The implementation of tolerance values through multicultural education program

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Abstract
This research aimed to delineate the strategies for fostering tolerance among students through multicultural education at Sanggar Anak Alam Nitiprayan in Yogyakarta. Employing a qualitative methodology with a case study approach, the investigation was conducted within the premises of Sanggar Anak Alam Nitiprayan located in Bantul, Yogyakarta. Data gathering methods encompassed interviews, observations, and documentation, with subjects selected purposively. Triangulation was utilised to ensure data validity. Analysis followed the qualitative data analysis technique advocated by Miles & Huberman, involving stages of data collection, reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The study yielded two principal findings: firstly, the integration of tolerance values into the school curriculum through multicultural education, and secondly, the cultivation of tolerance within classrooms via daily encounters, class agreements, communal prayer, and storytelling activities. Identified obstacles included diverse student potentials, varying parental attitudes, parental indoctrination conflicting with the SALAM curriculum, student non-compliance with agreements, facilitators adopting a lecturing rather than a facilitating role, and difficulties transferring students from formal educational backgrounds faced in adapting to the new environment.

Keywords: Indonesian value; multicultural education program; tolerance value,

Introduction

Indonesia, a democratic nation, upholds tolerance as a core value for its diverse society comprising various ethnicities, religions, races, and customs (Mavridis, 2015; Setiawan et al.,

2020; Widayati & Maulidiyah, 2018; Wijaksono, 2023; Yasi et al., 2019). Tolerance is vital for harmonious coexistence (Muhajarah & Soebahar, 2024). The Ministry of Education and Culture emphasises 18 national character values, including tolerance (Marsita et al., 2023). This encompasses respect for other religions and harmonious living (Islam, 2020; Mawadda et al., 2023), democratic values promoting equality (Raihani, 2014; Suryani & Muslim, 2024), peace-loving attitudes ensuring safety and happiness (Giwangsa et al., 2023), and social care characterised by assisting those in need (Meliani & Sati, 2023; Zurqoni et al., 2018). Promoting tolerance within diversity is best achieved through multicultural education, addressing critical issues in Indonesian society, such as social conflicts rooted in ethnicity, religion, and race (Aderibigbe et al., 2023; Primawati, 2013).

Tolerance, as highlighted by Suryana and Rusdiana, is a key aspect of the divine theme in Indonesia's multicultural education, with indicators including empathy—respecting others' religious practices—and awareness—understanding and respecting diverse beliefs (Suryana & Rusdiana, 2015). A common issue in diversity is the adjustment between ethnic, religious, or cultural groups. Mashau notes that people often feel confused and uncomfortable when interacting with different cultures, leading to culture shock (Bochner, 2003; Mashau, 2012; Moufakkir, 2013). This typically occurs when one spends enough time in a new culture to understand and adapt to it (D'Souza et al., 2016; Ward et al., 2020). Effective multicultural education is crucial in diverse communities with political systems that support freedom of expression and cultural understanding (Derderian-Aghajanian, 2010; Gumbo, 2001).

Without tolerance, diversity can lead to negative consequences such as tribal wars, religious conflicts, power struggles, criminal activities, racism, and other forms of intolerance that threaten national unity (Ayub & Jehn, 2014). This law aims to foster a tolerant generation by providing equal educational opportunities regardless of ethnicity, religion, race, or customs. Despite these efforts, intolerance remains prevalent, as evidenced by major conflicts in Indonesia. Diputra outlines five significant cases: the ethnic violence that resulted in the deaths of four Trisakti University students in 1998; the 1999 religious conflict in Ambon between Muslims and Christians; the 2001 Sampit tragedy involving the Dayak and Madura tribes; conflicts between the government and separatist groups like GAM, RMS, and OPM; and the 2012 attack on the Shia community in Sampang, which resulted in fatalities and injuries (Diputra, 2016).

Narrow-minded fanaticism remains deeply rooted among Indonesian youth, as evidenced by terrorism cases. For example, in August 2016, IAH (18) carried out a suicide bombing at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Medan, North Sumatra, being a sympathiser of ISIS (Qurrataa'yun, 2016). Terrorism analyst Al Chaidar advocates for a pluralistic and multicultural educational approach to counter-terrorism, criticising Indonesia's current education system for its excessive focus on rote memorisation and lack of multicultural elements.

