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The Relevance of Inclusive Islamic Theology in Addressing Religious Identity Conflicts in Multicultural Societies

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Abstract: Religion plays an important role in shaping individual and collective identity, yet religious identity conflicts, intolerance, exclusivism, discrimination, and social polarization continue to challenge multicultural societies. This study aims to examine the theological foundations of inclusive Islamic theology, analyze factors contributing to religious identity conflicts, and explore its relevance in promoting interreligious harmony. The research employs a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach through library research, drawing on the Qur'an, Islamic theological literature, scholarly books, academic journals, and previous studies. Data are analyzed using content analysis, thematic classification, and theological interpretation. The findings indicate that rahmatan lil-'alamin, tasamuh, wasatiyyah, and ukhuwah insaniyah constitute essential foundations of inclusive Islamic theology. Religious exclusivism and intolerance can contribute to identity conflicts, whereas inclusive theological principles encourage mutual respect, justice, interreligious dialogue, and peaceful coexistence. Religious education and community engagement are also important for translating these values into social practice. This study concludes that inclusive Islamic theology provides an ethical and theological foundation for addressing religious identity conflicts while maintaining religious commitment and respecting the dignity and rights of people from different religious backgrounds.

Research Highlights:

- Examines the theological foundations of inclusive Islamic theology in addressing religious identity conflicts.
- Highlights rahmatan lil-'alamin, tasamuh, wasatiyyah, and ukhuwah insaniyah as essential principles of religious inclusivity.
- Identifies religious exclusivism and intolerance as contributing factors to religious identity conflicts.
- Explains how inclusive Islamic theology promotes justice, mutual respect, interreligious dialogue, and peaceful coexistence.
- Emphasizes the roles of religious education and community engagement in strengthening interreligious harmony.

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INTRODUCTION

Religion plays an essential role in human life as a source of moral values, social identity, ethical principles, and spiritual guidance. Beyond its spiritual dimensions, religion also influences social relationships, cultural practices, and the formation of individual and collective identities(McGuire, 2008). In pluralistic societies, religious diversity represents an important aspect of social life that requires mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation. Islam, as a religion that emphasizes compassion, justice, peace, and humanity, provides fundamental theological principles for establishing harmonious relationships

among people from different religious backgrounds. The concept of rahmatan lil-'alamin reflects the universal mission of Islam to bring mercy and goodness to all creation. Furthermore, Islamic teachings encourage Muslims to uphold justice, respect human dignity, and recognize the existence of differences as part of human diversity. These principles provide an important foundation for developing inclusive religious attitudes and strengthening peaceful coexistence in multicultural communities.

However, contemporary societies continue to experience various forms of religious identity conflicts, including intolerance, discrimination, radicalism, religious exclusivism, and social polarization. Such conflicts frequently emerge when religious differences become sources of division rather than opportunities for mutual recognition and understanding(Marsella, 2005). Differences in theological interpretations, religious practices, cultural backgrounds, and political interests may contribute to tensions between individuals and religious communities. Furthermore, the development of digital communication and social media has created additional challenges through the rapid circulation of religious misinformation, hate speech, and narratives that reinforce negative perceptions of other religious groups. Religious identity can consequently become an instrument of social exclusion when individuals or groups consider their own religious affiliations superior and reject the legitimacy or rights of others. These circumstances demonstrate the importance of developing theological perspectives that encourage religious commitment while maintaining respect for diversity and human dignity.

Inclusive Islamic theology offers an important perspective for addressing these challenges by emphasizing openness, tolerance, justice, compassion, humanity, and peaceful coexistence without abandoning fundamental Islamic beliefs. This theological approach recognizes that maintaining a strong Islamic identity does not require hostility toward individuals from different religious traditions. The Qur'an provides several important foundations for this perspective. QS. Al-Hujurat (49):13 emphasizes that human beings are created as different nations and tribes so that they may know and understand one another. Similarly, QS. Al-Baqarah (2):256 establishes the principle that there is no compulsion in religion, while QS. Al-Mumtahanah (60):8 encourages Muslims to demonstrate kindness and justice toward those who do not fight them because of their religion(R'boul, 2021). The principle of rahmatan lil-'alamin, together with tasamuh (tolerance), wasatiyyah (moderation), and ukhuwah insaniyah (human brotherhood), provides a theological foundation for promoting inclusive attitudes and constructive interreligious relationships. Therefore, inclusive Islamic theology is relevant to contemporary efforts to prevent religious discrimination, reduce social polarization, and strengthen harmonious relationships within multicultural societies.

