

Integrating Multicultural Education and *Islam Wasathiyah*: Strategies for Fostering Inclusive Children's Educational Environments

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ABSTRACT

Globalization has intensified the complexity of fostering inclusive education, particularly in culturally diverse societies. Multicultural education promotes respect and appreciation for diversity, while *Islam Wasathiyah*—a principle rooted in Islamic teachings—emphasizes moderation, balance, and universal values. This study explores the integration of these two frameworks to develop a culturally grounded model for inclusive education. A systematic literature review was conducted to examine scholarly works on multicultural education and *Islam Wasathiyah*. Sources were selected based on relevance, credibility, and their contribution to inclusive educational practices. Findings suggest that combining multicultural education with *Islam Wasathiyah* provides a cohesive framework to support inclusivity in schools. This integration enhances social harmony, promotes tolerance, and fosters inclusive, child-friendly learning environments. Key strategies identified include diversity-sensitive teacher training, curriculum development based on shared human values, and active community participation in educational initiatives. By bridging cultural and religious educational paradigms, this model offers a universally adaptable approach to inclusivity. It contributes to broader educational reforms aimed at nurturing empathy and coexistence in pluralistic societies. The strategic fusion of these principles addresses gaps in current inclusive education practices and offers practical implementation pathways. Integrating *Islam Wasathiyah* with multicultural education creates a holistic model for inclusive education that is both culturally sensitive and universally applicable. This approach supports the development of equitable education systems responsive to cultural and religious diversity in today's global context.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Multicultural Education and *Islam Wasathiyah* are two important concepts in developing inclusive education in Indonesia. Multicultural education refers to an approach that facilitates the recognition, appreciation and development of cultural, religious and linguistic diversity in Indonesia (Abacioglu et al., 2020). Meanwhile, Wasathiyah Islam emphasizes the importance of moderation, balance and tolerance in carrying out Islamic teachings in everyday life. The two concepts can complement each other and encourage the creation of an inclusive school environment in Indonesia. Multicultural education has been recognized as a way to respect cultural diversity and promote intercultural tolerance in the context of education. The principles of multicultural education can be implemented in the curriculum, teaching and activities within the school environment. Multicultural education has proven effective in increasing understanding and tolerance, as well as reducing discrimination and prejudice against minority groups in Indonesia (Kitchenham et al., 2019).

On the other hand, *Islam Wasathiyah* is a concept emphasized by a number of Islamic scholars in Indonesia as a response to extremist and intolerant Islamic practices (M. Nugroho, 2021). This concept emphasizes the importance of moderation, balance and tolerance in carrying out Islamic teachings in everyday life. Wasathiyah Islam emphasizes the importance of interreligious dialogue and interfaith cooperation in building a harmonious and inclusive society. This was reinforced by the holding of the Religion Forum (R-20), which was held in Bali, Indonesia, on 2-3 November 2022, an important event for the Muslim World League (MWL) (Muliadi, 2022). This forum discusses how religion-based conflicts must end and how religion can be a solution to global crises. Religion is an important solution to various kinds of problems in the world, strengthening common understanding, peaceful coexistence, and harmony between various nations.

Combining *Islam Wasathiyah* and multicultural education concepts to create an inclusive school environment in Indonesia can be a big challenge for educators. Nevertheless, the meeting point between the two concepts can be found in the principles of respect, tolerance and equality (Nurchayono, 2018). In the context of education, the integration of Islamic values in multicultural education can be an effective strategy for creating an inclusive and harmonious school environment.

In this article, the author will discuss the best strategy for creating an inclusive school environment by combining the approaches of Multicultural Education and *Islam Wasathiyah*; First, is to foster multicultural awareness in teachers and students. This can be done by providing training and workshops for teachers and students on the importance of respecting cultural, religious and linguistic diversity in the school environment (Tambunan, 2023). In addition, this can be done by introducing various cultures, religions and languages in Indonesia through the curriculum and activities within the school environment. Second, integrating *Islam Wasathiyah* values in the curriculum and activities in the school environment. this can be done by teaching Wasathiyah Islamic principles, such as tolerance, cooperation, and moderation in religious studies and in activities within the school environment. In this case, the teacher needs to understand and apply *Islam Wasathiyah* values in teaching and learning in the classroom (Niam, 2022). Third, build strong cooperation between schools and student families. Cooperation between schools and students' families can help create an inclusive and harmonious environment. In this case, schools can hold meetings and activities that involve students' families to discuss the importance of respecting cultural, religious and linguistic diversity in the school environment.

