

## **Understanding Multicultural Education From Islamic Perspective**

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### ***Abstract***

*This study explored understanding multicultural education from an Islamic perspective, as well as how society is integrated in Islam. One of the main features brought by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) during his lifetime was the integration of society, as he was the one who constructed a peaceful society in the Islamic Era when Muslims, Arabs, Christians, and Jews coexisted. This study looked also at the benefits and shortcomings of multicultural education. The question is not whether multicultural education should be implemented, but rather what we mean by it and how we would go about implementing such a change inside an educational system.*

**Keywords:** *Multicultural education, Islamic perspective, integration of society*

### **Introduction**

Malaysian society is a complex and diverse society. Malaysia consists of various races, where different cultures can be viewed in the region. In terms of cultural diversity, it is described in terms of

religion and language. Thus, the existence of identifiable communities and cultural areas in Malaysia based on religious and linguistic differences is undeniable. Diversity in language, lifestyle, style of living, customs, and traditions is easily visible.

Students' cultural diversity requires teachers to understand their culture, language, community background, level of achievement and socioeconomics. Teachers do not only serve as mentors of students in the academic field alone, but they also play a role in producing students who have an awareness of the cultural diversity that exists among them, as well as being able to interact with a multicultural society. Teachers' understanding of cultural diversity, as well as being able to use best practices in applying multicultural elements in teaching will make it easier for them to deliver the education curriculum and indirectly be able to convey the teachings of Islam itself.

In multicultural education, one of the challenges is to provide students with an equal education in order to promote social justice. An equal education takes care of the experiences of several groups. However, ideological resistance and teacher accountability, teachers render any shift in the curriculum to multiculturalism impossible since educators need to recognise the cultural aspects of their students in different cultures before teaching minority students. Teachers must also have appropriate skills to allow them to incorporate the diverse cultures of students into their classroom experience.

According to Arslan<sup>1</sup>, multicultural education incorporates the principle that all students should have a fair chance and right to learn, regardless of their social status, race, religion or gender characteristics. Schools should investigate the idea closely and teach all the ideas, values, rituals, and ceremonies to their students.

The purpose of understanding diversity is not only to promote academic achievement, but also to foster unity among students of different races<sup>2</sup>. It is hoped that this understanding would prevent

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<sup>1</sup> H Arslan, "Educational Policy vs. Culturally Sensitive Programs in Turkish Educational System," *International Journal of Progressive Education* 5, no. 2 (2009): 16.

<sup>2</sup> Ahmad Abdul Razaq et al., "Kepelbagaian Pelajar dan Sekolah: Satu Kajian Kes di Negeri Pahang," *Jurnal Pendidikan Malaysia* 35, no. 2 (2010): 87–95.

conflict and misunderstanding between citizens, in particular Malaysian citizens of different ethnic backgrounds. The diverse backgrounds of students in Malaysia's education system require citizens to understand others, ethnic groups and remain united in the hope of creating a harmonious society. Thus, the main purpose of this research is to discuss the Islamic view of this cultural diversity. It encompasses the concept of multicultural education, the benefits of multicultural education, and the cultural diversity from Islamic perspective.

### **A Brief History of Multicultural Education**

The historical roots of multicultural education lie in the civil rights movements of various historically oppressed groups. It grew after the second world war and is a movement dating back to the end of 1960s and the beginning of 1970s. Its back to the social actions of African Americans and other people of colour who challenged the practice of discrimination in public institutions during the civil rights struggles of the 1960s<sup>3</sup>.

In a multi-ethnicity group, the situation was a common example of social conflict since tolerance between different ethnicities is lower. Moreover, the problem has been exacerbated by the influx of multi-ethnic immigrants from Asia and the growing number of blacks from the South since the Great Depression. For almost two decades, the United States has been caught up with the predicament, but integration remains difficult to achieve. Among the pioneers, however, James Bank derived a solution to the corresponding situation. The concept and belief of multicultural education in the education system was founded by James Bank. James Banks, one of the scholars of multicultural education, investigates schools as a social system from a multicultural context. Banks views the concept of multicultural education must be based on the idea of "educational equality". Banks<sup>4</sup> argues that in order to maintain a "multicultural school environment", all aspects of the school must be examined and changed, including policies, teacher attitudes, teaching materials,

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<sup>3</sup> J. A. Banks, "Approaches to Multicultural Curriculum Reform," *Trotter Review* 3, no. 3 (1989):17-18.

