



## Anthropology and Sociology: A Perspective of Undergraduate Student of Islamic Higher Education

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### ARTICLE INFO

### ABSTRACT

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**Purpose:** To better comprehend the political, social, environmental, and cultural contexts of human actions, anthropology and sociology concepts are increasingly being incorporated into various research fields. This study seeks to determine the perspectives of Islamic Higher Education sector undergraduates in Indonesia regarding incorporating anthropology and sociology concepts into Islamic education. **Research Design / Methodology / Approach:** This study employed qualitative research methods and gathered data from ten Indonesian undergraduates in the Islamic Higher education sector. For this purpose, semi-structured face-to-face interviews lasting between 40 and 50 minutes were conducted. The interviews were recorded with the participants' permission. After conducting interviews, the edited transcription version was analyzed using the NVivo software for thematic analysis.

**Findings:** Five significant themes were formulated. This study demonstrated a significant relationship between Islam and anthropology/sociology disciplines. It has helped identify the influence of Islam on various social issues and gender roles. **Originality/ Value:** This study has successfully determined the significance of incorporating religious anthropology/sociology concepts into Islamic education, thereby contributing to the originality of the current research. This study has also examined the history of anthropology/sociology studies within Islamic education from the perspective of undergraduate students, thereby enhancing its effectiveness.

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## 1. Introduction

In addition to emphasizing the relationship between humans and their creator, Islamic teachings also emphasize the social ties of individuals with others and the relationship between humans and their environment. Accordingly, Islamic teachings are comprehensive and encompass all aspects of human existence. [Rostam and Malim \(2021\)](#) identify two fundamental sources of Islamic teachings as the Quran and Hadith, with the Quran as the primary source of education and Hadith assisting in interpreting Quranic teachings. The extraordinary mission of Islamic education is to convey ideas for resolving conflicts and establishing a peaceful social existence for humans. Therefore, these teachings are pertinent to the social system because they provide legitimacy to the existing social system and serve as the system's controller ([Arifina, Agussanib, & Rudianto, 2020](#)). In addition, the anthropological approach is one of the most important methods in religious studies, as it seeks to comprehend religion by examining spiritual practices that develop within human society. In Islamic teachings, Hujviri's perspective attempted to analyze anthropological issues in depth, and his teachings of anthropology from the Islamic perspective summed up all of the ideas and concepts of medieval thought ([Manullang, 2020](#)). Hujviri's teachings are primarily influenced by Islamic anthropological perspectives on gnoseological and ontological issues. In addition, Ibn-Khaldun and Al-Biruni were eminent Muslim scholars who taught sociological and anthropological knowledge and traced their origins to Islamic history ([Al-Qurtuby, 2021](#)).

It has been determined that the adopted education system in Indonesia adheres to the dualistic instruction system. For example, the modern Islamic education system consists of pesantren (boarding institutions) and madrasahs governed solely by the Ministry of religious education. In addition, Indonesia has a secular education system that adheres to modern educational traditions ([Hidayat et al., 2020](#)). Incorporating secular paradigms was associated with negative outcomes for Muslim students, such as opening the door to atheism, eroding religious values, and spreading moral decay ([Hidayat et al., 2020](#)). Therefore, there is an urgent need to integrate Islamic teachings into the educational system so that student's character can be formed through Islamic education. Existing studies have emphasized integrating Islamic values in science and social science education ([Darmana, 2012](#); [Taşkın, 2014](#)). Motivated by these studies, this paper investigates the integration of Islamic teachings related to anthropological and sociological learning from undergraduate students' perspectives in Indonesia's Islamic higher education. This study aims to determine the relationship between Islamic teachings and anthropology and sociology concepts, investigate the role of Islamic education on social issues and gender roles within the context of anthropology and sociology studies, and make recommendations for incorporating religious anthropology/sociology concepts into Islamic education.

