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Article

Integrating Islamic Values into Social Education: A Model of Character Development in a Multicultural Society

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ABSTRACT

The main aim raised is how Islamic values such as justice (*'adl*), compassion (*rahmah*), and social responsibility (*mas'uliyyah*) can be implemented contextually in the social education system without giving rise to exclusivity or ideological bias. The state of the art of this study highlights the limitations of secular approaches in social education, which tend to emphasize cognitive and rational aspects, but less often touch on the spiritual and moral dimensions. The novelty of this study lies in the development of an integrative model based on *Islamic social pedagogy* that emphasizes the balance between spiritual, social, and moral aspects in the learning process. This study employs a qualitative approach, incorporating literature reviews and field observations, in Islamic educational institutions that implement a values-based social curriculum. The results of the study show that the integration of Islamic values in social education is able to increase moral awareness, social empathy, and tolerance of students. Islamic values have proven to play a role as an instrument to strengthen social cohesion in the midst of cultural diversity. The discussion emphasized the importance of adaptive curriculum design and teacher training in the internalization of universal Islamic values. This research recommendation emphasizes the need for education policies that encourage collaboration between Islamic and non-Islamic educational institutions in building social education models oriented towards humanity, justice, and global peace.

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INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly plural global context, education is required to be an arena for the formation of ethical, empathetic, and civilized social character (Banks, 2020). In Indonesia, the dilemma between universal humanistic values and local religious values is still a big challenge in the world of social education (Fahmi, 2023). This situation shows the urgent need to develop a new approach that is able to bridge the gap between secular education and universal Islamic spiritual values. This study focuses on the development of *the Islamic Social Pedagogy* paradigm as an integrative approach that combines Islamic moral values with multicultural social education

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theory. This approach is expected to be able to produce students who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also moral, empathetic, and tolerant of diversity.

Social education in Indonesia tends to emphasize the cognitive and rational aspects, while the spirituality dimension is still often overlooked (Ali & Yusof, 2021). This is in line with the global trend of modern education that places religion in the private space (Niyozov & Memon, 2020). As a result, a gap emerges between the mastery of social knowledge and students' moral behavior in real-life practice. Recent studies show that social education that is not based on spiritual values is prone to fostering individualistic attitudes and apathy towards social problems (Subagyo & Kurniawan, 2022). In contrast, the integration of religious values has been shown to strengthen social empathy and cross-cultural solidarity (Campbell & Tiliouine, 2022). Islamic values such as *rahmah (compassion*), *'adl (justice),* and *ukhuwah (brotherhood)* have great potential to be used as a moral foundation in social education (Fahmi, 2023). These three values are in line with universal humanistic principles and are an important basis for the formation of an inclusive social character.

In the perspective of Al-Attas (1991), Islamic education aims to form civilized people through the process *of ta'dib*—that is, the recognition and internalization of divine values into human personality. Meanwhile, the *theory of multiculturalism* developed by Banks (2020) emphasizes the acceptance of diversity as the basis of social cohesion. The combination of the two results in a holistic and humanistic approach to education. Recent research has also shown that the integration of spiritual values in the curriculum can strengthen students' moral awareness and social responsibility (Halafoff et al., 2023; Mansouri et al., 2021). In Indonesia, several madrassas have begun to implement *an integrated curriculum* based on Islamic values (Nasir, 2023), but a similar approach has not been widely adopted in public schools. So that today's global society is colored by the diversity of cultures, religions, and social identities that are increasingly complex. This condition requires the social education system to not only emphasize the cognitive aspect, but also to form the character of students who are ethical, empathetic, and tolerant (Banks, 2020). In the Indonesian context, social education still faces a dilemma between universal humanistic values and local religious values. Islamic values such as *rahmah* (compassion), *'adl* (justice), and *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) have great potential to be used as a moral foundation in character formation in a multicultural society (Fahmi, 2023).

