



THE KEY TO BUILDING A HARMONY AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

Paulus Widjanarko¹⁾, Hartono²⁾, Eka Titi Andaryani³⁾ Saiful Fallah⁴⁾ Irma Yuliana⁵⁾

Slamet Riyadi University, Semarang State University, Semarang State University, Slamet Riyadi University

1.pauludwiwiet@gmail.com, 2.hartono@mail.unnes.ac.id, 3.Ekatitiandaryani@gmail.com

fallah.saiful@students.unnes.ac.id

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<p>Received: June 8th 2024 Accepted: July 6th 2024</p>	<p><i>Multicultural education is an educational approach that is very relevant in an increasingly diverse global society. This approach not only focuses on the transfer of knowledge, but also on the formation of values and attitudes that support harmonious interaction between various cultures. The main goal of multicultural education is to enrich students' learning experiences through exposure to various perspectives and traditions, improve social skills, prepare students for the global market, and reduce prejudice and discrimination. Implementation of multicultural education can be done through inclusive curriculum development, teacher training, intercultural dialogue, and fair and inclusive evaluation. Despite facing several challenges such as communal resistance and limited resources, the importance of multicultural education in creating a more inclusive and just society cannot be ignored. The success of this implementation requires commitment and cooperation from various parties in society, including the government, educational institutions, teachers, parents and students themselves. Multicultural education is not only a necessity but also an investment for a more peaceful and productive future amidst global diversity.</i></p>

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INTRODUCTION

In this era of globalization, society is becoming increasingly heterogeneous with cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity intersecting every day. These social dynamics pose significant challenges and opportunities, especially in the educational context. Education, as one of the main pillars of character and knowledge formation, is required to respond to this diversity with effective and inclusive strategies. One of these strategies is multicultural education, which not only aims to educate but also to build bridges of understanding and tolerance between individuals from various backgrounds. The existence of a religiously stable environment supports local economic development by creating conditions conducive to investment and economic cooperation between religious communities. Apart from that, in the era of globalization, the positive image of religious harmony can also increase the attractiveness of religious tourism and create opportunities for mutually beneficial international cooperation. (Fajri, 2023)

Multicultural education is an approach that integrates various cultural, ethnic and social perspectives into the curriculum and learning practices to develop sensitivity and appreciation for plurality. This approach challenges monolithic views and the promotion of homogeneity, replacing them with a recognition of the richness and complexity of human social reality. Intercultural communication is one of the fields of study in communication science. Intercultural communication as a formal object that has become a field of study in a science has theories. These theories have the power to discuss intercultural humanitarian issues which specifically generalize the concept of communication between communicators and communicants of different cultures and discuss the influence of culture on communication activities. (Wicaksono & Setiawan, 2023) Through multicultural education, students are taught to respect diversity as a strength and not as a source of conflict.

In an increasingly globalized world and changing demographics, societies around the world are experiencing an increase in intercultural interactions. This phenomenon has significant implications for the education system, which plays an important role in preparing the young generation to become competent and empathetic world citizens. Along with social change and international migration, schools are becoming multicultural environments where students from diverse backgrounds come together. The presence of this diversity creates an urgent need for an education system that not only accommodates diversity but also actively promotes understanding and respect for differences. Multicultural education emerged as a response to this need, aiming to educate students in a spirit of inclusivity and mutual respect. This approach supports effective social and personal integration and students' preparation for work and life in a pluralistic society. When individuals or groups adopt exclusive attitudes, they tend to reject or ostracize people who have different religious beliefs or practices. This creates divisions in society and destroys harmony between religious communities. Meanwhile, intolerant attitudes worsen the situation by refusing to respect and recognize the diversity of

religious beliefs and practices. This creates tension and prejudice among members of society, complicating efforts to build interfaith dialogue and understanding. (Noor, 2023)

METHOD

In research on multicultural education, the methodology used must be able to explore and understand the complexity of issues related to education in culturally diverse contexts. The following are details of the methodology that can be used: This research uses a qualitative research design, which is more suitable for understanding individual perceptions, experiences and attitudes towards multicultural education. Qualitative methods allow researchers to explore social contexts and interactions in diverse educational settings. Data Collection: In-depth Interviews: Conduct interviews with teachers, students, and school staff to gain in-depth insight into their experiences and perceptions regarding multicultural education. Classroom Observation: Observing classroom interactions and school activities to see the implementation of multicultural education practices directly. Document Study: Analyze school documents such as curriculum, lesson plans, and school policies to understand how multicultural principles are integrated. The data collected will be analyzed using thematic analysis to identify the main themes that emerge from the data. This analysis will help explore patterns related to the implementation and effectiveness of multicultural education, as well as the challenges faced by participants. To ensure the reliability and validity of research results, researchers will use data triangulation, namely comparing results from various sources and data collection methods. Apart from that, member checking, namely getting feedback from participants about the findings obtained, will also be carried out to increase the credibility of the research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of multicultural education is not without challenges. Resistance from communities unfamiliar with diversity, lack of resources, and lack of adequate training for teachers are some of the obstacles frequently encountered. Apart from that, there are also structural and ideological problems that may hinder the implementation of truly inclusive and effective education. Therefore, understanding the background and dynamics that influence multicultural education is important to develop strategies that can overcome these obstacles and maximize the potential of education in building a more harmonious and productive society. In managing diversity, it is hoped that it can achieve sustainable peace and be accompanied by supporting matters for this diversity. This is supported by various rules such as laws, government regulations, conventions, policies, contracts, habits and customs of society. In this section, the results of research on multicultural education will be presented and discussed based on data that has been collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document study. This discussion will explore findings from research and connect them with existing literature to provide deeper insight into the dynamics and challenges of multicultural education.

