CONSTRUCTION OF TASĀMUḤ CONCEPT IN THE CURRICULUM OF THE ISLAMIC COLLEGE OF MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Rudi Suherman
University of Sydney, Australia
Email: rsuh6796@uni.sydney.edu.au

Moch. Bakhtiar
Institut Attanwir Bojonegoro, Indonesia
Email: mochbakhtiar@attanwir.ac.id

Bambang Hariyanto
UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Email: bambangs_h@yahoo.com

Abstract: This article describes how the values of religious tolerance (*tasāmuḥ*) are integrated into the curriculum of private Islamic education and manifest themselves in the local community. Both Muslims and non-Muslims believe that Islamic values can support social stability and cohesion to counter Islamophobia and the loss of religious values in Australia. Religious tolerance, as practised at the Islamic College of Melbourne, helps to create a more harmonious and less polarised community atmosphere. This is a qualitative study using a phenomenological approach. Data was collected through interviews and documentary studies. The findings show that the values of *tasāmuḥ* (tolerance), *ukhūwwah* (brotherhood) and *ta'āruf* (getting to know each other) are incorporated. These values are internalised in the Islamic curriculum, especially in the aspects of learning and output in the form of extra-curricular activities, social care and national events to promote mutual understanding and respect among different communities.

Keywords: Curriculum, Islamic Education, *Tasāmuḥ*.

Introduction

Since 1974, Islamic education has experienced fantastic growth, reaching 30 institutions in Australia.[1] Islamic educational institutions provide a harmonious social life. Although Islam is a minority religion, Australian Muslims and non-Muslims find it to be a tolerant and accommodating religion. The Islamic education system in Australia is able to accommodate and reflect the values of peace in their lives. This value of peace can ensure the rights of Muslim students to be educated in accordance with their beliefs, and strengthen inclusivity and pluralism in Australian society.[2]

The public education system in Australia is based on secular principles that emphasise inclusivity, equality and religious neutrality. However, for the Muslim community there is a fundamental need for Islamic values to be recognised and integrated into the curriculum. This includes aspects such as a correct understanding of Islam, respect in worship, halal food and an environment conducive to tasamuh. This is in line with the primary value of Islamic education as one of the means by which cultural and religious values are transmitted to the younger generation.[3]

However, the process of integrating the Islamic value of tasamuh into Islamic education in Australia is not without its problems. One of the key issues is the distortion of the teachings of secularism and the need for education with a religious identity. In addition, there are concerns among some Muslim communities that the introduction of Islamic values into education may conflict with

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[1] Markus Broer, Yifan Bai, and Frank Fonseca, "Socioeconomic Inequality and Educational Outcomes: An Introduction," in *Socioeconomic Inequality and Educational Outcomes: Evidence from Twenty Years of TIMSS*, ed. Markus Broer, Yifan Bai, and Frank Fonseca (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 1–6, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-11991-1_1.

[2] Amanda Rehayem et al., "Infant Feeding Beliefs and Practices of Arabic Mothers in Australia," *Women and Birth* 33, no. 4 (July 2020): e391–99, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wombi.2019.07.004.

[3] Emma Rowe, "Reading Islamophobia in Education Policy through a Lens of Critical Race Theory: A Study of the 'Funding Freeze' for Private Islamic Schools in Australia," *Whiteness and Education* 5, no. 1 (January 2, 2020): 54–73, https://doi.org/10.1080/23793406.2019.1689159.

universal values embraced by the Islamic education system in Australia,[4] such as gender equality and individual freedom.

Islamic educational institutions in Australia also face the internal challenge of designing a curriculum that strikes a balance between religious and general education. On the one hand, the curriculum must reflect Islamic values in a way that is authentic and relevant to Muslim students. On the other hand, the curriculum must also meet the Australian government's National Education Standards, which emphasise academic competence and relevant life skills in a multicultural society.[5]

In this position, Islamic education in Australia must be able to stand above all interests. Islamic education aims to provide an education that not only meets national academic standards, but also equips students with a deep understanding of Islamic teachings. However, this is not an easy task, with many challenges, including the pressure to balance religious and general education and to meet strict government regulations.[6] In this case, the construction of Islamic values in education becomes a complex process in which schools must be able to respond to the needs of the Muslim community while still complying with prevailing national policies.

