

Multicultural Education Theory according to Martin J. Beck Matustik in the Perspective of Islamic Religious Education (PAI)

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Abstract

Multicultural education emphasizes respect for cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity, which becomes very relevant in Indonesia as a country with rich plurality. In this context, the application of multicultural education theory, especially in Islamic Religious Education (PAI), has a strategic role in creating a more inclusive and harmonious society. This article aims to examine the theory of multicultural education according to Martin J. Beck Matustik, which consists of three main pillars: (1) recognition of diversity, (2) dialogue between cultures and religions, and (3) social justice. These pillars are very relevant to be integrated in the PAI curriculum, so as to form a generation that is not only intelligent in religious aspects, but also open, tolerant, and respectful of differences. The methodology used in this research is a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis, through a literature review that includes literature related to multicultural theory and its application in PAI. Data were also taken from PAI curriculum documents in Indonesia to explore the potential integration of multicultural values. The results showed that the application of multicultural education principles in PAI can encourage the creation of a more just and peaceful society, by producing individuals who are able to interact constructively and appreciate differences. Thus, Islamic religious education that promotes multicultural values is expected to be a solution to face the challenges of globalization and strengthen a more harmonious common life in Indonesia

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Introduction

Indonesia, as a country with vast cultural, religious and ethnic diversity, faces great challenges in maintaining harmony and strengthening social cohesion in the midst of such plurality. In this context, education plays a very important role as a tool to build understanding, tolerance and mutual respect between different groups (Mustafida, 2020). Multicultural education is a very relevant approach, because it can create an environment that respects differences and encourages peaceful coexistence. One important theory in multicultural education that offers deep insights into ways to foster such values is that of Martin J. Beck Matustik. As a theologian and philosopher, Matustik proposes an educational framework that emphasizes three main pillars, namely recognition of diversity, dialogue between religions and cultures, and social justice. These pillars are expected to be the basis for designing and developing education that not only teaches knowledge, but also shapes the character of students who are inclusive, open and fair.



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In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia, the application of Matustik's multicultural education theory can make a significant contribution in shaping a generation that not only has a deep religious understanding, but also has social skills that allow them to coexist with different religious, cultural and ethnic groups. This article aims to explore more deeply how Matustik's theory of multicultural education can be applied in PAI in Indonesia, as well as its relevance to the formation of a young generation that can create an inclusive, harmonious and just society. Thus, this study seeks to show that the integration of multicultural education principles in PAI is essential to face the challenges of globalization and pluralism, and to realize the vision of a peaceful and respectful Indonesia.

However, the main challenge in applying Matustik's multicultural education theory in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lies in the cultural resistance and exclusivist tendencies that are still inherent in some community groups. Religious education in Indonesia often focuses too much on dogmatic normative aspects, thus providing less space for interfaith and cultural dialogue (Fastmadhi et.al., 2024). In this context, Matustik theory offers a transformative opportunity by emphasizing the importance of dialogue as the main pillar. Interfaith and cultural dialogue, as suggested by Matustik, can be integrated into the PAI curriculum through collaborative and reflective learning methods, which not only teach deep religious understanding, but also build an attitude of openness to other perspectives. This requires a commitment from educators to adopt a learning approach based on inclusivity values, which prioritizes equality and respect for diversity.

Furthermore, the recognition of diversity as the second pillar in Matustik theory demands a fundamental revision of the PAI curriculum structure to reflect the reality of pluralism in Indonesia. A curriculum that emphasizes multicultural context-based learning experiences can help students understand that social justice values are not only relevant within the framework of their own religion, but also have universal dimensions that connect them to other groups (Handoko, 2022). In this case, Matustik's theory emphasizes that social justice should be the foundation of education that is not only oriented towards individuals, but also towards collective social responsibility. Thus, the application of this theory in PAI can make a real contribution in creating young people who are able to navigate the dynamics of pluralism with high moral integrity and social responsibility, and contribute to the formation of a more harmonious and just society

Method

The appropriate methodology in writing this article is a descriptive qualitative approach with a literature study. This approach is used to analyze and describe Matustik's theory of multicultural education and its application in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia. This article relies on a literature review of various relevant sources to explore key concepts such as recognition of diversity, interfaith dialog, and social justice. Thematic analysis is used to identify the main themes of the theory, while contextual reflection shows the relevance of the theory in Indonesia's pluralistic social and educational context. This approach enables in-depth understanding and applicability in Islamic religious education.