<sup>4</sup> J. A. Banks, "Approaches to Multicultural Curriculum Reform," *Trotter Review* 3, no. 3 (1989): 17-18.

assessment methods, guidance, and teaching styles.

Banks<sup>5</sup> defined multiculturalism as: A philosophical position and movement that deems that the gender, ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of a pluralistic society should be reflected in all of the institutionalized structures of educational institutions, including the staff, the norms, the values, the curriculum, and the student body. This philosophical concept was the foundation of his idea of multicultural education, with the goal that all students who adopt the multicultural education mentality should be provided with a school and education environment having the equality of opportunities regardless of their races, ethnicity, languages, religions, genders, cultural backgrounds, sociocultural status, and sexual orientations. Therefore, as an ideal and a movement, multicultural education was the means and the end by which this philosophical concept could be realized<sup>6</sup>.

Because America has a call for unity in diversity, U.S. educators strongly believed that education was the only means of reacting to the call and incorporating the rapidly increasing composition of multi-ethnicity, and that schools were the means of uniting people. Multicultural education, on the other hand, has benefited most countries, but the acceptance and need for multicultural education differs between nations.

Since conceptualization has become common in all contemporary heterogeneous societies such as Britain, France, Canada, Sri Lanka, New Zealand, Indonesia, Nigeria and Malaysia<sup>7</sup>, each country has its own history and context in embracing and applying multicultural education to meet its needs.

Educational institutions are among the institutions that are specifically targeted because they are the most oppressive and hostile institutions of the ideals of racial equality. As a result, various reformist groups demanded that every student benefits from educational opportunities equally without being subjected to

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<sup>5</sup> J. A. Banks, "Approaches to Multicultural Curriculum Reform," *Trotter Review* 3, no. 3 (1989), 17–18.

<sup>6</sup> J. A. Banks, "Approaches to Multicultural Curriculum Reform," *Trotter Review* 3, no. 3 (1989), 17–18.

<sup>7</sup> Ibrahim Rozita, "Multiculturalism and Education in Malaysia," *Culture and Religion* 8, no. 2 (2007): 155–67.

racial, ethnic, social class, or gender discrimination<sup>8</sup>.

Women activists for example, pushed for the curriculum to include more minority narratives, experiences, and histories, and insisted on a re-examination of hiring practices. They challenged inequities in employment and educational opportunities as well as income, identifying education as a primary contributing factor in institutionalized and systemic sexism (i.e. the discrepancy low number of female administrators relative to the percentage of female teachers)<sup>9</sup>. They demanded, should be more consistent with the racial diversity in the country. The same goes for other groups like gay and lesbian groups, the elderly and people with disabilities, push for human rights and socio-political status powerfully and visibly.

In the late 1980s, new multicultural scholars such as Carl Grant, Geneva Gay, Christine Sleeter and Sonia Nieto emerged. They have provided a new and in-depth framework with the aim of social change and providing equal educational opportunities, they have developed an educational model built on a bedrock of equal opportunity, social justice, and critical thinking.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Concept of Multicultural Education**

Multicultural Education is a process in education based on the principles of freedom, justice, equality and human values. In countries of multiculturalism, multicultural education is a policy in the field of education that acknowledges, embraces and affirms individual disparities and equations linked to gender and ethnicity. Multicultural education is a nation's education program so that multicultural communities can participate in realizing an ideal democratic life for their nation. In a broader context, multicultural education aims to help put the country together in a democratic way, underlining the viewpoint of the diversity of populations of

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<sup>8</sup> J. A. Banks, "Multicultural Education: Goals, "Possibilities and Challenges." In *Multicultural Education in the 21st Century*, edited by C. F. Diaz (New York, NY: Addison-Wesley, 2001), 11–22.

