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HIDDEN CURRICULUM AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MULTICULTURAL ISLAMIC IDENTITY IN PESANTREN-BASED HIGHER EDUCATION: AN INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS AND THE HCMII MODEL

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Kata Kunci:	ABSTRAK
Hidden Curriculum; Identitas Islam Multikultural; Perguruan Tinggi Berbasis Pesantren; Pendidikan Multikultural; Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis; HCMII Model	Keberagaman budaya Indonesia menghadirkan peluang sekaligus tantangan bagi pendidikan tinggi Islam dalam mengembangkan kemampuan mahasiswa untuk hidup secara konstruktif di tengah perbedaan. Dalam konteks pendidikan tinggi berbasis pesantren, kurikulum tersembunyi beroperasi melalui budaya kelembagaan, interaksi sehari-hari, keteladanan, kehidupan komunal, organisasi kemahasiswaan, dan pembiasaan keagamaan. Namun, perannya dalam membentuk identitas Islam multikultural masih belum banyak dieksplorasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana kurikulum tersembunyi berkontribusi terhadap pembentukan identitas Islam multikultural dalam lingkungan pendidikan tinggi berbasis pesantren serta merekonstruksi model konseptual berdasarkan pengalaman hidup para partisipan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) di STIKK An-Nur 2 Bululawang. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan dokumentasi yang melibatkan mahasiswa, dosen, pimpinan lembaga, dan perwakilan organisasi mahasiswa yang dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan lima dimensi kurikulum tersembunyi yang saling berkaitan, yaitu budaya kelembagaan, keteladanan, kehidupan komunal, organisasi kemahasiswaan, dan pembiasaan keagamaan. Pengalaman partisipan dalam beradaptasi dengan teman dari berbagai latar belakang daerah, menegosiasikan perbedaan dalam interaksi sehari-hari, mendengarkan perspektif yang berbeda, serta berpartisipasi dalam praktik kehidupan komunal dan keagamaan menunjukkan bahwa identitas Islam multikultural berkembang melalui pengalaman hidup yang berkelanjutan, bukan semata-mata melalui pembelajaran formal di dalam kelas. Proses tersebut menumbuhkan sikap menghargai keberagaman, kesetaraan, saling menghormati, tanggung jawab sosial, kompetensi antarbudaya, dan orientasi keislaman yang inklusif. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, penelitian ini mengusulkan Hidden Curriculum-Based Multicultural Islamic Identity (HCMII) Model, yang mengonseptualisasikan identitas Islam multikultural

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	<p>sebagai hasil yang muncul dari keterkaitan antara praktik kelembagaan, sosial, organisasi, dan keagamaan. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi teoretis dengan memperluas kajian kurikulum tersembunyi dari pembentukan karakter menuju konstruksi identitas Islam multikultural serta memberikan implikasi praktis bagi lembaga pendidikan tinggi berbasis pesantren dalam memperkuat pendidikan Islam yang inklusif dan kohesi sosial.</p>
<p>Keywords: Hidden curriculum; multicultural Islamic identity; pesantren-based higher education; Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis; HCMII Model</p>	<p>ABSTRACTS</p> <p>Indonesia's cultural diversity presents both opportunities and challenges for Islamic higher education in developing students' ability to live constructively with differences. In pesantren-based higher education, the hidden curriculum operates through institutional culture, everyday interactions, role modelling, communal living, student organizations, and religious habituation, yet its role in constructing multicultural Islamic identity remains insufficiently explored. This study aims to analyze how the hidden curriculum contributes to the construction of multicultural Islamic identity within a pesantren-based higher education environment and to reconstruct a conceptual model based on students' lived experiences. A qualitative approach using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was employed at STIKK An-Nur 2 Bululawang. Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation involving students, lecturers, institutional leaders, and student organization representatives selected through purposive sampling. The findings reveal five interrelated dimensions of the hidden curriculum: institutional culture, role modelling, communal living, student organizations, and religious habituation. Participants' experiences of adapting to peers from diverse regional backgrounds, negotiating differences in everyday interactions, listening to differing perspectives, and participating in shared communal and religious practices indicate that multicultural Islamic identity develops through continuous lived experiences rather than through explicit classroom instruction alone. These processes foster respect for diversity, equality, mutual respect, social responsibility, intercultural competence, and an inclusive Islamic orientation. Based on these findings, the study proposes the Hidden Curriculum-Based Multicultural Islamic Identity (HCMII) Model, which conceptualizes multicultural Islamic identity as an emergent outcome of interconnected institutional, social, organizational, and religious practices. The study contributes theoretically by extending hidden curriculum scholarship beyond character formation toward the construction of multicultural Islamic identity and offers practical implications for pesantren-based higher education institutions seeking to strengthen inclusive and socially cohesive Islamic education.</p>

A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world, characterized by a rich plurality of ethnicities, cultures, languages, and religions. This diversity poses significant challenges for Islamic educational institutions in preparing graduates who possess a strong Islamic identity while also demonstrating the capacity to coexist harmoniously within a pluralistic society. In this context, pesantren-based higher education institutions occupy a strategic position, as they not only transmit Islamic knowledge through formal curricula but also cultivate students' character and identity through an institutional culture that operates continuously throughout daily

life. Recent studies indicate that the development of character, tolerance, and social cohesion in pesantren is influenced more profoundly by students' everyday lived experiences, collective institutional culture, and social interactions than by formal classroom instruction alone (Ma'arif & Arif, 2026; Zunaih, 2026). Accordingly, the development of a multicultural Islamic identity should be understood as a continuous socio-cultural process that unfolds within the educational ecosystem of the pesantren, rather than merely as an outcome of classroom-based learning.

The concept of the hidden curriculum has received increasing scholarly attention in educational research because it provides a valuable perspective for explaining how values, norms, habits, and identities are constructed through experiences that are not explicitly prescribed in the formal curriculum. The hidden curriculum operates through exemplary role modeling (*uswah*), institutional culture, unwritten norms, communication patterns, the residential environment, and the relationships among kiai, lecturers, student administrators, and students. Within the pesantren context, these mechanisms facilitate a more effective process of value internalization than cognitive learning alone, as they are embedded in continuous habituation and sustained social interaction (Ishomuddin & Aziz, 2025; Ma'arif & Arif, 2026). Furthermore, a synthesis of previous studies demonstrates that pesantren culture represents the most influential form of hidden curriculum in fostering students' character, discipline, leadership, and attitudes of tolerance (Ma'arif & Arif, 2026; Nuryana et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, most previous studies have primarily examined the hidden curriculum as a mechanism for fostering religious character, discipline, or tolerance education. Comparatively little attention has been given to how the hidden curriculum constructs a multicultural Islamic identity within pesantren-based higher education institutions. Existing research has generally emphasized the exemplary role of kiai, religious habituation, or the pesantren environment as vehicles for character education, while offering limited explanation of the integrative mechanisms through which pesantren culture, residential life, student organizations, and the practice of living together interact to shape identity negotiation in multicultural settings (Ariyani & Sapuadi, 2026; Sapitri et al., 2022). Yet, a multicultural Islamic identity does not emerge instantaneously; rather, it is cultivated through collective experiences, intercultural interactions, social reflection, and the continuous internalization of values embedded in everyday life.