Result and Discussion

Martin J. Beck Matustik's Theory of Multicultural Education

Matustik developed a theory of multicultural education that focuses on three main pillars:

1. Recognition of Diversity

Martin J. Beck Matustik emphasizes that recognition of diversity is the main foundation in multicultural education. This principle requires individuals and communities to accept differences as an inevitable reality in living together. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), recognition of diversity is very relevant and important, especially considering Indonesia as a country with extraordinary cultural, religious and ethnic diversity. Recognition of diversity is not only a cognitive understanding, but as an attitude that must be translated into daily actions, both in social interaction and in education.

The importance of recognizing diversity is in line with Islamic teachings that emphasize the importance of mutual respect between human beings, regardless of differences. In the Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat (49:13), Allah SWT says, "O mankind, indeed We created you from male and female and made you into nations and tribes, so that you may know each other. Indeed, the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious among you." This verse affirms that differences

in ethnicity, nation, and religion are part of God's destiny that must be respected and maintained with full appreciation. In this context, PAI can serve as a vehicle to instill values of respect for existing plurality, both in daily life and in formal education.

The application of the principle of recognition of diversity in the PAI curriculum will encourage students to not only know their own religion well, but also understand and respect other religions, cultures and traditions around them. This can form a generation that is not only tolerant, but also active in creating peace and mutual understanding in a plural society. That way, Islamic religious education does not only focus on understanding religious dogma, but also teaches the importance of coexistence by appreciating differences as part of a harmonious togetherness.

2. Intercultural and Religious Dialogue

Martin J. Beck Matustik emphasizes the importance of intercultural and religious dialogue as a key element in multicultural education. Education that encourages dialog not only focuses on the internal understanding of each group, but also invites individuals to open constructive communication spaces with other groups that have different cultural and religious backgrounds. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), the concept of dialogue is very relevant, given the teachings of Islam that prioritize the principles of mutual understanding and peace between religious communities.

Islam clearly teaches that interfaith dialog is part of the effort to create peace and respect for differences. In the Qur'an, Allah says, "And do not mock one another, and do not call one another by bad names." (QS. Al-Hujurat: 11). This verse teaches Muslims to maintain mutual respect, avoid insults, and prefer constructive dialog. The Prophet Muhammad SAW also gave a very clear example of the importance of interfaith dialog. In his life, the Prophet often interacted with leaders of other religions, including in the context of a peace agreement with the Jews in Medina and dialog with the Christians in the form of meetings full of mutual understanding.

The application of the principle of dialog in PAI in Indonesia, with reference to this Islamic teaching, can be done through curriculum development that facilitates students to dialog with other religious or cultural groups. Through constructive dialog, students can learn to understand the worldview of others, as well as find common ground in existing differences. This is in line with the teachings of Islam, which teaches that differences are not a barrier to living together in harmony, but rather an opportunity to learn from each other and enrich understanding.

By applying the principle of intercultural and religious dialogue in PAI, Islamic religious education can form individuals who not only have strong religious knowledge, but also social skills that allow them to interact harmoniously with anyone, without being trapped in prejudice or stereotypes. As a result, generations educated with this principle of dialog will be better equipped to face social challenges and build a peaceful and tolerant society, despite the religious and cultural diversity around them.

3. Social Justice and Inclusive Education

Martin J. Beck Matustik emphasizes that education is not only a means to transfer knowledge, but also a tool to realize social justice in society. Education should be able to provide equal opportunities for every individual, without discrimination based on social, religious or cultural backgrounds. This concept is very relevant in the context of multicultural education, where diversity is not an obstacle, but rather a force that can enrich the learning experience and encourage the formation of a more just society. In the perspective of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), the principle of social justice is in line with Islamic teachings that emphasize the equal rights and obligations of every individual, regardless of their social status or background.

In the Qur'an, Allah says, "Indeed, the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious among you" (QS. Al-Hujurat: 13). This verse affirms that all human beings are equal before Allah, and that a person's superiority is not based on his social status or nationality, but on his piety. This principle teaches Muslims to treat everyone fairly, without discrimination, and ensure that every individual has equal access to education, both in terms of facilities, opportunities, and quality of teaching.

In the context of PAI, the application of the principles of social justice and inclusive education can be realized by providing equal access to religious education for all groups of society, both those from majority and minority groups, as well as from various social and cultural

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backgrounds. Islamic religious education can teach the values of justice and equality, and encourage students to develop empathy and social awareness towards disadvantaged groups. In this way, Islamic religious education can play an important role in realizing a just and inclusive society, where every individual is given equal opportunities to develop, regardless of differences.