Religious intolerance is still prevalent, with the National Commission on Human Rights reporting increased religious and belief freedoms cases, recording 97 cases in 2016 compared to 76 in 2014 and 87 in 2015 (www.komnasham.go.id). Retno Listyarti of the Federation of Indonesian Teachers' Unions (FSGI) noted a decline in diversity in public schools, with policy uniformity favouring the majority religion (Bona, 2015). A survey found that 48.9% of students in 100 public schools in Jakarta and surrounding areas supported violence in the name of religion, and 28.2% of religion teachers surveyed agreed with religious violence.

The low tolerance quality suggests that tolerance values are not deeply ingrained in individuals. Arifin attributes this to the lack of universal humanistic values, including tolerance, in the educational system's epistemological foundations. The educational practices are highly cognitive, focusing almost exclusively on intellectual intelligence (Al-Arifin, 2012). Multicultural education is essential to foster tolerant generations toward diversity. Primawati highlights its benefits: (1) introducing innovative learning approaches that enhance empathy and reduce prejudices, fostering intercultural individuals capable of peaceful conflict

resolution; (2) promoting social interaction and emotional engagement through specific strategies; (3) helping teachers manage the learning process efficiently and effectively, empowering learners to collaborate and uphold high-value commitments in diverse societies; (4) aiding Indonesia in managing sectarian conflicts by enhancing empathy and reducing prejudice (Primawati, 2013).

Effective implementation of multicultural education within schools is crucial for nurturing harmony amidst diversity. Rosyada asserts that schools must design, plan, and monitor all elements supporting the multicultural education process to offer the best services to all school clients (Rosyada, 2014). Schools should plan learning processes that cultivate multicultural attitudes, enabling students to become democratic society members who value human rights and justice. This includes designing curricula, and evaluation methods and preparing teachers with multicultural perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours.

According to Article 8 of the Republic of Indonesia Law number 14 of 2005, teacher competencies include pedagogical, personality, social, and professional competencies acquired through professional education. Fransiska supports this by stating that teachers are significant role models for children outside their home environment, influencing them through the school learning process (Fransiska, 2016). However, teachers face numerous challenges in instilling tolerance. In Indonesia, religious intolerance remains prevalent, necessitating teachers to be objective and promote religious tolerance among students. Nailufar's study involving 760 students in Jakarta and Greater Bandung revealed that teachers are the primary source of religious knowledge, with 39.9 percent of students receiving religious knowledge from teachers, compared to 23.2 percent from parents. Retno Listyarti of the Indonesian Teachers Union Federation (FSGI) noted that intolerant teachers threaten student tolerance (Nailufar, 2016). Additionally, cases of student intolerance have been reported, such as those in public junior high and senior high schools in Yogyakarta City (Edi, 2017).

Chairman of the D Commission of the Yogyakarta City Regional Representatives Council, Ardiyanto, highlighted the existence of school regulations in Yogyakarta City that promote intolerance, leading students towards religious fanaticism. Fokki elaborated on a complaint from a parent whose child attends a public junior high school where students are required to wear specific religious attire. Those not adhering are labelled as infidels, fostering feelings of inferiority among them. This situation indicates the ineffectiveness of Article 4 paragraph (1) of Law No. 20 of 2003 on National Education in promoting tolerance. The need for instilling tolerance through multicultural education in schools is emphasised, as early exposure to diversity fosters tolerance (Nikawanti, 2017; Sahal et al., 2018; Slamet et al., 2021).

Sanggar Anak Alam Yogyakarta (SALAM) offers an alternative education system that values diversity and understands the potential of diverse children. Students at SALAM come from various backgrounds, including children of scavengers, street musicians, and professors. Ethnic diversity is also present among Chinese, Javanese, Balinese, Malay, and European students of mixed descent. Religions represented include Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. SALAM's learning environment is integrated with nature, amidst rice fields in Nitiprayan, Bantul, and Yogyakarta. Mrs Sri Wahyaningsih explains that unlike traditional curriculums focused on uniformity, SALAM employs facilitators instead of teachers to nurture and guide students, embracing their diversity. SALAM exemplifies an alternative approach to realising diversity in education.

