

Multicultural Education as a Unifying Force for Values of Unity, Cohesion and National Identity in the Global Era in Indonesia

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Abstract

Multicultural education plays a crucial role in strengthening unity and cohesion in Indonesia, a country renowned for its ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity. In the era of globalization, the challenges faced by the Indonesian nation have become increasingly complex, particularly in preserving national integrity and identity. This article explores how multicultural education can serve as a unifying force for the values of unity, cohesion, and nationalism. Through an integrative and holistic approach, multicultural education aims not only to enhance understanding and appreciation of diversity but also to foster attitudes of tolerance, respect for differences, and rejection of all forms of discrimination. The effective implementation of multicultural education in Indonesian schools is expected to act as a bulwark against the negative influences of globalization, such as radicalization and intolerance, while promoting social harmony. Thus, multicultural education becomes a key element in maintaining the stability and integrity of the Indonesian nation amidst the ever-evolving global dynamics.

Keywords: *Multicultural Education, Unity, Cohesion, Globalization in Indonesia*

Introduction

Indonesia is an archipelagic country composed of various ethnicities, religions, cultures, and languages. This diversity is an invaluable asset and a challenge that must be managed wisely. In the era of globalization, where geographical boundaries are increasingly blurred and international interactions are more intense, it is crucial for Indonesia to maintain and strengthen the values of unity and integrity. Multicultural education becomes one of the main pillars in this effort, as through inclusive education that respects diversity, the younger generation can be equipped with understanding, tolerance, and appreciation for differences (Omar et al., 2015).

Multicultural education is not just about understanding other cultures, but also about building awareness that diversity is an integral part of the national identity. In the global era, where foreign influences and information easily enter daily life, it is essential to instill strong national values so that future generations remain firmly grounded in their national identity. Thus, multicultural education not only serves as a means to understand and appreciate differences but also acts as a binding force that strengthens national unity amidst globalization (Wichian Sanmee, 2024).

Through multicultural education, it is hoped that a generation will emerge that is not only intellectually capable but also wise in appreciating differences, and able to contribute to maintaining harmony and national integrity. This represents both a challenge and an opportunity for Indonesia in the current global era, where multicultural education plays a key role in realizing the ideals of unity, integrity, and a robust national life (Arifin & Hermino, 2017).

In the increasingly complex globalization era, Indonesia faces the challenge of preserving national identity while integrating global values. As a country with diverse cultures, ethnicities, religions, and languages, Indonesia has great potential to be a model for a harmonious multicultural society. However, social realities show that these differences often become sources of conflict and tension. Therefore, it is important to find the right approach to manage this diversity to create unity and cohesion (Wichian Sanmee, 2024).

Multicultural education emerges as a potential solution to bridge differences and build solidarity among various societal groups. This education aims not only to introduce students to different cultures but

also to teach values of tolerance, inclusion, and mutual respect. Amidst the global influence of foreign cultures, multicultural education also plays a crucial role in preserving local cultural identities and fostering pride in diversity (Wichian Sanmee, 2024).

Furthermore, multicultural education can function as a tool to strengthen social cohesion in an increasingly pluralistic society. With an integrated approach in the educational curriculum, values of unity and integrity can be taught from an early age, preparing the younger generation to actively participate in an inclusive society. In the context of nationalism, multicultural education can also act as a binding force that reinforces national spirit, maintains social harmony, and encourages active citizen participation in national development (Wichian Sanmee, 2024).

Indonesian unity is an ideal that must be pursued by all Indonesians. Unity can only be achieved if we respect and accept every existing difference. Indonesia is a country rich in diversity. This diversity can be seen in various aspects, including ethnicity, religion, race, culture, and language. This diversity is a blessing that we must be grateful for. "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" (Unity in Diversity) is the motto of Indonesia, which means "different but one". This motto teaches us to respect and accept existing differences.

However, the reality of social conflicts that often result in violence threatens unity and the existence of a nation. Currently, the number of islands in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) is 17,667 large and small islands. The population is approximately 210 million people, consisting of 350 ethnic and customary groups using nearly 200 local languages and dialects. In terms of religion, they practice Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, as well as various other belief systems. With such a large population, ethnicities, religions, customs, languages, and islands, Indonesia is often described as a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country (Bennett et al., 2015).