Inclusive education in Islamic religious education also includes the importance of supporting students with special needs or those in marginalized conditions, providing them with opportunities to learn without barriers, and ensuring they are treated with equal respect. This is in line with Islamic teachings that view all human beings as God's creations who have equal dignity and are entitled to fair opportunities in life, including in getting an education.

By applying these principles of social justice and inclusive education in PAI, it will not only create an educated generation with a strong religious understanding, but also a generation that is sensitive to social issues and committed to building a more just, equitable and respectful society towards diversity.

Implementation of Multicultural Education in PAI

The application of Matustik's multicultural education theory in PAI can be done through the following steps:

1. Integration of Multicultural Values in the Islamic Education Curriculum

The integration of multicultural values in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum is an important step to ensure that the religious education provided not only equips students with an understanding of the teachings of Islam, but also prepares them to live in a plural and diverse society. A multicultural-based Islamic education curriculum should include materials that teach the importance of appreciation of religious and cultural diversity, as well as the application of the values of tolerance and mutual respect. This will help shape a generation that not only has intelligence in religion, but also the social skills needed to create a harmonious common life.

One way to integrate multicultural values in the PAI curriculum is to include learning about the history of Islamic civilization which is rich in interaction with various cultures. Islamic civilization, which has developed in various parts of the world such as Andalusia, Persia, and India, provides a clear example of how Islam can interact and appreciate other cultures, as well as being part of the formation of a plural society. For example, the Islamic civilization in Andalusia, a medieval center of learning and scientific development, adopted and incorporated many aspects of European, Greek and Roman culture, while at the same time retaining the essence of Islamic teachings.

This interactive and inclusive study of the history of Islamic civilization can help students understand that Islam, from its inception, has taught values of peace, cooperation and respect for diversity. In this context, teaching about Islamic figures who engaged in interfaith and cultural dialogue, such as Ibn Sina (Avicenna) in Persia or Al-Zahrawi in Andalusia, can be exemplary examples of how Islam integrates various cultural elements to create mutual progress.

In addition, the PAI curriculum can also contain materials that explore Islamic teachings on tolerance, such as the concept of *ta'aruf* (getting to know each other) stated in the Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat (49:13), which teaches Muslims to get to know each other without judging differences. Thus, Islamic religious education that integrates multicultural values will strengthen mutual respect among religious and cultural communities, as well as enrich students' understanding of the history and diversity of mankind.

By integrating multicultural values in the Islamic religious education curriculum, Islamic religious education not only fosters a sense of pride in religious identity, but also forms individuals who have the skills and attitudes to contribute to the creation of an inclusive and harmonious society. This learning is expected to produce a generation that is more open to differences, and able to build dialog between cultures and religions with mutual respect and cooperation for the common good.

2. Character Education for Tolerance and Social Justice

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) not only aims to equip students with religious knowledge, but also to form characters that reflect deep Islamic values, including attitudes of

tolerance and social justice. These characters are very important to create individuals who are not only spiritually intelligent, but also have a high sense of social responsibility in interacting with others. In this context, PAI has a strategic role in instilling mutual respect, appreciating differences, and fighting for justice for everyone, without exception.

The value of tolerance is one of the basic values in Islamic teachings that is very important to be taught to the younger generation. In the Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat (49:11-13), Allah teaches Muslims to respect and not ridicule or demean other groups. Islam teaches that differences in ethnicity, nation, and religion are part of God's destiny that must be accepted gracefully. Therefore, through PAI, students can be taught to develop an open attitude towards differences in religion, culture, and worldview that exist in society. This tolerance education can be done by teaching the stories of Prophet Muhammad SAW who showed a tolerant attitude towards non-Muslims, such as in the peace agreement with the Jews in Medina, as well as in his interactions with other religious leaders who always prioritized dialogue and mutual understanding.

In addition, PAI education must also teach the value of social justice, which is the main principle in Islamic teachings. Social justice in Islam includes not only justice in the distribution of resources, but also justice in human rights, including the right to education, freedom of religion, and the right to a decent life. In the Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah (2:177), Allah emphasizes the importance of doing good and upholding justice, by not discriminating against people based on social status, ethnicity or religion. This principle is also seen in the hadiths of Prophet Muhammad SAW who often reminded his people to fight for justice and give rights to each individual according to their needs.

