

Implementation of Intercultural Education Competencies in State Islamic Religious University Lecturers

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Abstract

Intercultural education at State Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIN) has an important role in maintaining Islamic values within the framework of diverse cultures and religions. This study aims to identify intercultural education competencies in lecturers at UIN North Sumatra and STAIN Madina. This study used qualitative methods with in-depth interviews as an instrument to collect data from 10 lecturers. Research findings show that the majority of lecturers understand interculturality as a phenomenon that involves interaction, exchange of ideas, and mutual influence between different cultures. The research recommendation is that continuous efforts are needed to enrich intercultural education, improve curriculum, and develop personal abilities in creating an inclusive academic environment that is responsive to cultural diversity.

Keywords : Competence; Intercultural Education; Islamic Higher Education.

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Abstrak

Pendidikan antarbudaya di Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri (PTKIN) memiliki peran penting dalam mempertahankan nilai-nilai Islam dalam kerangka budaya dan agama yang beragam. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi kompetensi pendidikan antarbudaya pada dosen di UIN Sumatera Utara dan STAIN Madina. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan wawancara mendalam sebagai instrumen untuk mengumpulkan data dari 10 dosen. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas dosen memahami interkulturalitas sebagai fenomena yang melibatkan interaksi, pertukaran gagasan, dan saling memengaruhi antara budaya yang berbeda. Rekomendasi penelitian adalah

diperlukan upaya berkelanjutan untuk memperkaya pendidikan antarbudaya, meningkatkan kurikulum, dan mengembangkan kemampuan personal dalam menciptakan lingkungan akademik yang inklusif dan responsif terhadap keragaman budaya.

Kata Kunci : Kompetensi; Pendidikan Antarbudaya; Perguruan Tinggi Islam.

A. Introduction

State Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIN) are often a gathering place for students and employees from various cultures, tribes, and religions (Pettalongi, 2022). This uniqueness reflects the multicultural spirit that characterizes PTKIN in Indonesia. According to Islamic education experts, PTKIN plays an important role in embracing cultural diversity in the context of religious education. The presence of students and employees from diverse backgrounds, a rich academic environment with perspectives and experiences (Larrinaga & Amurrio, 2015). This challenges PTKIN to ensure that the education provided not only covers religious aspects but also enriches the understanding of cultural diversity.

Intercultural approaches to education are becoming increasingly important in this context, as they provide

opportunities for students and staff to learn from each other, exchange views, and understand different points of view (Romijn et al., 2021). Intercultural education has become one of the main challenges for universities in the 21st century, with special attention paid to the intercultural training of future professionals, as the main axis to build the foundations of a democratic and inclusive society (Escarbajal-Frutos et al., 2019).

State Islamic Universities (PTKIN), especially those in North Sumatra, must encourage experiential intercultural learning situations through the use of innovative methodologies to promote commitment to cultural diversity (Yassin et al., 2020). It is becoming increasingly important for training institutions to work within the framework of a holistic and open conception of interculturality. From several research results that took place in

North Sumatra, studies on intercultural attitudes and intercultural education sensitivity are scarcer in the context of Higher Education / Students, and other studies tend to be applied at the primary and secondary / Student education stages (Mikander et al., 2018). Studies focusing on developing intercultural sensitivity in lecturers at PTKIN North Sumatra are practically non-existent. This last point is a strong reason for the importance of this research being conducted.

State Islamic Universities (PTKIN) try to respond to constant changes in current realities, promoting a whole set of educational practices based on the values of solidarity, tolerance, and understanding of different cultures to build true dialogue and intercultural encounters (Osler, 2020). For this reason, PTKIN lecturers must assume a change in their pedagogical role and adapt their training to the needs of society; permanent social change in on-campus teaching, where not only disciplinary concepts and content are important, but also transversal values and competencies. The following researchers present the conceptual framework of professional development:

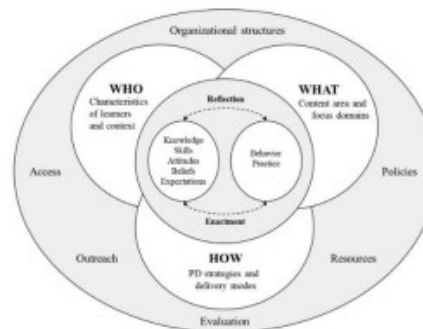


Figure 1. Professional Development Conceptual Framework

Cross-cultural education at State Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIN) plays an important role in ensuring the sustainability of Islamic values within the framework of existing cultural and religious diversity (Biasutti et al., 2019). In an increasingly diverse global world, PTKIN has a responsibility to protect and safeguard the nature of Islam while opening the door to a deeper understanding of different cultures and beliefs.

