



## A Multicultural Islamic Religious Education Curriculum Development

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### ABSTRACT

Curriculum development is often based on inappropriate strategies, due to a lack of comprehensive understanding of objectives, starting points, methods and functions. This study examines the development of multicultural Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in Da'wa Management Study Program (Prodi MD), Faculty of Da'wah and communication of Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University Yogyakarta. Type of qualitative research, with the method of Case Studies (case study). The approach used is Curriculum Development. The theory used as a framework for analysis is The Theory of Grass-Roots Initiative. Research findings show that the Da'wa Management Program the faculty of Da'wa Management and communication UIN (State Islamic University) Sunan Kalijaga developed a multicultural PAI curriculum in response to the development and needs of the community. Therefore, curriculum development is centered on the field experience of the academic community, both educators and learners. The paradigm used during the development process is naturalist-inclusive, where the material, learning process, and output are directed towards one goal, namely students who are tolerant, moderate, and able to bridge social gaps, both in the classroom and in society and industry. This article contributes to providing guidance for integrating multicultural values into the Islamic Religious Education curriculum, in order to create inclusive and responsive learning towards diversity.

Keywords: Multicultural PAI, Curriculum Development, Da'wa Management Program.

### ABSTRAK

*Pengembangan kurikulum sering kali didasarkan pada strategi yang kurang tepat, lantaran kurangnya pemahaman komprehensif tentang tujuan, titik awal, metode dan fungsi. Penelitian ini mengkaji pengembangan kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) multikultural di Program Studi Manajemen Dakwah (Prodi MD), Fakultas Dakwah dan Komunikasi Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. Jenis penelitian kualitatif, dengan metode studi kasus (case study). Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah pengembangan kurikulum. Teori yang digunakan sebagai kerangka analisa adalah teori Grass-Roots Initiative. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan, Prodi Manajemen Dakwah Fakultas Dakwah dan Komunikasi UIN Sunan Kalijaga melakukan pengembangan kurikulum PAI multikultural sebagai respon terhadap perkembangan dan kebutuhan masyarakat. Karenanya, pengembangan kurikulum berpusat pada pengalaman lapangan sivitas akademik, baik pendidik maupun peserta didik. Paradigma yang digunakan selama proses pengembangan adalah naturalis-inklusif, di mana materi, proses pembelajaran, dan output diarahkan pada satu tujuan, yaitu mahasiswa yang toleran, moderat, dan mampu menjembatani kesenjangan sosial, baik di ruang kelas maupun di masyarakat dan industri. Artikel ini berkontribusi dalam memberikan panduan untuk mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai multikulturalisme dalam kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam, guna menciptakan pembelajaran yang inklusif dan responsif terhadap keragaman.*

*Kata Kunci: PAI Multikultural, Pengembangan Kurikulum, Prodi Manajemen Dakwah.*

## INTRODUCTION

The effective development of educational curricula necessitates the implementation of well-defined “top-down” strategies. The lack of such strategies frequently arises from ambiguity concerning objectives, foundational elements, methodologies, and functions. The functions in curriculum development can be categorized into two types: external and user-oriented (Connelly, 1972). External developments are concerned with the articulation of theoretical frameworks related to society, knowledge, educators, and learners, and the translation of these frameworks into cohesive curriculum materials. Consequently, each conceptual framework will function as a clearly defined and readily available alternative for educators (Marsh, 2009). Conversely, user-oriented developments focus on designing learning environments that incorporate theoretical concepts while accommodating diverse backgrounds and conditions, thereby facilitating the practical application of these concepts within the classroom setting (Jones & Wipond, 1990). Adopting these strategies systematically promotes continuous improvement in curricula within educational institutions.

Equally critical to the issue of function is the necessity for an appropriate strategy in the formulation of curriculum objectives. Curriculum objectives must be critically evaluated throughout development phase to ensure they are realistic and achievable in practice (Hussain, Dogar, Azeem, & Shakoor, 2011). This critical evaluation requires well indicators to enhance the validity and applicability of the results. This indicator refers to objective considerations aligned with the interests of the organization or educational institution (Valverde, 1998). Such considerations involve systematic feedback collection mechanisms that facilitate curriculum revisions. These steps are essential due to the significant relationship between the curriculum design and development processes (Sutcliffe, 1992). In essence, a valid and applicable evaluation product is defined by its capacity to address specific, concrete issues effectively.

