

Implementation of Multicultural Education as an Effort to Build an Attitude of Tolerance among Students at Tanwirul Qulub Islamic Boarding School

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received 14-12-25

Revised 13-01-26

Accepted 21-01-26

Keywords

*Multicultural,
Education,
Tolerance among,
Boarding School,
Students*

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the implementation of multicultural education at the Tanwirul Qulub Islamic Boarding School in Lamongan and its contribution to fostering tolerance among students. Using a qualitative case study approach, data collection was conducted through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation analysis. The results show that multicultural education at this Islamic boarding school is realized through various activities, both formal and informal. In the formal realm, implementation is seen in the study of yellow books, madrasah diniyah, and school education that emphasizes universal Islamic values. Meanwhile, in the informal realm, multicultural values are practiced through the students' daily activities such as roan (joint community service), deliberations, and the manaqib activities of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jaelani, which involve broad community participation. Through these various activities, the Islamic boarding school strives to instill the values of *tasamuh* (tolerance), *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), and *ta'awun* (mutual assistance) that are internalized in the students' attitudes and behavior. Students are taught to live side by side without discrimination based on region of origin, social background, or cultural differences. Despite challenges such as a lack of formal understanding of the concept of multicultural education and limited learning media, its implementation has proven quite effective. Cross-cultural interactions among students are a crucial means of building harmony, solidarity, and mutual respect within the pesantren.

Introduction

Indonesia stands as a vast mosaic of cultural complexity, characterized by a distinct plurality of ethnicities, religions, languages, and customs. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), Indonesia is home to approximately 1,340

recognized ethnic groups and six official religions, making it one of the most multicultural nations in the world. This diversity acts as a double-edged sword; on one hand, it is a profound social asset, yet on the other, it presents a significant challenge in maintaining national cohesion. The social reality often reveals a gap between the ideal of harmony and the practice of coexistence. As noted by Ali Sunarno et al. (2023), acts of intolerance—ranging from discrimination and persecution to communal conflicts based on belief systems—remain a persistent issue in society. Consequently, the educational sector faces an urgent imperative to formulate approaches that can instill the values of mutual respect and social cohesion from an early age.

To mitigate these potential conflicts, multicultural education emerges as a critical pedagogical response. It is not merely a curriculum addition but a transformative process. James A. Banks (2010), a pioneer in this field, defines multicultural education as an approach designed to reform educational institutions so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups experience educational equality. It aims to equip learners with the understanding, attitudes, and skills necessary to function effectively in a pluralistic and democratic society. Complementing this view within the Indonesian context, Mundzier Suparta (2008) emphasizes that multicultural education is a philosophy that upholds cultural and ethnic diversity as a means to foster a just, democratic, and harmonious social life, aligning with the religious principle of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (a mercy to all worlds).

Within the national education system, the Islamic Boarding School, or Pondok Pesantren, occupies a strategic position in the internalization of these multicultural values. Beyond its traditional function as a center for the transmission of religious sciences (*tafaqquh fiddin*), the pesantren serves as a unique multicultural social space. The boarding nature of the institution creates an intense social environment where santri (students) from various geographic origins, linguistic backgrounds, and cultural habits live together 24 hours a day. This heterogeneity transforms the pesantren into a laboratory for social interaction, offering organic opportunities to build character, resilience, and tolerant attitudes through daily friction and reconciliation.

Pondok Pesantren Tanwirul Qulub in Lamongan exemplifies this multicultural microcosm. The institution accommodates a diverse body of students hailing from various regions, each bringing distinct cultural norms and habits. This diversity requires the institution to manage differences effectively to prevent friction and promote harmony. Preliminary observations suggest that the interaction among santri at Tanwirul Qulub has fostered a unique dynamic of tolerance. However, the specific pedagogical strategies—both explicit in the curriculum and implicit in the "hidden curriculum" of dormitory life—that the pesantren employs to manage this diversity remain largely undocumented.

Despite the abundance of literature regarding multicultural education in general, there is a scarcity of empirical research specifically discussing the implementation strategies at Pondok Pesantren Tanwirul Qulub and its direct contribution to the formation of student tolerance. Most existing studies focus on theoretical concepts or general public schools, leaving a gap in understanding how

traditional Islamic institutions in Lamongan adapt to modern multicultural challenges. Therefore, this research aims to bridge that gap by addressing two fundamental questions: (1) How is multicultural education implemented at Pondok Pesantren Tanwirul Qulub? and (2) What is its specific contribution to the formation of the students' tolerant attitudes?

