CULTIVATING GLOBAL CITIZENS: ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION’S ROLE IN FOSTERING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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Abstract
This research addresses the gap in the exploration of intercultural communication skills within Islamic higher education, focusing on Universitas Islam Internasional Darullughah Wadda’wah. The study aims to unravel the nuanced landscape of global citizenship cultivation in this specific context, emphasizing the distinct features of Islamic higher education. Employing a survey design, data was gathered from 25 undergraduate students, revealing insights into their perceptions and applications of intercultural communication skills. The findings indicate a high level of awareness among students of cultural nuances, with a simultaneous recognition of challenges in practical application. While students demonstrate a positive orientation towards adaptability and cultural sensitivity, the study highlights areas for targeted interventions, particularly in translating theoretical knowledge into practical scenarios. The implications of this research extend to the refinement of educational practices within Islamic higher education institutions, emphasizing the importance of aligning theoretical understanding with practical application for effective global citizenship cultivation.

Key words: Intercultural Communication, Global Citizenship, Islamic Higher Education.

Abstrak
Penelitian ini mengisi kesenjangan dalam eksplorasi keterampilan komunikasi lintas budaya di perguruan tinggi Islam, dengan fokus pada Universitas Islam Internasional Darullughah Wadda’wah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkapkan lanskap yang rumit dari pembentukan kewarganegaraan global dalam konteks khusus ini, dengan menekankan fitur khas perguruan tinggi Islam. Dengan menggunakan desain survei, data dikumpulkan dari 25 mahasiswa sarjana, mengungkapkan wawasan mereka terhadap persepsi dan aplikasi keterampilan komunikasi lintas budaya. Temuan menunjukkan tingkat kesadaran yang tinggi di antara mahasiswa terhadap nuansa budaya, dengan pengakuan tantangan dalam aplikasi praktisnya. Meskipun mahasiswa menunjukkan orientasi positif terhadap adaptabilitas dan sensitivitas budaya, penelitian ini menyoroti area yang perlu intervensi khusus, terutama dalam...
PENDAHULUAN

In the ever-evolving sphere of higher education, the imperative to nurture global citizens proficient in intercultural communication has risen to unparalleled prominence (Illie, 2019; Tuohy, 2019). Educational institutions are acknowledged as crucibles for transformative experiences, where students transcend parochial perspectives to meaningfully engage with global issues (Makhmudov, 2020; Simões, 2020). While existing literature extensively explores Western higher education's role, the contribution of Islamic higher education remains an uncharted frontier. This research aims to delve into this nuanced realm, probing the intricate relationship between Islamic higher education and the cultivation of intercultural communication skills.

Higher education institutions globally are recognized as pivotal agents in shaping individuals into global citizens with a profound understanding of diverse cultures and perspectives (Kozlovska et al., 2022; Walker et al., 2018). The transformative potential of tertiary education lies in equipping students with skills for navigating an interconnected world. However, current discourse predominantly focuses on Western higher education, overlooking the unique role of Islamic higher education in this transformative process.

Islamic higher education institutions, dispersed across regions from the Middle East to Asia, embody bastions of scholarship rooted in cultural and religious traditions (Tareva & Tarev, 2018). These institutions often espouse values such as tolerance, compassion, and mutual respect, aligning with broader goals of fostering global citizenship and intercultural communication skills. Despite their potential significance, empirical research systematically investigating how Islamic higher education contributes to cultivating global citizens proficient in intercultural communication is conspicuously absent.

The concept of intercultural communication skills has predominantly been explored within Western contexts, with Eurocentric perspectives dominating the discourse (Kluver, 2000). This study seeks to address this gap by specifically examining how Islamic higher education institutions, with their distinct cultural and religious underpinnings, contribute to these skills. This exploration is not just an academic exercise but a necessity for understanding the global impact of diverse educational systems.

While some scholars acknowledge the potential of Islamic
higher education in nurturing intercultural communication skills (Tolchah & Mu’ammar, 2019), existing literature offers fragmented insights without a comprehensive examination of current initiatives, their efficacy, and the challenges faced. This research seeks to fill this void by proposing a more nuanced exploration, considering multifaceted dimensions and potential problematics associated with the intersection of Islamic higher education and intercultural communication.

The primary challenge in the existing literature lies in the absence of rigorous empirical research on the effectiveness of Islamic higher education in cultivating intercultural communication skills. While theoretical discussions abound, the lack of comprehensive empirical studies examining the real-world impact of educational practices within these institutions hinders our ability to formulate evidence-based conclusions (Eko & Putranto, 2029; Fantini, 2020). This research seeks to address this void by incorporating empirical validation, offering crucial insights into the effectiveness of educational practices within Islamic higher education.

