

Implementing Multicultural Education in Indonesian State Islamic Universities: Case Studies of UIN Sunan Kalijaga and UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – The study aims to investigate how multicultural education has been implemented in the state Islamic universities in Indonesia and what strategies have been applied by the universities in promoting and imparting multicultural education to students. Two representing universities have been selected: UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta and UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi.

Design/methods/approach – This is qualitative study using direct data collection. Data were collected through interview, document analysis, and observation. Data were analyzed through descriptive analysis and critical analysis. Descriptive analysis has provided detailed information about the implementation of multiculturalism. Critical analysis has allowed researchers to examine and criticize various multicultural education tasks on both campuses.

Findings – The authors found that in implementing multicultural education, both universities have built an equity pedagogy by bringing multiculturalism into the learning process, have integrated multicultural content into learning, have inculcated multiculturalism insight in the process of constructing knowledge, and have made efforts to reduce prejudice and empower school culture. The strategies adopted to promote and impart multicultural education to students are adapting the curriculum, promoting equality through campus activities, optimizing the strategic role of lecturers in instilling multiculturalism insights directly into students, forming study centers with multiculturalism insight, and maintaining the uniqueness of each university in fighting for equality.

Research implications – Since the study covers state Islamic universities in Indonesia, it could contribute to the effort to promote multiculturalism in all the higher education institutions under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Based on the idea that campus residents are dynamic, critical, creative, multifaceted, and inventive creatures, it is important to create a campus environment that prioritizes an atmosphere of justice, equality, comfort, and security for all campus social entities.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 7 January 2025

Revised 3 May 2025

Accepted 1 June 2025

KEYWORD:

multiculturalism, multicultural education, state Islamic university, Indonesian higher education, equality



Jurnal Pendidikan Islam

1. Introduction

Multicultural education has become crucial to be taught in educational institutions as globalization has progressed (Banks, 2007; Levin, 2001). Multiculturalism is all that is taught in intercultural education. The institution responds to globalization by teaching multiculturalism. In order to promote equality and create a peaceful civilization among people everywhere, multiculturalism is extremely important (Sibawaihi & Fernandes, 2023). The program seeks to promote the valuing of diversity and equal opportunity for all people through an understanding of the contributions and perspectives of people of differing race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and physical



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How to Cite: Sibawaihi, M., Arifullah, M., & Hadi, M. S. (2025) Implementing Multicultural Education in Indonesian State Islamic Universities: Case Studies of UIN Sunan Kalijaga and UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, 14(1), 1-14.
<https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2025.141.1-14>

abilities and disabilities (Morey & Kitano, 1997). The urgency of multicultural education is not yet fully acknowledged, as it has not become a central component of the curriculum offered to all students and is instead primarily limited to the domains of social sciences, language arts, and fine arts (Gay, 2004). Although this view can be criticized, the social facts that gave rise to various conflicts, especially in Indonesia (Listyawati, 2019; Sumarno & Roebiyantho, 2013), seem to make it still relevant nowadays.

There have been many researchers studying multicultural education (Banks & Banks, 2004; Gay, 1994). Generally, they provide a foundation for understanding multicultural education in general. These studies generally provide a basic overview of multicultural education or multiculturalism. They often serve as references for many other researchers. In Indonesia, studies on multicultural education have also been conducted (Baihaqi, 2021; Cathrin & Wikandaru, 2023; Hasan, 2000; Mahfud, 2009; Ma'rifah & Sibawaihi, 2023; Sunarto, 2004). They generally provide Indonesian readers with an introduction to the implementation of multicultural education in the country, particularly in relation to Islamic education (Sulistyo, 2002; S. E. Susanti, 2011). One study identifies multicultural education within the context of Islamic education in Indonesia (Sulistyo, 2002). Unfortunately, it can be made sure that it is not a comprehensive and representative study. As for Susanti in *Pemikiran H.A.R. Tilaar tentang Pendidikan Multikultural dan Relevansinya dengan Pendidikan Islam*, she highlights the relevance of Tilaar's perspective of multicultural education to teaching values taught in Islamic education. In doing so, she elaborates on human rights, democracy, justice, tolerance, and humanity, which is a very general study in the discourses of Islamic studies.