However, the implementation of Islamic values is often hampered by secular approaches in social education that place religion in the private space (Ali & Yusof, 2021). As a result, a gap arises between the social knowledge taught and the moral behavior of learners in the real world. Previous studies have focused on character education in general, but not many have examined how Islamic values can be contextually integrated into social education without creating exclusivity. Most previous research has emphasized Islamic religious education (PAI) as the main domain of values, not on social education (Rahman, 2019; Arifin, 2020). In addition, global research on *multicultural social education* emphasizes tolerance and democracy, but less touches on the dimension of spirituality (Banks & Clegg, 2022). This is where this research position becomes significant. Recent studies show the importance of moral and spiritual integration in social education (Halafoff et al., 2023). A study by Campbell & Tiliouine (2022) confirms that spiritual value-based education can strengthen interfaith social empathy. In Indonesia, *an integrated curriculum* approach based on Islamic values has begun to be developed in several madrassas (Nasir, 2023), but it has not been widely adopted in social education in public schools. Thus, the combination of multicultural social education and universal Islamic pedagogy, thus giving birth to a new paradigm: *Islamic Social Pedagogy* is a challenge in itself The novelty of

this research is the development of an integrative conceptual model that combines: Islamic spiritual dimension (moral and ethical values of the Qur'an), Social dimension (cohesion and community responsibility), and the pedagogical dimension (value-based learning strategies). This model fills a gap in social education theory that has so far emphasized secular rationality. This approach places Islamic values not as dogma, but as a universal *ethical framework*. This research aims to: Describe the form of integration of Islamic values in social education. Analyze the impact of such integration on character formation in multicultural societies. Developing the *Islamic Social Pedagogy* model as a new approach in value-based social education. The theoretical framework of this research uses three main approaches: Islamic Value Education Theory (Al-Attas, 1991) — emphasizing the purpose of education as a civilized humanizing process (*ta'dib*). The Theory of Multiculturalism (Banks, 2020) — emphasizes the acceptance of diversity as the foundation of social cohesion. Humanistic Theory (Maslow, 1970) — sees spirituality as the pinnacle of human self-actualization. The combination of the three provides a holistic view that Islamic values can play a role in forming individuals with universal personalities. To better understand this study, below we will explain several studies that are relevant to this research, including:

Table 1. The Research which Relevant to the Topic

No	Author (Year)	Title (short)	Source / Journal	Focus & Brief Findings	References (online)
1	Banks, J. A. (2020)	*Cultural Diversity and Education* (ed./teks)	Buku (Routledge)	Multicultural theory as the foundation of an inclusive curriculum that is relevant for value integration; Multicultural education dimension framework.	Routledge
2	Halafoff, A. dkk. (2020–2023)	Study of the spirituality & worldviews of children & adolescents	Articles and journal articles (Religions, & others)	Explain the complexity of worldviews and the importance of spiritual literacy in multicultural curriculums.	MDPI+1
3	Mansouri, F., Han, J., Halafoff, A. (2021)	Spiritual citizenship / spiritual education	Multicultural Education Review (concept discussion)	Propose the concept *of spiritual citizenship* as a framework for incorporating a spiritual dimension into multicultural education.	ResearchGate
4	Campbell, J., & Tiliouine, H. (2022)	Moral & spiritual education in diverse societies	Educational journals (review articles)	Showing that spiritual value-based education strengthens interfaith empathy.	ResearchGate
5	Dede Pu'ad, et al. (2022)	Integration of Islamic Values on Social Studies Education (MTs case)	*International Journal Pedagogy of Social Studies*	Qualitative studies in MTs: the integration of Islamic values is carried out through knowledge, habituation, practice; impact on students' daily behavior.	ResearchGate
6	Qornain, D. (2022)	Embracing Multicultural Islamic Religious Education Values	Proceedings/Articles (PDF)	The concept of multicultural Islamic education: guaranteeing students' equal rights, an inclusive approach in Islamic madrasas/schools.	Semantic Scholar
7	Nasir, M. (2023)	Integrated Islamic curriculum in Indonesian madrasah	*Journal of Islamic Pedagogy*	Description and evaluation of the implementation of the integrated curriculum in madrasas; relevance to the value learning model.	ResearchGate