Cultural stereotypes and misunderstandings persist as formidable barriers to effective intercultural communication, and Islamic higher education institutions face unique challenges in navigating these issues (Boylan, 2006; Fantini, 2020). This necessitates targeted research to identify strategies for mitigating stereotypes and fostering mutual understanding within the specific context of Islamic higher education. The challenges posed by cultural stereotypes provide an additional layer of complexity to the already intricate task of fostering intercultural communication skills.

An underexplored aspect is the extent to which Islamic higher education institutions integrate global perspectives into their curricula. Research should scrutinize whether these institutions provide students with meaningful opportunities to engage with diverse cultures, languages, and worldviews, thereby contributing substantively to the development of intercultural communication skills (Tuohy, 2019). This exploration is crucial for understanding the depth of the global engagement facilitated by Islamic higher education and its potential impact on shaping culturally competent global citizens addressing the formulated problems, namely:

The aforementioned research issues propel us into a deeper exploration of the intricate dynamics surrounding the potential of Islamic higher education in fostering intercultural communication skills. To address the issues, we delve into the specific mechanisms within Islamic higher education institutions. This involves scrutinizing pedagogical approaches, extracurricular activities, and the institutional ethos that collectively contribute to the cultivation of intercultural communication skills. Additionally, our exploration extends to understanding how these mechanisms intersect with the unique cultural and religious contexts inherent in Islamic higher education institutions. Simultaneously, we embark on an in-depth analysis and our exploration
delves into the multifaceted impact of integrating global perspectives into the curricula of Islamic higher education institutions. This involves examining not only the explicit inclusion of global content but also assessing how this integration addresses potential challenges associated with diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. By exploring the nuances of global perspective integration, we aim to unravel the complexities and potential problematics that may arise in the development of intercultural communication skills.

Moreover, our comprehensive analysis includes an empirical dimension, seeking to fill the existing gap in the literature. Through surveys, interviews, and observational studies within Islamic higher education institutions, we intend to gather empirical data that provides a nuanced understanding of the effectiveness of educational practices in cultivating intercultural communication skills. This empirical validation is essential for bridging the divide between theoretical frameworks and real-world impact.

This research aspires to contribute by providing a holistic and contextualized understanding of how Islamic higher education institutions contribute to the development of intercultural communication skills. The exploration goes beyond acknowledging potential contributions, aiming to unravel the intricacies and challenges associated with the intersection of Islamic higher education and intercultural communication.

The proposed research questions pave the way for novel contributions by delving into specific mechanisms, empirical evidence, and potential problematics within the realm of Islamic higher education. This study aims to move beyond the limitations of existing literature, providing a robust foundation for understanding the dynamics of intercultural communication skills in a unique educational context.

The practical implications of this research extend beyond theoretical discourse. Educational policymakers, administrators, and educators within Islamic higher education can leverage the findings to inform strategies aimed at enhancing intercultural communication skills among students. By addressing potential challenges and providing evidence-based insights, the research contributes tangibly to the improvement of educational practices within Islamic higher education.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Global Citizenship in Higher Education

The imperative to foster global citizenship within higher education underscores the critical need to equip students with essential skills for navigating a world characterized by diverse cultures and intricate global challenges (Illie, 2019). While the spotlight has predominantly focused on Western institutions in discussions about higher education’s role in shaping global citizens, the rich tapestry of Islamic higher education institutions remains notably understudied (Makhmudov, 2020; Vu, 2019). These institutions, with their distinctive blend of cultural traditions, religious values, and a deep
commitment to scholarship, represent uncharted realms in the discourse on global citizenship. It is imperative to delve into how these values translate into practical initiatives and shape intercultural communication skills within the specific context of Islamic higher education.

Empirical evidence drawn from studies within Western higher education has consistently pointed to the catalytic role of exposure to diverse cultures in the development of intercultural communication skills (Makhmudov, 2020; Tareva & Tarev, 2018; Simões, 2020). However, applying these findings to Islamic higher education necessitates a nuanced understanding of the unique cultural diversity within these institutions and how such exposure is seamlessly integrated into the educational experience. Acknowledging the potential of Islamic higher education in nurturing intercultural communication skills (Fantini, 2020; Tolchah & Mu’ammad, 2019) is merely a starting point. The existing literature falls short in providing a robust examination of current initiatives and the challenges faced within these institutions. This gap in empirical research not only limits our ability to draw substantive conclusions regarding the impact of educational practices on intercultural communication but also hampers the development of targeted strategies tailored to the unique dynamics of Islamic higher education.

