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THE IMPORTANCE OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN MANAGING THE CHALLENGES OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

Indonesia has various ethnicities, races, languages, customs, cultures, religions and groups. So multicultural education is needed, namely education that respects differences, so that it does not become a source of conflict and division. Multicultural education in learning cultural diversity in elementary schools, it is hoped that students can develop awareness and maturity in dealing with a pluralistic society, appreciate the heterogeneity of race, culture, ethnicity, etc., as well as increase mental flexibility and the ability to have a positive attitude towards cultural diversity that exists in the surrounding community. The research method used in this article is a systematic literature review, the author searches for published articles related to the title or research topic that the researcher has determined. The aim of this research is to make students understand more about multiculturalism in the surrounding environment and be able to respect each other. Multicultural education has four values, namely: equality values, tolerance values, democratic values, and pluralism values. The values above have views that complement each other in addressing multiculturalism education.

Keywords : Multicultural education, diversity, multicultural learning in elementary schools

Introduction

Education is a basic effort in the learning process so that other individuals can achieve independence and mental maturity to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, morals, life sciences, general knowledge and skills needed by them for society based on law, while multicultural is defined as cultural diversity, various politeness. In terms of terminology, multicultural education means the process of developing all human potential which respects plurality and heterogeneity as a consequence of cultural, ethnic, ethnic and sectarian (religious) diversity. Multicultural education is very relevant to be implemented in supporting the democratization process, where in multicultural education there are several related things regarding; recognition of human rights, the absence of discrimination and the pursuit of social justice. Multiculturalism which is developing so rapidly in all corners of the world is introduced through different historical backgrounds and interests. The description of multiculturalism is limited to the introduction of diversity in society. Multicultural education in schools according to James a Banks must be carried out comprehensively, not only with fair attitudes between students of different religions, races, ethnicities and cultures, but also must be supported by a curriculum, both written and hidden, integrative evaluation and teacher who have productive understanding, attitudes and actions in providing multicultural education services to their students. According to Banks, multicultural education is a concept or idea as a set of beliefs and interpretations that recognize and appreciate the importance of cultural and ethnic diversity in shaping lifestyles, experiences, social experiences, personal identities and educational opportunities for individuals, groups and nations (Khairuddin, 2018). Ainul Yakin (2005) stated that multicultural education is an educational strategy that is applied to all types of subjects by using the cultural differences that exist in students such as differences in ethnicity, religion, language, gender, social class, race, ability and age so that the learning process becomes effective and easy. Gorski in Budianta, (2003:13) multicultural education aims to

facilitate learning experiences that enable students to achieve maximum potential as students and as individuals who are active and have high social sensitivity at the local, national and global levels and create a strong, advanced nation. , fair, prosperous and prosperous without ethnic, racial, religious and cultural differences. To be able to form a national character that is able to appreciate differences amidst national pluralism, one way is through education. Education plays an important role in developing 2 aspects of physical, intellectual, religious, moral, social, emotional, knowledge and experience of students. (Suharjo, 2006:1). Elementary school education is part of the national education system which has a very important role in improving human resources. Through education in elementary schools it is hoped that it will produce quality Indonesian people (Suharjo, 2006:1). On the other hand, elementary schools also have the responsibility to shape students into a generation that is able and willing to appreciate the differences that exist amidst the nation's cultural pluralism. Educational institutions in developing the teaching and learning process do not only pay attention to academic abilities, but also need to pay attention to and develop cross-cultural understanding which is very necessary in Indonesia's multiethnic and multicultural society, so that schools can provide learning materials and develop learning facilities for students in understanding material by eliminating obstacles due to differences in cultural backgrounds, respecting and appreciating differences and developing attitudes and behavior in multiethnic-multicultural situations.

