

Negotiating Inclusion in Islamic Schools Teachers' Practices Institutional Culture and Barriers to Equitable Education

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Abstract: Inclusive education in Islamic schools requires more than the placement of diverse learners in the same classroom because equitable participation is shaped by teachers' practices, institutional culture, ethical commitments, and available resources. This study examines how inclusive education is practiced and negotiated in an Islamic school context, focusing on teachers' pedagogical responses, institutional influences, and barriers and enabling factors. A qualitative case study design was employed using semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis involving teachers, school leaders, students, and parents. Data were analyzed thematically through iterative coding, comparison across data sources, and triangulation. The findings show that teachers promoted inclusion through differentiated instruction, individualized support, classroom adaptation, peer learning, and flexible assessment. However, the consistency of these practices depended on teacher competence, leadership support, collaboration, institutional policies, parental involvement, and the availability of learning resources and appropriate infrastructure. Islamic values, particularly justice, equality, compassion, dignity, and mutual assistance, provided an ethical foundation for inclusive practice, but their influence depended on institutional translation into concrete policies and routines. The study proposes an Inclusive Islamic Education Framework that conceptualizes inclusion as a negotiated process connecting teacher agency, institutional culture, Islamic ethical values, and institutional conditions. The framework contributes a context-sensitive explanation of how equitable educational participation can be developed in Islamic schools despite persistent structural constraints and diverse classroom learning environments.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Islamic Schools, Teacher Practices, Institutional Culture, Educational Equity, Islamic Education

INTRODUCTION

Access to equitable and quality education is increasingly recognized as a fundamental human right and a central condition for sustainable educational development. Inclusive education has consequently moved beyond the narrow understanding of integrating students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms toward a broader commitment to ensuring that all learners can participate, learn, and experience belonging regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or circumstances. The Salamanca Statement established an important foundation for this shift by emphasizing that schools should respond to the diverse needs of learners rather than requiring learners to adapt to inflexible educational systems (UNESCO, 1994). More recently, UNESCO (2020) has emphasized that inclusion should be understood as a process of identifying and removing barriers to participation and learning, encompassing not only disability but also socioeconomic status,

ethnicity, language, geographical location, gender, and other dimensions of diversity. Thus, inclusive education is fundamentally concerned with transforming educational systems, cultures, and practices so that educational opportunities are equitable rather than merely formally equal.

Despite the global expansion of inclusive education policies, substantial challenges remain in translating the principle of inclusion into everyday school practices. Inclusion requires changes in curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, school organization, and relationships among educational stakeholders (Ainscow, 2020). The challenge is particularly significant because inclusion cannot be achieved solely through the presence of diverse learners in mainstream classrooms. Rather, schools need to develop the institutional capacity to support meaningful participation and learning for students with different educational needs. Ainscow (2020) argues that inclusion and equity require a whole-system approach in which schools become central sites for identifying barriers and developing responses to learner diversity. This perspective implies that inclusive education should be examined simultaneously at the classroom, organizational, and policy levels.

In Indonesia, the commitment to inclusive education has been reflected in national educational policies, including the provision of inclusive education for learners with special educational needs. However, implementation continues to encounter pedagogical, organizational, and resource-related challenges. Teachers are frequently required to respond to increasingly diverse learners while facing limitations in professional preparation, learning resources, infrastructure, classroom size, and specialist support. Such conditions create a gap between formal commitments to inclusion and the realities of classroom practice. The implementation of inclusive education therefore depends not only on the existence of regulations but also on how teachers interpret and enact inclusion within particular institutional contexts. This is consistent with the broader literature suggesting that inclusive reform is difficult to sustain when policy implementation is disconnected from school culture, leadership, and teachers' everyday practices (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010).

Teachers occupy a particularly important position in this process because they translate inclusive principles into concrete pedagogical decisions. Inclusive pedagogy requires teachers to recognize learner diversity, avoid practices that unnecessarily separate students, and expand opportunities for participation and learning. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) demonstrate that

inclusive pedagogy involves teachers developing approaches that extend learning opportunities for everybody rather than constructing separate pedagogical arrangements for students perceived as having additional needs. In practice, this may involve differentiated instruction, flexible classroom organization, peer learning, individualized support, and adaptation of assessment. Nevertheless, teachers do not implement these practices in isolation. Their decisions are influenced by available resources, school expectations, leadership support, professional collaboration, and institutional norms. Consequently, teacher competence and agency need to be examined together with the organizational conditions in which inclusive teaching occurs.