Another challenge arises from the concerns of some Australians about the integration of Islamic values in education. On the one hand, there is a view that introducing religious elements into education could undermine the principle of secularism on which the state education system is based. On the other hand, there have also been concerns that teaching that focuses too much on specific religious values could hinder social integration and promote segregation among students.[7] These issues have led to intense debate about how to

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[4] Teuku Zulfikar and Emawati Emawati, "Islamic Education and Religiosity: Voices of the Indonesian Muslim Communities in Australia," *Ulumuna* 24, no. 1 (June 9, 2020): 24–56, https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v24i1.388.

[5] Markus Broer, Yifan Bai, and Frank Fonseca, "Methodology: Constructing a Socioeconomic Index for TIMSS Trend Analyses," in *Socioeconomic Inequality and Educational Outcomes*, by Markus Broer, Yifan Bai, and Frank Fonseca, vol. 5, IEA Research for Education (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 19–34, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-11991-1_3.

[6] Yaghoob Foroutan, "Education's Economic Return in Multicultural Australia: Demographic Analysis," *Journal of Sociology* 59, no. 1 (March 2023): 120–41, https://doi.org/10.1177/14407833211049479.

[7] Garth Stahl and Máirtín Mac An Ghaill, "The Pursuit of 'the Good Life': Muslim Masculinities and the Transition to Higher Education in Australia," *International*

construct Islamic values in education without violating the basic principles embraced by Australian society as a whole.

These conditions suggest that the construction of Islamic values in Australian education is a multidimensional and dynamic process involving interactions between government policies, community needs and the broader social context.[8] Therefore, this research is important in identifying the various factors that influence such constructs and in assessing their impact on Muslim students and the community as a whole. The research is also expected to provide useful recommendations for policy makers, educators and other stakeholders in building an education system that is inclusive, equitable and responsive to religious diversity in Australia.

Previous research on Islamic education in Australia has not examined the construction of the concept of integrating Islam into the curriculum, and has mostly examined the existence of minority Islamic educational institutions. Sabir Jamaluddin, Fakhrul Adabi and Sadad Mahmud examined the resilience of minority Islamic education in the midst of secular intervention through community strength.[9] Jaelani reveals the history of Islamic migration to Australia through active learning in small forums.[10] Islam in Australia prioritises social patterns to maintain ways of life and avoid conflict; Islamic education is used as a means of culture.[11] Gurr believes that Islamic education in Australia can be developed through family education.[12] Previous

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Journal of Inclusive Education 28, no. 7 (June 6, 2024): 1007–21, https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2021.1971310.

[8] Zuleyha Keskin and Mehmet Ozalp, "Islamic Studies in Australia's Universities," *Religions* 12, no. 2 (February 1, 2021): 99, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12020099.

[9] Mahmood Nathie and Mohamad Abdalla, "Courses Preferences and Occupational Aspirations of Students in Australian Islamic Schools," *Religions* 11, no. 12 (December 10, 2020): 663, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11120663.

[10] N Ghamra-Oui, "The Semiotics of an 'Islamic' Education: Engaging with the Concrete Realities of Muslims in Australia," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 40, no. 2 (2020): 318–31, https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2020.1773102.

[11] Subandi, "Pesantren-Based Transformational Leadership: Strategies toward International Superior Madrasah in Indonesia," *Webology* 18, no. SI05 (October 30, 2021): 1023–40, https://doi.org/10.14704/WEB/V18SI05/WEB18279.

[12] Maali Mohammed Jassim Alabdulhadi and Kalthoum Mohammed Alkandari, "Practices of Islamic Education Teachers in Promoting Moderation (Wasatiyyah) Values among High School Students in Kuwait: Challenges and Obstacles," *Cogent Education* 11, no. 1 (December 31, 2024): 2365577, https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2365577.

research has not examined the construction of Islamic moderation, which is the main unit of Islamic education in Australia, so it is important in this study.

The research method is a natural setting where the research is directed to the social conditions and educational institutions without the intervention of the researchers. This research style is in line with the qualitative research method, which prioritises in-depth phenomena. Primary data is taken from documentary studies of research results and books, supported by interviews with teachers in educational institutions. Primary data was provided by a sample of people who were considered by the researcher to be key informants. The final data are confirmed by triangulation of sources to form a valid and reliable set of research findings.

