



[DOI: 10.61650/ajis.v4i1.1166](https://doi.org/10.61650/ajis.v4i1.1166)

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Shaping Multicultural Character in the Generation Alpha Era at MA Ma'arif Roudlotut Tholibin Metro City

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Article History: Received: 20 February 2026 • Revised: 25 March 2025 • Accepted: 15 April 2026

• Published: 30 April 2026

ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in shaping multicultural character among Generation Alpha students and to identify the multicultural values developed at MA Ma'arif Roudlotut Tholibin, Metro City. The research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design, where data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. Participants were selected purposively, consisting of PAI teachers, tenth-grade students, the madrasah principal, and homeroom teachers, with data analysis following the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings reveal five strategic roles of PAI teachers (value educator, role model, cross-cultural dialogue facilitator, motivator, and evaluator) and seven internalized multicultural values (tolerance, justice, brotherhood, empathy, open-mindedness, democratic dialogue, and peace-loving). This study also identifies major challenges including exposure to intolerant digital content and individualistic tendencies among Generation Alpha students. The implications emphasize the need to integrate digital literacy into PAI learning as well as culturally responsive pedagogy training for teachers.

Keywords: role of Islamic Religious Education teachers; multicultural character; Generation Alpha; qualitative case study



ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan peran guru Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) dalam membentuk karakter multikultural pada siswa Generasi Alpha serta mengidentifikasi nilai-nilai multikultural yang dikembangkan di MA Ma'arif Roudlotut Tholibin Kota Metro. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus, di mana data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi. Partisipan dipilih secara purposif terdiri dari guru PAI, siswa kelas X, kepala madrasah, dan wali kelas, dengan analisis data mengikuti model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña. Hasil penelitian menemukan lima peran strategis guru PAI (pendidik nilai, teladan, fasilitator dialog lintas budaya, motivator, dan evaluator) serta tujuh nilai multikultural yang diinternalisasikan (toleransi, keadilan, persaudaraan, empati, keterbukaan pikiran, dialog demokratis, dan cinta damai). Penelitian ini juga mengidentifikasi tantangan utama berupa paparan konten digital intoleran dan kecenderungan individualistik siswa Generasi Alpha. Implikasi penelitian menekankan perlunya integrasi literasi digital dalam pembelajaran PAI serta pelatihan pedagogi responsif budaya bagi guru.

Kata Kunci: peran guru PAI; karakter multikultural; Generasi Alpha; studi kasus kualitatif

How to cite: Nuraini, Y. R., Setiawan, D., & Zuniati, M. (2026). The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Shaping Multicultural Character in the Generation Alpha Era at MA Ma'arif Roudlotut Tholibin Metro City. *Assyfa Journal of Islamic Studies*, 4(1), 519-532. <https://doi.org/10.61650/ajis.v4i1.1166>

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization and digitalization have fundamentally transformed character education systems, particularly in developing countries such as Indonesia, which is characterized by extraordinary ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. Generation Alpha, generally defined as individuals born between 2010 and 2025, is the first generation to have been fully integrated with digital technology from early childhood (Putri et al., 2024). Their characteristics as digital natives shape distinctive learning and social interaction patterns while also creating vulnerability to intolerant, exclusive, and radical religious ideologies distributed through digital media platforms. This situation poses a serious challenge for educational institutions, especially madrasahs, in fulfilling their role as agents of character formation that promote moderation and multicultural perspectives. Preliminary observations at MA Ma'arif Roudlotut Tholibin in Metro City, Lampung Province, in November 2025 found that among 25 tenth-grade students from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including Javanese, Sundanese, Ngapak, and Lampungese, understanding of multicultural values and tolerance remained limited, while existing teaching methods had not fully accommodated individual differences among students (Maisah et al., 2020).

Multicultural character education serves as a strategic instrument for responding to the pluralistic nature of Indonesian society. As Banks emphasizes, multicultural education seeks to develop awareness of diversity as a national asset rather than a source of conflict. In Islamic Religious Education (PAI), teachers occupy a central role that goes beyond the transmission of religious knowledge. Their responsibilities include acting as value educators, moral and spiritual guides, models of religious conduct, and mediators who instill religious moderation. Islamic values such as tolerance (*tasamuh*), justice (*'adl*), brotherhood (*ukhuwah*), and mutual respect are closely related to efforts to strengthen students' multicultural character (Rusydi, 2020). Recent studies, however, show that these roles have not been implemented optimally, as reflected in the limited

internalization of multicultural values in learning and insufficient educator role modeling (Maghfiroh & Halim, 2024). This reveals a gap between the ideal expectations of Islamic Religious Education teachers and actual practice (M.Yusuf, 2023).

