



EFFORTS TO FORM INDONESIAN NATIONAL CHARACTER THROUGH MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

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Abstract: Indonesian society is very diverse with various tribes, races, customs, classes, groups and religions. To the extent that these differences are recognized and understood, this situation actually makes sense. However, when differences arise and disturb the harmony of life, the differences must be resolved. (Taat Wulandari, 2020) Apart from that, education is a process of building and developing the human personality spiritually and physically. A society or nation will never progress without education, so it becomes less or even uncivilized. Education is also the process of improving a person's human resources to improve their social abilities and develop reciprocity between themselves, society and the surrounding cultural environment. The relevant methods that can be applied in Indonesia are as follows: 1. Contribution Approach, 2. Additive Approach 3. Transformation Approach 4. Social Action Approach. Thus, multicultural education can function as a transformer that can instill the values of humanism, pluralism and democracy into students' lives. The final goal of multicultural education is that students are not only able to understand the subject matter, but are also expected to have strong characters that will enable them to behave democratically, pluralist and humanist throughout their lives.

Keywords: Multicultural Education, Karakter.

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Introduction

Indonesian society is very diverse with various tribes, races, customs, classes, groups and religions. To the extent that these differences are recognized and understood, this situation actually makes sense. However, when differences arise and disturb the harmony of life, the differences must be resolved. (Taat Wulandari, 2020) Apart from that, education is a process of building and developing the human personality spiritually and physically. A society or nation will never progress without education, so it becomes less or even uncivilized. Education is also the process of improving a person's human resources to improve their social abilities and develop reciprocity between themselves, society and the surrounding cultural environment.

According to Article 4 Paragraph 1 of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, "National education aims to form people who have faith and are devoted to God Almighty, have morals and noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, and become democratic and responsible citizens. towards the welfare of society and the homeland." The process of implementing the national education system is very dynamic, and this especially has an impact on the socio-cultural dynamics of multicultural Indonesian society. (Kurniawan et al.,

2023) Multiculturalism is a characteristic of Indonesian society. This concept refers to the cultural diversity that exists in Indonesian society, which is also known as a pluralistic society. (Sanur & Dermawan, 2023) Meanwhile, Liwari describes multiculturalism as a person's feeling of comfort in communicating effectively with other people, both from the perspective of different groups, situations and cultural backgrounds. A sense of security is defined as a state where a person does not feel anxious and does not have self-defense mechanisms in intercultural experiences and encounters. (Musadad, 2012).

Multicultural education is also a conscious effort to develop personality both inside and outside school, which involves studying various differences in social status, race, ethnicity and religion to develop an intelligent personality in dealing with problems of cultural diversity. (Puspita, 2018) The lack of ethics and morality is a serious problem currently in Indonesia. This is demonstrated by the high level of crime, including corruption, fraud, theft, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, rape, prostitution, drugs, murder and terrorism. In addition, it appears that members of society lack qualities such as discipline, honesty, justice, work ethic, politeness, patience, and obedience to the law. Thus, it can be concluded that one of the main problems facing the Indonesian

nation recently is the loss of a sense of nationality, unity and oneness among some of the nation's children.

Real solutions and action are needed for this complex problem. The personal development of every citizen must focus on good national character, citizen intelligence, a strong sense of nationalism, the ability to live in a diverse society and culture. Thus, making multicultural education more intensive in the school curriculum is a very important strategic step to strengthen the national character of the next generation.

Objectives and Methodology

In research on multicultural education, the methodology used must be able to explore and understand the complexity of issues related to education in culturally diverse contexts. The following are details of the methodology that can be used: This research uses a qualitative research design, which is more suitable for understanding individual perceptions, experiences and attitudes towards multicultural education. Qualitative methods allow researchers to explore social contexts and interactions in diverse educational settings. Data Collection: In-depth Interviews: Conduct interviews with teachers, students, and school staff to gain in-depth insight into their experiences and perceptions regarding multicultural education. Classroom Observation: Observing classroom interactions and school activities to see the implementation of multicultural education practices directly. Document Study: Analyze school documents such as curriculum, lesson plans, and school policies to understand how multicultural principles are integrated. The data collected will be analyzed using thematic analysis to identify the main themes that emerge from the data. This analysis will help explore patterns related to the implementation and effectiveness of multicultural education, as well as the challenges faced by participants. To ensure the reliability and validity of research results, researchers will use data triangulation, namely comparing results from various sources and data collection methods. Apart from that, member checking, namely getting feedback from participants about the findings obtained, will also be carried out to increase the credibility of the research.