This diversity, whether acknowledged or not, can create issues if not well managed. Especially in the 21st century, characterized by changes driven by advances in communication technology and information, which have transformed the dimensions of time and space in human life. Society's culture moves and changes rapidly due to globalization affecting nearly all aspects of life. In the process of globalization, cultural penetration occurs both physically and virtually, making it impossible to prevent. Therefore, in the globalized world, national boundaries become less important, and it can be said that information, knowledge, and technology flows freely, influencing global human life both individually and collectively. In this era, the concept of the nation-state becomes less relevant because, empirically, a nation cannot isolate itself from global influences (Sarjiman, 2001).

The fragility of nation-state concepts, coupled with the recognition of democracy and human rights, has given rise to the concept of multiculturalism, a movement recognizing cultural diversity and the existence of various cultures. The role of "culture" is one of the forces in uniting societal groups. Multicultural awareness can develop well if cultivated and taught to future generations through education. Through education, an attitude of mutual respect for differences will develop if future generations are trained and made aware of the importance of valuing others and their cultures. Thus, multicultural education is crucial for addressing various horizontal conflicts, such as ethnic and racial diversity, as well as vertical conflicts, such as educational, economic, and socio-cultural disparities in Indonesia. Based on these facts, the author has chosen the topic "Multicultural Education as a Glue for Unity, Integrity, and National Life in the Global Era in Indonesia."

Literature review

Understanding Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is an approach that emphasizes the recognition and appreciation of cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity in society. According to Banks and Barry (Banks, 1993) multicultural education is defined as an effort to integrate diverse cultural perspectives into the educational system to create an inclusive and equitable learning environment. This education aims to develop intercultural competence, which is crucial in multicultural societies like Indonesia (Gay, 2018).

Multicultural education is a pedagogical approach that seeks to integrate the perspectives, histories, and contributions of various cultural groups into the curriculum and teaching practices. This approach emphasizes recognizing and appreciating cultural diversity as a fundamental element in the educational process.

The primary goal of multicultural education is to enhance understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity among students and to promote inclusivity and social justice within the educational environment.

This education aims to equip students with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to live and interact in a pluralistic and global society. Furthermore, multicultural education serves as a tool to reduce prejudice and discrimination, as well as to promote equality and active participation of all individuals, regardless of their cultural backgrounds.

Through multicultural education, it is hoped that a reflective and inclusive learning environment will be created, where all students feel valued and recognized, and are able to appreciate and acknowledge the cultural diversity of others.

In simple terms, multiculturalism can be understood as an attitude where each group is willing to integrate without disregarding the cultural diversity they possess. They blend together, leading to a process of "hybridization" that requires each individual not to highlight their cultural differences (Julaiha, 2019). Historically, multicultural education has long been developed in Europe, America, and other developed countries. Over time, the movement for multicultural education peaked in the 1970s and 1980s, particularly in educational institutions in the United States (Chye & Han, 2018).

In nearly every educational institution in the United States, whether at the higher education level or in schools, principles of ethnic and cultural diversity are integrated into educational activities as part of curriculum reform to support the multicultural education movement. Concepts of ethnicity and nationality are redefined to clarify the existence of ethnic identity within the context of unity and the whole. As Rose stated, groups whose members share a unique social and cultural heritage passed down from generation to generation are called ethnic groups. They are usually easily identifiable due to their family patterns, language, religion, and customs, and possess a strong sense of group identity (Flaxman & Banks, 1974). Therefore, multicultural education aims to prepare students with attitudes and skills necessary within their ethnic culture, national culture, and among other ethnic cultures.

From the above description, it can be inferred that multicultural education plays a role in shaping students' views on life and enhancing their appreciation of diversity (Yusup et al., 2018). Multicultural education is the process of instilling a way of life that respects, is sincere, and tolerant towards cultural diversity existing within a pluralistic society (Parkhouse et al., 2019). Thus, multicultural education becomes strategically important for managing diversity creatively.