In creating an inclusive school environment by combining multicultural education approaches and Wasathiyah Islam, educators need to pay attention to several things (Saihu, 2021). First, educators need to understand well the principles of multicultural education and Wasathiyah Islam and how to integrate them into the curriculum and activities in the school environment. Second, educators need to pay attention to the needs and diversity of students in teaching and learning in the classroom. Third, educators need to be open to learning and gaining new experiences in creating an inclusive and harmonious school environment.

In addition, inclusive education also prioritizes equal opportunities for all students, regardless of social background, physical or mental disability, religion, ethnicity and gender. In this context, inclusive education also emphasizes the importance of handling learning difficulties experienced by certain students, so that they can still achieve success in education. However, to realize inclusive education that is in accordance with multicultural principles and *Islam Wasathiyah*, of course the right strategy is needed (Rizqiyah & Karimah, 2019). One strategy that can be used is to create an inclusive and friendly school environment for all students. An inclusive school environment is an environment that is able to provide a sense of security, comfort, and respect for diversity and is able to facilitate the learning needs of all students. This can be achieved through the use of learning methods and strategies that are inclusive and responsive to student diversity.

Related to this, research conducted by Shaleh and Abdul Aziz (2021) shows that differentiation-based learning can be an effective inclusive learning strategy. In differentiated learning, the teacher understands that each student has unique and different learning needs, so the learning strategies and methods used must be adapted to the characteristics of these students. Differentiation learning can also help teachers pay more attention to students who have learning difficulties, so as to increase their chances of success in learning (Supriatin & Nasution, 2020). The differentiation learning approach is also in line with the concept of *Islam Wasathiyah* Education, which emphasizes the importance of equality and justice in education. As a concept that adheres to the middle principle, *Islam Wasathiyah* also emphasizes the importance of tolerance and respect for diversity, so it does not rule out the possibility of implementing multicultural education that is in line with *Islam Wasathiyah* principles (Karim et al., 2023).

In this context, this article will discuss the best strategy for creating an inclusive school environment within the framework of multicultural education and *Islam Wasathiyah* (Salleh et al., 2023). This article will discuss in more detail the differentiation learning as an inclusive learning strategy, as well as the application of multicultural education and *Islam Wasathiyah* in creating an inclusive school environment. Through this article, it is hoped that it will provide a broader view of the importance of implementing inclusive education within the framework of multicultural education and *Islam Wasathiyah*, as well as provide inspiration for teachers and other related parties to develop effective strategies in the context of inclusive education. *Islam Wasathiyah* has a very relevant and important concept. The *Islam Wasathiyah* concept teaches tolerance, justice, peace, and respect for differences. This is in line with the principle of inclusive education, which places diversity as wealth and strives for recognition and respect for individual differences. Therefore, multicultural education and *Islam Wasathiyah* can be seen as two complementary things that can be used to create an inclusive school environment.

However, it cannot be denied that integrating the concepts of *Islam Wasathiyah* into multicultural and inclusive education remains a significant challenge. These challenges include a general lack of understanding of the concept itself, limited resources and training for implementation in educational settings, and the varied interpretations that stem from different cultural and religious backgrounds.

To achieve the objectives of inclusive and multicultural education grounded in *Islam Wasathiyah*, a well-planned and strategic approach is essential (Yasin, 2018). One effective strategy is raising awareness about the principles of *Islam Wasathiyah* among the educational community—students, teachers, and parents alike. This can be accomplished through training sessions, seminars, and workshops that explain the concept and demonstrate practical ways to apply it in school environments.

Another important approach is implementing student-centered and differentiated learning strategies that accommodate each student's unique needs and potential (Kasdi, 2020). Such strategies foster tolerance, respect for diversity, and effective communication with individuals from various backgrounds. Building strong, collaborative relationships among students, teachers, and parents is also vital. Parental involvement plays a key role in creating an inclusive and multicultural school culture. Schools can actively involve parents in educational activities—such as workshops on *Islam Wasathiyah*—and encourage them to support inclusive policies and programs. Lastly, increasing

student participation in social and cultural activities both inside and outside the classroom helps promote a deeper understanding of and respect for different cultures and religions (Pitaloka et al., 2021). These experiences contribute to the development of tolerance and broaden students' global perspectives.