This study investigates the extent to which multicultural education has been implemented in the State Islamic Higher Education Institutions (Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri/PTKIN). UIN (Universitas Islam Negeri/State Islamic University) Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, and UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, Jambi, have been chosen to represent the PTKINs. UIN Sunan Kalijaga, a university with human resources and students with a high level of diversity, has incorporated multicultural education into the curriculum by which it is taught (Sibawaihi, 2022; Sibawaihi & Fernandes, 2023). Meanwhile, in the curriculum of UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, it has been clearly stated that "The curriculum of UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi is developed on the basis of multiculturalism and pluralism. The curriculum is built and developed on the basis of a multicultural ideology that recognizes and glorifies differences in equality both individually and culturally" (UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, 2019). Specifically, the study aims to identify the implementation of multicultural education at UIN Sunan Kalijaga and UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin and analyze the strategies applied by the two universities in promoting and imparting multicultural education to students.

2. Theoretical Framework and Method

2.1. Theoretical Framework

2.1.1. Multicultural Education

Experts offer many definitions of multicultural education. To mention some of them are an idea, an educational reform movement, and a process intended to change the structure of educational institutions so that all students have an equal chance to achieve academic success; a philosophy that stresses the importance, legitimacy, and vitality of ethnic and cultural diversity in shaping the lives of individuals, groups, and nations; a reform movement that changes all components of the educational enterprise, including its underlying values, procedural rules, curricula, instructional materials, organizational structure, and governance policies to reflect cultural pluralism; and a humanistic concept based on the strength of diversity, human rights, social justice, and alternative lifestyles for all people, it is necessary for a quality education and includes all efforts to make the full range of cultures available to students; it views a culturally

pluralistic society as a positive force and welcomes differences as vehicles for better understanding the global society (Gay, 1994).

Multicultural education is integral to improving the academic success of students of color and preparing all youths for democratic citizenship in a pluralistic society (Gay, 2004). The implementation of multicultural education can be classified into five dimensions: content integration, the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, an equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture (Banks, 2007). Content integration refers to the extent to which teachers use examples and content from various cultures in their teaching (Banks, 2007). In knowledge construction, teachers must help students understand, investigate, and determine how a discipline's implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and biases influence how knowledge is constructed. An equity pedagogy exists when teachers modify their teaching to facilitate students' academic achievement from diverse racial, cultural, gender, and social-class groups. In prejudice reduction, the dimension focuses on the characteristics of students' racial attitudes and how they can be modified by teaching methods and materials. In the empowering school culture, grouping and labeling practices, sports participation, disproportionality in achievement, and the interaction of the staff and the students across ethnic and racial lines must be examined to create a school culture that empowers students from diverse racial, ethnic, and gender groups.

2.1.2. Values of Multicultural Education

Values of multicultural education are based on a theoretical framework that includes four core values: responsibility to the world community, acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity, reverence for the earth, and respect for human dignity and universal human rights (Bennett, 2010). In addition to these values, the goals of multicultural education are also classified and illustrated in the same framework (Bennett, 2010). Here is the classification: to develop multiple historical perspectives; to strengthen cultural consciousness; to strengthen intercultural competence; to combat racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice and discrimination; and to increase awareness of the state of the planet and global dynamics. These six goals are interrelated. However,

“The goals and values work on different levels. Whereas the six curricular goals might be more explicit in the curriculum, present in the organization and content of the course, the values would more often be implicit in the approach of the instructor and the structure of the class. Finally, these goals are a framework, not a mandate, for curricular reform. The model does not suggest that each goal carry the same weight but that the goals serve as a guide for course development.” (Bennett, 2010)

Since it investigates the extent to which multicultural education has been implemented in higher education, this study is a qualitative research conducted at UIN Sunan Kalijaga and UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin. Qualitative research is a type of research that has been used by many experts, especially in social fields. It “refers to the meanings, concepts definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and description of things” and not to their “counts or measures” (Berg & Lune, 2012).

