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Toward an Islamic Multicultural Educational Management Paradigm: Developing Humanistic Character in Generation Z

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ABSTRACT
This study aims to examine the role of multicultural education in developing the humanistic character of Generation Z and to formulate an Islamic Multicultural Educational Management Paradigm that integrates multicultural values with Islamic educational principles. The study addresses contemporary social challenges, including intolerance, discrimination, digital hate speech, declining empathy, and social polarization among young people in increasingly diverse and digitally connected societies. This study employed a library research approach using an integrative literature review design. Data were collected from scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, policy reports, and other relevant academic sources on multicultural education, Islamic educational management, character education, and Generation Z. The data were analyzed using descriptive-analytical and thematic synthesis techniques to identify conceptual relationships and develop a comprehensive theoretical framework. Multicultural education significantly contributes to the development of tolerance (*tasamuh*), empathy, democratic attitudes, social responsibility, mutual respect, and appreciation for human dignity. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that these values are closely aligned with Islamic principles, particularly *ukhuwah basyariyah* (human brotherhood), *ta'aruf* (mutual understanding), and *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (universal compassion). The findings also indicate that multicultural education should not be limited to classroom instruction but should be institutionalized through leadership, organizational culture, governance, and educational management practices. This study introduces an Islamic Multicultural Educational Management Paradigm that positions multicultural education as a governance and institutional transformation framework rather than merely a pedagogical approach. The study advances Islamic Educational Management by providing a conceptual model that integrates multicultural educational principles, Islamic epistemological values, and humanistic character development. This framework offers theoretical and practical guidance for educational institutions seeking to foster socially responsible, inclusive, and ethically grounded Generation Z learners in the digital era.

KEYWORDS
Islamic Educational Management; Multicultural Education; Humanistic Character; Generation Z; Tolerance; Empathy; *Ukhuwah Basyariyah*.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia represents one of the world's most culturally diverse nations, characterized by the coexistence of numerous ethnic groups, religions, languages, traditions, and cultural identities. This diversity constitutes a strategic national asset that enriches social life and strengthens national identity. Nevertheless, diversity also presents significant challenges, particularly in the era of globalization and digital transformation, where social interactions increasingly occur within virtual environments. The rapid growth of information technology, social media, and digital communication platforms has created new opportunities for intercultural engagement while simultaneously facilitating the spread of intolerance, discrimination, hate speech, identity polarization, and social fragmentation. These challenges have become increasingly visible among younger generations who spend substantial time in digital spaces. Consequently, educational institutions face the urgent responsibility of preparing students to navigate diversity constructively while maintaining social cohesion and mutual respect in pluralistic societies (Lefone et al., 2022).

Among contemporary generations, Generation Z occupies a unique position due to its close relationship with digital technology. Born and raised in an environment characterized by continuous internet connectivity, social networking platforms, and instant access to information, Generation Z possesses unprecedented opportunities for learning and global interaction. However, excessive exposure to digital media has also generated complex social consequences, including cyberbullying, online radicalization, intolerance, declining face-to-face communication skills, and reduced social empathy. The increasing prevalence of these phenomena suggests that technological advancement alone is insufficient to foster the development of responsible, socially conscious citizens. Educational systems must therefore play a proactive role in cultivating ethical awareness, empathy, tolerance, and humanistic values that guide young people in navigating increasingly complex social realities. Recent educational reports similarly emphasize the importance of strengthening students' social-emotional competencies and civic values as essential components of twenty-first-century education.

Education has long been recognized as a strategic instrument for developing not only intellectual competence but also moral integrity and social responsibility. Educational processes are expected to facilitate learners' holistic development by integrating cognitive, affective, spiritual, and social dimensions. Accordingly, education should not be understood merely as a mechanism for transferring knowledge but also as a transformative process through which values, attitudes, ethics, and character are internalized (Hasbullah, 2017). Through effective educational experiences, students can be guided to develop empathy, tolerance, respect for human dignity, and social responsibility, all of which are indispensable for sustaining harmonious relationships in multicultural societies.

