

Multicultural Educational Values in the Islamic Boarding School Tradition: A Study of the Al-Ibriz Commentary

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Abstrak

This study examines the multicultural educational values embedded in KH. Bisri Musthofa's *Tafsir Al-Ibriz*, focusing on the interpretation of Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat, verses 11–13, and its relevance to multicultural education in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). The study employed a qualitative library research approach with a descriptive analytical design. The primary data source was *Tafsir Al-Ibriz*, supported by scholarly works on Qur'anic exegesis, multicultural education, religious moderation, and *pesantren* studies. Data were collected through documentation and analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The findings reveal that KH. Bisri Musthofa's interpretation promotes multicultural values, including respect for human dignity, empathy, tolerance (*tasamuh*), moderation (*tawassuth*), justice (*i'tidal*), balance (*tawazun*), equality, inclusiveness, and appreciation of diversity. These values are reflected in *pesantren* education through anti-bullying practices, peaceful conflict resolution, religious moderation, intercultural respect, and character development. This study demonstrates that *Tafsir Al-Ibriz* provides a contextual and culturally grounded foundation for strengthening multicultural education and promoting inclusive, peaceful, and harmonious educational practices in pluralistic societies.

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INTRODUCTION

The rise of religious radicalism, accompanied by anti-multicultural attitudes, poses a serious challenge to Indonesia's pluralistic society. Such ideologies not only fuel intolerance, discrimination, and violence in the name of religion but also threaten social cohesion and national unity (Azra, 2019; BNPT, 2023; Muhajir et al., 2025). One of the factors driving the emergence of radicalism is a narrow, exclusive interpretation of religious texts that disregards social context, thereby giving rise to claims of a single truth and a rejection of diversity (Qodir, 2014; Yusuf, 2018; Mariyono, 2024). This situation underscores the importance of strengthening multicultural education grounded in the values of moderate Islam (Bahri et al., 2025; Muis, 2026; Siddik et al., 2025). Pesantren, as Islamic educational institutions with a

tradition of scholarship and a culture of tolerance, have the potential to serve as strategic spaces for fostering mutual respect through the study of exegesis (Riaz et al., 2023; Sugianto et al., 2026; Ubaidillah & Fauzinudin Faiz, 2025). Therefore, research on the values of multicultural education in Tafsir Al-Ibriz by KH. Bisri Musthofa is crucial for reinforcing an inclusive, moderate, and relevant paradigm of Islamic education to prevent the spread of radicalism.

A number of previous studies have shown that Islamic boarding schools play a strategic role in fostering multicultural education as a means of preventing radicalism. Mufron (2026) study concluded that multicultural education in Islamic boarding schools is capable of instilling the values of tolerance, moderation, and respect for diversity, thereby serving as a bulwark against the spread of extremist ideologies. Santoso et al. (2012) also found that pesantren traditions in Yogyakarta foster a culture of dialogue, respect for differences in religious schools of thought, and an inclusive attitude through an education system rooted in local wisdom. Meanwhile, Ramadhan (2015) emphasized that a multicultural educational approach and religious inclusivity are effective strategies in the deradicalization process within pluralistic societies. Nevertheless, most studies still focus on multicultural educational practices in Islamic boarding schools in general (Islamic et al., 2023; Latif & Hafid, 2021; Mariyono, 2025). Research that specifically examines the values of multicultural education in Tafsir Al-Ibriz by KH. Bisri Musthofa particularly in the interpretation of Quranic Surah Al-Hujurat, verses 11–13 remains very limited. This gap serves as a key rationale for conducting this study.