The objectives of a multicultural Islamic religious education curriculum have traditionally been framed as intentional efforts to cultivate student competencies in alignment with the values of *at-Ta'aruf* (mutual understanding), *at-Tawassuth* (moderation), *at-Tasamub* (tolerance), *at-Ta'awun* (mutual assistance), and *at-Tawazun* (harmony). Evidence of successful attainment of the objectives of the multicultural PAI (Islamic Religious Education) curriculum is demonstrated through students' demonstration of competencies that reflect multicultural Islamic values (Ramdhan, 2019). These competencies are not merely regarded as educational targets but as the ultimate goals of the curriculum. Therefore, the term “competency-based curriculum” is understood to refer to a curriculum emphasizing competency development, typically categorized into stages of achievement, including basic competencies, core competencies, and graduation standards (Zekeri, 2004).

Due to the lack of an effective “top-down” strategy, the objectives of the multicultural PAI curriculum—designed to foster student competencies in *at-Ta'aruf* (mutual understanding), *at-Tawassuth* (moderation), *at-Tasamub* (tolerance), *at-Ta'awun* (mutual assistance), and *at-Tawazun* (harmony)—are often perceived as inadequate. To address this, the curriculum content must evolve from merely presenting facts, theories, and generalizations to integrating moral messages, procedural knowledge, and practical skills

(Emes & Cleveland-Innes, 2003). Furthermore, the theoretical framework should cover not only educational psychology but also social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions, thereby enabling students to engage as active participants in society, the nation, and the global community (Thompson, Jungst, Colletti, Licklider, & Benna, 2003). The learning process should also align closely with social realities, replacing competitive and egocentric environments with collective and supportive learning approaches within a positive atmosphere (Yusuf, 2019).

The alignment between the multicultural PAI curriculum and contemporary social realities has emerged as a critical perspective, necessitating adherence to this foundational principle in curriculum development. However, a fundamental inconsistency persists in the application of these principles. Numerous studies on multicultural PAI curriculum development, whether intentionally or inadvertently, propose alternatives that contradict the core views of multiculturalism. For example, Islamic educational institutions such as madrasahs, which embody distinctive features of Islamic education, often face challenges in adapting to curriculum development and globalization. Research indicates that effective multicultural curriculum development should focus on competencies related to embracing diversity, fostering mutual trust, cultivating understanding, maintaining respect, promoting open-mindedness, valuing interdependence, and facilitating non-violent conflict resolution and reconciliation (Rifan, 2022).

The apparently ideal alternatives discussed have, in practice, contributed to social fragmentation that can be seen from the division in the management of educational institutions within Salafi Muslim communities. Since the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center, the Salafi community has frequently been depicted as a potential source of terrorism. In response to public perception and stigmatization, some Salafi educational institutions have undergone significant reforms to modernize and professionalize their approaches. These institutions have adopted national curricula and integrated them with their religious curricula, which has not only garnered official recognition but also attracted the interest of upper-middle-class families seeking to enrol their children in these transformed Salafi schools (Muthohirin, Kamaludin, & Mukhlis, 2022).

Consequently, the integration of multiculturalism into the curriculum of Islamic educational institutions appears not as a natural evolution stemming from an organic process but rather as an 'imposition' influenced by external political and structural pressures. The central issue lies in the problematic methodology employed in the development of the multicultural PAI curriculum, which fails to encourage a genuine understanding of multiculturalism within the community. This failure has given rise to what is termed the "hidden curriculum" (Giroux & Penna, 1979), where fundamentalist ideologies are transmitted through educational practices characterized by exclusive and protective patterns, despite their incongruence with the principles of peace education (Muhammad, Ruswandi, Nurmila, & Zakiyah, 2023). The appearance of this hidden curriculum is closely associated with intense globalization efforts and external pressures constraining educational choices. Globalization, in particular, contributes to the moral erosion of the nation and exacerbates the disconnection between the quality of national education and societal expectations (Mahmudah, 2017).

