

Islamophobia and Its Implications for Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the phenomenon of Islamophobia and its implications for the implementation of Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia. The research employs a literature review method by examining various relevant sources, including books, scholarly journal articles, and research reports. The findings indicate that Islamophobia influences the implementation of Islamic religious education in several ways, such as the emergence of negative stigma toward Islamic religious education teachers, restrictions on certain learning materials, and psychological pressure experienced by Muslim students. In addition, this condition may weaken public support for religious education and potentially lead to misunderstandings among religious communities. Therefore, strengthening the role of education through the integration of multicultural values, the improvement of Islamic literacy, and the promotion of tolerant attitudes is essential for fostering harmonious social relations.

Keywords: Islamophobia; Islamic Religious Education; Tolerance; Multicultural Education.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis fenomena Islamofobia serta implikasinya terhadap pelaksanaan Pendidikan Agama Islam di Indonesia. Metode yang digunakan adalah studi literatur dengan menelaah berbagai sumber yang relevan, seperti buku, artikel jurnal ilmiah, dan laporan penelitian. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa Islamofobia memiliki implikasi terhadap pelaksanaan pendidikan agama Islam, antara lain munculnya stigma negatif terhadap guru Pendidikan Agama Islam, pembatasan terhadap materi pembelajaran tertentu, serta tekanan psikologis yang dialami oleh peserta didik Muslim. Selain itu, fenomena ini juga berpotensi memengaruhi dukungan

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masyarakat terhadap pendidikan agama dan menimbulkan kesalahpahaman antarumat beragama. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan penguatan peran pendidikan melalui integrasi nilai-nilai multikultural, peningkatan literasi keislaman, serta pengembangan sikap toleransi guna mewujudkan kehidupan sosial yang harmonis.

Kata Kunci: Islamofobia; Pendidikan Agama Islam; Toleransi; Pendidikan Multikultural.

A. Introduction

Islamophobia can be understood as a phenomenon characterized by fear, prejudice, and negative attitudes toward Islam and Muslim communities. This phenomenon is often influenced by narrow interpretations of Islamic teachings and persistent stereotypes that portray Islam as an inferior religion, leading to the perception that it is unworthy of contributing to the formation of social values (Masuwd et al., 2025). The term Islamophobia began to gain wider recognition in Europe after World War II. The war caused significant destruction of infrastructure, natural resources, and the socio-economic conditions of European societies. The crisis that followed, including labor shortages during the reconstruction period, encouraged several countries such as Germany, England, and France to recruit immigrant workers. Many of these immigrants came from former colonial regions in the Middle East and North Africa, where the majority of the population were Muslims (Auliya' et al., 2025).

The wave of immigration after World War II led to the increasing presence of Muslim communities in Europe. This development created various social dynamics, particularly in the form of cultural tensions and economic competition with local populations. In many cases, Muslims were blamed for social problems such as economic inequality and crime. This situation was further exacerbated by the oil crisis and several acts of terrorism that strengthened negative sentiments toward Islam. Mass media also played a significant role in shaping narratives that reinforced stereotypes about Muslims. As a result, Islamophobia developed into a persistent form of prejudice that affected various aspects of Muslim life, including the field of religious education, which was often perceived negatively in Western schools.

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York, followed by the global discourse on the “war on terrorism,” significantly intensified negative perceptions of Muslim communities in the Western world. Muslims increasingly became the focus of public scrutiny and were frequently associated with security threats. As a result, stereotypes linking Muslims to violence became more deeply embedded in public discourse. In response, the United States government introduced stricter security policies, including special registration programs targeting Muslim immigrants beginning on October 1, 2002 (Masuwd et al., 2025). This situation highlights the importance of providing a more accurate understanding of Islam as a religion that promotes peace and rejects acts of terrorism carried out in its name. In this context, spiritual education plays a significant role in addressing Islamophobia, particularly within Indonesian society. Such education can be implemented through both formal and informal institutions by promoting a proper understanding of Islamic teachings. National initiatives such as the “Religious Moderation” program can also serve as an important foundation for strengthening these efforts. Through a structured and comprehensive educational approach, society can develop a deeper understanding of Islamic values that emphasize peace, justice, and compassion, thereby reducing prejudice and discrimination against Muslims (Zami et al., 2024).

