

TOWARD AN INCLUSIVE INDONESIA: SOLUTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia, a country with rich cultural diversity, has great potential to serve as a model for the implementation of multicultural education. The diversity of ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup relations (SARA) is a national treasure, but it also poses a potential for conflict if not managed properly. Multicultural education offers a solution to address this potential conflict and build a more harmonious and inclusive Indonesian society. The research method used in this study to identify solutions for implementing multicultural education is descriptive qualitative research, specifically in the context of a literature review. A literature review is the initial stage of research that involves investigating and evaluating previous studies relevant to the current research topic. Its primary objectives are to provide a theoretical framework, define the scope of the research, and identify research gaps that need to be addressed. Solutions for enhancing multicultural education include integrating multicultural educational content into all subjects, providing training for educators, fostering a multicultural culture within schools, encouraging community participation, and utilizing interactive teaching methods. Indonesia, as a country with rich cultural diversity, has great potential to serve as a model for the implementation of multicultural education. The implementation of multicultural education in Indonesian schools faces a number of fairly complex challenges. Promoting Intercultural Dialogue: Teachers can create a classroom environment that promotes dialogue and intercultural exchange.

Keywords: Education, Multicultural, Inclusive

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A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as a country with rich cultural diversity, has great potential to serve as a model for the implementation of multicultural education. The diversity of ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup relations (SARA) is a national treasure, but it also poses a potential for conflict if not managed properly. Multicultural education offers a solution to address these potential conflicts and build a more harmonious and inclusive Indonesian society.

Inclusive multicultural education currently faces various challenges, such as a lack of teacher readiness, an unresponsive curriculum, and stereotypes. Multicultural education is an effort to acknowledge, appreciate, and celebrate cultural diversity within an educational context. Meanwhile, “inclusive” means creating a learning environment that is open and accessible to all students, regardless of their background. The two are interrelated, with multicultural education serving as the foundation for creating an inclusive learning environment.

Multicultural education aims to instill the values of tolerance, mutual respect, and appreciation for differences from an early age. Through multicultural education, it is hoped that students will understand and appreciate diversity, cultivate a spirit of tolerance, develop social skills, and become good citizens. Although the importance of multicultural education has been recognized, its implementation in Indonesian schools still faces various challenges, including: a lack of

understanding of the concept of multiculturalism, a lack of relevant teaching materials, a lack of support from the school environment, and a lack of awareness regarding the importance of multicultural education.

Given the importance of multicultural education and the challenges faced, comprehensive solutions are needed to improve the quality of multicultural education implementation in Indonesian schools. These solutions include developing an inclusive curriculum, providing teacher training, making relevant teaching materials available, and involving all stakeholders in efforts to realize effective multicultural education.

Multicultural education is an educational reform movement aimed at eliminating oppression and injustice in society. In the context of Islamic education, multiculturalism is not only about recognizing diversity but also about developing uniqueness and excellence in responding to societal developments.

Multicultural education is a progressive approach aimed at eliminating oppression and injustice in society through the process of recognizing human dignity. In the context of Indonesia—a nation rich in diverse cultures and religions—multicultural education is highly relevant. The Indonesian nation, with its motto “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika” (unity in diversity), faces a major challenge in transforming cultural differences into assets rather than sources of division.

Some of the main challenges in implementing multicultural education in Indonesia include: (1) unequal access to education for marginalized and minority groups, (2) limited curriculum content that emphasizes cultural diversity, (3) a lack of training for educators in managing multicultural classrooms, and (4) the persistence of discriminatory attitudes or intolerance within educational settings.

Recognizing these challenges, systematic and sustainable implementation solutions are needed so that multicultural education can be effectively implemented throughout Indonesia. These solutions involve building the capacity of educators, adapting the curriculum, and strengthening policies and regulations that support diversity in education. Additionally, community participation and the involvement of various stakeholders in creating an inclusive learning environment are also crucial to achieving this goal.

An inclusive approach through multicultural education is not merely an option but a necessity for maintaining unity amid diversity. Through education that embraces all segments of society regardless of differences, Indonesia can foster a generation that is more tolerant, empathetic, and ready to build a harmonious future for the nation.