In qualitative research, the most outstanding characteristic that differs from quantitative research is the epistemological assumptions regarding the nature of information needed to reach credible findings and conclusions (McMillan, 2008). In this sense, the researcher's subjectivity is in a high position to determine, process, and, at last, conclude. By looking at its characteristics, the study used direct data collection (McMillan, 2008). In this instance, the researchers gathered valid and newest data from both universities. Through this characteristic, the researcher accepted, considered, and adopted everything that enables it to be a source, reference, or data. The reason

is that a deep understanding of the topic is necessary (McMillan, 2008). Data were collected using three methods: interview, documentation, and observation. As a method to gather information by asking questions verbally to be answered verbally as well (Margono, 2004), the researchers did some interviews in an unstructured way, meaning that the researcher did not ask the respondents organized questions, and the questions were let flow in accordance with the issues discussed and the situation in the field. The number of participants interviewed were 11. For ethical reasons, their names have been disguised as participants 1-11. To them, the researcher emphasized that all sensitive statements that could trigger controversy would not be conveyed in the study. The researcher would protect their reputations, most of whom were officials at the two universities. They were those directly involved in structuring the curriculum and the learning process, as well as anyone regarded as related to the issue. They are rectors of both universities, some vice-rectors, deans, vice-deans, lecturers, and students.

The participant selection strategies were purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The difference between these two types of sampling lies in the basis and method of selecting participants. Purposive sampling is based on the participants' relevance and significance to the research topic. In this regard, the participants are those who were involved directly in leading both universities and those who were most responsible and representative in running multiculturalism in both UIN Sunan Kalijaga and UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin. Therefore, these participants were the “actors” who had power in their universities. Snowball sampling was based on recommendations by other people who knew them well in their capacity as representatives in dealing with multiculturalism on both campuses.

Documentation is document analysis. This strategy is “a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic (computer-based and internet-transmitted) material” (Bowen, 2009). Thus, documents are all sources that can be read, interpreted, and analyzed both written in text and recorded by electronic media. Document analysis was conducted by investigating the authentic data through books, journal articles, government regulations, online sources, representative reports, and unpublished certain documents. The method was used to obtain data mainly related to the curriculum implemented in UIN Sunan Kalijaga and UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin. This also was used to obtain data related primarily to multiculturalism at both universities. Lecturers from these universities wrote some of the books used, which were generally written in Indonesian. Journal articles, in this case, were published in various journals both in English and in Indonesian, both those that have international indexes and journals published locally or in higher education institutions. Government regulations are all regulations, laws, acts, and decisions of the Indonesian government. Online sources can be articles published on the two campuses' websites, articles published on blogs, or websites. Representative reports could be reports of institution units at each campus about activities carried out or accountability reports made by university officials.

The observation was also used primarily to look at the actual condition of students in the learning process and their daily association with them. Suppose something is found contrary to students' multiculturalism, for example. In that case, it was investigated whether it directly impacts lessons learned from their lecturers or any external factors. Therefore, the observation was based on the need to identify the implantation of values of multicultural education among students especially. The length of observation was about five months.

Data analysis was the following stage after all the data had been gathered. The researchers were responsible for getting in touch with, approaching, and conducting interviews with participants during the data collection phase. They also had to gather and select all necessary materials for the research topic during the data analysis phase. Data analysis involves (Hitchcock

& Hughes, 1995) "discovering and deriving patterns in the data, looking for general orientations in the data and, in trying to sort what the data are about, why and what kinds of might be said about them" (p. 295). Data were analyzed through descriptive analysis and critical analysis. Descriptive analysis provides a detailed profile and information about implementing multicultural education in both Islamic universities. However, what is meant by descriptive here is not completely free of interpretation (Sandelowski, 2000). The interpretation is to strengthen the arguments in addition to analyzing all data relevant to the research questions. Critical analysis, also called critical thinking, implies a critique that identifies the intellectual capacity to make a judgment (Brown, 1993) regarding the implementation of multicultural education in both universities. In a broader scope, applying this critical analysis will allow the researchers to examine and criticize the various tasks in multicultural education at the two universities.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. Findings

The findings are divided into two parts: the implementation of multicultural education at UIN Sunan Kalijaga and UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin and the strategies applied by the two universities in promoting and imparting multicultural education to students.

3.1.1. Implementation of Multicultural Education at UIN Sunan Kalijaga and UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin

The implementation of multicultural education at both universities is described in the following explanations: *First*, the fact that UIN Sunan Kalijaga and UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin are higher education institutions that have students with a high level of cultural diversity (Participant 5, personal communication, August 29, 2022) does not prevent these two institutions from treating all students equally. In these two universities, there are non-Muslim students. They are allowed to pursue Islamic and scientific education without discriminating against other Muslim students (Participant 1, personal communication, August 5, 2022; Participant 5, personal communication, August 29, 2022).

