

Values Of Multicultural Education In Preventing Racism

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Volume: 4 ISSN: 2963-5489	This study explores the values of multicultural education as an effective approach to preventing racism in Indonesia's diverse society. Using a qualitative descriptive method with a literature review approach, this research examines various perspectives and findings from previous studies related to multicultural education. The results indicate that multicultural education is not limited to promoting tolerance, but also emphasizes justice, equality, and empathy as fundamental values that can strengthen unity and reduce discriminatory attitudes. These values, when integrated into the curriculum and classroom practices, provide equal opportunities for students of different ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds to learn and grow harmoniously. Furthermore, Islamic Religious Education plays a significant role in instilling noble character and multicultural values in students, thereby fostering inclusivity, mutual respect, and compassion. Overall, multicultural education serves as a key instrument in building an inclusive educational environment that prevents racism and promotes social cohesion within Indonesia's multicultural society.
KEYWORD	
Multicultural Education, Tolerance, Justice, Equality, Empathy, Racism Prevention.	

1. Introduction

Indonesia is rich in cultural diversity, encompassing ethnic groups, religions, languages, and traditions. This diversity strengthens the unity and integrity of the nation. The motto "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*" teaches that although we are different, we remain one nation. Differences should serve as a unifying force, not a source of division. In a multicultural society, it is essential to preserve and respect diversity to prevent disunity. Education plays a vital role in maintaining and strengthening Indonesia's unity. It faces two major challenges in instilling the values of unity and integrity in students. First, how to raise awareness of the importance of unity and cohesion. Second, how to develop this awareness so that it is manifested in attitudes of mutual respect and appreciation of diversity in social, national, and civic life. These challenges can be addressed through multicultural education. In multicultural education, every citizen—regardless of ethnic, cultural, or religious background—receives equal opportunities to learn and grow.

Multicultural education is not only about tolerance but also about strengthening national unity. By understanding and appreciating diversity, children will grow into inclusive individuals who love their homeland. Schools play an important role in teaching these values. There are three key factors in multicultural education: first, integrating these values into learning through group discussions; second, developing sensitivity to multicultural issues; and third, fostering attitudes of respect, sincerity, and tolerance toward diversity. Racism often emerges in multicultural countries. Indonesia, as a multicultural nation, consists of various races, ethnicities, cultures, religions, and social groups. This diversity has the potential to generate conflicts

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related to racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, or group differences. Moreover, disparities in social and economic status in Indonesia often lead to conflicts that are difficult to avoid.

The importance of multiculturalism in elementary schools is crucial in preventing racism, as children at this stage are developing their worldview and perceptions of others. By introducing the concepts of cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity from an early age, students learn to appreciate differences and to understand that everyone, regardless of background, has the same right to be respected. Schools that teach multicultural values also create inclusive environments where children feel accepted, valued, and involved, thereby fostering a more peaceful and respectful climate. Previous research has also widely discussed multiculturalism, such as the journal article written by Rani Rahim, “*Multicultural Education to Overcome Racism in Mathematics*.” The article examines the role of multicultural education in addressing racism within mathematics learning. In this context, teachers are expected to treat students fairly without discrimination and to utilize Indonesia’s diversity as a means of cultivating respect and appreciation for differences.

This research is a qualitative descriptive study using a literature review approach. A literature review is defined as a series of activities related to methods of collecting library data, reading and taking notes, as well as processing research materials. The data collection technique in this study is documentation of relevant literature such as journals, articles, and books related to the research topic, in order to obtain data or information connected to the problem being studied. Data collection techniques are the most strategic step in research because the main objective of research is to obtain data.

2. Results and Discussion

2.1 Definition of Multicultural Education

The term *multicultural* is derived from two English words, *multi* and *culture*. Generally, *multi* means many or various kinds, while *culture* has several meanings, such as civilization, refinement, and cultivation. The term *multiculturalism* comes from three words: *multi* (many), *culture* (culture), and *ism* (idea or ideology). Thus, multiculturalism can be understood as the acceptance of cultural diversity. Parekh explains multiculturalism as a perspective that contains values, philosophy, wisdom, and norms used to address cultural diversity in a plural society.

Banks argues that multicultural education is a system of beliefs and explanations that recognizes and appreciates cultural and ethnic diversity in various aspects, such as lifestyle, social experiences, personal identity, and educational opportunities for individuals, groups, and nations. He defines multicultural education as an idea, a movement, a reform, and an educational process whose primary goal is to restructure educational institutions so that all students—both male and female, students with special needs, and those from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds—have equal opportunities to achieve academic success in school.

Hernandez explains that multicultural education is a perspective that acknowledges the social, political, and economic realities experienced by individuals in complex and culturally diverse human interactions. It also reflects the importance of cultural, racial, sexual and gender, ethnic, religious, social, and economic factors, as well as various forms of exclusion in the educational process. Other scholars, such as Sleeter, Grant, and Smith, describe multicultural education as a progressive approach that aims to transform education by providing a holistic critique of the weaknesses, failures, and discrimination present in the field of education. In addition, Ainul Yakin, as cited in Sutarno, states that multicultural education is a strategy applied across all subjects by utilizing cultural differences among students—such as ethnicity, religion, language, gender, social class, race, ability, and age—in order to make the learning process more effective and accessible.