Australian Muslim Community Typology

The Muslim community in Australia has grown rapidly, with a history rooted in the early 19th century when Muslim traders and labourers, such as 'cameleers' from Afghanistan, first arrived in Australia.[13] Over time, major waves of immigration occurred after the Second World War, particularly with the arrival of refugees from conflict-torn countries. These Muslim communities have grown within Australia's multicultural social, political and cultural context, creating a need to understand how the typology of Muslim communities in the country has formed and developed.[14]

One way of understanding this typology is to look at the ethnic origins of the Muslim community in Australia. The country's Muslim community is extremely diverse, comprising more than 60 different ethnic groups. The most prominent are communities from Lebanon, Turkey, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Somalia. Each of these groups brings its own religious and cultural traditions that influence the way Islam is practised in Australia. For example, the Lebanese Muslim community, which is one of the largest groups, has had

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[13] Maila D.H. Rahiem, *Religion, Education, Science and Technology towards a More Inclusive and Sustainable Future: Proceedings of the 5th International Colloquium on Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies (ICIIS 2022), Lombok, Indonesia, 19-20 October 2022*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2024), https://doi.org/10.1201/9781003322054.

[14] Alice Smith and Tanya Evans, "Gender Gap in STEM Pathways: The Role of Gender-Segregated Schooling in Mathematics and Science Performance," *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies* 59, no. 1 (June 2024): 269–87, https://doi.org/10.1007/s40841-024-00320-y.

significant influence in establishing mosques, Islamic schools and community organisations. They also play an active role in local politics, particularly in cities such as Sydney and Melbourne. In contrast, Muslim communities from Indonesia, which are smaller, often practice Islam in ways influenced by local Javanese and Sumatran traditions, which tend to be more moderate and syncretic.[15]

In addition to ethnic origins, the typology of Muslim communities in Australia can also be categorised according to their religious practices. While all of these groups subscribe to Islam, the ways in which they practise it can be very different. There are notable differences between Sunni and Shia Muslims, and between groups such as Sufis, Salafis and reformist movements. Salafi groups, for example, are known for a more strict and literal approach to religious texts, often avoiding adaptation to local cultures that do not fit their strict interpretation of Islam.[16] Sufi groups, on the other hand, emphasise the spiritual and mystical aspects of Islam and are often more inclusive of different cultural traditions.

Social and economic roles are also important dimensions in the typology of Muslim communities in Australia. Some Muslim groups, particularly those who have been in Australia for generations, have achieved high levels of social and economic integration. They are successful professionals, entrepreneurs and academics, and are actively involved in interfaith dialogue and social activities.[17] However, there are Muslim groups who still face significant challenges to social and economic integration, particularly refugees and new immigrants who often face discrimination, economic

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[15] Margaret O'Connor, Kathleen Menzies, and Michelle Warner, "Strengthening Muslim Community Leaders' Understanding of Palliative Care in Australia," *Progress in Palliative Care* 32, no. 2 (March 3, 2024): 74–77, https://doi.org/10.1080/09699260.2024.2307708.

[16] Rita Jabri Markwell, "Religion as a Motive – Does Australian Terrorism Law Serve Justice?," *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, March 29, 2023, https://doi.org/10.5204/ijcjsd.2686. Also see Bambang Hariyanto, "The Contribution of KH. Said Agil Siradj's Leadership in Fighting Radicalism: A Language Communication Strategy," *Islam Realitas: Journal of Islamic and Social Studies* 6, no. 2 (December 31, 2020): 193, https://doi.org/10.30983/islam_realitas.v6i2.3766.

[17] Lana Zannettino et al., "'Gatekeeping Family Violence': The Role of Religious and Community Leaders in the Afghan Migrant Community in South Australia," *Religions* 14, no. 9 (September 20, 2023): 1208, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14091208.

hardship and language barriers. Mosques and Islamic organisations often serve as a refuge and source of support for them.

Muslim communities in Australia face challenges related to identity, integration and public perception. Islamophobia and negative stereotypes of Muslims, reinforced by media coverage and global politics, often lead to tension and polarisation.[18] This creates challenges for Australian Muslims, particularly the younger generation, who must navigate their identity between two different worlds. However, despite these challenges, there are great opportunities for the Muslim community in Australia to play a positive role in this multicultural society. With a growing and increasingly educated population, Australian Muslims are well placed to contribute to the social, cultural and economic life of the country.[19] Education, interfaith dialogue and participation in political and civic life are some of the ways in which Australian Muslims can strengthen their position in society.