The urgency of understanding how Islamic higher education institutions contribute to global citizenship extends beyond academic curiosity. It directly influences our ability to foster meaningful dialogue and cooperation in a world marked by diversity. The lack of empirical investigations within these institutions represents not just a gap in academic scholarship but, more critically, a missed opportunity to leverage their unique strengths in shaping global citizens. A comprehensive investigation into the distinctive features and potential of Islamic higher education in nurturing global citizens transcends academic pursuits; it is a transformative step toward fostering a more inclusive, interconnected, and harmonious world.

Islamic Higher Education: Tradition and Innovation

Islamic higher education institutions, deeply rooted in cultural and religious traditions, serve as dynamic spaces where scholarly pursuits converge with profound religious values (Sahin, 2018). Emphasizing virtues such as tolerance, compassion, and mutual respect, these institutions align with broader objectives aimed at fostering global citizenship. While scholars recognize the potential impact of Islamic higher education in cultivating intercultural communication skills (Eko & Putranto, 2019; Tolchah & Mu’ammad, 2019), a critical examination of the specific mechanisms, challenges, and empirical evidence is notably absent. This literature review underscores the necessity of a deeper exploration into the nuanced interplay of tradition and innovation within Islamic higher education, supported by robust empirical data and citations.
Islamic higher education, steeped in centuries-old traditions, presents a unique educational paradigm where cultural values and religious principles intricately intertwine with the pursuit of knowledge (Fantini, 2020; Sahin, 2018). These institutions are not merely centers of learning; they embody cultural heritage and uphold religious values, shaping a distinctive educational experience.

Within this rich cultural tapestry, virtues such as tolerance, compassion, and mutual respect are intentionally interwoven into the educational fabric, aligning seamlessly with broader goals of nurturing global citizenship. However, the critical question arises: What specific mechanisms within Islamic higher education institutions translate these values into tangible skills, especially in intercultural communication?

Despite assertions about the potential impact of Islamic higher education on intercultural communication skills (Kozlovska et al., 2022), the literature remains insufficient in providing a nuanced exploration of the employed mechanisms. This raises a pressing need for empirical data that delves into the pedagogical approaches, curricular interventions, and extracurricular activities specifically contributing to the development of intercultural communication skills within the unique context of Islamic higher education.

Moreover, the literature falls short in addressing the challenges associated with this interplay. Cultural and religious dimensions may pose unique obstacles that influence the cultivation of intercultural communication skills. A comprehensive examination is required to uncover how Islamic higher education institutions navigate potential tensions between tradition and the demands of a rapidly changing global landscape.

While Sahin (2018) acknowledge the impact of Islamic higher education on intercultural communication skills, the lack of empirical evidence is glaring. The current literature is notably deficient in providing a rigorous examination of the overall effectiveness of educational practices. Robust research is essential to move beyond mere assertions and substantiate the concrete ways in which Islamic higher education contributes to the development of individuals capable of adeptly navigating diverse cultural landscapes.

In conclusion, the interplay of tradition and innovation within Islamic higher education holds immense potential for impacting intercultural communication skills. Yet, the current literature is inadequate in unraveling the intricacies of this interplay, necessitating a more profound exploration supported by empirical data and comprehensive citations. A rigorous examination is required to not only acknowledge the potential but critically assess the specific mechanisms, challenges, and empirical evidence underpinning the role of Islamic higher education in fostering global citizenship through intercultural competence.
Theoretical Frameworks in Intercultural Communication

The landscape of intercultural communication theories, predominantly established within Western contexts, has provided a foundational understanding of cross-cultural interactions (Gudykunst, 2003). However, the nuanced application of these frameworks within the distinctive context of Islamic higher education necessitates critical scrutiny and a more comprehensive examination, drawing on diverse scholarly perspectives (Kent & Taylor, 2011). This literature review rigorously evaluates the transferability of existing theories, pinpointing gaps that demand a context-specific approach and highlighting areas where a rich array of citations can contribute to a more nuanced understanding. By delving into the theoretical underpinnings, the objective is to establish a more robust and contextually informed understanding of intercultural communication within the unique realm of Islamic higher education.

Intercultural communication theory, such as those presented by Gudykunst (2003), have significantly enriched our comprehension within Western contexts. However, their application in the nuanced landscape of Islamic higher education raises pertinent questions. This literature review goes beyond a cursory examination, delving into the intricacies of existing theoretical frameworks to assess their relevance (Klyukanov, 2020). Through a critical lens, it identifies specific areas where a context-specific approach is imperative for a more accurate understanding, grounding each argument with a rich tapestry of citations from various cultural and educational perspectives (Kluver, 2000).

Gudykunst (2003) theoretical foundations, while robust, confront challenges in seamlessly translating to the intricacies of Islamic higher education. This examination aims not only to pinpoint those challenges but also to propose avenues for a more refined and culturally sensitive theoretical framework (Kozlovska et al., 2022). By critically evaluating existing theories and synthesizing diverse scholarly perspectives, this review significantly contributes to the ongoing dialogue on the adaptation and enhancement of intercultural communication frameworks within the unique dynamics of Islamic higher education.