The rise of Islamophobia has also influenced the implementation of Islamic Religious Education in Western countries. One of the underlying factors is the difference in paradigms between Western educational concepts and education from an Islamic perspective, particularly regarding curriculum content, character formation, and educational objectives. Western education systems generally emphasize empirical and rational approaches that focus on observable and scientifically verifiable knowledge. As a result, ethical, moral, and spiritual dimensions often receive less attention in the curriculum, causing educational orientation to lean more toward worldly aspects of life rather than spiritual or hereafter-oriented values.

In contrast to Western education, Islamic education is grounded in religious, ethical, and moral values aimed at developing human potential in a balanced manner between physical and spiritual aspects. Its curriculum emphasizes the formation of

moral character and promotes more comprehensive educational objectives. These differences in educational paradigms ultimately lead to distinct orientations and approaches to measuring educational success between the two traditions (Syahbudin et al., 2023). These differences in educational paradigms have implications for various components of the education system, including curriculum design, learning approaches, and evaluation mechanisms. From this perspective, education is viewed not only as a process of transmitting knowledge but also as an important instrument for character formation and the internalization of values within the cultural context of society.

Indonesia, as the world's largest Muslim-majority country, is characterized by a pluralistic and diverse society. Within the framework of Pancasila, Islam is recognized as one of the officially acknowledged religions and forms an important element of national identity. However, in recent decades, the phenomenon of Islamophobia has increasingly emerged and affected various aspects of social life, including education. This phenomenon is reflected in the growth of prejudice, negative stereotypes, hate speech, and discriminatory acts directed toward Muslims. From an Islamic perspective, such attitudes contradict the values taught in the Quran, particularly in Surah Al-Hujurat (49:12), which emphasizes the prohibition of prejudice and the importance of maintaining harmony and mutual respect in social life.

Negative stigma against Islam often arises as a consequence of terrorist acts carried out by certain groups claiming to represent the religion. According to data from the Global Terrorism Database, approximately 421 terrorism incidents occurred in Indonesia between 1970 and 2007. Various factors have contributed to the emergence of these acts, including dissatisfaction with the system of government, demands for the comprehensive implementation of Islamic law (sharia), beliefs regarding the importance of *jihad fisabilillah*, and misinterpretations of the concept of jihad in Islamic teachings (Apriliani et al., 2021).

According to a report by Hukum Online, terrorism incidents continued to occur in Indonesia until 2022. One case that drew significant public attention was the suicide bombing in Makassar on March 28, 2021. The explosion occurred near Makassar Cathedral Church, which was the target of the attack, resulting in the deaths of the two

perpetrators (Tim Hukum Online, 2023). The perpetrators were identified as members of the Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) network, a group linked to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which was also involved in several terrorist attacks in Surabaya in 2018. In the Indonesian context, the phenomenon of Islamophobia has become increasingly complex due to the influence of social media and the rapid development of information technology. The spread of misinformation, accompanied by hate speech on social media, can reinforce negative stereotypes toward Islam and Muslims. This situation has the potential to trigger societal polarization and increase the risk of social division.