Institutional culture is therefore a critical dimension of inclusive education. A school may formally endorse inclusion while maintaining organizational routines, expectations, and norms that unintentionally reproduce exclusion. Research on organizational culture and leadership demonstrates that sustainable inclusion requires schools to develop shared inclusive values, collaborative professional relationships, supportive leadership, and organizational conditions that enable teachers to respond to learner diversity (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). Recent research similarly indicates that leadership can influence teachers' inclusive beliefs and practices by embedding inclusion within school-wide institutional practices and culture (DeMatthews et al., 2026). Inclusion should consequently be understood not simply as an individual teacher responsibility but as an institutional process involving leadership, policy, collaboration, parental engagement, and the wider school environment.

This issue becomes particularly significant in Islamic schools and madrasahs, where educational practice is shaped not only by professional and governmental expectations but also by religious and moral values. Islamic educational traditions contain strong normative foundations for equality, justice, compassion, and human dignity. Concepts such as *'adl* (justice), *rahmah* (compassion), *musawah* (equality), and *karamah* (human dignity) provide potentially important ethical resources for developing equitable educational relationships. Recent scholarship has argued that inclusive education is compatible with Islamic educational principles because both emphasize non-discrimination, dignity, justice, and the provision of meaningful educational opportunities for learners (Afif, 2025). However, the existence of inclusive religious values does not automatically guarantee inclusive institutional practices. A recent Indonesian case study, for example, identified

a persistent gap between Islamic commitments to compassion and justice and their operationalization through teacher preparation, institutional policy, facilities, and classroom practices (Afif, 2025). This suggests that Islamic values may function as an enabling resource for inclusion, but their practical influence depends on how they are interpreted and institutionalized.

Existing research has provided valuable insights into inclusive pedagogy, teacher competence, leadership, organizational culture, and Islamic perspectives on educational equality. Nevertheless, these strands of scholarship are often examined separately. Studies of inclusive education commonly focus on teacher practices or policy implementation, while studies of Islamic education tend to emphasize theological foundations and normative principles. Less attention has been given to how teachers, institutional culture, Islamic values, and structural constraints interact in the everyday negotiation of inclusive education within Islamic schools. This gap is particularly important in contexts where formal institutional commitments may coexist with limitations in resources, teacher competence, infrastructure, and organizational support.

This study addresses this gap by conceptualizing inclusion as a negotiated institutional process rather than simply a policy implementation or pedagogical technique. The study examines how teachers negotiate inclusive practices within the opportunities and constraints created by institutional culture, school leadership, available resources, parental involvement, and Islamic ethical values. Its novelty lies in bringing these dimensions together to explain how equitable education is constructed in everyday practice within Islamic schools. The study therefore asks three research questions: (1) How do teachers implement inclusive educational practices in Islamic schools? (2) How does institutional culture influence the implementation of inclusive education? and (3) What barriers and enabling factors shape equitable education in Islamic schools? By answering these questions, the study seeks to contribute to inclusive education scholarship by developing an empirically grounded understanding of negotiated inclusion and by proposing an Inclusive Islamic Education Framework that connects teacher agency, institutional culture, Islamic values, and institutional conditions in the pursuit of equitable educational participation.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore how inclusive education is implemented and negotiated within an Islamic school context. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study sought to understand teachers' experiences, interpretations, institutional practices, and the contextual factors that shape equitable education rather than to measure the prevalence or statistical relationships of particular variables. Case study methodology enables researchers to investigate a contemporary educational phenomenon within its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly separated (Yin, 2018). The study specifically focused on the interaction between teachers' inclusive practices, institutional culture, Islamic educational values, and institutional barriers and enabling factors.