Previous research has predominantly emphasized theoretical approaches, such as the significance of psychological factors in curriculum development (Yusuf, Achmad, 2019), the value of local contexts and cultural considerations (Qomarudin, 2019), and the role of culture as a foundational philosophy, theoretical framework, model, and component in the development of a multicultural PAI curriculum (Mansur, 2016). Additionally, earlier studies have explored various objectives of multicultural PAI curriculum development, such as promoting tolerance, empathy, mutual trust, and mutual respect among students (Tang, 2023), as well as fostering Pancasila values and upholding principles of justice and democracy (Muzaini, 2023).

Research on the multicultural Islamic PAI curriculum development utilizing a grassroots model remains relatively limited. In contrast, the grassroots model acts as a complementary approach to the top-down administrative model (Sismanto, 2022). This discrepancy indicates that the involvement of external stakeholders such as educators, instructional materials, and learning systems does not fully embrace the organic initiatives of students. Currently, research on curriculum development approaches intersecting with the grassroots model has been conducted, as exemplified by the study of Indri Via Yunita Sari, et.al; however, it primarily concentrates on general PAI curriculum development and have not specifically addressed the dimensions of multicultural PAI curriculum (Sari, Kamila, & Nurkholis, 2023).

Theoretical investigations into the grassroots model approach and its application in curriculum development have been extensively documented, encompassing general and Islamic education contexts. The grassroots model has been employed in diverse educational settings, including the development of school curricula (Wati, Siti, & Adiyono, 2022), high school curricula (Musaadah, et al., 2023), Madrasah Diniyah and Madrasah Formal curricula (Arifin, 2024), and vocational programs in higher education (Erlianti, Muzayyin Maq, Susianto, Nasar, & Fathurohman, 2023). Therefore, employing the grassroots model to develop a multicultural PAI curriculum represents a significant advancement in the research field, contributing to a deeper understanding of multicultural PAI curriculum development.

This study investigates the development of a multicultural PAI curriculum in the Da'wa Management Program at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, Universitas Islam Negeri (State Islamic Univeristy) Sunan Kalijaga or also famously known as UIN SUKA, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, aiming to propose an appropriate 'top-down' strategy that aligns with multicultural goals and is applicable to social contexts. This research is significant given that prior studies suggest that the implementation of multicultural PAI curriculum often seems imposed rather than emerging from a genuine societal need, potentially functioning as a political strategy to mitigate negative public perceptions.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative methodology (Glesne, 2016) to explore the substantive meanings and values associated with a multicultural PAI curriculum development. Qualitative research is essential in identifying effective strategies for aligning curriculum content with the concrete needs of the community while mitigating potential risks. Employing a case study approach, this research examines how and why specific phenomena

occur, thereby facilitating a detailed observation of contemporary issues (Merriam, 1988). The case under investigation is the multicultural PAI curriculum development within the Da'wa Management Program at the Faculty of Da'wa and Communication, Universitas Islam Negeri (State Islamic Univeristy) Sunan Kalijaga (later called as UIN SUKA), Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

This study employs a curriculum development approach. Wendy Stubbs and Jan Schapper contend that in higher education institutions, curriculum development has predominantly focused on sustainability. Nevertheless, an equally significant approach is the “grassroots initiative,” typically driven by individual faculties. Such individually initiated curriculum development can also achieve sustainability, particularly in the absence of integrated or mainstreamed programs (Stubbs & Schapper, 2011).

Stubbs and Schapper advocate for all academic faculties to prioritize sustainability in curriculum development, irrespective of prevailing conditions. They argue that while the impact of an individual effort may appear limited, even minor contributions can collectively effect meaningful change. Their recommendations are notably inclusive and, from the researcher's perspective, provide a viable alternative amidst the growing prevalence of fundamentally counterproductive multicultural curriculum proposals.

The grassroots initiative theory has been extensively developed by various scholars as a framework for analysing curriculum development. (O'donoghue, Board, & McNaught, 1991) note that external support and continuous dialogue about the curriculum, emerging issues, and daily classroom activities can facilitate reconstructive change at the local level. Consequently, curriculum development can be guided by both external support and dialogue, as well as by phenomena occurring within the classroom setting.