One educational approach that has received significant scholarly attention in addressing issues of diversity and social cohesion is multicultural education. Multicultural education seeks to promote understanding, appreciation, and respect for cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity while fostering principles of

equality, inclusion, and social justice. According to Banks, multicultural education aims to help learners understand diversity as a positive social reality and develop competencies necessary for effective participation in democratic societies. Multicultural educational practices encourage students to recognize cultural differences, challenge discriminatory attitudes, and appreciate the dignity of all individuals regardless of their backgrounds. Such educational objectives are particularly relevant in multicultural nations such as Indonesia, where social harmony depends on citizens' ability to engage constructively with diversity.

Previous studies have demonstrated that multicultural education contributes significantly to the development of tolerance, empathy, democratic attitudes, and social awareness among students. In the Indonesian context, multicultural educational initiatives have been recognized as effective mechanisms for strengthening national integration and preventing social conflict. Educational environments that embrace multicultural values provide opportunities for learners to interact with peers from diverse backgrounds, appreciate differing perspectives, and cultivate mutual respect. Such experiences contribute to the formation of humanistic character traits that are increasingly necessary in contemporary societies characterized by cultural pluralism and digital interconnectedness (Windayani et al., 2024).

Implementing multicultural values in educational institutions requires learning environments that are democratic, inclusive, and respectful of diversity. Teachers play a critical role in facilitating such environments by promoting dialogue, encouraging collaborative learning, and ensuring equitable participation among students. Through inclusive educational practices, learners develop interpersonal competencies that enable them to collaborate effectively, appreciate diverse opinions, and establish harmonious social relationships in both school and community settings (Wati et al., 2024). These competencies are particularly important for Generation Z, whose social interactions frequently extend beyond physical environments into digital spaces where exposure to diverse perspectives and social influences is significantly amplified.

Multicultural education has also been identified as a crucial strategy for fostering tolerance, empathy, and mutual respect among Generation Z. Through meaningful social interactions and experiential learning activities, students are encouraged to understand alternative viewpoints, recognize shared humanity, and develop concern for others' well-being. These values constitute essential foundations for humanistic character formation and serve as protective factors against intolerance, prejudice, and social exclusion. Consequently, multicultural education offers an important framework for addressing the social challenges associated with contemporary youth development (Azman et al., 2025).

Despite these contributions, the majority of existing studies continue to approach multicultural education primarily from pedagogical and character education perspectives. Much of the literature focuses on classroom implementation, instructional strategies, and student learning outcomes. At the same time, relatively limited attention has been devoted to examining multicultural education from the perspective of educational management and institutional governance. This limitation is significant because the successful internalization of multicultural values depends

not only on teaching practices but also on broader organizational factors, including leadership, institutional culture, governance structures, policy frameworks, and strategic management processes. Research in educational leadership increasingly emphasizes that educational outcomes are strongly influenced by contextual and organizational dimensions that shape institutional practices and stakeholder interactions. Hallinger argues that educational leadership must be understood within broader socio-cultural and institutional contexts because leadership practices are inseparable from the environments in which they operate.

Within Islamic educational institutions, this issue becomes particularly important because educational management is not solely concerned with administrative efficiency but also with the cultivation of ethical, spiritual, and social values. Islamic educational management is grounded in a normative framework that integrates organizational effectiveness with moral responsibility, social justice, and human development. From an Islamic perspective, diversity is understood as a divine reality (*sunnatullah*) that should be managed through principles of justice, compassion, cooperation, and mutual respect. Values such as *ukhuwwah basyariyah* (human brotherhood), *tasamuh* (tolerance), *ta'aruf* (mutual understanding), and *rahmatan lil' alamin* (universal compassion) provide important ethical foundations for educational institutions seeking to promote harmonious coexistence within diverse societies (Khoeriyah et al., 2022).

Furthermore, Islamic educational institutions possess unique organizational characteristics that distinguish them from secular educational settings. Schools, madrasas, and pesantren operate within cultural traditions that emphasize collective responsibility, moral leadership, community engagement, and value-based governance. These indigenous educational traditions offer valuable resources for developing management paradigms that integrate multicultural principles with Islamic values. However, despite growing interest in multicultural and Islamic education separately, limited scholarly attention has been devoted to developing a comprehensive framework that systematically integrates multicultural educational principles with Islamic educational management. As a result, an important theoretical gap remains regarding how educational institutions can strategically manage diversity while simultaneously fostering humanistic character development among Generation Z.