As Paul Suparno stated, multicultural education helps students understand, accept, and appreciate people from different ethnicities, cultures, and values (Efendi & Lien, 2021). Therefore, students need to be encouraged to see other cultures to understand and eventually appreciate them. The model is not to obscure other cultures or homogenize them as a national culture, thus erasing local cultures. In multicultural education, each culture has its own value and truth, requiring understanding of cultural value relationships, one of which is through education.

A more comprehensive view of multicultural education is provided by M. Ainul Yaqin, who states that multicultural education is a strategy applied across all subject areas by utilizing cultural differences among students, such as differences in ethnicity, religion, language, gender, social class, race, ability, and age, to make the learning process effective and easy (Prasetiawati, 2017). Furthermore, Ainul explains that multicultural education also aims to train and build students' character to be democratic, humanistic, and pluralistic in their environment. In other words, through multicultural education, students are expected to easily understand, master, and apply democratic, humanistic, and pluralistic values both in and out of school. Therefore, the main objective of multicultural education is to implement the principles of justice, democracy, and humanism.

Education in a democratic society like Indonesia must be oriented towards the interests of a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-lingual nation. This means that educational organizers must consider the diverse conditions of a heterogeneous nation. The discourse on multicultural education is crucial as part of the future education agenda in Indonesia, particularly in developing intelligent Indonesian individuals. An intelligent individual is not only skillful and capable of mastering knowledge and solving problems but also moral, democratic, just, and humanistic.

With a willingness to accept other groups as equals regardless of cultural, ethnic, gender, language, or religious differences, the effort to realize the principles of democracy, justice, and humanism in multicultural education in Indonesia should address: First, the religious diversity in Indonesia, which is a fact of diversity in the country; Second, the multi-ethnic and linguistic patterns of each ethnic group, which can trigger conflicts if not properly accommodated. Thus, the role of multicultural education is crucial in mitigating inter-ethnic conflicts; Third, differences in gender and social status. Multicultural education can accommodate these differences; Fourth, differences in individual abilities, both physical and non-physical.

Multicultural Education in Indonesia

Indonesia, with its rich cultural diversity, makes multicultural education an essential component of the national education system. (Tilaar, 2002), (Tilaar, 2006) emphasizes that multicultural education in Indonesia must be designed to strengthen social cohesion and reduce potential intercultural conflicts. This aligns with research showing that multicultural education can enhance understanding and tolerance among students (Sleeter, 2011).

Multicultural education is an approach that acknowledges, values, and celebrates cultural diversity within society. It involves teaching and learning that considers students' cultural backgrounds, languages, races, religions, and life experiences. The goal is to promote understanding, tolerance, and cooperation among individuals from diverse backgrounds and to create an inclusive and equitable environment for all learners.

Key principles of multicultural education in Indonesia include:

- **Appreciation of Diversity:** Recognizing and valuing various cultures, languages, and life experiences as sources of enrichment for the learning process.
- **Justice and Equality:** Creating equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their backgrounds, and addressing all forms of discrimination or prejudice.
- **Inclusion:** Building a learning environment where all students feel accepted and valued, and where they can freely express their cultural identities.
- **Criticism and Reflection:** Encouraging students to think critically about social and cultural issues, and to reflect on their own and others' viewpoints.
- **Identity Development:** Helping students develop their own identity while valuing both their cultural identity and that of others.

Multicultural education benefits not only students from minority backgrounds but also all students by helping them understand and appreciate a increasingly interconnected and diverse world. It also prepares them to be global citizens with the social and emotional skills necessary to interact with people from various cultures.

The four types of diversity in our nation, as mentioned above, can be a catalyst for a multicultural national education paradigm. Moreover, with the current changes driven by advances in science and technology and the impact of globalization, there is a need for education that uses multicultural approaches and models with a global perspective to meet the demands of students, society, and the job market in the global era.

A global perspective is a viewpoint or way of thinking about issues, events, or activities from a global or international perspective. Therefore, our attitudes and actions should also be directed toward global interests (Camelia & Suryandari, 2021).

In other words, we need an approach that helps students navigate a "complex" life and avoid a narrow understanding of race, religion, ethnicity, language, and culture. As Rochiati points out, one of the challenges in education from a global perspective is understanding multicultural education in a non-racial way to prepare and support learning about intercultural processes, community development, and, if necessary, classroom actions (Hasan, 2019).