This research contributes to the anthropology and sociology of Islamic teachings in a novel way, thereby extending the relevant body of literature. In addition, few studies analyze Islamic sociological and anthropological teachings from the perspective of undergraduates. In addition, this study's other original contribution is the geographical context (i.e., Indonesia), where few studies have addressed this issue. Consequently, this study has significant ramifications, as students' comprehension of the Islamic perspective on sociology and anthropology can potentially alter the development of social relations in Indonesian society. According to the Islamic perspective, the awakening of Islamic

civilization in Indonesia is associated with the growing knowledge of social relations (Manullang, 2020). In addition, this study offers significant implications for practitioners and policymakers in the Indonesian educational sector by emphasizing the importance of empowering students' social and anthropological perspectives by enhancing their Islamic knowledge.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

Since 1977, when the first World Conference on Muslim Education was convened, numerous attempts have been made to define Islamic education. In addition, the most sophisticated approach to describing Islamic education was Al- Attas (Al-Attas & Ashraf, 1979), which many Western countries have adopted; for instance, Halstead (2004) has written about various features of recreational education in Islam, which were based on critical inquiry (Sahin, 2018). Nevertheless, applying anthropology and sociology in Islamic education is a crucial study area. As evidence to support the current research, the researcher has utilized the non-Western "Southern Theory" proposed by Connell in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which challenged Western dominance (Ahmed, 2018). According to Connell, the historical roots of Islamic sociological thought should be acknowledged, and it is of no use to return to classical Muslim scholars such as Ibn-Khaldun, the forerunner of sociology, and Al-Biruni, the predecessor of anthropology because their approach fails to produce modern social thought. Despite this, Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd's approach merits consideration because they made numerous contributions to medicine and philosophy.

### 2.2 Anthropology in Islamic Education

Anthropology is the study of the synthesis of humans; that is, anthropology is the study of how humans came to be (American Anthropological Association, 2023). Those who study anthropology are known as anthropologists and take a holistic approach to various aspects of the human experience. Anthropology aims to examine the past with the aid of archeology to determine how people lived hundreds or thousands of years ago and what was essential to their existence. Figure 1 explains that anthropology can also be defined as the study of the complex development of humans, including cultural and biological complexities from primordial times to the present (Anderson, 2023). Adding anthropology to Islamic education should be the subject of considerable inquiry.



Figure 1. Stages of human development according to anthropologists (Anderson, 2023)

According to the research and publications of Clifford Geertz's 1968 book *Islam Observed* (Geertz, 1968), adding anthropology to Islam is a significant field of study (Mahmood & Landry, 2020). In addition, Geertz's publication argues that the religious lives of individuals with Islamic experiences in Morocco and Indonesia should be compared. Consequently, anthropology is a distinct research discipline within Islamic education. According to research (Zheng, 2013) based on the biological anthropology of Chinese Muslims, the Hui people are one of the widely dispersed communities that the Chinese consider Muslim. In China, the origin of the Hui people is a topic of extensive debate and a significant area of study. In addition, Islam is believed to have been introduced to China during the Tang Dynasty roughly 1400 years ago. Since then, many merchants, soldiers, and other people from Arabia and Central Asia have migrated to China, possibly via the Silk Road (Gladney, 1998). It is believed that the Hui people, also known as Chinese Muslims, are the descendants of these migrants (Wang et al., 2019). In addition, the genetic variation of the Hui Y-chromosome indicates that they are the descendants of Asian immigrants who dwelt in China. Nevertheless, it provides a significant link between anthropology and Islam, the subject of this literature.

### 2.3 Sociology in Islamic Education

Sociology studies social relationships among humans (Department of Sociology, n.d.). Sociology covers various topics, including crime, religion, family and state, social classes, racial divisions, shared cultural beliefs, social stability, and radical societal change. In addition, sociology seeks to comprehend how neighboring social and cultural structures influence human activities and behavior based on these sociological approaches. Figure 2 depicts sociology as the empirical study of society, which involves the patterns of social relationships, culture, and social interaction (Hassan, 2022). Therefore, researchers should examine the application of sociology in Islamic education in greater depth.