Multicultural education serves as a response to the reality of cultural diversity by developing each individual’s potential while also respecting the plurality and differences that arise from cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious diversity. At the educational level, multicultural education must continue to be developed through curriculum design that supports and implements multicultural values. An integrative curriculum model and instructional design can serve as alternatives for developing multicultural learning in the classroom.

Multicultural education must consist of five interrelated components, namely:

- a. Content Integration, which refers to the way educators incorporate various cultures and student groups to build understanding of fundamental concepts, form generalizations, and develop theories within the subject matter.
- b. Knowledge Construction Process, which involves the use of methods, activities, and questions by educators to help students understand, investigate, and explain the influence of culture on the development of subject matter.
- c. Prejudice Reduction, which includes two aspects: first, the process of identifying students' racial attitudes; and second, determining the teaching methods used by educators to help students develop democratic values and attitudes.
- d. Equity Pedagogy, which refers to the adaptation of teaching methods by educators to align with students' learning styles, in order to facilitate diverse academic achievement across race, culture, ethnicity, and gender.
- e. Empowering School Culture and Social Structure, in which the school undertakes empowerment to restructure its social system as a complex multicultural community through various elements such as curriculum, materials, perceptions, and teachers' behaviors.

One of the subjects that plays a significant role in instilling multicultural values is Islamic Religious Education. The purpose of Islamic Religious Education is to instill noble character in children during their developmental stages, while also providing guidance and advice. In this way, such character becomes an integral part of their personality, ultimately fostering virtue, goodness, and compassion for the benefit of the nation.

2.2 The Values of Multicultural Education in Preventing Racism

The values of multicultural education encompass four main principles that can help prevent racism: the value of tolerance, the value of justice, the value of equality, and the value of empathy. The following is an explanation of these four multicultural values:

a. The value of tolerance

Tolerance refers to living together in a society composed of diverse beliefs, ethnicities, cultures, and social statuses. The practice of tolerance among individuals focuses on developing an understanding of mutual respect and acceptance. The value of tolerance taught to students encompasses various aspects of school life. According to informants, with the presence of different cultures and ethnic groups, students are encouraged to accept, respect, and acknowledge other student groups, whether in terms of language, ethnicity, dialect, or other differences. Schools are expected to embrace all elements of pluralism and multiculturalism. This appreciation is aimed at achieving the ultimate goal: the creation of harmony and peace.

b. The value of justice

The term justice originates from the Arabic word *adl*, which means equality or balance. It reflects the recognition of and equal treatment toward rights and obligations. If we acknowledge our right to life, we are also obliged to preserve that right through significant effort without harming others, because others equally possess the right to life. Likewise, if we recognize the rights of others to live, we must allow them to safeguard their own rights. Therefore, justice involves a balance or harmony between claiming rights and fulfilling obligations. The principle of justice emphasizes that all citizens must be treated fairly, regardless of differences in ethnicity, race, religion, language, economic status, or social standing. The state must ensure justice for all of its citizens.

c. The value of equality

Equality, derived from the word *equal*, refers to a condition in which every individual is at the same level, position, or rank. It emphasizes that no one is placed higher or lower than others. The value of equality carries the meaning of balance. If illustrated by a "scale," the weights must remain balanced and not tip to one side. Equality is also closely related to the value of harmony, because when schools are able to act fairly in every decision-making process, a harmonious atmosphere will be created. School management faces the challenge of balancing the rights and obligations of every member of the school community. In this regard, school leaders, teachers, staff, and students are all required to act fairly in carrying out their roles.

In conclusion, the values of tolerance, justice, and equality play a fundamental role in preventing racism. Tolerance fosters mutual respect and acceptance among individuals of diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, creating a peaceful and inclusive environment. Justice ensures fairness by balancing rights and obligations, thereby eliminating discriminatory practices that often lead to racial inequality. Equality emphasizes the recognition that all individuals are of the same worth, regardless of their background, and must be treated without hierarchy or bias. When these three values are integrated into education and daily social life, they serve as powerful tools to strengthen unity, harmony, and social cohesion, while effectively reducing the potential for racism.

3. Conclusion

Multicultural education plays a crucial role in shaping inclusive, respectful, and harmonious societies. The integration of its core values tolerance, justice, equality, and empathy provides a strong foundation for preventing racism. Tolerance nurtures respect and acceptance among individuals of diverse backgrounds; justice ensures fairness by balancing rights and responsibilities; equality emphasizes the equal worth of every individual regardless of social or cultural differences; and empathy strengthens mutual understanding. When these values are embedded into the educational process, particularly through subjects such as Islamic Religious Education, schools become agents of unity that foster peaceful coexistence. Ultimately, the practice of multicultural education not only prevents racism but also contributes to national integrity, social cohesion, and the development of a just and inclusive society.

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