

Strengthening Cultural Integration through the Reinterpretation of Islamic Values in Multicultural Education in West Papua

Dena Izzatul Ulya^{1*}

¹Universitas KH Mukhtar Syafaat Blokagung Banyuwangi

*Correspondence: denaizza076@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the strategic reinterpretation of Islamic values to strengthen cultural integration within a multicultural educational environment, focusing on Insan Mulia Integrated Islamic Senior High School in Manokwari, West Papua. The school represents an Islamic educational institution serving students from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, including Papuan, Javanese, Bugis, and Minang communities. Employing a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis of the curriculum and extracurricular activities. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model involving data reduction, presentation, and verification. The findings reveal that the contextual reinterpretation of Islamic values not only fosters tolerance and inclusivity but also functions as a managerial strategy for establishing a harmonious and culturally adaptive school climate. This study contributes to the development of a multicultural-based Islamic education management model that is responsive to the sociocultural realities of local communities.

KEYWORDS

Islamic education management, Reinterpretation of Islamic values, Cultural Integration, Multicultural Education, Multiethnic School

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INTRODUCTION

West Papua is one of the regions in Indonesia that has a high level of cultural diversity. This diversity can be seen from the many indigenous Papuan tribes such as Arfak and Maybrat, as well as migrants from various regions such as Bugis, Javanese, and Minangkabau who live side by side. In the context of education, this reality causes classrooms in schools to become meeting spaces for various different cultural identities (Sikana et al., 2025). These differences can be a strength, but they also have the potential to create social friction if not managed properly. Evidence of this diversity can be seen from population data, local content curricula, to social interactions among students in multicultural schools such as SMA IT Insan Mulia Manokwari. Thus, schools are not only places for knowledge transfer, but also arenas for shaping tolerant and inclusive social attitudes. Cultural diversity in West Papua is not only a geographical fact, but also a social reality that greatly influences the dynamics of



education, which demands value-based approaches, including Islamic social values, to build harmony and social integration.

One example of an Islamic educational institution within a multicultural context is SMA Islam Terpadu Insan Mulia Manokwari. This school is a private institution under the Lentera Hati Foundation, located on Jalan Swapen Perkebunan, Amban, West Manokwari. With approximately 38 students and 1–2 teachers, this school manages character-based Islamic education within a highly diverse cultural environment. One of the challenges in multicultural education in regions such as West Papua is the lack of integration between religious values and the socio-cultural context of students. Many schools have not fully contextualized Islamic values as teachings that uphold tolerance, justice, and universal humanity in everyday educational practices (Shopiah et al., 2025). As a result, these values often appear normative and fail to address real issues in the classroom. Concrete evidence of this problem can be found in Islamic religious education, which tends to be textual and lacks intercultural dialogue. In fact, Islam itself contains social principles such as *ta'āruf* (mutual understanding), *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood), and *'adl* (justice), which are highly relevant in diverse social contexts. Without proper integration, religious values may become exclusive and create divisions between groups. Therefore, reinterpretation of Islamic social values that emphasizes inclusivity is important to address this challenge. The lack of integration of religious values in multicultural education can hinder the development of social cohesion, thus requiring a more contextual and dialogical reinterpretation.

A multicultural school environment holds the potential for conflict due to differences in cultural identity, communication styles, and intergroup stereotypes. In several schools in West Papua, including Islamic schools such as SMA IT, minor frictions have been found in daily interactions among students from different ethnic groups, especially when cross-cultural understanding is not systematically instilled. Field evidence shows that conflicts may arise due to misunderstandings or even prejudice that are not wisely addressed by the school. As social beings, humans tend to form groups and feel threatened by others who are different, especially in sensitive minority-majority situations (Afihilmi et al., 2026). Therefore, an educational approach is needed that is not only cognitive but also affective and social. Islam, as a religion that acknowledges plurality (*lita'arafu*), can serve as a bridge in building intercultural communication. By teaching Islamic social values contextually, emerging conflicts can be directed into spaces for social learning. The potential for conflict in multicultural schools is real and must be bridged with value-based approaches that embrace diversity as a strength, not a threat.