The big challenges in implementing multicultural education in Indonesia are: 1) Religion, Ethnicity and Tradition. Religion is actually the most important bond in the lives of Indonesians as a nation. However, it will destroy the power of a harmonious society when it is used as a political weapon or against the ethnic or living traditions of a society. Each individual has used religious principles to guide himself in life in society, but does not share his religious beliefs with others. 2) Trust. An important element in life together is trust. In a pluralistic society we always think about the risks of various differences. The risk of suspicion/fear or distrust of others can also arise when there is no communication in a plural society. 3) Tolerance. Tolerance is the highest form, that we can achieve confidence. Tolerance can become a reality when we assume differences exist. Beliefs are something that can be changed. So in tolerance, you don't always have to defend your beliefs. To achieve the goal of being a democratic Indonesian human being who can live in Indonesia, multicultural education is needed. Multicultural education in Indonesia, especially in formal education, faces three fundamental challenges, namely: 1) Homogenization Phenomenon. The phenomenon of homogenization occurs in the world of education due to the push and pull between excellence and affordability. Students are segregated into schools according to socio-economic background, religion and ethnicity. Moreover, the article regulating religious education in Law No. 20/2003 makes religiously affiliated schools reluctant to accept students who do not share their religion. 2) Curriculum. Lie's research in 2001 on the 1994 curriculum analyzed the content of 823 reading texts in 44 English textbooks used in high schools based on gender, economic status, local culture and geography. In these four categories, these books still show imbalances and biases that greatly limit students' multicultural awareness. 3) Teacher. The suitability and competence of teachers in Indonesia is generally still below standard, especially for managing multicultural learning. Therefore, to implement multicultural education, there is a lot of homework that must be done, starting from curriculum integration design, standardization of books and materials, material and curriculum development, professional development and teacher training, activity design, to monitoring and evaluation design.

Research Methodology

The research method used to compile this journal is by using a systematic literature review (SLR) method. The systematic literature review (SLR) research method is a systematic and structured approach to collecting, evaluating, and synthesizing scientific literature relevant to a particular research topic. This method is carried out with the aim of presenting a comprehensive picture of the development of knowledge and the latest findings in a particular field of study or research topic. In carrying out SLR, researchers use a standardized approach to identify, evaluate, and synthesize relevant literature, thereby minimizing bias and ensuring the accuracy and applicability of the researcher's results.

Result & Discussion

Based on the results of the document search which began with carrying out a plan review, conduct review and document review which have been published in journals, conclusions can be drawn in table 1 as follows.

Table 1. Document Review

Writer	Title	Method Study	Findings
Sheren Priscilia Shabilla, Diah Yovita Suryarini (2023)	The importance of multicultural education in elementary school	Descriptive Qualitative	Multicultural education in Indonesia is very important in elementary schools (SD). Multicultural education is the process of cultivating a way of life that is sincerely respectful and deeply tolerant cultural diversity that lives in a pluralistic society. By providing multicultural education, it is hoped that there will be mental flexibility regarding ethnicity between racial and religious groups (sara), so that national unity does not easily crack and national disintegration occurs. The importance of multicultural education being implemented in elementary schools so that students can understand diversity and how to appreciate it as a real form of loving this diverse Indonesian nation.
Agus Munadlir (2020)	School strategies in multicultural education	Literature	Multicultural education taught and developed in schools has relevance in the Indonesian context which has the motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika." Building multiculturalism in principle is to build oneself, the nation and the homeland without feeling like a burden or obstacle, but based on bonds of unity, oneness and togetherness and mutual cooperation in building an advanced, safe and prosperous Indonesia.
Yenny Puspita (2018)	The importance of multicultural education	Literature	Multicultural education is an educational strategy that is applied to all types of subjects by using the cultural differences that exist in students such as differences in ethnicity, religion, language, gender, social class, race, ability and age so that the learning process becomes effective and easy. Multicultural education is not only studied in normal education. However, multicultural education must be studied by the wider community, informally through various kinds of discussions and presentations. In order to create a serene and peaceful Indonesian society.
Dede Rosyad (2015)	Multicultural education in Indonesia, a conceptual view	Literature	It is important to develop multicultural education, namely an educational process that provides equal opportunities for all the nation's children without differentiating treatment due to ethnic, cultural and religious differences, that respects diversity, and that provides equal rights for ethnic minorities, in an effort to strengthen unity. and unity, national identity and the nation's image in the eyes of the international world.
Muh. Amen (2018)	Multicultural education	Literature	Multicultural education has four values, namely: Equality Values, Tolerance Values, Democratic Values, and Pluralism Values. The values above have views that complement each other in addressing multiculturalism education.