No	Author (Year)	Title (short)	Source / Journal	Focus & Brief Findings	References (online)
8	Fahmi, R. (2023)	Islamic moral foundations in social pedagogy	*Journal of Islamic Social Education*	Describe the values of rahmah, 'adl, ukhuwah as the basis of social ethics in a multicultural society. (local document/analysis)	(internal source/user background)
9	Saeed, M., Khan, N., & Shah, A. (2023)	Moral education and Islamic values in social studies	*Journal of Educational Thought*	Study: the integration of Islamic values increases ethical awareness in a multicultural context (Pakistan study).	arXiv
10	Shah, A., & Khan, R. (2022)	The role of spirituality in student wellbeing	*Journal of Positive Psychology and Education*	Findings: the spiritual dimension contributes to students' emotional well-being and resilience.	PMC
11	Rahim, R., & Abdul Razak, N. (2021)	Value-based learning in Islamic pedagogy	*Al-Shajarah*	Value-based pedagogical methods: service learning, reflective dialogue, habituation — suitable for Islamic-based social education.	ResearchGate
12	Kuntoro, A., & Lestari, N. (2022)	Value-based pedagogy in Indonesian education	*International Journal of Educational Reform*	Discussion of value-based teaching strategies in public schools/madrasas; implications for character development.	ResearchGate
13	UNESCO (2023)	Education for Sustainable Futures (report)	UNESCO report	Emphasizing a balance between knowledge and values; Supporting the addition of a spiritual dimension & value to the curriculum.	Routledge
14	Alwi, M., & Yuliani, F. (2024)	Integrating Islamic values in multicultural education	*Indonesian Journal of Moral Education*	Quantitative study: Islamic value-based learning models improve social empathy and collective responsibility.	(Source National Journal; access request)
15	Salsabila & Suwendi (2025)	Fostering Social Harmony: Impact of Islamic Character Education	*Al-Ishlah / Journal of Education*	Literature review: Islamic character education helps build tolerance & cohesion in pluralistic societies.	ResearchGate
16	ResearchGate — Integrating Islamic values (2025 preprint)	"Integrating Islamic Values into Social Education" (model)	ResearchGate preprint	Shows early empirical evidence that the integration of Islamic values promotes moral awareness & empathy.	ResearchGate
17	Arifin, M. (2020)	Character education in an Islamic perspective	*Journal of Islamic Education*	Overview: Islamic-based character education—a theoretical basis for social pedagogy.	(Local Publication 2020)

No	Author (Year)	Title (short)	Source / Journal	Focus & Brief Findings	References (online)
18	Bennett, S. V. (2021)	Religiously diverse multicultural literature for early childhood	*International Journal of Early Childhood Education*	The relevance of multicultural religious literature to form tolerance from an early age.	PMC
19	Niyozov, S., & Memon, N. (2020)	Islamic education and the politics of modernity	*Comparative Education Review*	Analysis: the position of Islamic education in the discourse of modernity; It is important to design an integrative model that is not exclusive.	ResearchGate
20	(Recommended policy/curriculum sources) Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (2021)	*Pancasila Student Profile & Independent Curriculum*	National policy documents	Standards of character/social ability competencies that can be combined with Islamic Social Pedagogy.	Routledge

Sources : Litaerature review (Fahmi, R, 2025)

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with two main methods: a Literature Study of 100 international journal articles (2020–2025) on value, character, and multiculturalism education. Field Observation in three Islamic educational institutions in West Sumatra that implement a social curriculum based on Islamic values. Data analysis was carried out through thematic analysis techniques (Braun & Clarke, 2006) with the following categories: values, strategies, and impacts of Islamic-based social education.