Figure 2. Visual Definition of Sociology (Hassan, 2022)

To achieve a peaceful and predictable socialization, it is necessary to work on the perception of saving our faces and the faces of others, as proposed by sociologist Ervin Goffman among Southeast Asian nations in 1967 (Nair, 2019). This is because, in our daily lives, we interact with various people who adhere to various religions and cultures. Therefore, the relationship between sociology and Islam is a significant concern because it

illuminates social issues and teaches people how to interact with one another and respect their cultural norms and values. Sociology is essential to religious survival. According to research (Ahmadi et al., 2018), it is plausible to assume that religion is more accessible to strongly religiously oriented people whose orientation is influenced by how their culture interacts with religion. In addition, it can be observed that people who turn to their religion during a crisis do so because, according to their socio-cultural context, religion is the best way to handle calamity situations. Religion is a great source of coping for those who lack adequate alternatives (religion's prominence in individuals' cultural socialization). This emphasizes the significance of sociology in Islam, the focus of the present research.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Research Approach

Research methodology is essential for determining crucial data collection and analysis steps (Patel & Patel, 2019). In light of the exploratory nature of the proposed objectives, interpretivism was chosen as the guiding philosophy for this investigation. This study focuses primarily on undergraduate students' perceptions regarding anthropology and sociology in Islamic education; consequently, an inductive methodology was utilized, as it integrates "specific to general reasoning."

Even though both quantitative and qualitative research is conducted extensively in sociology. However, this research focuses on undergraduate students' concepts, beliefs, and ideas regarding anthropology and sociology in Islamic education, so the qualitative method (Busetto, Wick, & Gumbinger, 2020) was employed. In addition, this was a cross-sectional study.

#### 3.2. Population and Sampling

The population of a research study is referred to as the intended audience, and it is selected based on the specified objectives. Therefore, the population for this research consists of undergraduates from the Islamic Higher Education sector in Indonesia. Due to limited resources and time constraints, it was inconvenient for the researcher to collect data from such a large population; therefore, random sampling (Berndt, 2020) was employed, and a sample of 10 undergraduate students was chosen to collect the necessary data.

#### 3.3. Data Collection Process

Sociology uses various data collection methods, including surveys and interviews. Nonetheless, non-statistical primary data were collected for this study to address the proposed research objectives. Interviews with a semi-structured format were conducted for this purpose. There were face-to-face interviews with the selected respondents. Each interview lasted between forty and fifty minutes. The interviews were recorded with the participants' written consent.

- *Semi-structured Interviews*

For this study, seven semi-structured interview questions were developed to fulfill the research objectives. Past literature was taken into consideration for the development of these interview questions. Thus, the formulated semi-structured interview questions for this study are presented below:

1. What do you know regarding the history of anthropology/ sociology studies within Islamic education?
2. In your opinion, how do Islamic teachings associate with anthropology and sociology concepts?
3. How do anthropology and sociology contribute to Islamic education's cultural beliefs and practices?
4. In your opinion, how do anthropology and sociology in Islamic education help in highlighting social issues?
5. In your opinion, how does Islam impact gender roles in society?
6. In your opinion, how does incorporating Islamic teachings in anthropology and sociology studies help influence societies?
7. How can religious anthropology/ sociology concepts be merged in Islamic education?

### 3.4. Data Analysis

For this investigation, qualitative analysis was performed. Therefore, after collecting the edited transcriptions of the conducted interviews, they were effectively analyzed using the NVivo software (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018, key codification and key themes were identified, and a thematic analysis was performed).

