

## Practices And Dynamics Of Multi-Cultural Communication In Curup, Rejang Lebong Regency

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of Islamic values-based multicultural communication in strengthening social harmony within the multicultural community of Curup, Rejang Lebong Regency, Indonesia. Increasing cultural diversity resulting from social mobility and intercultural interaction requires effective communication capable of fostering mutual understanding and maintaining peaceful coexistence. This research employed a qualitative case study approach to explore how Islamic ethical values are integrated into everyday communication practices among culturally diverse communities. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis involving religious leaders, traditional leaders, educators, community representatives, and local government officials selected through purposive sampling. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings reveal that Islamic values, including *ta'aruf* (mutual acquaintance), *tasamuh* (tolerance), *ta'awun* (mutual assistance), *shura* (deliberation), justice, and mutual respect, have become essential ethical foundations for multicultural communication in Curup. These values promote inclusive dialogue, strengthen interpersonal trust, encourage collective participation, and facilitate peaceful conflict resolution among diverse ethnic groups. The study concludes that Islamic values-based multicultural communication functions as an effective catalyst for strengthening social harmony by transforming cultural diversity into social capital that reinforces community resilience and sustainable coexistence. The findings contribute to multicultural communication literature by integrating Islamic ethical perspectives into the understanding of communication practices within culturally plural societies.

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## Introduction

Contemporary society is increasingly characterized by cultural diversity resulting from globalization, migration, technological advancement, and the expansion of social interaction across geographical boundaries. These developments have intensified encounters among individuals representing different ethnicities, religions, languages, and cultural traditions, thereby creating both opportunities for collaboration and challenges related to misunderstanding, prejudice, and social fragmentation.

Multicultural communication has consequently become an essential mechanism for promoting mutual understanding, strengthening social cohesion, and fostering peaceful coexistence within pluralistic societies.

Effective communication enables individuals to negotiate differences through dialogue, empathy, and reciprocal respect while transforming diversity into a valuable social asset rather than a source of conflict. Contemporary scholars argue that multicultural interaction should not merely facilitate information exchange but also cultivate intercultural competence, social responsibility, and inclusive citizenship capable of sustaining harmonious relationships in increasingly heterogeneous communities (Banks, 2015; Aslan & Aybek, 2020). These developments indicate that ethical communication constitutes an indispensable foundation for preserving harmony in multicultural societies.

Islam offers a comprehensive ethical framework that supports multicultural communication through principles emphasizing justice (*'adl*), compassion (*rahmah*), tolerance (*tasamuh*), moderation (*wasatiyyah*), mutual acquaintance (*ta'aruf*), and deliberation (*shura*). These principles encourage individuals to recognize diversity as part of human existence while promoting cooperation and mutual respect among communities with different cultural backgrounds. Communication inspired by Islamic values extends beyond verbal interaction because it incorporates honesty, responsibility, sincerity, humility, and accountability into everyday social relationships.

Such ethical foundations are increasingly relevant in multicultural societies experiencing ideological polarization, social inequality, and cultural transformation. Previous studies demonstrate that Islamic values contribute significantly to strengthening tolerance, inclusive attitudes, and constructive dialogue among members of pluralistic communities (Mulyana, 2023; Arifansyah et al., 2023). Integrating these ethical principles into multicultural communication therefore provides an important pathway toward strengthening sustainable social harmony.

Academic discussions concerning multicultural communication have expanded considerably over the past decade. Earlier investigations primarily emphasized intercultural competence, cultural adaptation, identity negotiation, and communication accommodation as determinants of successful interaction across diverse cultural settings. More recent scholarship has highlighted the importance of local wisdom, religious ethics, and indigenous values as influential factors shaping communication practices within multicultural communities.

Universal communication models alone are increasingly considered insufficient to explain interaction patterns in societies where religion continues to influence everyday social behavior. Ethical values frequently determine how individuals interpret cultural differences, negotiate disagreement, and develop collective solidarity despite diverse social identities. Research further suggests that multicultural education and value-based communication significantly contribute to reducing prejudice while promoting tolerance and social integration within culturally heterogeneous environments (Banks, 2015; Setiawan et al., 2024; Aslan & Aybek, 2020).

Indonesia represents one of the world's most culturally diverse countries, comprising hundreds of ethnic groups, local languages, religious traditions, and customary practices distributed across thousands of islands. Such diversity constitutes an important national asset while simultaneously requiring effective communication capable of maintaining unity amid differences. Curup, the administrative center of Rejang Lebong Regency, reflects this multicultural reality through continuous

interaction among Rejang, Javanese, Minangkabau, Sundanese, Batak, Serawai, Lembak, Chinese, and other communities engaged in educational, economic, governmental, and religious activities.

