

Development of Multicultural Curriculum to Enhance Student Tolerance in Senior High School

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Abstract: This study aims to explore how the development of a multicultural curriculum can enhance student tolerance at SMA Trenggalek. The main focus of the research is on the implementation of a multicultural curriculum that includes the integration of multicultural content into various subjects, extracurricular activities that support diversity, and specialized training for teachers. The research method employed is qualitative with a case study approach, involving school principals, teachers, students, and staff as research subjects. Data were collected through observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted thematically. The findings indicate that the implementation of a multicultural curriculum at SMA Trenggalek has a significant positive impact on students' attitudes towards tolerance. The integration of multicultural content in subjects such as Indonesian language and history helps students understand and appreciate cultural diversity and the nation's history. Extracurricular activities like cultural festivals and interfaith discussions serve as platforms for students to interact and learn firsthand about various cultures and beliefs. Additionally, intensive teacher training ensures that multicultural values are effectively applied in the teaching process. The impact of the multicultural curriculum is evident in the increased tolerance among students, the reduction of conflicts between students from different backgrounds, and the creation of a more inclusive learning environment. Students become more open to differences, reducing prejudice and stereotypes, and are more active in collaborating with peers from diverse backgrounds.

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Introduction

In the era of globalization and technological advancement, intercultural interactions have become increasingly intense and complex (Ngongo & Hidayat, 2019). Schools, as formal educational institutions, play a crucial role in shaping the character and attitudes of students, including their tolerance towards cultural diversity (Amin, 2019). In Indonesia, a country characterized by ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity, multicultural education is highly relevant for building a harmonious and tolerant society (Amri et al., 2019). In Trenggalek, a regency in East Java, the issue of tolerance among students is a significant concern in the educational context.

Multicultural education is an educational approach that aims to recognize and appreciate cultural diversity within the learning process (Efendi & Sholeh, 2023). This approach not only introduces students to various cultures and beliefs but also seeks to integrate this understanding into all aspects of education (Supriatin & Nasution, 2017). The primary goal of multicultural education is to create a deep awareness of the importance of respecting differences and to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for living harmoniously in a multicultural and diverse society.

According to Banks (2015), multicultural education involves changes in curriculum, pedagogy, and the school environment to reflect and celebrate cultural diversity (Banks, 2015). This means that not only should learning materials include perspectives from different cultures, but teaching methods and the school atmosphere should also support and celebrate this diversity. A multicultural curriculum should include teaching materials that represent various cultures and worldviews, while pedagogy should be designed to value different learning styles and student backgrounds (Ramdhan, 2019). The school environment should also support diversity by creating an inclusive atmosphere that values differences (Fadlillah, 2017). SMA Trenggalek is a prime example of a school that reflects Indonesia's cultural diversity. With students from various ethnic and religious backgrounds, the implementation of multicultural education at SMA Trenggalek is highly relevant. This diversity provides the school with the opportunity to apply an educational approach that recognizes and celebrates cultural differences within the classroom (Sholeh, 2023).

Despite the importance of multicultural education, challenges remain in fostering tolerance among students (Rifa'i, 2015). Initial observations and discussions with teachers and students indicate that although a multicultural curriculum has been introduced, there are still challenges in its implementation. Cases of conflict among students with different cultural and religious backgrounds suggest that efforts to integrate multicultural values into the school curriculum need to be conducted more systematically and structurally (Sipuan et al., 2022). These challenges may include various factors such as resistance to change, inadequate training for teachers, or lack of support in conducting extracurricular activities that promote diversity (Sopiansyah & Erihardiana, 2021). To overcome these challenges, consistent efforts are needed to develop and implement a curriculum that not only teaches about diversity but also facilitates positive interactions between students from different backgrounds (Kuswaya Wihardit, 2010). This includes providing continuous training for teachers, developing inclusive pedagogical strategies, and creating school activities that promote cross-cultural dialogue and cooperation (Sholeh, 2023). With a more structured and systematic approach, SMA Trenggalek can more

effectively integrate multicultural values into the curriculum and achieve its multicultural education goals, namely, to create a harmonious and inclusive learning environment and to prepare students for living in an increasingly diverse society (Sholeh, 2023).