In the Islamic perspective, humans are created into nations and tribes to know one another, not to be hostile toward each other (QS. Al-Hujurat: 13). These values show that Islam has a strong theological foundation in supporting plural social life. However, in educational practice, these values are often not fully utilized to build multicultural awareness among students. At SMA IT Insan Mulia Manokwari, which is located in a heterogeneous community, this teaching should serve as the basis for curriculum design and school culture formation. Evidence of the success of this

approach can be seen when schools implement cross-cultural programs such as open discussions, thematic social learning, and collaboration among students from different ethnic groups. This demonstrates that Islam is not only spiritually relevant but also socially applicable (Zawawi, 2023). When values such as tolerance, brotherhood, and justice are understood within actual social contexts, Islam can strengthen social integration. Islam is not only compatible with multicultural education but also has great potential to become a primary driver in building social harmony amid diversity.

Islamic schools in West Papua, particularly those situated within multiethnic communities, have an important role in shaping students' social awareness. Schools such as SMA IT Insan Mulia are not only responsible for teaching religious knowledge but also for instilling applicable social values in everyday life. When schools consciously reinterpret Islamic values to be more inclusive, they are shaping a generation capable of living peacefully amidst diversity. Evidence of this can be seen in increased positive social interactions among students from different ethnic groups, a reduction in minor conflicts, and enhanced collaboration in cross-cultural school activities. By making Islam the foundation of character education that is friendly to differences, schools create social spaces that support cohesion and empathy. This shows that Islamic schools have a vital social function in maintaining stability and social integration in West Papua society. Islamic schools are not only places for religious learning but also social agents that play a strategic role in shaping a peaceful and united multicultural society.

Recent studies highlight the importance of a multicultural approach in Islamic education to promote tolerance and social cohesion in diverse societies (Zawawi et al., 2024). Research shows that integrating multicultural values into Islamic education curricula, teaching methods, and school activities can reduce prejudice, enhance intergroup cooperation, and create a more harmonious learning environment (Zaenal Mukarom et al., 2024; K. Anwar et al., 2022). The implementation of the 'Integrated Multicultural Practice Model' in Islamic Religious Education has been proven effective in integrating multicultural values into various aspects of school life (K. Anwar et al., 2022). Studies emphasize the need for inclusive Islamic education that recognizes and embraces cultural diversity as a positive aspect of learning (Yusawinur Barella et al., 2023). Furthermore, research indicates that multicultural Islamic education is essential in addressing the increasing diversity of populations in Islamic educational institutions and ensuring equal rights for all students, regardless of their backgrounds (Ulumuddin et al., 2023).

This study offers novelty by exploring the reinterpretation of Islamic social values within the context of multicultural education in West Papua, a region with distinctive cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity compared to other areas in Indonesia. Unlike previous studies that primarily emphasize the integration of multicultural values in Islamic education in general, this research highlights a contextual approach through the reinterpretation of Islamic social values tailored to the socio-cultural realities of West Papua. This creates a unique cultural bridge between Islamic teachings and local wisdom, enabling the resolution of identity tensions and strengthening tolerance and social cohesion within educational

environments. By focusing on a region that has received limited attention in the discourse of multicultural Islamic education, this study broadens the understanding and practice of inclusive education that is adaptive to local plurality in a deeper and more applicable manner.

The cultural diversity of students in this school reflects the plural face of West Papua, where practices of reinterpreting Islamic social values such as *ukhuwah*, justice, and tolerance are grounded in interethnic interactions and cross-cultural collaboration in school activities. This research becomes even more significant when considering the strategic need to build social harmony and strengthen national identity within the multicultural society of West Papua. In this context, educational institutions, particularly Islamic education, are challenged not only to convey religious teachings but also to become inclusive spaces for cultural dialogue. The reinterpretation of Islamic social values such as tolerance, social justice, and *ukhuwah insaniyah* becomes crucial in responding to dynamic and diverse social realities. Today's students live in complex social environments with rapid flows of information and cultural interaction, requiring adaptive and contextual educational approaches. Islamic education is expected to function as a cultural bridge, not merely as a normative instrument of *da'wah*. Therefore, this research is expected to contribute significantly to formulating a new paradigm of Islamic education that is not only rooted in noble religious values but also relevant and applicable in creating a harmonious, just, and mutually respectful society amidst diversity.