Result and Discussions

Education can be viewed from an outcome and process perspective, or from a broad and technical perspective. In a broad sense, education refers to an action or experience that has an impact on the growth or development of an individual's soul (mind), character or physical abilities. Meanwhile, in a technical sense, education refers to a process in which an individual builds and develops physical abilities. Education is still considered to play an important role in shaping the character of educated people and being able to become a "guiding light" for the nation's future young generation. This is something we have to understand. According to Ma'arif, one of the goals of education is to increase students' diversity in their own religious beliefs. In addition, education must provide openness for students to learn about and question other religions and foster an attitude of tolerance. Education is also the best means of building national awareness based on multiculturalism. (Arfan, 2022). Multiculturalism comes from two words: multi, which means many, and cultural, which means culture. Multicultural literally means diverse or many cultures (Amin, 2018). Multiculturalism argues that every society has a

culture that is generally accepted in society whose patterns are similar to a mosaic. All cultures from smaller societies that form a larger society, usually have a culture like a mosaic. (Ibrahim, 2013) Therefore, multiculturalism is a cultural perspective that has real life examples. Everyone knows that the term multiculturalism comes from culture. Theories about culture are very diverse, but in this context, culture is seen as a way to direct humans. One perspective considers multiculturalism as an ideology that can be used to improve humanity. Multiculturalism accepts differences in cultural and individual equality. (Kharisma et al., 2021). Multicultural education is a joint effort of diverse communities. Multicultural education also means teaching students to accept cultural diversity. (Arfa & Lasaiba, 2022) Each group that has cultural differences will not be a barrier, but instead they can complement each other to form Indonesia's national cultural treasures. The aim is to create more harmonious and innovative relations between various groups to control existing social prejudices. Students from various cultural backgrounds can get to know each other about their way of life, customs, and power to understand their aspirations. They can also recognize and respect the right of each group to express themselves according to their way of life through multicultural education.

Multicultural education is based on the concept of multiculturalism, namely the concept of diversity. Multiculturalism also recognizes, accepts, and affirms human differences and similarities related to gender, race, and religious class. Multicultural education builds cultural pluralism in an effort to combat prejudice and discrimination by using democratic values. Based on the definition of multicultural education described above, we can understand that upholding peace and appreciating and respecting differences in cultural diversity are the main goals of multicultural education. It is known that the development of multicultural education in each country varies depending on the problems faced by that country. James A. Banks (1993), an American expert on multicultural education, suggests four ways to incorporate multicultural educational materials into school curricula and learning programs. The relevant methods that can be applied in Indonesia are as follows:

1. Contribution Approach

In the early stages of the ethnic revival movement, this stage was the most frequently used. One of its characteristics is to include heroes from ethnic groups, ethnicities and cultural objects in appropriate lessons. So far, Indonesia has used this method.

2. Additive Approach

This approach can be achieved by adding materials, ideas, themes, and perspectives to the curriculum without changing the structure, goals, or other basic features. This method is often included with books, modules, or subject areas in the curriculum without changing the curriculum significantly. The additive approach has not yet reached the main curriculum, so it is only a first step towards multicultural education.

3. Transformation Approach

The transformation approach is different from the contribution and additive approaches. The transformational approach changes basic assumptions about the curriculum and increases students' basic abilities to view problems, concepts, themes, and issues from various viewpoints and ethnic perspectives. Perspective focus leads

to the main topics that may be discussed in lectures. By describing this as a multi-level educational process, where learning experiences allow people to develop respect and solidarity with each other.

Social Action Approach This approach includes all aspects of the transformation approach, but also adds elements that require students to take action related to the issues, ideas, and problems studied in the unit. The school helps students become conscious social critics and skilled participants in social change by teaching them techniques for decision making and social criticism. Students receive the knowledge, values, and abilities they need to contribute to social change so that the most advantaged ethnic, racial, and class groups can participate fully in society. (Sipuan et al., 2022). Multicultural education also helps students become humanist, democratic and pluralist in their environment. In the national education system law, the aim of multicultural education is to increase attitudes of empathy, respect and appreciation for all adherents of different religions and cultures. Multicultural education has two goals, namely initial and final goals. The initial aim of multicultural education is to facilitate discourse about multicultural education among teachers, lecturers, policy makers, education experts, and students, both in education and general science departments. Thus, multicultural education can function as a transformer that can instill the values of humanism, pluralism and democracy into students' lives. The final goal of multicultural education is that students are not only able to understand the subject matter, but are also expected to have strong characters that will enable them to behave democratically, pluralist and humanist throughout their lives.