The development of a multicultural curriculum is based on several educational theories, including the social constructivism theory proposed by Vygotsky, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in the learning process (Fauziah Nasution, 2024). According to this theory, learning occurs through interaction with others and the surrounding environment, which helps students understand and appreciate different perspectives (Haruna et al., 2024). In addition, the critical education theory proposed by Paulo Freire is also relevant, as it emphasizes the importance of education that liberates and empowers students to think critically about social and cultural issues (Madhakomala et al., 2022). This study aims to develop a multicultural curriculum that can enhance student tolerance at SMA Trenggalek. Specifically, the objectives of this research are to identify the key components of a multicultural curriculum suitable for the context of SMA Trenggalek, to design and implement a multicultural curriculum at SMA Trenggalek, and to evaluate the impact of the multicultural curriculum on student tolerance at SMA Trenggalek.

Research Method

A qualitative research method was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study, specifically the development of a multicultural curriculum and its impact on student tolerance at SMA Trenggalek. This method allows the researcher to explore and understand in detail how the multicultural curriculum can influence student attitudes and interactions within the school context (Shull et al., 2008) (Creswell, 2009). This study utilized a qualitative case study design, chosen for its ability to explore phenomena within their original context. This approach allows the researcher to understand the processes and interactions occurring in depth, as well as to obtain comprehensive insights into the experiences and perspectives of the research subjects (Yin, 2009).

Participants in this study included students, teachers, and school staff at SMA Trenggalek. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, where subjects were chosen based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The selected students represented diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, while the chosen teachers were those directly involved in the development and implementation of the multicultural curriculum (Patton, 2002).

Data collection techniques in this study involved three main methods. First, in-depth interviews were conducted to obtain direct views and experiences from participants regarding the multicultural curriculum and its influence on tolerance attitudes. These interviews were semi-structured, providing flexibility to explore information more deeply through open-ended questions. Second, participatory observation was carried out by the researcher, who directly engaged in school activities, observing student interactions and the implementation of the multicultural curriculum. This observation helped to understand the dynamics occurring within the classroom and school environment. Third, documentation was used to collect secondary data supporting the research, such as curriculum documents, meeting notes, and school activity

reports, providing additional context and information that enriched the research findings (Mertens, 2023).

Data analysis was conducted thematically with several key steps. Data from interviews and observations were first transcribed verbatim to facilitate analysis. Next, the transcribed data were coded to identify emerging themes, either manually or with the aid of qualitative analysis software. The identified themes were then grouped based on similarities and relationships between themes. The final process involved interpreting these themes to understand the meaning and implications of the collected data, referring to the previously established theoretical framework (Miles et al., 2014). To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this study employed triangulation techniques, comparing data from various sources and data collection methods. The researcher also applied member checking by asking participants to review the interview and observation results and conducted peer debriefing with fellow researchers to discuss and critique the research findings (Gliner & Morgan, 2017). Regarding research ethics, principles such as informed consent, confidentiality, and participant anonymity were carefully observed. Participants were provided with complete information regarding the research objectives and procedures and were given the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without facing any consequences (Bowen, 2009).

Result and Discussion

Results

Based on the interviews, observations, and documentation analysis, it was found that Trenggalek Senior High School has integrated multicultural curriculum through several approaches:

Implementation of Multicultural Curriculum

Teaching Multicultural Content

The teaching of multicultural content at Trenggalek Senior High School, which is integrated into various subjects such as Indonesian language, history, and civics, plays a crucial role in shaping students' understanding and attitudes towards cultural diversity. Mrs. SM stated:

"I integrate multicultural values into the Indonesian language curriculum by showcasing literary works from various regions and cultures. Moreover, I encourage students to discuss the values contained in these works." (Mrs. SM)

In this context, Mrs. SM uses literary works from various regions and cultures as a tool to teach multicultural values. By presenting literature from diverse cultures, students are introduced to the richness and diversity of cultures in Indonesia. Discussions on the values embedded in these works help students understand and appreciate differences, fostering tolerance. Through this approach, students learn not only about language and literature but also about the importance of embracing cultural diversity.

