

Inclusivity of Islamic Education in National Policy: An Analysis of Rahmatan lil 'Alamin Values

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the integration of Rahmatan lil 'Alamin values into Indonesia's national education policy as a foundation for developing inclusive Islamic education. This research begins with the gap between the universal ideals of Islamic teachings that emphasize compassion, justice, and respect for diversity, and the less-than-optimal formulation of these values explicitly in national education policy. The study uses a qualitative-descriptive approach through policy discourse analysis based on literature studies, with the main data sources being Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2017 concerning Strengthening Character Education, the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Religious Moderation policy, and the Independent Curriculum, as well as relevant academic literature. The results show that national education policy has incorporated the values of religiosity, humanity, and respect for diversity that align with the principles of Rahmatan lil 'Alamin. However, the integration of these values remains implicit and normative, has not been formulated as an explicit policy paradigm, and is not supported by systematic implementation instruments and operational indicators. This study offers a normative-conceptual framework of the integration of Rahmatan lil 'Alamin as an ideological principle of inclusive Islamic education policy, which is oriented towards humanity, justice, and equality in the formulation and direction of education policy.

Keywords: *Inclusive Islamic Education, National Education Policy, Policy Discourse Analysis, Rahmatan lil 'Alamin, Religious Moderation*

How to Cite Miswanto, M., Fillah, N., & Putra, A. A. M. (2026). Inclusivity of Islamic Education in National Policy: An Analysis of Rahmatan lil 'Alamin Values: Representation of Rahmatan lil 'Alamin Values in National Education Policy. *Jurnal Al Burhan*, 6(1), 487–499. <https://doi.org/10.58988/jab.v6i1.718>

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a strategic role in shaping an inclusive, tolerant, and responsive national character (Wang, 2024; Thames, 2023). In the Indonesian context, inclusive education focuses not only on providing access for all students but also requires the integration of religious values that align with national life. Within the framework of Islamic education, the concept of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* (*Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*) is understood as a religious principle that emphasizes universal compassion, respect for human dignity, and the avoidance of all forms

of discrimination (Buti, 1990). This principle is the theological foundation that Islam is present to bring welfare, openness, and social justice to all humanity, so it is relevant as a foundation for the formation of humanistic and inclusive Islamic education.

The theological foundation of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* is explicitly articulated in the Qur'an. Allah states:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

Meaning: "And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to all worlds" (Q.S. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 107).

This verse affirms that the mission of Islam is universal in nature and oriented toward compassion, justice, and human welfare across all social, cultural, and religious boundaries. Consequently, Islamic education, as an extension of this prophetic mission, is inherently required to reflect inclusive, humane, and non-discriminatory values within its philosophical orientation and policy direction.

Classical and contemporary Qur'anic exegesis interprets this verse as emphasizing the universal scope of Islamic mercy. Ibn Kathir (2000) explains that the Prophet Muhammad's mission constitutes mercy not only for believers but for all humanity, manifested through ethical guidance, social justice, and the prevention of harm. Al-Qurṭubī (2003) further emphasizes that *rahmah* in this context extends to the protection of human dignity and social harmony, while Quraish Shihab (2002) highlights its relevance to plural societies, where Islam functions as a moral force that promotes coexistence and inclusivity. From a policy perspective, these interpretations suggest that *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* should not remain a theological abstraction but must be translated into concrete educational policies that ensure equality, accessibility, and respect for diversity within Islamic education systems.

However, these values have not been fully integrated into the national policies that guide Islamic education in Indonesia (Khozin & Nurhakim, 2024). In fact, inclusive education in recent studies is understood as a systemic effort to eliminate learning barriers and guarantee the participation and learning achievements of all students without discrimination based on physical, social, cultural, or religious background (Ainscow, 2020). The synergy between the concepts of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* (blessing for the universe) and inclusive education should be reflected in policies, curricula, and learning practices that promote acceptance, equality, and respect for diversity. Integrating the two can strengthen the direction of national Islamic education toward a more moderate, adaptive, and relevant model to address the challenges of pluralism in Indonesia.

Some recent studies have examined two important aspects: first, the implementation of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* values in Islamic educational institutions. For example, research by Syamsadea & Amrullah (2025) revealed that the internalization of these values in elementary school students strengthens attitudes of tolerance, social sensitivity, and inclusiveness. Second, research on inclusive education in Islamic institutions is also growing, such as the study "Transforming inclusive practices in Islamic-based early childhood education" in Indonesia, which examines how teachers adopt a strengths-based approach in inclusive

classrooms (Malik & Prabowo, 2024). Other studies examine the *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* paradigm as an approach in Islamic education in institutions such as Muhammadiyah, which emphasizes inclusiveness and social justice (Khosiin et al., 2023). However, from these studies, it appears that there has not been much research that simultaneously analyzes how the value of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* is articulated in national education policy to promote inclusivity in Islamic education.

