this form of education, we aim for students from elementary to higher education levels to grow in a world free from prejudice, bias, and discrimination in any form, including religion, gender, race, skin color, culture, and social class, ensuring that their aspirations and goals in life can be realized.

Various studies have discussed the role of Islamic education in shaping students' character and morals (Murharyana et al. 2024; Mutaqin et al. 2024; Sabarudin et al. 2024, 2023), as well as the implementation of multicultural education in Islamic schools. For example, research by Fuadi & Shohib (2024) examines how Islamic education shapes students' character through religious moral and ethical values. Meanwhile, a study by Bahri et al. (2023) explores strategies for implementing multicultural education in madrasahs as an effort to foster tolerance among students.

However, there are still few studies that specifically explore the relationship between the multicultural approach in Islamic education and students' learning outcomes and their understanding of pluralistic values. Additionally, research such as that conducted by Alfarisi & Darmiyanti (2023) tends to focus more on theoretical aspects without examining practical implementation in the context of formal Islamic education in schools. This indicates a clear research gap, as most previous studies remain limited to conceptual discussions, while empirical investigations on the direct impact of multicultural approaches on students' learning outcomes and the internalization of pluralistic values in Islamic schools are still scarce. Therefore, this

Based on these findings, this study offers a new perspective by examining how the multicultural approach in Islamic education contributes to improving students' learning outcomes and shaping their understanding of pluralistic values. By integrating Islamic pedagogy and the multicultural approach, this research provides empirical insights into the effectiveness of a more inclusive educational model within Islamic schools. This study aims to: 1) Analyze the impact of the multicultural approach in Islamic education on students' learning outcomes. 2) Identify the extent to which this approach enhances students' understanding of pluralistic values. 3) Provide recommendations for curriculum development and teaching methods in Islamic schools to foster inclusivity toward cultural and religious diversity. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to developing a more inclusive Islamic education model that aligns with the multicultural realities of society.

B. METHOD

This study employs a mixed methods approach with an explanatory sequential design to obtain a comprehensive understanding of student learning outcomes in Islamic religious education using a multicultural approach. The research was conducted at MI Muhammadiyah Bontobodda, SDN 23 Centre Takalar, and SD Inpres Bone, with a population comprising all students in these schools. The sample consisted of 30 third-grade students from each school, selected using purposive sampling. The research instruments used in this study included tests and interviews. To ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments, the test items were validated by subject matter experts in Islamic education and assessed through content validity analysis. A pilot test was conducted with 15 students outside the sample, and the reliability of the test was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.82, indicating high reliability. For the qualitative instruments, credibility was strengthened through triangulation (interviews, observations, and documentation), peer debriefing with fellow researchers, and member checking by confirming interpretations with participants.

The quantitative method was applied to compare more than two independent groups within a single factor: the multicultural approach at MI Muhammadiyah Bontobodda, the humanistic approach at SDN 23 Centre Takalar, and the constructivist approach at SD Inpres Bone. Meanwhile, the qualitative method was used to explore student learning outcomes through interviews and observations regarding their understanding of pluralistic values. For data analysis in the quantitative method, both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics were used to depict the initial condition of the data, while inferential statistics were employed to test hypotheses and generate generalizable conclusions. The inferential analysis began with a normality test using Kolmogorov-Smirnov and a variance homogeneity test using Levene's Test. If the data were normally distributed, a parametric statistical test using one-way ANOVA was conducted. However, if the data were not normally distributed, a non-parametric statistical test using the Kruskal-Wallis test was performed. Furthermore, if the ANOVA test indicated significant differences, a Post Hoc Test was carried out to identify which groups exhibited significant differences. The Bonferroni test was used if the data were homogeneous, while the Games-Howell test was applied if the variance was not homogeneous.