Mr. BH also mentioned:

"In history class, I emphasize the importance of understanding different cultural backgrounds and how our nation's history has been shaped by various cultures. I also encourage students to engage in group projects that explore the cultures existing in Indonesia." (Mr. BH)

Mr. BH highlights the importance of understanding different cultural backgrounds in history lessons. By learning how the nation's history has been shaped by various cultures, students can see how cultural diversity contributes to the development of the country. Group projects exploring the various cultures in Indonesia allow students to collaborate and learn directly from each other. This approach helps students develop a deeper understanding of the contributions of various cultures to history and encourages them to appreciate the cultural differences around them.

The teaching of multicultural content by Mrs. SM and Mr. BH demonstrates that integrating multicultural values into subjects like Indonesian language and history is highly effective in enhancing students' understanding and attitudes toward cultural diversity. By using literature and group projects, these teachers have successfully created a learning environment that values cultural diversity and encourages students to respect and appreciate differences. This approach not only enriches students' knowledge of other cultures but also shapes their character to become more tolerant and inclusive.

Extracurricular Activities

Trenggalek High School has implemented various extracurricular activities that support multicultural education, including cultural festivals, interfaith discussions, and group projects exploring different cultures. These activities play a key role in enhancing students' understanding of other cultures and promoting cooperation and positive interaction among students.

Extracurricular activities such as cultural festivals and interfaith discussions are designed to introduce students to various cultures and beliefs. According to Mr. SR, cultural festivals provide students with an opportunity to celebrate and learn about cultural diversity in a fun and educational setting. Interfaith discussions, on the other hand, allow students to engage directly and dialogue about religious differences, deepening their understanding of different beliefs and practices. Both contribute to increasing students' understanding of other cultures and religions, as expressed:

"We organize extracurricular activities that support cultural diversity, such as cultural festivals and interfaith discussions." (Mr. SR)

Mr. TN reported that these activities help students get to know each other better, as well as reduce prejudice and stereotypes. By participating in cultural festivals and interfaith discussions, students not only receive information from formal sources but also from direct experiences with their peers who have different cultural and religious backgrounds. This process allows students to overcome misunderstandings and prejudices that may have existed before, creating a more inclusive and harmonious environment. As stated:

"Activities like cultural festivals and interfaith discussions really help us get to know each other better. They also reduce prejudice and stereotypes that might have existed before." (Mr. TN)

Extracurricular activities also play an important role in promoting cooperation and positive interaction. By engaging in group projects that explore various cultures, students learn to collaborate and communicate with peers from different backgrounds. This fosters strong

relationships and mutual respect among students, reinforcing cooperation and positive interaction within the school community.

Interviews on extracurricular activities at Trenggalek High School indicate that cultural festivals, interfaith discussions, and group projects have had a significant positive impact on supporting multicultural education. These activities have increased students' understanding of other cultures, reduced prejudice and stereotypes, and promoted cooperation and positive interaction. By providing a platform for cultural exploration and open dialogue, Trenggalek High School has successfully created a more inclusive and harmonious environment, supporting the development of tolerance among students.