Pesantren-based higher education institutions provide a unique context for examining this process, as their students come from diverse ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds and subsequently live together within a residential boarding system that facilitates intensive and continuous interaction. Within this environment, pesantren culture, the exemplary roles of kiai and lecturers, student organizations, deliberative forums (*musyawarah*), religious activities, and communal life in the dormitories collectively create a social space in which Islamic identity is continuously negotiated, enacted, and reconstructed. From this perspective, the hidden curriculum functions not merely as a mechanism for transmitting values but also as a dynamic arena for identity construction, where religious, cultural, and social dimensions intersect simultaneously. Accordingly, the development of a multicultural Islamic identity should be understood as the outcome of a dynamic interaction between formal learning experiences and the holistic social ecosystem of the pesantren (Nabilla, 2025; Pamungkas et al., 2026).

Addressing this research gap, the present study aims to examine how the hidden curriculum constructs a multicultural Islamic identity at STIKK An-Nur 2 Bululawang, a pesantren-based higher education institution. Unlike previous studies, which have primarily focused on the implementation of multicultural education or the development of character education in general, this study offers a novel perspective by reconstructing the interrelationships among pesantren culture, exemplary role modeling, residential life (living together), and student organizations as the principal components of the hidden curriculum in shaping a multicultural Islamic identity. Drawing upon the synthesis of empirical findings, this study proposes the Hidden Curriculum-Based Multicultural Islamic Identity (HCMII) Model as a conceptual framework that explicates the mechanisms through which a multicultural Islamic identity is developed within pesantren-based higher education. The proposed model is expected to contribute theoretically to the advancement of hidden curriculum scholarship while also providing practical insights for strengthening multicultural Islamic education in pesantren-based higher education institutions.

Although previous studies have extensively examined the role of hidden curriculum in shaping students' character, discipline, religious attitudes, and moral behavior, these perspectives do not fully explain the processes through which students construct a multicultural Islamic identity. Character-oriented studies tend to emphasize the internalization of values and desirable behaviors, while multicultural identity formation involves a broader experiential process in which individuals encounter differences, negotiate social interactions, recognize diverse perspectives, and develop an inclusive orientation toward others. In pesantren-based higher education, these processes are particularly significant because students experience institutional culture, communal living, organizational activities, role modelling, and religious habituation as interconnected aspects of everyday life. Therefore, examining hidden curriculum solely from the perspective of character formation may overlook how everyday institutional and social experiences contribute to students' understanding and enactment of Islamic identity in a culturally diverse environment. This gap indicates the need for a phenomenological investigation that explores students' lived experiences and identifies how hidden curriculum contributes to the construction of multicultural Islamic identity. The present study addresses this gap by employing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to examine the lived experiences of students and other institutional actors at STIKK An-Nur 2 Bululawang and to reconstruct the Hidden Curriculum-Based Multicultural Islamic Identity (HCMII) Model.

B. METHOD

This chapter can also include scientific formulas for data analysis/correlation tests. This study employed a qualitative approach using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore how the hidden curriculum constructs multicultural Islamic identity within a pesantren-based higher education institution. IPA was selected because it enables researchers to understand participants' lived experiences and the meanings they attribute to everyday educational practices that are often absent from the formal curriculum. Rather than examining hidden curriculum as merely an institutional policy or educational strategy, this study investigates how students interpret, negotiate, and internalize multicultural Islamic values through continuous interactions within the pesantren environment. This approach is consistent

with phenomenological inquiry, which seeks to uncover the essence of human experience from the participants' own perspectives (Bronstein & Smith, 2025; Creswell & Poth, 2024).

The philosophical foundation of this study draws upon Alfred Schutz's social phenomenology, which argues that social reality is constructed through intersubjective experiences, shared meanings, and accumulated stock of knowledge developed in everyday life. Within the context of pesantren-based higher education, multicultural Islamic identity is not understood as a fixed personal attribute but as a dynamic social construction emerging from students' interactions with religious traditions, institutional culture, academic activities, boarding life, and interpersonal relationships. Consequently, this study focuses on how participants interpret their educational experiences and transform these experiences into a shared understanding of multicultural Islamic identity.

The research was conducted at STIKK An-Nur 2 Bululawang, Malang, Indonesia, a higher education institution operating within an integrated Islamic boarding school (pesantren) system. The institution was purposively selected because it combines formal higher education with a twenty-four-hour residential learning environment, allowing hidden curriculum to operate continuously through religious practices, communal living, organizational activities, academic culture, and daily interactions. This educational ecosystem provides an appropriate setting for investigating how multicultural Islamic identity develops through both formal and informal educational processes. The institutional context also reflects the integration of multicultural Islamic values into academic, social, and cultural dimensions of campus life.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that they possessed substantial experience with the institutional culture and educational practices under investigation. The participants consisted of institutional leaders, pesantren caregivers, lecturers, student affairs administrators, dormitory supervisors (*musyrif/musyrifah*), student organization leaders, and undergraduate students representing diverse ethnic, cultural, and regional backgrounds across Indonesia. This diversity enabled the study to capture multiple perspectives regarding the construction of multicultural Islamic identity through hidden curriculum and to obtain rich phenomenological accounts of participants' lived experiences.

Data were collected through three complementary techniques: participant observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Participant observation was conducted within classrooms, dormitories, religious activities, student organizations, and various communal programs to understand how multicultural values were practiced in everyday interactions. Semi-structured interviews explored participants' experiences regarding institutional culture, role modelling, communal living, intercultural interaction, and the internalization of Islamic values. Documentary sources including institutional regulations, curriculum documents, student handbooks, organizational guidelines, boarding school regulations, and official reports were analyzed to strengthen data triangulation and provide contextual understanding of the educational environment.

Table 1. Research Participants and Sources of Data

Code	Participants	Number	Research Focus	Data Sources
<i>CL</i>	Chairperson of STIKK An-Nur 2	1	Institutional vision, multicultural policy, and hidden curriculum implementation	Interview, Documentation
<i>VC</i>	Vice Chairperson for Academic Affairs	1	Curriculum integration and academic culture	Interview, Documentation
<i>VP</i>	Vice Caregiver (Wakil Pengasuh Pesantren)	1	Pesantren culture, boarding system, and character formation	Interview, Observation
<i>LC</i>	Lecturer	5	Classroom practices, role modelling, multicultural learning, and value internalization	Interview, Observation
<i>DS</i>	Dormitory Supervisor (<i>Musyrif/Musyrifah</i>)	4	Daily supervision, habituation, discipline, and communal living	Interview, Observation
<i>SO</i>	Student Organization Leaders	4	Leadership, democratic participation, intercultural interaction, and organizational culture	Interview, Observation, Documentation
<i>ST</i>	Undergraduate Students	18	Lived experiences of multicultural interaction, identity negotiation, and hidden curriculum	Interview, Observation
<i>DOC</i>	Institutional Documents	—	Curriculum documents, boarding regulations, student handbook, organizational guidelines, strategic plans	Documentation
<i>OBS</i>	Campus and Boarding Activities	—	Religious activities, classroom learning, dormitory life, organizational meetings, community service	Observation