Research on inclusive Islamic theology, religious pluralism, religious moderation, and interreligious relations has attracted considerable scholarly attention over the past decade. Ghozali, Masruchin, and Fauzan (2022), in their study entitled Nurcholish Madjid's Inclusive Interpretation Pattern in Understanding Religious Tolerance Verses, examined the interpretation of Qur'anic verses concerning religious tolerance through the inclusive theological perspective of Nurcholish Madjid. Using thematic Qur'anic interpretation and content analysis, the researchers emphasized that Muslims can acknowledge religious diversity and establish harmonious relationships with other religious communities without abandoning their Islamic identity. Their findings highlight the importance of inclusive Qur'anic interpretation in developing mutual respect and preventing interreligious tensions. This study provides a significant theological foundation for understanding the relationship between Islamic identity and religious inclusiveness.

Zaduqisti et al. (2020), in their research entitled On Being Moderate and Peaceful: Why Islamic Political Moderateness Promotes Outgroup Tolerance and Reconciliation, investigated the relationship between Islamic political moderation, tolerance toward non-Muslims, and intergroup reconciliation in Indonesia. Using empirical research involving 299 participants, they found that Islamic political moderation positively predicted tolerance toward religious outgroups. Their findings also demonstrated that outgroup tolerance contributed to reconciliation, intergroup trust, cooperation, and willingness to support constructive relationships between religious communities. This research demonstrates the practical significance of Islamic moderation in reducing religious divisions and strengthening peaceful coexistence.

Ardiansyah (2024), in Theology of Pluralism in the Context of Indonesian Diversity: A Dialogue Between Inclusive and Exclusive Islam in the Perspective of John Hick's Theory, examined the differences between inclusive and exclusive Islamic theological orientations within Indonesia's religiously diverse society. The study discussed how theological interpretations influence attitudes toward religious

differences and interreligious relationships. It provides a conceptual perspective for understanding how inclusive theological orientations can encourage openness and recognition of diversity, whereas exclusive approaches may reinforce boundaries between religious communities. This research is relevant to the present study because it establishes a theoretical connection between Islamic theological orientations and the challenges of religious pluralism.

Furthermore, Zulkifli, Kafid, Nanang, and Fahri (2023), in their study entitled The Construction of Religious Moderation among Indonesian Muslim Academics, examined the factors influencing religious moderation among lecturers at Indonesian Islamic higher education institutions. Using a mixed-method approach involving 272 lecturers from twelve institutions, the researchers found that institutional policies and sociocultural contexts significantly influenced the construction of religious moderation. However, interreligious interaction did not demonstrate a statistically significant influence in their analysis. This finding indicates that developing inclusive religious attitudes requires attention to institutional environments and broader sociocultural conditions, rather than relying exclusively on interpersonal interaction.

Rustriningsih and Saad (2024), in their article Indonesian Islamic Theology: Understanding Exclusivism, Inclusivism, and Pluralism in the Context of Religious Plurality, explored the relationship between Islamic theological orientations and religious diversity in Indonesia. Through qualitative library research and descriptive-analytical examination, they explained how exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism influence the interpretation of religious differences. Their findings suggest that inclusive and pluralistic perspectives can provide important frameworks for reducing interreligious tensions and promoting harmonious coexistence. This study is particularly relevant because it directly discusses the theological foundations of inclusiveness in the context of Indonesia's multicultural society.

Previous studies have examined Islamic theology, religious pluralism, multiculturalism, and interreligious tolerance from various theological and sociological perspectives. Research concerning Islamic moderation has highlighted the importance of wasatiyyah in preventing religious extremism and promoting balanced religious attitudes. Other studies have discussed interfaith dialogue as an instrument for reducing prejudice, strengthening mutual understanding, and encouraging cooperation between religious communities. Research on religious identity conflicts has also emphasized the influence of exclusivist interpretations, political polarization, discrimination, and social inequalities in generating tensions among religious groups. Nevertheless, these discussions frequently address theological principles, social conflicts, and interreligious relationships as separate research dimensions. Consequently, further conceptual investigation is necessary to establish a more comprehensive connection between inclusive Islamic theological foundations and practical approaches to addressing religious identity conflicts.