This study addresses this gap by proposing an Islamic Multicultural Educational Management Paradigm as a conceptual framework for humanistic character development among Generation Z. Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on instructional approaches to multicultural education, this article positions multicultural values within the broader context of Islamic educational governance, leadership, organizational culture, and institutional transformation. The novelty of this study lies in its effort to synthesize multicultural educational principles, Islamic epistemological foundations, and educational management perspectives into an integrated conceptual paradigm. By doing so, the study contributes to advancing Islamic Educational Management as a distinct field of knowledge capable of responding to contemporary challenges associated with diversity, digitalization, and

youth character development. Ultimately, the proposed paradigm seeks to provide theoretical foundations for educational institutions aiming to cultivate a generation that is intellectually competent, spiritually grounded, socially responsible, and capable of living harmoniously within increasingly diverse societies.

METHOD

This study employed a library research approach, a method that utilizes scholarly literature as the primary source of data to examine a phenomenon, synthesize existing knowledge, and construct a systematic conceptual framework (Darmalaksana, 2020). Library research is particularly appropriate for studies aiming to develop theoretical propositions and conceptual models because it enables researchers to critically analyze, compare, and integrate findings from diverse academic sources without direct field observation. In this study, library research was selected to explore the intersection of multicultural education, Islamic educational management, humanistic character development, and the sociocultural characteristics of Generation Z in the digital era.

To strengthen the study's analytical rigor, the research adopted an integrative literature review design. An integrative review allows scholars to combine theoretical and empirical literature from multiple disciplines in order to generate new conceptual understandings and theoretical perspectives (Snyder, 2019). This approach was considered suitable because the present study sought not merely to summarize previous findings but to construct an Islamic Multicultural Educational Management Paradigm capable of addressing contemporary educational challenges related to diversity, digitalization, and character development. Through this approach, insights derived from multicultural education studies, Islamic educational thought, educational leadership, organizational culture, and character education were synthesized into a coherent conceptual framework.

The literature collection process was conducted systematically by identifying, selecting, evaluating, and synthesizing relevant academic sources. The primary sources comprised peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, conference proceedings, policy reports, and authoritative documents on multicultural education, Islamic educational management, educational leadership, character education, and Generation Z studies. Literature searches were conducted using major academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, ERIC, and Crossref. Several keywords were used in the search process, including “multicultural education,” “Islamic educational management,” “humanistic character,” “Generation Z,” “educational leadership,” “Islamic values,” “inclusive education,” and “educational governance.” To ensure relevance and contemporary significance, priority was given to publications produced within the last ten years, while seminal works that significantly contributed to the theoretical foundations of multicultural education and educational management were also included.

The selection of literature followed specific inclusion and exclusion criteria. Sources were included when they directly addressed multicultural education, Islamic educational institutions, educational management, leadership, governance, character

development, or the characteristics of Generation Z. Publications lacking scholarly credibility, duplicate sources, non-academic materials, and studies unrelated to the research's conceptual focus were excluded. Following the selection process, the collected literature was subjected to critical reading and thematic categorization to identify recurring concepts, theoretical patterns, and emerging scholarly debates. This procedure enabled the researcher to establish conceptual relationships among the principal themes examined in the study.

Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive-analytical and thematic synthesis approach. The descriptive stage involved organizing and summarizing key concepts derived from the selected literature, while the analytical stage focused on examining conceptual relationships, identifying theoretical gaps, and evaluating the applicability of existing perspectives to contemporary Islamic educational contexts. Subsequently, thematic synthesis was employed to integrate diverse findings into broader conceptual categories, including multicultural values, humanistic character formation, Islamic educational leadership, organizational culture, and educational governance. Through this process, the study developed a conceptual model that explains how Islamic educational management can strategically facilitate the development of multicultural values and humanistic character among Generation Z.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, source triangulation was conducted by comparing perspectives from different types of scholarly publications and disciplinary traditions. The study also employed critical interpretive analysis to ensure that the resulting conceptual framework was grounded in both contemporary educational scholarship and Islamic epistemological principles. The outcome of this methodological process is a theoretically informed paradigm that integrates multicultural educational principles, Islamic values, and educational management perspectives into a comprehensive framework for fostering humanistic character in Generation Z.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Multicultural Education in Shaping Humanistic Character among Generation Z