From the above discussion, it can be said that education in the global era must address global issues and problems such as cultural diversity, politics, economics, social issues, conflict and peace, global interdependence, human rights, environmental issues like degradation, disease, and migration, among others. Banks (1993) identifies five interrelated dimensions of multicultural education:

1. **Content Integration:** Integrating various cultures and groups to illustrate fundamental concepts, generalizations, and theories within subject areas/disciplines.
2. **The Knowledge Construction Process:** Helping students understand the cultural implications within a subject area.
3. **An Equity Pedagogy:** Adapting teaching methods to accommodate diverse learning styles in order to facilitate academic achievement among students of varying races, cultures, and social backgrounds.
4. **Prejudice Reduction:** Identifying racial characteristics and determining methods to teach students about them.
5. **Training Students:** Engaging students in activities and interactions with diverse ethnic and racial groups to create an academic culture.

These statements suggest that multicultural education can foster a well-educated and informed society, rather than a society that avoids social and cultural realities. Therefore, while multicultural education in Indonesia is relatively new as an approach deemed more suitable for Indonesia's heterogeneous society,

especially during the era of autonomy and decentralization, it aligns with democratic development. If not carefully implemented, it could lead to national disunity. Thus, the implementation of multicultural education from a global perspective must be well-prepared.

(Lie, 2016) states that multicultural education in Indonesia faces three fundamental challenges:

1. **Hegemonization Phenomenon:** The segregation of students into schools based on socio-economic, religious, and ethnic backgrounds, leading to a tug-of-war between excellence and accessibility.
2. **Curriculum Bias:** The curriculum still reflects gender, socio-economic status, local culture, and geography, showing imbalance and bias that limits students' multicultural awareness.
3. **Teacher Competence:** Generally, teachers' qualifications and competencies in Indonesia are below standard, especially for managing multicultural education (Lie, 2016).

To effectively implement multicultural education, attention must be given to various aspects such as multicultural curriculum, teacher training, the learning process, and evaluation using a multicultural approach (Cammarota, 2007):

- **Multicultural Curriculum:** This approach aims to value and incorporate cultural diversity in learning. It involves integrating various cultural perspectives, traditions, languages, and values into the school curriculum. The goal is to promote understanding, tolerance, and respect for cultural differences and to help students develop skills for living in a multicultural society.

Key aspects of a multicultural curriculum include:

1. **Inclusion and Representation:** Incorporating stories, histories, and contributions from diverse cultural groups into the learning materials.
2. **Development of Intercultural Skills:** Helping students develop the ability to communicate and collaborate with individuals from different cultural backgrounds.
3. **Critical Teaching:** Encouraging students to analyze and understand social structures that may affect intercultural relationships.
4. **Language Learning:** Providing opportunities to learn other languages and understand the cultural context behind them.
5. **Respect for Diversity:** Teaching values such as tolerance, social justice, and anti-discrimination.

The implementation of a multicultural curriculum may vary depending on local contexts and student needs. This may involve adjustments in teaching methods, material choices, and school activities to support understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity.

Models for multicultural curricula include both "official" curricula and the "hidden curriculum"—unwritten and unplanned processes where values, knowledge, and skills are internalized among students. In the "official" curriculum, multicultural education should be integrated into all subjects and cross-curricular activities. It is preferable that multicultural perspectives not be added as an extra burden but be embedded into the existing curriculum (Suradi, 2018).

Thus, a multicultural curriculum model should integrate the processes of learning values, knowledge, and skills necessary for life in a multicultural society, such as negotiation skills, dealing with differences, conflict resolution, cooperative learning, and problem-solving. These aspects should be designed according to child development stages and educational levels. Multicultural values should be incorporated into teaching strategies that promote the internalization of these values (Suradi, 2018).

Curriculum development with a multicultural approach should be based on the principles of: (1) cultural diversity as the foundation for philosophy; (2) cultural diversity as the basis for developing curriculum components such as objectives, content, processes, and evaluation; (3) culture in the educational environment as a source of learning and study; (4) curriculum as a medium for developing both local and national culture (Owoeye & Omole, 2012); Mansur, 2016).