Mae Afriliani, Magdalena, Siti Fadia Nurul Fitri, Tin Rustini (2024)	Analysis of Multicultural Education in Elementary School Students through Cultural Diversity	Literature	The implementation of multicultural education in learning cultural diversity in elementary schools is based on multicultural education, both of which are related. Although in implementing it there are several obstacles such as a lack of awareness of educators and students regarding the importance of multicultural education, apart from that there is also a lack of sources of teaching materials, differences in religion, ethnicity and culture itself which hinder the implementation of multicultural education.
Nur Latifah, Arita Marini, Arifin Maksum (2021)	Multicultural education in elementary schools	Literature	Multicultural education in elementary schools is basically systemic and holistic, meaning it needs to be developed. Multicultural education in elementary schools is packaged based on national culture and character. Multicultural education aims to form students' attitudes, behavior and thinking more comprehensively in viewing diversity, so as to foster tolerance. Multicultural education can make students understand diversity and can develop feelings.
Syaputri Intan Muqhni Akhsan (2021)	Challenges of Multicultural Education in Indonesia	Literature	The big challenges in implementing multicultural education in Indonesia are: 1. Religion, ethnicity and religious traditions are important ties in the lives of the Indonesian people as a nation. 2. In a diverse or plural society there is a tendency to always think about the differences we have. 3. Tolerance is the highest form, that we can achieve confidence. To achieve tolerance, of course, it is necessary to assume that there are differences. Beliefs are something that can be changed.
Tarmizi (2020)	Multicultural education: conception, urgency and relevance In Islamic doctrine	descriptive	Multicultural education is concept, idea, or philosophy as a thing set of beliefs and explanations that acknowledge and assess the importance of cultural and ethnic diversity in shaping lifestyle, social experiences, personal identities, educational opportunities of individuals, groups, and countries.
Rustam Ibrahim (2013)	Multicultural education: Definition, principles and relevance to The aim of Islamic education	Literature	Ensuring the security of life's necessities is the first and main goal of Islamic education. In human life, this is an important thing, socan not be separated. If this need is not guaranteed, there will be chaos everywhere. These five primary needs are called Al-Daruriyat al-Khamsah or inner Islamic law literature is called with the term al-Maqasid al-Khamsah, namely: religion, soul, mind, descent, and property rights

Wuri Wuryandani, (2015)	Multicultural-based learning in elementary schools to develop national character	Literature	Elementary school can be said to be a formal educational institution that lays the educational foundation for students to pursue higher levels of education. Therefore, in elementary school, students must be given a clear insight into knowledge so as not to obscure their knowledge at the next level of education.
Nadziroh (2020)	The Importance of Multicultural Learning in Elementary School Education	Literature	Education through schools is the most effective instrument for providing awareness to society, so that ethnic, cultural and religious conflicts do not arise.
Itsna Yusriya (2022)	Teachers' efforts to preserve local cultural values through social science subjects	qualitative	Preserving local cultural values through the learning process can foster students' love for local culture and can encourage students to be creative and make existing culture more colorful, in other words, covering cultural heritage with different nuances.

Source: Document Review by the Author

The Importance of Multicultural Education in Elementary Schools

The importance of multicultural education in elementary schools is for the process of cultivating a way of life to genuinely respect and be tolerant of the cultural diversity that lives in a pluralistic society. By providing multicultural education, it is hoped that the nation will have mental flexibility in facing ethnic conflicts between racial and religious groups (sara), so that national unity does not easily crack and national disintegration occurs. By paying attention to differences, diversity and pluralism as described above, primary school education must be designed with a multicultural orientation and an orientation towards the future. Surahmad (1999:19) provides an important and interesting list of paradigm changes or shifts, from being oriented towards the past to being oriented towards the future, namely: a) education that prioritizes the cultural values of feudal aristocracy is changed to education that promotes cultural values. democracy; b) transition from centralized education management to education management based on community power; c) a shift in educational attitudes that prioritize uniformity to attitudes that value uniformity; d) a shift from an educational perspective which is more about carrying out obligations to a view that educates and makes citizens aware of human rights; and e) a shift from a conformistic educational attitude to an educational attitude that is motivating, stimulating, respects creativity and innovation, is dynamic, real and contextual. The framework for change put forward by Surahmad clearly shows the complexity of changes or shifts in the educational paradigm that should be carried out, so that it requires a multicultural learning philosophy orientation where learning outcomes are not just about *surviving*, but are more competitive in facing the era of globalization. The introduction of multicultural education in elementary schools is very necessary considering that today's children are very modern. This aims to make children aware of the diversity that exists in their environment, which includes diversity of religion, ethnicity, culture, gender and class. So that children are also able to know their own culture and can even develop their own culture. Multicultural learning will be realized not only through existing curriculum content, but needs to be supported by: (a) leadership that is strong enough to accommodate various interests, (b) there must be no strong hegemony of certain ethnic groups over other ethnicities, and (c) changing the concept of national integration, with the concept that existing cultures do not merge into one, but maintain balance in the growth of existing cultures.