Research Setting and Participants

The research was conducted in a selected Islamic school/madrasah in Indonesia that had experience accommodating students with diverse learning needs. The site was purposively selected because it provided a relevant setting for examining inclusive educational practices within an Islamic institutional environment. Participants were recruited using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in inclusive education. The primary participants consisted of classroom teachers and school leaders, while students and parents were included as supporting informants when their perspectives were relevant to particular findings. Participant selection continued until the collected data provided sufficient information to explain the three research questions and additional interviews no longer generated substantially different themes. In qualitative inquiry, sampling is guided by the relevance and richness of information rather than statistical representativeness (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and school leaders to explore their understanding of inclusive education, strategies for addressing learner diversity, perceptions of institutional support, experiences of barriers, and the role of Islamic values in

educational practice. Where appropriate, interviews with students and parents were conducted to provide complementary perspectives on classroom participation and school support.

Classroom observations were undertaken to examine how teachers translated inclusive principles into actual instructional practices. Particular attention was given to differentiated instruction, classroom adaptation, peer interaction, teacher–student relationships, learning participation, and assessment practices. Field notes were used to record observable practices and contextual conditions.

Document analysis was conducted on relevant school documents, including institutional policies, curriculum-related documents, school regulations, lesson plans, assessment materials, and other documents associated with inclusion. Document analysis provided contextual evidence concerning the extent to which inclusive principles were formally embedded within institutional policies and routines.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed thematically following the principles outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Interview recordings were transcribed, and the researchers repeatedly read the transcripts, observation notes, and relevant documents to develop familiarity with the data. Initial codes were generated inductively and subsequently organized into broader categories and themes. The analysis focused on three analytical domains corresponding to the research questions: (1) teachers' inclusive educational practices, (2) institutional culture and its influence on inclusion, and (3) barriers and enabling factors shaping equitable education. The themes were subsequently compared across data sources to identify patterns, contradictions, and relationships. The final stage of analysis involved synthesizing the themes to develop the proposed Inclusive Islamic Education Framework, particularly the relationship among teacher agency, institutional culture, Islamic values, and institutional conditions.

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

Trustworthiness was established through data triangulation, member checking, prolonged engagement, and systematic documentation of the analytical process. Triangulation involved comparing interview accounts with classroom observations and institutional documents to reduce dependence on a single source of evidence. Member checking was conducted by presenting

relevant interpretations to selected participants for clarification and confirmation. These procedures are consistent with established criteria for credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Participants were informed about the purpose and procedures of the study, their voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw. In reporting the findings, participant and institutional identities were anonymized to protect confidentiality.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' Inclusive Educational Practices

The findings indicate that teachers in the Islamic school implemented inclusive education primarily through everyday pedagogical adaptations rather than through a single standardized instructional model. Teachers adjusted learning activities according to students' different levels of readiness, learning characteristics, and participation needs. Inclusive practice was therefore visible in the way teachers modified instruction, organized classroom interaction, provided alternative learning opportunities, and adapted assessment. These practices demonstrate that inclusion was understood not simply as placing students with different abilities in the same classroom, but as creating opportunities for diverse learners to participate meaningfully in the learning process. This finding supports the view that inclusive education requires changes in classroom practices that enable teachers to respond constructively to learner diversity rather than expecting all students to learn through identical pathways (Gibbs & McKay, 2021).

Differentiated instruction emerged as one of the most visible practices. Teachers adjusted the complexity of learning tasks, provided different forms of explanation, varied learning activities, and used flexible grouping according to students' learning readiness. Students who required additional assistance were given more explicit explanations and opportunities to repeat activities, while students who demonstrated greater readiness were provided with enrichment tasks. Rather than creating completely separate learning programs, teachers attempted to maintain common learning objectives while varying the pathways through which students reached those objectives. Such practices are important because differentiation can provide students with greater opportunities to access the same curriculum while recognizing differences in readiness, interests,

and learning profiles. However, the findings also indicate that differentiation depended substantially on teachers' individual initiative. This is consistent with research showing that although differentiated instruction is widely promoted as an inclusive strategy, its translation from policy discourse into classroom practice remains challenging and requires professional support, mentoring, and opportunities for teachers to share instructional strategies (Gibbs & McKay, 2021).