Values of Unity and Solidarity in Multicultural Education

The values of unity and solidarity are crucial foundations in multicultural education. In a diverse educational context, the application of these values plays a vital role in creating an inclusive and harmonious learning environment. Concrete manifestations of these values can be seen in various aspects, such as the implementation of curricula that respect and reflect cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity; the development of extracurricular programs that promote collaboration among students from different backgrounds; and training for educators to adopt culturally sensitive teaching approaches. Additionally, active intercultural dialogue and the formation of inclusive learning groups are essential means to foster a sense of togetherness and solidarity among students. Therefore, educational institutions not only teach

students to appreciate differences but also shape them into agents of change who can maintain unity and solidarity in a multicultural society.

Multicultural education plays an important role in instilling the values of unity and solidarity, especially in countries with high cultural diversity like Indonesia. (Banks & Barry, 2017) state that through multicultural education, students are taught to appreciate differences, collaborate in diversity, and develop an inclusive national identity. This type of education can also facilitate social integration and reduce prejudice, which often sources conflicts (Gorski, 2009).

Challenges and Opportunities in Multicultural Education in the Era of Globalization

Multicultural education in the era of globalization faces various significant challenges and opportunities. The main challenges include integrating local cultural values with global values, which can often be different or even conflicting. Globalization tends to spread cultural homogenization, which can erode local cultural identities. Additionally, multicultural education encounters issues of unequal access to education, where minority groups are often underserved in the dominant education system.

However, globalization also presents significant opportunities for multicultural education. Broader cultural and informational exchanges can enhance understanding and appreciation of diversity. Multicultural education can serve as a means to promote tolerance, international cooperation, and world peace. Furthermore, with the advent of information technology, access to various cultural perspectives has become easier, allowing for a more comprehensive and inclusive development of multicultural education.

Research published in the Journal of Multicultural Education indicates that well-designed multicultural education can strengthen students' social competencies and reduce intergroup prejudice (Banks, 1993), (Banks & Barry, 2017). Additionally, studies by Sonia (Nieto, 2009), (Sonia Nieto, 2017) in the International Journal of Multicultural Studies suggest that multicultural education in the era of globalization can prepare students to become more adaptive and responsive global citizens.

In this context, it is crucial for educators and policymakers to design curricula that not only acknowledge cultural diversity but also integrate it into a holistic learning experience. Thus, multicultural education becomes not just a tool for understanding differences but also for celebrating unity in diversity. The era of globalization brings unique challenges for implementing multicultural education, such as the increased influence of global culture that can undermine local cultural identities. However, globalization also offers opportunities to enrich multicultural education through broader access to knowledge and educational practices from various cultures (Stephen Castles, 2000). According to Nieto (2009), multicultural education in the era of globalization must balance between valuing local cultural identities and being open to global influences.

Multicultural Education as a Binder of Unity in Indonesia

In the context of Indonesia, multicultural education is not only important but crucial for maintaining national unity and solidarity. (Mappaenre et al., 2023) argue that multicultural education in Indonesia should be directed towards strengthening an inclusive national identity that encompasses various existing cultural identities. This is supported by research showing that multicultural education can enhance social solidarity and reduce intergroup tensions (Banks, 1993), (Flaxman & Banks, 1974).

Multicultural education plays a critical role in building and strengthening unity in Indonesia, a country rich in ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. As an educational strategy, this approach aims not only to appreciate and celebrate diversity but also to address differences that can lead to social tensions. Research indicates that multicultural education can act as a bridge connecting various social groups constructively and inclusively.

According to (Banks, 1993) in *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*, multicultural education helps students understand and appreciate cultural differences, which in turn can reduce prejudice and enhance social cohesion. They emphasize that an effective multicultural curriculum not only introduces various cultural perspectives but also builds skills for communicating and working effectively with people from different backgrounds.

Moreover, research by (Ladson-Billings, 2021) in *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* shows that multicultural education can improve student engagement and learning outcomes by reinforcing the connection between students' cultural experiences and the school curriculum.

This approach leads to increased sense of belonging and active participation in the school community, supporting unity and social integration.