A systematic review of multicultural education in Islamic Religious Education reveals a significant research gap. Most existing studies focus on curriculum and macro-level policy through quantitative approaches, providing insufficient depth for exploring the meanings, experiences, and actual practices of teachers and students (Muhammad, 2025). Research on the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in the context of Generation Alpha remains limited, despite the generation's distinctive learning styles, social interaction patterns, and fundamentally different ways of understanding diversity (Syinta et al., 2025). Studies specifically examining multicultural teaching strategies adapted to Generation Alpha in madrasah environments are also rare. In-depth exploration is therefore needed to understand how teachers navigate the tension between technological demands and the sustained internalization of multicultural values (Yusuf et al., 2022).

Based on the identified research gap, this study aims to: (1) describe the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in developing multicultural character among Generation Alpha students at MA Ma'arif Roudlotut Tholibin, Metro City, Lampung Province; and (2) identify the multicultural values developed through Islamic Religious Education learning at the institution. The study focuses on teachers' experiences and actual practices as educators, role models, facilitators, and mediators of values amid the challenges of the digital era. Theoretically, it is expected to enrich scholarly discourse on multicultural character education by integrating Generation Alpha characteristics into the framework of Islamic Religious Education teacher roles. Practically, the findings provide strategic recommendations for developing more inclusive, contextual, and adaptive Islamic education programs and offer guidance to educators, policymakers, and madrasah stakeholders in designing learning strategies responsive to digital-era challenges (Haidar et al., 2023).

The theoretical foundation of multicultural education in Islamic Religious Education rests at the intersection of three major conceptual frameworks: multicultural education theory, Islamic educational philosophy, and generational learning theory. Banks, a seminal scholar in multicultural education, conceptualized five dimensions: content integration, the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture and social structure. These dimensions provide a foundation for understanding how educational institutions can respond to student diversity.

The operationalization of multicultural values in Islamic education has been articulated through key constructs rooted in classical Islamic ethics. Inclusive Islamic values such as *tasamuh* (tolerance), *'adl* (justice), *ukhuwah*, which includes *ukhuwah Islamiyah*, *ukhuwah wathaniyah*, and *ukhuwah basyariyah*, and *rahmatan lil 'alamin* provide a normative foundation for multicultural character formation. These values are not merely abstract ethical principles but are intended to be internalized systematically through pedagogical strategies, including curriculum integration, transformative learning, and social-action decision making. Unlike additive or contributive approaches, transformative multicultural Islamic Religious Education requires students to move beyond passive acceptance of diversity toward active engagement with social justice issues and community problem solving. This perspective corresponds with Freirean critical pedagogy, which

has been adapted in Islamic education to emphasize *tafaqquh fi al-din*, or deep religious understanding, as a foundation for social transformation rather than ritual compliance alone. Recent studies therefore emphasize that effective multicultural Islamic Religious Education requires critical awareness of structural inequality while remaining grounded in authentic Islamic epistemological traditions (Alfafan & Nadhif, 2023).

Empirical studies of multicultural education in Islamic educational settings have revealed both promising practices and persistent challenges. A systematic review by Sunarti et al. (2024) found that effective multicultural education management includes inclusive curriculum development, continuous teacher professional development, and learning environments that respect diversity. Islamic Religious Education teachers are critical to integrating multicultural values because they can teach tolerance and respect for difference through a religious perspective. Using Banks's multicultural education model as an analytical framework, Hendriksen et al. (2024) found that inclusive practices among secondary school teachers were often regarded as meaningful but difficult to manage and disconnected from everyday teaching. High teacher agency depended on the ability to connect inclusive approaches with existing curriculum structures. These findings correspond with the Indonesian context, where Hastuty and Das (2025) documented that multicultural Islamic Religious Education strategies can improve tolerance and social cohesion, but limited systemic integration and inadequate culturally responsive teacher training remain significant obstacles. Studies of teacher competence further indicate that many Islamic Religious Education teachers lack a deep understanding of multiculturalism, contributing to exclusive attitudes that contradict fundamental multicultural education principles (Eva Latipah & Mardiyah, 2020).