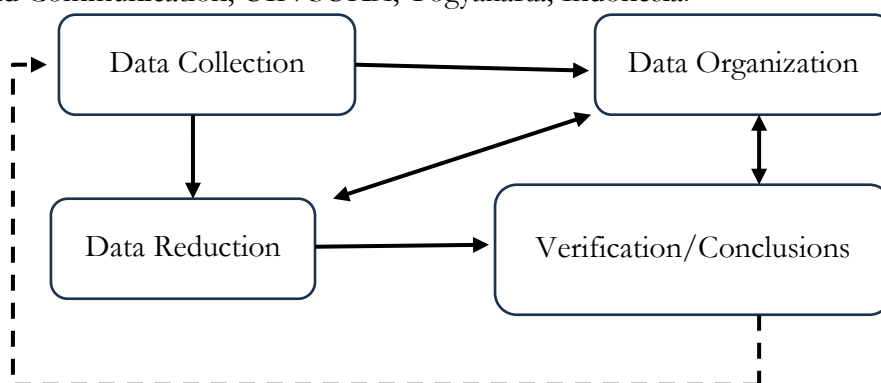
O'Donoghue et al. highlight the importance of external support and ongoing dialogue in curriculum development. However, Chris M. Anson emphasizes the significance of educators' attitudes towards external feedback. According to (Anson, 2021), the manner in which instructors engage with their own curriculum implementation is critical, particularly when subjected to objective and impartial external evaluation. External evaluators play a key role in assessing the effectiveness and shortcomings of instructors' implementation practices.

Anson's perspective complements this view by asserting that instructors, as authoritative figures, should actively engage with and respond to feedback from external evaluations. However, Anson's approach is more aligned with a “top-down” strategy, in contrast to O'Donoghue et al.'s preference for a “bottom-up” strategy, as described by Roche Stephen (Roche, 2017). Both approaches, fundamentally, are consistent with the grassroots initiative paradigm, involving integrating feedback from external sources, whether by emphasizing external input or by focusing on the attitudes and receptiveness of internal stakeholders, such as lecturers.

Given that this study utilizes a field-based methods, the data collection method employed is interviews (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Also, due to the primary focus on curriculum development, the informants selected are individuals holding authoritative positions, such as faculty members and administrative officials. Meanwhile, the primary data sources for this research are the statements of faculty members and administrative officials



involved within the Management of Da’wa (abbreviated as MD) Program at the Faculty of Da’wa and Communication, UIN SUKA, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.



**Flowchart 1. Miles and Huberman’s Data Analysis Technique**

Following data collection, the researcher applies the data analysis framework proposed by (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The process begins with data collection, followed by data condensation or reduction, which entails organizing the data to enhance alignment with the research objectives. Subsequently, the researcher conducts a detailed data analysis and draws conclusions based on the findings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Muhammad Irfai Muslim, a pivotal contributor to Multicultural Islamic Education and currently serving as the Secretary of the MD (Management of Da’wa) Program, has made a significant assertion regarding the adherence of multicultural PAI (Islamic Religious Education) to the UIN curriculum guidelines since the implementation of the 2013 curriculum. He elucidates that one notable outcome of this is the introduction of a specialized course titled ‘Multicultural Da’wa.’ This assertion not only provides valuable information but also underscores a substantial and enduring evolution in religious education in Indonesia, particularly about the development of the MD program.

Academic programs in this field have progressively faced the necessity to revise and adapt curricula in response to shifting societal developments and needs. In 2013, recognizing the increasing importance of diversity and intercultural dialogue, UIN instituted a mandate to enhance the multicultural dimension within Islamic education. This led to the implementation of curricular guidelines requiring all programs, including the MD program, to integrate multicultural elements into their curricula. In alignment with this mandate, the MD program at the Faculty of Da’wa and Communication, UIN SUKA, not only complied with but also proactively addressed this directive by incorporating the course ‘Multicultural Da’wa’ as a core component of its curriculum. This course provides students with a platform to investigate various cultural dimensions, traditions, and beliefs within the framework of da’wa.