Research on multicultural education and inculcating tolerance values is crucial for addressing diversity and social development. This study on the Tolerance Values Planting Program at Sanggar Anak Alam (SALAM) Yogyakarta is notable for several reasons. First, it examines the local context of Yogyakarta, Indonesia, which is distinct from the Western cultural contexts often studied. Second, SALAM, an alternative educational centre, employs a unique approach to teaching tolerance and multiculturalism, differing from studies focused on formal

schools. Third, this research uses an in-depth qualitative exploratory method, providing richer insights than previous quantitative studies.

Banks elaborates on multicultural education's role in shaping tolerance attitudes, emphasising an inclusive curriculum (Banks & Banks, 1997). Nieto shows that multicultural learning communities strengthen social bonds among diverse students (Nieto, 1999). Gorski investigates strategies for teaching low-income students using a multicultural approach relevant to SALAM's context (Gorski, 2013). Grant and Sleeter explore multicultural education for educational justice, offering insights into creating inclusive environments like SALAM (Grant & Sleeter, 2012). Gay provides a theoretical foundation for culturally responsive teaching, which is essential for promoting tolerance at SALAM (Gay, 2000).

This research aims to explore SALAM's Tolerance Values Planting Program, identify its methods and strategies, analyse its effectiveness in fostering tolerance, and assess its impact on Yogyakarta's social diversity. The study is expected to enrich the literature on multicultural education and tolerance in Southeast Asia, offering theoretical and practical guidance for educators and policymakers. It highlights the importance of multicultural education in promoting social harmony and reducing cultural and religious conflicts, contributing significantly to knowledge and practice in this field.

Method

This qualitative case study investigates the program for instilling tolerance values through multicultural education at Sanggar Anak Alam (SALAM) in Nitiprayan, Bantul, Yogyakarta, conducted from January to May 2017. Data sources include primary data from observations and interviews and secondary data from relevant documentation. Participants were selected purposively, focusing on individuals directly involved in the program, including Mrs. Sri Wahyaningsih, the founder of SALAM, and all SALAM facilitators. Data collection methods encompassed observation, interviews, and documentation, with data analysis following the Miles & Huberman method (Creswell, 2012; Sugiyono, 2010), which involves data collection, reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was ensured through triangulation, comparing multiple sources and methods. The analysis process reduced and categorised data based on the conceptual framework and research questions, summarising, coding, forming themes, and presenting data in a structured manner for interpretation and conclusions (Moleong, 2006).

Result and Discussion

Cultivating tolerance values through Multicultural Education at Sanggar Anak Alam (SALAM) is achieved through a blend of school programs and classroom activities. This aligns with Arifin's principle that effective multicultural education must integrate both classroom learning and institutional dimensions, necessitating comprehensive reform (Al-Arifin, 2012). According to Banks' multicultural education framework, SALAM employs a transformational approach to reshape the curriculum's foundational assumptions and develop students' abilities to consider concepts, issues, and problems from multiple ethnic perspectives (Hanum & Rahmadonna, 2010). Unlike most formal schools, SALAM's curriculum strongly emphasises diversity to foster mutual respect, togetherness, and love among children, thereby nurturing tolerance.

Programs at SALAM, such as "school without uniforms" to encourage individuality and equality, morning games for teamwork, home visits to understand cultural backgrounds, and presentations of healthy snacks to promote cultural sharing, are seamlessly integrated into the curriculum. This integrated approach mirrors Banks' concept of transformational multicultural education, which involves rethinking the educational experience to enhance diversity, understanding and respect. By embedding tolerance values into institutional practices and classroom activities, SALAM provides a holistic environment that promotes individual growth and collective harmony, setting a model for other educational institutions.