METHOD

This study selected SMA Islam Terpadu Insan Mulia Manokwari as the research site because this school represents an Islamic educational institution situated within a multicultural and dynamic social environment in the West Papua region. With students coming from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, there are students from Arfak, Javanese, Bugis, and Minangkabau ethnic groups, with a full-day school learning system. The school has 6 classrooms, 2 laboratories, and active extracurricular activities such as Islamic Spirituality (Rohis) and social service, which serve as direct means of implementing Islamic social values in students' daily lives. SMA IT Insan Mulia serves as a strategic space to examine how Islamic social values can be contextually reinterpreted in building social harmony and cultural bridges. The school also demonstrates a commitment to integrating character education based on Islamic values with an inclusive and adaptive approach to diversity. Therefore, SMA IT Insan Mulia Manokwari is highly relevant as a research site to study the practice of multicultural education based on Islamic values in an applicative and transformative manner.

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design because it aims to gain an in-depth understanding of how the reinterpretation of Islamic social values is implemented in the practice of multicultural education at SMA Islam Terpadu Insan Mulia Manokwari. A qualitative approach allows researchers to explore experiences, meanings, and complex social interaction processes that cannot be measured quantitatively. The case study was chosen because the focus of this

research lies in a single location with distinctive characteristics, namely an Islamic school situated within the multicultural society of West Papua. Through a case study, researchers can deeply explore the internal dynamics of the school, including the roles of teachers, students, and the principal in building social harmony through Islamic values such as tolerance, justice, and compassion. This approach also enables a contextual and comprehensive understanding of the challenges and strategies used by the school in bridging cultural differences. Thus, this approach is highly relevant for producing findings that are in-depth, reflective, and applicable.

In this study, the researcher used two types of data sources, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with the principal, teachers, students, and other related parties at SMA Islam Terpadu Insan Mulia Manokwari, in order to explore their direct experiences and perspectives regarding the practice of reinterpreting Islamic social values in the context of multicultural education. In addition, participatory observation was conducted to directly observe how intercultural interactions occur within the school environment. Meanwhile, secondary data were collected from various scientific literature, school documents, curriculum materials, and relevant educational policies. The combination of primary and secondary data was used to obtain a comprehensive and holistic understanding of how Islamic values are adapted to address the challenges of cultural diversity in West Papua, and how this contributes to building cultural bridges within the educational environment.

Table 1. Informant Data

No.	Informant Criteria	Informant Code	Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
1.	Principal and Vice Principal	PI-01 to PI-03	1	1	2
2.	Teachers and Educational Staff	TP-01 to TP-07	3	3	6
3.	Active Students	PD-01 to PD-06	9	10	19
	Total				27

The informants in this study were selected based on their direct involvement in the dynamics of multicultural education at SMA Islam Terpadu Insan Mulia Manokwari. They consist of the principal, teachers, educational staff, and students who represent diverse roles within the school community. The selection of these informants aims to obtain a comprehensive picture of how Islamic social values are reinterpreted and implemented in the context of learning and social interaction within the school environment. Through this approach, the study is expected to reveal in depth educational practices that emphasize tolerance, inclusivity, and intercultural harmony.

In this study, the data collection techniques used include in-depth interviews, participant observation, documentation study, and audio analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore informants' understanding of the process of reinterpreting Islamic social values in the context of multicultural education at SMA Islam Terpadu Insan Mulia Manokwari, including their experiences in implementing

or experiencing value-based Islamic education amidst cultural diversity. Participant observation was used to directly observe interactions among school members, learning practices, and the implementation of values such as tolerance, cooperation, and mutual respect in daily activities. Documentation study was carried out by examining school documents such as curricula, annual work programs, records of religious activities, and internal policies that demonstrate the integration of Islamic values in multicultural education. Meanwhile, audio analysis was used to record and review interview and discussion results, in order to maintain data integrity and support the accuracy of interpretation. The combination of these techniques provides a strong foundation for in-depth and contextual qualitative analysis.