Implementing the strategies above is expected to create an inclusive and multicultural school environment based on the concept of *Islam Wasathiyah* (Indonesia, 2017). Some research shows that multicultural education can help create an inclusive environment that accepts and respects individual differences. However, some critics question the extent to which the multicultural education approach is capable of dealing with more complex differences, especially in religious contexts (Farid et al., 2023). On the other hand, the concept of *Islam Wasathiyah* or moderate Islam has become important in the context of education in Indonesia. *Islam Wasathiyah* emphasizes the principles of tolerance, harmony and equality which are in line with the values of multiculturalism (Lindner & Schwab, 2019). In the context of education, *Islam Wasathiyah* emphasizes the importance of an inclusive approach in creating a learning environment that respects individual diversity and helps overcome discrimination and injustice. However, there is little literature that examines the meeting point between Multicultural Education and *Islam Wasathiyah*. Therefore, this study aims to find common ground between the two and develop the best strategy in creating an inclusive school environment. This strategy will assist teachers and school staff in integrating multicultural principles and *Islam Wasathiyah* into the curriculum, teaching practices, and learning environment in schools.

2. METHODS

The research methodology employed in this article is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) with an analytic descriptive approach. The SLR method is designed to collect, evaluate, and synthesize existing research findings on relevant topics. Its primary aim is to identify knowledge gaps within the current literature and to offer recommendations for future research.

This study followed a structured set of steps. The first step involved formulating specific research questions to guide the identification of relevant studies, particularly those related to strategies for fostering an inclusive school environment based on the principles of multicultural education and *Islam Wasathiyah*. Following this, the researchers selected relevant academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, to ensure comprehensive literature coverage.

Next, the researchers developed a detailed search strategy. This strategy incorporated carefully chosen keywords, related terms, and logical operators to refine and target the search for pertinent studies. Once relevant articles were retrieved, they were evaluated using established study quality assessment guidelines to determine their suitability for inclusion in the review.

Subsequently, data were extracted from the selected studies using a standardized data extraction form to ensure consistency and accuracy. The final stage involved analyzing and interpreting the collected data. The researcher then synthesized the findings and provided interpretations along with recommendations for further research in the field.

In this study, researchers used Scopus and Web of Science basic data to find relevant studies. The selection of Scopus and Web of Science databases was based on their reputation as high-quality, peer-reviewed academic sources that offer comprehensive access to internationally indexed and credible journals. Both databases cover a wide range of disciplines and provide advanced search features, enabling researchers to identify relevant and high-impact studies, particularly in the areas of education, Islamic studies, and inclusivity. The search strategy was carried out using the keywords "multicultural education", "Islamic education", "wasathiyah", "inclusive education", and "school environment", specifically confined to articles published within the 2018-2024 timeframe.

Initially, a total of 1402 articles were gathered, but subsequent filtering was applied based on criteria, such as studies that must be published in English, must be related to multicultural education, *Islam Wasathiyah*, inclusiveness, and the school environment, resulting in a final selection of 420 articles.

These articles underwent further scrutiny for thematic relevance, culminating in the identification of 105 journal articles. Following this, a review of the titles and abstracts of these articles was performed to pinpoint those that closely aligned with the research theme, ultimately yielding a final compilation of 33 articles for reference. These articles were predominantly sourced from educational journals, both at the national and international levels. After the selection and evaluation process of the study, the researcher found several points of contact between multicultural education and *Islam Wasathiyah* which could be the best strategy in creating an inclusive school environment. Some of these strategies include: developing an inclusive curriculum, training teachers in multicultural teaching and *Islam Wasathiyah*, implementing a student-centred learning approach, and using technology to increase student participation. The following diagram illustrates the sequential steps involved in this process.