Da’wa, fundamentally aimed at spreading Islamic teachings, transcends mere transfer of religious dogma. In the Islamic Studies program, a multicultural approach is employed to foster students’ understanding and appreciation of societal diversity. Students are trained to become effective communicators and agents of change, enabling to engage across various

cultural, ethnic, and religious contexts. The 'Multicultural Da'wa' course integrates classroom instruction with experiential learning, including fieldwork, group discussions, and comprehensive research projects. This pedagogical framework equips students to become inclusive and empathetic leaders, adept at bridging social divides and promoting intercultural harmony.

Nonetheless, the implementation of this course encounters several challenges. Ensuring that the curriculum remains pertinent and that the content is both inclusive and current requires ongoing effort. Effective execution also necessitates close collaboration between faculty and students to facilitate open and constructive dialogue. Muhammad Irfai Muslim posits that the future of multicultural PAI within the Islamic Studies program must not only address these challenges but also utilize them as opportunities to reform educational paradigms towards more inclusive and practical methodologies.

Muhammad Irfai Muslim highlights two critical considerations regarding the challenges and opportunities for future development in the context of an increasingly multicultural era. Firstly, a prominent challenge for the MD program is facilitating direct, practical experiences reflecting the multicultural realities of contemporary society. To address this, students' encouragement to engage in field visits to minority communities is essential. Such experiences would enable students to gain a deeper understanding of the diverse cultural practices, traditions, and beliefs present within Indonesia.

Direct field practice not only offers students practical, real-world experience but also exposes them to the complexities and opportunities of proselytizing in a multicultural society. Engaging with minority communities allows students to acquire in-depth insights into the needs, aspirations, and challenges these groups are facing. Such experiences are instrumental in fostering a comprehensive understanding and cultivating relevant skills necessary for effective multicultural da'wa.

Second, a potential area for future development within the MD program is collaborative projects focused on the implementation of multicultural da'wa. Through such projects, students can be actively engaged in designing, implementing, and evaluating the da'wa programs addressing key aspects of multiculturalism. These collaborative projects can involve partnerships among students, faculty, and community members in designing and executing inclusive and impactful da'wa activities. For example, students could organize dialogic and participatory da'wa events, such as cross-cultural discussion groups, cultural exchanges, or diversity training for local communities.

According to Muhammad Irfai Muslim, through such projects, students will not only gain practical experience in applying the concepts of multicultural da'wa but also make a tangible contribution to the development of a more inclusive and harmonious society. They will learn to become visionary and innovative leaders in spreading da'wa messages, relevant to the existing social, cultural, and political contexts (Muslim, 2024).

Andy Dermawan, a lecturer of the Multicultural Da'wa course within the MD program at the Faculty of Da'wa and Communication, UIN SUKA, is one of the individuals actively involved in designing and implementing an innovative and inclusive curriculum. In his interview, he revealed that the Multicultural Da'wa course has been an integral part of the curriculum at UIN SUKA's MD program since 2016. Andy Dermawan also emphasized that

the essence of multicultural education lies not only in theoretical understanding but, more importantly, in its application within society. Therefore, the approach used in teaching the Multicultural Da'wa course places greater emphasis on practical experience rather than solely on theory. He noted that approximately 60% of the total class time is allocated to practical activities, while the remaining 40% is devoted to theoretical content.

Andy Dermawan used a pedagogical approach which demonstrates a commitment to equipping students not only with theoretical knowledge but also with practical skills necessary for applying multicultural values in their daily lives and da'wa efforts. By emphasizing practical activities, students are provided with opportunities to engage directly with communities of diverse cultures, traditions, and beliefs. These experiential activities enable students to test and enhance their skills in communication, adaptation, and collaboration with individuals and groups from varied backgrounds. Furthermore, students are trained to confront and address challenges, developing solutions tailored to the complexities of a multicultural context.