Challenges and Opportunities in Intercultural Communication within Islamic Higher Education

Formidable barriers to effective intercultural communication, rooted in cultural stereotypes and misunderstandings, persist despite the wealth of theories presented by Gudykunst (2003). Within the distinctive context of Islamic higher education, navigating these challenges amid a rich tapestry of cultural and religious diversity introduces unique circumstances that demand tailored solutions (Klyukanov, 2020). This literature review not only highlights these challenges but goes further, providing a nuanced exploration supported by a robust array of citations.

While Gudykunst’s (2003) theory shed light on general intercultural communication
challenges, the specific nuances of Islamic higher education remain largely unexplored. This review seeks to bridge this gap by identifying challenges unique to the context, such as the intersection of cultural and religious dimensions (Fantini, 2020). Moreover, it doesn't merely point out challenges; it meticulously explores opportunities for fostering effective intercultural communication within this distinctive educational setting, all substantiated by a comprehensive array of citations (Gudykunst, 2003).

Effective strategies for the development of intercultural communication skills within Islamic higher education necessitate a profound understanding of the challenges at hand. This review not only critiques existing theories but underscores the importance of context-specific research that acknowledges the intricacies of cultural diversity within Islamic higher education (Boylan, 2006; Sahin, 2018). By doing so, it seeks to inform the development of tailored strategies grounded in empirical evidence, enhancing intercultural communication in this unique academic environment.

**Empirical Studies, Gaps and the Context of the Current Study**

A critical void in the existing literature revolves around the scarcity of rigorous empirical studies assessing the efficacy of educational practices within Islamic higher education in fostering intercultural communication skills. This literature gap persists despite tentative acknowledgments by some scholars regarding the potential impact of these practices (Kozlovska et al., 2022). However, a thorough exploration of current initiatives, their effectiveness, and the challenges encountered within this context is notably absent. The current study, conducted at Universitas Islam Internasional Darullughah Wadda’wah, addresses this gap and stands as an urgent call for empirical investigations that transcend theoretical discussions. It seeks to provide evidence-based insights into the practical impact of educational practices within the unique setting of Islamic higher education.

Within the realm of Islamic higher education, theoretical discussions abound regarding the potential impact of educational practices on intercultural communication skills (Eko & Putranto, 2019; Sahin, 2018). However, this discussion has yet to be substantiated by robust empirical evidence, leaving a conspicuous gap in our understanding of the actual effectiveness of these practices. The urgency of addressing this gap becomes even more apparent when considering the unique characteristics and challenges faced by Islamic higher education institutions. The interplay of cultural and religious dimensions within these institutions introduces complexities that demand a nuanced examination through empirical studies (Fantini, 2020; Klyukanov, 2020).

The current study, conducted at Universitas Islam Internasional Darullughah Wadda’wah, stands as a significant contribution to bridging this gap. By delving into the specifics of educational practices and their impact on intercultural communication skills within this
particular Islamic higher education institution, it aims to provide context-specific insights. This empirical approach is crucial for moving beyond theoretical conjectures and gaining a tangible understanding of the challenges and opportunities inherent in fostering intercultural communication within the unique context of Universitas Islam Internasional Darullughah Wadda’wah.

The absence of rigorous empirical studies in the broader literature underscores the pioneering nature of the current study. It is not merely an academic endeavor but a proactive step toward filling a critical void in the understanding of intercultural communication within Islamic higher education. The findings of this study are anticipated to contribute significantly to the body of knowledge, providing evidence-based recommendations for enhancing intercultural communication skills in similar academic settings.

In conclusion, while theoretical discussions have hinted at the potential impact of educational practices within Islamic higher education, the dearth of empirical studies represents a substantial gap in the literature. The current study, situated at Universitas Islam Internasional Darullughah Wadda’wah, emerges as a response to this gap, emphasizing the importance of evidence-based insights to inform educational practices and foster intercultural communication skills within the unique context of Islamic higher education.

**METHOD**

**Research Design and Participants**

This research meticulously employs a survey research design, chosen strategically for its ability to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intercultural communication skills of Islamic undergraduate students at Universitas Islam Internasional Darullughah Wadda’wah. The survey methodology is favored for its efficiency in gathering quantitative data, allowing for a nuanced exploration of multifaceted aspects related to intercultural communication within the specific academic context. This approach is selected intentionally to unravel patterns, attitudes, and perceptions among participants, offering a robust foundation for informed insights.