In Indonesia, where ethnic and cultural diversity often sources conflict, multicultural education can serve as a vital tool for building national unity. Research by (Sutami et al., 2022) in the *Journal of Indonesian Education* highlights that education incorporating multicultural values can help reduce horizontal conflicts and promote social integration in a pluralistic society like Indonesia.

Overall, the effective implementation of multicultural education in Indonesia will not only reduce social divisions but also strengthen unity amidst diversity. This approach requires support from all parties, including the government, educators, and the broader community, to ensure that multicultural values are thoroughly integrated into the educational system.

Implementation of Multicultural Education in Schools

The implementation of multicultural education in Indonesian schools involves developing a curriculum that reflects cultural diversity, training teachers in managing multicultural classrooms, and creating a learning environment that values differences. (Banks & Barry, 2017) emphasize that multicultural education must be integrated into all aspects of education, from the curriculum to classroom interactions. Research by (Sleeter, 2011) indicates that when multicultural education is effectively implemented, it can enhance students' academic achievement and build positive attitudes toward diversity.

Developing a curriculum for a large, diverse, and economically challenged country like Indonesia is not an easy task. Social, cultural, economic, and political diversity must be considered in the philosophy, theory, vision, curriculum document development, curriculum socialization, and implementation (Fox & Gay, 1995). Therefore, implementing multicultural education requires addressing several key areas, including curriculum integration design, standardization of books and materials, curriculum content development, professional development and teacher training, activity design, and monitoring and evaluation plans (Abidin & Murtadlo, 2020).

a. Educators (Teachers)

The development of a multicultural curriculum should be preceded by effective socialization so that teachers can develop syllabi and lesson plans, classroom processes, and evaluations that adhere to multicultural principles. The "key determinant" of the success of multicultural education is the teacher. Teachers are the main implementers in the field who interact directly with students. To support curriculum development, several steps are necessary:

- Socialization and Teacher Training: Teachers should be provided with a clear understanding of multicultural education, its goals, and its benefits. Comprehensive training is needed to ensure that teachers can integrate multicultural principles into daily teaching.
- Syllabus and Lesson Plan Development: Teachers need guidance in developing syllabi and lesson plans that reflect cultural diversity and inclusive values. This includes incorporating content from various cultures and using teaching methods that respect cultural differences in the classroom.
- Classroom Learning Processes: Teaching in the classroom should be designed to be inclusive and accommodate students' diverse cultural backgrounds. Teachers should create a learning environment that values diversity and encourages intercultural dialogue.
- Appropriate Evaluation: Evaluation systems should also consider multicultural principles, avoiding cultural bias and ensuring that all students have a fair opportunity to demonstrate their understanding.
- Collaborative Approach: Teachers should collaborate with peers and the community to continuously update their knowledge and practices in multicultural education. This also involves engaging parents and the community in the educational process.
- By preparing and involving teachers effectively, a multicultural approach to the curriculum can be well-implemented, creating a more inclusive educational environment that values diversity.
- Teachers must understand the characteristics of multicultural education to develop a multicultural curriculum in their teaching activities. A teacher using a multicultural approach must be "flexible," as teaching in a multicultural setting like Indonesia requires attention to "cultural differences." Factors such as building an inclusive and moderate religious paradigm in schools, respecting linguistic diversity, fostering gender sensitivity, developing a critical understanding of social injustices and differences, combating ethnic discrimination, valuing ability differences, and respecting age differences must be incorporated into the learning and awareness process in schools. Ultimately, students are expected to develop strong characters that are democratic, pluralistic, and humanistic (Acar-Ciftci, 2019).

b. Learning Processes

The learning process developed should place students in their social reality. This means that learning should involve group work and positive group competition, allowing individual differences to become group strengths and helping students adapt to various cultural, social, economic, intellectual, and political aspirations. Learning processes that can be developed include cooperative learning, problem solving, inquiry, and others (Bailenson et al., 2008).

c. Learning Evaluation

The evaluation used should encompass all aspects of students' abilities and personalities in accordance with the developed goals and content. Evaluation tools should not only measure learning outcomes (achievement) but also provide a clearer picture of the learning process. The use of alternative assessments is seen as an effort to integrate learning measurement activities with the overall learning process, with assessments themselves being an inseparable part of the learning process. Performance assessments, portfolio assessments, rubrics, observation guidelines, interview guidelines, rating scales, attitude scales, checklists, questionnaires, and others are tools that can be used to evaluate learning using a multicultural approach (Biggs, 1999).