The aim of the 2013 curriculum is to educate Indonesian people to become individuals and citizens who are faithful, productive, creative, innovative and affective. They must also be able to contribute to the lives of society, nation, state and world civilization as a whole. This is to show how education in Indonesia is truly high quality and character based. There are many multicultural principles that we can learn when studying history. The development of cultural nationalism is assisted by learning national history. This helps strengthen ties between the elements of a plural society. Our nation's figures have united to fight for Indonesian independence. It is very important to remember that the figures of our nation who contributed to the formation of the proclamation came from various places but had one goal, namely to liberate Indonesia. History learning is very important, because it is closely related to multicultural education. The application of multicultural education through a historical approach will produce significant results, namely increasing pluralist attitudes and forming a strong national character. According to psychological terms, character is character, temperament, a distinctive basic trait, a trait or quality that remains continuous and eternal which can be used as a characteristic to identify an individual. (Sulfemi, 2019) Meanwhile, Agus Wibowo also stated that character is something that exists in every person that shows unique thoughts, attitudes, behavior in life and socializing, both in the family, community, and nation and state. (Anatasya & Dewi, 2021) Therefore, character education is one of the things that needs to be instilled as early as possible.

Character education is providing views on life values such as caring, kindness, beauty, honesty, responsibility, truth, faith and intelligence. Thus, character-based education has the ability to use

information learned during the educational process as life inspiration that is useful for helping people overcome problems in life. According to the Ministry of National Education (2010), macro character development is divided into three stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation of results. At the planning stage, character sets are explored, crystallized, and formulated using sources such as (1) philosophy; 1945 Constitution, Law no. 20 of 2003, and its derivative statutory provisions; (2) theoretical; theories of mind, psychology, education, and values; and (3) theories about ethics. (Yuslaini, 2018). At the implementation stage, learning experiences and the learning process should lead to the formation of the character of the students they want to achieve. This process begins with the principles of empowerment and acculturation, which are the basis for the implementation of national education, and takes place in three pillars of education, including educational units, families and communities. At the results evaluation stage, the program is evaluated to improve its quality. Meanwhile, in a micro context, character development focuses on the educational unit as a whole. Educational units are an important part of today's learning environment that can help build, improve, strengthen and perfect character processes consistently. According to the Ministry of National Education (2010), character development consists of four components, namely learning in class, daily activities which include developing the culture of the education unit, co-curricular and extracurricular activities, and daily activities at home and in the community. (Oliver, 2013). The character of a country consists of its traits and attitudes which are reflected in the behavior and personality of its people. The quality of society will improve the quality of the country. This is because national character must come from a strong sense of nationality in a diverse cultural context. National character is also not a combination of individual traits. Cultural awareness and cultural intelligence of every citizen must demonstrate the cultural ties that form national identity. It is known that the characteristics of the Indonesian nation are characteristics possessed by Indonesian citizens based on actions that are considered good based on the values that apply in Indonesian society and the nation. Multicultural education is the right and appropriate solution to build good national character from an early age. Multicultural education must be further intensified in the school curriculum so that the nation's future generations can maintain a strong national character. If multicultural education is understood and implemented correctly, the national character will become strong.

Conclusion

In Indonesia, where society consists of various tribes, cultures, races, nations and religions, the implementation of multicultural education is considered important. It is known that multicultural education is a policy that comes from a deep awareness that society must uphold and respect various differences, including the fact that society has various ethnicities, ethnic groups, languages and cultures. Multicultural education with a historical approach has many benefits for students. This approach helps students understand diverse cultural perspectives, build pride in their cultural heritage, and understand and respect cultural diversity. This approach also expects students to have strong character to always act humanist, democratic and pluralist. Multicultural education has an important role in cultivating national character, because if students understand and apply multicultural education from an early age, they will be able to

become the nation's next generation with superior character. Multicultural education forms a student paradigm so that they have a unique national ideology, culture, manners, fighting spirit and high nationalism.

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