Attention to individual learning needs further strengthened the inclusive orientation of classroom practice. Teachers reported observing students' learning behavior, identifying students who experienced difficulties, and communicating with parents when additional information was required. These informal processes allowed teachers to understand students beyond their academic performance. Individual needs were interpreted in relation to students' cognitive abilities, emotional conditions, social relationships, and capacity to participate in classroom activities. Consequently, teachers did not rely exclusively on formal diagnostic categories when determining how students should be supported. This approach is particularly relevant to inclusive education because categorizing students according to disability or learning difficulty can sometimes reinforce separation. A more responsive approach considers learner diversity as a normal feature of classroom life and encourages teachers to expand their repertoire of pedagogical responses.

Classroom adaptation was another important dimension of teachers' practice. Teachers modified seating arrangements, simplified instructions, provided visual and concrete learning materials, repeated explanations, and adjusted classroom activities when students encountered difficulties. These adaptations were generally low-cost and relied heavily on teacher creativity. The findings suggest that inclusion can emerge through relatively simple pedagogical decisions when teachers possess sufficient awareness of students' needs. At the same time, classroom adaptation was constrained by available resources and the number of students in each class. Thus, teacher agency was important, but it could not completely compensate for structural limitations. This finding is consistent with scholarship emphasizing that inclusive practice requires alignment between pedagogical adaptation and the material and organizational conditions in which teachers work.

Peer learning also played a significant role in supporting participation. Teachers encouraged students to work in pairs or small groups and intentionally created opportunities for students to

assist one another. Peer support was not treated solely as an academic strategy but also as a mechanism for developing empathy, social acceptance, and mutual responsibility. Students with different levels of academic ability could contribute to group activities, allowing inclusion to extend beyond teacher–student interaction. Collaborative learning can strengthen equitable educational opportunities when schools create conditions that support shared responsibility and collective problem-solving (Griffiths et al., 2021). In the present context, peer learning also reflected Islamic educational values emphasizing mutual assistance and respect for others.

Assessment practices were likewise adapted to accommodate learner diversity. Teachers did not rely exclusively on standardized written examinations but used classroom observation, assignments, oral responses, practical activities, and formative feedback to monitor student progress. Students who required additional time or alternative forms of demonstrating learning were given greater flexibility. This approach reflects an understanding that assessment should function as a tool for identifying learning progress rather than merely ranking students. Such flexibility is important because rigid assessment systems can become a source of exclusion when students with different learning characteristics are judged through identical procedures. Inclusive assessment therefore requires teachers to distinguish between maintaining meaningful learning expectations and maintaining identical assessment procedures for every learner.

Nevertheless, the findings reveal that teacher competence remained a critical condition for sustaining these practices. Teachers demonstrated considerable commitment to inclusion, but their ability to implement differentiated instruction and assessment adaptation varied according to experience, confidence, and access to professional learning. Some teachers relied on personal experience and informal experimentation rather than systematic professional preparation. This indicates that teacher agency can initiate inclusive practices, but professional development is necessary to transform individual experimentation into consistent institutional practice. Collaborative professional development is particularly important because teacher collaboration can enable educators to exchange knowledge, reflect on classroom problems, and develop shared strategies (Mouchritsa et al., 2021). Overall, teachers implemented inclusion through differentiated, responsive, adaptive, collaborative, and flexible practices, although the

sustainability of these practices remained dependent on teacher competence and institutional support.

Institutional Culture and Inclusion

The findings demonstrate that teachers' inclusive practices were strongly influenced by the institutional culture of the Islamic school. Inclusion was more consistently implemented when school leaders communicated clear expectations, teachers shared responsibility, institutional values were reflected in daily routines, and policies supported flexible responses to student diversity. Conversely, when inclusive practice depended primarily on individual teachers, implementation became inconsistent. This indicates that institutional culture functions as an enabling or constraining environment for classroom inclusion rather than merely as a background condition.

Leadership emerged as one of the most important influences. School leaders supported inclusion by communicating the importance of respecting learner diversity, facilitating teacher discussions, encouraging pedagogical adaptation, and attempting to allocate available resources to students requiring additional support. Leadership was particularly important in legitimizing teachers' decisions to modify instructional strategies. When teachers perceived that school leaders supported experimentation and adaptation, they were more willing to develop inclusive approaches. School leadership therefore operates not only through formal administrative decisions but also through the messages, expectations, and organizational climate created by school administrators.