The participants, comprising 25 Islamic undergraduate students, are purposefully chosen from various academic programs at Universitas Islam Internasional Darullughah Wadda’wah. This deliberate selection ensures a diversity of perspectives, with participants drawn from different academic backgrounds. The strategic inclusion of participants from diverse disciplines aims to capture unique nuances in intercultural communication skills that may be influenced by specific academic contexts. A purposive sampling approach is employed to guarantee that participants possess a rich and varied range of experiences, contributing meaningfully to the study.

The selection criteria prioritize actively enrolled students, ensuring that insights are drawn from individuals currently engaged in the academic environment under
investigation. By intentionally selecting participants from diverse academic programs, the study seeks to enrich its findings by considering potential variations in intercultural communication skills across disciplines.

Instrument
The primary instrument, adapted from Simões (2020), for data collection is a meticulously designed close-ended questionnaire, structured into three distinct sections, each comprising 10 items. This questionnaire is intricately crafted to provide a detailed exploration of participants’ perceptions regarding intercultural communication skills. The first section focuses on fundamental skills, the second on contextual understanding, and the third on practical application. Each section employs a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 4, where 1 signifies “strongly disagree” and 4 represents “strongly agree”. This detailed questionnaire design is rooted in the need for a nuanced analysis of participants’ perspectives. The careful construction of sections aligns with the study’s objectives, enabling a thorough exploration of the various dimensions of intercultural communication skills. Additionally, the reliability of the questionnaire is substantiated by a high Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.872, affirming the instrument’s consistency in gauging participants’ intercultural communication skills.

Data Collection Procedure
The data collection process is marked by strategic planning and ethical considerations to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings. Participants are provided with comprehensive information about the research objectives, emphasizing the voluntary nature of their participation and the confidential treatment of their responses. Informed consent is obtained from each participant, explicitly detailing their right to withdraw from the study at any point without facing repercussions. The questionnaire administration is executed meticulously in a controlled environment, ensuring a conducive atmosphere for thoughtful responses. Clear instructions are provided to participants, and any queries are addressed promptly. The assurance of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses is reiterated to foster open and honest expression.

Data Analysis
The data analysis process adheres to methodological rigor, employing a comprehensive combination of descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including mean scores and standard deviations, are meticulously utilized to summarize participants’ responses, providing a clear and detailed snapshot of trends and patterns. In-depth inferential statistical techniques, such as correlation analysis, are employed to explore intricate relationships between variables related to intercultural communication skills. This multifaceted analysis aims to uncover nuanced insights, identifying potential areas of improvement and contributing to a deeper understanding of the participants’ intercultural communication competencies. The results are
presented comprehensively, grounded in robust statistical analysis, offering stakeholders actionable insights for informed decision-making. The detailed data analysis ensures that findings are not only statistically sound but also rich in contextual relevance, contributing substantively to the study’s objectives.

**Ethical Consideration**

Ethical considerations remain paramount throughout the study, emphasizing the respect of participants’ rights and well-being. Informed consent forms are distributed and signed by each participant, articulating the study’s purpose, voluntary nature, and the assurance of confidentiality. Participants are reminded of their right to withdraw from the study without facing any consequences. The research design prioritizes the privacy and anonymity of the participants to create a secure environment for open and honest responses. The study adheres unwaveringly to the principles of research ethics, ensuring the integrity and validity of the findings while upholding the highest standards of participant protection and respect.

**FINDINGS**

This research was undertaken with the overarching goal of deciphering the intricate landscape of intercultural communication skills within the realm of Islamic higher education. Universitas Islam Internasional Darullughah Wadda’wah served as the backdrop for this exploration, offering a unique context deeply entrenched in cultural and religious traditions. The intention was to address the existing gap in empirical evidence, seeking to unravel how Islamic higher education institutions contribute to the development of global citizens proficient in intercultural communication.

In adopting a survey as the research design, the aim was to systematically gather insights from 25 Islamic undergraduate students, chosen as representative voices from this distinct academic setting. The survey instrument, a meticulously crafted close-ended questionnaire, provided a structured approach to gauge students’ perspectives on fundamental skills, contextual understanding, and additional dimensions related to intercultural communication. The instrument’s high reliability coefficient of 0.872 attested to its consistency in capturing the nuanced views of the participants. As the survey unfolded, the focus was on navigating the specific mechanisms at play within Islamic higher education. Each section of the survey was strategically designed to unearth the complexities associated with cultivating intercultural communication skills. This approach not only probed the fundamental skills deemed essential but also delved into the broader impact of integrating global perspectives into curricula, recognizing the potential challenges posed by diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. The results of the survey are presented on the following table.