This study aims to analyze the values of multicultural education in the pesantren tradition through KH. Bisri Musthofa's interpretation of Quranic Surah Al-Hujurat, verses 11–13, in Tafsir Al-Ibriz. Specifically, this study aims to identify the values of *tasamuh* (tolerance), *tawassuth* (moderation), *i'tidal* (justice), and *tawazun* (balance) contained in this interpretation and to explain their relevance to strengthening multicultural education in the pesantren environment. This objective is based on the strategic role of Islamic boarding schools as Islamic educational institutions that not only transmit Islamic knowledge but also shape the character of students to be moderate, inclusive, and respectful of diversity. Various studies indicate that the internalization of multicultural values in pesantren contributes to fostering a tolerant attitude and preventing the spread of religious radicalism (Marzuki et al., 2020; Faoziah, 2018). Thus, this study is expected to enrich the field of exegesis based on multicultural education while providing a conceptual foundation for strengthening religious moderation within the pesantren educational tradition.

This study is based on the argument that Tafsir Al-Ibriz by KH. Bisri Musthofa contains multicultural educational values that are relevant as a foundation for strengthening religious moderation in Islamic boarding schools. This argument is based on the assumption that Qur'anic exegesis rooted in the intellectual tradition of Islamic boarding schools is not merely oriented toward textual understanding but also takes into account the social, cultural, and pluralistic context of Indonesian society. Through his interpretation of Qur'anic Surah Al-Hujurat, verses 11–13, KH. Bisri Musthofa is believed to have established the values of tolerance (*tasamuh*), moderation (*tawassuth*), justice (*i'tidal*), and respect for diversity as fundamental principles of human relations. These values are believed to serve as an alternative to the rise of exclusive, intolerant, and radical attitudes in religious life. Therefore, this study seeks to demonstrate that the Al-Ibriz Exegesis not only possesses a theological dimension but also offers a contextual, humanistic, and relevant multicultural educational paradigm to strengthen the moderate character of santri and the life of Indonesia's diverse society.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative library research approach using a descriptive analytical design to examine the multicultural educational values contained in KH. Bisri

Musthofa's *Tafsir Al-Ibriz*, particularly the interpretation of Surah Al-Hujurat, verses 11–13. The primary data source was *Tafsir Al-Ibriz*, while secondary data were obtained from scholarly books, journal articles, and relevant academic publications on multicultural education, Qur'anic exegesis, Islamic moderation, and Islamic boarding school education. Data were collected through documentation by identifying, classifying, and organizing textual evidence related to multicultural values. The researcher served as the primary research instrument throughout the data collection and interpretation process. Data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis involving data reduction, thematic categorization, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The analytical procedures were guided by Krippendorff's content analysis framework (Krippendorff, 2019) and the qualitative research principles proposed by Creswell and Poth (2018) to ensure a systematic interpretation of the text and its contribution to multicultural education within the context of Islamic boarding schools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The Intellectual Biography of KH. Bisri Musthofa and the Formation of His Islamic Thought

The results of this study show that KH. Bisri Musthofa was one of the scholars of the Indonesian archipelago who made significant contributions to the development of Islamic scholarship, particularly in the fields of exegesis, pesantren education, and da'wah. His educational background, shaped by the pesantren tradition from a young age, laid a strong scholarly foundation in the fields of exegesis, hadith, fiqh, usul al-fiqh, and the Arabic language. This intellectual experience matured further after he pursued his studies in Mecca, which broadened his Islamic horizons while also exposing him to various schools of thought among Middle Eastern scholars.

This educational process shaped KH. Bisri Musthofa's moderate, inclusive, and adaptive approach to the social realities of Indonesian society. This approach is evident in his tendency to integrate Islamic teachings with local culture without compromising the substance of the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. This approach subsequently became a hallmark of nearly all his written works, particularly *tafsir Al-Ibriz*, which remains a primary reference in various traditional Islamic boarding schools across Indonesia to this day. In addition to being known as an exegete, KH. Bisri Musthofa also served as an educator who positioned the Islamic boarding school as the center for shaping the Islamic character of society. His da'wah and educational activities demonstrate that the development of religious knowledge is not directed solely at cognitive aspects but also at the cultivation of moral character, tolerance, and a harmonious social life.