In PAI, character education that includes the values of tolerance and social justice can be taught through various methods, such as story-based learning, class discussions, and the application of these principles in daily life. This learning can be integrated in the teaching material on morals, which emphasizes the importance of being fair and respecting differences in social interactions. In addition, PAI can also facilitate students to engage in social activities aimed at fighting for justice, such as helping others regardless of social or religious backgrounds, as well as playing an active role in activities that promote peace and harmony among religious communities.

By integrating tolerance and social justice character education in the PAI curriculum, it is expected to give birth to a generation that not only has a strong religious understanding, but also has a good social attitude, which is ready to contribute in realizing a just, inclusive and harmonious society. PAI education that prioritizes this character will equip students with the skills to interact constructively with different parties, and fight for justice for all, without discrimination.

3. Dialogue-Oriented Pedagogical Approach

In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), a dialog-oriented pedagogical approach is one of the most effective methods to develop a deeper understanding of diversity, as well as to reduce negative prejudices that often arise due to ignorance of differences. PAI educators need to create learning spaces that are not only based on one-way teaching, but also provide opportunities for students to dialogue, discuss, and cooperate with their peers who come from different cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. This approach aims to open up space for a broader understanding of other people's perspectives, thus creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and reducing stereotypes that may exist.

Dialogue as a pedagogical approach in PAI has deep roots in Islam. In the Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah (2:256), Allah teaches that there is no compulsion in religion, and every individual has the right to choose his or her path freely. This principle reflects the importance of providing space for freedom of thought and opinion, which can be realized through dialogue activities between students. The Prophet Muhammad SAW also set an example in this regard, by building open communication and dialog with various groups of people, including those with different beliefs and cultures. This dialogue not only aims to reach an understanding, but also to respect each other and enrich the insights of each party.

In practice, PAI educators can design classrooms that support active interaction among students by encouraging them to ask questions, discuss, and share their views in an open and respectful atmosphere. Activities such as group discussions, case studies, and role plays can be used to encourage students to understand the situations and views of others. Through this kind of

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dialog, students can develop the ability to listen with empathy, express opinions with respect, and respond to differences with an open mind.

In addition, the application of dialog in PAI is also important to teach the importance of collaboration and cooperation in overcoming differences. In class discussions involving various backgrounds, students will learn to work together despite having different views or opinions, as well as build mutual respect in the process of learning together. This is very relevant to Islamic principles that emphasize *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) and *tawhid* (unity) as the main foundations of social life. In this context, education that prioritizes dialogue will train students to be more tolerant, not easily provoked, and able to establish harmonious relationships with others.

This dialogue-oriented pedagogical approach can also be expanded by involving students in various out-of-class activities that encourage collaboration between different groups, such as student exchange programs, interfaith seminars, or social activities that focus on mutual understanding. Thus, PAI education can play an active role in creating a more inclusive society, where every individual feels valued and given room to grow, regardless of their social and religious background.

Through this approach, students not only gain in-depth religious knowledge, but also social skills that are essential for building a more peaceful and tolerant world. By dialoguing, discussing and working together, students will be better prepared to live in a plural society, respect differences and create a more just and harmonious world.

4. Formation of Critical Attitude towards Social Injustice

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) does not only focus on religious aspects, but it should also shape the character of students who have a critical awareness of social issues that occur in society, especially those related to social injustice due to religious and cultural differences. In this context, PAI has an important role in teaching students to recognize social injustice and fight for justice for everyone, without exception. One aspect that needs to be emphasized is awareness of religious discrimination and marginalization of minority groups that still often occur in many places, including in social life in Indonesia.

Islam explicitly teaches the principle of justice and opposes all forms of oppression and injustice. In the Qur'an Surah An-Nisa (4:58), Allah says, "Verily, Allah enjoins you to give the trust to those who are entitled to it, and when you set a law among men, you shall set it justly..." This verse emphasizes the importance of justice in every aspect of life, whether in terms of managing power, sharing resources, or treating fellow human beings. Therefore, through PAI, students need to be taught to identify and criticize various forms of injustice that occur in society, whether related to religion, culture, or social status.

PAI education that forms this critical attitude can be done by inviting students to understand contemporary social issues that are relevant to religious teachings. For example, learning about religious discrimination that is often experienced by minority groups, such as Muslims in non-Muslim majority countries, or vice versa. Discussions about the marginalization of minority groups, such as certain ethnicities or religions, are also important so that students have a broader insight into existing social realities. By equipping students with knowledge about these social injustices, it is hoped that they can develop empathy and higher social awareness towards the suffering experienced by others.