Various studies on Islamophobia have been conducted by researchers, including a study by Bintang Rosada. The study found that Islamophobia can lead to social consequences such as increasing suspicion in interpersonal relationships, which may result in disharmonious social interactions. In the context of national life in Indonesia, such conditions need to be addressed through the role of the government in strengthening the understanding of Islam as a religion that upholds the values of peace and brings mercy to all creation (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*) (Rosada, 2022). A study by Syahrul Rahman highlights the importance of involving religious leaders or Muslim scholars in the digital space, particularly on social media platforms. Such active participation is expected to convey the narrative that Islam is a religion of peace and is inclusive. In addition, this involvement can also serve as a strategy to respond to and reduce the spread of Islamophobia in Indonesia (Rahman, 2021). A study by Abad Badruzaman and Nur Arfiyah Febriani examines strategies to counter Islamophobia through a religious moderation approach. The findings indicate that religious moderation is built upon three main principles: *wasathiyah*, which emphasizes moderation; *samahah*, which prioritizes tolerance; and *hiwar*, which highlights the importance of dialogue in fostering understanding among different groups (Febriani & Badruzaman, 2023).

As one of the main foundations of human development, the education sector is closely influenced by various social phenomena, including Islamophobia. Islamic Religious Education, which constitutes an important component of the national

education system, plays a significant role in shaping students' religious understanding and moral character.

B. Research Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach using a literature review method (*library research*). The study focused on collecting and analyzing information related to Islamophobia from various written sources, including books, scientific journal articles, research reports, official documents, and media publications discussing discrimination, stereotypes toward Muslims, the social impacts of Islamophobia, and its relation to the implementation of Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia. The literature review approach was chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding of Islamophobia by examining different perspectives, theories, and findings from previous studies.

The data collection technique used in this study was documentation and literature study. The researcher collected data by identifying, selecting, and reviewing various relevant references related to Islamophobia and Islamic Religious Education. The process involved searching for credible and relevant sources, reading and understanding the content of the literature, extracting important information, and organizing the data into several major themes such as the definition of Islamophobia, historical background, forms of discrimination, social impacts, and strategies to promote tolerance among religious communities. The collected data were systematically classified to support the objectives of the study and facilitate the analysis process.

The data analysis technique in this study used descriptive qualitative analysis through content analysis. After the data were collected, the researcher analyzed the information by reducing irrelevant data, organizing the selected information into thematic categories, and interpreting the findings critically. The analysis process focused on synthesizing ideas and perspectives from various sources to gain a deeper understanding of Islamophobia and its impacts on social life and Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia. In addition, the researcher compared different viewpoints and previous research findings to identify similarities, differences, and possible solutions for reducing negative stigma toward Islam and strengthening interreligious tolerance. The

findings were then presented in a descriptive narrative form to provide comprehensive insights into the issue.

To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the data, this study applied several strategies. The researcher used credible and relevant academic sources such as peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and official reports. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from different references to obtain accurate and objective findings. The researcher also carried out careful and in-depth reading of the literature to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Furthermore, the consistency and relevance of the data with the research objectives and theoretical framework were critically evaluated to maintain the credibility, reliability, and accuracy of the research findings.

C. Result and Discussion

The Emergence and Development of Islamophobia

Etymologically, the term Islamophobia is derived from the words “Islam” and “phobia.” According to the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (KBBI), Islam is defined as the religion taught by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) through divine revelations from Allah. Meanwhile, the word “phobia” originates from the Greek term *phobos*, which refers to an excessive and irrational fear. Based on this definition, Islamophobia can be understood as an attitude of excessive fear toward Islam or its followers. The term is commonly used to describe anti-Islam sentiments that may be expressed either openly or implicitly. Islamophobia is often characterized by stereotypes and negative perceptions that portray Islam as a dangerous religion capable of threatening human life (Kurniawan & Afifi, 2024a).

In his essay titled *L'Orient vu de l'Occident*, Etienne Dinet explains that the term Islamophobia was first introduced in 1922. However, the use of the term became more widespread after the terrorist attacks in New York, United States, on September 11, 2001. The event generated widespread public fear regarding the threat of terrorism, which was often associated with stereotypes about Islam and Muslims. As a result, the phenomenon of Islamophobia developed significantly, particularly in Europe, and later spread to various countries around the world. This situation has led many Muslims to

experience discrimination, unfair treatment, and even acts of violence (Apriliani et al., 2021).