In the qualitative phase, thematic analysis was conducted to identify, analyze, and report patterns within the data. The interview protocol was developed based on the core concepts of pluralism and multicultural education, ensuring alignment with the research objectives. Questions were designed to elicit students' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes toward tolerance, inclusivity, and cooperation with peers from different backgrounds. To ensure clarity and relevance, the protocol was reviewed by two experts in Islamic education and piloted with a small group of students before the actual data collection. This method helps uncover the meaning embedded in interviews, observations, and documentation by classifying information into specific themes. Thematic analysis is widely used in research to understand experiences, perceptions, and meanings associated with a phenomenon in this case, student learning outcomes in Islamic religious education with an emphasis on pluralistic values. The steps in the thematic analysis for this study included: (1) Familiarization with the data; (2) Generating initial codes; (3) Searching for themes; (4) Reviewing themes; (5) Defining and naming themes; and (6) Writing the analysis report. Significant statements from participants were coded and clustered into meaning units, which were then synthesized into broader categories representing pluralistic values such as tolerance, inclusivity, and mutual respect. By employing this method, the study aims to generate an in-depth understanding of how Islamic religious education at the elementary level fosters students' comprehension of pluralistic values.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to analyze and visualize the characteristics of the data for both the independent and dependent variables without making inferences about the population. The purpose of this analysis is to provide a general overview of the data under study, particularly regarding the mean, standard deviation, minimum value, maximum value, and range, as presented in the following table.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics		
Approach	Mean	Std. Deviation
Multicultural	85.13	4.485
Humanistic	86.13	6.559
Constructivist	80.20	7.485
Total	83.82	6.755

Based on the table above, the mean scores for each approach were 85.13 for the multicultural approach, 86.13 for the humanistic approach, and 80.20 for the constructivist approach. The standard deviation values were 4.485 for the multicultural approach, 6.559 for the humanistic approach, and 7.485 for the constructivist approach. The overall mean and standard deviation were 83.82 and 6.755, respectively. The mean provides a general overview of the central tendency of the data and reflects a representative central point influenced by extreme values. Meanwhile, the standard deviation indicates the dispersion of data around the mean. A high standard deviation suggests that the data points are more spread out, whereas a lower standard deviation implies that the data are more concentrated around the mean.

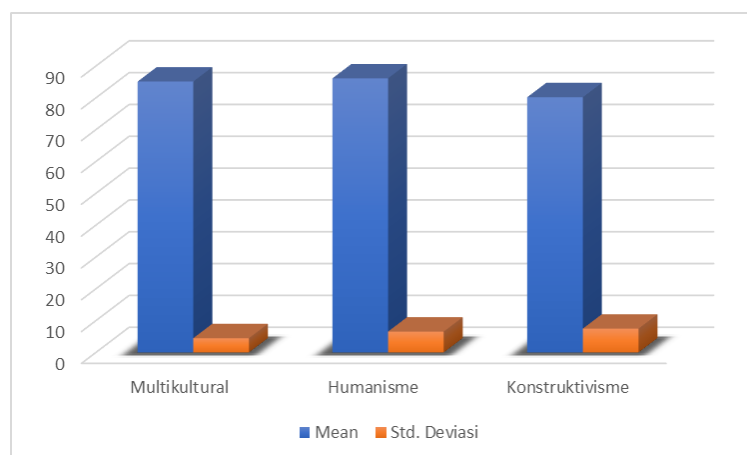


Figure 2. Descriptive Statistics

Based on the figure above, it is evident that the highest mean score in Islamic religious education learning was achieved using the humanistic approach, followed by the multicultural approach, while the constructivist approach had the lowest mean score. Regarding the standard deviation, the highest value was found in the constructivist approach, followed by the humanistic approach, and the lowest was in the multicultural approach. Based on this general overview, further inferential statistical tests were conducted to make generalizations, starting with assessing the normality of the data, as presented below.

Table 2. Tests of Nomality

Approach	Statistic	Sig.
Multicultural	.161	.045
Humanistic	.219	.001
COnstructuvust	.094	.200*

Based on the table above, the statistical values for the multicultural, humanistic, and constructivist approaches are 0.161, 0.219, and 0.094, respectively. Meanwhile, their significance values are $0.045 < 0.05$, $0.001 < 0.05$, and $0.200 > 0.05$. According to the decision criteria, this indicates that the data do not follow a normal distribution.