Education is a process of nurturing and developing human potential so that individuals become knowledgeable, morally grounded, and capable of participating constructively in social life. Education functions not only as a means of transferring knowledge but also as a medium for instilling values, morality, and character that serve as the foundation of social interaction. Through education, individuals are guided to become wise, responsible, and respectful toward others in social contexts. Therefore, education plays a strategic role in shaping a generation that is not only intellectually competent but also possesses a strong humanistic character (Hasbullah, 2017). In contemporary educational discourse, educational success is no longer measured solely by academic achievement but also by the ability to cultivate learners who demonstrate balanced social, emotional, moral, and spiritual competencies. This perspective is consistent with humanistic educational theory, which emphasizes the

development of human dignity, ethical awareness, and personal growth as fundamental goals of education.

In increasingly pluralistic and complex societies, education is expected to address challenges arising from cultural, religious, ethnic, and social diversity. Diversity represents an unavoidable social reality, particularly in Indonesia, which is recognized as one of the most multicultural countries in the world. Consequently, educational approaches are needed not only to acknowledge diversity but also to transform it into a source of social strength and cohesion. Within this context, multiculturalism becomes highly relevant, as it views diversity as a social asset to be respected and managed constructively. Multiculturalism teaches that all individuals possess equal dignity and deserve respect regardless of their cultural, religious, linguistic, or social backgrounds. In multicultural societies, tolerance, mutual respect, and acceptance of differences are essential foundations for harmonious social relations (Tilaar, 2014). Banks (2019) argues that multicultural education is not merely about recognizing diversity but also about systematically promoting equity, social justice, and democratic participation within society.

Multicultural education represents the practical implementation of multicultural values within educational systems. It seeks to cultivate learners' appreciation of diversity while fostering awareness of equality, social justice, and human dignity. This educational approach encourages students to recognize differences not as sources of conflict but as opportunities for learning and social enrichment. Multicultural education aims to develop tolerance, respect for others' rights, and awareness that discrimination and prejudice undermine social harmony (Tilaar, 2014). Furthermore, multicultural education emphasizes equal access to educational opportunities regardless of religion, ethnicity, race, or socioeconomic status. In this sense, multicultural education goes beyond the transmission of knowledge by fostering values and attitudes that support peaceful coexistence in diverse societies. This perspective aligns with Gay's (2018) argument that culturally responsive education enhances students' social sensitivity, empathy, and intercultural competence.

Implementing multicultural education requires more than classroom-based instructional strategies. It involves creating democratic, inclusive, and equitable learning environments that respect and value diversity. Teachers play a crucial role in facilitating such environments by promoting dialogue, encouraging collaborative learning, and fostering mutual respect among students from different backgrounds (Hasbullah, 2017). However, from an Islamic educational management perspective, the success of multicultural education also depends on institutional leadership, organizational culture, governance structures, and educational policies that consistently reinforce multicultural values. Educational institutions must integrate inclusivity, justice, and respect for diversity into their vision, mission, and organizational practices. Hallinger (2018) emphasizes that educational effectiveness is strongly influenced by leadership and organizational contexts that shape everyday educational experiences. Therefore, multicultural education should be understood not

merely as a pedagogical strategy but as an institutional paradigm that systematically integrates multicultural values into educational management and governance.

The relevance of multicultural education becomes even more evident when considering the characteristics of Generation Z. This generation was born and raised during an era marked by rapid technological advancement, digital communication, and unrestricted access to information. Generation Z is widely recognized for its technological literacy, creativity, and active engagement with social media platforms (Putra, 2016). While these developments provide unprecedented opportunities for learning and global interaction, they also present significant challenges. Excessive exposure to digital environments may contribute to increased individualism, reduced face-to-face social interaction, cyberbullying, online intolerance, hate speech, and identity polarization. Various studies indicate that technological advancement without adequate character education can weaken social empathy and interpersonal sensitivity. Consequently, multicultural education becomes an essential mechanism for helping Generation Z develop the ethical awareness and social responsibility necessary for constructive participation in increasingly diverse digital societies.