Teacher Training

Teacher training is a key component in ensuring that multicultural education is effectively implemented in the classroom. This training aims to enhance teachers' understanding of the importance of multicultural education and provide practical strategies to integrate it into their teaching. As mentioned:

"Teachers receive special training on how to integrate multicultural values into their teaching. This training aims to enhance teachers' understanding of the importance of multicultural education and provide them with practical strategies to implement it."
(Mr. SR)

The specialized training received by the teachers at Trenggalek High School plays a crucial role in the implementation of the multicultural curriculum. By providing teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to integrate multicultural values into their teaching, this training ensures that teachers can deliver relevant and effective content to students. This training also helps teachers feel more confident in addressing challenges that may arise in multicultural teaching and provides them with the tools and strategies to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Impact of the Multicultural Curriculum on Students' Tolerance

Increased Tolerance Attitudes

The increase in tolerance attitudes among students at Trenggalek High School is one of the significant outcomes of the implementation of the multicultural curriculum. Interviews with students indicate that they have experienced positive changes in how they understand and appreciate cultural and religious differences, as well as in their willingness to collaborate with peers from different backgrounds.

Mr. TN stated that the multicultural curriculum helps students better understand and appreciate differences. Classroom discussions about various cultures and religions play a key role in this process. By engaging in guided dialogues, students gain the opportunity to explore different perspectives and experience diversity from a deeper viewpoint. This contributes to a more open and inclusive attitude, as expressed:

"I think this curriculum is great because it teaches us to better understand and appreciate differences. In class, we often discuss various cultures and religions, and it makes me more open and appreciative of friends from different backgrounds." (Mr. TN)

Ms. HN added that activities such as cultural festivals and interfaith discussions help reduce prejudice and stereotypes. These activities provide students with direct experiences of different cultures and beliefs, which helps eliminate misunderstandings and prejudices that may have existed before. By getting to know and interacting with friends from different backgrounds, students can form a more positive and realistic view of diversity, as expressed:

"I agree. Activities like cultural festivals and interfaith discussions really help us get to know each other better. They also reduce prejudice and stereotypes that might have existed before." (Ms. HN)

Interviews with students indicate that the implementation of the multicultural curriculum at Trenggalek High School has resulted in a significant increase in their tolerance attitudes. By providing opportunities for students to discuss various cultures and religions and engage in activities that celebrate diversity, this curriculum effectively helps students overcome prejudices and stereotypes and encourages them to be more open and appreciative of differences. This approach not only enriches students' learning experiences but also contributes to the formation of a more harmonious and inclusive school community.

Reduction of Student Conflicts

Following the implementation of the multicultural curriculum at Trenggalek High School, reports from teachers and the principal indicate a decrease in conflicts among students from different cultural and religious backgrounds. This reduction reflects the positive impact of the multicultural curriculum in creating a more harmonious and inclusive learning environment, as stated by Mr. SR:

"We hope to teach students to respect and honor differences, thereby creating a harmonious environment. The main challenge is how to integrate multicultural values into every aspect of learning."

Reports from the principal indicate that the multicultural curriculum has successfully reduced conflicts among students from different cultural and religious backgrounds. By teaching students to respect and honor differences, the school has created a more harmonious environment. Integrating multicultural values into the curriculum helps students understand and appreciate differences, which in turn reduces tension and conflicts that may arise from misunderstandings or prejudices. Through the implementation of the multicultural curriculum, students become more sensitive to the feelings and identities of their peers. This leads to a decrease in the frequency of negative comments or teasing toward friends from different backgrounds. Multicultural education helps students understand the impact of their words and actions on others, making them more considerate and empathetic in their interactions.

Additionally, students are now more frequently involved in constructive discussions. This reflects the curriculum's success in encouraging productive dialogue and mutual understanding among students. By providing a space to talk and exchange views on cultural and religious differences, students learn to resolve their differences in a more positive and constructive way. This demonstrates that the multicultural curriculum at Trenggalek High School has significantly reduced conflicts among students from different cultural and religious backgrounds. By teaching values of respect and appreciation for differences, this curriculum has successfully created a more harmonious and inclusive learning environment. The reduction

of negative comments and the increase in constructive discussions are indicators of success in integrating multicultural education into everyday learning. However, as noted by Mr. SR, the main challenge remains in consistently integrating multicultural values into every aspect of learning to ensure a lasting impact.

Inclusive Learning Environment

Interviews indicate that the implementation of the multicultural curriculum at Trenggalek High School has created a more inclusive learning environment, where students from various backgrounds feel more accepted and valued. Social interactions among students also show improvement in terms of mutual understanding and cooperation.