Thus, multicultural education can be an effective process in creating a prosperous, dignified, and just society. Therefore, it is important for us to continue developing and improving the implementation of multicultural education in Indonesia so that we can achieve our desired goals.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this study to determine solutions for implementing multicultural education is descriptive qualitative research, specifically in the context of a literature review. A literature review is the initial stage of research that involves investigating and evaluating previous studies relevant to the current research topic. Its primary objectives are to provide a theoretical framework, define the scope of the research, and identify research gaps that need to be addressed.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Challenges in Implementing Multicultural Education in Schools

(Yusditiyani et al., 2022) point out that multicultural education in schools faces several challenges. Issues related to multicultural education in society encompass educational processes, functions, and outcomes, including:

1. The functions and objectives of multicultural education are not linked to its practices and implementation,
2. Principles of multicultural education that do not support democracy, justice, and human rights,
3. The evaluation of multicultural education in relation to national quality control is often misused for specific interests.
4. The implementation of multicultural education in Indonesian schools faces a number of fairly complex challenges. The following are some of the main issues frequently encountered in efforts to implement multicultural education:
5. Many educators and school staff do not yet have an adequate understanding of the concept of multicultural education. Multicultural education is often misunderstood as merely teaching tolerance or introducing cultural diversity, without recognizing it as a broader effort to foster equality, justice, and respect for differences. As a result, multicultural education has not yet become an integral part of daily instruction.
6. The curriculum systems in many schools still do not pay enough attention to diversity. Existing curricula have not been fully designed to accommodate and respond to students' cultural, ethnic, religious, or socioeconomic differences. Most course materials place greater emphasis on the dominant or majority culture, so minority groups often do not feel represented in the teaching and learning process.

b. The Role of Teachers in Creating an Inclusive Multicultural Learning Environment

In the context of multicultural education, the role of teachers is of paramount importance. Teachers are not merely conveyors of academic information but also facilitators of learning who shape students' attitudes, values, and understanding of cultural diversity. Some key points regarding the role of teachers in multicultural education include their role as facilitators of inclusive learning, which involves ongoing efforts to create a learning environment that takes diversity into account. Teachers' commitment is manifested in their efforts to create a classroom where every student feels valued and respected as an individual who contributes to the diversity that enriches the classroom experience. I focus on the Academy's development, and teachers also provide special social support, ensuring that every student feels supported in achieving their academic goals and personal growth.

Integrating multicultural values into the curriculum is a key role for teachers in creating rich and inclusive learning experiences. The integration of multicultural values places an emphasis on social justice and human rights—not merely as abstract concepts, but as a key role in guiding students to understand the challenges and inequalities that certain groups may face.

c. The Role of Multicultural Education in Fostering Inclusive Attitudes Among Students

Multicultural education plays a vital role in fostering an inclusive mindset among students through several effective strategies and methods:

1. Enhancing Understanding of Diversity

Multicultural education helps students better understand different cultures and cultural backgrounds. This enables them to appreciate differences and avoid prejudice and stereotypes.

2. Developing Intercultural Skills

Through multicultural education, students can develop intercultural skills that are invaluable in a globalized world. These include the ability to interact and communicate with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

3. Instilling Core Values

Teachers and educators must instill core values such as democracy, humanism, and pluralism in students. This helps students develop a comprehensive sense of identity toward others and recognize that their existence is inseparable from their pluralistic surroundings.

4. Integrating Opinions and Perspectives

Multicultural education creates a learning environment that supports student diversity. Teachers use culturally responsive teaching methods, such as diverse case studies and problem-based learning, to enhance intercultural understanding and tolerance.

5. Fostering Intercultural Dialogue

Teachers can create a classroom environment that promotes intercultural dialogue and exchange. This helps students understand different worldviews and develop inclusive attitudes through direct interaction.

6. Providing Relevant Context

Teachers can select lesson materials, textbooks, and resources that reflect students' diverse cultures and experiences. This makes students feel relevant and represented in the curriculum, thereby fostering respect and acceptance of differences.