In addition, PAI education can also teach Islamic values that support equality and respect for human rights. Islamic history provides many examples of the Prophet Muhammad's efforts to eliminate social discrimination, such as in the Medina Charter that guarantees the rights of all citizens, regardless of their religion and ethnicity. The Prophet Muhammad also exemplified fair and caring leadership towards marginalized groups, such as women, orphans, and the poor.

The application of a critical attitude towards social injustice in PAI education can involve students in activities that promote the values of justice, such as social programs or discussions on various issues of injustice that occur in society. Students can be invited to engage in fundraising or outreach activities to help marginalized groups, as well as participate in social campaigns that promote justice and equality.

By equipping students with the ability to recognize and criticize social injustice, PAI education not only instills religious values, but also develops a critical attitude towards broader social issues. This will shape a younger generation that not only understands religion, but also has

a commitment to fight for justice, respect the rights of others, and play an active role in creating a more just and inclusive society.

The Relevance of Matustik's Multicultural Education Theory in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia

According to Martin J. Beck Matustik, the theory of multicultural education is highly relevant to be applied in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia, a country known for its religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity. By prioritizing key principles such as recognition of diversity, interfaith dialogue, and social justice, Islamic religious education can become an effective tool for fostering harmony among religious communities. In the midst of Indonesia's pluralistic society, the application of this theory in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has great potential to build a more inclusive and harmonious social climate, as well as to encourage better understanding among different groups.

Recognition of diversity in PAI education can help students understand that differences in religion, culture, and ethnicity are part of God's destiny that must be respected. In Islam, these differences are not a reason to discriminate or commit violence, but rather a means to get to know and appreciate each other. By teaching this principle in the PAI curriculum, students will become accustomed to seeing differences as a wealth, not as a threat. This creates a deep respect for the cultural, religious, and social identity differences that exist around them.

Furthermore, interfaith and intercultural dialogue, which is also one of the main pillars in the Matustik theory, aligns well with Islamic teachings that encourage its followers to interact with various groups with an open and understanding attitude. This principle is reflected in the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who always prioritized dialogue and peace in every interaction with groups of different religions and cultures, both in social relations and in the context of the state. By integrating interfaith dialogue into PAI education, students can learn to appreciate the beliefs of others more, thereby reducing the likelihood of religion-based conflicts.

Social justice, as the third principle in Matustik's multicultural education theory, is highly relevant to Islamic values that prioritize justice for all humanity regardless of differences. In PAI, the application of the principle of social justice can teach students about the importance of advocating for equal rights for everyone, including minority or marginalized groups in society. In this context, PAI education not only teaches ritual worship but also instills social values that support equality and justice, as taught by Islam.

Through the application of multicultural education theory in PAI, the younger generation of Indonesia will become more open and ready to adapt to the existing reality of pluralism. They will not only appreciate differences but also possess the skills to collaborate in a diverse community life. Islamic religious education based on multicultural principles will strengthen their character, making them more tolerant, just, and inclusive, and capable of actively contributing to the creation of a harmonious and respectful society. Thus, the application of Matustik's theory in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has the potential to produce individuals who are not only knowledgeable in religion but also adept at living in a pluralistic society.

Conclusion

The application of multicultural education theory according to Martin J. Beck Matustik in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia is very relevant and strategic, considering the diversity of religions, ethnicities, and cultures present in society. By emphasizing the three main pillars of this theory, namely recognition of diversity, interfaith and intercultural dialogue, and social justice, Islamic religious education can become an effective tool for fostering harmony and peace among religious communities. Through the integration of these principles into the PAI curriculum, the younger generation of Indonesia will not only gain a strong understanding of religion but also develop an open, tolerant, and just character. Moreover, PAI education based on multicultural values will prepare students to live in a pluralistic society full of differences, with the social skills needed to interact harmoniously. Learning that emphasizes dialogue, mutual understanding, and respect for differences will encourage the formation of a more inclusive society, where every individual, regardless of religion or culture, can live together in peace. Thus, the application of multicultural education theory in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Indonesia has great potential to produce a generation that is not only knowledgeable

in religion but also committed to social justice and mutual respect for differences, in order to create a more just, harmonious, and pluralistic society.

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