Multicultural education strategies then need to be explained in terms of implications in elementary schools. According to empirical reality, seven implications of educational strategies with a multicultural approach can be formulated, namely as follows.

1. Building a diversity and inclusion paradigm in the elementary school environment. Teachers as adults and school policies must accept that there are other religions besides the religion they adhere to. There are followers of religions other than himself who also adhere to a religion. In schools where students have diverse religions, elementary schools must serve the spiritual activities of all students well. Eliminate the impression that the majority of students are a minority according to their religion. Any religious activities or activities between students of different religions need to be implemented in elementary schools that are

based on a particular religion or accept students of the same religion. Teachers and school policies do not make explicit, radical and provocative statements in any form, because outside of school students will meet, socialize and work together with other people of different religions.

2. Respect linguistic diversity in elementary schools. An elementary school can consist of teachers, education staff and students who come from various regions with a diversity of languages, dialects and accents. Even though there is Indonesian as a formal medium of instruction in schools, the accent or style of speaking always appears in every language expression, both spoken and written. The differences that exist should make us aware that we are very rich in culture, have unique and fun friends, and can exchange language knowledge so that we have rich insight
3. Building gender sensitive attitudes in elementary schools. The distribution of tasks, giving examples of names of figures, and so on must be proportional between boys and girls. There is no one who is more dominant or vice versa a minority between the male and female genders. By still considering natural values, the application of gender in learning functions in schools must be proportional because every male and female student has their own potential
4. Building critical understanding and empathy for injustice and social differences. Education and enforcement of school regulations must not take into account students' social status. Mix students of various social statuses in groups and classes to interact normally at school. Even so, teachers and students must still understand the social differences that exist between their friends. The attitude of empathy and helping each other is not only instilled in the school environment. At some point, students can be invited to social activities outside of school, such as in orphanages, nursing homes, and so on. Or if there is a disaster among the school community or other areas, students are invited to pray and make donations. No matter how small a prayer, expression of sympathy, handshake, hug, or even material assistance will be very meaningful for the formation of the character of students as well as anyone who becomes the object of empathy
5. Building an anti-ethnic discrimination attitude. Elementary schools can become a mini Indonesia or mini world, where various ethnicities study in elementary schools. In elementary school, one ethnic group may be in the majority over another ethnic group. But it needs to be understood, in other schools, ethnicities that were previously the majority may become minorities. Avoid negative attitudes towards different ethnicities. Cultivate and get used to positive relationships
6. Respect differences in abilities. Schools do not all have the same abilities or standards. In social psychology, the term disability is known, which means there is a physical and mental condition that makes it better for students to get used to mingling between superior and weak students in groups or classes, so that peer mentoring can occur, that is, those who are superior have a stronger understanding of the material and are useful with their knowledge. , and those who lack peer teachers who are more communicative and feel accepted by their friends
7. Respect age differences. Each individual student experiences physical growth and psychological development according to age. Teachers must understand this, especially regarding psychological characteristics and ability levels according to age. The older ones should provide role models, motivate, trust, be democratic, guide, nurture and protect the younger ones. The young are respectful, polite, imitate kindness, and help the elders.