Andy Dermawan underscores the importance of ensuring that the content of the Multicultural Da'wa course is both relevant and applicable to real-world contexts. His approach aims to provide students with material integrating both theoretical concepts and practical applications. This strategy is designed to prepare students with a deep understanding of the complexities and opportunities associated with da'wa in a multicultural society. Consequently, Dermawan's approach in teaching the Multicultural Da'wa course at UIN SUKA demonstrates a commitment to using Islamic education to promote an inclusive and harmonious society. By combining theoretical knowledge with practical experience, the course prepares students to become effective agents of change enabling to bridge cultural differences and enhance intercultural harmony in the context of da'wa.

Andy Dermawan asserts that the Multicultural da'wa component of the MD program has achieved notable success. He observes this success through observable shifts in student behavior and attitudes, having increasingly embraced diversity. Dermawan has noted a gradual enhancement in students' inclusivity and tolerance towards differences, with a growing ability to accept peers regardless of cultural, ethnic, or religious differences. This positive development has been particularly more apparent among the student cohorts of 2021, 2022, and 2023, demonstrating the effectiveness of the pedagogical strategies implemented in the Multicultural Da'wa course.

By integrating theoretical knowledge with practical experience, students gain not only an understanding of the importance of valuing diversity but also the opportunity to directly engage with diverse communities. The emphasis on direct experiential learning is fundamental to the effectiveness of this educational approach. Encountering differences firsthand enables students to identify shared values across various cultures, thereby fostering a sense of unity and mutual respect.

The effectiveness of multicultural da'wa education extends beyond enhancing inclusivity within the academic environment; it also equips students to act as effective agents of change in a diverse society. By fostering an open attitude and appreciation for diversity, students are expected to emerge as leaders capable of promoting constructive dialogue and enhancing interfaith and intercultural harmony. The success of multicultural da'wa education



in the MD program signifies not only an academic accomplishment but also a profound commitment to cultivating an inclusive and harmonious society. Through an education rooted in multicultural values, it is anticipated that students will serve as advocates for positive change in addressing the complex challenges within societal diversity.

The efficacy of the learning process is closely linked to the integration of practical experiences, which enhances the contextual relevance of the educational experience for students. It is essential to incorporate real-world scenarios into the classroom setting, allowing students to articulate and address challenges encountered in their own communities. These challenges not only serve as a basis for devising solutions but also have the potential to offer inspiration to other communities. Andy Dermawan emphasizes that engaging with societal realities contributes significantly to creating a more meaningful and relevant learning experience for students.

Since late 2020, the MD program has undergone a notable paradigm shift in its pedagogical approach. Andy Dermawan highlights a transition from a previously predominant theoretical framework, comprising 40% theory and 60% practice, to a model where theoretical concepts are more effectively integrated with practical applications. This shift underscores the importance of field-based information, emphasizing that diversity should be recognized not merely as an abstract concept but as a critical, tangible reality that must be explored and addressed within educational contexts. As a result, the curriculum is now designed to ensure that theoretical instruction is aligned with real-world phenomena. Additionally, the evaluation of field practice is essential to maximize the educational benefits derived from these experiential learning opportunities.

According to Dermawan, the criteria for evaluating educational success are hierarchical. Initially, students are expected to demonstrate proficiency in effectively reporting their findings. Subsequently, later student cohorts should be equipped to critically assess and build upon the reports generated by their predecessors. Additionally, it is crucial for the classroom environment to facilitate productive discussions centered on concrete societal issues. Dermawan argues that this pedagogical approach will have a lasting impact on graduates, preparing them to engage effectively with societal diversity. This highlights the importance of aligning educational content with the real-world contexts in which students will work or live. As graduates will engage with actual societal dynamics, the curriculum designed to address and reflect the real-world challenges and needs they are facing is imperative.

Andy Dermawan also identifies several challenges faced in multicultural education, which have informed his recommendations for the future development of the multicultural PAI curriculum. A key challenge in multicultural da'wah education pertains to the content of the curriculum, particularly the textbooks utilized as learning resources. These materials frequently reflect the idealistic viewpoints of researchers rather than empirical field realities, thereby impeding students' ability to apply them effectively in practical settings. For example, Dermawan observes that some texts available in libraries tend to be more utopian than realistic.