At UIN Sunan Kalijaga, starting from the 2022/2023 Academic Year, a new student admission program has been launched through the diversity path (*jalur keberagaman*) and the three "t" (*terdepan*[frontier], *terluar* [outermost], and *tertinggal* [underdeveloped]) path (UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2022). This two-track offering is a real campus step for the campus in maintaining the diversity of the nation amidst a lot of differences. UIN Sunan Kalijaga campus has a long history of being committed to always maintaining the values of diversity.

Aware of this fact of plurality, both at UIN Sunan Kalijaga and at UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, multiculturalism or multiculturalism education is taught and developed in such a way (Participant 10, personal communication, December 12, 2022; Participant 3, personal communication, August 26, 2022). Thus, in this context, the two UINs have built an equity pedagogy by bringing multiculturalism into the learning process. This implementation aligns with broader patterns observed in other Islamic educational settings. For example, Abdullah School in India has integrated multicultural values through dual curricula and inclusive character education programs, fostering empathy and interreligious respect among students (Muqowim & Munastiwi, 2024). In the Indonesian context, Islamic schools embracing civil society principles and democratic leadership have shown positive impacts in nurturing socially responsible and pluralistic youth (S. A. Susanti et al., 2024).

The concern for multiculturalism at UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin has been highlighted by several lecturers who care about it. One of the critical statements regarding the phenomenon that is developing on many campuses in the country emerges from one of the lecturers in which

"The phenomenon of the struggle between students themselves, and not infrequently being used by ideological barriers, on the basis of narrow group fanaticism continues to emerge, even though they are actually fighters for multiculturalism and pluralism towards the establishment of a dialogical political culture that is Godly and humane." (Malik, 2017)

Second, in an effort to integrate multicultural content into learning, UIN Sunan Kalijaga has made *Pendidikan Multikultural* (Multicultural Education) a course. At the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Education, I myself as a lecturer taught this course in the Kependidikan Islam (Islamic Education) Study Program in 2013-2014 and the Manajemen Pendidikan Islam (Islamic Education Management) Study Program in 2020. Experience in teaching this subject suggests that this campus has accommodated multiculturalism through the provision of courses included in the curriculum of departments/study programs and faculties. That is why the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Education teaches multiculturalism and multicultural education as course subjects in all departments in an effort to respond to plurality and multiculturalism itself. Even, multiculturalism is not only included in the curriculum of the Faculty of *Tarbiyah* and Teaching Sciences, but also in other faculties. This is undertaken by the understanding that the implementation of the values of multiculturalism is a way to enhance the dignity of humanity.

At UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi there is no specific course called *Pendidikan Multikultural* (Multicultural Education), but the content of multicultural education or multiculturalism is emphasized in several subjects such as Orientalism and Occidentalism and Agama dan Budaya (Religion and Culture) (Participants 6, 7, and 8, personal communication, August 29, 2022). From this, it can be shown that the knowledge construction process has been implemented in these two UINs. The impression is that the two universities have a concern about integrating multiculturalism into learning materials. This concern can form knowledge that has an insight into multiculturalism in students. However, if the two universities are compared, UIN Sunan Kalijaga appears to have a higher concern than UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin. This can be seen not only from the fact that UIN Sunan Kalijaga has made Multicultural Education a course but also from the fact that many institutions or study centers have been established to accommodate multiculturalism. In this case, it can be mentioned that among them are *Pusat Layanan Difabel* (Center for Disability Service), *Pusat Studi Pengembangan Wacana Keragaman Agama dan Sosial Budaya* (Center for Development Studies of Religion Diversity Discourse and Socio-culture), Center for Teaching Staff Development, Center for the Study of Religious and Socio-Cultural Diversity, and *Pusat Studi Wanita* (Center for Women Studies).