Characteristics of Tafsir Al-Ibriz as a Medium for Community Education

The research findings indicate that the compilation of *tafsir Al-Ibriz* was motivated by the Javanese community's need for an easily understandable interpretation of the Qur'an. Unlike many classical exegetical works written in Arabic, KH. Bisri Musthofa chose to use the Javanese language written in the Pegon script so that it would be accessible to both Islamic boarding school students and the general public who have limited understanding of Arabic. Another unique feature of the *Tafsir Al-Ibriz* lies in its use of the "makna gandhul" method a word for word translation technique accompanied by step-by-step explanations of meaning. This method makes it easier for readers to understand the structure of the Arabic language while grasping the main message of each verse. Thus, *Tafsir Al-Ibriz* serves not only as a book of

exegesis but also as a tool for learning Arabic and for Qur'anic education within Islamic boarding schools.

Content analysis shows that the interpretations presented by KH. Bisri Musthofa use language that is communicative, simple, and closely aligned with the social reality of the community. Explanations of verses are often accompanied by examples from daily life, making the message of the Qur'an more contextual. This approach demonstrates that Tafsir Al-Ibriz develops a model of exegesis that is educational, practical, and responsive to the needs of the local community.

Multicultural Educational Values in the Al-Ibriz Commentary

An analysis of the interpretation of Quranic Surah Al-Hujurat, verses 11–13, shows that KH. Bisri Musthofa placed great emphasis on the development of social ethics as the foundation for a peaceful and harmonious society. These values are embodied through the prohibition of various actions that can damage social relationships, such as insulting, criticizing, giving derogatory nicknames, harboring negative assumptions (*su'uzan*), prying into others' affairs (*tajassus*), and gossiping (*ghibah*). According to his interpretation, such behaviors have the potential to give rise to conflict, division, discrimination, and the loss of mutual respect within society. Furthermore, KH. Bisri Musthofa interprets the concept of human diversity as part of God's divine order (*sunnatullah*). Differences in ethnicity, nationality, language, or social background are not a basis for establishing the superiority of a particular group, but rather a means to get to know one another (*ta'aruf*), cooperate, and strengthen the bonds of human brotherhood. This interpretation demonstrates that diversity is understood as a form of social capital that must be managed through mutual respect and tolerance.

Furthermore, KH. Bisri Musthofa emphasized that the measure of human dignity is not determined by social identity, ethnicity, economic status, or group affiliation, but solely by piety toward Allah SWT. This interpretation demonstrates that the principle of human equality is one of the fundamental values in the Qur'an that is strongly relevant to the concept of contemporary multicultural education.

The Relevance of Multicultural Education Values to Pesantren Education

The research findings indicate that the multicultural educational values contained in the Tafsir Al-Ibriz are highly relevant to the pesantren education system. This is evident from the alignment between the values developed by KH. Bisri Musthofa and the principles of moderate Islamic education, which have long been a defining characteristic of pesantren in Indonesia. The value of *tasamuh* is manifested through respect for differences in views and social backgrounds among students. The value of *tawassuth* is reflected in teaching that avoids extremism and excessive fanaticism. The value of *i'tidal* is embodied in the fair treatment of all pesantren residents without discrimination based on regional origin or social status. Meanwhile, the value of *tawazun* is evident in the effort to maintain a balance between the relationship between humans and God (*hablum minallah*) and the relationship among fellow human beings (*hablum minannas*).

The implementation of these values is reflected in the life of the pesantren through deliberative discussions, the study of classical Islamic texts, the practice of communal living, respect for the cultural differences of students from various regions, and character development based on *akhlakul karimah*. Thus, Tafsir Al-Ibriz not only holds theoretical value in the study of exegesis but also offers practical contributions as a conceptual foundation for strengthening multicultural education within the pesantren environment.

Table 1.