**Table 1**

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website: http://jurnal.untan.ac.id/index.php/jvip
email: jurnalvis@untan.ac.id
The table detailing fundamental skills in intercultural communication provides a nuanced insight into the perspectives of Islamic undergraduate students at Universitas Islam Internasional Darulughah Wadda’wah. Notably, a substantial majority of students (88%) express the view that understanding cultural nuances is a challenging endeavor. This finding underscores a shared recognition among participants of the intricacies involved in navigating diverse cultural landscapes, highlighting the potential complexities they perceive in intercultural interactions.

On the positive side, the students demonstrate a high level of confidence in adapting to diverse communication styles. For instance, 80% of students feel confident in adapting to diverse communication styles. Similarly, 76% of students actively seek opportunities to engage with individuals from different cultures, and 72% believe that acknowledging cultural differences is important for effective communication.

The table also reveals that participating in cultural exchange programs enriches students' understanding, with 36% expressing strong agreement. However, communicating effectively in cross-cultural situations remains challenging for many students, as indicated by the substantial number of responses indicating disagreement or strong disagreement (44% and 40%, respectively).

The table provides a comprehensive overview of the students' perspectives on various aspects of intercultural communication, offering insights into their preparedness and the complexities they anticipate in navigating diverse cultural landscapes.
communication styles, with an overwhelming 80% strongly agreeing. This suggests a prevailing self-assuredness among respondents regarding their ability to flexibly navigate and adjust their communication approaches in cross-cultural settings. Moreover, the results reveal a strong inclination towards active engagement with different cultures, as evidenced by the 72% who actively seek opportunities to interact with individuals from diverse backgrounds (Q6) and the 92% who participate in cross-cultural discussions and activities (Q10). These findings suggest a proactive approach among students, indicating an eagerness to broaden their intercultural experiences and skills.

However, it is noteworthy that a significant proportion of students (84%) find it challenging to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations (Q4). This challenges the assumption that high confidence in adapting to diverse communication styles necessarily translates to ease in practical cross-cultural communication. The complexities and difficulties highlighted in these responses point to potential areas for targeted interventions to enhance students’ proficiency in overcoming challenges associated with intercultural communication. Overall, the results provide valuable insights into the multifaceted perceptions of fundamental intercultural communication skills among Islamic higher education students.

Transitioning to the table on contextual understanding, the insights gleaned from the fundamental skills table lay the groundwork for a deeper exploration of Islamic undergraduate students’ perspectives at Universitas Islam Internasional Darullughah Wadda’wah. The high level of confidence in adapting to diverse communication styles and the proactive engagement with different cultures suggest a positive orientation towards intercultural experiences. As we delve into contextual understanding, we anticipate further nuances in how students perceive the broader implications of cultural awareness on interpersonal relationships and decision-making processes within their unique academic setting. The upcoming table promises to provide a more intricate view of how these students navigate the contextual dimensions of intercultural communication, shedding light on their consciousness of cultural differences and the adaptability of their communication styles in various social contexts.

Table 2
Contextual Understanding of Intercultural Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q11</td>
<td>I believe cultural awareness enhances</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q12 I adapt my communication style based on the cultural background of my friends. 1 (4%) 1 (4%) 7 (28%) 16 (64%)

Q13 I am conscious of cultural differences when expressing opinions in a group. 0 (0%) 1 (4%) 6 (24%) 18 (72%)

Q14 I consider cultural perspectives in decision-making processes. 0 (0%) 1 (4%) 5 (20%) 19 (76%)

Q15 I actively seek to understand the cultural context of communication. 0 (0%) 2 (8%) 7 (28%) 16 (64%)

Q16 I am aware of the cultural implications of non-verbal communication. 0 (0%) 1 (4%) 6 (24%) 18 (72%)

Q17 I recognize the influence of cultural norms on communication styles. 0 (0%) 2 (8%) 6 (24%) 17 (68%)

Q18 I believe in the importance of cultural sensitivity in written communication. 0 (0%) 1 (4%) 8 (32%) 16 (64%)

Q19 I am considerate of cultural diversity when working in teams. 0 (0%) 2 (8%) 6 (24%) 17 (68%)

Q20 I actively engage in activities that promote cultural understanding. 0 (0%) 2 (8%) 7 (28%) 16 (64%)

The table on contextual understanding provides a detailed exploration of how Islamic undergraduate students at Universitas Islam Internasional Darullughah Wadda’wah perceive the broader implications of cultural awareness in various aspects of their academic and social lives. Firstly, a significant majority (92%) of students agree or strongly agree that cultural awareness enhances interpersonal relationships (Q11). This positive sentiment suggests that students recognize the role of cultural understanding in fostering stronger connections with their peers, indicating a heightened awareness of the importance of cultural sensitivity in building meaningful relationships within the academic community.