Source: Authors

The data were analyzed following the procedures of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis proposed by Smith et al. (2022). The analysis began with repeated reading of interview transcripts and field notes to achieve immersion in the data. Initial coding was subsequently conducted to identify significant statements and experiential meanings expressed by participants. These codes were then organized into emergent themes representing recurrent patterns of meaning across participants' experiences. Finally, relationships among themes were interpreted to develop a conceptual explanation of how hidden curriculum contributes to the construction of multicultural Islamic identity. Throughout the analytical process, interpretation moved iteratively between individual experiences and broader institutional contexts to generate a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

Figure 1. Research Methodological Flowchart: From Data Collection to HCMII Model Reconstruction

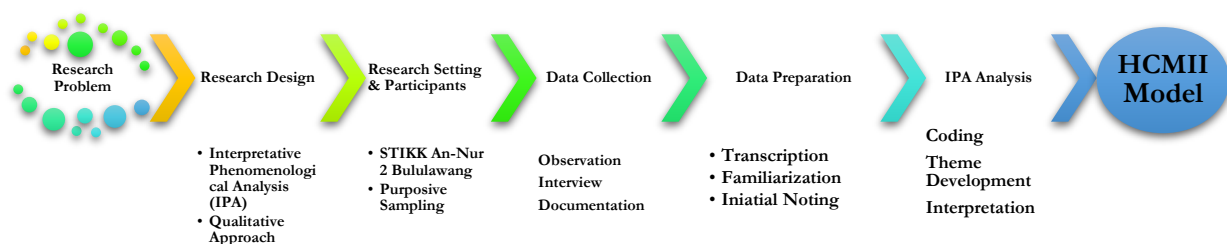


Figure 1 illustrates the sequential methodological process employed in this study, beginning with the formulation of the research problem and the selection of the qualitative IPA design, followed by participant selection and data collection through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The collected data were transcribed and examined through case-by-case IPA procedures, including familiarization, initial noting, coding, and the development of emergent themes. The analysis then proceeded to thematic synthesis and cross-case interpretation to identify the interconnected dimensions of the hidden curriculum. These interpretive findings were subsequently integrated with Alfred Schutz's social phenomenological perspective to reconstruct the Hidden Curriculum-Based Multicultural Islamic Identity (HCMII) Model.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, the study employed multiple validation strategies following Lincoln and Guba's criteria of qualitative rigor. Credibility was established through prolonged engagement in the research setting, triangulation of interviews, observations, and documentary evidence, as well as member checking with selected participants. Dependability and confirmability were strengthened through maintaining an audit trail documenting research decisions and analytical procedures, while transferability was supported by providing thick descriptions of the institutional context, participant characteristics, and educational practices. These strategies ensured that the findings accurately represented participants' experiences while maintaining methodological transparency and analytical rigor.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of interview, observation, and documentary data revealed that the construction of multicultural Islamic identity in pesantren-based higher education is shaped through a dynamic hidden curriculum embedded within students' everyday educational experiences. Rather than emerging solely from the formal curriculum, multicultural Islamic identity is continuously developed through institutional culture, interpersonal relationships, communal living, organizational participation, and religious practices that collectively constitute the educational ecosystem of the pesantren. These findings indicate that the hidden curriculum operates as an integrated system of implicit learning in which students acquire multicultural values through sustained participation in academic, social, and religious activities.

The data analysis identified five interrelated themes that explain the mechanism through which the hidden curriculum contributes to multicultural Islamic identity formation: (1) institutional culture as the foundation of hidden curriculum, (2) role modelling as everyday identity formation, (3) living together as a space for multicultural identity negotiation, (4) student organizations as a hidden curriculum for participatory leadership, and (5) religious habituation through daily educational practices. These interconnected dimensions demonstrate that multicultural Islamic identity develops through continuous interaction between institutional values, shared experiences, and intercultural engagement rather than through explicit classroom instruction alone.

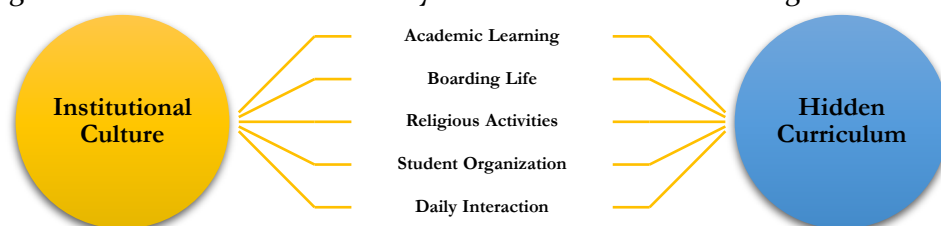
To provide a consolidated synthesis of the empirical findings, Table 2 summarizes the five dimensions of the hidden curriculum, their principal forms of implementation, and the corresponding outcomes in the construction of multicultural Islamic identity. The matrix demonstrates that these dimensions do not operate independently but constitute interconnected educational experiences through which students gradually internalize Islamic values while developing respect for cultural diversity, intercultural competence, social responsibility, and inclusive forms of Islamic identity.

Table 2. Matrix of Hidden Curriculum Dimensions, Implementation Forms, and Multicultural Islamic Identity Outcomes

Hidden Curriculum Dimension	Implementation Forms	Multicultural Islamic Identity Outcomes
Institutional Culture	Integrated academic, religious, residential, and social activities; institutional regulations emphasizing equality, collective responsibility, discipline, and mutual respect	Respect for diversity, equality, collective responsibility, social solidarity, and inclusive Islamic orientation
Role Modelling	Exemplary behaviour of lecturers, pesantren caregivers, dormitory supervisors, and institutional leaders; respectful interaction, dialogue, and conflict resolution	Internalization of justice, respect, tolerance, humility, social responsibility, and intercultural sensitivity
Communal Living	Mixed residential arrangements; daily interaction among students from different ethnic, linguistic, and regional backgrounds; shared responsibilities and collaborative activities	Cultural adaptation, empathy, mutual respect, intercultural competence, social cohesion, and negotiated multicultural Islamic identity
Student Organizations	Participatory meetings, consultation (<i>shura</i>), collaborative leadership, collective decision-making, and intercultural cooperation	Participatory leadership, openness to different perspectives, communication skills, collective responsibility, and multicultural citizenship
Religious Habituation	Congregational prayer, Qur'anic recitation, Islamic studies, communal service (<i>khidmah</i>), collective remembrance (<i>dhikr</i>), and shared religious activities	Religious commitment, discipline, empathy, solidarity, mutual respect, social responsibility, and integration of Islamic values with cultural diversity

To provide a holistic overview of the empirical findings, Figure 2 illustrates the educational ecosystem in which the hidden curriculum operates within pesantren-based higher education. The figure demonstrates that institutional culture integrates academic learning, boarding life, religious activities, student organizations, and daily social interaction into a unified educational environment that continuously shapes students' multicultural Islamic identity. This ecosystem serves as the empirical foundation for the subsequent thematic analysis presented in the following sections. The results obtained from the research have to be supported by sufficient data. The research results and the discovery must be the answers, or the research hypothesis stated previously in the introduction part.