Based on this research gap, the present study examines the relevance of inclusive Islamic theology in addressing religious identity conflicts through a qualitative approach based on theological and academic literature analysis(Essabane et al., 2022). Specifically, this research aims to examine the fundamental concepts and principles of inclusive Islamic theology, identify the theological and social factors contributing to religious exclusivism and intolerance, and analyze Islamic perspectives on religious diversity, justice, tolerance, and humanity. Furthermore, this study seeks to explain how inclusive Islamic theological principles can contribute to addressing religious identity conflicts and formulate their practical implications for contemporary Muslim communities. Ultimately, this research is expected to contribute to the development of a more comprehensive understanding of inclusive Islamic theology as a theological and ethical foundation for promoting religious harmony, mutual recognition, social justice, and peaceful coexistence in pluralistic societies.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design using a descriptive-analytical approach to examine the relevance of inclusive Islamic theology in addressing religious identity conflicts(Amirulloh, 2022). A qualitative approach is considered appropriate because the research focuses on understanding theological concepts, religious interpretations, social phenomena, and ethical principles associated with religious diversity, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence. The study is conducted through library research by examining various academic and theological sources, including the Qur'an, classical and contemporary Islamic interpretations, scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and previous research related to Islamic inclusiveness and religious identity conflicts. The descriptive-analytical approach is used to

systematically describe the fundamental principles of inclusive Islamic theology and critically analyze their relevance to contemporary religious and social challenges. Rather than employing statistical measurements or numerical assessments, this research emphasizes conceptual examination, theological interpretation, and critical analysis of relevant literature to develop a comprehensive understanding of how Islamic teachings can contribute to addressing religious intolerance, exclusivism, discrimination, and social polarization.

This research integrates theological, philosophical, sociological, and contextual approaches to provide a comprehensive examination of inclusive Islamic theology and its relationship with religious identity conflicts. The theological approach examines fundamental Islamic teachings concerning religious diversity, tolerance, justice, humanity, and peaceful coexistence, particularly the principles of rahmatan lil-'alamin, tasamuh, wasatiyyah, and ukhuwah insaniyah. Through this approach, the study investigates how Qur'anic teachings provide normative foundations for respecting human dignity and maintaining harmonious relationships among people from different religious backgrounds. The philosophical approach analyzes the fundamental concepts, assumptions, and ethical implications of inclusive Islamic theology, including the relationship between religious commitment, recognition of diversity, and respect for the rights of others(Lamptey, 2016). Meanwhile, the sociological approach examines religious identity conflicts as social phenomena influenced by religious exclusivism, discrimination, political polarization, cultural differences, and unequal intergroup relationships. This approach also considers how religious identity can become a source of social division when differences are interpreted through prejudice and negative perceptions. Furthermore, the contextual approach connects Islamic theological principles with contemporary religious and social challenges, particularly those involving religious intolerance, radicalism, misinformation, and the increasing complexity of interreligious relationships in multicultural societies. The integration of these approaches enables the research to examine inclusive Islamic theology not only as a normative religious concept but also as an ethical framework with practical implications for promoting social harmony.

The data used in this research consist of primary and secondary sources selected according to their relevance to the research objectives(Shoemaker, 2022). Primary sources include the Qur'an, particularly QS. Al-Hujurat (49):13, which emphasizes human diversity and mutual recognition; QS. Al-Baqarah (2):256, which establishes the principle of no compulsion in religion; QS. Al-Mumtahanah (60):8, which emphasizes kindness and justice toward people who do not engage in religious hostility; and QS. Al-Anbiya (21):107, which describes the prophetic mission as a mercy to all creation. In addition, primary theological materials include classical and contemporary Qur'anic interpretations, Islamic theological writings, and relevant Islamic ethical and philosophical literature that explain the principles of tolerance, justice, moderation, and humanity. Secondary sources consist of scholarly journal articles, academic books, research reports, and previous studies discussing inclusive Islamic theology, religious pluralism, Islamic moderation, religious identity conflicts, religious intolerance, multiculturalism, and interfaith dialogue. Particular attention is given to peer-reviewed academic publications from the last ten years to ensure that the discussion reflects recent scholarly developments and contemporary debates. The selection of these sources is intended to establish a reliable theoretical foundation and support a critical understanding of the relevance of inclusive Islamic theology in addressing religious identity conflicts.

Data collection is conducted through systematic documentation and literature review(Fink, 2010). The process begins with identifying and collecting relevant academic publications, Islamic theological references, Qur'anic interpretations, scholarly books, and research articles related to inclusive Islamic theology and religious identity conflicts. Relevant literature is obtained from academic databases, scientific journal repositories, digital libraries, and other credible scholarly sources. The next stage involves identifying Qur'anic verses and their interpretations concerning religious diversity, tolerance, justice, human dignity, and peaceful coexistence. These materials are examined to understand the theological foundations supporting inclusive attitudes within Islamic teachings. Subsequently, previous studies concerning religious exclusivism, intolerance, discrimination, social polarization, and interreligious relationships are reviewed to identify important research findings, theoretical perspectives, and limitations in existing scholarship. The collected information is then classified according to the main research themes, including the foundations of inclusive Islamic theology, the causes of religious identity conflicts, Islamic perspectives on religious diversity, and the practical implications of inclusive theological principles. Literature selection considers academic credibility, relevance to the research questions, clarity of theoretical arguments, and contribution to the research objectives. Through this systematic process, the study seeks

to ensure that the collected data provide sufficient conceptual and theological support for answering the research questions.