Moving on to communication dynamics, the findings suggest a considerable inclination towards adaptability, with 64% strongly agreeing and another 28% agreeing that they adapt their communication styles based on the cultural background of their friends (Q12). This adaptable communication approach aligns with the earlier findings on fundamental skills, indicating a continuity in the students’ proactive engagement with diverse cultural contexts.
Moreover, the students demonstrate a high level of consciousness regarding cultural differences in group dynamics, decision-making processes, and non-verbal communication. Notably, 72% strongly agree that they are conscious of cultural differences when expressing opinions in a group (Q13), and a substantial 76% strongly agree that they consider cultural perspectives in decision-making processes (Q14). These findings highlight a robust awareness among students of the influence of cultural factors on group interactions and decision-making, reflecting a matured understanding of the nuanced aspects of cross-cultural communication within their academic setting. In summary, the findings illuminate a holistic perspective of contextual understanding, revealing not only a heightened awareness of cultural dynamics in interpersonal relationships but also a sophisticated sensitivity to cultural nuances in communication and decision-making contexts among Islamic undergraduate students.

Transitioning to the practical application, the insights derived from the contextual understanding table offer a comprehensive understanding of how Islamic undergraduate students at Universitas Islam Internasional Darullughah Wadda’wah perceive and navigate cultural nuances in their academic and interpersonal interactions. The high levels of agreement in recognizing the influence of cultural awareness on interpersonal relationships, communication styles, and decision-making processes lay the groundwork for a closer examination of the practical application of these cultural competencies in real-world scenarios. As we delve into the upcoming table, we anticipate gaining a deeper insight into how these students practically implement their cultural understanding, exploring their engagement in activities that promote cultural understanding and their consideration of cultural diversity when working collaboratively. The forthcoming table promises to provide a nuanced view of the tangible ways in which Islamic higher education students translate their theoretical understanding of intercultural communication into practical applications within their academic and social spheres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q21</td>
<td>I believe that intercultural communication skills are essential for personal development.</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>8 (32%)</td>
<td>16 (64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q22</td>
<td>I actively seek feedback on my intercultural</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>6 (24%)</td>
<td>17 (68%)</td>
</tr>
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communication skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q23</th>
<th>I am confident in navigating cross-cultural communication challenges.</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>17</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>(0%) (4%) (28%) (68%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Q24</td>
<td>I value the role of cultural diversity in fostering creativity and innovation.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0%) (4%) (36%) (64%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q25</td>
<td>I actively educate myself about different cultural norms and practices.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(0%) (8%) (28%) (64%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q26</td>
<td>I am aware of my cultural biases and strive to overcome them.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(0%) (4%) (28%) (68%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q27</td>
<td>I believe that cross-cultural communication is essential for global harmony.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0%) (8%) (28%) (64%)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q28</td>
<td>I actively contribute to creating an inclusive and diverse community.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0%) (4%) (32%) (64%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Q29</td>
<td>I believe that intercultural communication skills are crucial for professional success.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0%) (4%) (28%) (68%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Q30</td>
<td>I am open to constructive discussions about cultural differences in educational settings.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0%) (8%) (28%) (64%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The table on practical application sheds light on how Islamic undergraduate students at Universitas Islam Internasional Darullughah Wadda’wah actively apply their intercultural communication skills in various domains of their academic and personal lives. Notably, a resounding 96% of students (32% strongly agreeing and 64% agreeing) recognize the essential role of intercultural communication skills in personal development (Q21). This overwhelming agreement suggests a strong conviction among students that cultivating these skills is integral to their individual growth and maturation, underscoring the perceived importance of intercultural competence beyond academic realms.

In the realm of self-awareness and continuous improvement, the majority of students (68%) actively seek feedback on their intercultural communication skills (Q22), demonstrating a proactive approach to refining and enhancing their abilities. This willingness to receive constructive feedback aligns with the notion of ongoing learning and development, reflecting a commitment to self-improvement in the context of intercultural communication.
Furthermore, the findings indicate a high level of confidence among students in navigating cross-cultural communication challenges, with 68% strongly agreeing and an additional 28% agreeing (Q23). This confidence suggests a readiness and adaptability in confronting and addressing the complexities inherent in cross-cultural interactions. Additionally, a significant majority (72%) values the role of cultural diversity in fostering creativity and innovation (Q24), emphasizing a link between intercultural communication skills and the creation of an innovative and dynamic academic environment.

The findings also reveal that students actively engage in educational initiatives about different cultural norms and practices (64% agree and 28% strongly agree for Q25) and are aware of their cultural biases, striving to overcome them (68% agree and 28% strongly agree for Q26). These findings underscore a proactive approach in cultivating cultural awareness and overcoming potential biases, contributing to a more inclusive and culturally sensitive academic community. In summary, the practical application table provides a comprehensive picture of how Islamic higher education students actively apply their intercultural communication skills, emphasizing their commitment to personal growth, continuous learning, and the creation of an inclusive academic community that values diversity and innovation.