Theoretically, policy research shows that value integration in public policy often stops at the normative and declarative level, without being followed by the formulation of clear policy paradigms, implementation instruments, and operational indicators. This pattern of value integration has the potential to create a gap between the philosophical vision of the policy and the reality of its implementation. Based on this framework, the conceptual framework of this research is based on the assumption that the value of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* (*Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*) needs to be analyzed not merely as a normative doctrine, but as an ideological framework for policy that influences the direction, design, and objectives of inclusive Islamic education at the national level.

In terms of feasibility and urgency, this research theme is relevant to the increasing challenges of pluralism, social diversity, and the need for moderate and inclusive Islamic education in Indonesia. National education policy holds a strategic position as an operational reference that determines the direction and sustainability of the education system at large. Without a clear and systematic integration of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* values at the policy level, Islamic education risks becoming trapped in symbolic practices with minimal social transformation potential. Therefore, this research is worthy of being conducted to fill the gap in research at the macro-policy level and to strengthen the conceptual foundation for developing inclusive Islamic education.

Thus, this study aims to analyze how the value of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* is constructed in Indonesia's national education policy as a basis for developing inclusive Islamic education. Specifically, this study aims to: (1) identify the narrative and representation of the value of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* in education policy documents, (2) examine how the concept of inclusiveness of Islamic education is realized through these policies, and (3) formulate a conceptual construction of inclusive Islamic education rooted in the principle of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*. Academically, this study contributes by expanding the study of Islamic education into the realm of policy analysis and strengthening the theory of moderate Islamic education at the macro policy level.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative-descriptive approach with a policy discourse analysis method based on library research. This approach was chosen because the study focuses on exploring the meaning, values, and ideology contained in national education policies related to the concept of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* as the basis for the development of inclusive Islamic education. The qualitative approach is considered relevant for understanding the social realities and values contained in policy texts (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The data for this study are entirely sourced

from secondary data, in the form of official documents and relevant scientific literature. The main documents include Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 87 of 2017 concerning Strengthening Character Education, the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Moderate Religious Practice document, and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology's *Merdeka Belajar* (Freedom of Learning) policy. In addition, this study also utilized references from standard reference books and relevant recent scientific articles. Data collection was carried out using documentation techniques, namely by searching, identifying, and selecting various relevant written sources for analysis (Bowen, 2009).

Data analysis was conducted through policy discourse analysis, which consists of four stages: data reduction, interpretation of meaning, ideological analysis, and drawing conclusions (Fairclough, 2013; Van Dijk, 2014). Data reduction was carried out by selecting relevant documents, followed by the interpretation of the Islamic values contained in the policies. Next, ideological analysis was conducted to reveal how the principles of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* and inclusiveness were represented in Islamic education policy. Data validity is maintained through source triangulation and document critique to ensure the validity and consistency of the analysis results (Miles et al., 2014). The triangulation process was conducted by comparing and confirming findings from various sources, such as official government policy documents, academic articles, and scientific works relevant to the theme of inclusive Islamic education.

In line with Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis paradigm, the analyzed data were not only understood at the level of policy text and structure, but also classified based on the dimension of social cognition, namely how values, ideologies, and collective knowledge about inclusivity and *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* are represented and framed in education policy. This social cognition was identified through narrative patterns, normative assumptions, and ideological orientations underlying policy formulation, allowing for a more in-depth reading of the relationship between the policy text and the surrounding social context (Van Dijk, 2014). With this approach, the analysis is not only descriptive but also has interpretive and ideological power in explaining how the value of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* is constructed, normalized, or limited in Islamic education policy, both at the normative level and in its implementation direction (Syamsadea & Amrullah, 2025; Khosiin et al., 2023).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Representation of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* Values in National Education Policy

A discourse analysis of national education policy documents indicates that the values of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* (*Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*) have begun to emerge implicitly in various regulations, although they have not yet been explicitly stated as terminology or a stand-alone policy paradigm. In national regulations related to character building, religiosity is a key value, emphasizing the development of noble morals, tolerance, respect for diversity, and the strengthening of social ethics. These values reflect the principles of social benefit and harmony in national life.

