

## Multicultural education for strengthening harmony in diversity

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### Abstract

The multicultural era requires habituate awareness of diversity in schools as a praxis of multicultural education to instill awareness of diversity. This study aims to obtain a model of implementation of multicultural education in building harmony in diversity in schools. The research method uses qualitative with a case study approach. Data collection techniques use active-participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The results showed that the curriculum is integrated with the values of humanism and pluralism, its implementation is designed with social action programs. The next implementation goes through stages: prejudice reduction, content integration, equality paedagogy, and empowering school culture and social structure. This research contributes to the implementation of multicultural education in schools, and is very urgent to be carried out in schools in line with the digital era of multicultural mixing globally.

**Keywords:** Education, multiculturalism, values, harmony, diversity

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## 1. Introduction

A diversity can be both a gift and a disaster, if not managed with cultured awareness (Arce-Trigatti & Anderson, 2020; Aytug et al., 2018; Jayadi et al., 2022). Vigilance of the potential impact of global culture and the pervasive significance of media technologies through cultural-social gaps have implications for the proliferation of diversity violence. For example, the rejection of faith-based activities such as ashura recitation, Cap Gomeh celebrations.

It is important to restore multicultural awareness in society as the formulation of the noble values of the nation that the nation's founding fathers concocted into the core values of the culture in the name of Pancasila. (Rahman, 2022) The role of educational institutions as a shaper of the cultural character of the Indonesian nation is superior and competitive. However, its praxis has not met expectations due to the dominance of external variables: awareness of unity and unity, humanity, civilization, the democratization of education, and appreciation of diversity as a social, national, and state reality. Inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the praxis of management of multiculturalism education in schools.

Awareness of multicultural realist praxis as the essence of behavioral education in students (Lee et al., 2020) only becomes a conceptual-symbolic realm. The educational paradigm of the future is based on creativity and awareness as a distinct human being, yet equal as a creature of God. Vulnerability of conflict as a cohesive consequence in plural social dynamics. The socio-cultural diversity of Indonesia is a spectrum as well as a challenge to the harmonization of the nation.

The results of previous studies stated that awareness and recognition and acceptance of attitudes, behaviors, mental, and morals of school residents carried out in different activities, mutual respect for differences in various tribes, ancestry, skin color, religion, occupation, and so on; The assessment of education can be done through several indicators in the form of changes in attitude, moral, and mental behavior as well as views on social, cultural economic, and political diversity that unify the nation. Its implementation must be supported by a curriculum that adopts tolerance values. The results of previous studies stated that awareness and recognition and acceptance of attitudes, behaviors, mental, and morals of school residents carried out in different activities, mutual respect for differences in various tribes, ancestry, skin color, religion, occupation, and so on; The assessment of education can be done through several indicators in the form of changes in attitude, moral, and mental behavior as well as views on social, cultural economic, and political diversity that unify the nation. Its implementation must be supported by a curriculum that adopts tolerance values.

Multicultural education emphasizes social justice, democracy, and human rights which means the educational process in diversity (Jantzen, 2020). James A. Banks (Banks & Fox-gieg, 2010) reinforces it as a series of faith cultivations that explain the recognition of the important values of cultural diversity in their ethnicity into lifestyle, social experience, and personal identity, as the basis of student's ability to accept and understand differences as fitrah and social reality.

The values of multicultural education (Cheng, 2019; Dimova-Cookson, 2021; Lidz, 2021; Zajda, 2020): a) Democratic values. Its essence is thorough in all aspects, shapes, and dimensions. the realization of cultural, political, and social justice. b) the value of humanism. In recognition of pluralism over the heterogeneity of human beings with various ideological, religious, paradigm, and ethnic backgrounds. (Putri & Nasiwan, 2020; Sithole, 2019; Thornton et al., 2021)

The focus of this research is multicultural education in schools. The purpose of the study is to explore curriculum models, programs, and their implementation that are integrated with multicultural values. The urgency of this research contributes to the praxis of multicultural education. The limitations

of the study are focused only on the characterization of a specific research area. Future research can replicate theories for multicultural education development model research.

