

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN MIDDLE-SCHOOL: CASE STUDY IN SOCIAL STUDIES LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to define the influence of multicultural education on junior high school students' acquisition of social studies knowledge. This study employs a qualitative and descriptive research approach. This study focuses on the Middle-School 6 Sidoarjo component, namely the instructor and students. The results of the data analysis and discussion show that the classroom implementation of multicultural education in social studies is effective. Students may be well-trained to influence and make a positive impact, among other desired outcomes. Be tolerant in accepting all differences, as they are manifestations of God's grace. Do not discriminate against friends who hold different beliefs; do not impose your own beliefs on others; allow others the freedom to choose their own beliefs; refrain from interfering with others' worship; continue to interact and behave well with those who hold dissimilar beliefs in worldly matters; show respect for those who are worshiping; and refrain from hating or hurting the feelings of those with differing beliefs or opinions. We expect these manifestations of tolerance to generate constructive energy, thereby preventing conflicts or disagreements among pupils.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Multiculturalism is an individual's perspective on the diverse lives and cultural policies prioritized in the community, characterized by cultural diversity in politics, systems, and routines. Multiculturalism serves as a worldview, translating into a range of cultural policies that prioritize acknowledging the religious and multicultural pluralities inherent in human lives (DomNwachukwu, 2010; Loh, 2022). Concurrently, Johansson (2024) asserts that "multiculturalism is an ideology that acknowledges and reflects the disparities in the equality of both individuals and cultures." Multiculturalism entails the comprehension, admiration, and assessment of one's own culture, as well as the respect and inquisitiveness toward the ethnic cultures of others.

In a pluralistic society, multicultural education is a method of fostering values and lifestyles that are both tolerant and respectful of the cultural diversity that exists (Kirac

et al., 2022; Sulaiman et al., 2023). In addition to instilling in students the values of tolerance, mutual respect, and cooperation in the face of cultural, racial, religious, and social group differences, multicultural education also equips students with the social skills necessary to navigate issues related to ideological differences. Multicultural education is a concept that aims to revitalize the educational process by providing all individuals with equal opportunities to excel in informal educational institutions (Ghosh & Galczynski, 2014; Obiakor, 2023). As a result of the diversity of religious, ethnic, cultural, and racial divisions, multicultural education requires an appreciation for differences. Moreover, multicultural education is a collection of beliefs and explanations that evaluate and acknowledge the significance of diversity in the form of social experience, personal identity, lifestyle, and educational opportunities from group countries.

According to numerous studies, multicultural education in Indonesia remains relatively unknown and is still a mere discourse with a lack of practice in schools (Hoon, 2017; Raihani, 2018; Tesar & Pangastuti, 2024). The writer conducted observations and interviews at Middle-School 6, Sidoarjo. Acquired information indicates that the optimal implementation of multicultural education in the school environment has not been achieved, particularly in the area of social studies education. There are still a variety of personal obstacles and problems that students encounter during the learning process and outside of the normal classroom hours. Teachers, who should be required to acquire and professionally teach social studies subjects, have not optimally instilled the values of tolerance, unity, democracy, and mutual respect. Consequently, the school continues to experience a range of deviant behaviors among its pupils, which are inconsistent with the objectives of multicultural education.

Consequently, Huda et al. (2021) holds that "the implementation of multicultural education is considered one of the most effective methods for fostering a sense of mutual tolerance and the ability to coexist in a diverse environment." From the outset, students' daily conduct will reflect their shared values of tolerance, respect for diversity, and love for peace, deeply ingrained in their personalities. This is predicated on the heterogeneous diversity of students, who belong to various religious traditions, including Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Furthermore, the students demonstrate inclusivity and represent various ethnic groups beyond the Javanese community. Eight classes, two of which are non-Muslim or of a different religion, make up each class.