Social harmony within this region has largely been maintained through communication practices emphasizing mutual respect, cooperation, collective responsibility, and religious values embedded in daily life. Islamic ethical principles remain closely connected with local traditions and frequently influence deliberation, conflict resolution, hospitality, and community participation. Understanding these communication dynamics is therefore essential for explaining how multicultural societies preserve peaceful coexistence while maintaining cultural diversity as a shared social resource.

Despite increasing scholarly attention to multicultural communication, several important gaps remain within the existing literature. Most previous studies have concentrated on multicultural education, intercultural competence, organizational communication, or conflict resolution while devoting comparatively limited attention to community-based communication rooted in Islamic ethical values. Existing scholarship also tends to examine multiculturalism and religion as separate analytical domains rather than investigating their interaction in shaping harmonious social relationships.

This study therefore proposes Islamic values-based multicultural communication as an integrated conceptual framework for understanding how religious ethics function as communicative resources that strengthen mutual trust, social cohesion, and intercultural understanding within culturally diverse communities. Focusing on Curup, Rejang Lebong Regency, this research contributes theoretically by enriching multicultural communication literature through the integration of Islamic ethical perspectives and contributes practically by providing recommendations for strengthening inclusive dialogue and sustainable social harmony in multicultural societies (Arifansyah et al., 2023; Mulyana, 2023; Setiawan et al., 2024)

## Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to explore the implementation of Islamic values-based multicultural communication as a catalyst for social harmony in Curup, Rejang Lebong Regency, Bengkulu Province. A qualitative case study was selected because it facilitates an in-depth understanding of social interactions, communication practices, and the meanings constructed by individuals within their natural sociocultural environment. The research focused on a multicultural community comprising diverse ethnic groups, including Rejang, Javanese, Minangkabau, Sundanese, Batak, Serawai, Lembak, and Chinese communities, whose daily interactions reflect various forms of intercultural communication. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their knowledge, experiences, and active involvement in multicultural social life. Informants included religious leaders, traditional leaders, community leaders, educators, youth representatives, and local government officials who possessed substantial insights into communication practices and social harmony within the community. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis involving community regulations, local cultural records, and relevant policy documents. Triangulation of data sources and collection techniques was employed to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and

Saldaña (2014), consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Interview transcripts, observational field notes, and documentary evidence were systematically organized, coded, and categorized to identify recurring themes related to multicultural communication, Islamic values, and social harmony. The analytical process was conducted iteratively, allowing emerging patterns to be continuously compared across different participants and sources until thematic saturation was achieved. The trustworthiness of the findings was ensured through source triangulation, member checking, prolonged engagement in the research setting, and peer debriefing to minimize researcher bias and strengthen analytical consistency. Ethical considerations were carefully observed by obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring voluntary participation, maintaining confidentiality, and anonymizing personal identities throughout the research process. These procedures ensured that the findings accurately reflected the lived experiences of participants while providing a comprehensive understanding of how Islamic values-based multicultural communication contributes to strengthening social harmony in a multicultural society.

## Discussion

### Islamic Values in Multicultural Communication Practices

Multicultural communication practices in Curup, Rejang Lebong Regency, are characterized by continuous interaction among communities with diverse ethnic, cultural, and social backgrounds. The coexistence of Rejang, Javanese, Minangkabau, Sundanese, Batak, Serawai, Lembak, and Chinese communities has created a social environment where communication plays a crucial role in maintaining harmonious relationships. Everyday interactions occur in traditional markets, educational institutions, religious gatherings, neighborhood associations, and public service settings, allowing individuals from different backgrounds to establish mutual understanding through direct engagement. Rather than emphasizing cultural differences, community members prioritize shared social values, mutual respect, and collective responsibility. Communication is generally conducted using inclusive language and attitudes that encourage openness, cooperation, and empathy. These interaction patterns demonstrate that multicultural communication in Curup is not merely a social necessity but also an essential mechanism for sustaining peaceful coexistence within a culturally diverse society (Harahap, 2025; Mubarok et al., 2025; Saputra et al., 2025).