Implementation of a Multicultural Curriculum: Most schools have tried to integrate multicultural aspects in their curriculum, but the level of implementation varies significantly. Effective implementation is often hampered by a lack of resources and teacher training. This is in accordance with literature which shows that multicultural education requires significant investment in teacher professional development. Student Responses to Multicultural Education: Students demonstrate increased awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity. This shows that a multicultural approach can increase empathy and tolerance among students, which is in accordance with multicultural education theory which emphasizes the importance of understanding and respecting diversity. Challenges in Implementation: The main challenges schools face include resistance from some communities, as well as logistical and financial challenges in providing inclusive learning materials. These challenges reflect the need for stronger policy strategies and support from all stakeholders to overcome barriers to the implementation of multicultural education.

In the discussion, we relate these findings to theoretical frameworks and previous studies that demonstrate the benefits and barriers of multicultural education. Some key points in discussion include: Effectiveness of Multicultural Education: Research shows that effective multicultural education requires more than just curriculum changes; it also requires changes in teaching practices and schools' attitudes toward diversity. This requires a holistic approach involving the entire school community. In describing its effectiveness, several key aspects need to be considered:

a. Cognitive Aspect

Effective multicultural education helps students understand and appreciate different perspectives and experiences. This includes students' ability to understand the history, values, and belief systems of different cultures and their worldview. Students also learn about social inequalities and how they manifest in various cultural and social contexts.

b. Social Aspects

From a social perspective, successful multicultural education creates an inclusive and supportive learning environment, where all students feel valued and understood. Such an environment encourages positive interactions between students from different backgrounds, helping to build wider social networks and reducing intergroup conflict. Effectiveness in this aspect can also be seen from reducing incidents of discrimination and prejudice.

c. Emotional Aspect

The effectiveness of multicultural education also involves students' emotional aspects, where they feel more confident and open to diversity. This includes the development of empathy, where students not only understand but also feel the experiences of others, which can contribute to better moral and ethical development.

d. Behavioral Aspects

At a behavioral level, the effectiveness of multicultural education can be measured through the level of student participation in activities that promote diversity, such as multicultural clubs, classroom activities that involve intercultural collaboration, and projects that involve the broader community. Student behavior in applying multicultural principles in everyday life is also an important indicator.

e. Curriculum Implementation and Teacher Training

The effectiveness of multicultural education also depends on how well the curriculum is designed to include diverse material and how teachers are trained to manage and teach in diverse classrooms. Adequate teacher training in multicultural education is essential to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to implement the curriculum effectively.

f. Evaluation and Feedback

Ongoing evaluation of multicultural education programs and feedback from students, teachers, and parents is vital to measure effectiveness and make necessary adjustments. Comprehensive evaluation methods help detect areas needing improvement and ensure that multicultural education goals are achieved. Institutional Policies and Support: Research results confirm the need for strong institutional support, including policies that support multicultural practices and investments in training and resources. This research recommends the development of national guidelines for multicultural education that schools can adapt to meet their local needs.

This research makes an important contribution to our understanding of multicultural education, highlighting successes and difficulties in its implementation, and offering guidance for improving existing practices. Through in-depth analysis, this research paves the way for further studies that can answer unsolved questions and help optimize multicultural education in an increasingly diverse global context. Indonesia is a country that has very rich ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. However, this diversity is also a challenge in building a harmonious and inclusive society. Conflict and discrimination often occur due to these differences

CONCLUSION

This research examines various important aspects of multicultural education, with the following main conclusions: Multicultural education is essential for forming inclusive attitudes and intercultural understanding in students. Preparing students to be successful in the global market and become empathetic and responsible participants in a pluralistic society. The benefit is to increase students' empathy and tolerance for differences. Reduce prejudice and promote harmonious coexistence. Resistance from the community, lack of resources, and teacher training needs. Requires strong institutional support and supportive policies. As well as increasing efforts to develop and implement multicultural education practices. Providing regular training for teachers, developing a more inclusive curriculum, carrying out more community involvement. broad in Education. Multicultural education is an important need in an increasingly diverse society. With a comprehensive approach and good strategies, multicultural education can help build a more just and inclusive society.

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