<sup>9</sup> J. A. Banks, "Approaches to Multicultural Curriculum Reform," *Trotter Review* 3, no. 3 (1989), 17-18

<sup>10</sup> J. A. Banks, "Multicultural Education: Characteristics and Goals." In *Multicultural Education: Issues & Perspectives*, edited by James A Banks and C. McGee Banks (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2001), 15-30.

diverse cultures, ethnicities and cultural groups. In this process, an environment and equal opportunities are provided to all students<sup>11</sup> regardless of their ethnic, cultural, social class, gender and mental or physical abilities, and this is required in the teacher's understanding and implementation process<sup>12</sup>. As a process in education, multicultural education serves to apply these principles and values into the self and thinking of students so that they can be used as a practice in community life. When correctly implemented, it would help the society itself<sup>13</sup>. With adequate knowledge and expertise in the multi-cultural sector, teachers are required to have positive perceptions and attitudes towards the diversity of their students. Some research has indicated that teachers who are equipped with resources that fulfil the different cultural criteria of students would better embrace multicultural education<sup>14</sup>.

Schools should analyse the idea closely and teach all ideas, values, rituals, and ceremonies to their students<sup>15</sup>. Multicultural education for all students is an inclusive education regardless of religious belief or racial and cultural history. From this viewpoint, in the complexity of their communities, multicultural education is introduced to increase empathy, appreciation, comprehension, knowledge, and recognition of oneself and others. Meanwhile, a positive self-concept is also formed in personal students to enable them to understand the history, culture and contributions of various other ethnic groups in influencing the politics and culture

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<sup>11</sup> Christine E Sleeter, "Preparing Teachers for Culturally Diverse schools: Research and the Overwhelming Presence of Whiteness," *Journal of Teacher Education* 52, no. 2 (March 1, 2001): 94–106.

<sup>12</sup> Vilma Seeberg and Theresa Minick, "Enhancing Cross-Cultural Competence in Multicultural Teacher Education: Transformation in Global Learning," *International Journal of Multicultural Education* 14, no. 3 (2012).

<sup>13</sup> Patrick Parrish and Jennifer A. Linder-VanBerschoot, "Cultural Dimensions of Learning: Addressing the Challenges of Multicultural Instruction," *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning* 11, no. 2 (2010): 1–19.

<sup>14</sup> Tricia Delk, "The Efficacy of Multicultural Education Training in Teacher Credentialing Programs: A Descriptive Case Study" (University of Phoenix, Tempe, 2017), 40

<sup>15</sup> Arslan, "Educational Policy vs. Culturally Sensitive Programs in Turkish Educational System," 5

of the country. Therefore, Multicultural Education is an educational process that is based on the reality in a plural society as in Malaysia.

Multicultural education can help students learn and understand the principles and experiences of their own ethnic cultural background, foster understanding of different ethnicities and societies through exposure to other cultural viewpoints, raise awareness and reverence for the similarities and disparities between the various communities, and recognise, question and dispel ethnic/cultural stereotypes.

In this regard, multicultural education is suitable for the purpose of enhancing the ability to provide knowledge and skills to students to understand the cultural diversity that exists in the surrounding society. Cultural diversity in education can occur through various dimensions including intellectual intelligence, gender, race, ethnicity and family background. This diversity has implications for the style and culture of student learning. Therefore, in dealing with this diversity, teachers need to be wise in providing fair education (equity education) to students as intended by the government. The wisdom of teachers in managing learning situations and providing activities that can foster an appreciation of the values of unity, can create understanding, reduce polarization, and change students' perceptions of race relations especially in the current era of globalization<sup>16</sup>.

Therefore, as mentioned above, such a question should be raised: are the teachers competent in teaching classrooms consisting of different cultures? Here we present several perspectives on the success of multicultural education by Western scholars. As the curriculum implementer, according to Ladson-Billings<sup>17</sup>, teachers should have two skills in multicultural instruction; awareness, and the complex sensitivity of the students. This implies that teachers should be responsive to the classroom's diversity, including self-awareness and awareness of others as civilized human beings, whether they are diverse in terms of

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<sup>16</sup> Robert J. Holton, *Globalization and the Nation-State* (London: Macmillan, 1998).