Islamic values provide an ethical foundation that shapes communication practices among members of the multicultural community. Principles such as *ta'aruf* encourage individuals to become acquainted with one another beyond ethnic and cultural boundaries, creating opportunities for meaningful social interaction. The value of *tasamuh* promotes tolerance by encouraging respect for differences in customs, traditions, and perspectives without compromising religious identity. Community members also practice *ta'awun* through cooperation in social, educational, and humanitarian activities regardless of cultural background. Deliberation (*shura*) remains an important mechanism for resolving communal issues through dialogue and consensus rather than confrontation. Communication inspired by these values emphasizes honesty, courtesy, humility, and mutual appreciation, thereby fostering interpersonal trust and strengthening collective solidarity. Such ethical practices demonstrate that Islamic teachings function as practical guidelines for everyday communication within multicultural communities (Mulyana, 2023; Setiawan & Stevanus, 2023; Lubis, 2025).

The integration of Islamic values into multicultural communication is also reflected in various community traditions that encourage collective participation and social cohesion. Religious celebrations, cultural festivals, community service activities, and neighborhood meetings frequently involve participants from different ethnic groups working together toward common objectives. These occasions create opportunities for dialogue, cultural exchange, and relationship building that reduce social distance among community members. Respect for local customs is maintained alongside adherence to Islamic ethical principles, enabling diverse cultural expressions to coexist harmoniously. Community leaders, religious scholars, and traditional authorities actively encourage inclusive communication by emphasizing respect, mutual assistance, and peaceful interaction. Such leadership strengthens public confidence in collaborative approaches to addressing social issues while preventing the emergence of prejudice and exclusion. Consequently, multicultural communication becomes embedded within everyday social practices rather than remaining a formal or symbolic concept (Arifansyah et al., 2023; Mubarok et al., 2025; Saputra et al., 2025).

Communication practices in Curup also illustrate the importance of balancing cultural identity with collective social interests. Individuals maintain pride in their respective ethnic traditions while demonstrating willingness to adapt communication styles when interacting with members of other communities. Differences in language, customs, and cultural expressions are generally interpreted as opportunities for learning rather than barriers to social interaction. This adaptive communication pattern minimizes misunderstanding and facilitates reciprocal understanding across diverse cultural groups. Community members commonly employ polite expressions, active listening, and consensus-oriented dialogue to strengthen interpersonal relationships. The presence of shared Islamic ethical values further reinforces these communication behaviors by encouraging fairness, sincerity, and responsibility in every interaction. Such practices contribute to the development of a social environment characterized by mutual acceptance, trust, and inclusive participation (Harahap, 2025; Setiawan & Stevanus, 2023; Suhardiyanto, 2025).

The findings indicate that Islamic values-based multicultural communication has become an integral component of social life in Curup. Ethical communication is not limited to religious activities but extends into economic cooperation, educational interaction, community governance, and neighborhood engagement. The consistent application of values emphasizing tolerance, justice, compassion, and cooperation has strengthened interpersonal relationships among culturally diverse residents while reducing the potential for social conflict. Communication grounded in these ethical principles enables diversity to function as a source of social capital that enriches community life rather than generating division. Continuous interaction supported by mutual respect and shared moral commitments has fostered a culture of inclusiveness capable of accommodating differences without diminishing collective identity. These findings suggest that Islamic values-based multicultural communication represents an effective model for promoting sustainable social harmony within multicultural societies and may provide valuable insights for other regions experiencing similar patterns of cultural diversity (Lubis, 2025; Mulyana, 2023; Arifansyah et al., 2023).

### **Multicultural Communication as a Catalyst for Social Harmony**

Social harmony in multicultural communities is not established solely through cultural diversity but is continuously constructed through meaningful communication among individuals and groups. In Curup, harmonious relationships are maintained

through regular interactions that emphasize respect, cooperation, and mutual understanding despite differences in ethnicity, language, and cultural traditions. According to Mubarok et al. (2025), Islamic values serve as an important social foundation for strengthening solidarity in plural societies by encouraging inclusive interaction and collective responsibility. Community members recognize diversity as a shared reality that should be managed through dialogue rather than competition or exclusion. This perspective enables individuals to appreciate cultural differences without weakening their own identities. Harahap (2025) further explains that communication rooted in Islamic ethics promotes empathy and mutual acceptance, allowing multicultural communities to develop stronger interpersonal relationships. Such interaction gradually transforms diversity into social capital that reinforces stability and collective well-being.