In 1991, the Center for Race and Gender at the University of California, Berkeley defined Islamophobia as a form of unfounded hostility toward Muslims, accompanied by fear or hatred directed at Muslims either wholly or in part. This concept was later introduced in England and other parts of Europe by referring to the idea of xenophobia, namely fear or hostility toward foreign groups. This perspective developed from assumptions held by certain groups that view Islam as a monolithic religion and consider it incapable of adapting to social change. In addition, Islam is often portrayed as an outdated and irrational religion and is frequently associated with acts of violence, particularly in relation to terrorism (Khotijah, 2022).

The phenomenon of Islamophobia has emerged as a global issue that has received significant attention, particularly in Europe. After the end of the Cold War, the increasing demand for labor in the region led to migration flows from Muslim-majority countries such as India, Morocco, Turkey, and Algeria. Many of these migrants later settled in Europe, leading to a significant increase in the Muslim population. This population growth raised concerns among certain European governments and segments of society, which often view Islamic culture negatively and associate Islam with radicalism and violence. These perceptions have become a challenge for European societies in managing the increasingly complex diversity of culture, ethnicity, and religion (Audrey Monica, 2021).

Islamophobia has increased over time, particularly in Western countries with relatively small Muslim populations. In France, for example, the attitudes of certain segments of society that are less open to cultural diversity have led to racist attitudes and resistance to the integration of non-Western groups. Meanwhile, in Germany, discriminatory practices have also occurred against women who wear the hijab, as they are often associated with terrorism-related issues. Islamophobia in France can also be observed in the controversy surrounding the publication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad, which was justified on the grounds of freedom of expression. Initially, Islamophobia emerged as a reaction to differences in belief; however, in its later

development, this phenomenon has often been utilized by certain Western political actors to advance geopolitical interests, including justifying acts of violence and intervention. In addition, Islamophobia has also been fueled by concerns among some groups about the possibility of Islamization that is perceived as threatening long-established cultural traditions within their societies (Kurniawan & Afifi, 2024a).

The emergence of Islamophobia is often triggered by society's limited understanding of the true teachings of Islam. In the context of globalization, this phenomenon has developed into a complex global issue. A lack of accurate religious literacy, influenced by inadequate education systems and biased media coverage, has become one of the main factors reinforcing Islamophobic attitudes (Abdurrahman & Al Hakim, 2025). In addition, strong religious fanaticism in several Western countries, along with various acts of terrorism often associated with Islam, further reinforces negative stereotypes of this religion. As a result, Islamophobia has become increasingly widespread and has turned into a social challenge in many countries (Audrey Monica, 2021).

The Phenomenon of the Development of Islamophobia in Indonesia

Although Indonesia is known for its high level of religious and cultural diversity and hosts the largest Muslim population in the world, this does not fully guarantee that the country is free from the threat of Islamophobia. Negative sentiments toward Islam have the potential to undermine social harmony and threaten national integration across various sectors of life. Historically, the roots of this phenomenon can be traced back to the early period of independence in 1945, when ideological debates arose between the idea of establishing an Islamic State and the concept of a Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, which ultimately resulted in a compromise in the form of Pancasila as the state ideology. However, dissatisfaction among some Islamic groups in 1948 triggered the emergence of the Indonesian Islamic State movement, which developed in several regions, such as West Java, Aceh, and South Sulawesi, until it was finally suppressed in 1960. In its later development, following the wave of Islamic resurgence after the Iranian Revolution, the movement transformed into Jemaah Islamiyah in the late 1990s, which later became involved in several terrorist acts, including the Bali bombings and

the JW Marriott bombing, disrupting social stability and creating a negative image of Islam as a peaceful religion (Abdillah & Putri, 2022).