A second challenge involves the need for contextualization in the development of multicultural educational materials. These materials must avoid broad generalizations that do

not accurately reflect the highly pluralistic nature of social diversity. As societal variations become more pronounced, it is essential to consider local and specific contexts to ensure that multicultural content is presented in a relevant and accurate manner.

Addressing these two challenges, Andy Dermawan proposes two principal directions for the future development of the multicultural da'wa curriculum. The first direction advocates for an idealistic approach, prioritizing the teaching of fundamental concepts and principles in multicultural education. While conceptual understanding of multicultural values is essential, it should be complemented by practical and contextual field experiences. The second direction emphasizes the importance of grounding the curriculum in empirical field data. Multicultural da'wa education should be firmly rooted in the social and cultural realities of society, which entails the collection of empirical data, direct observation, and active engagement with diverse community groups to gain a comprehensive understanding of prevailing multicultural dynamics.

By implementing these two developmental approaches, Andy Dermawan anticipates that multicultural da'wa education within the MD program will achieve greater effectiveness and alignment with the needs of both students and the broader community. The integration of conceptual idealism with contextual field experiences is expected to provide students with a thorough understanding and the pertinent skills required to facilitate harmonious and inclusive intercultural dialogue (Dermawan, 2024).

### **Experience Centered Curriculum**

In the MD Program at the Faculty of Da'wa and Communication, UIN SUKA, curriculum development is a continuous process, reflecting the institution's commitment to evolving in response to changing societal needs. A recent innovation within this framework is the incorporation of a multicultural da'wa course into the curriculum. This course transcends traditional classroom instruction by offering an exploration of various dimensions of social, cultural, traditional, and religious life. As Christine E. Sleeter highlights, the development of a multicultural curriculum is an ongoing process due to the ever-evolving context of each learner. The process of integrating experience-based learning and abstracting these experiences into theoretical frameworks is fundamental to curriculum design and development (Sleeter, 2000).

Through direct field experiences, students not only gain theoretical knowledge but also actively engage in practicing the values they have learned. This pedagogical approach aims to cultivate students into inclusive leaders, enabling to bridge social divides and enhance intercultural relations. As a result, students are equipped to serve as agents of change both within the academic setting and the broader community. The MD Program at the Faculty of Da'wa and Communication, UIN SUKA Yogyakarta, demonstrates its commitment to producing a generation, attuned to diversity and prepared to address the complex challenges of an increasingly multicultural world by continuously updating its curriculum (Muslim, 2024).

Experience centered curriculum constitutes the foundation of this educational approach, highlighting the imperative for students to acquire both theoretical knowledge and practical skills applicable in real-world contexts. The deliberate emphasis on field-experience learning (60%) over theoretical components (40%) in the curriculum reflects a commitment

to prioritizing hands-on field experiences as the primary mode of instruction, with theoretical content serving a supportive role. David Wolsk elucidates that an experiential-based curriculum acts as a means to assess students' personal development and their proficiency in navigating social environments. Through engagement with community settings, students are encouraged to generalize personal experiences into theoretical frameworks concerning human life and societal dynamics (Wolsk, David, 1974).

Field-experience learning, extending beyond mere interaction with diverse cultural, traditional, and belief systems, equip students with crucial competencies. These include effective communication, adaptability to change, and collaborative skills within collective contexts. Such competencies transcend theoretical knowledge, facilitating practical applications essential for navigating complex societal environments. David Wolsk asserts that a experience centered curriculum learning not only enhances students' comprehension of the subject matter but also promotes the development of perceptual, communicative, and actionable skills (Wolsk, 1975).

Furthermore, the content of the curriculum is meticulously aligned with societal needs. It is structured to ensure that students not only cultivate inclusive and tolerant attitudes but also manifest these behaviours in their interactions with diverse social contexts. Consequently, education is not merely a conduit for acquiring knowledge but also a mechanism for character development, aimed at fostering positive contributions toward an inclusive and tolerant society (Dermawan, 2024). Thus, the curriculum's design and implementation are inherently tied to the dynamic complexities of social environments (Plate, 2012). In essence, the development of the multicultural PAI curriculum addresses the multifaceted issues of multiculturalism, promotes critical assessment, and encourages improvements that serve societal benefits.