Arifin's and Banks' theories (Al Arifin, 2012; Banks & Banks, 1997) support this approach, emphasising the need for comprehensive and transformative practices for true multicultural education. SALAM's application of these principles demonstrates practical implementation, offering valuable insights into fostering tolerance and inclusivity in diverse educational settings. This approach advances knowledge and has significant practical implications for promoting tolerance through multicultural education.

Formal schools often emphasise uniformity in aspects such as student attire, teacher dress codes, building structures, and standardised textbooks under the guise of educational equality (Bodine, 2003; Hidalgo et al., 2010; Sabic-El-Rayess et al., 2019). However, education should appreciate human diversity, including cultural backgrounds and customs, reflecting the motto "Bhineka Tunggal Ika" (Unity in Diversity) (Assefa, 2023; Laia, 2024; Naz et al., 2023). This diversity can extend to daily clothing, allowing children to wear appropriate attire and encouraging diverse thinking, which fosters collaboration (Reidy, 2021).

Typically, schools enforce strict uniform regulations (Mitchell & Knechtle, 2003). For example, elementary students may have specific uniforms for each day of the week, requiring multiple sets of uniforms, which can be burdensome for families. Gernata Titi, a parent at SALAM, notes that if a child cannot wear the required uniform, they risk peer bullying.

SALAM embraces diversity by forgoing uniforms, allowing students and facilitators to wear T-shirts and flip-flops, and promoting individuality and self-acceptance. This practice fosters tolerance and inclusivity, aligning with educational theories of individualism and equality. Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" advocates for education as a practice of freedom, encouraging students to express their identities and engage critically with their environment (Garavan, 2016). Dewey's "Democracy and Education" suggests that education should uphold democratic principles and treat students equally, irrespective of socioeconomic status (Dewey, 2024). By not requiring uniforms, SALAM highlights economic disparities, fostering open dialogue and mutual understanding among students from various backgrounds.

The absence of uniforms at SALAM helps dismantle hierarchical structures and power dynamics typical of formal educational settings, aligning with Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, which suggests that schools often reproduce social inequalities through mechanisms like uniform enforcement (Bourdieu, 2008). This policy fosters a more egalitarian and inclusive environment, allowing students to feel comfortable and accepted, which is crucial for their social and emotional development. It promotes a school culture that values diversity and a sense of belonging, encouraging students to engage with diverse perspectives and backgrounds, thus enriching the educational experience. The "School Without Uniforms" policy at SALAM supports individual expression, egalitarianism, and dismantling hierarchical structures, cultivating tolerance and inclusivity by allowing students to express their identities freely and fostering respect for diversity. This initiative is vital to SALAM's holistic approach to multicultural education, contributing to a more tolerant and inclusive society.

Children's play is fundamentally akin to adult work. Children are deeply engaged during play, creating rules and strategies and mimicking real-life scenarios. According to Ki Hadjar, children naturally observe, imitate, and innovate, forming the basis of his educational model, the Three N's: Observe, Imitate, Innovate. At SALAM, the primary learning process is play-based, where children express themselves freely with facilitators following Ki Hadjar Dewantara's Tut Wuri Handayani method.

Each morning, SALAM facilitators organise games for elementary to junior high school students to foster solidarity, cooperation, and a sense of togetherness, which is essential for tolerance. Mrs Wahya notes that these games enhance socialisation, a critical learning aspect, as humans are inherently social. Children learn to communicate, express desires, and make friends through guided play.

Morning games help children expand their vocabulary, develop sensory organs, and acquire knowledge. They find happiness, make friends, and discover wisdom and values of togetherness. At 08:30 AM daily, SALAM students and facilitators gather for games that promote cooperation, respect, and unity, reflecting Banks' dimension of Empowering School Culture and Social Structure (Banks & Banks, 2019). This practice preserves the spirit of cooperation, a root of Indonesian tolerance, aligning with Arifin's competency of respecting and collaborating with diverse individuals (Al Arifin, 2012).