PLD UIN Sunan Kalijaga even has its own achievements because this institution is the first institution at the tertiary level in Indonesia that is concerned with disabilities (Abdullah, 2010). In this instance, PLD can be regarded as a disability service center that is useful not only for UIN Sunan Kalijaga but also for other higher education institutions. Officials at UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, for example, admit that the establishment of the *Pusat Kajian Disabilitas* (Center for Disability Studies) at UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin is inseparable from the contribution made by UIN Sunan Kalijaga—in this case, PLD (UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, 2022).

Study centers aimed at accommodating multiculturalism at UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin can also be found. Besides the PKD, it can also be mentioned that others are the *Pusat Studi Demografi, Etnografi dan Transformasi Sosial* (Center for Demographic, Ethnographic, and Social Transformation Studies) and the *Pusat Kajian Melayu, Kebudayaan dan Peradaban* (Center for Malay, Culture, and Civilization Studies). The number of study centers that concentrate on multiculturalism at UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin is much less than the study

centers at UIN Sunan Kalijaga, as mentioned above. From this, it can also be said that the study institutions at UIN Sunan Kalijaga have a higher level of diversity than at UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin. Thus, even though the process of integration of multiculturalism knowledge is seen in these two universities, the scope of knowledge developed by the two higher education institutions looks quite different where UIN Sunan Kalijaga is more prominent than the other.

Third, efforts made to reduce prejudice and empower school culture in relation to multiculturalism are:

3.1.1.1. Paying attention to human resources.

While UIN Sunan Kalijaga pays much attention to human resources, especially lecturers, for example in leadership succession which does not show partiality to one particular organizational affiliation but reflects accommodation for all organizations or groups, UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin emphasizes advising students on the insights of equality.

UIN Sunan Kalijaga gives everyone an equal opportunity to carry out any activities and programs included in the leadership succession. The leaders of this institution have made solid efforts to accommodate and recognize the cultural diversity of the communities. In an interview with Participant 1 (personal communication, August 5, 2022), it was said that the leadership of this campus pays serious attention to equality.

Meanwhile, in an interview with Participant 4 (personal communication, August 26, 2022) of UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, it was said that *"Meanwhile, advising students is mostly conducted by instilling their insights into multiculturalism. In the process of cultivating these multiculturalism insights, the values of equality and mutual respect continue to be put forward in order to shape the character of multicultural students."* Attention to students is, of course, not without reason. Students are agents of change in society (Akin et al., 2017). On his shoulders lies the hope of the nation and state to continue the struggle mandated in the laws and constitution. In the Strategic Plan of UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, it is said that *"Higher Education has a moral responsibility, autonomy, and functions that must produce students who have qualifications relevant to development in the context of current and future needs"* (UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, 2017a).

3.1.1.2. Cooperating with institutions that focus on strengthening multiculturalism

UIN Sunan Kalijaga cooperates, for example, with the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Republic of Indonesia, in commemorating the International Day of Disabilities (UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2021); with the *Persatuan Tunanetra Indonesia/Pertuni* (Indonesian Blind Union) that brought about the publication of the Quran in Braille; and with several higher education institutions like Universitas Gadjah Mada, and Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana that established the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies (ICRS), a doctoral program in religious studies (ICRS, 2020).

Meanwhile, UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin collaborates, for example, with schools or madrasas to instill multiculturalism insights to students (Participant 6, personal communication, August 29, 2022); with the Sekolah Luar Biasa/SLB (Extraordinary School) Harapan Mulia Jambi that brought about a memorandum of understanding for supporting social works; and with the State SLB/SLBN Jambi Province (UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, 2017b) for access for the Journal of Disability Studies and Research (JDSR), PKD, UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, research related to disability in Indonesia, cooperation in implementing the curriculum of Merdeka Belajar - Kampus Merdeka, and improving the quality of SLB teachers.

3.1.1.3. Strengthening local culture in the context of accommodation for differences.

In terms of local culture, UIN Sunan Kalijaga is claimed to be a "home" for rich Javanese culture (Sibawaihi & Fernandes, 2023). As is known, Javanese is widely recognized as "the most powerful cultural group in politics and society" in the country (Noel, 2008). Javanese people inhabit not only Yogyakarta but also cover almost the entire island of Java which has six provinces.