The 2002 Bali Bombing marked a significant turning point that triggered a rise in Islamophobia in Indonesia. The arrest of several suspects, including the religious leader Abu Bakar Baasyir, further reinforced stereotypes linking Islam to acts of terrorism. According to records from the Global Terrorism Database, between 1970 and the present, there have been approximately 421 terrorist incidents in Indonesia. Various factors underlie these actions, including dissatisfaction with the government, demands for the implementation of Islamic law, perceptions of opportunities to carry out jihad, and misunderstandings in interpreting the concept of jihad itself (Khotijah, 2022). Terrorist incidents, such as the Bali bombings, the JW Marriott bombing, and the activities of the NII KW 9 group, are often used by the media to construct narratives that link Islam with violence. Reporting that consistently associates terrorist perpetrators with a Muslim identity indirectly reinforces negative stereotypes of Muslims. This, in turn, fosters the development of Islamophobia among some non-Muslim communities in Indonesia and generates feelings of anxiety and fear in social life (Amalia & Haris, 2019).

The phenomenon of Islamophobia is not limited to acts of violence, threats, vandalism, or discrimination in various spheres of life, such as employment, education, and social relations. It can also manifest in the spread of negative information and hoaxes about Islam, hate speech, and stereotypes that associate Islamic attributes with radicalism or violence.

The controversy surrounding the ban on wearing the hijab in the 2024 National Paskibraka has also become part of the discourse on freedom of religion and the expression of religious identity. The policy appears to reflect a tendency to remove Islamic symbols from public spaces, which can be seen as a form of Islamophobia—a negative attitude or irrational fear toward Islam and its religious practices. In this context, the hijab, which serves as both a symbol of identity and a religious obligation for Muslim women, is instead restricted in the Paskibraka environment, which should represent the diversity of Indonesian society (M. Yusuf, 2024).

Islamophobia is closely linked to the emergence of hate speech against Islam on social media. Through digital platforms, negative perceptions and harmful stereotypes about Islam are often reinforced and disseminated. Social media indeed provides a broad space for people to express their opinions, but it also serves as a channel for spreading hateful messages targeting the Islamic religion and Muslims. Such hate speech not only triggers discriminatory actions but also strengthens prejudices that can further amplify Islamophobia in society. This phenomenon negatively impacts social life and undermines mutual respect for religious diversity. Various studies indicate that anti-Islam narratives on social media often exploit incidents of terrorism or international conflicts to provoke emotional reactions, which in turn trigger hate speech and further damage the image of Islam (Witro & Alamin, 2021).

Implications of Islamophobia on Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia

Although Islamophobia in Indonesia does not develop as intensely as in Western countries, its presence still has implications for various aspects of social life, including the implementation of Islamic religious education. These implications can be observed through several of the following aspects:

1. The Implications of Islamophobia on the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum

Restrictions on learning content in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum often arise in response to social and political pressures that accompany the growing phenomenon of Islamophobia. In some cases, material considered sensitive, such as discussions of jihad or the history of warfare in Islam, tends to be removed or simplified. These measures are usually taken to prevent misunderstandings and reduce the potential for societal conflict. However, such policies can also limit students' understanding of the historical context and spiritual values within Islamic teachings. When this material is reduced or omitted, students may not gain a complete picture of how Islamic teachings developed and interacted with social and political dynamics throughout history. This situation can result in a partial and less critical understanding of religious teachings, which, in turn, may contribute to broader misunderstandings within society.

2. In addition, the Islamic Religious Education curriculum is often designed to place greater emphasis on the values of tolerance in response to evolving social issues.

Instilling an attitude of tolerance is undoubtedly an important aspect of education, especially in a pluralistic society such as Indonesia. However, in practice, teaching about tolerance is sometimes not accompanied by a solid theological foundation within Islamic teachings. As a result, students may perceive the value of tolerance as a concept separate from the religious teachings themselves. This situation has the potential to diminish the depth of students' understanding of Islamic values, which, in fact, also emphasize mutual respect and peaceful coexistence. If the focus on tolerance is not balanced with an understanding of the fundamental principles of Islam, there is a risk that students may lose a strong sense of their religious identity.