Data analysis in this study was conducted using a qualitative descriptive interactive approach developed by Miles and Huberman, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction was carried out by selecting, summarizing, and reorganizing data from interviews, observations, documentation, and audio recordings to focus on the main issue, namely the reinterpretation of Islamic social values in multicultural education at SMA Islam Terpadu Insan Mulia Manokwari. Subsequently, the data were presented in the form of narratives and thematic findings to illustrate the relationship between educational practices, Islamic values, and the local cultural context. The process of drawing conclusions was conducted continuously while ensuring consistency and interconnection among data categories. To ensure data validity, this study employed source triangulation, method triangulation, and observer triangulation techniques. Cross-validation was conducted by comparing data from various informants, data collection techniques, and interpretations among researchers to ensure that the findings are objective, accurate, and reliable.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Integration of Tolerance and Justice Values in the Islamic Education Curriculum

This study finds that the integration of tolerance and justice values into the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in West Papua has had a positive impact on students' character development. Through a learning approach that emphasizes respect for diversity and social justice, students are taught to respect differences and treat others fairly. This is reflected in students' daily interactions, which demonstrate inclusive attitudes and empathy toward peers from different cultural backgrounds. Evidence from classroom observations and interviews with teachers shows that students are more open in discussing social issues and more actively involved in activities that promote justice and tolerance. The integration of these values into the curriculum not only enhances students' understanding of Islamic teachings but also strengthens social cohesion in a multicultural school environment.

In relation to this, one Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher at SMA Islam Terpadu Insan Mulia Manokwari, Mrs. Dina, stated how the integration of tolerance and justice values in the PAI curriculum has positively influenced students' character development:

"We realize that West Papua is a highly diverse region, both culturally and religiously. Therefore, in teaching PAI, I always emphasize the importance of tolerance and justice values. For example, when discussing morality in Islam, I relate it to attitudes of respecting differences and treating everyone fairly, regardless of their background." (Gr)

A similar statement was also conveyed by Mr. Muhammad Syahrul, a PAI teacher and supervisor of religious extracurricular activities at SMA Islam Terpadu Insan Mulia Manokwari:

"In this school, we strive to ensure that Islamic values are not only taught in the classroom but also lived in everyday life. For example, when mentoring Rohis (Islamic Spirituality) activities, I often emphasize the importance of justice and tolerance as part of noble character. In a multicultural environment such as Manokwari, students need to be equipped with the understanding that Islam teaches mercy for all creation, not only for fellow Muslims. Therefore, in discussions or regular study sessions, we encourage them to think about how to act fairly toward friends of different religions or ethnicities, and how to maintain unity without forcing uniformity." (Gr)

Based on the results of interviews with PAI teachers at SMA Islam Terpadu Insan Mulia Manokwari, it can be seen that Islamic religious instruction is not only focused on theoretical aspects but also on the application of tolerance and justice values in daily life. Teachers emphasize the importance of appreciating cultural and religious diversity in West Papua as part of Islamic morality that embodies rahmatan lil 'alamin. This approach aims to shape students' attitudes to be fair and respectful of differences, thereby creating a harmonious and multicultural school environment without diminishing their Islamic identity.

The Role of Teachers as Agents of Change in Multicultural Education

Teachers play a central role as agents of change in implementing multicultural education based on Islamic values. They not only deliver instructional material but also serve as role models in applying values such as tolerance, justice, and compassion in daily interactions. Through participatory teaching methods and inclusive approaches, teachers successfully create a learning environment that respects diversity. Interviews with students reveal that they feel valued and supported by teachers in developing their understanding of the importance of living harmoniously. Classroom observations show that teachers actively encourage discussions on social and cultural issues, as well as integrate multicultural perspectives into learning. The role of teachers as agents of change is crucial in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors to respect diversity and uphold Islamic values within a multicultural context. Teachers at SMA IT Insan Mulia often use local cultural approaches in teaching, such as incorporating proverbs or Papuan folklore to clarify Islamic values like justice and mutual respect. This approach makes it easier for students to accept the learning material, as they feel that religious values are not foreign to their culture.