Institutional values also shaped how inclusion was interpreted. Islamic principles such as *rahmah* (compassion), *'adl* (justice), *musawah* (equality), and respect for human dignity provided an ethical language through which teachers and school leaders understood their responsibility toward diverse learners. Inclusion was consequently framed not merely as compliance with educational regulation but as part of the moral responsibility of the school. This is significant because Islamic educational institutions possess a distinctive cultural resource that can strengthen inclusive commitments. Research on inclusive education in madrasas has identified justice and equal educational opportunities as important dimensions of inclusive Islamic education (Mareta et

al., 2024). However, the findings also demonstrate that values become meaningful only when translated into organizational practices.

Teacher collaboration strengthened this process. Teachers exchanged information about students, discussed classroom difficulties, shared teaching materials, and consulted colleagues when they encountered complex learning needs. Collaboration reduced the tendency to view inclusion as an individual teacher's responsibility. It also created opportunities for teachers with different levels of experience to learn from one another. Nevertheless, collaboration was sometimes informal and dependent on teachers' willingness to communicate. The findings therefore suggest that schools should institutionalize collaboration through regular meetings, case discussions, peer observation, and professional learning communities.

School policies provided another important institutional mechanism. Formal procedures concerning student admission, curriculum adaptation, classroom support, and parental communication helped establish a framework for inclusive practice. However, the findings indicate that formal policy alone was insufficient. Policies became effective when they were understood by teachers and supported by organizational routines. This distinction is important because the existence of an inclusive policy does not necessarily mean that inclusion has become part of institutional culture. A policy may remain symbolic if teachers lack the competence, time, resources, or leadership support required for implementation.

Parent involvement also influenced inclusion. Communication between teachers and parents enabled schools to obtain information about students' learning characteristics and provided opportunities to coordinate educational support. Parents could contribute information that was not immediately visible in classroom interactions, while teachers could explain students' progress and recommend strategies for home support. However, the findings also reveal that parental understanding of inclusive education was not always uniform. Some parents demonstrated strong support, whereas others were concerned about academic achievement, classroom disruption, or the presence of students with additional needs. This indicates that parental partnership must be developed as part of the school's inclusive culture rather than treated as an occasional communication activity.

An inclusive environment ultimately emerged through the interaction of leadership, shared values, teacher collaboration, policies, parental involvement, and everyday school norms. Inclusion became stronger when students were treated as legitimate members of the school community rather than as recipients of special treatment. This finding reinforces the argument that inclusive education requires cultural transformation in addition to pedagogical adaptation. Institutional culture therefore determines whether individual inclusive initiatives remain isolated practices or become collective and sustainable approaches embedded in the everyday life of the school.

Barriers and Enabling Factors

The findings indicate that inclusive education in Islamic schools developed through continuous negotiation between structural barriers and enabling conditions. The most significant barriers included limited infrastructure, insufficient learning resources, uneven teacher competence, large class sizes, inconsistent parental support, and limitations in institutional policy. These barriers did not operate independently. Instead, they interacted and sometimes intensified one another. For example, limited infrastructure became more problematic when teachers lacked specialized training, while large classes made individualized support more difficult when additional personnel were unavailable.

Infrastructure was a particularly visible constraint. Physical accessibility, specialized learning facilities, assistive materials, and appropriate classroom arrangements were not always available. Such limitations can restrict students' participation even when teachers possess strong inclusive intentions. Similar challenges have been identified in Indonesian Islamic educational contexts, where inadequate facilities and limited institutional preparation remain important barriers to inclusion (Afif, 2025). Learning resources presented a related challenge. Teachers frequently had to modify or create materials themselves, demonstrating creativity but also increasing their workload.

Teacher competence represented both a barrier and an enabling factor. Limited preparation in inclusive pedagogy could reduce teachers' confidence in dealing with diverse learning needs. Conversely, teachers who possessed stronger pedagogical knowledge and willingness to learn were better able to adapt instruction. Professional development therefore represents an important

intervention point. Rather than focusing exclusively on disability-specific knowledge, training should include differentiated instruction, classroom management, adaptive assessment, universal design, collaborative problem-solving, and strategies for building inclusive relationships.