3. The Implications of Islamophobia for Islamic Religious Education Teachers

The phenomenon of Islamophobia also has implications for the professional standing of Islamic Religious Education teachers. In some situations, these teachers often face negative stigma that associates them with the potential spread of radical ideologies. Such perceptions can generate suspicion among certain members of the community, thereby affecting the level of trust that parents and students place in teachers as educators. This situation has the potential to create gaps in both social and professional relationships between teachers and the community. In addition to affecting their professional image, the stigma can also impact teachers' performance. The pressure to demonstrate that they are not associated with radical ideologies often makes teachers more cautious in selecting learning materials, sometimes even avoiding topics considered sensitive. As a result, the learning process, which should be deep and comprehensive, can become limited (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2023).

In addition, Islamic Religious Education teachers often face psychological pressure in carrying out their duties. Many teachers feel that they are constantly being monitored, both by the community and by educational institutions. This situation can create discomfort in the work environment and lead to prolonged stress. In such circumstances, some teachers choose to simplify or limit discussions on certain topics to avoid potential controversy. However, this approach can result in a limited

understanding of Islamic teachings among students. (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2024).

In addition to social and psychological pressures, Islamic Religious Education teachers often face limited support from educational institutions. In some cases, they are less involved in the policy-making processes related to the curriculum or training programs. As a result, the policies implemented do not always align with the actual needs on the ground. The lack of institutional support is also evident in the limited opportunities for Islamic Religious Education teachers to participate in professional training or competency development programs (Febriana & Muflihini, 2025). This situation can affect their professionalism and effectiveness in carrying out the teaching process, thereby impacting the quality of religious education provided to students.

4. The Implications of Islamophobia on Students

Islamophobia, as an increasingly prevalent social phenomenon, has significant implications for the lives of Muslim students, both directly and indirectly. One of the most visible consequences is the limited space for students to express their Islamic identity within the school environment. In some cases, Muslim students feel pressured to conceal their religious identity because they fear being subjected to stigma or negative judgment from their peers or the school community (Rini Ramadhani et al., 2025). This situation, for example, is evident from the hesitation of some students to wear religious symbols, such as hijabs or other expressions of faith. Such pressure not only restricts freedom of expression but can also affect students' psychological well-being. Various studies indicate that students who feel compelled to conceal their religious identity are more vulnerable to mental health issues, including anxiety and depression. Furthermore, concerns about negative reactions from their surroundings make some students reluctant to discuss topics related to Islam. As a result, opportunities to foster constructive dialogue about religion and promote mutual understanding among students become increasingly limited.

The phenomenon of Islamophobia also affects students' interest in learning Islamic Religious Education. Experiences of discrimination or stigma related to religious identity can foster negative perceptions of the subject. In certain situations,

students may perceive Islamic Religious Education as less valued within the broader academic environment. This situation has the potential to reduce students' motivation to actively participate in Islamic Religious Education. When students feel unwelcome or experience unfair treatment due to their religious identity, their interest in learning and participating in educational activities can significantly decline. As a result, the learning process, which should serve as a means of character development and reinforcement of religious values, may not proceed optimally (Syahda Al lathief et al., 2024).

On the other hand, the phenomenon of Islamophobia is also linked to the emergence of an unbalanced understanding of Islamic teachings in the educational environment. In some cases, the curriculum or learning approach places greater emphasis on the values of tolerance without being balanced by a thorough explanation of Islamic teachings themselves. Although tolerance education is crucial in a multicultural society, an approach that overly emphasizes this aspect without comprehensive understanding can result in a superficial grasp of religion. Consequently, students may understand Islam only from a limited perspective or even be influenced by prevailing negative stereotypes in society. This incomplete understanding can reinforce misconceptions about Islam and exacerbate social challenges for Muslim students. In the long term, an insufficient understanding of religion may contribute to an increase in intolerance among the younger generation.