The collected data are analyzed through qualitative descriptive-analytical procedures involving several interconnected stages. First, data reduction is conducted by selecting, organizing, and filtering theological and academic literature relevant to the research focus. Information that does not directly contribute to understanding inclusive Islamic theology or religious identity conflicts is excluded from the main analysis(Akay Dag, 2022). Second, thematic classification is performed by grouping the selected information into several major themes, including inclusive Islamic theology, religious identity, religious exclusivism, intolerance, pluralism, justice, tolerance, and interfaith relations. This classification facilitates the identification of relationships among theological principles and contemporary social challenges. Third, content analysis is employed to examine the meanings, interpretations, and ethical implications of Islamic theological teachings, particularly Qur'anic principles concerning human diversity, religious freedom, justice, and compassion. Fourth, comparative analysis is conducted by examining the differences between exclusive and inclusive theological perspectives in interpreting religious diversity and understanding relationships with other religious communities. This comparison aims to identify how different theological orientations may influence attitudes toward tolerance, discrimination, and peaceful coexistence. Fifth, interpretative analysis connects the identified theological principles with contemporary religious identity conflicts by examining their potential contributions to reducing intolerance, strengthening mutual recognition, and promoting constructive interreligious relationships. Finally, conclusion drawing involves synthesizing the analytical findings to formulate an overall understanding of the relevance of inclusive Islamic theology and its practical implications for contemporary Muslim communities. Through these analytical stages, the research develops a comprehensive interpretation of inclusive Islamic theology as a theological and ethical foundation for addressing religious identity conflicts and strengthening peaceful coexistence in pluralistic societies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept and Foundations of Inclusive Islamic Theology

Inclusive Islamic theology represents a theological perspective that emphasizes openness, tolerance, justice, compassion, humanity, and respect for religious diversity while maintaining commitment to fundamental Islamic beliefs and principles(Abou El Fadl, 2002). This approach recognizes that religious differences are an unavoidable aspect of human existence and should not automatically become sources of hostility, discrimination, or social division. In the context of contemporary multicultural societies, inclusive Islamic theology provides an important foundation for establishing constructive relationships between Muslims and people from different religious backgrounds. Its fundamental characteristics include recognition of human dignity, appreciation of diversity, rejection of religious coercion, commitment to justice, and the promotion of peaceful coexistence. The concept is not necessarily an assertion that all religious doctrines are identical or that theological differences should disappear. Rather, it emphasizes that differences in religious beliefs should not eliminate the obligation to respect the rights, dignity, and humanity of others.

One of the most important foundations of inclusive Islamic theology is the Qur'anic concept of rahmatan lil-'alamin, which describes the prophetic mission of Muhammad as a mercy to all creation. QS. Al-Anbiya (21):107 establishes that the presence of the Prophet Muhammad represents mercy beyond the boundaries of a particular ethnic, cultural, or social group(Syarif, 2020). This principle provides an ethical foundation for promoting compassion, justice, and peaceful relationships among human beings. Furthermore, QS. Al-Hujurat (49):13 emphasizes that humanity was created from a single origin and divided into different nations and tribes so that people may know and understand one another. This verse demonstrates that human diversity should encourage mutual recognition rather than discrimination or superiority based on identity. Similarly, QS. Al-Baqarah (2):256 establishes the principle of no compulsion in religion, emphasizing the importance of respecting individual religious conviction. These Qur'anic principles demonstrate that Islamic theology contains important foundations for developing inclusive attitudes and maintaining harmonious relationships within religiously diverse communities.