## **2. Research method**

### *2.1. Research design*

The research uses qualitative research with a case study approach. This approach is to describe and analyze phenomena related to multicultural education in strengthening harmony in diversity. This study examines various forms of activity, characteristics, changes, relationships, similarities, and differences with phenomena related to multicultural education..

### *2.2. Research site and participants*

This research took place at the National High School Banyumas, Central Java, Indonesian. This school is school that is unique in using English, Mandarin, and Indonesian languages of instruction. The backgrounds of students, teachers, and education personnel come from different races, ethnicities, and religions. The school facilitates religious education by preparing religious teachers by the religion adopted by the students. Research participants included: principals, vice principals for curriculum, and religious teachers (Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Khonghucu).

### *2.3. Data collection*

Data collection techniques use observation, structured interviews, and documentation. The observation technique uses the observation method of active participants, researchers observe related to the policy of developing multicultural education in this case including program planning and design, and its implementation, namely the implementation process in learning activities in the classroom and outside the classroom. Structured interview techniques use open-ended questions, but within the confines of the theme and flow of conversation, flexible and controlled with interview guidelines as a reference for obtaining data. Documentation techniques include vision, mission, school programs, and multicultural education implementation documents

### *2.4. Data analysis*

Data analysis using the Miles and Huberman model. The steps are as follows: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and concluding. 1) Data collection, first conducted a preliminary study, which serves to verify the implementation of multicultural education. Furthermore, data collection uses observation, interviews, and documentation. 2) Data reduction, the data reduction process is carried out by sorting out the data and then creating data categories on multicultural education according to James A.Banks' multicultural education theory.

3) Data presentation, carried out after the data is categorized to describe research problems. The data is presented in the form of an abstraction table of interview results, observations, and documentation. 4) Concluding all the data that has been presented, through two stages, namely: first, describing the theme subcategories in the categorization table and coding accompanied by verbatim interview quotes, second, explaining the results of the research findings by answering research problems. Test the validity of the data through triangulation in credibility testing as a check of data from various sources. through triangulation of data sources and triangulation of methods.

## **3. Results**

### *3.1 Integrated curriculum of Multicultural Values*

Multicultural education management at National High School means the effectiveness and efficiency of the potential principles of educational programs to shape character through praxis-based

management of diversity. The goal is specific language practice, cultural practices, and customs through multicultural educational design. The obstacles faced are the complexity of vulnerability to changes in the educational environment system, such as national education policies, politics, school culture, and curriculum formalization. Anticipated by creating, providing, and preserving culture in the school environment as an active and effective planned situation. A learning approach that provides opportunities for equality for each child to grow in differences. To have the awareness of maintaining unity and unity, dismissing social dominance in every learning activity.(Clark-Howard, 2020;Arphattananon, 2018).

Multicultural Education the National High School as branding is carried out with an integrated curriculum with multi-material education through an integrative hidden curriculum The 2013 curriculum is based on diversity, emphasizing tolerance, harmony, religious norms, local community culture, and gender equality with a spot point of curriculum management integrated with multicultural education(Arphattananon, 2018; Kusá et al., 2014). With the provision of 5 effective days of schooling. Then there is a difference in the details of face-to-face hours with a duration of 10 class hours per day each lesson integrated with multicultural education. This is due to the additional time for English (4 class hours), Chinese (4 class hours) bringing in native speakers directly from China, and Self-Development (2 class hours). The 3-language mastery program becomes a superior program, as well as self-development activities that focus on sports.

Outline of the integrated curriculum policy of Multicultural Education at National High School : First, accept students from various groups. the National High School philosophically views the potential for diversity as a strength. Because of the condition of school residents with high heterogeneity, they have different ethnic backgrounds, religions, races, and regions of origin as well as descendants from Java, China, Bugis, and India. Students with a non-Muslim majority (80%), contrasting the condition of teachers as much as 60% Muslims. The close relationships that school residents build through communication, harmonization, as well as interpersonal independence of the individual (Fitzpatrick, 2019;Lee et al., 2020;Lourenço, 2018)..