Within this context, humanistic character emerges as one of the most important competencies that Generation Z must develop. Humanistic character refers to attitudes and behaviors that uphold human dignity, empathy, compassion, tolerance, social responsibility, and mutual respect (Nurkholis, 2013). Such character traits are indispensable for fostering harmonious social relations in multicultural societies. Education that prioritizes humanistic character formation enables students to become individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also morally responsible and socially conscious. In the context of twenty-first-century education, these qualities are increasingly important because learners are expected not only to compete globally but also to collaborate effectively with individuals from diverse cultural and social backgrounds.

The relationship between multicultural education and the development of humanistic character among Generation Z is particularly significant. Through multicultural education, students learn to appreciate cultural, religious, and ideological differences while developing values such as tolerance, cooperation, empathy, and mutual respect (Tilaar, 2014). These values help Generation Z avoid discriminatory attitudes and intolerant behaviors while fostering positive social relationships and peaceful coexistence. Through inclusive learning experiences and meaningful social interactions, students are encouraged to understand diverse perspectives, respect diversity, and demonstrate concern for others' well-being. UNESCO (2023) similarly emphasizes that educational programs integrating multicultural values contribute significantly to the development of global competencies, social awareness, and inclusive citizenship. Therefore, multicultural education serves not only as an educational approach but also as a strategic instrument for character formation, highly relevant to the needs of Generation Z.

From the perspective of Islamic Religious Education, multicultural education is closely aligned with Islamic teachings that emphasize human brotherhood, compassion, justice, and respect for diversity. Islam views human diversity as a

manifestation of divine wisdom and teaches that people were created into different nations and tribes so that they may know and respect one another. Values such as *ukhuwah basyariyah* (human brotherhood), *tasamuh* (tolerance), *ta'aruf* (mutual understanding), and *ta'awun* (cooperation) provide a strong ethical foundation for multicultural education. These principles reinforce the importance of fostering harmonious relationships among individuals despite differences in religion, culture, or social identity (Tilaar, 2014). Consequently, Islamic Religious Education plays a vital role in cultivating tolerance, respect for diversity, and appreciation of human dignity among Generation Z. Integrating multicultural education with Islamic values can therefore serve as an effective strategy for developing students who are both religiously committed and humanistically oriented.

Based on the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that multicultural education plays a strategic role in shaping the humanistic character of Generation Z. Multicultural education not only promotes understanding and appreciation of diversity but also cultivates empathy, tolerance, social responsibility, and respect for human dignity in everyday life. However, within the broader framework of Islamic Educational Management, multicultural education should not be viewed solely as a pedagogical approach. Rather, it should be positioned as an institutional paradigm that integrates multicultural values into leadership practices, organizational culture, educational governance, and character development initiatives. Through such an approach, Islamic educational institutions can function as transformative environments that nurture generations who are intellectually competent, spiritually grounded, socially responsible, and capable of living harmoniously within diverse societies. This paradigm is particularly relevant in the digital era, where technological competence must be balanced with social intelligence, ethical awareness, and spiritual maturity in order to prepare Generation Z for the challenges of an increasingly interconnected world.

The Role of Multicultural Education in Fostering Tolerance, Empathy, and Mutual Respect among Generation Z

Multicultural education is not merely a supplementary component of the national curriculum but rather a crucial instrument of social reconstruction for sustaining harmony within a pluralistic society. For Generation Z, which grows amid globalization, digital interconnectedness, and unrestricted access to information, multicultural education serves as an ideological anchor, providing ethical guidance for navigating diversity. This educational approach creates a reflective space where students are encouraged not only to recognize differences but also to transform them into collective strengths. Through multicultural education, educational institutions can transform classrooms into miniature inclusive societies that prepare young people to face global challenges without losing their cultural and spiritual identities. In contemporary educational discourse, multicultural education is increasingly recognized as a strategic mechanism for cultivating global citizenship, intercultural competence, and social responsibility in diverse societies (Banks, 2019).

From the perspective of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), multicultural education aligns closely with the prophetic mission of Islam, which upholds human

dignity, justice, compassion, and peaceful coexistence. The integration of multicultural values and Islamic teachings is particularly important for Generation Z, which is vulnerable to identity crises due to continuous exposure to global cultural influences through digital media. When multicultural values are integrated with inclusive Islamic principles, students are guided to understand diversity as part of divine wisdom (*sunnatullah*), to be approached with respect and wisdom. Therefore, multicultural education within Islamic educational institutions is not merely intended to promote social harmony but also to cultivate a holistic understanding of humanity rooted in spiritual and ethical values. In this regard, the internalization of multicultural education contributes significantly to the development of three essential humanistic characteristics among Generation Z: tolerance (*tasamuh*), empathy, and mutual respect (*ukhuwwah basyariyah*).