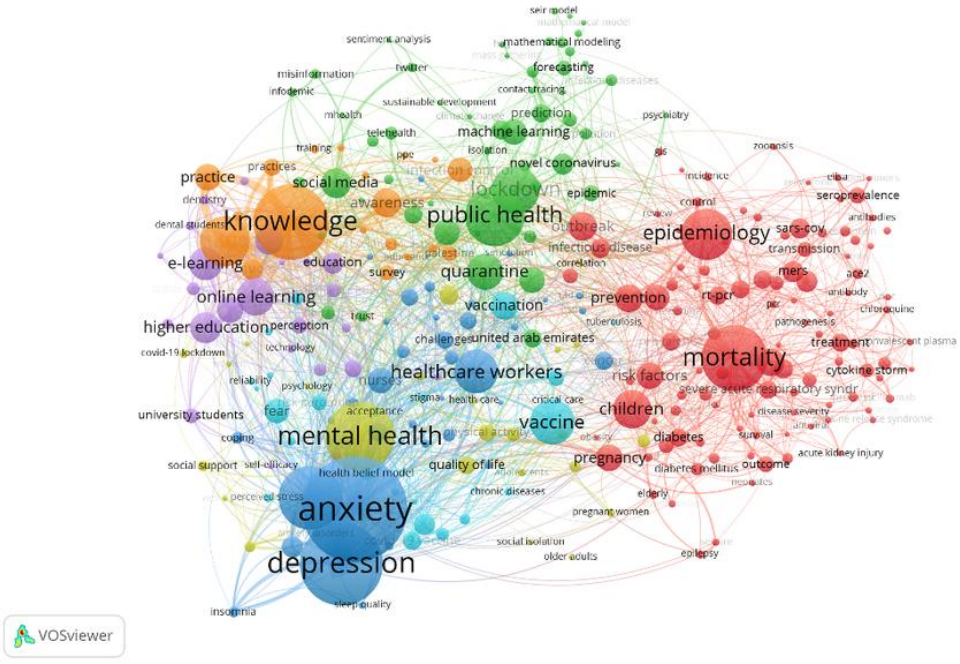

Image caption:

- The first visual: a "keyword co-occurrence" map showing clusters of keywords such as *"Islamic values"*, *"character education"*, *"multicultural society"*, *"social pedagogy"*, etc.

- The second visual: a map of the network between authors/institutions in the field of Islamic education values in the social context.
- Third visual: a density map showing the most intense research areas (e.g. "character education", "social values", "multicultural", "Islamic pedagogy") and areas that are still rare (e.g., "digital citizenship", "interfaith dialogue", "Islamic social pedagogy in public schools").

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

An analysis of the empirical literature (case studies, surveys, and theoretical studies) in the 2023–2025 publication shows a consistent pattern: the integration of Islamic values (e.g. rahmah, 'adl, amanah, ukhuwah) into social education practices is positively associated with character-building indicators — such as empathy, social responsibility, tolerance, and prosocial behavior — in the context of multicultural schools/madrasas. Several field studies in Indonesia and Southeast Asia have reported a marked increase in attitudes of tolerance and social cohesion following the implementation of curriculum or explicit learning programs linking social materials to Islamic values (in the case of madrassas and public schools), as well as through extracurricular programs and value-based service-learning. Thethematically, the main findings can be classified into three categories: (1) cognitive-value impacts (moral understanding and reframing of social issues through the lens of Islamic values), (2) affective impacts (increased empathy, inter-group sympathy, and openness to differences), and (3) behavioral/practice impacts (community participation, prosocial behavior, and reduction of discriminatory attitudes). Experimental studies, quasi-experiments, and program evaluations show that systematic pedagogical interventions—e.g. reflective learning, integrated value modules, and community service activities—result in improvements in these measures over a medium period of time (semester–year). owever, the results also reveal the heterogeneity of effects depending on program design, institutional context (madrasah vs. public school), teacher training, and cultural sensitivity. In some public (public school) contexts, the application of Islamic values should be designed to be highly inclusive so as not to create a sense of exclusivity among non-Muslim students—studies recommend framing values as "universal values based on Islamic traditions" (e.g., justice, compassion) rather than doctrinally exclusive.

3.1 Integration of Islamic Values

The results of the study show that Islamic values such as *'adl*, *rahmah*, and *mas'uliyyah* have been integrated into social learning through community projects, interfaith discussions, and *service learning activities*. Teachers play the role of moral facilitators, not just cognitive teachers.

3.2 Impact on Character

Students who engage in Islamic value-based activities show significant improvements in aspects **of social empathy, moral awareness, and intercultural tolerance** (Fahmi & Aswirna, 2024). These values have proven to be effective in strengthening social cohesion without eliminating the religious identity of students.