The following table presents Standards, Targets, and Learning Visualization Outcomes based on the description of the role of teachers as agents of change in multicultural education grounded in Islamic values at SMA Islam Terpadu Insan Mulia Manokwari.

Table 2. Learning Visualization

Standards	Targets	Learning Visualization Outcomes
Teachers act as agents of change in multicultural education based on Islamic values Teachers apply participatory and inclusive teaching methods	Students are able to understand and internalize the values of tolerance, justice, and compassion within diversity Students actively participate in discussions and learning that respect diversity	Interactive visualizations showing examples of tolerant and fair attitudes in various situations of diversity in school Classroom discussions, debates, or simulations involving students from different cultural and religious backgrounds
Teachers serve as role models in daily interactions	Students emulate teachers' attitudes of tolerance and compassion	Teachers' behavior as role models, such as helping, listening, and respecting students' differences
Learning integrates multicultural perspectives	Students are able to recognize and appreciate social and cultural diversity in their surroundings	Learning materials that present cultural, religious, and social diversity in a contextual and realistic manner

The table above illustrates the relationship between the standards of multicultural education based on Islamic values, the learning targets to be achieved, and the learning visualization outcomes that support the process at SMA Islam Terpadu Insan Mulia Manokwari. The interpretation of this data shows that teachers at this school play a strategic role in internalizing values such as tolerance, justice, and compassion into daily learning processes. The established standards emphasize that teachers are not only responsible for teaching but also for acting as agents of social change capable of shaping students' character to appreciate diversity. The learning targets are directed toward enabling students to be active, open-minded, and possess inclusive attitudes in facing the multicultural realities around them. To support the achievement of these targets, learning visualizations are designed in a contextual and interactive manner, such as through simulations of multicultural situations, cross-cultural discussions, and positioning teachers as role models in real life. Thus, the integration of standards, targets, and visualization outcomes can create a learning process that is not only informative but also transformative, equipping students with social and spiritual competencies that are relevant in a diverse society.

Contextual Learning Strategies in Enhancing Multicultural Understanding

The contextual learning strategies implemented in Islamic education in West Papua have proven effective in enhancing students' understanding of multicultural values. By linking learning materials with local contexts and students' everyday experiences, the learning process becomes more relevant and meaningful. For instance, discussions of Islamic values are connected to local traditions and cultures, enabling students to see the relationship between religious teachings and their daily lives. Classroom observations indicate that students are more enthusiastic and engaged in learning when the material is presented within contexts familiar to them. Interviews with teachers reveal that this approach helps students understand and appreciate the cultural diversity around them. Contextual learning strategies play an important role in building students' understanding of multicultural values and strengthening their Islamic identity within the local context.

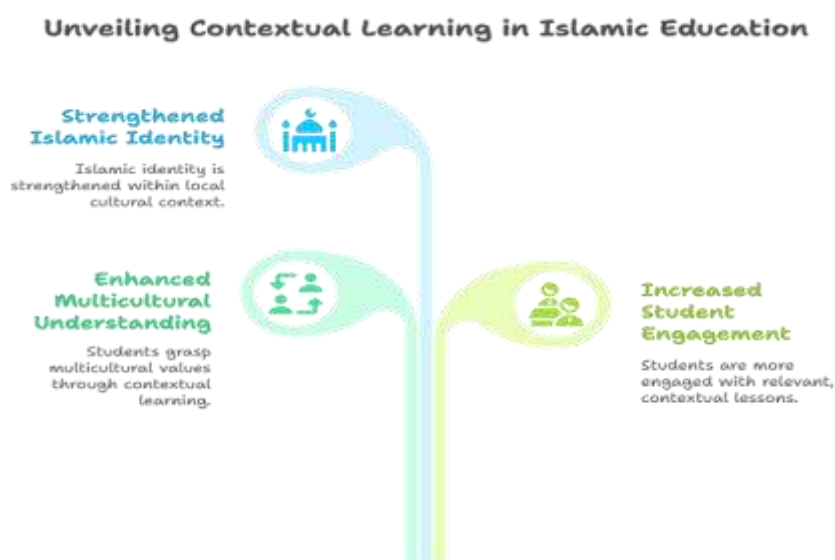


Figure 1. Contextual Learning Strategies in Enhancing Multicultural Understanding