The typology of the Muslim community in Australia reflects its complexity and diversity. With different ethnic backgrounds, religious practices and socio-economic roles, Australian Muslims offer a rich portrait of how Islam is practised and understood in this multicultural country. Although the Muslim community in Australia faces many challenges, it also has great opportunities to contribute to the social and economic development of the country and to strengthen social cohesion through dialogue and cooperation.[20]

Insights into the importance of understanding the internal and external dynamics of the Muslim community in Australia are therefore relevant not only to academic studies, but also to public policy and more inclusive social integration strategies. By understanding this typology, we can better appreciate the contributions and challenges faced by Australian Muslims and

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[18] Holger Daun and Reza Arjmand, "Globalisation and Islamic Education," in *Third International Handbook of Globalisation, Education and Policy Research*, ed. Joseph Zajda (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021), 451–63, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-66003-1_25.

[19] Jan A. Ali, "Studying Islam and Its Adherents in Australian Universities," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 2 (December 31, 2021): 137–48, https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v7i2.15773.

[20] Hussain Mohi-ud-Din Qadri and M. Ishaq Bhatti, *Contemporary Issues in Islamic Social Finance*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2021), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003050209.

support them to realise their full potential in this pluralistic and dynamic society.

The Symbiosis of Islamic Education in Australia

The development of Islamic education in Australia has undergone significant changes since its inception.[21] Initially, the Muslim community in Australia consisted of small groups who arrived as migrant workers, sailors and traders in the 19th and early 20th centuries. They brought with them Islamic traditions and values that later became the basis for the development of Islamic education in the country.[22]

As the Muslim population grew through immigration and local births, the need for education in Islamic values became more pressing. In the 1970s and 1980s, Muslim communities began to establish weekend schools and madrasas that focused on teaching the basics of the religion, such as reading the Qur'an, fiqh and Islamic history.[23] These institutions are usually set up and run by local communities with limited resources, but play an important role in maintaining Muslim identity and cultural heritage in Australia.

It was not until the late 20th century that the Muslim community began to establish full-time schools that were officially recognised by the Australian government. These schools not only taught the Australian national curriculum, but also incorporated Islamic religious education into their programmes. This step was taken to meet the need for a holistic education for Muslim children, encompassing both academic and spiritual aspects. One of the earliest examples was the opening of King Khalid Islamic College in Melbourne in 1982, which was followed by the establishment of several other Islamic schools across Australia.[24]

The establishment of these Islamic schools faced various challenges, including funding, accreditation and social acceptance.

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[21] Shane Satterley, Halim Rane, and Riyad H. Rahimullah, "Fields of Educational Interest and an Islamist Orientation in Australia," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 35, no. 3 (April 3, 2023): 694–711, https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2021.1970542.

[22] Siti Nor Aisyah Akhwan et al., "Acculturation Challenges Faced by Malaysian Muslim Students Studying Abroad," *Pertanika Journal of Science and Technology* 29, no. S1 (April 14, 2021), https://doi.org/10.47836/pjssh.29.s1.18.

[23] Rowe, "Reading Islamophobia in Education Policy through a Lens of Critical Race Theory."

[24] Zulfikar and Emawati, "Islamic Education and Religiosity."

However, through the hard work and dedication of the founders and the Muslim community at large, many of these schools have managed to grow and thrive. They provide a supportive learning environment where students can pursue academic excellence while remaining connected to their Islamic values and identity.[25] In addition, these schools play a role in promoting intercultural understanding and tolerance through various programmes and activities that engage the wider community.

In the 21st century, Islamic education in Australia continues to grow with the emergence of tertiary institutions offering Islamic Studies and Middle Eastern Studies programmes. Universities such as the University of Melbourne and Griffith University have introduced programmes that allow students to study Islamic studies academically.[26] In addition, the emergence of research centres and think tanks focusing on issues relevant to the Muslim community indicates a growing interest and recognition of the importance of Islamic Studies in academic and social contexts.

Technological developments and digitalisation have also played an important role in the transformation of Islamic education in Australia. Online learning platforms and digital resources have made Islamic education more accessible to a wide range of people, including those living in remote areas.[27] E-learning programmes, webinars and mobile applications have enabled more flexible and interactive learning, addressing the challenges of geographical and time constraints.

Nevertheless, Islamic education in Australia still faces challenges, including issues related to stereotyping, Islamophobia and social integration. Some Islamic schools are under pressure to demonstrate that they make a positive contribution to Australian society as a whole and do not isolate students from the wider community.[28] To address this, many Islamic schools and educational institutions are actively building partnerships with other schools,

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[25] Keskin and Ozalp, "Islamic Studies in Australia's Universities."