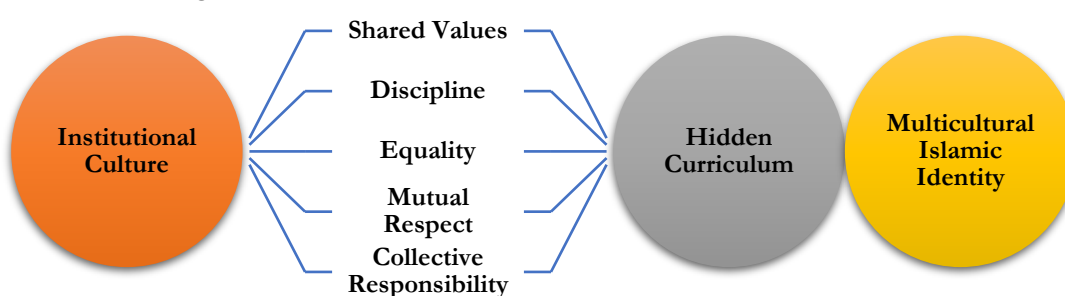
Figure 2. Hidden Curriculum Ecosystem in Pesantren-Based Higher Education



Institutional Culture as the Foundation of Hidden Curriculum

The findings revealed that the institutional culture of STIKK An-Nur 2 Bululawang functions as the primary foundation of the hidden curriculum in constructing students' multicultural Islamic identity. Rather than relying solely on formal classroom instruction, multicultural values were embedded throughout the daily educational environment, where academic learning, religious activities, communal living, and institutional regulations formed an integrated educational ecosystem. Participant observation demonstrated that students from diverse ethnic, linguistic, and regional backgrounds participated collectively in academic, religious, and social activities without segregation, allowing multicultural interactions to become an ordinary part of everyday life. This continuous interaction enabled students to experience multicultural values directly instead of merely learning them conceptually. Interview data further confirmed that institutional culture played a more influential role than formal instruction in shaping students' attitudes and identity. As one lecturer explained, "We never teach tolerance merely as theoretical knowledge. Students learn to appreciate diversity because they experience living together with friends from different cultural backgrounds every day" (Interview, LC-02). Likewise, document analysis of the institutional handbook and boarding regulations indicated that equality, collective responsibility, discipline, and mutual respect constitute the fundamental principles governing both academic and residential life (Document, DOC-02). These findings demonstrate that institutional culture operates as an implicit educational mechanism through which multicultural Islamic identity is continuously reproduced in everyday educational practices.

Figure 3. Institutional Culture as Hidden Curriculum



Role Modelling as Everyday Identity Formation

Another significant finding concerns the central role of educational role models in transmitting multicultural Islamic values through the hidden curriculum. Interviews consistently indicated that lecturers, pesantren caregivers, dormitory supervisors, and institutional leaders were perceived not merely as instructors but as living examples

whose daily behaviour shaped students' understanding of Islamic ethics and multicultural coexistence. Rather than emphasizing verbal instruction, participants highlighted the importance of observing how educators resolved disagreements, respected differences of opinion, and interacted with students from diverse backgrounds. One pesantren caregiver stated, "Students imitate what they observe from their teachers much more than what they hear during lectures" (Interview, VP-01). Classroom and dormitory observations supported this perception, showing that educators consistently encouraged dialogue, mutual respect, and collective problem-solving whenever conflicts emerged among students (Observation, OBS-06). Institutional documents also emphasized exemplary leadership (*uswah hasanah*) as one of the core principles guiding student development (Document, DOC-04). These findings suggest that role modelling functions as a powerful hidden curriculum through which multicultural Islamic identity is internalized naturally and continuously.

Living Together as a Space for Multicultural Identity Negotiation

The study further found that communal living within the boarding system constituted the most significant social space for negotiating multicultural Islamic identity. Living together exposed students to cultural diversity on a daily basis, requiring them to adapt to different languages, traditions, habits, and perspectives while maintaining harmonious relationships. Rather than viewing cultural differences as barriers, students gradually reconstructed their understanding of diversity through shared experiences and collaborative activities. One student reflected, "Initially, I found it difficult to adjust because my roommates came from different regions. However, after living together, I realized that our differences became opportunities to learn from one another" (Interview, ST-05). Observation data similarly revealed that students routinely communicated using inclusive language, shared responsibilities equally, and resolved interpersonal disagreements through discussion and mutual understanding (Observation, OBS-08). Documentation regarding dormitory placement further showed that room assignments intentionally mixed students from different provinces to encourage intercultural interaction and social adaptation (Document, DOC-05). These findings indicate that communal living transforms multicultural interaction into a continuous learning process through which students negotiate and reconstruct their Islamic identity within a pluralistic environment.

Student Organizations as a Hidden Curriculum for Participatory Leadership

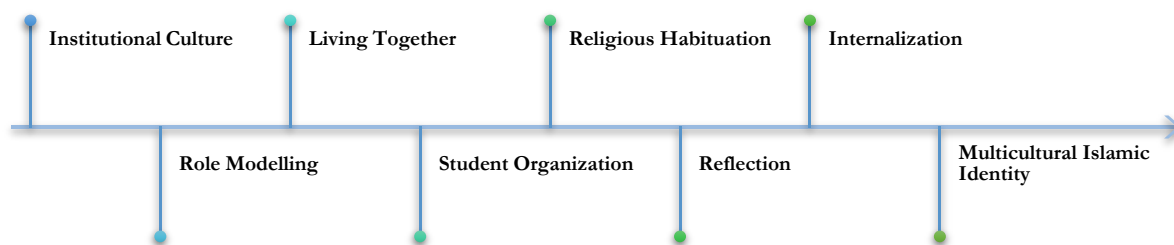
Student organizations emerged as another important component of the hidden curriculum. Beyond functioning as extracurricular activities, student organizations provided practical opportunities for students to experience democratic participation, collaborative leadership, collective responsibility, and intercultural communication. Participants described organizational meetings as educational spaces where differing opinions were openly expressed and decisions were reached through consultation (*shura*) rather than domination. A student organization leader explained, "Our meetings teach us how to listen to different opinions before making collective decisions" (Interview, SO-03). Participant observation showed that organizational activities encouraged cooperation among students from diverse backgrounds while strengthening interpersonal trust and mutual respect (Observation, OBS-09).

Organizational constitutions and leadership guidelines also emphasized consultation, participation, and collective accountability as fundamental principles of student governance (Document, DOC-06). These findings demonstrate that student organizations function as an informal educational arena where multicultural Islamic identity is developed through participatory leadership and collaborative decision-making.

Religious Habituation through Daily Educational Practices

The findings also demonstrate that religious habituation represents a fundamental dimension of the hidden curriculum. Students participated daily in congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation, Islamic studies, communal service, and other religious activities integrated into the twenty-four-hour educational system. Rather than being perceived as isolated religious obligations, these practices became habitual social experiences that fostered discipline, empathy, humility, and mutual responsibility. According to one lecturer, "Character is not formed through lectures alone but through daily routines repeated consistently throughout students' lives in the pesantren" (Interview, LC-03). Observations confirmed that students consistently engaged in collective worship, shared responsibilities, and mutual assistance during both academic and non-academic activities (Observation, OBS-11). Institutional regulations further documented structured daily schedules designed to integrate religious practice with academic learning and character education (Document, DOC-07). Consequently, religious habituation became an implicit educational mechanism through which Islamic values were transformed into everyday behaviour, reinforcing students' multicultural Islamic identity.