<sup>17</sup> G. Ladson-Billings, "But That's Just Good Teaching." In *Sources-Notable Selections in Multicultural Education*, edited by J. Noel (United States of America: Dushkin/McGraw-Hill, 2000), 206–16.

religion, culture, race, language, students' economic status and their background. Multicultural education is not sufficient to become the responsibility of certain subject teachers, but it needs to be implemented integrally into various learning materials that are relevant to the subjects concerned. There is nothing wrong, students are invited to dialogue and learn to grow their sensitivity to cases of violence that occur. How students respond and attitudes to acts of violence that occur can be used as valuable input in the multicultural education-based learning process. Teachers need to give freedom to students to respond, so that they feel appreciated and treated as someone who is needed by their presence in the learning process.

### **The Benefits and Shortcomings of Multicultural Education**

The growth of cultural diversity has led educators, especially in public schools, to recognise the need to widen their awareness of multicultural education. The need for inclusive education is becoming extremely important with the immigration of multicultural communities.

Multicultural education exposes students to the various cultural ideals and views and aims to create understanding and acknowledgement of people's differences. The progress or failure of multicultural education depends on the successful training of teachers and administrators<sup>18</sup>. For their students to excel academically, these instructors must be proficient in the courses they teach<sup>19</sup>.

Multicultural Education introduces students to the diverse cultural ideals and traditions, and seeks to create awareness and recognition of disparities between people. Tolerance and recognition were implanted in people. Since it encourages contextual relevance, anti-bias schools, challenges students to think objectively without leaping to categorizations, cognitive skills and social action are formed, culminating in civically active individuals. The approach allows students to engage by

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<sup>18</sup> Earl Bradford Smith, "Approaches to Multicultural Education in Preservice Teacher Education: Philosophical Frameworks and Models for Teaching," *Multicultural Education* 16, no. 3 (2009): 45–50.

<sup>19</sup> John U. Ogbu, "Understanding Cultural Diversity and Learning," *Educational Researcher* 21, no. 8 (1992): 5–14.



maintaining their community and traditions unchanged and this helps them feel a sense of belonging. By being culturally aware practitioners, without any prejudice, students may help to assimilate without losing their cultural identities. It encourages the celebration of college identity and helps to sustain a sense of belonging and faith in students.

Nieto<sup>20</sup> explained that the rise of ethnic diversity has prompted many educators to realize the need for public schools to expand their awareness of multicultural education. The success or failure of multicultural education depends on teachers and administrators being trained effectively. In the courses they teach, these teachers must be qualified if their students are to be competitive academically. In addition, educators need to be non-biased and have an appreciation and sensitivity to the diverse cultures that are represented in the student population. Administrators should consider and enhance the growing diversity in society as it relates to race and ethnicity in the curriculum<sup>21</sup>. Once teachers and administrators understand the learning needs of students and understand how these expectations will vary from the needs of the dominant culture's students, then the actual learning takes place<sup>22</sup>. That is, as "we really see, know the students we must teach"<sup>23</sup>, we're beginning to create a change in the life of these students. To this purpose, teacher training programs are responsible for developing programs that are acceptable and in accordance with the expectations of these teacher candidates. These initiatives need not only challenge teacher candidates to abandon their comfort zones, but the programs themselves need to analyse and broaden their knowledge and understanding of the different cultures that these teacher candidates may represent<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> Sonia Nieto, *Affirming Diversity: The Socio-Political Context of Multicultural Education*, 4th ed. (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2004), 40.

<sup>21</sup> Taher A. Razik and Austin D. Swanson, *Fundamental Concepts of Educational Leadership*, 2nd ed. (Buffalo: Pearson, 2001), 120

<sup>22</sup> Osman Özturgut, "Understanding Multicultural Education," *Current Issues in Education* 14, no. 2 (2011), 1–11.

<sup>23</sup> L. Delpit, *Other People's Children* (New York: The New Press., 1995), 183.