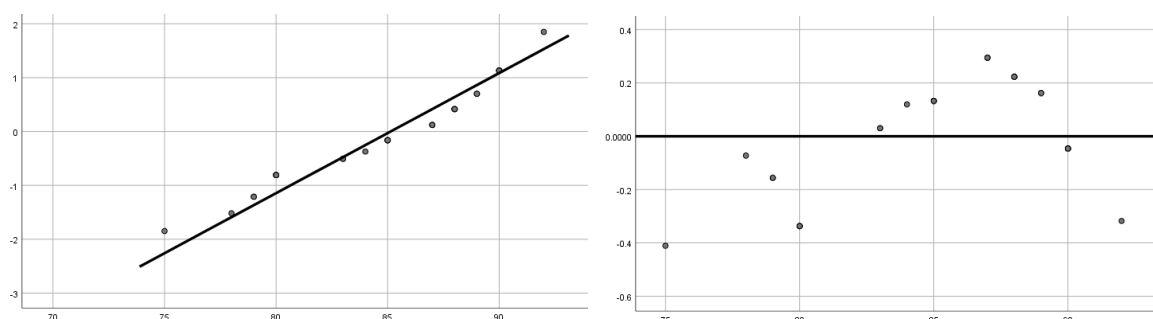


Figure 3. Normal Q-Q Plot of Multicultural

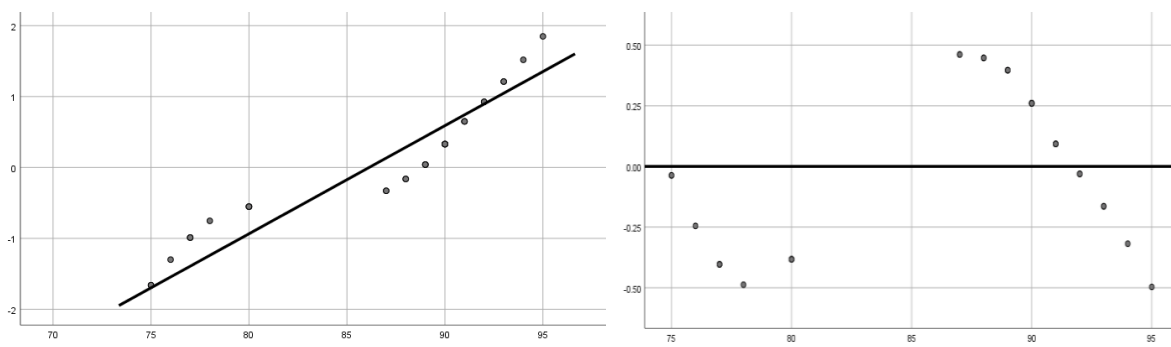


Figure 4. Normal Q-Q Plot of Humanistic

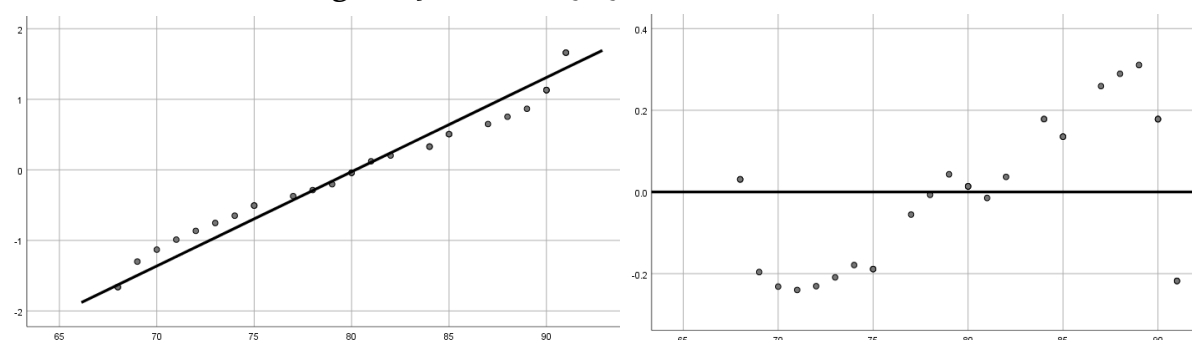


Figure 5. Normal Q-Q Plot of Constructivist

Based on Figures 3, 4, and 5 above, it can be observed that the data points do not spread around the diagonal line and are mostly distant from the line. This indicates that the data do not follow a normal distribution. Consequently, a non-parametric statistical test using the Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted as the next step.

Tabel 3. Test Statistics^{a,b}

	Value
Kruskal-Wallis H	11.134
Asymp. Sig.	.004

From Table 3, it can be seen that the Kruskal-Wallis value is 11.134, with a significance level of $0.004 < 0.05$. Based on the decision criteria, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in Islamic religious education learning outcomes among the multicultural, humanistic, and constructivist approaches. To further examine the differences among these approaches, a Post Hoc test was conducted, as shown below.