Figure 4. Process of Multicultural Islamic Identity Construction

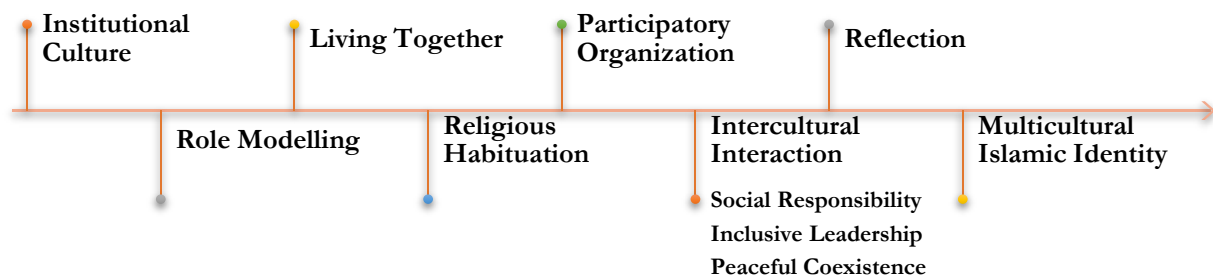


Reconstruction of the Hidden Curriculum-Based Multicultural Islamic Identity (HCMII) Model

Synthesizing all empirical findings, this study proposes the Hidden Curriculum-Based Multicultural Islamic Identity (HCMII) Model as a conceptual framework explaining how multicultural Islamic identity is constructed within pesantren-based higher education. The model demonstrates that multicultural Islamic identity does not emerge solely through formal curriculum but evolves through the interaction of five interconnected dimensions: institutional culture, role modelling, communal living, participatory student organizations, and religious habituation. These dimensions collectively create continuous intercultural interactions, reflective learning, and shared educational experiences through which students gradually internalize Islamic values while developing openness toward cultural diversity. Rather than functioning independently, each dimension reinforces the others within an integrated educational ecosystem, producing graduates who possess a strong Islamic identity while demonstrating inclusiveness, intercultural competence, and commitment to peaceful

coexistence. This model represents the principal empirical contribution of the study by explaining the mechanism through which the hidden curriculum operates as a dynamic process of multicultural Islamic identity construction in pesantren-based higher education.

Figure 5. Reconstruction of the Hidden Curriculum-Based Multicultural Islamic Identity Model



DISCUSSION

Institutional Culture as the Foundation of Hidden Curriculum

The findings demonstrate that institutional culture constitutes the fundamental mechanism through which the hidden curriculum constructs multicultural Islamic identity in pesantren-based higher education. Unlike formal curricula that explicitly prescribe learning objectives and instructional content, the hidden curriculum operates through the institutional environment, daily routines, shared norms, interpersonal relationships, and collective educational experiences. The integration of academic activities, religious practices, boarding life, and communal interaction creates a holistic educational ecosystem in which multicultural Islamic values are continuously experienced rather than merely taught. Consequently, students internalize values such as respect, equality, mutual responsibility, and social solidarity through repeated participation in everyday institutional life instead of through cognitive instruction alone. This finding reinforces the view that institutional culture functions as an implicit pedagogical system capable of shaping students' identity through continuous socialization and value habituation (Koutsouris et al., 2021; Ma'arif & Arif, 2026).

The present findings further support contemporary perspectives that conceptualize the hidden curriculum as an educational ecosystem rather than a collection of unintended learning experiences. Within the pesantren context, institutional culture intentionally integrates religious traditions, organizational structures, leadership practices, and communal living into a coherent environment where educational values are embedded in everyday activities. Such a finding extends previous studies that primarily associated the hidden curriculum with character education by demonstrating that institutional culture simultaneously constructs multicultural Islamic identity through sustained intercultural engagement. Rather than separating religious commitment from cultural diversity, the institutional culture encourages students to perceive pluralism as an integral component of Islamic ethical practice. This observation is consistent with recent studies indicating that pesantren culture functions as a latent educational mechanism through which values are internalized across formal and informal learning settings (Bustami et al., 2026; Homsiyah et al., 2026).

An important contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that institutional culture not only transmits existing values but also facilitates the continuous negotiation of multicultural identity. Previous higher education studies have argued that

institutional cultures often reproduce implicit expectations regarding the "ideal student," requiring students to adapt to pre-existing academic norms (Koutsouris et al., 2021). In contrast, the findings of this research reveal a different dynamic within pesantren-based higher education. Rather than assimilating students into a homogeneous institutional identity, the pesantren culture provides opportunities for students from diverse ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds to negotiate their identities through daily interaction while maintaining their cultural distinctiveness. Institutional culture therefore becomes an inclusive social environment where diversity is recognized as an educational resource rather than an institutional challenge. This inclusive orientation strengthens students' sense of belonging while simultaneously reinforcing their commitment to Islamic values rooted in justice, mutual respect, and social harmony (Ariyani & Sapuadi, 2026; Ettiene Wenger & Beverly Wenger, 2022).

The findings also contribute to expanding contemporary discussions on multicultural Islamic education. Existing literature frequently emphasizes multicultural education through curriculum reform or classroom pedagogy. However, this study indicates that multicultural Islamic identity is constructed more effectively through the interaction between institutional culture and students' lived experiences than through formal curricular intervention alone. Everyday educational practices—including communal worship, shared responsibilities, organizational participation, and interpersonal communication—serve as continuous sites of value internalization. Such findings confirm that identity formation is fundamentally a social and cultural process shaped by repeated participation within an educational community. Consequently, multicultural Islamic identity should be understood as an emergent outcome of participation in a culturally embedded learning ecosystem rather than as a direct product of classroom instruction (Ma'arif & Arif, 2026; Sulaiman & Muttaqien, 2026).

From a theoretical perspective, this study advances the hidden curriculum literature by positioning institutional culture as the foundational dimension of the proposed Hidden Curriculum-Based Multicultural Islamic Identity (HCMII) Model. Existing studies generally identify institutional culture as one component of hidden curriculum implementation. In contrast, the present findings suggest that institutional culture functions as the overarching educational environment that integrates role modelling, communal living, participatory leadership, and religious habituation into a unified process of multicultural identity construction. Accordingly, multicultural Islamic identity emerges not as an isolated educational outcome but as the cumulative result of continuous interaction among institutional values, collective experiences, and intercultural engagement within the pesantren ecosystem. This theoretical reconstruction broadens the conceptual understanding of hidden curriculum by explaining its role as a dynamic mechanism through which Islamic higher education simultaneously nurtures strong religious commitment and multicultural competence.