[26] Nathie and Abdalla, "Courses Preferences and Occupational Aspirations of Students in Australian Islamic Schools."

[27] Ghamra-Oui, "The Semiotics of an 'Islamic' Education: Engaging with the Concrete Realities of Muslims in Australia."

[28] Mahmood Nathie, "Are Australian Islamic Schools Elitist?," *Journal for Multicultural Education* 15, no. 2 (August 9, 2021): 184–200, https://doi.org/10.1108/JME-07-2020-0069.

interfaith organisations and government agencies to promote dialogue, cooperation and mutual understanding.

In addition, the curriculum of Islamic education is changing to reflect contemporary needs and realities. Topics such as citizenship, ethics and Muslim contributions to world history and science are increasingly being integrated into the learning programme. This approach aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to participate actively and constructively in Australia's multicultural society.[29]

Overall, the development of Islamic education in Australia reflects the Muslim community's journey in establishing its identity and role in a diverse society. Through commitment and adaptation, Islamic education has become an important part of the national education landscape, providing a platform for young Muslims to develop their full potential while upholding Islamic values and traditions.[30] By continuing to face and overcome challenges, Islamic education in Australia has the potential to continue to grow and contribute positively to social harmony and progress in the country.

In the modern era, Islamic education in Australia is at a more mature and established stage compared to previous decades. The Muslim community has successfully established an education system that not only meets the spiritual and academic needs of Muslim students, but also contributes to social cohesion in a multicultural society.[31] Islamic schools now exist in all Australian states and territories, some of which are well established and nationally recognised. These schools provide an education that combines the Australian national curriculum with Islamic religious education, including the study of the Qur'an, Arabic language, fiqh and Islamic history.[32]

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[29] Alabdulhadi and Alkandari, "Practices of Islamic Education Teachers in Promoting Moderation (Wasatiyyah) Values among High School Students in Kuwait."

[30] Daun and Arjmand, "Globalisation and Islamic Education."

[31] Terence Lovat, "Islamic Education Today and Yesterday: Principal Themes and Their Potential to Enlighten Western Education," in *Advances in Educational Technologies and Instructional Design*, ed. Miftachul Huda et al. (IGI Global, 2020), 1–19, https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-8528-2.ch001.

[32] Terence Lovat, "Values Education, Efficacious Learning, and the Islamic Connection: An Australian Case Study," in *Encyclopedia of Teacher Education*, ed. Michael A. Peters (Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2022), 2149–54, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-8679-5_186.

Islamic education in Australia is becoming more inclusive and responsive to contemporary challenges. Islamic schools are now increasingly involved in cross-cultural initiatives that introduce students to the concepts of global citizenship, tolerance and cultural diversity. This is an effort to ensure that graduates of Islamic schools not only understand their Islamic identity, but are also able to play an active and positive role in the wider Australian society.

Islamic higher education is also flourishing. Several leading Australian universities offer programmes in Islamic and Middle Eastern studies, as well as in-depth research into various aspects of Muslim life in the modern world. These programmes attract not only Muslim students, but also students from diverse backgrounds who are interested in learning more about Islam and its role in the contemporary world.[33] Universities such as Melbourne University, Griffith University and Sydney University have become centres of excellence in Islamic Studies, focusing not only on theological but also on social, cultural and political aspects.

In addition to formal education, there is non-formal and informal education, especially through digital platforms and social media. Islamic organisations and community centres are active in providing online classes, webinars and short courses on a range of topics from Quranic tafsir to Islamic ethics in business. This provides an opportunity for Muslims across Australia, including those living in remote areas, to stay connected to Islamic education without having to physically attend classes.[34]

At the same time, the Islamic education curriculum continues to adapt to the times, including the integration of technology into teaching and learning. Islamic schools are now more open to using digital technology to improve the quality of education, whether through the use of digital tools in the classroom, distance learning, or even the use of artificial intelligence to personalise education.[35]

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[33] Halim Rane et al., "Islam in Australia: A National Survey of Muslim Australian Citizens and Permanent Residents," *Religions* 11, no. 8 (August 14, 2020): 419, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11080419.

[34] Halim Rane, Adis Duderija, and Jessica Mamone, "Islamic Studies in Australia's Higher Education Sector," *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 6, no. 1 (January 21, 2021): 1–31, https://doi.org/10.55831/ajis.v6i1.337.