Meanwhile, UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin with the Center for Malay Studies, Culture, and Civilization dedicates itself to the study of sustainable development goals. This study center is an institution that participates in reducing distortions of Malay culture and civilization through education, research, and community service (UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, 2018). Through studies of Malay culture and other ethnicities surrounding UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, such as Minangkabau and Bugis, it is believed that

"At this university, people's understanding of multiculturalism has been held long before the term multiculturalism itself was taught at this institution. Without the need to go deep into what multiculturalism and pluralism are, our people (the academic community at UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin) have understood the insights that teach equality and equity and put them into practice." (Participant 5, personal communication, August 29, 2022)

3.1.2. Strategies adopted by both campuses

There are five strategies applied by UIN Sunan Kalijaga and UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin in promoting and imparting multicultural education to students. First, both universities make adjustments to the curriculum. It is demonstrated by the fact that both universities incorporate multicultural content into their curriculum. There is a difference between both universities: UIN Sunan Kalijaga makes Pendidikan Multicultural (Multicultural Education) a course, while UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin just emphasizes multiculturalism insights into several courses. Several lecturers are enthusiastic about incorporating multiculturalism into their teaching in front of students even though the subjects being taught are not directly related to multiculturalism (Participant 9, personal communication, August 29, 2022). Multiculturalism is basically emphasized by graduates. The knowledge that is developed then automatically becomes multidisciplinary, targeting not only one scientific field but also other sciences. This is the essence of the trans-integration scientific paradigm developed and promoted at this university (Su'aidi, 2020).

Second, they promote equality through campus activities. It has been undertaken by (a) developing an attitude of respect for ethnic diversity (Participant 2, personal communication, August 10, 2022; Participant 5, personal communication, August 29, 2022). The people on these two campuses (lecturers, staff, and students) have a fairly high diversity in terms of ethnicity. UIN Sunan Kalijaga treats international students fairly and cooperatively without discriminating against them from local/national students. UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin also undertakes the same thing with the students. Students from various regions and ethnicities, even international students, are treated the same. The leaders prioritize student development in terms of an understanding of equality that leads to respect for differences. Student organizations have advisors who are generally lecturers. Suppose disputes arise between these organizations that are difficult to reconcile. In that case, the way is to ask the advisors to handle these cases directly through a meeting facilitated by the university leadership (Participant 4, personal communication, August 26, 2022); (b) providing maximum opportunities for all individuals and groups in various campus programs and activities regardless of their background and group affiliation (Participant 3, personal communication, August 26, 2022; Participant 10, personal communication, December 12, 2022). What is emphasized in this point is the provision of equal opportunities for

all students to participate in various campus programs and activities (Participants 6 and 8, personal communication, August 29, 2022); (c) developing cohesiveness based on the joint participation of different groups so that all groups feel that they are not discriminated against. The aspect of democracy is emphasized in this regard (Participant 6, personal communication, August 29, 2022; Participant 10, personal communication, December 12, 2022). This third point, in principle, justifies the first two points, especially in joint participation. The difference is in the emphasis that all large or small groups are given the same opportunity to grow and develop in these two universities.

Third, in the learning process, lecturers are considered to have a strategic role in instilling multiculturalism insights directly into students. Lecturers are expected to realize that teaching is not just saying words, but needs to provide opportunities for students to develop and actively seek and process the knowledge/information obtained so that it becomes an understanding that is integrated with the knowledge and experience possessed by students. In this regard, efforts are made to strengthen the values of multiculturalism not only in classroom learning but also in direct practice (Participant 6, personal communication, August 29, 2022; Participant 11, personal communication, December 14, 2022). Lecturers also are expected to be able to teach culture in an easy way to understand by emphasizing equality and equity (Participant 6, personal communication, August 29, 2022; Participant 11, personal communication, December 14, 2022). An understanding of the meaning of culture will lead students to appreciate differences because culture itself teaches that with reason a person will respect other people, not because of their position or social status but because they are human beings (Rose, 2016; Unifrog, 2022). In addition, lecturers are expected to be able to bridge any problems that arise between fellow students in relation to cultural differences. In this case, the lecturers must be able to explain the location of common ground that can be developed together so that the differences do not lead to division but to unity (Participant 4, personal communication, August 26, 2022; Participant 10, personal communication, December 12, 2022).