Second, schools guarantee tolerance, students are given privacy to practice religion, culture, and customs, for the citizens of the school. Fulfilling the basic right of students to: receive religious education and teachers according to their religion; get the opportunity to practice worship. For example, Muslim students every Friday are welcome to pray Friday. Catholic students every midnight are given time to read prayer Angelus. Read the prayer together at the beginning of each semester of learning, by inviting the student's religious leaders and according to their beliefs. National High School's commitment to multicultural education services actually internalizes the core values of multicultural, namely democratic, humanism, and pluralism.(Kuswaya & Ali, 2021).

The activities related to the multicultural education policy conveyed by the principal are as follows: 1) Religious education is handed over to all students with their respective religious teachers at religious lessons, 2) Every month religious activities are held according to their respective religions, 3) Every Friday Muslim students are welcome to perform Friday prayers. Then at noon from other religions such as Catholicism, there is a recitation of the Angelus prayer. 4) Joint prayer activities are carried out at the beginning of the year and at the beginning of entering the 2nd semester of learning. All religions can invite their respective religious leaders to lead the prayer (Arifin et al., 2019).

### *3.2. Multicultural Based School Program*

As an organizing process in the anatomical work of the organization, through the curriculum development team of the National High School, multicultural education is planned and implemented through curricular, extracurricular, and co-curricular activities. School policy is central in the

implementation of multicultural education programs, implementation of learning, and habituation. To ensure the implementation of the multicultural education curriculum, periodic program evaluations are carried out once a month through coordination meetings (interview with vice principal for curriculum).

The multicultural education program at the National High School was carried out well because of the commitment, responsibility, and work of the teacher team to continue to oversee the multicultural vision policy. The involvement of the entire element of the school community is evidenced by the integration of the program in every step of the stakeholder's work so that it is not a partisan or individual program. So that the main goal-oriented is implementation praxis through a multicultural interactive lifestyle implemented by students to the entire environment and school residents (Arce-Trigatti & Anderson, 2020; Aragona-Young & Sawyer, 2018). Each design of multicultural education activities is contained in the curriculum document at the unit level of education which is implemented through a multicultural-based program divided into:

### 3.2.1 Programmatic activities.

Designed for a one-year educational calendar and as a routine and vehicle to internalize multicultural education directly to students. The types of activities are grouped: a) Strengthening nationalism (Independence day ceremony of the Republic of Indonesia, national awakening day, youth oath day, Pancasila supernatural day, national education day, and others); b) Religious (joint prayer, Eid al-Adha, Christmas, and new year celebrations, Chinese New Year, Isra' Mi'raj, great Friday, Eid al-Fitr); c) Togetherness (prayer together, mooncake celebration, National High School Olympic Games, Study Tour). 2) Incidental Activities. The program of activities is simultaneous and tentatively adapted to the conditions of occurrence. For example social service activities; sharing the takjil (snack) of Ramadan; delegation of cultural events; Winter/Summer Camp in collaboration with the University of China; art performances use 3 languages.

### 3.2.2 Implementation of Social Action Programs.

The entire program and activity of multicultural education are internalized on real activities practiced by everyday students. Outcome it (Fitzpatrick, 2019) *Attitud goals, Cognitive goals, Instruction goals* (Lourenço, 2018). Multicultural educational activities at the National High School are carried out with: a) Teachers allow Muslim students to perform prayers when the time comes. On the contrary, Muslim students enliven cultural days/holidays of certain religions to give awards to adherents of other religions. Do not discredit a person's ethnic, religious, racial, and customary background with his tribal calling to be racist, etc. b) The teacher helps the student understand, investigate, and read the meaningfulness of each cultural assumption in perspectives and prejudices that influence his thinking (Abacioglu et al., 2019). Students are divided into groups of members with different backgrounds at random to create a multi-cultural competition, with different themes in each group. Furthermore, students work together to explore, find and share knowledge of the cultural diversity of the archipelago, the results of which are presented in wall magazines in each class. c) Various togetherness activities are held, such as Family gathering activities as an effort to establish communication so that there is a close relationship between students, teachers, and parents. (processed from interviews with principals and vice principals for curriculum). The school program to support multicultural education conveyed by the principal as follows:

Table 1. Multicultural Based Programs

Religious Activities	Executive	Cooperation with adherents of other religions
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Prayer Together	All Religions	Prayers are carried out together in rooms that have been reserved for their respective religions, by inviting religious leaders from outside to lead prayers according to their respective religions.
Eid al-Adha	Teachers and students are Muslim.	The celebration of the sacrificial holiday of Muslim students, teachers, and employees makes the event of slaughtering sacrificial animals and assisted by students of different religions in technical terms is not a ritual thing. Such as cutting motong and distributing to the community
Celebration of Isra'Mi'raj	Teachers and students are Muslim	The celebration of the Islamic Holidays is filled with gatherings with teachers and students who are Muslims to hold Islamic studies and eat together followed by teachers and students of other faiths.
Eid Al-Fitr Celebration	Teachers and students are Muslim	The celebration of Eid al-Fitr is carried out by teachers and students of the Muslim religion, halal bihalal is held and seminars are held at schools. Students of other faiths are encouraged to follow for the pleased
Mooncake Celebration	Teachers and students of Khonghucu	This event was attended by religious teachers and all Khonghucu students with several events such as a paper cutting event for Chinese writings, a Mandarin karaoke competition, and the distribution of cakes to be helped by students with other uniforms
Chinese New Year Celebrations	Teachers and students of Khonghucu	It is celebrated by students and teachers who come from Chinese descent who are Khonghucu. Events such as art performances and displays of Chinese cultural culture such as Liong games, Tambur, Barongsai, dances, students of other religions help prepare various tools and materials
Christmas and New Year Celebrations	Christian and Catholic teachers and students	Organized by teachers and students of Christian and Catholic religions, students of other faiths helped
Good Friday	Christian and Catholic teachers and students	It is carried out by teachers and students of the Christian and Catholic faiths. Students of other religions worship their worship
Nyepi Celebration	Hindu teachers and students	Celebrated by Hindu teachers and students and other religious students helping to perform

### 3.3. Implementation of Multicultural Education

The implementation of multicultural education is carried out through four dimensions, namely:

- 1) Prejudice reduction, this dimension focuses on the characteristics of students' racial attitudes and how these attitudes can be changed with learning methods and materials (Kuswaya & Ali, 2021). During the family gathering event where the school held this event to establish communication and close relationships between students, teachers, and also parents of students. Furthermore, during the commemoration of the Independence Day of the Republic of Indonesia where the students of the National High School together shared to become ceremonial officers. These two examples of activities that have been organized by the National High School can be an effort to reduce prejudice

against each other. It is not enough to only occur in the classroom but for its implementation, it is even more effective when it also involves many parties at events held outside the classroom or school . The program for prejudice reduction, such as the results of an interview with the vice principal for curriculum, is stated in the abstraction table of the following interview results:

Table 2. Prejudice Reduction Programs

Programs	Purpose
Celebration of Indonesia's independence day	In addition to carrying out ceremonies, the school also held several competitions for students and teachers in enlivening the Indonesian Independence event, followed by all students
Election of Student Council Administrators	Students carry out the election of the student council president directly, with figures who have already run for the elected candidate regardless of differences in background
National High School Games	This activity is in the form of various kinds of competitions held by yayasan Putera Harapan which are attended by all school units under the foundation, namely from kindergarten, elementary, junior high, and high school in order to be together with students
Study Tour	This activity is not only in order to visit tourist attractions but also aims to make students more familiar with historical and cultural sites in an area to beat nationalism
Pancasila Magic Day Ceremony	As a form of effort to always maintain unity and practice Pancasila as the ideology of the nation in the frame of harmonization in diversity
Language Month Race	This competition activity was attended by all students who became delegates of their respective classes. The competition is related to skills in Indonesian, English, English, Chinese and Javanese. The types of competitions held such as speech competitions, poetry, drama, singing, story telling, caption writing, etc. Delegates for each class are elected by class agreement regardless of religious or racial differences.