<sup>24</sup> Arnetta F. Ball, "Preparing Teachers for Diversity: Lessons Learned from the US and South Africa," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 16, no. 4 (2000): 491–509; Geneva Gay, "Importance of Multicultural Ed.Pdf," *Decational Leadership*, no. January (2004), 30–35.

Schugurensky<sup>25</sup> concluded that as cultural diversity and global tolerance are encouraged within the framework of inclusive education, conventional elitism (of providing a Eurocentric curriculum) and its limitations would be overcome.

However, in a multicultural classroom, students of diverse racial, linguistic and social backgrounds learn together from the same program, making it challenging for all to understand the topic. There is a risk that teachers can fail to work out how thoroughly the students understand the content. Because of not all students come from the same culture, this causes a language barrier. People from other communities can be non-confrontative, submissive or otherwise indirect. Teachers in multicultural classes must be trained to cope with the disagreements and miscommunications that appear to occur between students from various backgrounds that have different ideals, ideologies, customs, assumptions, behavioural habits, etc.

Bernstein<sup>26</sup> argued that multicultural schooling hinders the efforts of assimilation and produces a divided culture. Pon<sup>27</sup> claimed that cultural competence reinforces an outdated understanding of culture which is a form of new racism. Cultural competence is reminiscent of new racism by differentiating non-whites by deploying modernist and absolutist views of culture, while not using racialist language.

### **Multicultural Education and Sustainability**

People's knowledge in sustainable interactions with the land is viewed as critical to living in harmony with the environmental sustainability while also ensuring the cultural and economic survival of peoples. Furthermore, if sustainable development is to be achieved, people and nations of all cultures must be able to live in harmony and solidarity. Obtaining this goal is critical to sustainable development for advocates of gender equity, as it ensures that women are equally valued for their vital contributions

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<sup>25</sup> Daniel Schugurensky, "The Eight Curricula of Multicultural Citizenship Education," *Multicultural Education* 10, no. 1 (2002), 2–6.

<sup>26</sup> Richard Bernstein, *Dictatorship of Virtue: Multiculturalism and the Battle for America's Future*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 250

<sup>27</sup> Gordon Pon, "Cultural Competency as New Racism: An Ontology of Forgetting," *Journal of Progressive Human Services* 20, no. 1 (2009), 59–71.

to local and national development, as well as raising their children in accordance with sustainable living values and principles.

Due to the inherent problems of a unique diverse context, teaching in multicultural classrooms is demanding as a response to the more competitive global character of today's environmental space, with cooperative and collaborative interventions and cross-cultural understanding. Opportunities and challenges in multicultural classrooms' teaching and learning situations are shared foundations in underpinning the performance to go beyond the rhetoric of complicated problems like gender, harmony, race, and identity<sup>28</sup>. As a result of the rapid acceleration of diversity issues, a multicultural teaching approach has been significantly expanded in response to specific obstacles. Expanding the multicultural education approach, in this perspective, is important in order to adapt the specific ways of resolving challenges with appropriate means. The nature of broader difficulties surrounding the learning and teaching setting is anticipated to result in the creation of solutions for a diversified setting<sup>29</sup>. To address these issues, larger benefits of using learning arrangements within pedagogical skills must be promoted among a varied group of students. The distinguishing aspect is that it continues the key tasks outlined in each country's higher education system.

Furthermore, issues like as the emergence of current multiculturalism attitudes pose a challenge. Furthermore, refusing to accept commonality might contribute to injustice and inequity among students from various backgrounds<sup>30</sup>. As a result, requiring compliance is necessary to ensure that respect underpins today's educational system's relationships among varied students. When dealing with ethnic issues in the classroom, it is important to recognise difference by requiring mutual acceptance and tolerance. This seeks to provide an opportunity to apply the fundamental tenets in a practical setting. Multicultural awareness should include a reciprocal commitment to consider the entire context of

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<sup>28</sup> J. A. Banks, "Diversity and Citizenship Education in Multicultural Nations." *Multicultural Education Review* 1, no. 1 (2009), 1–28.

<sup>29</sup> D Killick, *Developing Intercultural Practice: Academic Development in a Multicultural and Globalizing World* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2017), 53.