## 4. Results

After the codification of collected data via NVivo, important themes (figure 3) were formulated for thematic analysis, which are presented below:

- Theme I: History of Anthropology/ Sociology Studies
- Theme II: Association between Islam and Anthropology/ Sociology Studies
- *Theme IIa: Cultural Beliefs and Practices*
- Theme III: Social issues
- *Theme IIIa: Gender Roles*
- Theme IV: Social Impact of Islamic Teachings
- Theme V: Religious Anthropology/ Sociology Concepts

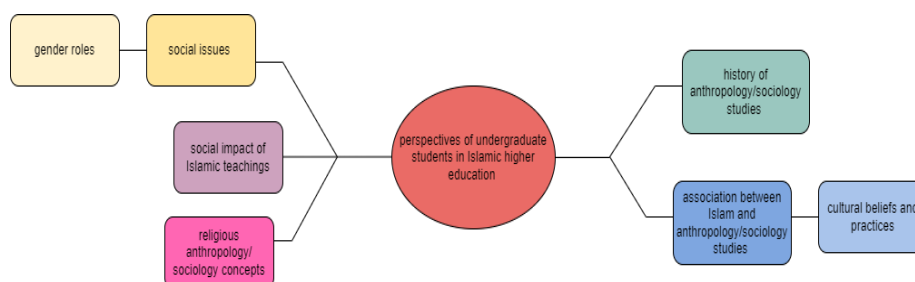


Figure 3. Mind map of thematic analysis

### 4.1. Thematic Analysis

- *Theme I: History of Anthropology/ Sociology Studies*

Six respondents believed anthropology and sociology had contributed significantly to Islamic education throughout history. They believed that social ethics and Sharia (Islamic

Law), which govern moral values and social norms, are the primary focus of Islamic education. One of the respondents, while discussing the history of anthropology/sociology studies in Islamic education, stated:

*"Well, we have studied a lot about anthropology/ sociology in Islamic education. The work of Ibn Khaldun personally inspires me. He greatly contributed to sociology, historiography, demography, and economics studies."*

It has been observed that incorporating anthropology and sociology into higher education has contributed to developing essential cultural and social values among students, resulting in effective outcomes.

- *Theme II: Association between Islam and Anthropology/ Sociology Studies*

According to eight respondents, there is a significant relationship between Islam and anthropology/sociology studies. They believed Islam concentrates primarily on promoting social justice and reducing inequality, consistent with sociological concepts such as power dynamics and social inequality. In addition, Islam stresses the importance of symbols and prayers in fostering group cohesion. Nevertheless, anthropology studies advocate concepts of collective memory, belonging, and social identity. Regarding this, one of the respondents stated:

*"In my opinion, Islamic teachings are essential in providing an ethical framework for improving the social and individual behavior of the people. "*

Nevertheless, social and ethical norms are also emphasized in anthropology/sociology studies, demonstrating a close connection between these fields and Islam.

- *Theme IIa: Cultural Beliefs and Practices*

Five respondents indicated that anthropology and sociology concepts significantly contribute to Islamic cultural beliefs and practices. According to them, these concepts aid in analyzing the historical, political, economic, and social factors considerably influencing Islamic practices and beliefs. One of the respondents, while emphasizing the contribution of anthropology and sociology concepts to Islamic education, stated:

*"I believe that anthropology and sociology concepts contribute to the cultural adaptation process in Islam."*

These concepts assist in identifying the areas within the context of cultural beliefs that require modification. In addition, Islamic teachings emphasize socialization within diverse communities, which contributes to the formation of moral, cultural, and religious identities; this justifies the incorporation of sociology concepts into Islamic education.

- *Theme III: Social Issues*

Seven respondents agreed that including anthropology and sociology in Islamic education helps shed light on social issues. Respondents believed sociology assists in identifying the dynamics of social life, such as power relations, inequality, and others. Incorporating these elements into Islamic education could, therefore, effectively address various social issues, such as economic disparities, social discrimination, and gender inequality, among others. Regarding this, one of the respondents stated:

*"Integrating social aspects in Islamic education has helped me understand social issues, such as gender inequalities. I have experienced this issue personally to relate more effectively."*

Incorporating anthropology and sociology concepts has also effectively fostered open dialogue among students, which has assisted them in identifying significant social issues. This strategy has also been successful in fostering empathy among them.