According to the preceding description, it is necessary to adopt a stance or approach to the diverse characteristics of pupils to establish multicultural education in institutions and the community (Liu et al., 2020). Consequently, the teacher consistently instructs students on the importance of communication and establishes playgroups made up of students from a variety of religious, racial, and tribal backgrounds. This approach aims to eliminate any barriers or differences that could hinder social interaction among students. The sooner students grasp the concept of multiculturalism, the more it mitigates the risk of future national disintegration (Hossain, 2023).

Multicultural education is defined as the "study of people's color," which implies that multicultural education seeks to investigate differences as a divine gift. Multicultural education as an educational system that emphasizes cultural diversity. Furthermore, multicultural education is a perspective that acknowledges the social, economic, and political realities that are present in the complex and diverse encounters that each experiences across cultures (Lee et al., 2020; Portera, 2020). This perspective disregards the significance of social status, economics, sexuality, gender, religion, culture, race, ethnicity, and other exceptions in the educational process.

Multicultural education is a progressive approach to education that comprehensively critiques and demonstrates the weaknesses, failings, and discrimination that are present in the field. Multicultural education is defined as the process of educating individuals to develop attitudes that respect cultural diversity (Jayadi et al., 2022). The primary component of multicultural education is the arrangement of students' roles as parallel subjects. One student is identical to another. The process of multicultural education involves the establishment of a lifestyle that is characterized by respect, sincerity, and tolerance for the diversity of cultures that coexist in a plural society (Portera, 2020; Efendi & Lien, 2021). Multicultural education is a method of fostering mutual respect, tolerance, and assistance in social life, as evidenced by the aforementioned definitions of multicultural education.

The objective of multicultural education is to alter the method of learning and teaching to ensure that all students have equal opportunities (Banks, 2010; Grant & Sleeter, 2012). Multicultural education is a combination of education for freedom and the dissemination of inclusive movements to fortify interpersonal relationships. Classifies multicultural education objectives into three categories: learning, knowledge, and attitude objectives (Parkhouse et al., 2019; Smits & Janssenswillen, 2020).

The objective of multicultural education concerning attitude is to cultivate self-awareness, tolerance, sensitivity, and empathy for culture, as well as the ability to resolve and prevent conflict. The goal of multicultural education is to establish a multicultural education discourse within educational circles. This discourse intends to directly influence students' attitudes toward democracy, pluralism, and humanism in schools, with the expectation that they will adopt these attitudes for themselves. The aforementioned description indicates that multicultural education aims to foster values and lifestyles that respect and tolerate the cultural diversity present in a plural society.

Therefore, based on the previous conception, there has been no research related to multicultural education in the context of social studies in junior high school students. Thus, the purpose of this study is to define the influence of multicultural education on junior high school students' acquisition of social studies.

2. METHOD

This research methodology employs qualitative procedures to authentically investigate an occurrence within a social setting, prioritizing the interaction and profound communication between the researchers and the occurrences under study. This study aims to investigate and elucidate how the subject engages with their environment

in the context of multicultural education in social studies learning at Middle-School 6 Sidoarjo."

Four components define qualitative research: (1) it emphasizes the process, comprehension, and significance; (2) the researcher acts as the primary tool for data gathering and analysis; (3) inductive reasoning drives the research process; and (4) it presents the data descriptively, specifically through words and images (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The participants in this research consisted of students and instructors, particularly social studies teachers at Middle-School 6 Sidoarjo. The study's goal was to investigate the impact of multicultural education on the learning process at Middle-School 6 Sidoarjo. Evaluation guides the research topic selection, given the group members' unique position and expertise in the studied phenomenon. The research objectives, which aim to develop patterns of the influence of multicultural education on social studies learning in Middle-School 6 Sidoarjo, guide the selection of this research topic. When collecting data, researchers use the following methods: observation, interviews, and documentation.