The Role of Teachers and Schools in Developing Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is an approach that values cultural diversity and aims to create an inclusive learning environment that respects all cultural backgrounds. Teachers and schools play a crucial role in developing multicultural education. Here are some ways they can contribute:

a. The Role of Teachers in Multicultural Education

- a) Developing an Inclusive Curriculum:
 - o Teachers can design curricula that include the history, culture, and contributions of various ethnic and cultural groups. This helps students understand and appreciate diversity.
- b) Teaching Values and Tolerance:
 - o Teachers can impart values such as tolerance, justice, and empathy. They can guide students to respect differences and treat everyone with dignity.
- c) Using Diverse Teaching Methods:
 - o Employing various teaching methods that consider students' cultural backgrounds can help create an inclusive learning environment. This includes using teaching materials relevant to different cultures.
- d) Being Role Models:
 - o Teachers should act as role models in respecting diversity. Their attitudes and behaviors towards students from different backgrounds can influence how students perceive and treat others.
- e) Supporting Family Involvement:
 - o Teachers can encourage family engagement in their children's education, particularly families from diverse cultural backgrounds. This can help create a more inclusive and supportive environment.

b. The Role of Schools in Multicultural Education

- a) Inclusive School Policies:
 - o Schools can adopt policies that support multicultural education, such as anti-discrimination policies and the promotion of cultural diversity.
- b) Developing Programs and Activities:
 - o Schools can develop programs and activities that celebrate cultural diversity, such as cultural weeks, festivals, and collaborative projects involving various cultures.
- c) Teacher Training:
 - o Schools can provide training for teachers to enhance their understanding of multicultural education and how to implement it in their teaching.
- d) Creating an Inclusive Physical Environment:
 - o Schools can create a physical environment that reflects cultural diversity by displaying artwork, posters, and other materials that represent various cultures.
- e) Building a Supportive School Community:
 - o Schools can work to build a supportive community where all students feel valued and accepted. This includes supporting student groups from diverse cultural backgrounds and creating spaces for them to share their experiences.
 - o The role of teachers and schools in developing multicultural education is vital. Schools, as educational institutions, play a key role in instilling awareness among the younger generation about their individual

and collective identities and nurturing future citizens in both homogeneous and diverse societies (Tonbuloglu et al., 2016). Meanwhile, teachers aim to train and discipline students, provide moral and religious education, instill nationalistic and patriotic awareness, and contribute to their overall development. Thus, teachers play a crucial role in multicultural education, as they are central to this educational strategy. Predicting future societal characteristics is challenging, as societal development is no longer linear in the global era, necessitating educational institutions and teachers to have multicultural awareness—awareness of the need to provide education to those with different needs (Cherng & Davis, 2019).

Therefore, teachers and schools need to understand various student needs as follows:

- **The Role of Teachers and Schools in Building Religious Paradigms**

Teachers are essential in implementing inclusive and moderate religious values in schools. A teacher with a moderate religious understanding can teach and implement these values among students (Miedema & NI, 2014). Teachers should: First, be democratic, meaning their actions and words should not be discriminatory towards students of different religions. Second, show high sensitivity to religious events. Schools also play a crucial role in creating a pluralistic and tolerant educational environment by: First, implementing local regulations that promote respect for different religions among all school members. Second, encouraging inter-religious dialogue among students with teacher guidance. Third, using textbooks that promote moderate religious understanding.

- **The Role of Teachers and Schools in Valuing Linguistic Diversity**

Teachers should value "linguistic diversity" and practice these values at school, fostering an environment where students respect others with different languages, accents, and dialects. Teachers should model respectful behavior regarding language differences, which students are expected to emulate (Flores & Rosa, 2015).