Multicultural education allows students and employees at PTKIN to have a broader understanding of Islamic values and how these values can be applied in different cultural contexts. This can help avoid religious narrowing that can occur when only one point of view is considered (Kamaruzzaman, 2018). By studying the views and

practices of other religions, students can compare and reflect on the core values of Islam, thereby strengthening their understanding (Mu'awanah et al., 2020).

Intercultural education has great potential to deepen every Muslim's understanding of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, the foundation of Islam. In the reality of cultural diversity, the Qur'an as the holy book of Islam contains universal messages that can be interpreted and applied in different cultural contexts. As Allah says in surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13.

With intercultural education, we have the opportunity to explore the diverse dimensions of Islam. This education provides a platform to interpret Islamic teachings by considering different cultural contexts (Hanafy, 2015). Intercultural understanding or sensitivity as the ability to identify and appreciate cultural differences and similarities, and intercultural competence as the ability to think and act in a way appropriate to the context (Sudrajat, 2014).

The curricular and didactic treatment of intercultural education requires a plinary interdisci approach to promote comprehensive training in

democratic values that favor the acquisition of intercultural skills as a key element to enhance professional development in a context characterized by multiculturalism (Wello et al., 2017). The construction of personal, social, and cultural identities is also a key factor in the generation of intercultural education as a reflective proposal and critical educational action (Babushko et al., 2022).

The purpose of this study is to identify attitudes and perceptions towards cultural diversity and interculturality in the university context, as well as to analyze the pedagogical and inclusive perspectives of lecturers in 2 different campuses, namely lecturers at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training UIN North Sumatra, lecturers at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training and lecturers at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training STAIN Madina. in relation to intercultural education.

B. Research Method

Qualitative methodology was used in this study. Data is studied through content analysis, and as an instrument to collect information, in-depth interviews were conducted with lecturers on 2

different campuses, namely lecturers of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training UIN North Sumatra, lecturers of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training STAIN Madina. The sample in this study was 10 people who were representatives of 2 campuses. Each campus is represented through 5 lecturers who participate voluntarily, representing a heterogeneous distribution and based on the length of teaching at the university.

The selected lecturers are focused on lecturers who teach courses related to culture so that from them more in-depth information is obtained about the material, approaches, problems they face in lecture classes while teaching courses related to intercultural. To select participants in this study, researchers asked directly to colleagues or colleagues representing 2 campuses. The colleagues were briefed in advance that the lecturer to be interviewed is a lecturer who has at least 3 years of teaching experience at the college. In the letter, the main purpose of the research and the reasons for conducting the interview are presented. The interview took place in each lecturer's office and lasted for one hour. They were

previously informed of their right to withdraw from the interview at any time they deemed if the interview was out of its original purpose.

The interview questions were compiled by the researchers, taking into account the research objectives and the conceptual foundations of intercultural education in a university context. A literature review allows for a better understanding of how cultural and intercultural diversity is addressed in the university curriculum (Marzali, 2017). Likewise, it makes it possible to understand how intercultural competence is acquired in the various subjects included in the content of the university curriculum.

This study uses a data analysis approach that refers to the interactive framework proposed by Miles and Huberman, in accordance with the explanation presented by (Rijali, 2019). The data analysis process consists of three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. In an effort to ensure the validity of the data, this study also applied the triangulation method. The triangulation approach applied includes the use of various

methods and data sources by examining information obtained from interviews, field notes, surveys, and documentation records contained in various data sources (Abdul, 2020). The technique used to test the validity of data is the triangulation approach, which aims to verify data through the approach of various data sources with different methods and carried out at different times.

C. Results and Discussion

Based on the results of interviews with lecturers related to the first question asked is about the lecturer's knowledge of the definition of interculturality. Based on the answers of these lecturers, several similar patterns of answers emerged among some lecturers, indicating a convergence point in their understanding of the concept of interculturality.

The majority of lecturers emphasize that interculturality is a phenomenon that involves interaction, exchange, and influence between different cultures. They describe interculturality as the process by which individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds interact, exchange ideas,

and share values and worldviews. In their view, interculturality not only includes recognition and respect for cultural differences, but also enriches the understanding of cultural diversity and similarity (Uyun, 2022).

Based on the results of the overall interviews, the answers obtained from 10 lecturers indicate that interculturality is a fundamental concept in their views. The lecturers realized the importance of intercultural exchange and dialogue, which was able to create a deeper understanding of different cultures. This corresponds to the main objective of intercultural education, which is to facilitate mutual recognition, appreciation, and cooperation among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Furthermore, the researcher asked the second and third questions related to the knowledge of PAI study program students about intercultural education. For the second question, a number of lecturers argued that although there are efforts in teaching and curriculum to introduce the concept of intercultural education to PAI study program students, there is still room for improvement. Some lecturers observed

that some students still need more practical opportunities to experience and apply the principles of interculturality in a real environment. This reflects the need for more field activities, cross-cultural discussions, and social interactions that can help students understand and feel the importance of interculturality in daily life practices (Khoirunnisa & Sunarya, 2023).