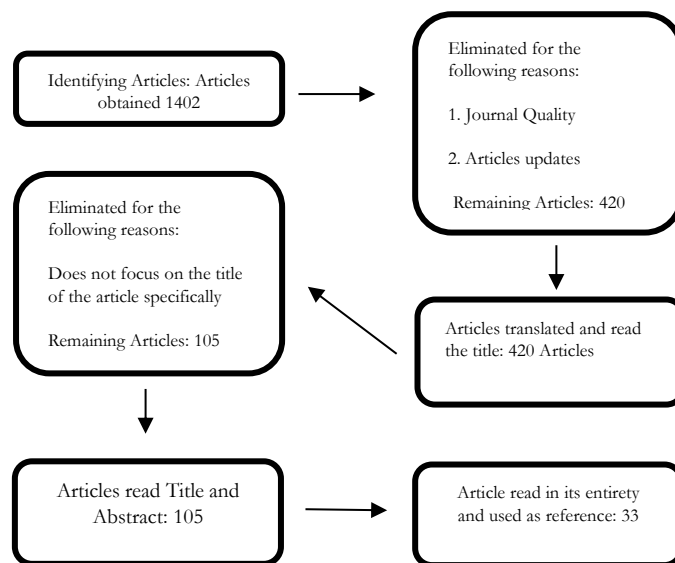


Figure 1. Illustration of article search steps

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. *Islam Wasathiyah* and Multicultural Education Paradigm

Indonesia is a nation with a large population that has the motto "Unity in Diversity", which is different people, it is still one (Tambunan, 2019). Various tribes, religions, ethnicities, languages, customs and cultures color the Indonesian nation. As a plural and multicultural country, on the one hand, it becomes an advantage and wealth for this country when it is managed properly, and will produce solid synergy, but on the other hand, it will become a big threat to cause social, political, religious and cultural havoc when diversity is not managed properly (Amar, 2024). Multiculturalism education has a definition as education about religious and cultural diversity in responding to socio-cultural changes and certain social environments. In this context, education is required to respond to developments in the diversity of society and school populations, as well as demands for equal rights for every social group.

Violence in the name of religion often occurs in various countries in the world, and Indonesia is no exception. *Wasathiyah*, which is a moderate understanding of Islam, comes with the idea of opposing violence, defending wronged people, fanaticism, extremism, rejecting intimidation, and terrorism. *Wasathiyah* is very closely related to the Muslim community, which is mentioned in the Qur'an as *ummatan wasathan* (Bakar, 2021). *Ummatan wasathan* is a society that always maintains its balance, does not fall into left or right extremism, and is not dragged into radicalism and violence. According to Azra (2005), the former Chancellor of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta, the actualization of the *ummatan wasathan* in Indonesia has started since the beginning of the peaceful spread of Islam.

In the view of the MUI, *Islam Wasathiyah* sees Islamic teachings as *rahmatan lil alamin*, a mercy for the entire universe. *Islam Wasathiyah* is "Central Islam" for the realization of the best people (*khairu ummah*). *Wasathiyah* (moderate Islam) has recently been emphasized as the mainstream of Islam in Indonesia. The idea of mainstreaming is a solution to address various problems of religion and global civilization (Diyani, 2021). Thus the application of *wasathiyah* in Indonesia is fully regarded as a very good government effort to produce generations that are compatible with a pluralistic society and to maintain peace and achieve harmony. The study of the concept of *wasathiyah* or moderate Islam has attracted the attention of many scientists in various fields such as socio-politics, languages, Islamic development, socio-religious and Islamic education. *Islam Wasathiyah* emerged as a counterbalance to the emergence of groups that often heretical and disbelieve (*takfiri*) other groups.

In Arabic, the term *wasathiyah* comes from the word *wasath* وسط that literally means in the middle. The word *wasath* with its various forms in the Qur'an is repeated five times, including *wasathna* (al-'diyt 100: 5), *awsat* (al-Ma'idah 5: 89), *awsatuhum* (al-Qalam 68: 28), *wasatan and al-wusta* (al-Baqarah 2: 143 & 238) ('Abd al Bq, 1945). The term *wasathiyah* is often referred to as moderation. When referring to the term moderation, it can be seen that the term is a Latin term, namely *moderatio*, which means "moderate" or something that is not excessive and not lacking. Meanwhile, in the Indonesian Dictionary, the word moderation is the same as reducing violence, avoiding extremes, always avoiding extreme behavior or expressions, having a tendency towards a middle dimension or path, having an adequate view and being willing to consider the views of other parties.