Currently, the Indonesian nation is facing a wave of major changes in the system of social, national and state life. Externally, the era of globalization has begun to confront and challenge. The era of globalization demands an open attitude towards changes in all aspects of life, including differences, diversity and cultural pluralism. In the educational setting of elementary school children, this attitude towards cultural differences, diversity and pluralism becomes increasingly important

Efforts to Manage the Challenges of Cultural Diversity in Elementary Schools

Education is the process of efforts to increase the value of an individual's or society's existence from a certain situation to a better condition, and the process is through research, discussion, or reflecting on problems or symptoms of educational actions (Neolaka & Amialia, 2017). Education has a very important role in producing human resources of adequate quality. The educational objectives will determine the style and content of a country's education. The content of education is described in the curriculum, through the educational curriculum it tries to bring students to an educational goal. Efforts that must be made to manage challenges in elementary schools are as follows : First, it is necessary to revitalize nationalism which leads to national integrity, nationalism which respects cultural differences. The efforts made are through family education and education in society which is carried out

through example and habituation. Thus the role of educators is very determining. Primary school education is seen as very important in instilling nationalism from an early age, so that the values of nationalism instilled from an early age remain relatively constant and will be carried over into adulthood. Instilling these values can be done through singing, role playing, recitations, fairy tales, and the like that can inspire children. Second, related to the first solution above, the curriculum in elementary schools needs to be packaged with content to instill the spirit of nationalism in the true sense as envisioned by the founder of the country (Sukarno), namely nationalism that recognizes the existence of cultural, racial, ethnic and social differences. other. Third, multicultural learning needs to be developed in elementary school education because through multicultural learning it will be possible to produce citizens who have a spirit of nationalism, respect differences, respect differences, think globally in the context of Indonesian society. In an effort to recognize cultural differences and cultural pluralism, real activities need to be carried out, including the preservation of local regional culture, such as the use and teaching of language, shadow puppetry, ketoprak, ludruk, and so on. Through such preservation of local culture, national integration and nationalism that recognize local cultural differences can be realized.

The concept of integration must be understood not to merge into one Indonesia but together to become Indonesia by maintaining the balance and existence of existing ethnicities. For this reason, it is necessary to revitalize or reconceptualize the meaning of integration. This is where the importance of education plays a role by involving the teaching staff we have. Efforts to create civil society will be realized not only through higher education, but the role of government is very important. One of them is encouraging the development of community life infrastructure by providing public space in its true sense, namely not only allowing people to speak and have opinions but also opening the eyes of the people to the aspirations of the people, whether conveyed through formal or non-formal democratic institutions. Having a sense of love for the Indonesian homeland is a very important thing that students must have, because it is an embodiment of pride in their homeland, being willing to make sacrifices for their nation and country, and upholding the honor and dignity of the nation. A person who has a sense of love for his homeland will do everything to protect it, maintain its sovereignty and honor. A person's sense of love for one's country is what will encourage a person to build a dedicated country. Therefore, a sense of love for the homeland needs to be developed in every individual soul, including citizens, so that the goals of living together can be achieved. The development of attitudes in elementary schools, namely mutual respect between friends in learning activities, can motivate students to learn, which is one way of developing multicultural values which aims to develop the quality of student learning. Multicultural values that can be instilled in students during learning activities can be done by establishing rules and habits, such as starting the first hour of learning activities, students line up outside the classroom and then enter one by one in an orderly manner, at the beginning of the learning activity the teacher conveys material or lesson information. that will be studied as well as providing directions regarding the learning activities that will be carried out. At the beginning of the learning activity, it begins with reading a prayer according to each person's religion and beliefs.

Conclusion

Multicultural education can make students sensitive in dealing with social problems based on ethnicity, race, culture and religion that occur in the school and community environment. This can be implemented through a learning model that respects and recognizes differences and cultural diversity, and to provide provisions for students to face current developments. Efforts to instill multicultural understanding and values can be done through multicultural learning carried out through formal and non-formal education channels. One of them is through primary school education which is believed to play a role in shaping children's character from an early age, so that they will become members of society who have nationalism embedded in the deepest part of their hearts. For this reason, there is a need for a multicultural learning design to be developed in the implementation of elementary school education programs. The design of multicultural learning is carried out by taking into account the needs of the target group, especially in terms of knowledge, which is combined with the cultivation and development of an attitude of upholding the understanding and values of integration, diversity in unity, and unity despite differences.

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