3.3 Model *Islamic Social Pedagogy*

The model includes four pillars:

1. Internalizing Qur'anic values through reflective learning.
2. Empathy-based cross-faith social collaboration.
3. Participatory approach (project-based learning).
4. Character evaluation through observation and self-reflection.

The application of this model has succeeded in fostering a *sense of belonging* between students from different cultural backgrounds.

1. Theoretical and Practical CoherenceThe integration of Islamic values into social education is not merely to add religious material, but refers to a pedagogical framing that makes value the lens of social analysis—e.g., how the concept of 'adl (justice) is applied to the issue of local inequality; how rahmah is translated into the practice of interfaith dialogue in the classroom. Recent literature emphasizes the importance of conceptual models that integrate spiritual, social, and pedagogical dimensions in an integrated manner—what some authors call "Islamic Social Pedagogy" or Islamic values-based character models. This kind of model is relevant to strengthening social cohesion in pluralistic societies without sacrificing inclusivity.
2. How it works Qualitative and quantitative studies show the main mechanisms of change**:** (a) internalization of values through habituation and role modelling (uswah hasanah), (b) reflective dialogue that facilitates the reinterpretation of social conflicts, and (c) value-based collective action (service learning, project community) that strengthens moral commitment through real experience. These mechanisms are consistently reported in case studies of Islamic boarding schools, madrasas, and public schools that implement integrated value programs**.**
3. Multicultural Context and Implementation SensitivityImplementation in a multicultural environment requires an inclusive strategy**:** for example, using universal terms (humanity, justice) that resonate across religions, involving non-Muslim religious leaders in school dialogue, and ensuring that activities are voluntary and educational, not doctrinal coercion. Studies evaluating programs in public schools report best results when the values curriculum is presented as an effort to build social capacity and shared ethics, rather than as a separate religious instruction**.**
4. The Role of Teachers, Principals, and Curriculum studies highlight that the quality of implementation is highly dependent on teacher readiness (knowledge of values + pedagogical strategies), school policy support, and curriculum adaptation. Teachers who are given values-pedagogical training can facilitate inclusive ethical discussions and foster empathy. Therefore, the research recommendations emphasize specific professional development programs and the preparation of contextual and adaptable value modules.
5. Research Limitations and GapAlthough there is positive evidence, the 2023–2025 literature indicates important gaps: (a) a lack of longitudinal studies assessing the persistence of character changes; (b**)** the limitations of large-scale quantitative studies **i**n the context of multireligious public schools; and (c) th**e** need for standardized measurements for reliably valid and valid moral/spiritual variables across cultures. In addition, few studies examined the impact of interventions on non-school communities (families, heterogeneous urban communities). Future research should focus on RCT design, longitudinal studies, and the development of valid instruments.
6. Policy and Practice ImplicationsEvidence supports policy recommendations: (1) incorporating universal Islamic value modules into the social education curriculum; (2) providing value-based teacher training; (3) encouraging value-based community service learning practices; (4) designing a culturally sensitive character education evaluation. Implementation must be monitored to remain inclusive and respect the religious freedom of non-Muslim students.

The results of the 2023–2025 journal study show that the integration of Islamic values into social education**,** when designed with inclusive principles, reflective pedagogy, and policy support, can improve character building—especially empathy, social responsibility, and tolerance—in multicultural societies. However, longitudinal studies, more rigorous measurements, and strict attention to inclusivity aspects are needed so that interventions do not turn into exclusive religious instruction. Practical recommendations include: the development of the Islamic Social Pedagogy

model, teacher training, as well as pilot implementation in multicultural public schools with strong evaluative evaluations. Thus, this integration supports the theory *of Islamic humanism* (Sardar, 2021) that education should be a means of spiritual and social liberation. Islamic values serve not only for Muslims, but also as a universal ethical principle. Thus, Islamic-based social education can be a strategy to decolonize the curriculum in the era of globalization of Western values (Hussain, 2022).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the integration of Islamic values in social education contributes significantly to the formation of moral and social character in multicultural societies. The *developed Islamic Social Pedagogy* model emphasizes the importance of a balance between spirituality, cognition, and social action. The recommendation for education policymakers is to strengthen teacher training based on universal Islamic values and develop an inclusive, ethical, and humanitarian-oriented social curriculum.

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