The present investigation will use two distinct categories of instruments, namely the primary instrument and auxiliary instruments. In this study, the researcher is the primary instrument. Supportive tools are used by researchers as research aids. This work's empirical investigation employed [Miles & Huberman's \(1994\)](#) interactive model for data analysis. We conducted the data analysis using an interactive model, starting with the data collection procedure and continuing at each step of the research until its conclusion. [Miles & Huberman \(1994\)](#) proposed a three-stage process for analyzing qualitative data: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As mentioned in the school curriculum, multicultural education is not a standalone topic at Middle-School 6 Sidoarjo; rather, it is an integral part of school policy and culture. According to the results, the whole school community, including the principal, teachers, and support staff, must work together to ensure that kids are well-informed and prepared to participate in multicultural education programs. Still, the Vice Principal for Student Affairs has a larger structural role to play in student organizations. Students reside in a dorm that is part of the school grounds, clearly contributing to the school atmosphere both during and outside of class. Consequently, the classroom and boarding environment of Middle-School 6 Sidoarjo includes intercultural education.

According to the study's findings, Middle-School 6 Sidoarjo is fostering an ethos of tolerance through intercultural education. Middle-School 6 Sidoarjo's multicultural education program rests on three pillars: religious understanding, national pride, and discipline.

The following are selected passages from the study's interview data about the school's constituent parts. Mr. Khoiril Huda, Middle-School 6 Sidoarjo's Deputy Principal for Student Affairs, provided the following account of the school's multicultural environment:

"In this school for multicultural education, we do not discriminate between those from any ethnicity we spread widely."

At our school, there are various religions, and all ethnic groups are from Sabang Sampek Merauke. Only we have a special class that accommodates these differences, labeled B and H. There are a variety of religions, ethnic groups, and a balanced composition of women (B and H).

"Mrs. Utik Rednawati, a social studies teacher, asserted that Indonesia's unity lies in its diversity. She began by acknowledging that the country is home to a variety of ethnic groups, each with unique customs, languages, and homes. By embedding this diversity, we can foster mutual tolerance among friends and children, thereby preventing disagreements. Research backs up this statement."

Interviews with Yonathan Ageng P, a student at Middle-School 6 Sidoarjo, and the school's president revealed that the school embraces a wide range of religious and ethnic backgrounds.

According to an interview with Mr. Suryantoro, a social studies teacher:

"In Sidoarjo, there are many migrant tribes. One class includes the Madurese, and Oseng tribes from Banyuwangi, and Sundanese. This highlights the fact that teachers, like students, are cognizant of the multicultural conditions that exist. Religions and cultures will exist for as long as there are tribes, faiths, and cultures. As a bonus, this can help students learn about religious tolerance and tribal harmony, how to pray for Muslims (assalamualaikum) and Christians (good morning and afternoon) by their faiths, and how to select educational resources (videos) if pupils do not listen attentively during lectures."

The school is making efforts to foster tolerance in multicultural education

The instructor plays a crucial role in the process of acquiring academic knowledge. The effectiveness of learning, both within and outside the classroom, is fundamentally contingent upon the teacher's guidance and delivery of teachings to pupils (Bentall, 2020; Lim et al., 2024). The role of the teacher in promoting an attitude of tolerance is significant (Andrews & Aydin, 2020). To cultivate this attitude among pupils, the teacher must regularly demonstrate it in their everyday lives, both directly and indirectly. The following are the implementation techniques for handling character values.

Teaching and learning activities must take place only inside the confines of the educational institution. In the classroom, the instructor and students conduct instructional and educational activities to impart the lecture content. Instructors at Middle-School 6 Sidoarjo are using teaching and learning approaches to foster tolerance among pupils in the classroom, according to the acquired data.

Practically, incorporating teaching and learning activities into the curriculum fosters tolerance. By integrating character development into subjects, the school aims to align national education objectives with its vision, mission, and goals (Hermino & Arifin, 2020; Ferrer-Estévez & Chalmeta, 2021). This will enable the school to achieve national

education goals and cultivate students who possess robust character, particularly in terms of tolerance towards one another.

The research focused primarily on the learning activities related to social studies education carried out by instructors in the classroom setting. Because there are Muslim and non-Muslim pupils in a single class, Middle-School 6 Sidoarjo conducts its teaching and learning activities separately.