Thus, multicultural education can serve as a vital foundation for shaping a generation that is tolerant, inclusive, and prepared to navigate life in a diverse society with understanding and courage.

d. Definition of a Multicultural Society

Indonesian society is a society with a highly complex level of diversity. A society with such diversity is characterized as a multicultural society. When we define a society as a group of people who have lived together for a long time and cooperated to the point where they are able to organize themselves and regard themselves as a social entity with certain boundaries (Linton), then the concept of society combined with multiculturalism requires a very broad and deep understanding to grasp what a multicultural society is.

Multiculturalism, which is essentially a worldview that is subsequently translated into cultural policies. Emphasizes the acceptance of the diversity, pluralism, and multiculturalism present in societal life. Multiculturalism can also be understood as a worldview that is subsequently embodied in “politics of recognition” (Azyumardi Azra, 2007). Thus, the term multiculturalism refers to the state of a society composed of groups or ethnic communities with different cultures, yet bound by a shared formal interest within a given territory. In a multicultural society, various cultures coexist, live side by side, and interact with one another within a single society. Given this cultural diversity, it is necessary to foster mutual respect and mutual adaptation between one cultural element and another, while adhering to the values, norms, and national character, so that community life remains balanced, tranquil, and peaceful. Given this diversity of cultural elements, interaction is bound to occur, both direct and indirect, between one cultural element and another: the interaction among these cultures influences one another, and whether consciously or unconsciously, will inevitably lead to changes.

In the context of social interaction within a multicultural society, Malay and non-Malay Islamic communities are analyzed using structural-functional theory. Here, society is viewed as a dynamic system consisting of subsystems that are interconnected with one another. Structural-functional theory holds that these subsystems have consequences for one another and for the system as a whole. The structural functionalist approach, as developed by Parsons and his followers, can be examined through the following basic assumptions: Society must be viewed as a system rather than as a collection of interconnected parts. The relationships of influence between these parts are multifaceted and reciprocal.

e. Multicultural Education in Indonesia

Indonesian society is characterized by a highly complex level of diversity. A society with such diversity is known as a multicultural society; this term has a very broad meaning and requires a deep understanding to truly grasp what a multicultural society is. Multiculturalism refers to the diversity or differences between one culture and another. Thus, a multicultural society can be defined as a group of people who live and settle in a particular place, possessing their own distinct culture and characteristics that distinguish one community from another. Every society develops its own unique culture, which serves as its defining feature. This is the origin of the term “multiculturalism.” Multiculturalism is a worldview that can be translated into various cultural policies emphasizing acceptance of the realities of diversity, plurality, and multiculturalism present in society. Multiculturalism can be summarized as the acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity; it emphasizes that everyone should respect and honor the cultural diversity within society. Multiculturalism arises from diverse and extensive sociocultural and geographical conditions. Indonesia consists of many islands, each inhabited by a group of people, thereby forming a community; from these communities, distinct cultures emerge. Naturally, this results in a vast and diverse array of cultures,

which in turn gives rise to various obstacles that hinder the development of multiculturalism in society.

f. The Impact of Multiculturalism in Indonesia

Indonesia, a country rich in ethnic, religious, racial, and cultural diversity, faces significant challenges and opportunities in the context of multiculturalism. With more than 300 ethnic groups and 700 languages, this diversity is both a defining characteristic and a challenge for its people. This article discusses the positive and negative impacts of multiculturalism in Indonesia, as well as strategies for managing this diversity.

- **The Positive Effects of Multiculturalism**

1. Promoting Tolerance and Cooperation

Multiculturalism in Indonesia can foster tolerance among different ethnic and religious groups. By understanding and respecting differences, people can create a harmonious and supportive environment.

2. Cultural Enrichment

Cultural diversity provides opportunities to learn from one another and adopt best practices from various traditions. This enriches local cultures and fosters innovation in the arts, cuisine, and traditions.

3. Intercultural Dialogue

Multiculturalism promotes dialogue among different groups, which is essential for resolving conflicts and fostering greater understanding. Multicultural education is a vital tool for building awareness of diversity.

- **The Negative Effects of Multiculturalism**

1. Social Conflict

Although diversity can enrich society, it also has the potential to spark conflict. Cases such as the Sampit Tragedy (2001) and the Ambon riots (1999) demonstrate how differences can escalate into violence if not properly managed.