The practice of Islamic values-based communication contributes significantly to conflict prevention by encouraging constructive dialogue and participatory decision-making. Community members commonly prioritize deliberation when addressing differences of opinion or resolving social issues, reflecting the Islamic principle of *shura* as a mechanism for achieving consensus. Setiawan and Stevanus (2023) argue that communication emphasizing justice, tolerance, and respect for diversity strengthens public trust while reducing opportunities for misunderstanding and social tension. Open communication also encourages individuals to express their views respectfully without creating hostility toward others. Mulyana (2023) emphasizes that Islamic social values cultivate responsibility and sincerity, enabling communication to function as a bridge connecting individuals from different cultural backgrounds. These ethical principles encourage cooperation in community activities, religious celebrations, educational programs, and neighborhood initiatives that strengthen social integration. Consequently, communication becomes an effective instrument for maintaining peaceful coexistence within culturally diverse communities.

Religious leaders, traditional authorities, educators, and local government institutions collectively play an essential role in reinforcing social harmony through multicultural communication. Their leadership encourages inclusive dialogue by promoting values of moderation, cooperation, and mutual respect in both formal and informal community activities. Arifansyah et al. (2023) explain that the integration of Islamic values into community interaction strengthens collective awareness regarding the importance of respecting diversity while maintaining social cohesion. Community meetings, religious gatherings, and cultural events provide opportunities for continuous intercultural engagement that minimizes prejudice and strengthens interpersonal trust. Saputra et al. (2025) highlight that collaborative participation in social and religious activities contributes to stronger emotional bonds among community members regardless of ethnic differences. Such leadership demonstrates that harmony is sustained not only through institutional regulations but also through everyday communication guided by shared ethical principles. These practices create an environment in which diversity becomes an element of unity rather than division.

The findings also reveal that multicultural communication supported by Islamic values enhances social resilience when communities encounter potential conflict or social change. Individuals tend to prioritize peaceful dialogue, reconciliation, and collective problem-solving instead of confrontation because these approaches are deeply embedded within both religious teachings and local traditions. Lubis (2025) notes that Islamic ethical principles strengthen community resilience by encouraging compassion, fairness, and cooperation across cultural boundaries. Differences in

language, customs, and cultural identity are therefore interpreted as opportunities for reciprocal learning instead of barriers to communication. Suhardiyanto (2025) further argues that harmonious multicultural societies develop when cultural diversity is accompanied by shared moral commitments that encourage inclusive participation and social responsibility. Continuous interaction founded upon these principles enables communities to adapt to changing social conditions while preserving mutual trust and collective solidarity. Such resilience reflects the effectiveness of value-based communication in strengthening long-term social harmony.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Islamic values-based multicultural communication functions as an important catalyst for strengthening social harmony in Curup, Rejang Lebong Regency. Inclusive communication encourages community members to develop trust, cooperation, and reciprocal respect that transcend ethnic and cultural differences. Mubarok et al. (2025) emphasize that religious values become meaningful when translated into everyday communication practices capable of fostering peaceful coexistence. Harahap (2025) similarly observes that ethical interaction grounded in Islamic teachings contributes to sustainable relationships among culturally diverse communities. The experience of Curup illustrates that harmony is achieved through continuous communication supported by shared moral values rather than through the elimination of cultural differences. These findings enrich the discourse on multicultural communication by demonstrating that Islamic values constitute practical communicative resources for strengthening social cohesion within plural societies. The model identified in this study may therefore serve as an alternative reference for other multicultural regions seeking to cultivate inclusive, peaceful, and sustainable community relationships.

### Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Islamic values-based multicultural communication plays a significant role in strengthening social harmony within the multicultural community of Curup, Rejang Lebong Regency. Communication practices grounded in Islamic ethical principles, including *ta'aruf*, *tasamuh*, *ta'awun*, *shura*, justice, and mutual respect, have fostered inclusive interactions, strengthened interpersonal trust, and encouraged collaboration among individuals from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. These values are not confined to religious activities but are consistently reflected in everyday social, educational, cultural, and community engagements, enabling diversity to become a source of collective strength rather than social division. The findings further reveal that harmonious relationships are sustained through continuous dialogue, participatory decision-making, and shared moral commitments supported by religious leaders, traditional authorities, educational institutions, and local communities. This study contributes to the development of multicultural communication theory by integrating Islamic ethical values as practical communicative resources that promote social cohesion within culturally plural societies. From a practical perspective, the findings provide an alternative framework for policymakers, educators, religious leaders, and community organizations to strengthen intercultural understanding and sustainable social harmony. Future research is recommended to examine the implementation of Islamic values-based multicultural communication in different sociocultural contexts using comparative or mixed-method approaches to enrich the understanding of communication practices in increasingly diverse societies.

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