Role Modelling as Everyday Identity Formation

The findings demonstrate that role modelling constitutes one of the most influential dimensions of the hidden curriculum in constructing multicultural Islamic identity within pesantren-based higher education. Unlike formal instruction, which primarily emphasizes cognitive learning, role modelling enables students to internalize Islamic values through continuous observation of educators' attitudes, behaviours, and interpersonal interactions. The present study reveals that lecturers, pesantren

caregivers, dormitory supervisors, and institutional leaders collectively function as moral exemplars whose daily practices shape students' perceptions of justice, respect, tolerance, humility, and social responsibility. Consequently, multicultural Islamic identity develops not through explicit moral instruction but through repeated encounters with authentic examples of Islamic conduct embedded in everyday educational experiences. This finding confirms that educational leadership within pesantren extends beyond administrative responsibility to become an implicit pedagogical process through which values are socially transmitted and collectively reproduced (Ishomuddin & Aziz, 2025; Ma'arif & Arif, 2026).

The significance of role modelling identified in this study is consistent with recent scholarship emphasizing that the hidden curriculum operates primarily through interpersonal relationships rather than instructional content alone. Within Islamic educational settings, educators are expected to embody Islamic ethics (akhlaq) so that students learn through observation, imitation, and social interaction. Such an approach reflects the classical pesantren tradition in which exemplary behaviour (uswah hasanah) functions as a central educational strategy for character formation. The present findings extend this perspective by demonstrating that exemplary leadership also facilitates multicultural identity development. Students reported that lecturers and pesantren leaders consistently demonstrated respect for cultural diversity, encouraged dialogue during disagreement, and resolved interpersonal conflicts through consultation and mutual understanding. These practices implicitly taught students that Islamic commitment and multicultural openness are complementary rather than contradictory values, thereby strengthening both religious identity and intercultural competence (Ariyani & Sapuadi, 2026; Homsiyah et al., 2026).

Another important contribution of this study lies in illustrating that role modelling functions as a mechanism for reducing cultural prejudice through everyday interaction. Previous studies frequently discuss tolerance as a learning outcome achieved through multicultural education or classroom instruction. However, the present findings indicate that students' acceptance of cultural diversity emerged primarily because they repeatedly observed respected educators interacting fairly with individuals from different ethnic, linguistic, and social backgrounds. Such experiences gradually reshaped students' own attitudes toward diversity without requiring direct instructional intervention. This finding supports contemporary perspectives that emphasize observational learning and social participation as fundamental mechanisms of identity formation. Through repeated exposure to inclusive behaviour demonstrated by educational leaders, students reconstructed their understanding of Islamic identity as inherently connected with justice, compassion, equality, and peaceful coexistence (Bandura, 2021; Farhan Aprisal & Milda Apriliana, 2026; Ishomuddin & Aziz, 2025).

The findings also enrich current discussions regarding educational leadership in Islamic higher education. Existing literature generally positions lecturers and institutional leaders as facilitators of learning or transmitters of religious knowledge. In contrast, this study demonstrates that their influence extends far beyond academic instruction. Role modelling becomes a hidden curriculum through which institutional values are embodied and continuously reinforced across multiple educational contexts, including classrooms, dormitories, religious gatherings, and organizational activities. This holistic educational relationship enables students to witness the practical implementation of Islamic ethical principles in authentic social situations.

Consequently, students perceive multicultural values not as abstract ideals but as lived realities reflected in the daily conduct of respected educational figures. Such findings reinforce the argument that educational effectiveness within pesantren depends largely upon the consistency between institutional values and educators' actual practices (Ma'arif & Arif, 2026; Sulaiman & Muttaqien, 2026).

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the development of the Hidden Curriculum-Based Multicultural Islamic Identity (HCMII) Model by positioning role modelling as the second core dimension connecting institutional culture with students' identity construction. While institutional culture provides the educational environment, role modelling translates institutional values into observable social practices that students continuously interpret and imitate. The interaction between these two dimensions creates an educational process in which multicultural Islamic identity develops organically through experience rather than through formal transmission alone. This theoretical proposition broadens previous conceptualizations of the hidden curriculum by demonstrating that exemplary leadership serves not merely as an educational strategy but as a dynamic mechanism through which Islamic higher education simultaneously cultivates religious integrity, intercultural sensitivity, and multicultural citizenship. Accordingly, role modelling should be recognized as an indispensable component of institutional efforts to strengthen multicultural Islamic education within contemporary pesantren-based higher education.

Living Together as a Space for Multicultural Identity Negotiation

The findings demonstrate that living together within the pesantren boarding system represents the most influential social arena for constructing multicultural Islamic identity. Unlike conventional higher education institutions, where intercultural interaction is often limited to classroom activities, the pesantren environment extends learning into a twenty-four-hour residential system in which students continuously negotiate cultural differences through shared daily experiences. Communal living enables students from diverse ethnic, linguistic, regional, and socio-cultural backgrounds to engage in sustained interpersonal interaction, fostering mutual adaptation and collective learning. These findings indicate that multicultural Islamic identity is not formed through isolated instructional activities but emerges from continuous participation in a shared social environment where diversity becomes an integral part of everyday life. This finding supports recent studies arguing that boarding-based Islamic education creates a culturally embedded learning ecosystem in which social interaction functions as an implicit educational process that strengthens both religious commitment and intercultural understanding (Ma'arif & Arif, 2026; Pamungkas et al., 2026).

The present findings further extend contemporary discussions on multicultural education by demonstrating that communal living serves as a dynamic process of identity negotiation rather than merely a setting for social adaptation. Previous studies generally conceptualize multicultural interaction as the development of tolerance through intercultural communication. However, this study reveals that students actively reconstruct their understanding of Islamic identity through everyday encounters with peers who possess different cultural traditions, languages, and perspectives. Continuous interaction encourages students to reinterpret cultural diversity as an opportunity for learning instead of a source of conflict. Such experiences

gradually transform individual perceptions into shared understandings characterized by mutual respect, empathy, cooperation, and collective responsibility. These findings align with recent research emphasizing that multicultural identity develops through sustained intercultural engagement and shared educational experiences rather than through formal multicultural instruction alone (Ariyani & Sapuadi, 2026; Zunaih, 2026).

An important theoretical implication emerging from this study is that communal living functions as a mechanism of identity negotiation rather than cultural assimilation. Existing higher education literature frequently suggests that students entering new institutional environments gradually adapt to dominant institutional norms. In contrast, the findings of this research demonstrate that the *pesantren* boarding system encourages reciprocal adaptation among students from diverse cultural backgrounds while preserving their respective cultural identities. Through collaborative learning, collective worship, shared responsibilities, and informal social interaction, students negotiate differences without abandoning their cultural heritage. Consequently, multicultural Islamic identity emerges as a negotiated identity that integrates strong Islamic values with appreciation for cultural diversity. This finding contributes to intercultural education scholarship by illustrating that identity formation within *pesantren* is dialogical, relational, and continuously reconstructed through everyday interaction rather than imposed through institutional conformity (Jackson, 2021; Pamungkas et al., 2026).