- *Theme IIIa: Gender Roles*

Islam has played a significant role in influencing gender roles in society. Four respondents have emphasized the importance of Islamic education in this context extensively. They believed that in Islam, men and women are accountable to Allah for their actions. However, various scholars and researchers have presented their theories in this context, emphasizing men's role as household protectors. At the same time, women are viewed as family caregivers. One respondent asserted, in the context of gender roles:

*"As far as Islamic teachings are concerned, they promote equality among men and women. In certain cases, both men and women are given privileges accordingly."*

Additionally, different cultural and social values are also considered to play an essential role in influencing the roles of gender in society.

- *Theme IV: Social impact of Islamic teachings*

When asked about the impact of Islamic teachings in anthropology and sociology studies, seven respondents stated that incorporating Islamic teachings in anthropology and sociology studies could influence society significantly. The respondents believed this approach would effectively promote inclusion and brotherhood among diverse cultures, promoting peace and prosperity worldwide. Moreover, in this regard, one of the respondents stated:

*"Integrating Islamic teachings in sociology/ anthropology studies can effectively promote a deeper and valuable understanding of Islamic practices and values."*

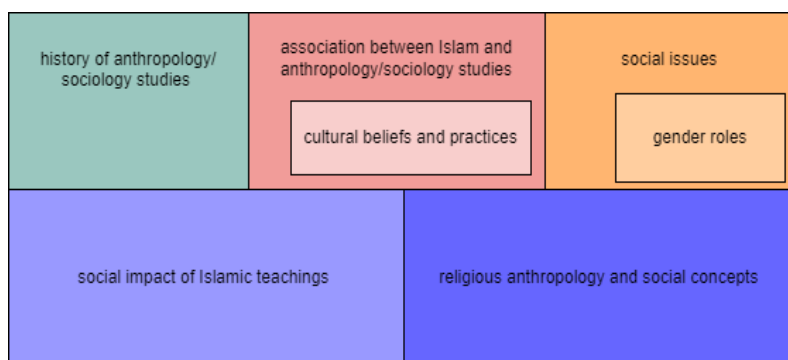
It is also believed that Islamic teachings have a significant impact on communal and individual identities. Integrating these teachings into anthropology and sociology studies can also enhance Muslims' sense of self-efficacy, as they will be acknowledged within the academic discourse.

- *Theme V: Religious anthropology/ sociology concepts*

According to six respondents, incorporating religious anthropology and sociology concepts into Islamic education could help students comprehend Islam's influence on society. In this regard, these respondents provided differing recommendations. To better comprehend the roles of men and women in society, one respondent argued that more gender studies should be conducted from various socio-cultural perspectives, with Islam's teachings in mind. Simultaneously, another respondent stated:

*"Well, I think more focus should be given to the historical evaluation of Islamic teachings within the context of anthropology and sociology studies to understand better different social, political, environmental, and other related issues."*