<sup>30</sup> Laurence J. Kirmayer, "The Politics of Diversity: Pluralism, Multiculturalism and Mental Health," *Transcultural Psychiatry* 56, no. 6 (2019): 1119–38.

the multicultural society situation. This significance will allow global society to continue to use a strategic approach with an ideal procedure in order to keep the promise of social peace<sup>31</sup>. The ability to mutually grasp diversity concerns through intercultural recognition should be ingrained, along with the ability to continue to apply suitable cultural divergence manners. This initiative necessitates open-minded attitudes among students from varied backgrounds, for example, by allowing them to express multiple perspectives on diversity issues based on their distinct experiences and viewpoints. As a result, adopting a multicultural perspective would make room for other voices to appreciate diversity by scrutinising the validity of beliefs that can lead to injustice. As a result, bias and discrimination against students in such ways will heighten awareness of these challenging issues. As a result, acquiring acceptable attitudes and abilities governed by the strategies is essential in order to give them with succinct and acceptable solutions. Critical evaluation is essential while responding to the needs of diverse students in the context of a multicultural classroom, in order to prevent biases and ethnocentrism. Behaviors for completing such skills must be developed<sup>32</sup>. In a multicultural curriculum, it is critical for teachers to allow more participation with students from various backgrounds while maintaining a variety of pedagogical features.

### **Multicultural Education from Islamic Perspective**

As mentioned in Qur'an verses 256 chapter 2, Islam provides for freedom of religion for mankind. Islam teaches its adherents not to discriminate against each other and to give equal rights to anyone regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, and so on. Allah SWT never differentiates his servants and just the degree of piety renders them different. For a human being, the cultural diversity of nations such as language, way of life, faith and dress habits and realistic values are indicators of civilization. In Islamic teaching, the presence of

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<sup>31</sup> Jungmin Kwon, "Intercultural Learning in the Home Environment: Children's Experiences as Part of a Homestay Host Family," *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 19, no. 3 (May 27, 2020): 274–86.

<sup>32</sup> Yvonne Leeman and Erna Van Koeven, "New Immigrants. An Incentive for Intercultural Education?," *Education Inquiry* 10, no. 3 (July 3, 2019): 189–207.

race or ethnicity, culture and the diversity of ways of life have been noted. Whereas in language, it also has a socio-cultural relationship. This means that cultural influences are affected by an ethnic language. For instance, the prophets, as mentioned in chapters 14 verses 4, received a revelation in their own ethnic languages. Allah SWT says:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانٍ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ فَيُضِلَّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ  
وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

Ibrāhīm 14:4

Translation: And We did not send any messenger except [speaking] in the language of his people to state clearly for them, and Allah sends astray [thereby] whom He wills and guides whom He wills. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.

A symbol of the greatness of Allah is also the presence of several languages. It is necessary to integrate the meaning of Islamic teachings into every language. Moreover, as recounted in the Quran about the supremacy and gain of the prophet Sulaiman, who is fluent in the language of animals and spirits, it is an advantage for a teacher who works as a preacher whether he or she has mastered more than one language. The abilities in many languages will assist preachers in culture of people and nation.

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as the greatest teacher, has used several methods that can celebrate the diversity of students while providing education to his companions and those who have just learned Islam in his time. He celebrated the differences of each individual learner. He interacts with each individual learner based on his (individual) intellectual ability.

Adnan<sup>33</sup> stressed that in addition to being a teacher, the teacher also serves as *Mu'allim*, *Murabbi*, *Mu'addib* and *Murshid*, even as a preacher to students and society. Teachers are the communicators of knowledge in implementing multicultural education. Therefore, the skills of teachers as preachers to non-

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<sup>33</sup> Mohamad Azrien Mohamed Adnan, "Değer Öğretim Yaklaşımı: Karakter ve Değer Eğitim Yaklaşımı ve Uygulaması (Value Teaching Approach: Character and Value Educational Approach and Application)." In *Karakter ve Değerler Eğitimi (Character and Values Education)*, edited by Bayram Özer (Ankara: Pegem Akademi, 2019), 165–80.

Muslim students are very much needed. The teaching of Islamic education needs to emphasize the educational aspect across the curriculum by focusing on the multicultural aspects, either directly or indirectly.