[35] Abdul Hadi and Kiki Mikail, "The Implementation of Change Management in Madrasa (Islamic School) Through Compliance of National Standards of Education:

Overall, Islamic education in Australia focuses not only on the religious aspect, but also on the academic achievement and character development of students. With the support of the community, government and educational institutions, Islamic education in Australia continues to strive to equip young Muslims with knowledge, skills and Islamic values that will help them contribute positively to a diverse and dynamic society. In the midst of global challenges, Islamic education in Australia continues to serve as an important foundation for the formation of a strong, inclusive and adaptable Muslim identity.

Integrating *Tasamuh* into the Curriculum: Islamic College of Melbourne

As the Muslim community has grown, Islamic educational institutions in Australia have seen a significant increase in student numbers. According to Australian Islamic Education in Schools, there are currently more than 30 Islamic schools across Australia. One of the fastest growing states in Australia is New South Wales (NSW). The data shows that the number of Islamic schools in NSW has tripled in the last 15 years to 30 institutions. The student population in Islamic schools has also increased by almost 200 per cent to more than 10,000 students.[36]

There are two reasons for the increase in the number of Islamic schools. First, the Muslim community is known as a peace-loving community that respects everyone. Secondly, the Muslim community is helpful and there is no conflict.[37] Islamic schools in Australia are very different from Islamic schools in Indonesia. Islamic values in Australia are not clearly stated in school documents, but can be applied as a set of values in the form of ethics and school operations.

The Islamic College of Melbourne Australia system is open to non-Muslim students and teachers. Not all are Muslim; 70 per cent are Muslim, 30 per cent are not. Only the students are all Muslim, but

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Learn from The Australia Education Partnership with Indonesia 2012-2016," *Elementary Education Online* 20, no. 1 (March 17, 2021): 1123–27.

[36] Mariam Alhashmi and Jase Moussa-Inaty, "Professional Learning for Islamic Education Teachers in the UAE," *British Journal of Religious Education* 43, no. 3 (July 3, 2021): 278–87, https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2020.1853046.

[37] Shaheen Amid Whyte, "Islamic Religious Authority in Cyberspace: A Qualitative Study of Muslim Religious Actors in Australia," *Religions* 13, no. 1 (January 12, 2022): 69, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13010069.

the teachers are not all Muslim.[38] They still learn religious knowledge from Muslim teachers, while non-Muslim teachers impart academic knowledge and skills, such as how to be independent, how to succeed, computer engineering, design, animation and other technological developments.[39] This is a form of value integration between the community and the government that gives space to the Islamic College of Melbourne. On the other hand, the children also receive all the lessons as a good thing that will benefit them in the future.

> "Children need to realise that we do not live with one religion in this world, but we live side by side with people of different religions, and children need to respect diversity. In addition to students and teachers, Islamic schools in Australia are sometimes run by non-Muslim principals. The system of openness implemented by the Islamic College of Melbourne aims to ensure that every educational institution in Australia is able to become a place that fosters an appreciation of the diversity of cultures and beliefs in society".[40]

A pluralistic school environment is very effective in fostering a sense of tolerance among pupils. The effect of teaching a tolerant attitude is to promote mutual respect for other people's beliefs, both in school and in the community. The Muslim community is still a minority in Australia, making up about two per cent of the total Australian population. The tolerant attitude of the Australian Muslim community can be found at the Islamic College of Melbourne. The teaching of tolerance at the Islamic College of Melbourne, Australia, is one of the important aspects of shaping the character and identity of Muslim students in a multicultural society. Given the diversity of cultures and religions in Australia, the Islamic College of Melbourne actively integrates the values of tolerance into the curriculum and daily life of the school.

The Islamic College of Melbourne recognises the importance of preparing students to live harmoniously in a religious society. Therefore, Islamic teachings on tolerance—such as the principles of respecting differences, peaceful coexistence and establishing good

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[38] Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University Yogyakarta et al., "Empowerment in Islamic Schools in Yogyakarta and Sydney," *Journal of International and Comparative Education* 9, no. 1 (2020): 15–27, https://doi.org/10.14425/jice.2020.9.1.0512.

[39] Nada Ghamra-Oui, "Constructing the Informal Curriculum of Islamic Schools in Australia: Contribution of Contextual Factors and Stakeholder Experiences," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 42, no. 3 (July 3, 2022): 291–307, https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2023.2176068.