Furthermore, communal living strengthens social cohesion by cultivating what may be described as everyday multicultural citizenship. Daily routines requiring cooperation in academic activities, religious practices, dormitory responsibilities, and student organizations foster habits of dialogue, conflict resolution, empathy, and mutual assistance. Rather than perceiving diversity as a potential threat, students gradually develop the capacity to collaborate across cultural boundaries while maintaining a shared Islamic ethical framework. This finding supports recent scholarship arguing that educational institutions promoting sustained intercultural contact are more effective in developing social cohesion than institutions relying exclusively on classroom-based multicultural education (UNESCO, 2023; Zunaih, 2026). Therefore, the boarding system should be understood not merely as a residential arrangement but as a comprehensive educational environment where multicultural competencies are cultivated through repeated social participation.

From the perspective of the proposed Hidden Curriculum-Based Multicultural Islamic Identity (HCMII) Model, communal living represents the central social mechanism connecting institutional culture and role modelling with students' lived experiences. Institutional values become meaningful only when they are practiced within authentic social relationships, and communal living provides precisely such opportunities for continuous experiential learning. The findings therefore suggest that multicultural Islamic identity evolves through the interaction of religious commitment, intercultural communication, shared responsibilities, and collective reflection occurring within the boarding environment. This theoretical reconstruction advances the hidden curriculum literature by positioning living together as a distinctive educational dimension that explains how *pesantren*-based higher education simultaneously nurtures Islamic character, intercultural competence, and multicultural citizenship. Unlike previous conceptualizations that primarily associate communal living with discipline or character education, the present study demonstrates that it also

functions as the principal arena in which multicultural Islamic identity is socially negotiated, collectively experienced, and continuously reconstructed.

These findings also resonate with international scholarship that conceptualizes higher education as an institutional environment in which students' identities are shaped through both explicit and implicit educational practices. Koutsouris (Koutsouris et al., 2021), for example, demonstrate that hidden curriculum influences how students from diverse backgrounds understand institutional expectations and their own identities, emphasizing the importance of institutional responsiveness to diversity rather than requiring students to conform to a predetermined institutional norm. The present study extends this perspective by showing how a pesantren-based higher education institution can utilize an integrated educational ecosystem comprising institutional culture, communal living, role modelling, student organizations, and religious habituation to facilitate reciprocal adaptation and multicultural identity negotiation. In this context, diversity is not merely accommodated within the institution but becomes an experiential resource for developing intercultural competence and social cohesion. This interpretation is also consistent with recent research on Islamic higher education that identifies hidden curriculum and everyday social interaction as important mechanisms of identity negotiation and intercultural adaptation (Ariyani & Sapuadi, 2026). Thus, the HCMII Model contributes to the international discussion by demonstrating how multicultural identity formation can be embedded within a religiously integrated institutional environment rather than being treated solely as an outcome of formal multicultural curriculum.

Religious Habituation through Daily Educational Practices

The findings demonstrate that religious habituation constitutes a fundamental dimension of the hidden curriculum in constructing multicultural Islamic identity within pesantren-based higher education. Unlike formal religious instruction that primarily focuses on cognitive understanding, daily religious practices provide students with continuous opportunities to internalize Islamic values through repeated experience and social participation. Activities such as congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation, Islamic studies, communal service (*khidmah*), and collective remembrance (*dhikr*) are integrated into students' everyday lives, transforming religious principles into habitual behaviour. The consistency of these practices enables students to develop self-discipline, empathy, mutual respect, and social responsibility while strengthening their awareness of living harmoniously within a culturally diverse community. These findings support recent studies emphasizing that the sustainability of character education in pesantren is largely determined by continuous religious habituation embedded within institutional culture rather than by classroom instruction alone (Ishomuddin & Aziz, 2025; Ma'arif & Arif, 2026).

Furthermore, the findings reveal that religious habituation not only reinforces individual spirituality but also serves as a social mechanism for strengthening multicultural relationships. Shared religious activities encourage students from different ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds to participate in common rituals that cultivate equality, solidarity, and collective responsibility. Rather than eliminating cultural diversity, these religious experiences provide a common ethical foundation through which differences are respected and integrated into everyday social interaction. This finding expands previous discussions on Islamic education by demonstrating that

religious practices simultaneously nurture spiritual commitment and intercultural competence. Consequently, multicultural Islamic identity emerges through the intersection of religious devotion and collaborative social experiences, reflecting the Islamic principles of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *'adalah* (justice), and *tasamuh* (tolerance) in daily educational life (UNESCO, 2023; Zunaih, 2026).

From the perspective of the proposed Hidden Curriculum-Based Multicultural Islamic Identity (HCMII) Model, religious habituation represents the integrative dimension that connects institutional culture, role modelling, communal living, and participatory leadership into a coherent process of identity construction. While each dimension contributes to students' educational experiences, religious habituation provides the moral and spiritual foundation that continuously reinforces multicultural values through everyday practice. This study therefore extends the hidden curriculum literature by arguing that religious routines should not be understood merely as ritual obligations but as implicit pedagogical processes through which Islamic ethical values become embodied in students' attitudes and behaviours. Accordingly, multicultural Islamic identity is constructed through the continuous interaction between spiritual discipline, collective participation, and intercultural engagement, enabling pesantren-based higher education to produce graduates who are religiously committed, socially inclusive, and capable of contributing positively to multicultural societies.

Theoretical Reconstruction of the Hidden Curriculum-Based Multicultural Islamic Identity (HCMII) Model

The principal theoretical contribution of this study is the reconstruction of the Hidden Curriculum-Based Multicultural Islamic Identity (HCMII) Model, which explains the dynamic mechanism through which multicultural Islamic identity is constructed within pesantren-based higher education. While previous studies have predominantly examined hidden curriculum as an implicit strategy for character education, moral development, or disciplinary formation, the present findings demonstrate that hidden curriculum functions as a comprehensive educational ecosystem that simultaneously nurtures religious commitment and multicultural competence. The proposed HCMII Model identifies five interrelated dimensions—institutional culture, role modelling, communal living, participatory student organizations, and religious habituation—that collectively shape students' identity through continuous social interaction and experiential learning. Rather than operating independently, these dimensions interact dynamically to create an educational environment in which multicultural Islamic values are continuously experienced, interpreted, negotiated, and internalized. This finding extends the conceptualization of hidden curriculum beyond its traditional function as an unintended educational outcome by positioning it as a strategic mechanism for multicultural identity construction within Islamic higher education (Hafferty & O'Donnell, 2023; Ma'arif & Arif, 2026).

Furthermore, the HCMII Model contributes to contemporary scholarship on multicultural Islamic education by integrating perspectives from hidden curriculum, identity construction, and culturally embedded learning ecosystems into a unified theoretical framework. Existing models of multicultural education generally emphasize curriculum reform, instructional strategies, or intercultural competencies as primary mechanisms for developing inclusive attitudes. In contrast, the present study

demonstrates that multicultural Islamic identity develops primarily through students' lived experiences within the pesantren ecosystem, where religious traditions, institutional culture, and social interaction continuously reinforce one another. This finding supports recent arguments that identity is socially constructed through participation in communities of practice and sustained intercultural engagement rather than through formal knowledge transmission alone (Jackson, 2021; UNESCO, 2023). Consequently, the HCMII Model reconceptualizes multicultural Islamic identity as a dynamic, relational, and experiential process emerging from continuous participation in an integrated educational community.