The theological significance of tasamuh (tolerance), wasatiyyah (moderation), and ukhuwah insaniyah (human brotherhood) further strengthens the foundations of inclusive Islamic theology. Tasamuh encourages Muslims to respect differences in religious beliefs and practices without necessarily

compromising their theological commitments. Wasatiyyah emphasizes balance, fairness, and moderation in understanding and practicing religion, preventing excessive attitudes that may contribute to intolerance and extremism. Meanwhile, ukhuwah insaniyah recognizes the universal human relationship that connects individuals regardless of their religious backgrounds. These principles demonstrate that maintaining a strong Islamic identity does not require rejecting or discriminating against people who follow different religious traditions. Instead, theological commitment should be accompanied by ethical responsibility, mutual respect, and concern for human welfare(Clark, 2014). Therefore, inclusive Islamic theology requires interpretations of Islamic teachings that connect religious commitment with compassion, justice, and constructive social relationships.

Religious Identity Conflicts in Contemporary Society

Religious identity conflicts refer to tensions, disagreements, and forms of hostility that emerge when religious affiliations become sources of competition, discrimination, exclusion, or confrontation between individuals and communities. Religious identity functions as an important component of personal and collective belonging because it influences moral values, cultural traditions, social relationships, and perceptions of the surrounding world. However, religious identity can become problematic when individuals or groups develop negative perceptions toward other religious communities or consider their own religious affiliation superior to others. In pluralistic societies, these attitudes may create boundaries between religious groups and weaken opportunities for communication and cooperation. Consequently, religious differences that should be managed through mutual recognition may develop into sources of social tension and conflict.

Several factors contribute to the emergence and intensification of religious identity conflicts in contemporary society. Religious exclusivism and intolerance can encourage individuals to reject the legitimacy of other religious communities and interpret differences as threats to their own identity(Pratt, 2017). Political interests may also influence religious relationships when religious symbols and affiliations are used to mobilize public support, strengthen group loyalty, or create divisions between social communities. In addition, cultural differences, historical prejudices, socioeconomic inequalities, and competing interpretations of religious traditions may intensify misunderstandings. The development of digital communication has created additional challenges because misinformation, provocative religious narratives, hate speech, and discriminatory content can spread rapidly through social media platforms. When individuals receive information primarily from sources that reinforce their existing beliefs, negative perceptions of other religious groups may become increasingly difficult to overcome.

Religious identity conflicts can appear in various forms, including religious discrimination, stereotyping, hate speech, social exclusion, restrictions on religious expression, and hostility between religious communities. These situations may affect access to education, employment, public services, places of worship, and participation in community activities. Religious conflicts also have broader consequences for social stability, national unity, and democratic relationships because they weaken public trust and reduce opportunities for intergroup cooperation. In multicultural societies such as Indonesia, where religious diversity constitutes an important characteristic of national life, unresolved religious tensions may threaten social integration and the principles of mutual respect. Therefore, addressing religious identity conflicts requires approaches that recognize the complexity of theological, political, cultural, and social factors influencing interreligious relationships. Inclusive Islamic theology offers one important perspective for developing ethical responses to these challenges.

Theological Factors Contributing to Religious Identity Conflicts

Theological interpretations play an important role in shaping individual attitudes toward religious diversity and relationships with other religious communities. One factor that may contribute to religious identity conflicts is the development of exclusive interpretations that emphasize differences between religious groups without adequately considering the ethical obligations of justice, compassion, and respect for human dignity. When religious teachings are interpreted primarily through hostility, suspicion, and rejection of others, theological differences may become instruments of social division. Such interpretations can encourage individuals to perceive other religious communities as threats rather than recognizing them as fellow human beings who possess equal dignity and rights. However, it is important to distinguish legitimate theological commitments and doctrinal boundaries from attitudes that justify discrimination or hostility toward people of different religious backgrounds.

Misunderstandings concerning religious differences and theological boundaries may also contribute to the emergence of religious intolerance(Nicholson, 2011). Some individuals may assume that

respecting other religions requires abandoning their own religious convictions or accepting every religious doctrine as equally valid. Such assumptions can create unnecessary tensions between religious commitment and social inclusiveness. In fact, respect for religious diversity does not necessarily require theological agreement or the elimination of differences in belief. Rather, it requires recognizing that disagreement should not become a justification for denying the rights, dignity, and freedom of others. This distinction is important because religious identity conflicts frequently emerge when theological differences are transformed into negative social judgments and discriminatory practices.

Another contributing factor is the tendency to regard one's religious identity as inherently superior while disregarding the humanity of individuals from other religious communities. Although religious beliefs may provide a strong sense of identity and belonging, excessive group identification can encourage prejudice, stereotyping, and social exclusion. Religious extremism and radical interpretations may further intensify these attitudes when religious teachings are used to legitimize hostility or violence. In certain circumstances, religious authorities, political actors, or community groups may selectively interpret religious texts to support particular ideological interests. Consequently, religious teachings that emphasize justice, compassion, and peace may be misunderstood or manipulated to justify discriminatory attitudes.