In multicultural education, a teacher is not only expected to master and be prepared to professionally teach subjects or courses that are offered. Moreover, a teacher must still be willing to instill the fundamental ideals of multicultural education such as equality, humanism, and pluralism or instill theological values in students that are egalitarian. In essence, the performance arising from school is not only knowledgeable in conjunction with the practiced disciplines, but also willing to apply religious principles and recognize and appreciate the nature of other religions and beliefs. Accordingly, the teacher can practice his expertise, and cooperate with those core principles of multicultural education includes theological lesson to students and institutions.

Islam recognizes the dignity of every human being regardless of ethnicity. The diversity and difference are not a factor that drives people to be divided and hostile, but should be to get to know each other, socialize with each other and help each other to peace and prosperity of living together can be achieved.

Islamic education is seen as a medium to unite the cultural diversity of students. The goals of Islamic education is to produce students who have the following characteristics: strong and steadfast faith and devotion as a fortress of self-resilience, mastering the knowledge of *fardu 'ain and fardu kifayah*, as a guidance and practice of life, performing the demands of *fardu 'ain and fardu kifayah* to fulfil the responsibility of worship and moral responsibility as a complementary pillar of self and culture.

The integration of society is one of the important aspects brought by Prophet Muhammad SAW during his lifetime, as he was the one who built a peaceful society in Islamic Era where there were Muslims, Arabs, Christians and Jews living together. The difference and diversity experienced by the Prophet SAW at that particular time was a perfect reference for mankind, especially Muslims who were living within a multicultural and multi-religious society. Although men were created with many differences, they originally came from the same lineage and can be distinguished only by religion and their piety, as highlighted by

the Prophet SAW:

إِنَّ أَنْسَابَكُمْ هَذِهِ لَيْسَتْ بِسَبَابٍ عَلَى أَحَدٍ ، وَإِنَّمَا أَنْتُمْ وَلَدُ آدَمَ ، طَفُّ  
الصَّاعِ لَمْ تَمْلُئُوهُ ، لَيْسَ لِأَحَدٍ عَلَى أَحَدٍ فَضْلٌ إِلَّا بِالدِّينِ أَوْ عَمَلٍ صَالِحٍ ،  
حَسَبُ الرَّجُلِ أَنْ يَكُونَ فَاحِشًا بَدِيًّا ، بَخِيلًا جَبَانًا

Translation: “Indeed your lineage are not insult upon one person, because all of you are sons of Adam, no one from you are preferred or better than one another except due to religion or piety, and it is enough for (destruction of) men to be incredibly lewdly, miserly and obscenely”<sup>34</sup>.

Unity is the first and foremost principle that emphasized by Islam in integrating of society as explained in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW):

عَنْ أَبِي نَضْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي وَسْطِ أَيَّامِ التَّشْرِيقِ فَقَالَ يَا  
أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَلَا إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ وَاحِدٌ وَإِنَّ آبَاءَكُمْ وَاحِدٌ أَلَا لَا فَضْلَ لِعَرَبِيٍّ عَلَى أَعْجَمِيٍّ وَلَا  
لِعَجَمِيٍّ عَلَى عَرَبِيٍّ وَلَا لِأَحْمَرَ عَلَى أَسْوَدَ وَلَا أَسْوَدَ عَلَى أَحْمَرَ إِلَّا بِالتَّقْوَى أُبَلِّغْتُ قَالُوا  
بَلَّغَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Abū Nadrah reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said during the middle of the day at the end of the pilgrimage, “O people, your Lord is one and your father Adam is one. There is no favor of an Arab over a foreigner, nor a foreigner over an Arab, and neither white skin over black skin, nor black skin over white skin, except by righteousness. Have I not delivered the message?” They said, “The Messenger of Allah has delivered the message.”<sup>35</sup>

As the order to unite and the prohibition of division among others are stated in the Qur'an, the Messenger SAW did not remain silent about the importance of unity and the danger of division in society. The Messenger has given a serious warning to those who are attempting to harm some civilization. In addition, the Prophet SAW explained that the people who are closest to his God are the

<sup>34</sup> Hadith No. 17048 narrated by Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, See “Musnad Ahmad”.