Table 1. Representation of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* Values in National Education Policy

Level of Analysis	Practice Context	Represented Values	Mode of Articulation	Key Finding
Macro	National education and character policies	Religiosity, tolerance, social ethics, respect for diversity	Implicit and normative	Values present without an explicit paradigm
Institutional	Islamic educational institutions	Inclusivity, social care, humanistic ethics	Practical and contextual	Values implemented in daily practices
Macro-policy gap	National policy framework	Humanity, harmony, universal benefit	Ethical discourse	Lack of an operational framework and indicators

At the level of educational practice, findings indicate that Islamic educational institutions have adopted the values of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* more concretely than in macro policies. These values are reflected in learning activities, the creation of an inclusive educational environment, and the development of student character that cares for others and the social environment. This demonstrates institutional efforts to internalize friendly, humanistic, and contextual Islamic values in daily educational practice.

However, a review of various national policy documents shows that values aligned with *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* (the Universal Blessing for the Universe) are still formulated in general and normative terms. The values of religiosity, humanity, tolerance, and respect for diversity have not been packaged in an operational conceptual framework and have not been supplemented with measurable implementation indicators. Thus, at the national macro-policy level, the values of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* still function as an ethical horizon and normative discourse, not as a systematic and applicable policy paradigm.

The Construction of Inclusivity in Islamic Education Policy

The analysis of national Islamic education policies indicates that the concept of inclusivity is beginning to occupy a strategic position in the development of Islamic education. Curriculum policy documents and madrasah regulations depict students who are not only devout and pious but also possess an inclusive and humanistic character. This indicates efforts to integrate universal humanitarian values into Islamic educational ethics.

Table 2. Construction of Inclusivity in Islamic Education Policy

Level	Practice Context	Inclusivity Orientation	Evidence from Findings	Key Challenge
Macro	Curriculum and madrasah regulations	Inclusive and humanistic student profile	Integration of universal humanitarian values	Normative articulation
Meso	Institutional practices in madrasahs	Cooperation, tolerance, respect for diversity	Intracurricular and extracurricular activities	Uneven implementation
Micro	Classroom and school culture	Inclusive learning and social interaction	Translation into daily educational practices	Limited teacher capacity
Systemic	Policy implementation framework	Inclusive education governance	Institutional readiness	Resource and quality disparities

At the implementation level, findings indicate that some madrasahs have begun to implement inclusivity values in educational practices. These values are reflected in intracurricular and extracurricular activities that emphasize cooperation, tolerance, and respect for differences. This implementation demonstrates that inclusive policies are not limited to normative documents but have been translated into learning activities and school culture.

However, the research also reveals structural and systemic challenges in implementing inclusivity policies. Disparities in quality between madrasahs, limited teacher capacity in translating inclusive principles into pedagogical practice, and a lack of supporting resources are key obstacles. This situation indicates that inclusive policies at the macro level are not fully supported by readiness for implementation at the institutional and practical levels of education.

The Relationship between *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* Values and the Character Education Paradigm

The research results show that the values of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* (*Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*) are strongly linked to the character education paradigm in national education. Values such as compassion, justice, respect for human dignity, social empathy, and humanitarian responsibility align with the goals of character education, which not only shape individual morals but also students' social awareness.

Table 3. Relationship between *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* Values and the Character Education Paradigm

Aspect	Key Elements	Policy Expression	Main Finding
Value alignment	Compassion, justice, human dignity, social empathy	Religiosity, cooperation, and integrity	Strong alignment with character education goals
Educational focus	Social awareness and humanitarian responsibility	Individual moral development	Social-inclusive dimension underdeveloped
Policy integration	Theological and ethical foundations	Normative policy formulation	Conceptual gap between theology and policy
Operationalization	Universal Islamic values	Curriculum and character programs	Lack of measurable indicators
Implementation pattern	Value-based practices	Local institutional initiatives	Partial and fragmented application

The findings also indicate that the Strengthening Character Education (PPK) policy incorporates values aligned with the principles of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*, particularly through an emphasis on religiosity, cooperation, and integrity. However, the implementation of these values tends to focus on the individual and normative dimensions, while the social and inclusive dimensions have not been fully developed systematically. Furthermore, the policy review revealed a gap between the theological foundations of Islamic education and the technocratic formulation of national education policy. Universal values aligned with *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* have begun to be incorporated into the curriculum and education policies, but have not yet been explicitly formulated as a conceptual and operational framework. The absence of measurable implementation indicators means that the application of the *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* values in character education is still partial and dependent on local initiatives of educational institutions.