Addressing these theological challenges requires contextual, ethical, and human-centered interpretations of Islamic teachings. Qur'anic principles should be examined not only through their textual meanings but also through their broader moral objectives and implications for human relationships(Sardar, 2011). The principles of rahmatan lil-'alamin, tasamuh, wasatiyyah, and justice provide important foundations for challenging interpretations that encourage hostility and social exclusion. Furthermore, Islamic theological discussions should distinguish between maintaining religious beliefs and respecting the rights of people who hold different convictions. Through this approach, inclusive Islamic theology can contribute to a more balanced understanding of religious identity, theological commitment, and social responsibility.

Inclusive Islamic Theology as an Approach to Addressing Religious Identity Conflicts

Inclusive Islamic theology provides an important theological and ethical foundation for addressing religious identity conflicts by emphasizing human dignity, justice, tolerance, compassion, and peaceful coexistence(Bensaid & Machouche, 2019). Its contribution lies in connecting Islamic religious commitment with responsibilities toward individuals and communities from different religious backgrounds. This perspective recognizes that religious diversity is part of human social reality and that differences should be managed through dialogue, mutual understanding, and respect rather than hostility. By emphasizing the universal ethical dimensions of Islamic teachings, inclusive theology offers an alternative to religious interpretations that encourage discrimination, intolerance, and social polarization. It also demonstrates that Muslims can maintain their theological convictions while participating constructively in pluralistic societies.

The recognition of human dignity represents one of the central principles of this approach. QS. Al-Hujurat (49):13 emphasizes that human diversity should serve as a basis for mutual recognition and understanding rather than a justification for superiority or discrimination. This teaching provides a foundation for respecting individuals regardless of their religious, ethnic, cultural, or social backgrounds. Furthermore, QS. Al-Mumtahanah (60):8 explains that Allah does not prohibit Muslims from demonstrating kindness and justice toward those who do not fight them because of religion or expel them from their homes. This verse establishes an important theological foundation for peaceful social relationships and cooperation with other religious communities. It demonstrates that justice and kindness are not restricted to relationships within the Muslim community but also extend to individuals from different religious backgrounds.

The principle of justice is further emphasized in QS. Al-Ma'idah (5):8, which instructs Muslims to uphold justice even toward people whom they dislike(Wagiman, 2019). This teaching is particularly relevant to religious identity conflicts because prejudice and hostility can influence how individuals perceive and treat members of other communities. Inclusive Islamic theology emphasizes that religious differences should never become excuses for unequal treatment, discrimination, or violations of human rights. In addition, tasamuh encourages respectful engagement with different beliefs, while wasatiyyah promotes balanced attitudes that reject both excessive religious hostility and the neglect of ethical responsibilities. These principles can contribute to preventing interreligious tensions by encouraging Muslims to approach differences through patience, fairness, and constructive communication.

Another important contribution of inclusive Islamic theology is its ability to encourage dialogue and cooperation between religious communities. Dialogue creates opportunities for individuals to clarify misunderstandings, challenge negative stereotypes, and recognize shared humanitarian concerns(Takim, 2004). Through constructive communication, religious communities can identify common interests in addressing poverty, educational inequality, environmental degradation, and other social problems. Inclusive theological interpretations also challenge the assumption that religious commitment must involve hostility toward other religious identities. Instead, they promote an understanding of Islamic faith that combines spiritual devotion with social responsibility. Therefore, inclusive Islamic theology can serve as an important foundation for reducing religious tensions, protecting religious rights, and strengthening peaceful coexistence in contemporary multicultural societies.

The Role of Interreligious Dialogue and Social Cooperation

Interreligious dialogue represents an important mechanism for translating the principles of inclusive Islamic theology into constructive social relationships. Religious identity conflicts frequently emerge from misunderstandings, negative stereotypes, limited communication, and the inability of different communities to recognize one another's experiences and perspectives. Dialogue provides opportunities for individuals from different religious backgrounds to exchange ideas, clarify differences, and develop mutual understanding. From an Islamic theological perspective, such engagement is consistent with the principles of ta'aruf (mutual recognition) and tasamuh (tolerance), which encourage respectful relationships and the recognition of human diversity(Jackson & Fujiwara, 2013). Effective interreligious dialogue does not require participants to abandon their religious convictions or eliminate doctrinal differences. Rather, it emphasizes mutual respect, peaceful communication, and cooperation in addressing shared social concerns.