Class size also affected teachers' capacity to provide individualized support. In larger classes, teachers had less time to monitor individual progress, provide repeated explanations, and adapt activities. This demonstrates that inclusive education cannot be reduced to teacher motivation. Even highly committed teachers face practical limits when the student-teacher ratio is too high. Accordingly, institutional planning should consider workload, class composition, and access to additional support personnel.

Parental support was another factor that could either strengthen or constrain inclusive practice. Parents who understood the educational needs of their children and maintained constructive communication with teachers contributed to continuity between school and home. In contrast, limited understanding or unrealistic expectations could make teachers' efforts more difficult. Building parent awareness is therefore an important component of inclusive school development. Schools need to establish communication mechanisms that position parents as educational partners rather than simply as recipients of information.

Leadership and institutional policy functioned similarly as both potential barriers and enabling mechanisms. Weak leadership could leave teachers to manage inclusion individually, whereas supportive leadership could mobilize resources, encourage collaboration, and legitimize classroom adaptation. Likewise, unclear institutional policies could produce inconsistent practices, while clear and flexible policies could provide teachers with a stable framework for responding to learner diversity. These findings indicate that institutional commitment must be expressed through both organizational structures and everyday leadership practices.

At the same time, several enabling factors were identified. Supportive leadership provided organizational legitimacy for inclusive initiatives, while teacher collaboration allowed educators to share responsibilities and develop practical solutions. Parent support strengthened continuity between school and home. Clear institutional policies provided direction, whereas flexible implementation allowed teachers to respond to individual circumstances. Most importantly, Islamic values provided a moral foundation that encouraged teachers to interpret inclusion through

justice, compassion, equality, dignity, and mutual assistance. Recent research in Indonesian Islamic educational settings similarly demonstrates that Islamic values can support inclusive learning environments, although limitations in teacher preparation, facilities, and parental acceptance remain important challenges (Mareta et al., 2024).

Based on the interaction among these findings, the study proposes the Inclusive Islamic Education Framework. The framework conceptualizes inclusive education as a negotiated process involving four interconnected dimensions: teacher agency, institutional culture, Islamic ethical values, and institutional conditions. Teacher agency represents teachers' capacity to differentiate instruction, adapt classrooms, modify assessment, and develop peer-learning opportunities. Institutional culture encompasses leadership, collaboration, policies, parental engagement, and inclusive school norms. Islamic ethical values provide the normative foundation through principles of justice, equality, compassion, dignity, and mutual support. Institutional conditions include infrastructure, learning resources, class size, teacher competence, institutional policy, financial support, and specialist support.

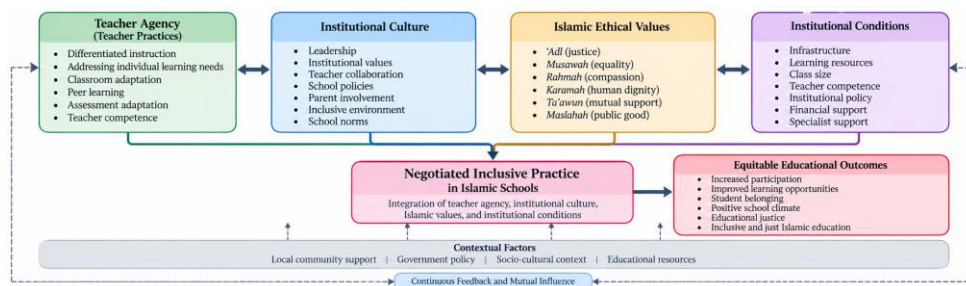


Figure 1. Inclusive Islamic Education Framework: Interplay of Teacher Agency, Institutional Culture, Islamic Values, and Institutional Conditions

Figure 1 illustrates that inclusive education in Islamic schools is not produced by a single factor. Instead, it emerges through interaction among teachers' pedagogical agency, institutional culture, Islamic ethical values, and the conditions within which schooling takes place. The central concept of negotiated inclusive practice highlights the process through which teachers and school leaders translate inclusive aspirations into feasible educational actions. This negotiation occurs when teachers respond to student diversity while simultaneously considering available resources, institutional expectations, parental perspectives, and the ethical commitments of Islamic education.