Fourth, they form study centers with multiculturalism insight. Study centers which are at UIN Sunan Kalijaga for example are *Pusat Layanan Difabel/PLD* (Center for Disability Service), *Pusat Studi Pengembangan Wacana Keragaman Agama dan Sosial Budaya* (Center for Development Studies of Religion Diversity Discourse and Socio-culture), Center for Teaching Staff Development, Center for the Study of Religious and Socio-Cultural Diversity, and *Pusat Studi Wanita* (Center for Women Studies), while at UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin are *Pusat Kajian Disabilitas/PKD* (Center for Disability Studies), *Pusat Studi Demografi, Etnografi dan Transformasi Sosial* (Center for Demographic, Ethnographic, and Social Transformation Studies), and *Pusat Kajian Melayu, Kebudayaan dan Peradaban* (Center for Malay, Culture, and Civilization Studies). PLD UIN Sunan Kalijaga even has its own achievements because this institution is the first institution at the tertiary level in Indonesia that is concerned with disabilities (Abdullah, 2010). In this instance, PLD can be regarded as a disability service center that is useful not only for UIN Sunan Kalijaga but also for other higher education institutions. Officials at UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, for example, admit that the establishment of the *Pusat Kajian Disabilitas* (Center for Disability Studies) at UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin is inseparable from the contribution made by UIN Sunan Kalijaga—in this case, PLD (UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, 2022). PKD UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, although new, has achievements that cannot be underestimated. Based on the results of the UNESA Dimetric Awards 2022, UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin is ranked 13th out of 125 higher education institutions. In this ranking, there are two out of ten indicators that are directly related to multiculturalism or to be more precise to a

disability, namely the special policy for disability inclusion and cooperation with disability organizations ([Jamberita.com, 2022](#); [UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, 2022](#)).

Fifth, they maintain the uniqueness of each university in fighting for equality. UIN Sunan Kalijaga, for example, shares the characteristics of the university that is known to prioritize scientific multiculturalism (Participant 10, personal communication, December 12, 2022). There is pride and uniqueness in human resources at this university, implying that the campus is culturally friendly. Besides realizing the strategic position of the university, which is the oldest state Islamic higher education institution in the country that teaches religious messages about protecting the vulnerable and oppressed, the leadership of UIN Sunan Kalijaga is well aware that this campus is a laboratory for the embodiment of multicultural values ([Sibawaihi, 2022](#)). Meanwhile, UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, located in a relatively developing area, pays attention to demographic and population studies. The Center for Demographic, Ethnographic, and Social Transformation Studies at this university examines at least demography (the knowledge base of various population studies with a multidisciplinary approach), governance (studies on government governance developed to respond to current population issues in order to produce policy recommendations), gender (covering contemporary issues such as reproductive health, sexuality, gender-based violence), and social issues (raised as an effort to increase public awareness of the importance of knowing social issues that are happening) ([UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, 2017b](#)).

The inculcation of multiculturalism insight seems inseparable from the vision and missions carried out by UIN Sunan Kalijaga and UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin. The vision targeted at UIN Sunan Kalijaga is the "integration and development of Islam and science for civilization." This means that the intended target of this integration is a civilization, which means the world of humanity as a whole without polarizing it into parts ([Duiker & Spielvogel, 2016](#); [Sulaiman, 2016](#)). In one of its missions, it is said that UIN Sunan Kalijaga is "*Increasing the role of institutions in solving national problems based on Islamic and scientific insights for the realization of civil society.*" What is meant by civil society is society, which is not a family and a state, that upholds ethical life ([Udegbumam, 2014](#)).

UIN Sunan Kalijaga has the slogan "UIN Sunan Kalijaga for the nation, UIN Sunan Kalijaga globalizes" ([UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2020](#)). This motto always underlies and inspires various activities or programs carried out within this university (Participant 10, personal communication, December 10, 2022). Multiculturalism, thus, becomes a vehicle for the implementation of this motto which wants this institution to be globalized in its various aspects. In its role as a higher education institution, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, along with Universitas Gadjah Mada and Universitas Sanata Dharma, has developed its wings by, for example, establishing a higher education institution, the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies that offers an integrative and international doctoral program in inter-religious studies ([ICRS, 2020](#)).