Segregated learning is very efficient since it prevents any kind of unfairness in the learning process. Minority pupils must not face exclusion from social studies. Therefore, the instructor's incorporation of character development could potentially enhance the integration of learning within the classroom (Harrison & Laco, 2022). Nevertheless, the cultivation of character should not overlook the primary goals in the educational process to ensure that pupils develop a character with high moral standards.

Extracurricular activities are educational activities that take place outside of regular classroom instruction. We conduct these activities either inside or outside the instructional setting to enhance understanding, enhance abilities, and incorporate religious principles or regulations and societal standards from local, national, and global contexts. Middle-School 6 Sidoarjo provides a variety of extracurricular activities, including mading, Scouting, volleyball, soccer, sepak takraw, arts, and many more. Therefore, extracurricular activities can facilitate the implementation of character education. Extracurricular activities provide a platform for students to express their innate abilities and personal interests. Extracurricular activities provide a means for students to use their time outside of the classroom by engaging in meaningful activities, making responsible learning decisions, and effectively managing their time and work, thus fostering the development of character and skills.

Practically speaking, the social studies instruction process in the classroom proceeds seamlessly, and pupils may be meticulously motivated. One aspect of tolerance is the acceptance of all diversity because these distinctions are a manifestation of the Divine Grace of Allah Almighty.

1. Do not exhibit prejudice toward friends who have divergent ideas.
2. Avoid coercing individuals based on their religious beliefs.
3. Grant others the autonomy to choose their views (religion).
4. Avoid disrupting the worship and religious practices of those with divergent views.
5. In secular affairs, maintain communication and exhibit tolerant behavior towards individuals of diverse religious beliefs.
6. Deference to those engaged in religious devotion.
7. Refrain from harboring animosity and causing emotional distress towards someone who has divergent thoughts or viewpoints from our own.

Within the school, some manifestations of tolerance include mutual respect, variations in places of worship, and the practice of encouraging classmates to observe their religious views at certain times (Coleman & White, 2011; Suryani & Muslim, 2024). We anticipate that these manifestations of tolerance will foster a constructive atmosphere, thereby preventing conflicts or disagreements among students. These tolerances are inherent components of the current tolerance framework. The

manifestation of this tolerance is necessary across all individuals and backgrounds to establish a cohesive and varied society that is abundant in innovative ideas (Velthuis et al., 2021). Perpetual cultivation of this tolerance is vital in multicultural education.

The analysis focuses on the various manifestations of tolerance in middle school education. Middle-School 6 Sidoarjo suggests that the school's vision, mission, and objectives manifest the promotion of tolerance. Every topic incorporates this, and an outstanding teacher facilitates extracurricular learning to reinforce it. As a result, to promote tolerance in social studies education, all members of the school community, particularly students and teachers, must actively participate in its implementation. Ensuring the proper maintenance and use of educational facilities and infrastructure, both inside and outside the classroom, is critical for fostering students' character development.

4. CONCLUSION

Findings from the analysis of data and interviews with school staff show that incorporating multicultural education into social studies lessons has a big effect on the growth of tolerance in Middle-School 6 Sidoarjo. Researchers at the designated study site carry out observations and interviews to derive the measures of tolerance in schools.

Practically speaking, social studies instruction in the classroom runs smoothly, allowing for meticulous student shaping. Tolerance manifests in many forms: (1). Show tolerance in accepting all differences, as diversity is a manifestation of Allah Almighty's divine favor. (2). Do not exhibit prejudice toward friends who have divergent ideas. (3). Avoid coercing individuals based on their religious beliefs. (4). Grant others the autonomy to choose their views (religion). (5). Avoid disrupting the worship and religious practices of those with divergent views. (6). In secular affairs, maintain communication and exhibit tolerant behavior toward individuals of diverse religious beliefs. (7). We show respect to those who are involved in religious devotion. (8). Refrain from harboring animosity and causing emotional distress towards someone who has divergent thoughts or viewpoints from our own.

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