According to Mrs. SM, students show a more open attitude and appreciation of differences following the implementation of the multicultural curriculum. This attitude is manifested in the frequency of discussions and cooperation involving friends from different backgrounds. The increase in tolerance and appreciation of differences reflects the curriculum's effectiveness in shaping positive attitudes among students, as expressed:

"I see that students are becoming more open and appreciative of differences. They engage in discussions and cooperate with friends from different backgrounds more often." (Mrs. SM)

Ms. HN added that the social interactions among students also improved, with greater understanding and cooperation. Students become more aware of the need to respect others' identities and feel comfortable discussing and exploring these differences openly. This promotes stronger bonds and mutual respect among students, as expressed:

"Social interactions among students have improved as well. We understand each other better and are more willing to cooperate." (Ms. HN)

The implementation of the multicultural curriculum at Trenggalek High School has successfully created a more inclusive learning environment. By fostering a more open and appreciative attitude toward differences, this curriculum promotes positive social interactions and greater cooperation among students. Through discussions and collaboration with friends from different backgrounds, students learn to appreciate the diversity around them and develop stronger relationships based on mutual respect. This success demonstrates the curriculum's effectiveness in shaping a more inclusive and harmonious school environment.

Discussion

Integration of Multicultural Content in the Curriculum

One of the fundamental aspects of the multicultural curriculum at Trenggalek High School is the integration of content that reflects cultural diversity across various subjects. In Indonesian language classes, the curriculum includes literary works from different regions and cultures. This approach allows students to explore and discuss diverse cultural values. Research by Banks and Banks (2015) indicates that integrating multicultural content into language curricula can help students develop empathy and a deeper understanding of different cultural experiences (Banks, 2015).

In history classes, the approach focuses on understanding the diverse cultural backgrounds and their contributions to the formation of the nation's history. Research by Monterey Bay and

Sleeter (2018) emphasizes that teaching history from a multicultural perspective allows students to see how various cultures contribute to the formation of national identity and promotes a more holistic and inclusive understanding of history (Sleeter, 2018).

Extracurricular activities play a crucial role in supporting the implementation of the multicultural curriculum. At Trenggalek High School, cultural festivals, interfaith dialogues, and group projects provide students with hands-on experiences with different cultures and beliefs. Research by Gollnick and Chinn (2013) shows that extracurricular activities centered on diversity can help students reduce prejudice and stereotypes while enhancing social skills and interactions among them (Gollnick & Chinn, 2013). Cultural festivals allow students to celebrate and learn about traditions from various cultures, while interfaith dialogues offer opportunities to delve into different religious values. Research by Gay (2018) also shows that extracurricular activities that integrate diverse cultural perspectives can increase multicultural awareness and encourage students to build more positive relationships with peers from different backgrounds (Gay, 2018).

Teacher training is another key component in implementing the multicultural curriculum (Sholeh, 2023). Such training equips teachers with the knowledge and skills to integrate multicultural values into their teaching. Research by Ladson-Billings (2022) indicates that effective training helps teachers feel more confident in addressing challenges in multicultural teaching and provides them with the strategies needed to support students from diverse backgrounds (Ladson-Billings, 2022). With appropriate training, teachers can create a more inclusive learning environment that supports diversity and facilitates positive learning experiences for all students. Research by Thomas (2018) highlights that teacher training focused on multicultural competence can enhance teachers' ability to respond more effectively to students' needs and support their academic and social development (Carver-Thomas, 2018).

Impact of the Multicultural Curriculum on Student Tolerance

The implementation of the multicultural curriculum at Trenggalek High School has had a significant positive impact on students' attitudes towards tolerance. Recent studies show that multicultural curricula can effectively increase tolerance among students. For example, a study by Rață (2013) found that curricula incorporating multicultural elements substantially contribute to enhancing inclusive attitudes and tolerance among high school students (Rață, 2013). At Trenggalek High School, the integration of multicultural values into subjects like Indonesian language and history, as well as extracurricular activities focused on cultural diversity, has successfully increased students' openness to cultural and religious differences.