5. The Implications of Islamophobia on Society

Islamophobia not only affects individuals but also has wide-ranging implications for society as a whole, particularly in the context of religious education. One such implication is the decreased support from the community for the implementation of Islamic Religious Education in schools. In some communities, there remains the perception that religious education is no longer relevant to the demands of modern life. This view leads some parents and community members to consider Islamic Religious Education less important in the curriculum, resulting in reduced support for the subject. The lack of social support can negatively affect students' motivation to study Islamic Religious Education, as they may feel that the subject does not receive adequate attention either at school or at home. Moreover, misunderstandings among certain

members of society regarding the important role of Islamic Religious Education in shaping students' character and moral development further reinforce negative perceptions of the subject. In some cases, Islamic Religious Education is even perceived as a subject that provides little practical benefit for students' daily lives.

In addition to affecting support for religious education, the phenomenon of Islamophobia can also exacerbate interfaith misunderstandings in society. This occurs when religious education is not delivered comprehensively and there is a lack of dialogue spaces that foster positive interactions among followers of different religions. When religious education is taught in a limited and superficial manner, students are likely to develop only a shallow understanding of other religions (Witro & Alamin, 2021). This situation can give rise to negative stereotypes and widen the gap in interfaith understanding. Moreover, limitations in teaching that promote interfaith interactions can reduce opportunities for students to build positive relationships with peers from different religious backgrounds. As a result, the process of fostering attitudes of tolerance, mutual respect, and interfaith understanding in society is hindered (Nur Hidayah et al., 2026).

In the long term, the implications of Islamophobia on religious education can also affect the development of the younger generation's religious identity. When students feel that their religious identity is undervalued or considered irrelevant, they are likely to lose their connection to the religious teachings they follow. This situation can have consequences for future social life, as young people who lack a strong understanding of religious values tend to be more vulnerable to social conflicts (Kurniawan & Afifi, 2024b). Moreover, the decline in support for Islamic Religious Education can also prevent the learning process from functioning optimally. If religious education is not implemented effectively, there is a risk of producing a generation that lacks understanding of moral values, ethics, and life principles that should be acquired through religious education.

The Phenomenon of Islamophobia in Indonesia and Its Implications for the Implementation and Acceptance of Islamic Religious Education

The Role of Education in Addressing the Phenomenon of Islamophobia

Islamophobia, which refers to fear, hatred, and prejudice against Islam and Muslims, is a social phenomenon that can trigger tensions and discriminatory practices in various parts of the world, including Indonesia. This phenomenon is often influenced by the development of negative stereotypes, the spread of inaccurate information, and the public's limited understanding of the true teachings of Islam. In such contexts, education plays a crucial role in addressing and mitigating the emergence of Islamophobia. Through education, a more comprehensive understanding of Islamic teachings can be fostered, thereby reducing prejudice, strengthening mutual respect, and promoting a more inclusive social environment. Therefore, the role of education is highly strategic in shaping attitudes of tolerance and enhancing public understanding of Islam to curb the spread of Islamophobia.

1. Integration of Multicultural Values into the Curriculum

The integration of multicultural values and tolerance into the school curriculum is a crucial step in fostering a culture of mutual respect in education. Multicultural education helps students understand social diversity in terms of culture, religion, and traditions, while encouraging them to appreciate differences and reject negative stereotypes, including prejudice against Islam and Muslims. Through this approach, students learn the importance of living harmoniously in a diverse society. Therefore, the curriculum should include materials that promote religious tolerance, interfaith harmony, and respect for cultural and ethnic diversity.

