

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM MANAGEMENT TO DEVELOP GLOBAL DIVERSITY DIMENSIONS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

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Abstract. This article aims to present the management of multicultural education programs that can be implemented in early childhood education to develop dimensions of global diversity. This research employs a literature study approach, where data is collected from various books, journals, and articles relevant to the topic. The research results indicate that the development of dimensions of global diversity in early childhood can be enhanced through the management of multicultural education. The research findings are expected to provide practical recommendations for educators and policymakers in designing and implementing educational programs that support children's development in understanding and appreciating cultural diversity on a global level.

Keywords: Early Childhood, Education, Global Diversity, Management, Multicultural

INTRODUCTION

In the advancing era of globalization, it is crucial to realize that younger generations need a deep understanding of cultural diversity. Globalization has interconnected societies worldwide, making cultural interactions inevitable in various aspects of life, such as education, work, and social relationships. While Indonesia's rich cultural diversity is a source of cultural wealth, it also holds the potential to trigger conflicts if not managed with understanding and respect. Therefore, fostering an understanding of cultural diversity becomes essential when introduced early, as early childhood is a critical stage in a person's development. At this stage, the foundations of personality, values, and attitudes begin to take shape, laying the groundwork for future behavior. Understanding diversity can be effectively nurtured through well-designed multicultural education programs.

Mauharir et al. (2022) define multicultural education as an idea, an educational reform movement, and a process aimed at reshaping the structure of educational institutions so that children from different racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds have equal academic opportunities in schools. Similarly, Sukoco (2015) describes multicultural education as a process and strategy for fostering attitudes that appreciate and respect individuals with different cultural, racial, ethnic, religious, social class, and gender perspectives. This understanding is vital because every individual has different dimensions regarding thoughts, perceptions, experiences, attitudes, and behaviors in a multicultural environment.

1.1 The Importance of Multicultural Education in Early Childhood

Based on these definitions, multicultural education is more than just teaching about cultures; it is a holistic approach to preparing children to live and interact harmoniously in diverse societies. It helps children develop essential values such as tolerance, empathy, and open-mindedness. By introducing children to cultural diversity early on, educators can help shape their attitudes toward inclusivity and acceptance, fostering skills for peaceful coexistence.

Early childhood is an ideal stage to implement multicultural education because children are naturally curious and open to learning about the world around them. This stage provides a unique opportunity to instill positive attitudes toward differences before biases and stereotypes take root. Activities such as storytelling, cultural festivals, food-tasting events, and art projects can serve as engaging ways to introduce young children to the concept of diversity.

1.2 Multicultural Education and the Pancasila Student Profile

In Indonesia, the "Independent Curriculum" (Kurikulum Merdeka) places significant emphasis on character development aligned with the dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile. Kahfi (2022) states that the Pancasila Student Profile aims to cultivate honorable Indonesian students who follow God as a guide in life, possess qualities that enable them to compete nationally and globally, work collaboratively with anyone and anywhere, carry out their tasks independently, think critically, and generate creative ideas for development.

The Pancasila Student Profile consists of six dimensions, which are highly relevant to the goals of multicultural education:

- 1.2.1 Being Faithful, Devoted to God Almighty, and Having Noble Character
Encourages children to develop moral values rooted in their faith and traditions while respecting the beliefs of others.
- 1.2.2 Embracing Global Diversity
Teaches children to recognize and appreciate the cultural richness of their community and the world, fostering respect and responsibility in social interactions.
- 1.2.3 Collaborating Effectively
Prepares children to work with peers from diverse backgrounds, emphasizing teamwork and mutual understanding.
- 1.2.4 Thinking Critically
Develops the ability to analyze and evaluate cultural norms and practices, encouraging informed perspectives.
- 1.2.5 Acting Independently
Builds self-confidence and the ability to make respectful choices in a multicultural context.
- 1.2.6 Being Creative
Inspires children to use cultural knowledge as a foundation for creative expression and innovation.

1.3 Practical Applications in Early Childhood Education

For instance, the application of the "Embracing Global Diversity" dimension in kindergarten could involve teaching children about various cultures in their environment. This can be done through simple yet impactful activities such as:

Introducing Traditional Attire: Allow children to explore traditional clothing from different regions of Indonesia, fostering respect and admiration for cultural uniqueness.

Storytelling with Diverse Narratives: Sharing folktales and stories from different cultural backgrounds helps children understand diverse traditions and moral values.

Cultural Festivals: Organizing cultural festivals where children and parents can participate in dances, songs, or crafts from various ethnic groups encourages active learning and appreciation.

Collaborative Projects: Encouraging children to work together to create art pieces inspired by cultural symbols or landmarks promotes teamwork and understanding.

These activities align with the concept of multicultural education, aiming to nurture children who grow into tolerant, empathetic, and open-minded individuals.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this study is a qualitative approach conducted through a literature review. All data collected is sourced from journals and other references. This methodological approach aims to provide insights into the definition of the concept of multicultural education and its relation to developing the dimension of "embracing global diversity" in early childhood. The literature review in this research encompasses the following:

1. Literature review on the concept of multicultural education.
2. Literature review on multicultural education and its relationship to developing the dimension of "embracing global diversity" in early childhood.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

This study examines the concept of multicultural education and its connection to developing the dimension of "embracing global diversity" in early childhood. Based on the literature review conducted, it was found that children encounter a great deal of diversity, particularly in the school environment. Such diversity should not become a source of conflict if children are introduced to multicultural education early on.

According to Plata & Robertson (1998) and Ross & Wang (2010), families, schools, and teachers play a crucial role in teaching multicultural education to young children. Multicultural education is an educational approach that acknowledges and values cultural diversity while aiming to promote understanding, tolerance, and respect for cultural differences. Banks (2015) states that multicultural education not only teaches children about cultural diversity but also helps them develop the social and emotional skills necessary to interact effectively in a multicultural society.

In the context of early childhood, multicultural education can be implemented in various ways, such as introducing children to diverse traditions and cultures through stories, music, dance, and activities that reflect cultural diversity. Research by Gay (2010) indicates that children exposed to multicultural education from an early age tend to have more open and tolerant attitudes toward cultural differences.

The findings of this study suggest that implementing multicultural education in kindergarten can enhance children's global diversity dimension. Children participating in multicultural education programs demonstrate a better understanding of various cultures around them and show greater appreciation and respect for differences. Additionally, they develop a sense of social responsibility and the ability to collaborate with peers from different cultural backgrounds.

Furthermore, Sleeter and Grant (2009) reveal that well-implemented multicultural education can help children develop a strong sense of self-identity, empathy, and intercultural communication skills. This aligns with the dimension of "embracing global diversity" in the Pancasila Student Profile, underscoring its significance in fostering tolerance, empathy, and openness in children.

CONCLUSION

The findings from the literature review in this study conclude that multicultural education focuses on preparing children to thrive in diverse environments. This aligns with the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile in the dimension of "embracing global diversity" in kindergarten. Through this approach, children can learn about various cultures in their surroundings and demonstrate responsibility and respect for their peers' actions and contributions.

When children are accustomed to multicultural education, they not only gain knowledge about the cultural diversity around them but also learn how to respond to differences in their environment. As

a result, children are expected to adapt and behave positively even in diverse settings. Multicultural education provides a strong foundation for children to grow into tolerant, empathetic individuals who can interact positively with people from various cultural backgrounds.

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