Despite growing scholarly attention to multicultural education in Islamic contexts, substantial theoretical and empirical gaps remain. First, existing research largely focuses on curriculum and policy analysis through quantitative approaches, producing limited understanding of the processes, meanings, and actual practices through which Islamic Religious Education teachers navigate multicultural challenges in their daily work. Second, although Generation Alpha has been recognized as having learning characteristics fundamentally different from previous generations, studies specifically examining how teachers adapt multicultural strategies to digital-native characteristics, rapid information absorption, high curiosity, and the potential individualism of Generation Alpha remain rare. Third, the literature lacks an integrative framework linking the multidimensional Islamic philosophical conception of teacher roles, including *ustadz*, *mu'allim*, *murabbi*, and related roles, with the specific demands of multicultural pedagogy in digital learning environments. This study addresses these gaps through an in-depth qualitative exploration of how Islamic Religious Education teachers interpret and enact their roles in developing multicultural character among Generation Alpha students.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative case study design based on the rationale articulated by Creswell and Poth (2023), who define case study research as an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. The design was appropriate because the study sought to explore deeply the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in developing multicultural character among Generation Alpha students at a specific institution, MA Ma'arif Roudlotut Tholibin in

Metro City, Lampung Province. It enabled the researcher to capture the complexity and uniqueness of the phenomenon as it occurred naturally while preserving the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events. The research was conducted over three months, from November 2025 to January 2026. The site was selected based on preliminary observations indicating that multicultural character formation by Islamic Religious Education teachers had not yet been implemented optimally and that existing teaching methods had not fully accommodated individual student differences (Sriliza, 2025).

Participants were selected through purposive sampling according to criteria relevant to the research objectives. Informants included: (1) Islamic Religious Education teachers responsible for teaching tenth-grade students and directly involved in multicultural value internalization; (2) tenth-grade students representing Generation Alpha, born in or after 2010, and selected from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including Javanese, Sundanese, Ngapak, and Lampungese; and (3) the madrasah principal as the primary policymaker. The total number of informants was determined through data saturation and was estimated at 10-15 participants. Data collection included semi-structured in-depth interviews to explore teachers' experiences, strategies, and challenges; participant observation to examine learning processes and teacher-student interactions directly; and documentation of lesson plans, teaching materials, student records, and photographs of learning activities. All interviews were audio-recorded with informed consent and transcribed verbatim (Solekha et al., 2025).

Data credibility was ensured through source and method triangulation. Source triangulation compared information from Islamic Religious Education teachers, students, and the madrasah principal, while method triangulation compared interview, observation, and documentation data. Member checking was conducted by returning interview transcripts to informants for accuracy verification. Prolonged engagement in the field enabled the researcher to develop trust and gain deeper contextual understanding. Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of: (1) data condensation through selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming raw data from interview transcripts, field notes, and documents; (2) data display through narrative text, matrices, and diagrams to support pattern recognition and conclusion drawing; and (3) conclusion drawing and verification through interpretation of data patterns, regularities, and causal flows. Manual coding included open coding to identify initial themes, axial coding to organize themes into broader analytical categories, and selective coding to integrate and refine the core categories that addressed the research questions (Kamsir et al., 2025).

3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The findings reveal the multifaceted roles of Islamic Religious Education teachers in developing multicultural character among Generation Alpha students at MA Ma'arif Roudlotut Tholibin, Metro City. Based on in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis conducted from November 2025 to January 2026, three central themes emerged: (1) teachers' strategic roles as multicultural educators, (2) multicultural values internalized through Islamic Religious Education learning, and (3) digital-era challenges and adaptive strategies. The first theme concerns the multidimensional roles performed by Islamic Religious Education teachers. Interviews with two teachers, coded G1 and G2, showed that their roles extended beyond conventional instruction to five strategic positions (Arikarani et al., 2025).

Role 1: Value Educator and Internalization Agent

Both Islamic Religious Education teachers demonstrated awareness of their responsibility as primary agents of multicultural value internalization. Teacher G1 stated, "I do not only teach the pillars of Islam or chapter memorization; I also help students understand that Islam is rahmatan lil 'alamin. When I teach tolerance, I connect it with Surah Al-Kafirun and the Prophet's example of living alongside non-Muslims." This finding is consistent with the conceptualization of Islamic Religious Education teachers as mu'allim and murabbi, whose roles include not only knowledge transmission but also moral and spiritual development (Nurlita Ekasari et al., 2025).