<sup>35</sup> Hadith No. 23489 narrated Ahmad bin Hanbal, See “Musnad Ahmad”.

ones who protect the welfare of society. In order to preserve harmony between societies, the danger of division must be emphasised because division can undermine civilization and contribute to devastation. Unity and brotherhood are intertwined. Brotherhood refers to the relationship between two or more individuals who work together, coordinate, behave in the interests of each other, work together and struggle together for their life. It is a representation of harmony that integrates international ties based on the idea of civilization. The word Brotherhood underscored in Islam can be used in a wider concept. The foundation of this brotherhood is not simply a bond of blood or race, but a conviction that all adherents are brothers and sisters. In favour of the principle of brotherhood stated in the Qur'an, the Prophet SAW has demonstrated that brotherhood is not only based on faith, but also on the part and aspect of faith. The Messenger is earnestly trying to establish and preserve good ties between Muslims, regardless of history, descent and social class, by stressing that Allah meets the needs of a person willing to meet the needs of his brothers.

### **Conclusion**

The Islamic Education Curriculum has embraced the values of purity and superior ambition in accordance with the philosophy of national education. The ideology and ideals brought on by Islamic education derived from the Quran and the Sunnah and form the foundation of human society and civilisation. The function of the Islamic Education Curriculum is to improve behaviour, skills, personality and outlook on life as a servant of Allah for the development of self, community, the environment and the country. It must be valued and grasped by educators so that this aim can be nurtured in the minds of students. Therefore, in order to fulfil the purposes of the theory of Islamic education, the idea of teaching Islamic education is to cover the theoretical and practical implications of a combination of different teaching techniques and approaches to teaching Islamic education.

In order to promote multiculturalism in education, we need a strong definition of what we understand from 'multicultural education. Via a simple concept, we will make the appropriate policy adjustments. After making the requisite policy changes, we



need leaders with good intercultural leadership skills to articulate the idea of multicultural education. The task of identifying multicultural education, making the requisite policy changes and finding a representative to articulate it can be done by the serious and sincere execution of each of these steps. The strong emphasis on the mastery of other communities within multiculturalism is overambitious and self-satisfied, for lack of a better term. Understanding and accepting other cultural points of view and behaviour is important for the development of intercultural understanding. But before we start to 'transform' the universe, we need to consider 'why I do what I do.' Whoever you are, wherever you are, wherever you want to do, it all starts with an interpretation of 'I'. The fundamental challenge is to be able to recognise and value the diversity and complexity of plurality and cultural identities. Knowledge of one's own assumptions, prejudices and misconceptions is a first step in being able to communicate positively and learn from others. The meaning of intercultural learning lies in this process <sup>36</sup>.

Multicultural education can assist students in recognising and understanding their own ethnic cultural heritage's values and experiences, fostering openness to different ethnicities and cultures by exposure to other cultural perspectives, gaining knowledge and appreciation for the similarities and disparities within diverse communities, and defining, questioning, and dispelling ethnic/cultural stereotyping.

Creating social cohesion among students is a necessity for 21st century life. Students need to learn to understand, accept, tolerate and respect each other in order to reduce conflict. Therefore, the education system needs to play an effective role as a socialization agent to foster personality and mutual awareness among students. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the MOE to provide quality and competent trained teachers in terms of the practice of teaching professionalism values from knowledge and understanding as well as teaching and learning skills based on Malaysian Teacher Standards. The role of the teacher is not only as a communicator of knowledge but also as a guide and soul-

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<sup>36</sup> Isabel Ferreira Martins, "Learning to Live Together: The Contribution of Intercultural Education," *European Journal of Education* 43, no. 2 (2008): 197–206, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1465-3435.2008.00350.x>.

maker. Teacher leadership for prosperity, unity and national integration is not only needed in the curriculum but also in co-curricular activities. Achieving the goals of the National Education curriculum in creating social cohesion depends on how teachers handle the teaching and learning process in imparting knowledge, values and skills based on the learning outcomes that students should achieve.

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