In terms of terminology, moderate Islam is often equated with *Islam Wasathiyah*. However, the standard definition is still being debated among experts, Muslim activists, and socio-religious organizations (Purnomo & Solikhah, 2022). Several experts agree with John L. Esposito that, moderate Islam is a highly contested technical vocabulary for its meaning (highly contested concept), both among Muslims and non-Muslims. The definitions that appear are very diverse, depending on who and in what context, they are defined and understood. Broadly speaking, the meaning of *wasathiyah* in the Qur'an is expressed in various forms of words that have several meanings, which as a whole are inseparable from the meanings of fair, balanced, straight, the best choice, the middle and the simple which are manifested in Islamic attitudes and behavior that are inclusive, humanist and tolerant.

MUI proposes principles, characteristics, and special characteristics of *Wasathiyah* (moderate) Islam, which is wider than before. *First, Tawassuth* (taking the middle way), namely understanding and practicing that not *ifrath* (exaggeration in religion) and *tafrith* (reducing teachings of religion) (Faiqah & Pransiska, 2023). *Second, Tawazun* (balanced), namely understanding and practising religion in a balanced manner which covers all aspects of life, both worldly and *ukhrawi*, firm in declaring principles that can differentiate between *inhiraf* (deviation) and *ikhtilaf* (difference). *Third, I'tidal* (straight and assertive), namely placing something in its place and exercising rights and fulfill obligations proportionately. *Fourth, Tasamuh* (tolerance), is recognizing and respecting differences, both in religious aspects and various other aspects of life. *Fifth, Musawah* (egalitarian), namely no being discriminatory to others due to differences in beliefs, traditions and the origin of a person. *Sixth, Shura* (deliberation), namely every issue resolved by way of deliberation to reach a consensus with the principles put benefit above all else. *Seventh, Islah* (reform), prioritizing reformative principles to achieve a better condition, accommodate changes and progress of the times based on public benefit (*mashlahah 'amah*) by sticking to the principle of *al-muhafazhah 'ala alqadimi al-shalih wa al-akhdu bi al-jadidi al-ashlah* (maintaining good old traditions and adopting new, better traditions) (Fitri, 2021). *Eighth, Aulawiyah* (prioritizing priority), namely the ability to identify more important matters that must be prioritized to be implemented compared to those with lower importance. *Ninth, Tathawwur wa Ibtikar* (dynamic and innovative), which is always opened to make changes according to the times as well as creating new things for the benefit and progress of mankind. *Tenth, Tahadhdhur* (civilized), namely upholding good morals, character, identity, and integrity as *khairu ummah* in human life and civilization.

In the context of understanding the philosophy of Islamic Education, the concepts of multicultural education and Islamic wasathiyah are closely related to the understanding and application of educational concepts from an Islamic perspective (Mukaffa, 2023). In the context of this article, the philosophy of Islamic education can be applied in developing a differentiation strategy that emphasizes a holistic approach that pays attention to the needs and potential of each individual. The concept of active learning, problem-based learning, and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in learning are examples of differentiation strategies that can be integrated into the Islamic Education approach. Because, in essence, science and good deeds are two things that cannot be separated.

Based on the synthesis of literature regarding multicultural education and Islam Wasathiyah, a new framework can be proposed called the *Integrative Framework of Wasathiyah-Based Multicultural Islamic Education* (IWBMIE). This framework consists of four core pillars: (1) Wasathiyah Values as the Philosophical Foundation, (2) Differentiated Multicultural Learning Strategies, (3) Integration of Technology and Social Context, and (4) Educational Outcomes in the Form of Moderate and Tolerant Character Building. The first pillar emphasizes the internalization of Wasathiyah principles such as *tawassuth* (moderation), *tawazun* (balance), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *i'tidal* (justice) as foundational values that guide the entire educational process. The second pillar advocates for the use of active learning, project-based learning, and collaborative approaches that respect students' diverse backgrounds.

The third pillar focuses on leveraging information and communication technology (ICT) to create inclusive learning spaces and to strengthen access to culturally relevant educational resources. The fourth pillar assesses educational success not only through cognitive achievements but also through the development of student character that is moderate, open-minded, and capable of living harmoniously in a pluralistic society. The IWBMIE model serves as a conceptual framework that places Islam Wasathiyah at the core of Islamic education, promoting a system that is responsive to diversity and contemporary challenges while contributing to a peaceful and inclusive Indonesian society.

3.2. Application of Differentiation Strategies to Create an Inclusive School Environment

The differentiation approach in inclusive education is a strategy to ensure that each student gets a learning experience that suits their individual needs and tendencies (M. A. Nugroho, 2024). This approach employs a variety of learning strategies designed to meet the individual needs of students, without neglecting the needs of the group as a whole.