2. Cultural Isolation

In some cases, minority groups may feel marginalized or isolated from the majority population. This can lead to social tensions and a sense of insecurity among certain groups

3. Stereotypes and Discrimination.

Negative stereotypes about certain groups can stem from misunderstanding or mistrust. Discrimination based on ethnicity or religion often leads to profound social injustice.

g. Solutions for Implementing Multicultural Education in an Inclusive Society

Multicultural education is becoming increasingly important in the context of Indonesia, a country rich in cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity. In the effort to build an inclusive society, multicultural education serves as a tool to reduce prejudice, strengthen tolerance, and create a harmonious learning environment. However, its implementation still faces various challenges that need to be addressed.

Challenges in Implementing Multicultural Education

1. Curriculum Challenges.

Many schools in Indonesia have not yet fully integrated multicultural education into their curricula. This has led to a gap between educational goals and actual practices in the field.

2. Stereotypes and Prejudices.

Discrimination against minority groups often hinders the creation of an inclusive learning environment. Cases of intolerance in schools indicate that multicultural education has not yet been fully effective.

3. Lack of Awareness.

There is still a lack of awareness among educators and students regarding the importance of multicultural education, which results in the weak implementation of multicultural principles.

Solusi untuk Meningkatkan Pendidikan Multikultural

1. Content Integration: Multicultural education should be integrated into all subjects, not just taught as a separate subject. This allows students to understand diversity in a broader context.
2. Teacher Training: Conducting training for teachers to help them understand and apply the principles of multicultural education in their teaching. This includes ways to address stereotypes and prejudices in the classroom.
3. Building a School Culture: Schools need to create a culture that values diversity by involving students in activities that promote tolerance and cross-cultural cooperation.
4. Community Participation: Involving parents and the community in the educational process to foster a collective awareness of the importance of diversity. Activities such as seminars or workshops can serve as effective venues for discussing multicultural issues.
5. Use of Interactive Methods: Implementing interactive teaching methods that encourage students to interact and engage in dialogue about differences.

D. CONCLUSION

Indonesia, as a country with rich cultural diversity, has great potential to serve as a model for the implementation of multicultural education. The diversity of ethnic groups, religions, races, and other social groups is a national treasure, but it also poses a potential for conflict if not managed properly. Multicultural education offers a solution to address these potential conflicts and build a more harmonious and inclusive Indonesian society. Inclusive multicultural education currently faces various challenges, such as a lack of teacher readiness, an unresponsive curriculum, and stereotypes. Multicultural education is an effort to recognize, appreciate, and celebrate cultural diversity within an educational context. Meanwhile, “inclusive” means creating a learning environment that is open and accessible to all students, regardless of their background.

The functions and objectives of multicultural education are not directly linked to its practices and implementation. Principles of multicultural education that do not support democracy, justice, and human rights are often misapplied. The evaluation of multicultural education in relation to national quality control is frequently distorted to serve specific interests. The implementation of multicultural education in Indonesian schools faces a number of complex issues. Many educators and school staff do not yet have an adequate understanding of the concept of multicultural education. The role of multicultural education in fostering inclusive attitudes among students by enhancing their understanding of diversity helps students better comprehend different cultures and cultural backgrounds.

Teachers and educators must instill core values such as democracy, humanism, and pluralism in students. This helps students develop a comprehensive sense of identity toward their peers and recognize that their own existence is inseparable from their pluralistic surroundings. Integrating Views and Perspectives Multicultural education creates a learning environment that supports student diversity. Teachers use culturally responsive teaching methods, such as diverse case studies and problem-based learning, to enhance intercultural understanding and tolerance.

Fostering Intercultural Dialogue Teachers can create a classroom environment that promotes intercultural dialogue and exchange. This helps students understand different worldviews and develop inclusive attitudes through direct interaction.

Providing Relevant Context Teachers can select lesson materials, textbooks, and resources that reflect students' diverse cultures and experiences. This makes students feel that the curriculum is relevant to them and represents them, thereby increasing their respect for and acceptance of differences. Indonesian society is characterized by a highly complex level of diversity. A society with such diversity is known as a multicultural society; this term has a very broad meaning and requires a deep understanding to truly grasp what a multicultural society is.

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