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design that focuses on the Tanwirul Qulub Islamic Boarding School, Sungelebak Village, Karanggeneng District, Lamongan Regency. The qualitative approach was chosen to deeply understand the phenomena that occur in their natural context (Creswell, 2014). Research informants were selected purposively, namely those who are considered to have in-depth knowledge or important roles in the pesantren ecosystem (Patton, 2015). The main criterion for selecting informants was that they had lived at the pesantren for at least one year. A total of 8 informants, consisting of caretakers, administrators, ustadz/ustadzah, and male and female students, were selected to provide a comprehensive picture. To collect data, three main techniques were used: non-participatory observation of the students' routine activities; semi-structured interviews to explore the informants' experiences, perceptions, and personal views; and documentation that included the curriculum, activity schedule, vision and mission, and photo archives of the pesantren.

Results and Discussion

1. Implementation of Multicultural Education: Between Structural and Cultural Approaches

The implementation of multicultural education at Pondok Pesantren Tanwirul Qulub is unique because it operates through two integrated dimensions: structural (formal learning) and cultural (daily habituation).

- a. **Formal Integration** In the formal sphere, multicultural values are integrated into General Religious Studies, Madrasah Diniyah (Islamic religious schooling), and formal academic learning. Unlike secular schools where multiculturalism might be a separate subject, Tanwirul Qulub infuses these values into the interpretation of religious texts (Kitab Kuning). This approach prevents the secularization of multicultural values, rooting them instead in Islamic theology.
- b. **the "Hidden Curriculum" of Social Activities** The most profound impact, however, is observed through the "hidden curriculum" – unwritten learning experiences that occur outside the formal classroom.

Roan (Communal Service): This activity serves as an egalitarian platform. Regardless of a student's social class or regional background, everyone works together for cleanliness. Theoretically, this breaks down social barriers and builds solidarity, creating a sense of shared ownership of the pesantren environment.

Musyawah (Deliberation): This forum is a practical application of democratic principles. It teaches students that differences in opinion are not threats but opportunities for dialogue. This aligns with the Islamic principle of Shura, training students to resolve conflicts without violence.

Manaqib of Syekh Abdul Qadir Jaelani: By involving the wider community, this spiritual gathering creates a "borderless classroom" where students interact with society, strengthening cross-cultural interactions and social cohesion.

2. Internalization of Core Values: Tasamuh, Ukhuwah, and Ta'awun

The core values cultivated – Tasamuh (tolerance), Ukhuwah (brotherhood), and Ta'awun (cooperation)—are not merely taught as concepts but are lived experiences. The primary method for this internalization is Exemplarity (Uswah Hasanah). The Kyai (clerics) and Ustadz (teachers) do not just preach tolerance; they demonstrate it.

Theoretical Perspective: This aligns with Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which posits that individuals learn behaviors by observing and imitating others (modeling). In the context of the pesantren, the Ustadz serves as the "symbolic model." When students see their teachers respecting others or engaging in calm deliberation, they cognitively process this behavior and replicate it in their peer interactions.

3. Challenges in Implementation

Despite the **successes**, the research identified systemic challenges:;Lack of Codified Curriculum: The absence of an explicit multicultural curriculum means that learning often relies on the intuition of individual teachers rather than a standardized system.

Teacher Competence: A lack of formal academic understanding regarding "multiculturalism" as a pedagogical term limits the teachers' ability to expand the discourse beyond traditional religious boundaries.

Limited Media: The reliance on traditional oral transmission limits the students' exposure to global multicultural contexts.

4. Theoretical Discussion and Synthesis

The findings of this study confirm that the education model at Tanwirul Qulub validates James A. Banks' (1993) theory on the dimensions of multicultural education. Banks argues that multicultural education is not limited to content integration (curriculum) but heavily relies on "An Empowering School Culture." The activities of Roan, Musyawarah, and Manaqib create this empowering culture. They restructure the social organization of the school so that students from diverse groups experience equality.

Furthermore, the results support the findings of Husna & Mahfuds (2022), who argued that habituation is more effective than rote memorization in character building. The daily friction and subsequent reconciliation among students from different regions in the dormitory serve as an organic laboratory for tolerance.

However, the role of the educator remains paramount. As noted by Futaqi (2023), multicultural education requires educators to act as agents of social change. At Tanwirul Qulub, this is evident, but the "agent" capacity needs to be strengthened through professional training to bridge the gap between traditional

wisdom and modern multicultural terminology.

Conclusion

The implementation of multicultural education at Pondok Pesantren Tanwirul Qulub is a holistic process that blends religious dogma with social praxis. Through the integration of core values (Tasamuh, Ukhuwah, Ta'awun) into both formal studies and communal activities (Roan, Musyawarah), the pesantren successfully fosters a tolerant character in students. While the "hidden curriculum" functions effectively, the formalization of these values into an explicit curriculum and the enhancement of teacher competency are necessary steps to ensure the sustainability and consistency of this multicultural education model in the future.

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