This is also in line with the goals of national education contained in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system, which emphasizes that education must cover all children without exception, including children with special needs and several government policies, such as the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture. Number 70 of 2013 concerning Inclusive Education, which establishes guidelines for implementing inclusive education in Indonesia.

The integration of Islam Wasathiyah and multicultural education is becoming increasingly essential in addressing the challenges of multiculturalism and inclusivity within school environments. Multicultural education emphasizes the recognition and respect for cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity in educational settings. On the other hand, Islam Wasathiyah promotes the principles of tolerance, balance, and justice in managing differences. Therefore, establishing common ground between these two approaches is crucial for fostering an inclusive and harmonious school culture.

One effective strategy is ensuring that multicultural education accounts for the religious diversity present within the school, including Islam. Integrating the values of Islam Wasathiyah into multicultural education can create an inclusive atmosphere where both Muslim and non-Muslim students learn to respect and understand each other's beliefs and backgrounds.

Another important approach is to cultivate an environment that encourages open discussions and dialogue on issues related to multiculturalism and inclusivity, including the principles of Islam

Wasathiyah. Such discussions allow students to expand their understanding of cultural, ethnic, and religious differences, helping them to develop a deeper sense of tolerance and mutual respect.

A student-centered and differentiated learning approach can also be applied to meet individual student needs. This approach is vital in building an inclusive environment where every learner feels valued and supported. For example, differentiated instruction can create more engaging and meaningful learning experiences for students with varying needs, including those in accelerated programs. A study conducted at MTsN Ponorogo revealed that students with high cognitive abilities often become disengaged during civics lessons when the content does not challenge them to think critically. This highlights the importance of adapting instructional strategies to maintain student interest and promote critical thinking.

Finally, providing teachers with training and professional development opportunities is essential for effectively implementing multicultural education and the principles of Islam Wasathiyah. Such training enables educators to understand and apply Wasathiyah values in the classroom while also equipping them with the skills to deliver differentiated instruction that supports diverse learning needs (Bahrozi, 2021).

Understanding of multicultural values and equality is very important in forming an inclusive school environment. However, often this understanding conflicts with the values held by certain religious groups, as is the case in Islam (Graham et al., 2022). Therefore, it is important to find common ground between inclusive multicultural and Islamic education, and find the best strategy to create an inclusive school environment for students from various religious and cultural backgrounds. One of the proposed strategies is the concept of Wasathiyah Islam. Wasathiyah Islam is a concept that means moderate, tolerant and balanced Islam. This concept emphasizes the importance of equality and justice, and opposes discrimination and extremism. In an educational context, the *Islam Wasathiyah* concept can be used to create an inclusive school environment where all students feel valued and accepted, regardless of their cultural and religious background.

However, the implementation of the concept of *Islam Wasathiyah* in the context of education is not easy. Collaboration is required from various parties, including teachers, students, and parents, as well as school and community leaders. This requires deep awareness and understanding of *Islam Wasathiyah* values and how to implement them in daily life at school (Anam, 2023). In addition, it is also necessary to develop an inclusive and multicultural curriculum, which takes into account the cultural and religious diversity of students. The curriculum must integrate important aspects of various cultures and religions, and teach students to respect and understand differences. In addition, the development of inclusive and differentiated learning methods is also very important to help students from different religious cultural backgrounds feel accepted and valued in the school environment.

The use of technology can also help create an inclusive school environment (Hosaini, 2021). Technology can be used to access diverse educational information and resources, as well as to facilitate communication and collaboration between students from different cultural and religious backgrounds. In addition, no less important is the role of the teacher in creating an inclusive school environment. Teachers must understand and respect students' cultural and religious diversity, and have the right skills and strategies to facilitate inclusive learning. Teachers must also develop good relationships with students and parents, and work with the community to create an inclusive school environment. Teachers must also develop good relationships with students and parents, and work with the community to create an inclusive school environment.

The application of a differentiation approach in inclusive education can be implemented through various strategies that cater to the diverse needs of students (Hosaini, 2024). One method involves providing varied teaching materials tailored to students' different ability levels and learning needs. These materials should align with students' competencies and be supported by instructional methods that facilitate understanding and engagement.