Tabel 4. Multiple Comparisons

Approach	Approach	Std. Error	Sig.
Multicultural	Humanistic	1.451	.771
	Constructivist	1.593	.009
Humanistic	Constructivist	1.817	.005

Based on Table 4, the significance value between the multicultural and humanistic approaches is $0.771 > 0.05$, while the significance values between the multicultural and constructivist approaches ($0.009 < 0.05$) and between the humanistic

and constructivist approaches ($0.005 < 0.05$) indicate significant differences. According to the decision criteria, this suggests that there is no significant difference between the multicultural and humanistic approaches in Islamic religious education. However, significant differences exist between the multicultural and constructivist approaches, as well as between the humanistic and constructivist approaches, in terms of student learning outcomes in Islamic religious education. To support these quantitative findings, interviews were conducted with students and teachers from each school to explore how the applied learning approaches influenced students' understanding of pluralistic values in Islamic religious education.

At MI Muhammadiyah Bontobodda, the multicultural approach was implemented through discussions on diversity and tolerance in Islam. Several students stated that they better understood the importance of respecting differences after experiencing this learning approach. One MI student expressed:

"I now understand that friends from different ethnic backgrounds and customs can also learn Islam in their own way. Our teacher often teaches us that Islam encourages us to respect differences."

The teacher at this school also emphasized that the multicultural approach helps students accept diversity and strengthens their tolerance. This aligns with the teacher's statement:

"We always try to connect Islamic teachings with real social life. Through discussions and group work, students learn how to interact better with friends from different backgrounds."

At SDN 23 Centre Takalar, the humanistic approach focused more on students' personal experiences and self-reflection. Some students admitted that this method helped them understand Islamic values through their daily life experiences.

"When learning about honesty, we were asked to share personal experiences. I realized that Islam teaches us to be honest, not just at school but also at home."

The teacher at this school noted that the humanistic approach made students more engaged in learning because they felt valued and acknowledged.

"Students feel more connected to the material because they can relate it to their personal experiences. This makes it easier for them to understand concepts in Islamic religious education."

At SD Inpres Bone, the constructivist approach was implemented through discovery-based learning and open discussions. However, some students found it difficult to grasp the concepts being taught due to the lack of clear guidance from the teacher.

"Sometimes I get confused because I have to find the answers myself. If something is wrong, then the teacher explains. I prefer when the teacher explains first and then asks us to find examples."

The teacher at this school acknowledged that the constructivist approach requires students to be prepared for independent thinking, which can be challenging for students with lower academic abilities.

"This approach is effective for students who are used to critical thinking, but for those who lack confidence, they tend to remain silent in discussions."

Based on interviews with students and teachers, the multicultural and humanistic approaches had a stronger positive impact on students' understanding of pluralistic values. The multicultural approach helped students comprehend diversity in

Islam, while the humanistic approach made it easier for them to internalize religious values through personal experiences. In contrast, the constructivist approach faced implementation challenges, as it required critical thinking skills that not all elementary school students possess.

Discussion

The research findings indicate that there is a significant difference in the effectiveness of multicultural, humanistic, and constructivist learning approaches on Islamic religious education outcomes. The humanistic approach achieved the highest average learning outcome (86.13), followed by the multicultural approach (85.13), while the constructivist approach had the lowest (80.20). Inferential analysis using the Kruskal-Wallis test showed significant differences among the learning approaches ($p = 0.004$). Furthermore, the Post Hoc test revealed no significant difference between the multicultural and humanistic approaches ($p = 0.771$), but there were significant differences between the multicultural and constructivist approaches ($p = 0.009$) as well as between the humanistic and constructivist approaches ($p = 0.005$).

The humanistic approach achieved the highest learning outcomes, aligning with Rogers' (1983) theory of experiential education, which suggests that student-centered and experience-oriented learning is more effective in enhancing understanding. Rogers emphasized that learning becomes more meaningful when students feel valued and can reflect on their personal experiences. Additionally, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory supports these findings, suggesting that students who feel appreciated and receive relevant learning experiences are more motivated to understand and internalize the material (Bari and Hidayat 2022; Sumantri and Ahmad 2019a, 2019b). Teachers at SDN 23 Centre Takalar confirmed that students were more engaged and better able to connect religious values to their daily lives when using the humanistic approach. This approach aligns with QS. Al-Mujadilah (58:11):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحِ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَإِذَا قِيلَ انشُرُوا فَانْشُرُوا يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾

Meaning: "O you who have believed, when it is said to you, 'Make room in assemblies,' then make room; Allah will make room for you. And when it is said, 'Arise,' then arise; Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees. And Allah is acquainted with what you do." (RI 2020)

This verse emphasizes the importance of valuing knowledge and learning, as well as how those who acquire knowledge will be elevated in status. In the context of the humanistic approach, when students feel valued and receive a positive learning environment, they are more motivated to understand and internalize religious values. This is further supported by previous research from Noddings (Fauzi et al. 2025), which states that *caring education* enhances students' understanding of moral and religious values. In this context, the humanistic approach not only improves learning outcomes but also fosters students' character development, making them more reflective and compassionate toward others.