Extracurricular activities such as cultural festivals and interfaith dialogues provide students with opportunities to engage directly with diverse cultures, playing a crucial role in reducing prejudice and stereotypes (Sholeh & Syafi'i, 2024). Research by Bhopal (2023) supports this finding by showing that culture-based activities can strengthen multicultural understanding and facilitate positive interactions between students (Bhopal, 2023). At Trenggalek High School, students have shown increased willingness to collaborate and interact with peers from different backgrounds, aligning with these research findings.

The multicultural curriculum also contributes to the reduction of conflicts among students. Research by Syahbudin and Hanafi (2018) indicates that the implementation of a multicultural

curriculum can reduce conflicts related to cultural and religious differences by promoting better understanding and reducing stereotypes (Syahbudin & Hanafi, 2018). At Trenggalek High School, the reduction in the number of conflicts involving students from different backgrounds suggests that the curriculum helps create a more harmonious atmosphere. With an inclusive approach and hands-on experience in interacting with cultural diversity, students are less likely to make negative comments or tease peers who are different.

This reduction in conflict can be attributed to the increased ability of students to address differences constructively, as supported by research by Gazzotti and Liberali (2014). This research suggests that multicultural education can help students develop effective communication and problem-solving skills, which in turn reduces tensions among them (Gazzotti & Liberali, 2014). The learning environment at Trenggalek High School has also shown positive changes, with increased inclusivity. Research by Trouki (2012) suggests that a well-implemented multicultural curriculum can create a more inclusive learning environment, where students feel accepted and valued (Trouki, 2012). At Trenggalek High School, students from various backgrounds feel more accepted and valued, and social interactions among them have shown improvement in terms of mutual understanding and cooperation.

This inclusive environment supports the creation of a positive learning atmosphere (Minarti et al., 2024). These findings are supported by research by Senior et al. (2018), which found that an inclusive learning environment contributes to increased student engagement and motivation (Senior et al., 2018). By promoting mutual understanding and cooperation through various activities, the multicultural curriculum at Trenggalek High School has successfully created an atmosphere that supports diversity and values differences.

Conclusion

The study on the Development of a Multicultural Curriculum at Trenggalek High School demonstrates that integrating multicultural values into the curriculum and school activities effectively enhances student tolerance. The implementation of the multicultural curriculum at Trenggalek High School involves the integration of learning materials that reflect cultural diversity in various subjects, the organization of extracurricular activities that support diversity, and teacher training specifically designed to integrate multicultural values into teaching.

The study's findings reveal that teaching multicultural content through subjects such as Indonesian language and history has successfully helped students understand and appreciate cultural and historical diversity. Extracurricular activities such as cultural festivals and interfaith dialogues provide practical experiences that enrich students' understanding of various cultures and beliefs. Teacher training provides the skills and strategies necessary to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment for diversity.

The impact of the multicultural curriculum is evident in the increased tolerance among students, characterized by a more open attitude towards cultural and religious differences. Conflicts among students caused by cultural and religious differences have significantly decreased, and the learning environment has become more inclusive and harmonious. Students show more engagement in positive interactions and cooperation across backgrounds. Overall, the development of a multicultural curriculum at Trenggalek High School has proven effective in creating a school atmosphere that supports tolerance and diversity. This study recommends

the implementation of similar practices in other schools to improve student relationships and create a more harmonious and inclusive learning environment.

Recommendation

To advance the development of a multicultural curriculum, it is recommended that multicultural elements be integrated across all subjects and that extracurricular activities supporting diversity be expanded. Additionally, teacher training should be updated to reflect the latest advancements in multicultural education. Potential barriers include limited resources and resistance to change. Regular evaluations and stakeholder engagement are crucial to address these challenges and ensure the successful implementation of the curriculum.

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