Another approach focuses on offering diverse learning experiences. Educators can design personalized learning activities based on each student's preferences, interests, and strengths. This may

include small group discussions, individual projects, written assignments, or hands-on demonstrations—each providing students with multiple pathways to access and engage with the curriculum.

In addition, providing individual support plays a key role in differentiation. Teachers can offer targeted assistance to students who face learning challenges, such as one-on-one guidance, additional tutoring, or scaffolding during complex tasks. This personalized attention helps build student confidence and enhances their ability to succeed academically (Hamed & Alehirish, 2023).

Differentiation also involves the use of varied assessment methods to measure student progress. Instead of relying solely on standardized testing, educators can assess students through individual projects, performance tasks, or skill-based evaluations. This allows for a more accurate and fair reflection of each student's growth and learning potential.

All of these strategies contribute to building an inclusive and supportive learning environment. By addressing students' individual needs and preferences, educators can help each learner reach their full potential and ensure they feel respected, valued, and empowered in the classroom.

Based on the synthesis of literature on differentiation in inclusive education and the values of Islam Wasathiyah and multicultural education, we propose a new model called the "Wasathiyah-Inclusive Differentiated Education Framework" (WIDE Framework). This integrative framework is built upon four interconnected dimensions: (1) Philosophical Foundation of Wasathiyah and Multiculturalism, (2) Differentiated Learning Practices, (3) Inclusive School Culture and Curriculum, and (4) Collaborative Stakeholder Engagement. The first dimension positions Wasathiyah values—such as moderation (*tawassuth*), tolerance (*tasamuh*), justice (*i'tidal*), and equality (*musawah*)—as the moral and philosophical basis for inclusive education in multicultural contexts. These values align with the goals of multicultural education that promote respect, equity, and harmony across diverse student backgrounds.

The second and third dimensions operationalize the framework through differentiated learning methods (adjusted content, processes, and assessments), inclusive and culturally responsive curricula, and the use of technology to support learning access. These approaches are designed to accommodate students' varied abilities, learning preferences, and cultural identities. The fourth dimension emphasizes collaborative engagement between teachers, students, parents, and the wider community. Professional development for teachers is crucial in this framework, equipping them to implement inclusive strategies while internalizing and modelling *Wasathiyah* values. The WIDE Framework ultimately aims to build inclusive schools where diversity is not only recognized but celebrated, and where every student feels respected, supported, and empowered to learn and grow in a harmonious environment.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this article emphasizes that the differentiation approach is the best strategy and meeting point in creating an inclusive school environment in the context of multicultural education and *Islam Wasathiyah*. The use of this strategy pays attention to the individual differences of students and facilitates each student to be able to learn in the most effective and efficient way for themselves. In addition, *Islam Wasathiyah* principles that are in line with the differentiation approach can also strengthen and deepen the application of this strategy in the context of multicultural education. This differentiation approach allows each student to learn in a way that suits their needs and abilities, and encourages diversity and openness in education. Some of the differentiation strategies proposed in this article are the use of a variety of learning media, project-based learning, the use of cooperative learning, and independent learning. In addition, the differentiation approach also pays attention to students' needs in understanding and accepting cultural and religious differences that exist in the school environment. This can be achieved through introducing inclusive values in the curriculum and conducting activities that reinforce cultural and religious diversity.

By understanding the differences between students and being able to adapt learning strategies to meet their needs, teachers can create an inclusive environment and promote intercultural unity. It is important for teachers and educational institutions to pay attention to the individual differences of students, so that they can adapt appropriate learning strategies and create a safe and inclusive environment. As well as paying attention to other factors such as an inclusive curriculum, a friendly environment, and curriculum development that is sensitive to cultural differences. Furthermore, an inclusive school environment also requires cooperation between teachers, support staff, parents, and students, as well as a friendly environment.

This study is conceptual in nature and primarily based on literature review and theoretical synthesis, without the support of empirical data from field research or classroom observations. Therefore, its application in diverse educational contexts may face challenges due to varying socio-cultural, institutional, and student characteristics. For future research, empirical studies should be conducted to test the effectiveness of the integrative differentiation approach based on Islam Wasathiyah and multicultural education in actual school settings. Research can also explore teachers' readiness, student responses, and institutional support in implementing this model to develop more grounded and practical strategies for inclusive education.

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