Religious leaders have an important responsibility in promoting tolerance and preventing religious conflicts because their interpretations and public statements can significantly influence community attitudes. Islamic scholars, preachers, teachers, and other religious authorities can communicate theological teachings that emphasize compassion, justice, moderation, and respect for human dignity. They can also discourage the misuse of religious narratives to justify discrimination, hostility, and violence. In this context, religious leadership should extend beyond delivering doctrinal teachings to include the development of ethical awareness and constructive interreligious relationships. Religious leaders from different traditions can also cooperate in community activities, humanitarian initiatives, and conflict-prevention programs that strengthen public trust.

Islamic educational institutions also play a significant role in developing inclusive religious understanding(Ali et al., 2021). Schools, universities, Islamic boarding schools, and religious learning communities can integrate values of tolerance, moderation, justice, and humanity into educational activities. Religious education should provide students with an understanding of Islamic theological principles while encouraging critical thinking, responsible communication, and respect for religious diversity. Such educational approaches can help prevent narrow interpretations that may encourage prejudice and exclusivism. In addition, collaborative programs involving students from different religious backgrounds can create opportunities for meaningful interaction and strengthen social awareness.

Social cooperation among religious communities represents another practical expression of inclusive Islamic theology. Communities can work together to address humanitarian and social problems, including poverty, natural disasters, environmental degradation, public health challenges, and educational inequalities(Kemp et al., 2015). These collaborative activities demonstrate that religious differences do not prevent individuals from pursuing shared social objectives. Community organizations and civil society institutions can facilitate these relationships by establishing communication networks, cultural activities, and community-based initiatives(Haider, 2009). Furthermore, digital literacy has become increasingly important in preventing religious misinformation and hate speech. Religious communities should encourage responsible digital communication, verify information before sharing it, and promote educational content that supports tolerance and peaceful coexistence. Through these combined efforts, interreligious dialogue and social cooperation can become effective instruments for strengthening the practical implementation of inclusive Islamic theological principles.

The Relevance of Inclusive Islamic Theology in Contemporary Multicultural Societies

Inclusive Islamic theology is highly relevant to contemporary multicultural societies because religious and cultural diversity requires ethical frameworks that protect human dignity and encourage peaceful relationships. In societies characterized by different religious traditions, ethnic identities,

languages, and cultural practices, social harmony cannot depend exclusively on the absence of disagreement. Instead, it requires the ability of individuals and communities to manage differences through mutual recognition, justice, tolerance, and constructive communication. Inclusive Islamic theology provides an important contribution to this process by connecting Islamic religious commitments with universal humanitarian responsibilities. Its emphasis on rahmatan lil-'alamin, wasatiyyah, and ukhuwah insaniyah offers theological foundations for developing attitudes that recognize diversity as a social reality that must be addressed through ethical and peaceful approaches.

In the Indonesian context, inclusive Islamic theology has particular significance because the country is characterized by religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity. The principles of Pancasila, national unity, and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika provide a broader framework for maintaining social integration among different communities(Akbar et al., 2022). Islamic theological teachings concerning justice, humanity, and mutual recognition can support these national principles by encouraging Muslims to participate in building harmonious relationships with people from different religious backgrounds. The implementation of inclusive theology can also contribute to preventing religious discrimination and identity-based polarization, particularly when religious affiliations become associated with political competition or social exclusion. By emphasizing common humanitarian responsibilities, inclusive Islamic theology encourages individuals to prioritize peaceful social relationships without disregarding their respective religious identities.

The integration of inclusive Islamic values into religious education and community development is also important for strengthening social responsibility. Educational institutions can introduce theological perspectives that encourage students to understand religious differences through knowledge, respect, and critical reflection. Community organizations can facilitate interreligious cooperation through humanitarian activities, cultural exchanges, and social development programs. These initiatives can strengthen social trust and reduce negative stereotypes that contribute to religious tensions. Furthermore, inclusive Islamic theology can support the development of a culture of peace by encouraging individuals to reject violence, discrimination, and unjust treatment while promoting compassion and cooperation in everyday relationships.

Despite its relevance, the implementation of inclusive Islamic theology faces several challenges. Conservative resistance may emerge when inclusive interpretations are misunderstood as attempts to weaken Islamic identity or compromise fundamental religious beliefs. Political polarization can also obstruct interreligious relationships when religious identity becomes an instrument for mobilizing group interests. In addition, misinformation, hate speech, and limited opportunities for interreligious communication may reinforce negative perceptions and social divisions. These challenges demonstrate that promoting inclusive theology requires sustained educational efforts, responsible religious leadership, institutional support, and meaningful engagement among different communities. Therefore, inclusive Islamic theology should not remain merely a theoretical or normative discourse but should be translated into consistent ethical practices and constructive social initiatives that contribute to religious harmony and social integration.