- 2) Equality paedagogy through equality in the way teachers transform their teaching into a way that facilitates the academic achievement of students of different racial, cultural and social class groups. Including a teaching style that is consistent with the many learning styles within various cultural and racial groups (formulated from the results of learning observations of religious teachers). Equality Pedagogy (Equality Paedagogy) is also strengthened by teachers to play a role in transforming learning into facilitators of academic competence, consistency of teaching style variations to accommodate the needs of students with various abilities and backgrounds (Abacioglu et al., 2019). Learning activities present experts in their fields.

The equality education policy implemented by religious teachers is supported by school policies. The first policy is to accept students from various groups, and the second policy is that schools give freedom to all students, educators, and education personnel related to religion to be handed over personally to each other while supporting each other (Bachtiar, 2018). There is no or should not be one person who conveys that another religion or tribe is above it or below it (interview with the principal ). Meanwhile, related to gender equality, the curriculum must be directed to equitable education and encourage the development of gender equality (interview of

the vice principal for curriculum)

- 3) This content integration is proven by teachers being able to integrate learning content into theories and values of multicultural education in the implementation of learning activities that build the values of tolerance, unity, mutual cooperation, the spirit of nationalism. Integrating subjects into a multicultural educational context with highly supportive classroom circumstances where students are heterogeneous not only gender-wise but culturally and religiously (processed from the results of learning observations made by religious teachers). So that when learning related to multicultural educational material will be felt in real terms (Maftuhin, 2022).

Meanwhile, curriculum integration design was developed to increase tolerance and harmony of religious people, and pay attention to religious norms prevailing in the school environment. (curriculum document). The implementation of multicultural education is integrated with religious education materials, as for multicultural values developed according to the results of interviews with religious teachers as follows:

Table 3. Religious Education integrated multicultural values

Respondents	Multicultural Values
Islamic Teachers	In the study of Islam, the values of toleration, equal rights, and democracy are values that are instilled in students, because they are closely related to the teachings of Islam. Even respect for other religions is strongly encouraged in Islam. So Islam highly upholds tolerance
Christianity Teachers	The values developed are compassion, which leads to equal rights over all human beings not respecting differences, races, tribes, or other entities, because the Bible teaches equal rights and no differences
Catholic Religious Teachers	Religion teaches two vertical and horizontal dimensions. Namely, the relationship between man and his God and the relationship between man and his fellow man. Human beings must live in compassion and respect each other's differences
Khonghucu religious teacher	The existence of differences is to show the greatness of Tian (the name of God), differences become an inevitability that must be addressed with tolerance
Hindu religious teachers	The teaching to appreciate differences in multicultural life is one of the teachings mentioned in the Vedic book, and the history of tolerance has been shown at the beginning of the entry of Hinduism into Indonesia

- 1) Empowering school culture and social structure, this dimension is carried out through the fields of sports, achievement improvement, conducive interaction between staff, students between ethnicities and races, and from the cultural components of the school is directed to create a school culture that empowers students from diverse groups, races, ethnicities, and cultures (Seidualiyeva et al., 2022; Rektina, 2021; Alfulaila et al., 2019). One of the large enough events organized by the foundation and school to internalize multicultural education into the soul of students through activities that build the values of tolerance, unity, cooperation, the spirit of nationalism, and complement each other amid the differences in backgrounds they have through several activities (interviews with principals).