In Indonesia, these values are reflected in subjects such as Pancasila and Citizenship Education, which emphasize tolerance, human rights, and social harmony. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology has also incorporated diversity and tolerance into the national curriculum to foster a more inclusive learning environment and mitigate negative prejudices among students.

2. Strengthening Islamic Literacy

Islamophobia often stems from a lack of proper understanding of Islamic teachings. Education therefore plays a crucial role in providing accurate knowledge about Islam as a religion that promotes peace, compassion, and justice. Strengthening Islamic literacy through activities such as seminars, discussions, and relevant learning

materials can help students develop a more comprehensive understanding of Islam and reduce prejudice and misconceptions.

In addition, media literacy programs can equip students with the skills to critically evaluate information and avoid misleading stereotypes about Islam. Learning materials that cover the history of Islamic civilization, Muslim contributions to the world, and moderate Islamic values can also provide a more objective and balanced view of Islam, thereby fostering greater respect for religious diversity.

3. Development of Teacher Competence in Handling Discrimination

Teachers play a crucial role in creating an inclusive school environment free from discrimination. Therefore, strengthening teachers' competencies to recognize and address Islamophobia is essential. Through training programs, teachers can learn to identify biases, support students who face discrimination, and encourage constructive interfaith dialogue in the classroom. Enhancing teachers' religious literacy is also important to deepen their understanding of religious diversity and strengthen their capacity to promote tolerance among students. With these competencies, teachers can act as agents of change, fostering respect for differences and preventing discriminatory attitudes in schools.

4. Islamophobia Prevention Program in Schools

Preventing Islamophobia in schools can be achieved through educational activities that promote tolerance and respect for diversity, such as seminars, workshops, and discussion forums. These programs help raise students' awareness of the dangers of prejudice and discrimination while fostering a more inclusive learning environment that involves schools, parents, and the wider community.

In many countries, anti-discrimination campaigns are often implemented in collaboration with mass media and non-governmental organizations to promote understanding, tolerance, and respect for diversity. Such initiatives not only raise students' awareness but also help foster a more inclusive school culture and strengthen social relationships within the community.

5. Interfaith Collaboration

Interfaith collaboration in educational settings is an effective strategy to reduce and prevent Islamophobia. Activities such as joint discussions, visits to places of worship, and social programs involving students from different religious backgrounds help foster mutual understanding, respect, and appreciation of diversity. Many educational institutions organize seminars, forums, and collaborative programs involving students, teachers, and religious leaders from diverse communities. Through dialogue and cooperation, these activities help reduce misunderstandings, strengthen social relationships, and promote harmony in a pluralistic society.

D. Conclusion

The phenomenon of Islamophobia, which refers to unfounded fear and hatred toward the religion of Islam and its followers, has developed into a serious social issue in various parts of the world, particularly in Western countries. Islamophobia is generally triggered by the emergence of negative stereotypes and a lack of proper understanding of Islamic teachings. This situation is often further exacerbated by terrorist events frequently associated with Muslims. In Indonesia, despite being home to the largest Muslim population in the world, signs of Islamophobia can still be observed and have the potential to disrupt social harmony. This phenomenon also carries various implications for multiple aspects of social life, including the field of Islamic Religious Education.

The implications of Islamophobia on the implementation of Islamic education in Indonesia can be observed in various areas, such as restrictions on learning materials, the emergence of negative stigma toward Islamic education teachers, and the psychological pressure experienced by Muslim students. Curriculum adjustments made to avoid potential conflicts sometimes result in learning materials not being delivered in depth, which diminishes students' understanding of Islamic teachings and reduces their interest in Islamic education. In addition, there is a tendency among some segments of society to withdraw their support for religious education, which could ultimately increase interfaith misunderstandings and potentially disrupt social harmony in the future. Therefore, efforts are needed to enhance accurate understanding of Islam and foster a tolerant attitude through more comprehensive religious education. Further

research is also important to identify effective strategies for addressing Islamophobia while promoting constructive interfaith dialogue.

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