Role 2: Role Model

Observation revealed that teachers consistently modeled inclusive behavior. Across three observed Islamic Religious Education sessions, teachers: (1) greeted students with both Arabic greetings and local Javanese greetings; (2) invited students from different ethnic backgrounds to lead prayers; and (3) treated all students with equal attention regardless of academic achievement or family background. Teacher G2 explained, "Generation Alpha students are highly observant. They imitate what I do more quickly than they listen to what I say. I therefore have to consistently demonstrate friendliness to every student without distinguishing ethnicity or ability." This finding supports Mulyasa's view that teachers inherently function as models whose behavior is continuously observed and imitated by students (Rusmiatiningsih & Rizkyantha, 2022).

Role 3: Facilitator of Cross-Cultural Dialogue

Teachers actively created space for interethnic and interreligious dialogue. In a lesson on *ukhuwah Islamiyah*, the teacher deliberately formed heterogeneous groups combining Javanese, Sundanese, and Lampungese students. Teacher G1 explained, "I intentionally create mixed groups. When students discuss the material, they automatically learn to listen to friends from different regions. This develops empathy and openness." The strategy corresponds with Banks's equity pedagogy dimension, in which teachers modify instructional approaches to facilitate achievement among diverse student populations.

Role 4: Motivator of Inclusive Participation

Observation documented motivational strategies adapted to Generation Alpha characteristics. Recognizing that students born in the digital era respond well to visual and interactive stimuli, teachers used multimedia presentations depicting Indonesia's cultural diversity. Teacher G2 stated, "I often show videos about Indonesian cultural diversity. Students born in the digital era are more interested in visual content. Afterward, I ask them to share their own experiences of friendships with students from different ethnic groups" (Imron et al., 2023).

Role 5: Evaluator of Multicultural Competence

Assessment practices extended beyond cognitive evaluation to affective and behavioral dimensions. Teachers reported using observation sheets to monitor students' everyday interactions. Teacher G1 explained, "I do not only assess daily tests; I also observe how they behave outside the classroom. Are they willing to work in groups with students from different ethnicities? Do they respect different opinions?" The second major theme identified seven core multicultural values

systematically integrated into Islamic Religious Education learning based on interview data, lesson plan analysis, and observation records.

Value 1: Tolerance (*Tasamuh*)

All informants consistently identified tolerance as a fundamental multicultural value. Student S2, a Sundanese student, explained, "The Islamic Religious Education teacher teaches us that Islam requires tolerance. I have friends from Lampung and Java, and we never argue merely because of ethnic differences. The teacher says that difference is beautiful." This finding corresponds with Ramadani et al. (2025), who found that contextual and reflective approaches are most effective in developing tolerance.

Value 2: Inclusive Justice (*'adl*)

Teachers demonstrated a commitment to treating all students fairly regardless of background. Analysis of the lesson plan, Document D4, showed explicit learning objectives related to justice, including the statement, "Students can demonstrate fair treatment toward classmates from different ethnic and religious backgrounds."

Value 3: Brotherhood (*Ukhuwah*)

Universal brotherhood was operationalized through three subdimensions: *ukhuwah* Islamiyah, brotherhood among Muslims; *ukhuwah* wathaniyah, national brotherhood; and *ukhuwah* basyariyah, human brotherhood. Teacher G1 explained, "I teach that *ukhuwah* does not apply only among Muslims but also among fellow Indonesian citizens and even all human beings."

Value 4: Empathy and Mutual Assistance

Student interviews revealed the internalization of mutual assistance. Student S3, a Javanese student, stated, "When a friend experiences difficulty, I remember the Islamic Religious Education lesson about helping others. I do not consider the friend's ethnicity; what matters is that the person needs help" (Rusmiatiningsih & Rizkyantha, 2022).

Value 5: Open-Mindedness (*Tafakkur*)

Teachers encouraged students to explore multiple perspectives before reaching conclusions. This value was operationalized through structured discussions in which students presented arguments from different cultural viewpoints.

Value 6: Democratic Dialogue

Classroom observation documented that teachers consistently prioritized dialogic approaches over one-way instruction. During one observed session, students spent 25 minutes discussing how to resolve a hypothetical conflict between students from different cultural backgrounds.

Value 7: Peace-Loving Attitudes (*Salam*)

Peaceful conflict resolution was explicitly taught. Teacher G2 stated, "I teach that resolving problems through violence is not part of Islamic teaching. Students must learn deliberation and

mutual forgiveness." The third theme concerns challenges and adaptive strategies. Despite strong commitment to implementation, teachers identified significant barriers to multicultural character formation among Generation Alpha students (Hafizah, 2023).