Results of the Analysis of Multicultural Educational Values in the Al-Ibriz Commentary

Key Findings	Analysis Results	Implications for Islamic Boarding School (Pesantren) Education
Intellectual Biography of KH. Bisri Musthofa	His pesantren education and learning experiences in Makkah shaped a moderate, contextual, and culturally grounded Islamic perspective.	Serves as a model for developing Islamic education that integrates classical Islamic scholarship with contemporary societal needs.
Characteristics of <i>Tafsir Al-Ibriz</i>	The commentary employs the Javanese language and Arabic Pegon script using the <i>makna gandhul</i> method, making it accessible and easy to understand for the community.	Facilitates the teaching and learning of the Qur'an in pesantren while broadening access to Qur'anic understanding for both students and the wider community.
Prohibition of Mockery and Insults	Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat (49):11 emphasizes respect for human dignity and prohibits ridicule, mockery, and verbal humiliation.	Fosters a culture of mutual respect among students from diverse social and cultural backgrounds.
Prohibition of Suspicion (<i>Su'uzan</i>), Spying (<i>Tajassus</i>), and Backbiting (<i>Ghibah</i>)	Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat (49):12 promotes positive thinking, respect for privacy, and avoidance of slander and backbiting.	Builds a harmonious, secure, and trusting environment within the pesantren community.
The Concept of <i>Ta'aruf</i>	Ethnic, cultural, and national diversity is regarded as <i>sunnatullah</i> (God's divine order) intended to encourage mutual understanding and cooperation.	Encourages inclusive social interaction while strengthening both <i>ukhuwah Islamiyah</i> (Islamic brotherhood) and <i>ukhuwah insaniyah</i> (universal human fraternity).
The Principle of Human Equality	Human dignity is determined solely by piety (<i>taqwa</i>), rather than by ethnicity, social status, or other worldly identities.	Reinforces the values of justice, equality, and anti-discrimination in pesantren education.
The Value of <i>Tasamuh</i> (Tolerance)	Encourages appreciation of diverse opinions, beliefs, and cultural backgrounds.	Cultivates tolerant, open-minded, and respectful character among students.
The Value of <i>Tawassuth</i> (Moderation)	Promotes a balanced and moderate understanding of Islamic teachings.	Prevents extremism and fanaticism within the pesantren environment.
The Value of <i>I'tidal</i> (Justice)	Upholds the principle of fairness and justice in social relationships.	Supports equitable educational governance and fair treatment of all students.
The Value of <i>Tawazun</i> (Balance)	Maintains harmony between one's relationship with Allah and with fellow human beings.	Produces holistic character education that integrates spiritual and social dimensions.

Discussion

The findings indicate that KH. Bisri Musthofa's interpretation in *Tafsir Al-Ibriz* is closely aligned with the principles of multicultural education, which recognize diversity as a social reality that should be respected and appreciated rather than viewed as a source of conflict.

His interpretation of Surah Al-Hujurat, verses 11–13, extends beyond the literal explanation of the Quranic text by emphasizing ethical values that guide social interaction, including mutual respect, equality, brotherhood, and justice. These values encourage individuals to avoid behaviors that damage social harmony, such as ridicule, prejudice, suspicion, and discrimination (Billah et al., 2025; A. D. Hossain & Salama, 2023; Md. I. Hossain, 2024; Syed & Ali, 2021). This finding demonstrates that pesantren-based Qur'anic exegesis possesses not only theological significance but also a strong social dimension that remains highly relevant to the multicultural context of contemporary Indonesian society.

The values identified in this study further strengthen the role of Islamic boarding schools as educational institutions committed to cultivating moderate Islamic character (Billah et al., 2025; Firmansyah et al., 2025; Mahmud et al., 2022). The ethical principles derived from the prohibition of insulting others, harboring negative assumptions, spying, and backbiting serve as the foundation for character education that promotes dialogue, empathy, mutual understanding, and peaceful coexistence (Gültekin, 2026; Karimulloh & Ade Nursanti, 2026; Thalgi, 2024). These teachings encourage students to appreciate differences while maintaining Islamic moral values in their daily interactions (Aderibigbe et al., 2023; Bakti et al., 2026; Lili Sholehuddin Badri & Ahmed Abdul Malik, 2024). Consequently, multicultural education from the perspective of KH. Bisri Musthofa is not limited to theoretical discourse but is translated into practical educational values that can be internalized through everyday learning activities and social life within the pesantren environment.