Fostering Tolerance (*Tasamuh*) through Inclusive Understanding

Multicultural education plays a vital role in fostering tolerance (*tasamuh*) through an inclusive understanding of diversity. Tolerance refers to the willingness to respect differences in ethnicity, religion, culture, language, and social background without devaluing or discriminating against others. In Indonesia's multicultural society, tolerance is indispensable for maintaining peaceful and harmonious social relations. Multicultural education teaches students that every individual possesses equal dignity and deserves respect regardless of differences in identity or background (Putri Azhari & Meyniar Albina, 2024). This understanding is particularly important in contemporary societies, where social polarization and intolerance have increasingly emerged in both physical communities and digital spaces.

Inclusive understanding within multicultural education involves creating opportunities for students to learn about, appreciate, and interact with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Through inclusive learning experiences, students are encouraged not only to understand their own cultural traditions but also to appreciate the beliefs, customs, and values of others. Such experiences contribute to reducing prejudice and stereotypes while fostering openness toward diversity (Abdul Wahab Syakhrani et al., 2024). Banks (2019) argues that multicultural education enables learners to develop democratic attitudes and intercultural competencies necessary for living in increasingly diverse societies. Consequently, diversity is no longer perceived as a threat but rather as a valuable social resource that enriches collective life.

Multicultural education also cultivates tolerance through collaborative learning activities that bring together students from different backgrounds. Classroom discussions, group projects, and social activities encourage learners to respect differing opinions and perspectives. These interactions help students develop habits of peaceful coexistence and reduce tendencies toward discrimination and intolerance (Risa Erna Wati et al., 2024). Educational environments that consistently promote dialogue and cooperation contribute significantly to the formation of tolerant attitudes. Such findings are supported by UNESCO (2023), which emphasizes that educational institutions play a critical role in strengthening social cohesion by fostering respect for diversity and encouraging inclusive participation.

Furthermore, multicultural education develops awareness that all human beings share equal worth and dignity. Inclusive educational practices encourage students not to discriminate against others based on religion, ethnicity, physical condition, or social status. This awareness is especially important for Generation Z, which frequently encounters diverse viewpoints and communities through social media and digital platforms. Without adequate guidance, digital interactions may expose young people to hate speech, misinformation, and extremist narratives. Multicultural education, therefore, functions as a preventive mechanism that equips students with the critical and ethical capacities needed to respond constructively to diversity in digital environments (Ni Luh Ika Windayani et al., 2024).

From an Islamic perspective, tolerance (*tasamuh*) signifies respecting differences without compromising one's own beliefs. Islam encourages harmonious coexistence, mutual respect, and the preservation of social unity despite diversity. Therefore, multicultural education is highly compatible with Islamic teachings and serves as an effective medium for transmitting moderate and inclusive Islamic values to students (Syifa Siti Aulia et al., 2025). Through such educational experiences, students learn to approach differences wisely and responsibly while maintaining their religious commitments. Consequently, tolerance becomes not merely a social skill but also an ethical and spiritual responsibility rooted in Islamic teachings.

The implementation of inclusive multicultural education can be strengthened through positive habituation within schools. Teachers play a central role by modeling respectful behavior, applying equitable instructional practices, and creating classroom environments where all students feel valued and accepted. School activities such as community service, intercultural discussions, and national celebrations further reinforce students' sense of belonging and collective identity. Such inclusive school cultures help students develop into tolerant individuals who can appreciate diversity in both local and global contexts (Ranti Dwi Agustin et al., 2024). From an educational leadership perspective, these practices highlight the importance of institutional commitment and organizational culture in promoting multicultural values (Hallinger, 2018).

Developing Empathy through the Affective Domain and Experiential Learning

Multicultural education also contributes significantly to the development of empathy through affective learning and real-life social experiences. The affective domain encompasses attitudes, values, emotions, and social awareness that shape individuals' responses to others. Within multicultural education, students are not only taught factual knowledge about diversity but are also encouraged to develop emotional sensitivity and concern for others. Through this process, learners gain a deeper understanding of diverse social, cultural, and religious realities, which, in turn, fosters empathetic attitudes in everyday life (Muhammad Azman et al., 2024).