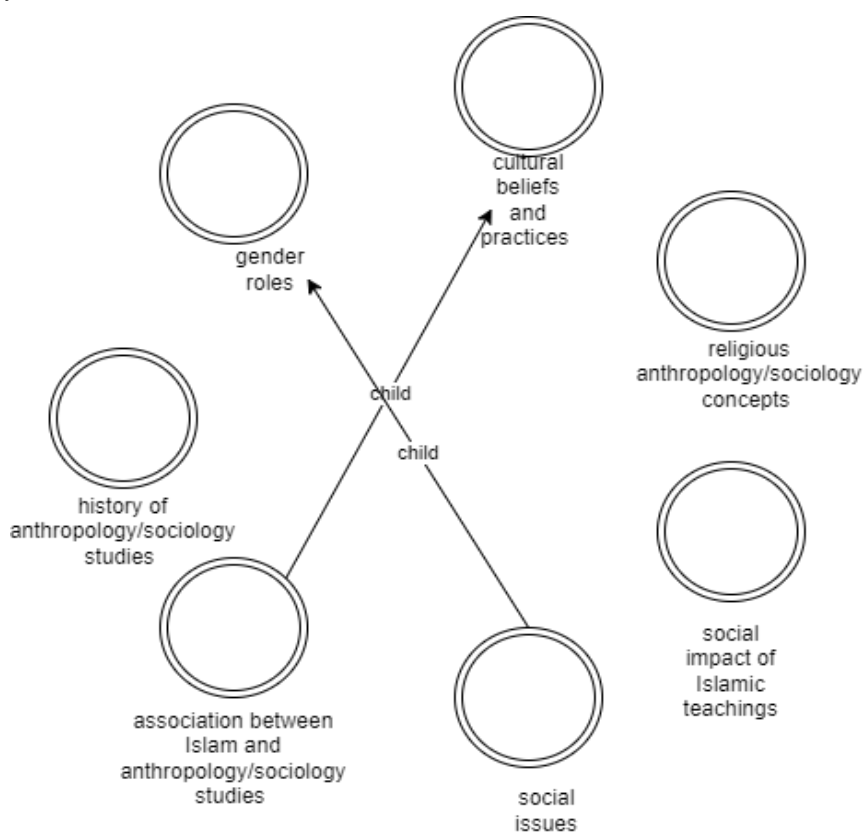




**Figure 4.** Treemap of thematic analysis

Most respondents also recommended promoting open discussions to determine other related issues.

Figures 4 and 5 represent the treemap and project map for the conducted thematic analysis.



**Figure 5.** Project map

## 5. Discussion

The study's research objectives were discussed in depth to advance the investigation. As the primary purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between Islamic teachings and anthropology and sociology concepts, this was the first objective. According to the analysis of the study, it was determined that sociology and anthropology studies had historically contributed to Islamic education. Ibn-Khaldun's significant contributions to historiography, sociology, economics, and demography, as well as his influential work, were highlighted to emphasize his significant contribution to these fields of study. Regarding Islam, a significant relationship between anthropology and sociology concepts was identified. Respondents emphasized that to reduce inequality, social justice must be eliminated according to various sociological approaches, such as social inequalities and power dynamics. In addition, they demonstrated the relevance of anthropology and sociology to Islam by emphasizing prayers and symbols to promote group cohesion that emphasizes belonging, collective memory, and social identity, as described in anthropology.

In addition, the second purpose of the study was "to investigate the role of Islamic education on social issues and gender roles within the context of anthropology and sociology studies."

According to the study's analysis and respondents' opinions, it was determined that it was necessary to comprehend anthropology and sociology studies to comprehend the significance of anthropology and sociology concepts within the Islamic context. These concepts aid in investigating the economic, political, historical, and social factors, beliefs, and practices of Islam and in gaining a thorough understanding of them. Sociology elucidated the social dynamics involving societal challenges, inequalities, and power relations. Students can better recognize and address several social issues by integrating these elements into Islamic education. Incorporating these studies and concepts into Islamic education has facilitated open dialogue between students. In addition, students are encouraged to conduct in-depth analyses and demonstrate comprehension of these social issues. Respondents acknowledged the significant role that Islamic education plays in shaping gender roles in this society. In addition, they have acknowledged that various researchers and scholars have presented their perspectives on gender roles within the context of Islam. Numerous arguments have been presented, as women are viewed as family nurturers and males as family protectors. In addition to societal norms and religious teachings, social and cultural values exert influence on gender roles within society, reflecting the complex interplay that exists between the two.