DISCUSSION

Representation of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* Values in National Education Policy

The research findings indicate that the values of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* (*Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*) are implicitly present in national education policy, particularly through an emphasis on religiosity, humanity, tolerance, and respect for diversity. However, these values have not yet been formulated as an explicit and operational policy paradigm. On the other hand, at the practical level of education, Islamic educational institutions tend to be more progressive in implementing *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* values concretely through learning, institutional culture, and student character development.

These findings demonstrate that national character strengthening policies actually incorporate dimensions of social ethics and inclusivity that align with the principles of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*, although not explicitly stated. Various studies indicate that religiosity values in character education policies encompass tolerance, respect for differences, and strengthening social morals as the foundation of a

harmonious national life (Fatah et al., 2023; Sirait et al., 2024). These values align with the view of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas (1980), who asserted that Islamic education aims to shape civilized human beings who bring universal benefit.

The gap between macro policies and micro practices indicates a broader scope for interpretation at the institutional level (N. I. P. Nurhikmah, 2025). Islamic educational practices demonstrate the ability to translate the values of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* (*Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*) into an inclusive and humanistic learning context, as found in studies of modern Islamic schools that emphasize social concern and a welcoming learning environment (Khosiin et al., 2023). Furthermore, the strengthening of the values of humanity, justice, pluralism, and inclusivity confirms that the *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* paradigm remains relevant in facing the dynamics of education in the era of Society 5.0 (Aristya et al., 2024).

From the perspective of Muhammad Sa'id Ramadhan Al-Buthi, this situation indicates that Islamic education at the policy level has not yet been fully directed towards systematic social transformation. Al-Buthi emphasized that Islamic education must be built on a clear conceptual and operational framework to transform values into social reality (N. Nurhikmah, 2024). The absence of measurable implementation indicators in national policy demonstrates that the value of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* (*Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*) still functions as a normative discourse, rather than as the ideological foundation of education policy.

Overall, these findings underscore the need for a reformulation of national education policy that positions the value of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* not merely as a moral principle but as an operational paradigm. This reform needs to be realized through the formulation of competency standards, curriculum development, learning design, and evaluation systems based on the values of compassion, justice, equality, and respect for diversity. With this approach, Islamic education can function as a transformational force in building an inclusive, civilized society that is responsive to global challenges.

The Construction of Inclusivity in Islamic Education Policy

The results of this study indicate that national Islamic education policy has begun to normatively integrate the principle of inclusivity, both in the formulation of student profiles and in the direction of curriculum development. Furthermore, educational practices in a number of madrasas demonstrate concrete efforts to translate inclusive values into learning activities. However, this implementation still faces various structural and systemic obstacles that hinder its sustainability and equitable distribution.

Policy-wise, these findings reinforce the view that inclusivity has become part of the strategic orientation of national Islamic education, as reflected in the Independent Curriculum document and madrasah regulations that emphasize humanist and inclusive character (Alim & Sulastri, 2024). This orientation aligns with the classical tradition of Islamic education, which places etiquette, social responsibility, and character development as the primary foundations of education, as formulated by Imam al-Zarnuji in *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* (Az-Zarnuji, 2018). Within this framework, inclusivity is not simply defined as access to

education, but as a moral construct that shapes pious and civilized human beings (Tamphu et al., 2024).

Empirically, the implementation of inclusive values in educational practice demonstrates that policies can be operationalized through learning designs and school cultures that emphasize universal humanitarian values. This finding aligns with research showing that strengthening student profiles based on Pancasila and *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* (the principle of mercy for the universe) is realized through educational activities that foster tolerance, cooperation, and respect for differences (Wulandari, 2022). This confirms that inclusivity can become a concrete pedagogical practice, not merely a normative concept in policy documents.

However, the implementation challenges identified indicate a gap between macro-policy and practice at the meso- and micro-levels. The disparity in quality between madrasahs, limited teacher competency in inclusive pedagogy, and a lack of supporting resources indicate that inclusive policies have not yet fully become political decisions that guarantee equitable distribution of the quality of Islamic education (Sumarni et al., 2024; Mala et al., 2024; Mareta et al., 2024). Within a policy analysis framework, this situation indicates that inclusivity remains at the philosophical level, not yet fully institutionalized in a systematic implementation design.

From the perspective of Muhammad Sa'id Ramadhan al-Buthi's moderate Islamic educational theory, Islamic education demands the transformation of the whole person through the integration of moral, social, and spiritual dimensions (Buti, 2003). Therefore, inclusivity must be understood as the epistemological foundation of Islamic education, not merely an administrative strategy (Fauzi et al., 2025). The gap between normative Islamic values and the reality of policy implementation indicates a policy deficit, whereby fundamental Islamic values have not been fully translated into effective educational governance.