Then, for the third question, the majority of lecturers interviewed agreed that the curriculum of PAI study programs at both universities has developed in supporting the development of intercultural education competencies. They indicate that elements such as courses related to interculturality, cross-cultural religious seminars, and intercultural training in the curriculum, have enabled students to gain a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and its influence on religion. However, some lecturers also highlighted the need to continue to develop and enrich the curriculum to be more responsive to increasingly complex global challenges.

Based on the results of the interview, there were overall answers from lecturers about a realistic picture

related to the development of intercultural education competencies among PAI study program students at both universities. Although strides have been made in teaching and curriculum, there is a realization that sustained efforts are needed to enhance students' understanding and practical experience in understanding, appreciating, and managing cultural differences in an increasingly complex society.

The researcher continued the fourth question related to the intensity of lecturer participation in attending seminars on culture or becoming administrators in certain organizations such as FKUB (Religious Communication Forum) or other similar organizations. In answering this question, the researcher concluded the results of the answers given by the lecturers, namely, the majority of them stated that they had not been involved in the organization or attended cultural seminars. Nevertheless, the lecturers still have a commitment to understand and appreciate cultural and religious diversity through various efforts.

It is important to note that some lecturers have a deep interest in understanding diversity, even though

they have not been involved in any particular organization or seminar. Although there are differences in their direct experience in organizational participation or seminars. This finding is consistent with previous studies indicating that there is limited participation of lecturers in interfaith and cultural organizations (Wahyuni, 2017). These lecturers point out that awareness of the importance of cultural and religious diversity remains a concern in their education and daily interactions.

This illustrates that although there may be limitations in direct participation in certain organizations or seminars, these lecturers have a strong concern for the importance of learning and dialogue regarding cultural and religious diversity. Thus, demonstrating the importance of their role in shaping positive perceptions of diversity among students and society as a whole.

The fifth question asked to lecturers is related to their understanding of the competence of personal abilities that lecturers must have. In relation to the three aspects mentioned, namely showing the attitude of Indonesian personality, understanding religious, social, and state values, and having a

broad view of the problems of Indonesian society, the majority of lecturers indicated that they had developed these abilities. The majority of lecturers explained that they have tried to reflect attitudes and actions that are in accordance with Indonesian personality values in the context of teaching and interaction with students. In research by (Paul & Elder, 2006), (Rosnawati et al., 2015) it was found that this approach is an important part of efforts to create an inclusive academic environment and encourage mutual respect among students who come from various cultural backgrounds.

The majority of lecturers also affirm that they have tried to understand and recognize religious, social, and state values in an effort to support the learning process and interaction with students. This approach is in accordance with the concept of intercultural education that encourages a deeper understanding of cultural and religious values in the context of education (Sapendi, 2015). At the same time, the lecturers also recognize that although they have made efforts to develop these aspects of personal abilities, there is still room for further growth.

Research by (Bagus et al., 2023) shows that there is a need for a continuous learning approach in developing personal abilities such as intercultural understanding and respect for diversity.

Furthermore, the last question is the sixth question asked by researchers to lecturers is related to academic abilities that must be possessed, such as mastering analytical tools, logical thinking, critical, systematic, and analytical; have the conceptual ability to identify and formulate problems; and being able to offer alternative problem solving. Most of the lecturers explained that they had developed some aspect of these academic abilities. The majority of lecturers state that they have mastered analytical tools relevant in their field of study. They have used a variety of logical, critical, systematic, and analytical thinking methods in order to develop strong arguments and make decisions based on existing evidence and data. The results of this study are in line with the results of research (Sobri, 2023) which emphasizes the importance of critical thinking skills in an academic context. The lecturers also revealed that there are situations where more efforts

are needed in formulating problems with more specifics and relevance related to intercultural education competence. This is in line with Paul and Elder's theory in (Indraswati et al., 2020) which underlines the importance of the ability to formulate problems effectively.

D. Conclusion

The results of research in the context of intercultural education show that there is room to increase students' understanding of knowledge about intercultural education. More practical activities and cross-cultural interactions in real environments are needed. In terms of curriculum, the lecturers agreed that the curriculum of PAI study program has developed to support intercultural education competencies through courses, cross-cultural seminars, and intercultural training. However, there is an awareness of the need to continuously enrich the curriculum to make it more relevant to the complexity of global challenges. Continuous efforts are needed to enrich intercultural education, optimize curriculum, and improve personal abilities in order to create an inclusive academic environment and be

responsive to cultural diversity.

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