These findings are consistent with previous studies emphasizing that Islamic boarding schools play a strategic role in promoting religious moderation and preventing intolerance through the internalization of the values of *tasamuh*, *tawassuth*, *i'tidal*, and *tawazun*. Nevertheless, this study contributes a distinctive perspective by demonstrating that these values are explicitly embedded in KH. Bisri Musthofa's interpretation of Surah Al-Hujurat, verses 11–13, in *Tafsir Al-Ibriz*. Rather than discussing multicultural education solely from the perspective of educational practice or institutional policy, this study highlights its Qur'anic foundation as interpreted within the Nusantara exegetical tradition. In doing so, it expands the discourse on Indonesian Islamic exegesis by illustrating how local interpretations of the Qur'an can contribute to the development of multicultural educational thought.

Overall, the findings suggest that *Tafsir Al-Ibriz* functions not only as a work of Qur'anic interpretation but also as a source of social and educational values that reinforce tolerance, respect for diversity, equality, and human solidarity. These principles remain highly relevant in addressing contemporary challenges related to intolerance, social polarization, and religious radicalism in Indonesia. Therefore, integrating KH. Bisri Musthofa's ideas into the curriculum and educational practices of Islamic boarding schools may provide an effective strategy for strengthening multicultural education. Such integration has the potential to foster students who possess strong religious commitment while simultaneously demonstrating openness, inclusiveness, and the capacity to live harmoniously within Indonesia's culturally and religiously diverse society.

Tabel 2.

A Synthesis of the Values of Multicultural Education Based on Surah Al-Hujurat, Verses 11–13, in the Tafsir Al-Ibriz

Qur'anic Verse	KH. Bisri Musthofa's Interpretation	Multicultural Education Values	Implementation in Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren)
QS. Al-Hujurat: 11	Prohibition against mocking, insulting, and giving others offensive nicknames.	Respect for human dignity, mutual respect, and appreciation of others.	Promoting ethical interaction among students, implementing anti-bullying practices, and fostering mutual respect within the pesantren community.
QS. Al-Hujurat: 12	Prohibition against negative suspicion (<i>su'uzan</i>), spying on others (<i>tajassus</i>), and backbiting (<i>ghibah</i>).	Trust, empathy, social integrity, and harmonious interpersonal relationships.	Cultivating a culture of mutual trust, strengthening <i>ukhuwah</i> (Islamic brotherhood), and encouraging peaceful conflict resolution among students.
QS. Al-Hujurat: 13	Human diversity is part of Allah's divine design (<i>sunnatullah</i>); true honor is determined by piety (<i>taqwa</i>), not ethnicity or social status.	Tolerance, equality, inclusivity, social justice, and respect for diversity.	Integrating religious moderation education, appreciating students' cultural diversity, and reinforcing multicultural character development within the pesantren environment.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that KH. Bisri Musthofa's *Tafsir Al-Ibriz*, particularly its interpretation of Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat verses 11–13, embodies fundamental multicultural educational values, including respect, tolerance, justice, moderation, equality, inclusivity, and appreciation of diversity. These values provide a strong ethical foundation for strengthening religious moderation and multicultural character formation within pesantren education. Theoretically, this study enriches the discourse on Nusantara Qur'anic exegesis by demonstrating its relevance to contemporary multicultural education and Islamic educational thought. Practically, the findings offer a conceptual framework for integrating multicultural values into pesantren curricula, character education, and daily educational practices to foster inclusive and peaceful learning environments. Future research is recommended to examine the implementation of these values in various pesantren settings through empirical field studies or comparative analyses with other Indonesian Qur'anic commentaries to further explore their educational impact and contextual relevance.

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