The multicultural approach also demonstrated high effectiveness in Islamic religious education, especially in fostering students' understanding of pluralistic values. The results show that students taught with this approach demonstrated higher tolerance and inclusivity than those taught using other approaches. This aligns with (Pattiasina, Susanto, and Pradita 2023) theory of multicultural education, which

emphasizes that diversity in education helps students develop an understanding of tolerance and mutual respect. Interview findings from students at MI Muhammadiyah Bontobodda revealed that through this approach, they gained a deeper understanding of how Islam teaches tolerance and respect for differences. Teachers also stated that this method effectively fosters inclusive and tolerant attitudes among students. Djubaedi et al. (2022) supports these findings, stating that the multicultural approach can enhance students' social awareness and understanding of real-world diversity. In the context of Islamic religious education, this is crucial because Islamic teachings emphasize the concepts of *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood) and *ukhuwah wathaniyah* (national brotherhood).

The constructivist approach yielded the lowest learning outcomes in this study, indicating that this method is less optimal for teaching Islamic religious education at the elementary level. This aligns with criticism from (Roy, Huq, and Rob 2020) who argue that the constructivist approach can be ineffective if not supported by sufficient teacher guidance, especially for students in the early stages of cognitive development. Piaget's theory of cognitive development states that elementary school children are still in the concrete operational stage, meaning they require explicit examples and guidance to understand abstract concepts (Imanulhaq and Ichsan 2022; Suparno 2001; Nainggolan and Daeli 2021), including those in Islamic religious education. The constructivist approach, which heavily relies on independent exploration, can be challenging for students who have not yet developed strong critical thinking skills.

This was confirmed by interviews with students at SD Inpres Bone, where they expressed difficulty in understanding the material due to a lack of clear guidance when using the constructivist approach. Teachers also acknowledged that this method is better suited for students with more advanced comprehension skills, requiring specific adaptations for effective implementation.

Based on the research findings and literature analysis, it can be concluded that the humanistic and multicultural approaches are more effective in improving students' learning outcomes in Islamic religious education compared to the constructivist approach. The humanistic approach provides more meaningful learning experiences, while the multicultural approach helps students understand the values of diversity in Islam. Conversely, the constructivist approach requires further adaptation to be effectively applied at the elementary school level.

Learning is understood as a dynamic process that occurs through various methods and levels. The diversity of learning approaches has led to the emergence of different theories that explain how students engage in the teaching process, absorb information, and retain it for long-term use. In the context of Islamic education, the multicultural approach has become increasingly relevant in shaping students' understanding of pluralistic values. Various learning theories, both macro-level theories such as social constructivism and more applied models like inclusive learning strategies, provide a foundation for implementing multicultural education in Islamic schools. Understanding these theories allows researchers to explore how the multicultural approach not only enhances students' academic achievement but also strengthens their understanding of diversity and tolerance in social life.

One of the most influential theories in this regard is Social Constructivism, developed by Lev Vygotsky in 1968. This theory emphasizes that learning occurs within a social and cultural context, making the multicultural approach in Islamic education

highly relevant for improving student learning outcomes (Atmowidjoyo, Mugiyono, and Nahuda 2022). According to Vygotsky, language and culture play a crucial role in human intellectual development and in shaping how individuals perceive the world (Agustyaningrum and Pradanti 2022; Setiyaningsih and Subrata 2023; Saputra and Suryandi 2020; Habsy et al. 2024). This means that the concept of learning is transmitted through language, interpreted through experiences, and understood through interactions within a cultural context. The alignment of knowledge is emphasized, highlighting that knowledge is not only socially constructed but also co-constructed through collaboration with others (Nurhikmah 2024b).

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) states that learning is most effective when individuals are guided by a "More knowledgeable other" or through structured support. This socio-cultural perspective stresses that knowledge is actively built through social interactions, and learning is a collaborative process involving shared experiences and engagement with peers and teachers. Social constructivism extends beyond individual cognition by recognizing the social dimensions of learning, emphasizing the use of conversation, peer interaction, and knowledge application as essential components of the learning process. Learning is viewed as a social activity connected to various human interactions, including peers, family members, and other acquaintances (Mo'tasim et al. 2020)..