Challenge 1: Digital Exposure to Intolerant Content

Both teachers expressed concern about students' unrestricted access to online content. Teacher G1 noted, "They can access social media very easily. Not all religious content is moderate; some content teaches exclusivism. This is a major challenge because we cannot fully control what they consume outside school." This finding supports Suedi (2026), who documented that Generation Alpha's digital-native characteristics create vulnerability to radical content.

Challenge 2: Individualistic Tendencies

Teachers observed that some students were reluctant to collaborate and preferred individual assignments. Teacher G2 explained, "Because they are accustomed to gadgets, some feel more comfortable working alone. Multicultural character, however, requires collaboration. I have to continually encourage them to work in groups."

Challenge 3: Limited Parental Involvement

The madrasah principal, coded K1, identified limited parental involvement as a structural obstacle: "Character formation cannot take place only at school. Parents must also be consistent at home, but many parents are busy or do not fully understand the importance of multicultural education." This finding is consistent with Mardiana (2020), who found that limited teacher-parent communication and insufficient parental role modeling are significant barriers to multicultural value implementation.

Adaptive Strategies

Teachers used several strategies to address these challenges: (1) integrating digital literacy into Islamic Religious Education to help students critically evaluate online content; (2) using gamification and interactive digital tools to increase engagement; and (3) conducting periodic parent-teacher coordination meetings to align value-internalization efforts.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings provide empirical evidence regarding how Islamic Religious Education teachers operationalize their roles in developing multicultural character among Generation Alpha students. The discussion interprets these findings within the theoretical framework outlined in the literature review, compares them with previous studies, and identifies theoretical and practical implications.

Integration of Teacher Roles and Multicultural Pedagogy

The finding that Islamic Religious Education teachers perform multiple roles as educators, models, facilitators, motivators, and evaluators extends Mulyasa's typology by demonstrating how each role specifically contributes to multicultural character formation. Unlike previous studies that examined these roles in general educational contexts, the present study shows that effective multicultural Islamic Religious Education requires simultaneous rather than sequential enactment. For example, when teachers model inclusive behavior while facilitating cross-cultural dialogue, the synergistic effect on students' multicultural awareness is strengthened (Noer Taufik et al., 2024).

This finding is consistent with Muthmainnah et al. (2026), who identified three interrelated strategies used by Islamic Religious Education teachers: integrating multicultural values into lesson content, applying interactive teaching methods, and consistently modeling inclusive behavior. The present study provides a more nuanced understanding by showing how Generation Alpha characteristics, including digital-native behavior, rapid information absorption, and high curiosity, require role adaptation. Teachers used visual media and interactive digital tools to attract attention while embedding multicultural messages, a strategy not emphasized in earlier research conducted before Generation Alpha entered secondary education.

Multicultural Values: From Abstraction to Operationalization

The identification of seven operationalized multicultural values extends the theoretical frameworks of Banks (2015) and Tilaar (2020) by showing how abstract principles are translated into concrete pedagogical practice. *Tasamuh*, *'adl*, and *ukhuwah* are not merely declarative but are systematically embedded across three instructional phases: planning, reflected in learning objectives; implementation, observed in heterogeneous grouping and dialogic methods; and evaluation, reflected in behavior-based assessment. This tripartite integration corresponds with Sugesti's (2025) finding that multicultural Islamic Religious Education at SMPN 03 South Tangerang was implemented through planning, implementation, and evaluation while integrating values directed toward moderate character. The present study adds empirical specificity by documenting how each phase operationalizes particular values. For example, lesson planning at MA Ma'arif Roudlotut Tholibin explicitly states behavioral outcomes related to respect for diversity, a practice not consistently documented in previous studies.

Generation Alpha Specificity: Digital Natives Requiring a Moral Foundation

A distinctive contribution of this study is its focus on Generation Alpha students, the first cohort to receive systematic multicultural character education throughout their secondary schooling. The findings reveal dual characteristics that both facilitate and inhibit value internalization. Their digital-native orientation and high curiosity provide rapid exposure to diverse cultural content. Student S2's ability to articulate experiences of interethnic friendship illustrates successful internalization. Conversely, unrestricted digital access exposes students to intolerant content, while individualistic tendencies inhibit collaborative skills. This duality is consistent with Adisti and Rozikan (2021), who found that Generation Alpha character education based on Javanese *unggah-ungguh* successfully developed personality when implemented consistently. The present study, however, shows that Javanese values alone are insufficient in multicultural settings representing Javanese, Sundanese, Ngapak, and Lampungese ethnicities. Teachers therefore

integrated local wisdom from several traditions, demonstrating culturally responsive pedagogy adapted to the composition of their students.