The framework also demonstrates that barriers do not simply prevent inclusion; rather, they create conditions within which teachers and institutions must negotiate possible responses.

Teacher agency can partially overcome resource limitations, but it cannot substitute for institutional reform. Likewise, Islamic values can provide a strong ethical rationale for inclusion, but values must be translated into policies, professional development, accessible environments, and classroom practices. The framework therefore positions negotiated inclusive practice as the central mechanism connecting moral commitment with educational action.

This finding extends existing discussions of inclusive Islamic education by moving from a primarily normative understanding of Islamic values toward an institutional and practice-oriented model. Islamic values are not treated merely as theological principles but as resources that can influence teacher decisions, school policies, interpersonal relationships, and organizational priorities. At the same time, the framework recognizes that moral commitments operate within material and organizational constraints. Consequently, equitable education requires the alignment of ethical values with teacher capacity, institutional leadership, resources, policy, and collaborative practices.

The central contribution of the framework is therefore its emphasis on negotiation. Inclusive education in Islamic schools is neither simply imposed through policy nor automatically produced by religious values. It is continuously constructed through interactions between teachers, leaders, students, parents, institutional norms, and contextual conditions. When teacher agency is supported by collaborative institutional culture, coherent policies, adequate resources, and Islamic ethical commitments, inclusive practices are more likely to become sustainable. Conversely, when these dimensions are disconnected, inclusion tends to depend on individual teacher commitment and remains vulnerable to institutional constraints.

The findings demonstrate that equitable education in Islamic schools requires a systemic approach. Teachers need the competence and autonomy to adapt instruction, but they also require leadership, resources, collaboration, and supportive policies. Schools need to move beyond formal declarations of inclusion toward institutional cultures in which diversity is recognized as an ordinary and valuable characteristic of the learning community. Islamic values can provide a powerful ethical foundation for this transformation when principles of *'adl*, *musawah*, *rahmah*, *karamah*, and *ta'awun* are translated into concrete educational practices. Inclusive education consequently becomes not merely a pedagogical strategy but an ongoing institutional process

through which justice, equality, compassion, and human dignity are negotiated and enacted in everyday school life.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that inclusive education in Islamic schools is enacted through teachers' everyday pedagogical decisions. Teachers responded to learner diversity through differentiated instruction, individualized assistance, classroom adaptation, peer learning, and flexible assessment. These practices show that inclusion involves more than student placement; it requires opportunities for participation, learning, and belonging. However, sustainability varied according to teachers' competence and support. Teacher agency represents a central mechanism through which inclusive principles are translated into practice.

The study concludes that institutional culture determines whether practices become consistent and sustainable. Leadership, shared values, teacher collaboration, school policies, parental involvement, and inclusive norms shape teachers' capacity to respond to diversity. Supportive leadership and collaboration strengthen adaptation, whereas weak organizational support can leave inclusion dependent on commitment. Islamic values of justice, equality, compassion, dignity, and mutual assistance provide an ethical foundation, but their significance depends on translation into policies, routines, relationships, and classroom practices.

Equitable education is shaped by the interaction between barriers and enabling factors. Limited infrastructure, learning resources, large classes, uneven teacher competence, parental concerns, and inconsistent policies constrain implementation. Conversely, professional development, supportive leadership, teacher collaboration, parental partnership, flexible policies, and adequate resources strengthen inclusive practice. Teacher commitment alone cannot overcome structural limitations. The Inclusive Islamic Education Framework conceptualizes inclusion as a negotiated process connecting teacher agency, institutional culture, Islamic ethical values, and institutional conditions to equitable participation.

Theoretically, this study contributes by framing inclusion in Islamic schools as negotiated practice rather than policy implementation. Practically, school leaders should strengthen professional development, collaborative planning, adaptive assessment, resource allocation, and

parent partnerships while embedding Islamic ethics in decisions. Policy makers should address teacher preparation, accessibility, class size, resources, and implementation capacity together. As a qualitative case study, findings are contextually grounded and not statistically generalizable. Future research should examine the framework across Islamic schools and educational levels.

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