The figure above synergistically emphasizes that contextual learning strategies in Islamic education in West Papua are highly effective in enhancing students' multicultural understanding. By linking Islamic teachings with local cultural realities, this strategy successfully creates learning that is both relevant and meaningful. As a result, students are not only more actively engaged in the learning process, but also demonstrate improved understanding and appreciation of diversity. Thus, contextual learning strategies not only bridge instructional content with students' lived experiences, but also play a significant role in shaping a generation of Muslims who are prepared to live harmoniously in a multicultural society.

Strengthening Islamic Identity through Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities in schools in West Papua play a significant role in strengthening students' Islamic identity while simultaneously promoting multicultural values. One of the flagship activities is regular discussions within Rohis (Islamic Spirituality), which involve students from diverse backgrounds. For instance, Papuan and Javanese students engage in discussions about the concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* and how to apply it in their social lives outside the classroom. In addition, social service activities in the Amban community serve as a platform for cross-cultural learning, where students are encouraged to interact directly with local residents. Through such activities, students are instilled with the ability to apply Islamic values within real-life multicultural contexts. Participation in these activities increases students' awareness of the importance of tolerance, cooperation, and respect for differences. Interviews with students and teachers indicate that extracurricular activities provide space for students to express their Islamic identity in a positive and inclusive manner. Observations of these activities show harmonious interactions among students from various cultural backgrounds. Extracurricular activities are an effective means of strengthening students' Islamic identity and building cultural bridges within a multicultural educational environment.

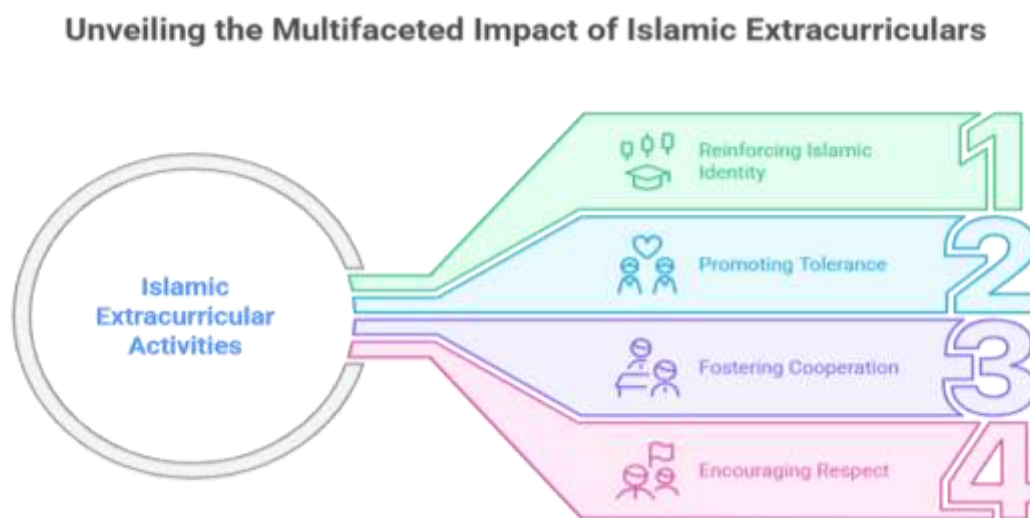


Figure 2. The Impact of Islamic Extracurricular Activities

The figure above explains the multifaceted impact of Islamic extracurricular activities in shaping students' character. There are four main contributions generated from these activities. First, these activities strengthen students' Islamic identity through the habituation of religious values in daily life. Second, extracurricular activities promote tolerance, helping students become more open and respectful of differences, especially within a multicultural society. Third, these activities also play a role in fostering a spirit of cooperation, strengthening social relationships among students through group activities. Finally, Islamic extracurricular activities cultivate a sense of respect, both toward others and toward differing values. These four aspects demonstrate that religious activities outside the classroom not only deepen religious

understanding but also serve as an effective means of shaping students' social and moral character in a comprehensive manner.