Meanwhile, the vision of UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin as a whole does seem to have a different emphasis from that of UIN Sunan Kalijaga, but the vision of UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin emphasizes this university as a locomotive for social change at the national and international levels with a spirit of moderation ([UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, 2017b](#)). Such a vision statement shows a strong desire to instill a spirit of moderation in the life of the nation and state, both on national and international scales (Participant 3, personal communication, August 26, 2022). The same spirit can also be identified in its mission, where UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin launched "Internationalization of the campus through regional and global cooperation with mutual benefits." ([UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, 2017b](#)). For this university, cooperation has become one of the missions and goals that must be implemented ([UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, 2017b](#)).

However, there is something that seems lacking for UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin when the multiculturalism or Multicultural Education course is not given specifically as is the case at UIN Sunan Kalijaga. Incorporating Multicultural Education into the curriculum of study programs/departments or faculties is a real effort to formally embed multiculturalism into the curriculum. The curriculum is an important component of education that has a strategic position. *"... school's curriculum is the total effort of the school to bring about the desired outcome's in school and in out-of-school situations. In short, the curriculum is the school's program for the learner"* (Saylor et al., 1981). On the other hand, UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi with its scientific distinction is expected to become a trademark and branding to become agent of social change, especially in the Jambi Province. This is important considering that this tertiary institution is expected to produce not only intellectual candidates in their respective fields but also intellectual candidates who are useful in society. With this distinction, it is also hoped that good communication and cooperation will be established between the university, the community, and the local government.

4. Conclusion

Based on the two questions raised in the research, the study divides the conclusion into two parts as follows: First, in order to implement multicultural education, both universities built an equity pedagogy by incorporating multiculturalism into the educational process, integrating multicultural content into learning, instilling multiculturalism insight in the process of knowledge construction, and making an effort to lessen prejudice and strengthen school culture. Second, Strategies used to promote and impart multicultural education to students are paying attention to the curriculum, promoting equality through campus activities (by developing an attitude of respect for ethnic diversity, providing maximum opportunities for all individuals and groups in various campus programs and activities, and developing cohesiveness based on the joint participation of different groups), instilling multiculturalism insights into students in the learning process, creating study centers with multiculturalism, and maintaining the uniqueness of each university in fighting for equality.

The vision and missions pursued by the two universities appear inseparable from the inculcation of multiculturalism insight. When the vision of UIN Sunan Kalijaga targets humanity as a whole, that of UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin emphasizes social change in a spirit of moderation at the national and international levels. However, when the Multicultural Education course is not officially offered, as is the case at UIN Sunan Kalijaga, there is something that seems to be wanting for UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin. Multicultural education is an actual attempt to formally integrate multiculturalism into the curriculum of an institution. A crucial element of education with a strategic position is the curriculum. On the other hand, UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin has a distinction as an agent of social transformation, particularly in the Jambi Province, Indonesia. Consequently, the institution, community, and local government would build strong communication and cooperation.

Through this study, the authors realize that although the study has provided a very valuable experience, the research on multicultural education in Islamic universities has not been final. First, this study examines two state Islamic universities under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Republic of Indonesia. Given the large number of state Islamic campuses in this country, of course these two UINs do not represent other state Islamic campuses that have different geographical and cultural contexts. Therefore, further research on state Islamic universities that are geographically and culturally different also needs to be undertaken. For example, state Islamic universities in Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Maluku, or Papua. These universities can be compared with each other or not. Given the characteristics of state Islamic universities that are scientifically almost the same, the study can compare more than two universities. Second, the comparative research can be expanded by comparing

not only two state Islamic universities under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, but also two universities, both state and private, under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture; or two universities, both state and private, both under the Ministry of Education and Culture. For the latter case, one can compare, for example, the University of Indonesia which is located around Metropolitan Jakarta, and Hasanuddin University in Makassar, South Sulawesi, which is far from the capital of the Republic of Indonesia. Or, comparing universities on the island of Bali with universities on the island of Lombok, two islands that are close together but culturally very different.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

Sibawaihi contributed as the main and corresponding author. He undertook every aspect of the research. Mohd. Arifullah was involved in doing interviews and processing data especially related to UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin. Moh. Solikul Hadi assisted in conducting literature review and collecting data especially related to UIN Sunan Kalijaga..

Funding statement

This research was funded by the Institute of Research and Community Service (Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat) UIN Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 2022.

Data availability statement

The datasets generated during and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Declaration of Interest's statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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