Vygotsky's approach to the relationship between social and individual processes is fundamentally different from Piaget's theory. Vygotsky prioritized social and linguistic influences on learning and meaning-making, arguing that the social dimension of consciousness is primary in both time and reality. He stated, *"The social dimension of consciousness is primary in time and in fact. The individual dimension of consciousness is derivative and secondary."* To explain the participatory and social learning process, Vygotsky introduced the concept of ZPD, which he defined as: *"The distance between the actual developmental level determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers."*

Additionally, Vygotsky emphasized the role of semiotic mediation in learning and knowledge construction. He argued that both social and individual functions are mediated through semiotic mechanisms, such as language and other psychological tools. The internalization of semiotic processes aids in autonomous problem-solving and advances knowledge construction.

Social constructivism provides a foundation for teaching techniques that emphasize participation, discussion, and idea-sharing among students (Rytälä 2021). Several strategies for implementing social constructivist principles in education include:

- 1) Classroom Discussions: Classroom discussions stimulate students' critical thinking. Teachers facilitate dialogues that encourage students to express their views, share experiences, and construct collective understanding. Through these interactions, students develop their knowledge by responding to peers' ideas and refining the concepts they learn.
- 2) Small Group Discussions: Small group discussions allow students to be actively engaged. Within these groups, they interact with each other, discuss their ideas, and solve problems collaboratively. This setting fosters an environment where students can experience the social impact of their thinking and actions.
- 3) Active Student Participation in Specific Topics: Encouraging students to actively participate in specific topics enhances their engagement. This can involve independent investigations,

project presentations, or active roles in simulations (Nurhamidah and Nurachadijat 2023; Juwanti et al. 2020; Nurhadiyati, Rusdinal, and Fitria 2021; Boss and Krauss 2022; Anggraini and Wulandari 2021). Direct participation provides students with practical experiences and enriches their understanding through hands-on interactions with the subject matter. By applying these strategies, Islamic education can integrate multicultural principles effectively, fostering not only students' academic achievements but also their awareness and appreciation of cultural and religious diversity.

These teaching techniques support student grouping and interactive tactics, creating a dynamic and inclusive learning environment. This approach leverages the power of social interaction to enrich learning, enabling students not only to deeply understand the material but also to develop essential social skills (Hayat, Rossi, and Ainayya 2025). By integrating cognitive and social dimensions, social constructivism offers a holistic learning approach. Students do not merely accumulate facts and concepts but also construct their understanding through social interactions, shared experiences, and the use of language and culture. This approach lays a strong foundation for students' intellectual and social development. By viewing learning as a dance involving all participants, the theory of social constructivism continues to inspire the world of education and modern learning.

Learning can be likened to a dance in which each student plays a crucial role. Through coordinated interaction, they collectively build a deeper understanding and diverse meanings. This approach positions students as active constructors of their own knowledge rather than passive recipients of information. In the context of Islamic education, this perspective becomes even more relevant, especially in teaching pluralistic values. By utilizing interactions among students from diverse cultural backgrounds and perspectives, Islamic education can enrich the learning experience, foster openness, and strengthen understanding of diversity. Thus, the multicultural approach in Islamic education not only supports better learning outcomes but also shapes more inclusive and tolerant character development.

The theory supporting this research is the Multicultural Education Theory proposed by Banks. This theory emphasizes the importance of education that values diversity and promotes equality and justice in learning. Religiosity is a human attitude in implementing beliefs, rituals, experiences or spirituality, intellect, and consequential practices (Rahim et al. 2024). In Islam, being religious means practicing one's faith, Islam, and Ihsan. Religion is a set of binding rules that govern an individual's relationship with God, other humans, and the universe. Religion brings well-being to all humankind, and thus, religious teachings address the necessity of tolerance toward others. Islam, in the Qur'an, specifically in Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13 and An-Nisa verse 135, regulates justice in human life. Justice in Islam is the most essential religious principle in individual and social relationships (Mutaqin et al. 2024). The principle of justice serves as the foundation of the goals of multicultural education. Thus, the importance of religiosity in education is as significant as understanding the multicultural education approach.