Challenges and Solutions in the Implementation of Multicultural Education

The implementation of Islamic-based multicultural education in West Papua faces various challenges, including limited resources, resistance to change, and a lack of understanding of the concept of multiculturalism. However, schools have developed various solutions to address these challenges. For instance, regular teacher training is conducted to enhance their understanding and skills in applying multicultural approaches. In addition, collaboration with local communities and religious institutions helps strengthen support for multicultural education initiatives. Interviews with principals and teachers indicate that participatory and inclusive approaches in planning and implementing educational programs increase the effectiveness of implementation. Observations show an increase in student acceptance and participation in activities that promote multicultural values. In conclusion, despite the existing challenges, adaptive and collaborative approaches enable the effective and sustainable implementation of Islamic-based multicultural education.

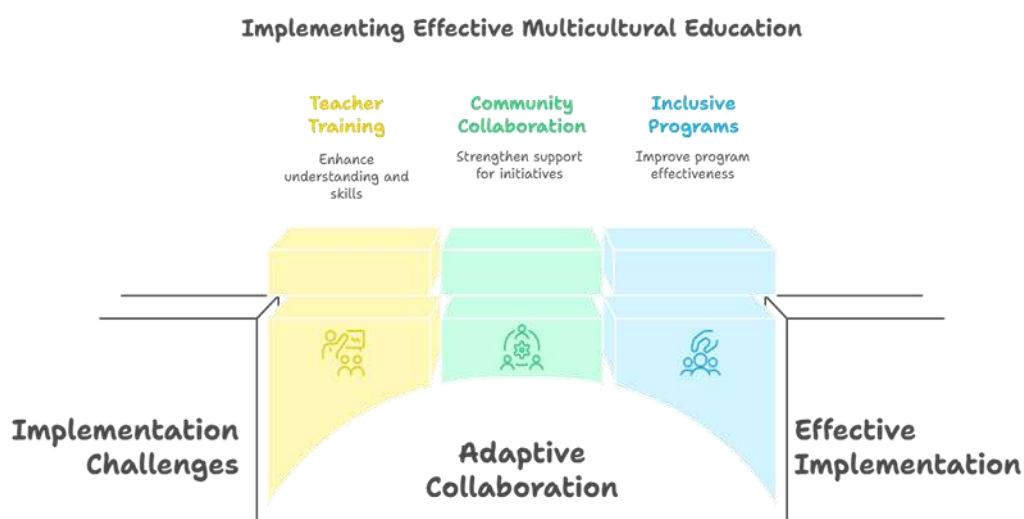


Figure 3. Effective Implementation of Multicultural Education

The figure shows that the successful implementation of multicultural education largely depends on adaptive collaboration involving three main components: teacher training, community collaboration, and inclusive programs. These three elements function as bridges to overcome various implementation challenges in the field. Teacher training helps enhance understanding and skills in addressing diversity. Collaboration with the community strengthens external support for school programs. Meanwhile, inclusive programs ensure that all students are fairly involved. With the synergy of these three elements, multicultural education can be implemented effectively and sustainably across various school contexts.

CONCLUSION

The integration of Islamic values such as tolerance, justice, and compassion in education at SMA Islam Terpadu Insan Mulia Manokwari, West Papua, makes a significant contribution to students' character development within a multicultural society. Through contextual learning that connects instructional materials with local realities, as well as extracurricular activities that encourage active student participation, Islamic education in this school successfully creates an inclusive and meaningful learning environment. Teachers play a strategic role as agents of change who not only deliver instructional content but also serve as role models in applying multicultural values in daily interactions. Challenges such as limited resources and resistance to change are addressed through teacher training, collaboration with local communities, and the implementation of participatory learning methods. As a result, students demonstrate improved understanding of diversity, the ability to engage in open dialogue, and more just and tolerant attitudes toward cultural and religious differences. Islamic-based multicultural education at SMA Islam Terpadu Insan Mulia Manokwari has proven not only to strengthen students' Islamic identity but also to equip them with the social competencies necessary to live harmoniously in a diverse society.

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