**DISCUSSION**

The findings of this research illuminate a multifaceted understanding of how Islamic undergraduate students at Universitas Islam Internasionals Darulughah Waddawah perceive and engage with intercultural communication skills within their unique academic setting. The discussion section will delve into the key themes that have emerged from the fundamental skills, contextual understanding, and practical application tables, drawing parallels with existing literature while addressing notable differences. Additionally, it will critically examine the strengths and weaknesses of the research, highlighting areas for future exploration and the broader implications of the study.

The data revealed a high level of confidence among students in adapting to diverse communication styles, aligning with the emphasis on adaptability as a fundamental skill in intercultural communication (Makhmudov, 2020; Vu, 2019). This aligns with the broader literature that underscores the importance of adaptability and flexibility in navigating cross-cultural interactions (Tolchah & Mu’ammarr, 2019). However, the challenges expressed by a significant percentage of students in effectively communicating in cross-cultural situations point to potential gaps in practical application. Previous research has similarly highlighted the difficulties in translating theoretical knowledge into practical skills (Eko & Putranto, 2019). Exploring these challenges in more depth could provide valuable insights for refining educational interventions.

The students’ strong awareness of cultural differences in group dynamics and decision-making processes aligns with the literature...
emphasizing the significance of cultural sensitivity in collaborative settings (Kim, 2017). The recognition of the influence of cultural norms on communication styles echoes previous studies highlighting the impact of cultural factors on communication behaviors (Tareva & Tarev, 2018; Vu, 2019). However, the high levels of consciousness regarding cultural differences contrast with the challenges expressed in effective cross-cultural communication, suggesting a potential disparity between theoretical knowledge and practical application. This discrepancy merits further investigation to discern the factors contributing to the observed dynamics.

The practical application of intercultural communication skills revealed through the survey reflects a positive orientation among students, with a majority actively seeking feedback, valuing cultural diversity for innovation, and contributing to creating an inclusive community. These findings resonate with literature emphasizing the importance of feedback in skill development (Illie, 2019; Kozlovska et al., 2022) and the positive impact of cultural diversity on creativity and innovation (Walker et al., 2018). However, the study also unveils areas where students may benefit from targeted interventions, such as in navigating cross-cultural communication challenges and actively engaging in activities that promote cultural understanding. These gaps align with existing research highlighting the need for more practical experiences and interventions in higher education (Simões, 2020).

Comparing these findings with previous research, parallels are evident in the overarching importance attributed to adaptability, cultural sensitivity, and the recognition of cultural diversity. The challenges expressed by students in practical application align with the broader literature highlighting the complexities of translating theoretical knowledge into real-world scenarios (Eko & Putranto, 2019; Fantini, 2020). The positive orientation towards seeking feedback and valuing cultural diversity resonates with studies emphasizing the role of continuous learning and diversity in fostering innovation (Shain, 2018; Illie, 2019). However, the specificities of the Islamic higher education context introduce unique dimensions, warranting further exploration.

The strengths of this research lie in its focus on Islamic higher education, a context often underexplored in intercultural communication studies. The use of a survey instrument allowed for the systematic collection of quantitative data, providing a comprehensive overview of students’ perceptions. However, limitations include the reliance on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias, and the potential for a limited generalization of findings due to the specific context of Universitas Islam Internasional Darulughah Wadda’wah. Additionally, the absence of qualitative insights hinders a deeper exploration of the nuances behind the quantitative responses.

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

**Conclusion**
This research contributes valuable insights into the perceptions and applications of intercultural communication skills within the unique context of Islamic higher education. While aligning with broader literature, the study uncovers nuanced challenges and strengths specific to this setting. The findings underscore the importance of targeted interventions to enhance practical application and highlight the ongoing need for research that explores the intricate interplay of cultural and religious factors within the realm of intercultural communication. This research serves as a foundation for future explorations, providing a basis for refining educational practices and fostering a more nuanced understanding of intercultural communication within Islamic higher education institutions.

Suggestions
Future research could delve into the specific mechanisms within Islamic higher education institutions that contribute to the cultivation of intercultural communication skills. Qualitative studies may offer deeper insights into the lived experiences of students, unveiling the cultural and religious nuances that shape their perceptions and behaviors. Additionally, interventions aimed at bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application could be explored, with a focus on enhancing students' abilities to navigate cross-cultural challenges effectively. Comparative studies across diverse cultural and religious contexts within higher education could provide a richer understanding of the factors influencing intercultural communication skills development.

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