- **The Role of Teachers and Schools in Building Gender Sensitivity**

In multicultural education, the role is crucial in raising students' awareness about the importance of gender equality and building anti-discrimination attitudes towards women (Lumadi & Shongwe, 2010). Teachers should: First, have sufficient knowledge about gender equality. This is important because teachers are central figures in students' lives, influencing their understanding of gender fairness. Second, practice gender fairness directly in the classroom. Third, be sensitive to gender issues both inside and outside the classroom. Schools should also: First, have and enforce anti-discrimination gender policies. Second, provide gender training for all staff and students to effectively promote equality and anti-discrimination. Third, organize seminars or social events related to gender equality.

- **The Role of Teachers and Schools in Building Social Awareness**

Teachers and schools contribute to developing students' critical awareness of social, economic, and political injustices. Teachers should be informed about social issues affecting students, such as poverty, unemployment, and corruption. In the classroom, teachers should practice fairness and avoid favoritism based on students' social backgrounds. Schools should establish and enforce rules addressing social injustices and organize social service activities to help students engage with community issues (Wentzel, 1997).

- **The Role of Teachers and Schools in Building Anti-Ethnic Discrimination Attitudes**

Teachers play a crucial role in fostering anti-ethnic discrimination sensitivity. Teachers should be knowledgeable about anti-ethnic discrimination and model non-discriminatory behavior towards students from different ethnic backgrounds. Schools should also: Promote understanding and awareness of anti-ethnic discrimination by creating study centers or forums for dialogue to foster harmonious inter-ethnic relationships (Gaias et al., 2022).

- **The Role of Teachers and Schools in Building Anti-Discrimination Attitudes Towards Differences in Ability.**

Teachers are key in promoting awareness to avoid discriminatory attitudes towards students with different abilities. They should model acceptance and understanding of students with varying abilities, such as speech impairments or learning difficulties, to encourage mutual respect (Sianipar et al., 2021). Schools should: First, have policies that accept both "normal" students and those with different abilities. Second, provide specialized services and facilities for students with different abilities. Third, train teachers and staff on how to handle students with varying abilities.

- **The Role of Teachers and Schools in Building Anti-Discrimination Attitudes Towards Age Differences.**

Schools should enforce rules prohibiting age discrimination and encourage students to respect age differences. Schools should not impose age limits on admission if individuals meet the necessary criteria (Binat et al., 2017). Teachers should also understand and respect age differences and demonstrate this behavior in their interactions with students, providing equal attention to all regardless of age.

Conclusion

Multicultural education plays a crucial role as a binding force for values of unity, cohesion, and nationalism in the global era in Indonesia. Here are several conclusions regarding the importance of multicultural education:

Valuing Diversity: Multicultural education helps students understand and appreciate the cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity present in Indonesia. It fosters the awareness that differences are a wealth to be valued and preserved.

Fostering Tolerance and Empathy: Through multicultural education, students are taught to be tolerant and empathetic towards differences. This is essential in preventing social conflicts and promoting harmony in society.

Strengthening National Identity: Multicultural education teaches students to love and respect their own culture while remaining open to other cultures. This strengthens national identity and pride as Indonesian citizens.

Encouraging Cooperation and Solidarity: By understanding and appreciating differences, multicultural education encourages cooperation and solidarity among citizens. This helps build a more inclusive and cohesive society.

Preparing Generations for the Global Era: In the global era, the ability to interact and work with people from diverse backgrounds is increasingly important. Multicultural education prepares students to adapt and succeed in an interconnected world.

Maintaining National Unity and Integrity: By teaching values of togetherness, mutual respect, and patriotism, multicultural education acts as a fortress to preserve the unity and integrity of the Indonesian nation.

In Indonesia's multicultural context, multicultural education is not just an option but a necessity for building a strong, united, and peaceful nation. Teachers and educational institutions (schools) need to understand the concept of multicultural education from a global perspective so that the values contained in this education can be both taught and practiced before students. It is hoped that through the development of multicultural education, students will more easily understand their lessons and increase their awareness to always behave humanely, pluralistically, and democratically. Ultimately, students are expected to become a "multicultural generation" in the future, capable of facing unpredictable societal, national, and global conditions with discipline, humanitarian concern, adherence to morality, honesty in daily behavior, and the application of democratic values, justice, and humanity.

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