James A. Banks, a multicultural education activist, was the first Black professor in the College of Education. His writings, which highlighted the gap between theory and practice in multiculturalism in the West, led him to advocate for multicultural education for people of all backgrounds. Banks explains that the multicultural approach in education provides an effective solution to addressing racism and various social

issues, as he believes that part of education is teaching how to think (Um and Cho 2022; Padil, Saguni, and Adawiyah 2021; Malla et al. 2022; Latif and Hafid 2021; Zarkasyi 2021). Linguistically, multiculturalism means the recognition, appreciation, and acceptance of diverse cultures within a country or society. Multiculturalism is an idea that emphasizes disparity to create peace and prosperity for people of different backgrounds without losing their identity (Susilawati et al. 2024). According to Banks, cultural education is based on the idea of freedom and democratic development to foster knowledge and skills. Moreover, multicultural education is a movement for educational reform and an ongoing process (Irawati 2020).

The goals of multiculturalism are to provide a welcoming, fair, and inclusive learning environment without considering student differences. "Welcoming" means students feel accepted and supported, allowing them to recognize and understand differences through the learning process. Another goal is to build a mentality in society that prevents susceptibility to social conflict. In a multicultural curriculum, Burner and Banks state that issues, themes, topics, and concepts presented should be interconnected with multiculturalism.

James A. Banks is one of the pioneers in multicultural education, introducing five key dimensions: 1) Content Integration: The use of examples and content from diverse cultures in teaching, which are then integrated into materials, models, methods, assignments, and assessments. 2) Knowledge Construction Process: Encouraging students to understand how knowledge is constructed and how cultural perspectives influence historical interpretations, enabling students to learn how knowledge is built. Banks emphasizes that students must be taught to understand all types of knowledge and actively discuss them. 3) Prejudice Reduction: Using various methods and materials to reduce prejudice and promote positive attitudes toward different cultural groups. 4) Equity Pedagogy: Adapting diverse teaching methods and learning styles to support the academic success of all students. 5) Empowering School Culture and Social Structure: Creating a school environment that supports inclusivity and social justice (Santoso et al. 2023).

Multicultural education is a means of instilling tolerance, mutual respect, and love for peace among students. With sincere religious foundations and the application of religious values as a basis for good behavior, students can become agents of change ready to realize a just and prosperous Indonesia for all its citizens. By adopting this theory, the multicultural approach in Islamic education can be implemented to enhance students' understanding of pluralistic values.

An inclusive learning model is effective for implementation in multicultural-based curricula in Islamic schools. A model is defined as a pattern (example, reference, variety) of something to be created or produced (Schihalejev et al. 2020; Qornain et al. 2022; Mahmud 2023; Putri et al. 2024; Aisida 2021). In terminology, a model is understood as an accurate representation of an actual process that allows individuals or groups to act based on the model (Muliadi 2012). Learning is a concept consisting of two dimensions (teaching and learning) that must be planned, actualized, and directed toward achieving objectives or mastering a set of competencies and indicators that reflect learning outcomes. In education, the term "teaching model" refers to a specific learning approach, including its objectives, structure, environment, and management system to achieve the desired student behavioral changes. Joyce defines a teaching

model as a conceptual framework used as a guide for conducting learning (Nasution et al. 2024).

According to Suprijono, a learning model refers to the approach used, including learning objectives, stages of learning activities, learning environments, and classroom management. A learning model is also defined as a pattern used to design curricula, organize materials, and provide guidance for educators (Fauzi et al. 2025). A learning model has specific characteristics, namely: a) A logical theoretical rationale structured by its designer. b) The learning objectives to be achieved. c) The required teaching behaviors to ensure the model can be successfully implemented. d) The necessary learning environment to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

A learning model serves as a guide for teachers in conducting lessons. The selection of a model is influenced by the nature of the subject matter being taught, the learning objectives, and the students' abilities. Additionally, each learning model consists of stages that students go through under the teacher's guidance. These stages differ from one another, and understanding these differences spanning from the introduction to the conclusion is crucial for teachers to ensure successful learning (Hermawan 2014). However, many field observations indicate that learning models have not yet fully fostered an inclusive and multicultural paradigm among students.

Exclusive learning models present certain challenges, such as limiting the space for differences of opinion between teachers and students or among students themselves. As a result, the learning process becomes indoctrinative, with an educational focus solely on achieving ritual competencies and monotheistic beliefs based on a singular interpretation of Islamic education categorized strictly into right and wrong, good and bad. To prevent potential conflicts from escalating in Indonesia, fostering inclusive and multicultural awareness through education is of significant importance. The discourse on inclusive Islamic education does not aim to equate all religions or acknowledge the validity of beliefs that differ from one's own, as such an approach is considered impractical.