The National High School Games, this activity is the largest sports competition party at foundation from the lowest to the top level of education. The annual participatory activity must be attended by all students (interviews with the vice principal for curriculum), teachers, and school employees as a



contingent in each branch of the competition. All school personnel joined in several groups consisting of a teacher and student members in one contingent to become their respective delegates from each branch of the race that followed. Then the competition activities were held to enliven the Independence Day of the Republic of Indonesia where teachers, employees, and students melted together without barriers when participating in each competition held. Both activities are to empower school culture towards student achievement (Ubaidillah et al., 2020; Solehuddin & Budiman, 2019).

#### **4. Discussion**

Education is a form of human right that must be fulfilled by institutions that are obliged to fulfill it equally so that all people in a nation can enjoy them. Multicultural education is becoming important in diversity. Multicultural education at the National High School is integrated with the curriculum. This is appropriate because multicultural education does not stand as a separate material so its implementation is integrated into all religious learning materials through multicultural values, namely democratic values, pluralism, and tolerance (Jantzen, 2020; Achaeva et al., 2018; Brown et al., 2019). The integration of multicultural values in religious education is adjusted to the teachings of each religion carried out by religious teachers. Religious material is integrated into multicultural education, which is based on religious teaching material that is social and universal (Putri & Nasiwan, 2020; Sithole, 2019; Thornton et al., 2021). These materials do not occur constructively between one religious material and another, it has been mapped as religious material that can be integrated into multicultural education by each religious teacher (Pennings et al., 2018; Shalihin et al., 2020; Vallone et al., 2022).

Furthermore, activities are prepared by the school related to multicultural education, both activities in the form of learning in the classroom and outside the classroom. Various multicultural education-based activities are carried out to frame harmony in diversity. These activities are oriented in the framework of equality, justice, and equal rights to eliminate prejudice (Cheng, 2019; Dimova-Cookson, 2021; Lidz, 2021; Zajda, 2020). In addition to activities intended for the worship of each religion, activities are also carried out that are directed at togetherness.

In the implementation of multicultural education, the application of the dimensions of multicultural education is by the theory proposed by James. A. Banks as explained below (Banks & Foxgieg, 2010; Akinlar & Dogan, 2017). Content integration, namely teachers can integrate learning content into the theories and values of Multicultural education in the implementation of learning. The integration of multicultural values in all religious learning materials strongly supports students' thinking patterns in the multicultural dimension to support harmony in diversity (Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs); (Marzuki et al., 2020; Kus Eddy Sartono et al., 2022). Prejudice reduction, this dimension focuses on the characteristics of students' racial attitudes and how they can be changed with teaching methods and materials (Zainuddin & Nasucha, 2018; Abd Hamid et al., 2019).

The school has facilitated the form of programs to accommodate togetherness in diversity, Equality Paedagogy, carried out by religious teachers by transforming their teaching with a focus on facilitating the academic achievement of students from various racial groups, cultures, and social classes (Arifin et al., 2019). Equal rights between students are emphasized by religious teachers so that equal rights occur (Aragona-Young & Sawyer, 2018). Empowering school culture and social structure is carried out through improving achievement and forming a school culture that is harmonious in differences. School culture is built with a multicultural consciousness through the cultivation of democratic values, tolerance, pluralism, and equality of rights (Firmonasari et al., 2021). Harmonious social interaction between staff, teachers, and students between different ethnicities and races is carried out to empower schools toward academic and non-academic achievement (Szelei et al., 2019; Vervaet et al., 2018; Paris, 2018).

## 5. Conclusion

Multicultural education strongly supports the formation of a harmonious attitude in togetherness. The implementation stage can be carried out through an integrated curriculum with democratic values, humanism, pluralism and social action programs. Aspects of reducing prejudice, by establishing communication and close relationships between teachers, students, and school personnel. Equality education by giving equal rights to all students regardless of students of different religions or races. Finally, there is school empowerment through activities that build the values of tolerance, unity, cooperation, and national spirit. This research is only limited to implementation, so that in the future development research can be carried out that produces a multicultural educational model that can be replicated in wider educational institutions.

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