In addition, the third objective of the study was "To provide recommendations for incorporating religious anthropology/sociology concepts into Islamic education." According to the respondents, incorporating Islamic teachings and sociology and anthropology studies has a significant social impact. According to them, this integration contributes to global prosperity and peace and can cultivate brotherhood and inclusiveness among different cultures. This method can facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the Muslim community by emphasizing the significance of Islamic values and practices. In sociology and anthropology disciplines, the social impact of these Islamic teachings extends far beyond the academic realm. The importance of incorporating religious sociology and anthropology concepts into Islamic education has been identified as the

primary focus of respondents seeking a comprehensive understanding of Islam's role. Recommendations were made to investigate the role of women and males in a society based on Islamic teachings. In addition, Islamic education and its historical evaluation within sociology and anthropology contexts were observed to comprehend their impact on political, social, and environmental issues. Open discussions were encouraged as a valuable method for investigating other matters. Therefore, Islamic education can comprehensively understand Islamic ideas and their relevance to societal dynamics.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be stated that the study's primary purpose was to investigate students' various perspectives regarding the incorporation of sociology and anthropology into Islamic higher education in Indonesia. The students' beliefs, ideas, and related concepts were identified. Despite this, several significant themes emerged when analyzing the study's findings. Regarding Islamic education, the historical contributions of sociology and anthropology studies were investigated. Students acknowledged this connection between Islam and these disciplines, emphasizing the promotion and significance of social justice and symbols in addition to prayers to cultivate group cohesion. In addition, the study highlighted the contributions of sociology and anthropology and their concepts in terms of cultural practices and beliefs. The social impact of incorporating Islamic teachings into sociology and anthropology studies was observed. In a nutshell, valuable insights regarding curriculum development were provided, and further research was conducted using comprehensive approaches in the modern world.

## 7. Research Implications

As far as the current study is concerned, there are many theoretical and practical implications. A few are mentioned below:

### 7.1. Theoretical Implications

The study has the following theoretical implications: To explore the perspectives of undergraduate students, the study emphasized the significance of qualitative research methodologies. Moreover, interviews were used to investigate the perspectives of individuals regarding Islamic education in the context of Anthropology and Sociology. This narrative supports the value of qualitative research to illustrate the complexity and richness of student perspectives and experiences.

The study's findings also contribute to the theoretical comprehension of the relationship between Islam and Anthropology and Sociology concepts. Connections between these disciplines, such as social inequalities, power dynamics, and social justice, demonstrate the theoretical alignment between these studies. These implications for theoretical frameworks shed light on how Islamic teachings influence values and behaviors.

Regarding Islamic education, the perspectives of "Sociology" and "Anthropology" combine to foster interdisciplinary approaches. Students are encouraged to evaluate and query societal norms, cultivate analytic skills, and engage in research (Susanto et al., 2022). In addition, this method can cultivate a generation of students who can challenge prevailing norms, think critically, and contribute to the growth of Islamic education knowledge.

## 7.2. Practical Implications

The study has the following practical implications: The significance of dialogue and frank discussions can be highlighted by the study. Educators can facilitate this dialogue by creating a welcoming and secure learning environment where all students can engage in respectful conversations.

These sociology and anthropology studies emphasize the significance of diversity and inclusiveness in society and aid in incorporating these perspectives into Islamic education (Wekke & Hamid, 2013). Students will be exposed to various Muslim community traditions, customs, cultural practices, and points of view, which is a positive outcome. Consequently, this can promote empathy, tolerance, and appreciation of diversity. In addition to emphasizing the study's practical value and its holistic comprehension of Islam's place in society, Ismail, Ali, and Us (2022) emphasized its ability to integrate diverse knowledge and its practical relevance.

## 8. Research Limitations

Regarding the current investigation, there are numerous limitations. Several are listed below:

In addition to numerous regional and cultural distinctions, it has been noted that Indonesia is a diverse nation. Nevertheless, the applicability of sociological and anthropological concepts varies across communities and regions (Bali & Musrifah, 2020). Therefore, It is necessary to evaluate these cultural factors to incorporate these perspectives into Islamic education.

In the context of Islamic Education in Indonesia, sociology and anthropology studies may be limited in terms of resources and available resources. This absence of relevant studies and literature may pose a significant barrier to further research into the intersection of these disciplines with Islamic education. According to Ismail et al. (2022), aligning with the curriculum, ensuring teacher training, and overcoming logistical challenges may be time-consuming and difficult.

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