Practical Implications of Inclusive Islamic Theology

The practical implementation of inclusive Islamic theology requires coordinated efforts involving educational institutions, religious leaders, community organizations, digital platforms, and government institutions. The first implication concerns Islamic education, which should integrate the values of tolerance, justice, humanity, moderation, and respect for religious diversity into teaching materials and educational activities. Islamic education should not focus exclusively on the transmission of doctrinal knowledge but should also develop students' ethical awareness, social responsibility, and ability to interact respectfully with people from different religious backgrounds. Educators can introduce Qur'anic teachings concerning human diversity, justice, and peaceful coexistence through contextual learning, discussions, and collaborative activities. Such educational practices can contribute to developing a balanced understanding of Islamic identity and interreligious relationships.

The second implication concerns religious leadership. Islamic scholars, preachers, teachers, and community leaders should promote theological interpretations that emphasize compassion, justice, moderation, and peaceful coexistence. Religious leaders have an important responsibility to prevent the misuse of religious teachings to justify discrimination, intolerance, and hostility. Their public communication should encourage critical understanding, responsible religious behavior, and respect for the dignity of other communities. Cooperation between religious leaders from different traditions can also

strengthen mutual understanding and create opportunities for preventing potential conflicts before they develop into larger social tensions.

The third implication involves strengthening interfaith dialogue through sustainable communication and cooperation between different religious communities. Dialogue should be developed through regular meetings, educational discussions, cultural activities, and collaborative humanitarian programs. Rather than limiting interaction to formal discussions, religious communities should establish practical forms of cooperation that address shared social concerns. The fourth implication concerns community engagement, which can be implemented through joint activities involving Muslims and members of other religious communities. Collaborative programs in education, environmental protection, disaster response, public health, and poverty reduction can demonstrate the practical importance of shared humanitarian values(Khan & Rahman, 2007). These activities also provide opportunities to reduce social distance, challenge stereotypes, and strengthen trust among community members.

The fifth implication concerns digital religious literacy. In the contemporary information environment, religious misinformation and hate speech can influence public perceptions and intensify identity-based tensions. Therefore, inclusive Islamic theology should be accompanied by responsible digital communication practices. Muslim communities, educational institutions, and religious organizations should encourage information verification, critical media literacy, respectful online discussions, and the dissemination of educational content that promotes tolerance and peaceful relationships. Digital platforms can also be utilized to communicate inclusive Islamic teachings and create opportunities for constructive interreligious engagement. Finally, the sixth implication concerns public policy(Tan, 2007). Government institutions and policymakers should strengthen policies that protect religious freedom, equality, human dignity, and the rights of minority communities. Public institutions should ensure that religious differences do not become grounds for discrimination in public services, education, employment, or participation in social life. Collaboration between government institutions, religious organizations, and civil society is necessary to create an environment that supports peaceful coexistence and equal protection under the law.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that inclusive Islamic theology provides an important theological and ethical foundation for addressing religious identity conflicts in contemporary multicultural societies. The analysis demonstrates that religious identity conflicts may emerge from religious exclusivism, misinterpretation of religious teachings, political polarization, discrimination, and social misinformation. Islamic principles, particularly rahmatan lil-'alamin, tasamuh, wasatiyyah, and ukhuwah insaniyah, emphasize compassion, justice, tolerance, moderation, and respect for human diversity. These principles encourage Muslims to maintain their religious commitments while recognizing the dignity and rights of individuals from different religious backgrounds. Furthermore, religious education, responsible religious leadership, interfaith dialogue, and community cooperation are essential for translating inclusive theological values into practical social relationships. Theoretically, this study contributes to connecting Islamic theological foundations with contemporary challenges involving religious identity and social polarization. Practically, it encourages more inclusive, tolerant, and harmonious interreligious relationships. Islamic educational institutions should strengthen inclusive religious education, while religious leaders should promote peaceful theological interpretations. Governments and civil society should facilitate interreligious dialogue and protect religious rights. Future research should employ empirical approaches to examine the implementation and effectiveness of inclusive Islamic theology in diverse communities.

AUTHORS' DECLARATION

Authors' Contributions and Responsibilities

The author was responsible for conceptualizing the research, formulating the research objectives, collecting and reviewing relevant literature, analyzing theological perspectives, interpreting the findings, and preparing the manuscript.

Competing Interests

The author declares that there are no competing interests related to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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