Inclusive-multicultural Islam acknowledges the diversity of human cultural expressions in understanding the core messages of religion, regardless of doctrinal differences. The term "inclusive-multicultural Islam" combines two concepts: inclusive Islam and multiculturalism, which are explained as follows. Inclusive Islam is a perspective on religious diversity based on the belief that other religions contain elements of truth and can provide benefits and salvation to their followers. According to Alwi Shihab, inclusive Islam embodies a moderate principle, where the pursuit of truth should be conducted through truthful means rather than through coercion. Respect for other religions is an expression of moderation. This moderation does not imply inconsistency in one's faith but rather a demonstration of respect for others (Nurhikmah 2024a). The spirit of inclusive Islam promotes the search for truth and open dialogue, prioritizing openness over rigidity and fostering a society that upholds human values.

By situating these findings within global discourse, this study not only demonstrates the relevance of multicultural education in the Indonesian Islamic context but also contributes to the wider conversation on how education systems worldwide can foster pluralism and inclusivity. This highlights the universal role of multicultural approaches in countering exclusivist narratives and preparing students for life in increasingly diverse societies. From this discussion, it can be concluded that

inclusive Islam involves seeking truth through interfaith dialogue, without compromising one's religious commitment, but rather respecting others. It encourages openness instead of rigidity and supports the development of a society that values humanity. According to Shihab, several steps lead to inclusive Islam: a) Religious groups should be willing to listen to one another without sacrificing their fundamental principles. b) Religious communities must abandon historical animosities and work together to promote shared fundamental values. c) Religious leaders should guide their followers in practicing their faith while fostering religious tolerance, which is a key goal supported and promoted by the state.

Inclusive Islam in education refers to an educational framework that serves as a medium for developing universal morality within religions through an inclusive Islamic theology. The term "inclusive Islamic education" in this context does not refer to accommodating special-needs children in regular schools alongside other students. Instead, it encompasses all aspects of life, including religion. Thus, it can be concluded that inclusive-multicultural Islamic education is an educational concept that acknowledges societal diversity and develops universal moral values across religions through inclusive Islamic theology, emphasizing religious tolerance. An inclusive-multicultural Islamic education framework that embraces openness to diversity means accepting elements from other religions based on shared teachings originating from Allah SWT, while maintaining full commitment to religious teachings and faith manifesting as submission, obedience, and devotion to Allah SWT.

By integrating an inclusive learning approach into Islamic education, schools can create an environment that strengthens students' understanding of pluralism and inclusivity. This makes learning more meaningful, not only cognitively but also in shaping attitudes and social values relevant to community life. By combining these theories, this study seeks to explore how a multicultural approach in Islamic education can enhance students' learning outcomes and deepen their understanding of diversity and pluralism in society.

D. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the humanistic approach has the highest effectiveness in improving learning outcomes in Islamic religious education, followed by the multicultural approach, while the constructivist approach shows the lowest results. The humanistic approach has been proven to provide a more meaningful learning experience for students by emphasizing self-reflection and emotional engagement in understanding Islamic values. Meanwhile, the multicultural approach plays a crucial role in fostering students' inclusive attitudes and tolerance towards diversity, aligning with Islamic principles of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) and solidarity.

Although the constructivist approach aims to encourage independent exploration in learning, the results of this study suggest that it is less optimal for elementary school students, who are still in the concrete operational stage of cognitive development. This indicates the need for modifications in implementing the constructivist approach, such as providing clearer guidance and integrating it with scaffolding-based learning strategies. By doing so, the effectiveness of this approach in Islamic religious education can be maximized. These findings have significant implications for educational practices, particularly in designing teaching methods that align with students' characteristics and the objectives of Islamic education. The humanistic and

multicultural approaches can serve as primary strategies for enhancing students' understanding and internalization of Islamic values in daily life. Meanwhile, the constructivist approach can still be applied with necessary adaptations to better suit the learning needs of elementary school students.

Therefore, educational policies and teacher training programs should consider a combination of effective teaching strategies to achieve more optimal and meaningful learning outcomes. More specifically, policymakers are encouraged to integrate multicultural perspectives into curriculum design, ensuring that lesson materials explicitly promote tolerance, inclusivity, and respect for diversity. Teacher training programs should incorporate modules on multicultural pedagogy, equipping educators with practical strategies to facilitate dialogue, manage diversity in the classroom, and contextualize Islamic values in pluralistic settings. For practitioners, implementing project-based learning and collaborative classroom activities can serve as effective methods to internalize pluralistic values among students. Through these concrete measures, the integration of multicultural approaches in Islamic education can be systematically strengthened at both policy and classroom levels.

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