Empathy develops effectively when students engage directly with peers from diverse backgrounds. Activities such as collaborative projects, community engagement programs, and intercultural dialogue enable students to understand perspectives different from their own. These experiences encourage learners to

recognize and appreciate others' challenges, emotions, and experiences. As a result, students become more willing to offer support, demonstrate compassion, and engage in prosocial behavior. Educational experiences grounded in real-life interaction are particularly effective because they allow empathy to be learned not merely as a theoretical concept but as a lived social practice (Sulfani, Waode Arifatun, & Ekson, 2023).

The affective dimension of multicultural education also strengthens students' social sensitivity toward issues affecting their communities. Teachers play a crucial role in cultivating empathy by facilitating humanistic and communicative learning experiences. Classroom discussions on diversity, opportunities for personal reflection, and the sharing of individual experiences encourage students to understand their peers' feelings and perspectives. These practices help reduce egocentrism, prejudice, and discriminatory attitudes while fostering emotional intelligence and interpersonal understanding.

Beyond classroom instruction, empathy can be further strengthened through community-based activities such as social service projects, humanitarian initiatives, collaborative cultural programs, and volunteer work. Such experiences expose students to diverse life circumstances and encourage them to recognize the interconnectedness of human experiences. Consequently, multicultural education contributes not only to intellectual development but also to the cultivation of social and emotional competencies essential to responsible citizenship (Sri Wijayanti et al., 2025).

For Generation Z, cultivating empathy is particularly important because digital technologies often reduce opportunities for meaningful face-to-face interaction. Excessive reliance on digital communication may weaken social sensitivity if not balanced by effective character education. Multicultural education addresses this challenge by encouraging students to engage in authentic social interactions that foster emotional awareness and appreciation of diversity (Nina Kardina et al., 2023). Through such experiences, learners become better able to understand the needs and feelings of others, thereby strengthening social cohesion within diverse communities.

Additionally, multicultural education promotes empathy through active, participatory learning methods such as role-playing and simulation. These instructional strategies allow students to experience situations from perspectives different from their own, thereby enhancing their understanding of cultural differences and social challenges. By assuming various social roles, students gain insight into others' experiences and emotions, which contributes to the development of cultural empathy and intercultural understanding (Dian Triana, 2022). Such approaches are consistent with contemporary educational theories emphasizing experiential learning as a powerful means of developing social and emotional competencies.

Instilling Mutual Respect through *Ukhuwwah Basyariyah*

Another important contribution of multicultural education is fostering mutual respect through the concept of *ukhuwwah basyariyah* (human brotherhood). This concept emphasizes the shared humanity of all people, regardless of religion,

ethnicity, culture, language, or social status. Multicultural education teaches students that every human being possesses inherent dignity and deserves to be treated with fairness and respect. Mutual respect, therefore, becomes a foundational principle for creating peaceful and harmonious relationships within schools and society (Yayah Khoeriyah et al., 2022).

Through multicultural education, students are guided to understand diversity as a social reality that should be embraced with openness rather than fear or hostility. By learning about different cultures and traditions, students develop a greater appreciation for diversity and become less likely to engage in discriminatory behavior. Regular interaction with peers from diverse backgrounds helps cultivate attitudes of respect, understanding, and cooperation (Sipuan et al., 2022). These experiences contribute to the formation of socially responsible individuals who value human dignity and reject exclusionary practices.

The development of mutual respect is further reinforced through humanistic and inclusive teaching practices. Teachers serve as role models by demonstrating fairness, active listening, and respect for differing viewpoints. When educators create supportive and inclusive classroom environments, students are more likely to internalize similar attitudes in their own social relationships. Consequently, multicultural education extends beyond theoretical instruction and becomes a practical framework for promoting respectful behavior in everyday life.

Outside the classroom, mutual respect can be strengthened through collaborative activities that encourage teamwork and shared responsibility. Group discussions, community service projects, and cooperative learning experiences enable students to appreciate the abilities, perspectives, and contributions of others. Such activities foster a sense of solidarity and social responsibility while reinforcing the importance of respecting diversity. These experiential learning opportunities are particularly effective in developing students' sense of human brotherhood and social concern.