The challenge of digital exposure to intolerant content supports Ramadani et al. (2025), who documented that although most madrasah students were categorized as tolerant, approximately 23.58% remained less tolerant because of exposure to radical online content. This persistent challenge underscores the need to integrate digital literacy into the Islamic Religious Education curriculum, a strategy implemented successfully by teachers in this study through critical evaluation of online religious content.

Theoretical Implications: Extending Banks's Framework

The findings indicate the need to extend Banks's five-dimensional multicultural education framework to accommodate Generation Alpha's distinctive characteristics. While content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowerment of school culture and social structure remain relevant, digital-native students require an additional dimension: digital-critical engagement. This dimension would include: (1) critical evaluation of online multicultural content, (2) responsible social media engagement concerning diversity issues, and (3) the use of digital platforms to strengthen inclusive narratives.

The proposed extension is consistent with Suedi (2026), who argues that Islamic education for Generations Z and Alpha requires an integrative framework combining student-centered pedagogy, responsible digital technology use, and systematic character formation rooted in Islamic values. The present study empirically validates that proposition by documenting how teachers operationalized digital-critical engagement through activities such as analyzing online religious content for exclusive narratives and creating digital presentations on Indonesia's cultural diversity.

Practical Implications

Several practical implications emerge. First, teacher education programs should equip Islamic Religious Education teachers with culturally responsive pedagogical competence specifically adapted to digital-native learners. Training should include: (a) integrating multicultural values through interactive digital media, (b) facilitating blended online-offline dialogue on diversity, and (c) assessing affective outcomes through digital portfolios.

Second, madrasah leadership should establish formal mechanisms for teacher collaboration and parental involvement. The finding that limited parental participation is a barrier is consistent with Mardiana (2020), who recommends stronger teacher-parent communication and parental role modeling. Structured programs such as multicultural parenting workshops and home-based value-reinforcement activities could address this gap.

Third, curriculum developers should incorporate explicit learning objectives related to digital-critical engagement into the Islamic Religious Education syllabus. The present curriculum's cognitive focus on diversity should be balanced with competence in evaluating online content and participating respectfully in digital discourse about religious and cultural differences (Ajamalus, 2024).

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study has several limitations. First, as a single case study at one madrasah, the findings may not be generalizable to all Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. Second, the three-month research period may not capture long-term changes in students' multicultural attitudes. Third, the study focused on teacher-reported and observed behavior rather than measuring actual changes in student attitudes over time (Sinulingga et al., 2026).

Future research should address these limitations through: (1) comparative multisite studies across madrasahs with different ethnic compositions; (2) longitudinal designs tracking the development of multicultural attitudes among cohorts throughout secondary education; and (3) mixed-methods studies combining pretest-posttest measures of student attitudes with qualitative exploration of mediating factors.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study concludes that Islamic Religious Education teachers at MA Ma'arif Roudlotut Tholibin in Metro City perform multidimensional roles as value educators and internalization agents, role models, facilitators of cross-cultural dialogue, motivators of inclusive participation, and evaluators of multicultural competence. These five roles are enacted simultaneously and in an integrated manner rather than sequentially, creating a synergistic effect on the multicultural character formation of Generation Alpha students. The study also identifies seven multicultural values systematically internalized through Islamic Religious Education: tolerance (*tasamuh*), inclusive justice (*'adl*), brotherhood (*ukhuwah*), empathy and mutual assistance, open-mindedness (*Tafakkur*), democratic dialogue, and peace-loving attitudes (*salam*). These values are not merely declarative but are concretely operationalized across planning through learning objectives, implementation through heterogeneous grouping and dialogic methods, and evaluation through behavioral observation (Ginting et al., 2024).

The study's theoretical contribution lies in extending Banks's (2015) multicultural education framework by proposing digital-critical engagement as an additional dimension specifically relevant to Generation Alpha. The dimension includes critical evaluation of online multicultural content, responsible social media engagement on diversity issues, and the use of digital platforms to strengthen inclusive narratives. The study also enriches Islamic educational philosophy by demonstrating how the teacher roles of mu'allim, murabbi, and mu'addib can be actualized in a challenging digital context. Practically, the findings guide Islamic Religious Education teachers in integrating digital literacy into learning, using gamification and interactive digital tools to increase student engagement, and conducting regular coordination with parents to align multicultural value-internalization efforts.

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