### **Inclusive-Naturalistic Paradigm in Curriculum Development**

The development of the multicultural PAI curriculum encounters several challenges and obstacles. A primary challenge faced within the MD Program at the Faculty of Da'wa and Communication, UIN SUKA, is fostering effective collaboration between faculty and students to advance inclusive dialogue. In response, the program has transitioned towards a more inclusive educational paradigm (Muslim, 2024). The orientation and practices of the curriculum must align with the objectives and principles of inclusive education. Effective development of an inclusive curriculum should address three critical dimensions: a learner-centered approach, a process-oriented methodology, and communication-based instructional strategies (Udvari-Solner & Thousand, 1996).

Open dialogue is crucial for the development of an inclusive curriculum. This dialogue must extend beyond interactions between educators or lecturers and students to include engagement with the broader community and, importantly, with the students' parents (Kovalova, Prokofieva, & Chorna, 2021). Establishing a foundation for inclusive collaboration and dialogue can be achieved through the integration of shared cultural and historical values unifying the community (Dracup, Austin, & King, 2020). Such a foundation enhances cooperation among all stakeholders by grounding efforts in idealistic principles, local wisdom, and historical context. Nonetheless, achieving close collaboration between

lecturers and students within the framework of an inclusive curriculum presents a substantial challenge for the MD Program at the Faculty of Da'wa and Communication, UIN SUKA.

One of the challenges encountered within the MD Program at the Faculty of Da'wa and Communication, UIN SUKA, is that the current learning materials are predominantly theoretical and lack integration of field-based experiential information. Numerous social, cultural, religious, and contextual factors are inadequately addressed in the instructional content. Thus, contextualizing lecture materials is essential. Additionally, the materials facilitating students' ability to effectively document and report their field experiences are essential (Dermawan, 2024). An alternative approach to curriculum development is the naturalistic model, not only outlining curriculum objectives but also emphasizing the collection, selection, organization, and evaluation of experiential data to achieve the desired educational outcomes (Walker, 1971).

To address the challenges inherent in the naturalistic curriculum development model, the MD Program at the Faculty of Da'wa and Communication, UIN SUKA, implements a tiered evaluation system. At the initial stage, students are required to effectively document and report their field experiences. These reports are then assessed by subsequent student cohorts in later stages. Ultimately, the effectiveness of the learning process is measured by the quality of the learning environment and its productivity (Dermawan, 2024). Harold Berlak posits that the core components of an educational curriculum include: the advancement of scientific knowledge, curriculum revision, the provision of data for educational policy development, and the methodology formulation for educational theory development (Berlak, 1971).

By implementing a three-tiered curriculum development framework in the MD Program at the Faculty of Da'wa and Communication, UIN SUKA, the program systematically addresses advancements in scientific knowledge, curriculum revision, the availability of field data, and methodologies for educational theory development. The curriculum development within this program is guided by two primary directions: enhancing theoretical development through experience-based learning and ensuring that knowledge generated maintains contextual relevance (Dermawan, 2024). Consequently, the paradigm for developing the multicultural PAI curriculum in this program can be characterized as both naturalistic and inclusive. It is naturalistic in its emphasis on the importance of context and practical experience, and inclusive in its objective to produce educational outcomes: tolerant, inclusive, and moderate.

## CONCLUSION

The development of the multicultural PAI curriculum represents both an essential evolution and an ongoing process, reflecting the growing complexity of social issues. This developmental trajectory involves crafting a curriculum that addresses real-world contexts, starting from students' experiences and abstracting these experiences into a theoretical and conceptual framework. Achieving this requires prioritizing pragmatic experiences over idealistic theories in curriculum development, thereby enriching both theoretical perspectives and practical applications. The primary aim is to produce educational outcomes that are not only pertinent to social realities but also proactive in addressing and bridging tensions arising

from diversity. The Management of Da'wa (MD) Program at the Faculty of Da'wa and Communication, UIN SUKA, exemplifies this approach, demonstrating the effectiveness of the multicultural PAI curriculum through measurable shifts towards more inclusive attitudes among its students.

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