The HCMII Model also offers significant practical implications for Islamic higher education institutions seeking to strengthen multicultural education without compromising Islamic values. The findings suggest that institutional efforts should move beyond curriculum redesign toward the development of comprehensive educational ecosystems in which institutional culture, exemplary leadership, communal living, participatory governance, and religious habituation function as mutually reinforcing dimensions of student development. Such an ecosystem enables multicultural values to become embedded in everyday educational practices rather than remaining abstract concepts discussed in classrooms. Accordingly, this study advances the hidden curriculum literature by proposing a new conceptual model that explains how pesantren-based higher education can simultaneously cultivate strong Islamic identity, intercultural competence, social cohesion, and peaceful citizenship. The HCMII Model therefore provides both a theoretical framework for future research and a practical reference for policymakers and educational leaders seeking to develop inclusive, culturally responsive, and values-based Islamic higher education in increasingly pluralistic societies.

Unlike previous studies that primarily conceptualized the hidden curriculum as an implicit mechanism for character education or moral development, this study introduces the Hidden Curriculum-Based Multicultural Islamic Identity (HCMII) Model as a novel conceptual framework explaining how multicultural Islamic identity is constructed through the dynamic interaction of institutional culture, role modelling, communal living, participatory student organizations, and religious habituation. The model demonstrates that multicultural Islamic identity is not an incidental outcome of formal education but a socially negotiated and culturally embedded process emerging from the integrated educational ecosystem of pesantren-based higher education. Consequently, the HCMII Model offers a new theoretical perspective for understanding multicultural Islamic education while providing practical guidance for developing inclusive and culturally responsive Islamic higher education institutions.

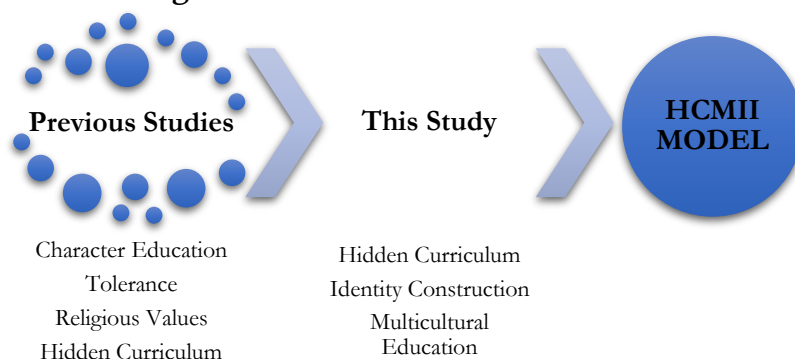
Theoretical Contribution

This study contributes to the advancement of hidden curriculum scholarship by extending its conceptual scope beyond character education and moral development toward the construction of multicultural Islamic identity in pesantren-based higher education. While previous studies have primarily examined the hidden curriculum as an implicit mechanism for transmitting institutional values or fostering students' discipline, the present study demonstrates that it functions as a comprehensive educational ecosystem in which institutional culture, role modelling, communal living, participatory student organizations, and religious habituation interact dynamically to

shape students' identities. This finding enriches existing theories of hidden curriculum by explaining that multicultural Islamic identity is not an unintended by-product of educational practice but a socially negotiated and culturally embedded process emerging from continuous participation in everyday educational life. In doing so, the study bridges the theoretical gap between hidden curriculum, multicultural education, and identity construction within Islamic higher education, offering a more holistic understanding of how educational environments influence students' religious and intercultural development.

More importantly, this study introduces the Hidden Curriculum-Based Multicultural Islamic Identity (HCMII) Model as a novel conceptual framework that explains the mechanism through which multicultural Islamic identity is constructed within pesantren-based higher education. Unlike existing models that emphasize curriculum content, instructional strategies, or multicultural competencies, the HCMII Model conceptualizes identity formation as the cumulative outcome of interconnected institutional experiences embedded within a culturally and religiously integrated learning ecosystem. The model therefore provides a new theoretical perspective for future studies on Islamic education, hidden curriculum, and multicultural identity by demonstrating that identity construction is fundamentally experiential, relational, and context-dependent rather than solely instructional. Consequently, the HCMII Model offers an original conceptual contribution that may serve as a reference for future comparative research on multicultural education across Islamic higher education institutions in different cultural contexts.

Figure 6. Theoretical Contribution



Practical Implications

The findings of this study offer important practical implications for policymakers, higher education leaders, and educators seeking to strengthen multicultural Islamic education in increasingly diverse societies. First, the study suggests that efforts to cultivate multicultural Islamic identity should not rely exclusively on curriculum revision or classroom-based instruction. Instead, higher education institutions should develop comprehensive educational ecosystems that intentionally integrate institutional culture, exemplary leadership, communal living, student participation, and religious habituation into students' everyday experiences. Such an ecosystem enables multicultural values to be internalized naturally through continuous interaction and shared practice rather than through isolated academic activities.

Second, the proposed HCMII Model provides a practical framework for designing educational policies and institutional development strategies within pesantren-based higher education. Institutional leaders may utilize the model to evaluate whether hidden curriculum practices consistently support multicultural inclusion, social cohesion, and Islamic ethical values across academic, residential, organizational, and religious dimensions. Likewise, lecturers, dormitory supervisors, and student affairs administrators may strengthen their educational roles by recognizing that their daily interactions, leadership practices, and behavioural examples constitute powerful components of students' identity formation. Accordingly, the HCMII Model offers not only a theoretical explanation of multicultural Islamic identity construction but also a practical guide for developing inclusive, culturally responsive, and values-based Islamic higher education capable of preparing graduates who are religiously committed, socially responsible, and competent in navigating multicultural societies.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the hidden curriculum plays a significant role in the construction of multicultural Islamic identity within pesantren-based higher education. Through an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of participants' lived experiences at STIKK An-Nur 2 Bululawang, five interconnected dimensions were identified: institutional culture, role modelling, communal living, student organizations, and religious habituation. These dimensions operate beyond formal classroom instruction by creating continuous opportunities for students to encounter cultural differences, negotiate social interactions, participate in collective activities, observe exemplary behaviour, and internalize Islamic values through daily practices. The findings indicate that multicultural Islamic identity develops as an experiential and socially negotiated process, reflected in students' respect for diversity, equality, mutual responsibility, intercultural competence, and inclusive Islamic orientation. Based on the synthesis of these findings, the study proposes the Hidden Curriculum-Based Multicultural Islamic Identity (HCMII) Model, which conceptualizes multicultural Islamic identity as an emergent outcome of the interaction between institutional, social, organizational, and religious practices. The model extends existing hidden curriculum scholarship beyond character formation by explaining how everyday educational experiences can contribute to the construction of an Islamic identity that is simultaneously religiously grounded, culturally inclusive, and socially cohesive. Practically, the findings suggest that pesantren-based higher education institutions can strengthen multicultural education not only through formal curriculum design but also by intentionally developing institutional cultures, role modelling, communal living arrangements, student organizations, and religious habituation that facilitate meaningful engagement with diversity.

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