Multicultural learning approaches are implemented at SALAM by fostering closer acquaintance among diverse students through home visits. These visits, conducted in all classes with flexible timing, depend on agreements among parents, facilitators, and children. Based on life events, locations and activities are determined in advance to provide children with new experiences. For instance, junior high students visited the home of Kurnia Pamungkas Kusumaningrum, enhancing family ties and social bonds among parents and students. Children gain insights into their peers' daily lives and environments, fostering tolerance and understanding. Furthermore, SALAM's unique approach includes parents providing snacks in rotation and involving children in the preparation process to instill the value of giving. This comprehensive approach builds knowledge of diversity, cultural backgrounds, social dynamics, and religious beliefs, promoting tolerance and appreciation among students.

Children are taught to recognise and prepare healthy foods without preservatives, benefiting themselves and their peers. They also learn gratitude by saying "thank you" when receiving snacks. Early childhood education (PAUD) differs from elementary (SD) and junior high (SMP) levels in that snacks are provided only once in PAUD, while in SD and SMP, snacks are given before breaks and substantial meals before going home.

In second grade, every Tuesday, children save money instead of buying snacks, fostering mutual respect and commitment to agreements. In third grade, children may ask for more snacks from the facilitator after confirming availability. Before eating, all students wash their hands in an orderly queue, promoting tolerance and respect for others. Due to outdoor activities, early childhood education students often wash their hands and feet.

This queuing habit teaches children to respect others' rights. After washing hands, students pray before eating, except for the 6th-grade and middle school levels. The prayer is: *"My Lord, thank you for this food, bless it. Amen."* After eating, students wash their hands and, in higher grades, clean their utensils and place them back in the designated area.

Multicultural education's knowledge construction is evident in classroom agreements that vary by class conditions, guiding children in self-care, peer interaction, and environmental responsibility. Class dynamics generate events central to the learning cycle at SALAM. If issues arise, they are addressed based on these agreements. According to Primawati, multicultural education at SALAM equips children with decision-making skills and alternatives for maintaining integration and harmony (Primawati, 2013). As the Ministry of Education and Culture outlines, tolerance practices include respecting others regardless of age, religion, race, and culture, speaking politely, and not imposing one's will on others, fostering acceptance of diverse individuals (Maznah et al., 2016).

In classroom storytelling activities, children learn to listen without interrupting, a method endorsed by the Ministry of Education and Culture to foster tolerance. Storytelling also encourages discussions on diversity, such as religious celebrations, where facilitators cross-check information with children of that faith. This approach promotes tolerance by addressing various aspects of diversity, including ethnicity, customs, race, religion, arts, and socio-cultural factors (Maznah et al., 2016). Facilitators at SALAM follow an event-based learning cycle, focusing on students' real-life situations and needs, as suggested by Moeis (2014). SALAM's facilitators cultivate a classroom climate rooted in local culture, encouraging children to embody positive local values. For instance, they remind children of proper behaviour and

promote healthier local cuisine over Western junk food. Facilitators see students as friends, not robots, encouraging them to express their potential. This involves personalised research projects based on each student's interests and abilities. According to Moeis, attention to students' real-life circumstances and needs is crucial, a principle reflected in SALAM's practice of having at least three facilitators per class to meet diverse learning needs.

Conclusion

Conceptually, the cultivation of tolerance values at SALAM is integrated through four methods: 1) school without uniforms, 2) morning games, 3) home visits, and 4) provision of healthy snacks. Classroom learning also incorporates tolerance values through 1) collective prayers, 2) class agreements and events, and 3) storytelling activities. It can be concluded that the cultivation of tolerance values requires sincerity and dedication from all parties to help children understand diversity. Facilitators should continuously improve their competencies to support SALAM programs. Enhancing the quality of educational facilities and equipment is also crucial in cultivating tolerance values.

This research recommends continuous professional development for facilitators and educators to stay updated with best practices in multicultural education. SALAM should regularly evaluate and update its educational facilities and resources to support the effective teaching of tolerance values. Future research should explore the long-term impacts of the SALAM program on participants and conduct comparative studies with other multicultural education programs in different cultural contexts. Policymakers are encouraged to support initiatives like SALAM by providing funding and resources, creating policies that promote inclusive education, and recognising such programs as models for integrating tolerance education into the broader educational system. This will help nurture tolerance and understanding across society, contributing to a more harmonious and cohesive community.

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