[40] Mayani Siwangi, *Interview* (Sydney-Australia, 12 Juli 2023).

relations with fellow human beings—are emphasised in the educational process. This is not limited to theory, but is also put into practice through various programmes and activities.[41]

> "In the curriculum, the Islamic College of Melbourne teaches the teachings of peace through religious lessons that touch on basic concepts such as *tasamuh* (tolerance), *ta'aruf* (getting to know each other) and *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood). Pupils are taught that Islam encourages its followers to respect the beliefs and practices of other religions, as affirmed in the Qur'an and Hadith. This is often integrated with other subjects such as history and social studies, where students are encouraged to "understand the contribution of different civilisations and religions to the development of humanity".[42]

In addition to the formal curriculum, the teaching of tolerance is reinforced through extra-curricular activities and school programmes. The Islamic College of Melbourne organises interfaith dialogue events where students have the opportunity to discuss and interact with students from different religious backgrounds.[43] Such programmes not only help to build a deeper understanding of other religions, but also encourage students to respect and appreciate differences.

The Islamic College of Melbourne's relationship with the local community is also a means of practising tolerance. Many schools are actively involved in community activities such as charity events, environmental projects and cultural festivals that involve a wide range of people. Through this participation, students are taught to be active and responsible citizens who value the contribution of every member of the community.

In the midst of challenges such as rising Islamophobia and negative stereotypes of Muslims, the Islamic College of Melbourne strives to teach tolerance as a response to misperceptions and

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[41] Halim Rane, "Introduction to the Special Issue 'Islamic and Muslim Studies in Australia,'" *Religions* 12, no. 5 (April 29, 2021): 314, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12050314.

[42] Mayani Siwangi, *Interview* (Sydney-Australia, 12 Juli 2023).

[43] Muhammad Nabeel Musharraf, Jabeen Bhutto, and Hadi Bux, "Islamic Studies in Australian Universities–An Analysis from the Perspective of Local Training of Imams," *The Scholar Islamic Academic Research Journal* 5, no. 1 (February 25, 2019): 49–92.

misunderstandings that may exist in the community.[44] By emphasising that Islam is a religion that promotes peace and co-existence, these schools seek to combat prejudice and build bridges of understanding between the Muslim community and the wider community.

The teachings of tolerance at the Islamic College of Melbourne are also applied at the classroom level by teachers and school staff. Professional development for teachers often includes modules on how to teach the values of tolerance and inclusiveness in classes that may include students from different cultural and religious backgrounds.[45] These teachers are also encouraged to be role models in respecting differences and promoting open dialogue in the classroom.

However, despite these efforts, the Islamic College of Melbourne also faces challenges in implementing the teachings of tolerance, especially when it comes to dealing with external narratives that sometimes demonise the Muslim community.[46] As a result, these schools continue to adapt and find new ways to ensure that the values of tolerance are not only taught, but also lived and practised by the entire school community.

Overall, the teaching of tolerance at the Islamic College of Melbourne is a vital component in helping Muslim students to develop into individuals who value diversity and contribute positively to a multicultural society. By instilling these values at an early age, the Islamic College of Melbourne aims to create a generation that is not only strong in faith, but also open, inclusive and ready to live harmoniously in an increasingly interconnected and diverse world.

Construction of *Tasamuh* in the Curriculum of the Islamic College of Melbourne

The concept of tasamuh, which is integrated into the curriculum of the Islamic College of Melbourne in Australia, is not only felt by students and other school environments, but also has an impact on social life. In Melbourne and Sydney, which have large Muslim populations, the integration of Tasamuh has been carried out to address the specific needs of Muslim students. For example, the

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[44] Heri Gunawan and Encep S Jaya, "Multicultural Education in the Perspective of National and Islamic Education," *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 01 (February 27, 2023), https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v12i01.1220.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

provision of halal food in school canteens, a designated space for prayer and a more flexible uniform policy to respect students' religious beliefs. However, in other areas where the Muslim population is smaller, measures are taken to protect minorities and human rights.

In general, the curriculum in Australian public schools is based on the principle of secularism. Although religion is taught, the focus is on comparative religious studies in general, with no particular emphasis on Islamic values.[47] As a result, many Muslim students feel that their religious identity is not sufficiently recognised or valued in this educational environment. This feeling can exacerbate Muslim pupils' sense of alienation and lack of involvement in school activities, especially if they feel that their religious practices are not well facilitated.[48]

Therefore, the principle of tasamuh is not only in the integration of the curriculum in schools, but also in the social order, this process is called "construction". Where the curriculum is applied in school, it can be developed in the area of social order. The Islamic College of Melbourne not only provides academic education to national standards, but also emphasises the in-depth teaching of Islamic values. They serve as community centres that help strengthen students' religious identity while preparing them for active participation in society.