Thus, this study emphasizes the urgency of reformulating inclusive Islamic education policies to ensure they are operational, measurable, and supported by clear evaluation instruments. This reformulation should include the formulation of implementation indicators, strengthening teacher competency in inclusive pedagogy, building a supportive institutional culture, adequate budget allocation, and an achievement-based accountability model. Without these steps, inclusivity has the potential to remain a normative slogan without significant impact on the quality of learning and the equity of educational services. Integrating normative vision, concrete policies, institutional implementation, and data-driven evaluation is a prerequisite for Islamic education to be able to respond substantively and sustainably to diversity and modern challenges.

The Relationship between *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* Values and the Character Education Paradigm

The results of this study indicate that the value of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* (*Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*) is closely related to the character education paradigm, both conceptually and in national education policy. These values have been normatively internalized in character education policy, but have not yet been fully developed as a systematic and measurable operational framework.

Conceptually, the principle of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* (*Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*) is epistemologically close to character education, which places morality, social empathy, and humanitarian responsibility as the foundation of education (Adha & Prawironegoro, 2024; Arif, 2021). From an Islamic educational perspective, character is interpreted not only as personal morality but also as social awareness and concern for others (Nurhakim et al., 2025). This view aligns with Al-Ghazali's ideas in *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, which emphasizes education as a process of *tazkiyat al-nafs* (observance of the self) to shape individuals with divine morals and contribute positively to society (Ghozali, 2018). Thus, *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* serves as the theological and ethical foundation for the development of humanistic and comprehensive character education.

At the policy level, the spirit of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* is truly reflected in the policy of Strengthening Character Education through the values of religiosity, cooperation, and integrity (Shodiq, 2023; Naufalia, 2023; Kartini et al., 2024). However, the faith values developed still tend to be vertical and have not been fully directed toward social impacts, such as respect for diversity and humanitarian responsibility. Research shows that internalizing *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* values in the learning process can increase social empathy and tolerance in students, which are core to moderate Islamic character (Syamsadea & Amrullah, 2025).

From a policy analysis perspective, the relationship between *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* and character education still faces structural challenges. National curriculum policies and madrasah regulations demonstrate recognition of the values of inclusivity and universal humanity, but have not explicitly linked them to the *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* paradigm (Shihbuddin et al., 2024; Musnandar, 2022). This creates a gap between the theological foundations of Islamic education and technocratic policy formulations. As emphasized by Muhammad Sa'id Ramadhan al-Buthi, ideal Islamic education must be based on the principle of *tawāzun*, namely the balance between steadfastness of faith and openness to differences (Buti, 2003). The absence of this principle explicitly in policy has the potential to limit Islamic education to an exclusive approach.

The main challenge in operationalizing *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* values lies in the weak translation of these values into policy implementation and evaluation indicators. The absence of standardized national guidelines results in the fragmented implementation of inclusive values, relying on local initiatives within educational institutions (Malik & Prabowo, 2024). Therefore, more explicit policy formulation is needed, such as the development of an inclusiveness-based character assessment rubric, curriculum monitoring instruments, and student behavior indicators that represent the *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* values.

The implication is that strengthening *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* values in character education policies has the potential to make Islamic education a social instrument for building a peaceful, just, and civilized society. However, successful implementation depends heavily on multi-stakeholder collaboration between the government, educational institutions, educators, the community, and other stakeholders (Syafika & Marwa, 2024). With a systematic integration of normative vision, operational policies, and educational practices, *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* values

not only strengthen the theory of moderate Islamic education but also expand educational practices toward an inclusive and humanistic social order.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* values have not yet been explicitly and systematically positioned as a foundational paradigm in Indonesia's Islamic education policy. Although inclusive, humanitarian, and moral principles are reflected across national policy documents, their articulation remains largely normative and fragmented, lacking clear operational indicators for implementation and evaluation. As a result, the integration of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* into character education and inclusive Islamic education has not fully functioned as a coherent policy framework, but rather depends on institutional interpretation and local initiatives. This research is limited by its reliance on policy document analysis and the absence of empirical observation at the institutional level, as well as by the lack of standardized indicators related to *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* values. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to incorporate field-based research to examine policy implementation practices and to develop measurable frameworks linking theological values, curriculum design, pedagogical strategies, and educational outcomes. Such efforts are essential to strengthening *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* as a practical and transformative paradigm for inclusive and moderate Islamic education.

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