From an Islamic perspective, *ukhuwwah basyariyah* holds that a common humanity binds all human beings together. Therefore, Islam encourages respect, cooperation, and mutual assistance among people regardless of differences in identity or belief. Multicultural education reflects these principles by promoting respect for diversity and rejecting discrimination. Through multicultural educational practices, students come to understand that respecting others is not only a social obligation but also an essential component of Islamic moral conduct (Suryawan Bagus Handoko, 2022).

In the contemporary digital era, fostering mutual respect has become increasingly important, as Generation Z frequently interacts on social media platforms. Differences of opinion in online environments often lead to conflict, hate speech, and intolerance when not approached thoughtfully. Multicultural education helps students develop the critical awareness and ethical responsibility necessary to engage respectfully with diverse viewpoints in digital spaces. Consequently, learners become more capable of using social media constructively while maintaining civility, empathy, and respect toward others (Iefone Shiflana Habiba et al., 2023).

Overall, the findings indicate that multicultural education serves as a strategic framework for cultivating tolerance, empathy, and mutual respect among Generation Z. These values are not merely individual character traits but essential social competencies required for living harmoniously in multicultural societies. Within the framework of Islamic Educational Management, the development of these values should be supported through institutional leadership, organizational culture, educational governance, and character-building programs that consistently integrate multicultural and Islamic principles. Through such an approach, educational institutions can contribute to the formation of a generation that is intellectually capable, spiritually grounded, socially responsible, and prepared to navigate the complexities of an increasingly diverse and interconnected world.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that multicultural education plays a far more substantial role in shaping the humanistic character of Generation Z than has commonly been assumed. The findings reveal that multicultural education contributes not only to the development of tolerance, empathy, democratic attitudes, social responsibility, and respect for human dignity but also serves as a strategic foundation for cultivating inclusive, ethical, and socially responsible citizens in the digital era. More importantly, the study finds that integrating multicultural values with Islamic educational principles—including *ukhuwah basyariyah* (human brotherhood), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *ta'aruf* (mutual understanding)—provides a comprehensive framework for strengthening humanistic character formation. These findings challenge the traditional assumption that multicultural education functions primarily as a pedagogical approach and instead suggest that it should be positioned as a broader educational management paradigm capable of addressing contemporary social and cultural challenges faced by Generation Z.

From a scholarly perspective, this study reinforces previous findings regarding the positive relationship between multicultural education and character development while extending the discussion into the field of Islamic Educational Management. The study contributes to the literature by proposing an Islamic Multicultural Educational Management Paradigm that integrates multicultural educational principles, Islamic epistemological values, and humanistic character development. This conceptual contribution enriches current academic debates by highlighting the importance of institutional governance, leadership, organizational culture, and value-based educational management in fostering tolerance, empathy, and mutual respect among students. Consequently, the study broadens the theoretical scope of multicultural education beyond classroom practices and positions it within the wider framework of educational transformation and institutional development.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. As a library research study, the findings are derived primarily from the analysis and synthesis of existing literature rather than empirical investigation in specific educational settings. Consequently, the proposed conceptual framework has not yet been tested in diverse institutional

contexts. In addition, the study focuses primarily on the relationship between multicultural education, Islamic educational values, and humanistic character development, which may limit the generalizability of its conclusions across different educational systems and sociocultural environments. Future studies are therefore needed to empirically examine and validate the proposed paradigm through qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method research involving larger samples and various types of Islamic educational institutions, including schools, madrasas, and pesantren.

Based on these findings, several recommendations can be proposed. First, educational policymakers should integrate multicultural values more systematically into educational governance, curriculum design, and character education programs. Second, school leaders and teachers should strengthen inclusive educational practices that promote dialogue, collaboration, and respect for diversity within both physical and digital learning environments. Third, Islamic educational institutions should develop organizational cultures that embody the principles of *ukhuwah basyariyah*, *tasamuh*, and *ta'aruf* as foundational elements of character education. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to develop and empirically test the Islamic Multicultural Educational Management Paradigm proposed in this study to assess its effectiveness in fostering humanistic character and social cohesion among Generation Z in increasingly diverse and digitally connected societies.

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