The curriculum at the Islamic College of Melbourne is designed to balance religious and general education, with the aim of producing students who are not only knowledgeable but also have noble morals in accordance with Islamic teachings. However, this research also found that Islamic schools face many challenges, particularly in ensuring that they remain academically competitive and comply with strict government regulations.

The non-Muslim community's perception of Islamic schools in general, and the Islamic College of Melbourne in particular, is being transformed by the teaching of tasamuh to students and its implementation in real life in the community. While there are

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[47] Hifza Hifza et al., "The Multicultural Islamic Education Development Strategy on Educational Institutions," *Jurnal Iqra': Kajian Ilmu Pendidikan* 5, no. 1 (June 7, 2020): 158–70, https://doi.org/10.25217/ji.v5i1.799.

[48] Nadia Selim, "Arabic Teaching at Australian Islamic Schools," in *Supporting Modern Teaching in Islamic Schools*, by Ismail Hussein Amzat, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2022), 182–97, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003193432-18.

concerns that Islamic educational institutions may encourage social isolation or promote exclusionary views, there are also concerns that Islamic schools may not be able to provide the best education for their students.[49] The Islamic College of Melbourne is committed to working collaboratively to build good relationships with the wider community. The Islamic College of Melbourne has even developed an interfaith programme that aims to promote interfaith understanding and tolerance in an effort to build bridges between Muslim students and the non-Muslim community. This shows that Islamic schools are not only focused on religious education, but are also committed to promoting inclusion and social cohesion.

The construction undertaken by the Islamic College of Melbourne also applies to the digital world. On the one hand, digitalisation has opened up new opportunities for wider access to Islamic educational resources, such as Quran learning apps and online classes. However, there are also challenges, particularly around the digital divide. Not all Muslim students at the Islamic College of Melbourne have adequate access to technology, especially in underprivileged communities, which can exacerbate inequalities in education. This highlights the importance of constructs to bridge the digital divide so that all students, including Muslim students, can benefit equally from technological advances.

Policy support from the Australian government is generally positive towards religious diversity in education, but the implementation of these policies often depends on local initiatives and the awareness of individual schools.[50] While there are policies in place to promote inclusion, such as anti-discrimination programmes and multicultural education, implementation varies and often depends on the understanding and commitment of local educators.[51] This highlights the need for more training for teachers and school staff in dealing with religious diversity, as well as the provision of more

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[49] Suyatno Suyatno et al., "Progressive Islamic Education: Bridging the Gap of Islam, Indonesianness, and Modernity," *The Qualitative Report*, 2022, https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.4782.

[50] Muhammad Munadi, "Preparation of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Secular Countries: A Study in Austria," *Dinamika Ilmu*, December 1, 2020, 219–39, https://doi.org/10.21093/di.v20i2.2483.

[51] Masnur Alam, "A Collaborative Action in the Implementation of Moderate Islamic Education to Counter Radicalism," *International Journal of Innovation* 11, no. 7 (2020).

adequate resources to support the teaching of Islamic values in a predominantly secular educational environment.

Thus, building tasamuh in Islamic education in Australia is a process full of challenges, but also rich in opportunities. Challenges include differences in social acceptance, limitations in the secular curriculum and the impact of the digital divide. However, opportunities also exist in the form of community support, the development of Islamic schools, and initiatives to strengthen social cohesion through inclusive education. The findings provide a comprehensive picture of how Islamic values can be integrated into education in Australia and offer valuable recommendations for policymakers, educators and communities to improve the effectiveness and inclusiveness of education that reflects Australia's religious and cultural diversity.

Conclusion

From the research and discussion above, three important things can be concluded as contributing and novel findings. First, Islamic education in Australia is experiencing rapid development due to the internalisation of tasamuh in social life. Second, the integration of the concept of tasamuh in Islamic education at the Islamic College of Melbourne, Australia, takes the form of the inclusion of the values of *tasamuh* (tolerance), *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) and *ta'aruf* (mutual knowledge). This Islamic value is internalised in the curriculum in terms of learning, objectives and outcomes. Thirdly, the construction of the concept of tasamuh is applied at the Islamic College of Melbourne Australia in specific aspects, namely internal school, school environment and social through extra-curricular activities, social care and national events. Construction is needed to maintain religious and state social relations.

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