
Analysis of the Concept of Multicultural Education According to KH. Abdurahman Wahid (Gus Dur)

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ABSTRACT

The plurality of society in Indonesia is one of the icons of Indonesia. With plurality, people are expected to respect differences in ethnicity, race, religion, and culture. However, plurality must be the basis of community tolerance, rarely causing conflicts due to differences. The emergence of conflicts that occur is one of the indicators that Indonesian people still do not fully understand the problem of multicultural internal conditions. Gus Dur's presence in advancing multicultural education emerged as part of a response to the phenomenon of ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural differences that often arise in the midst of a multicultural society. Gus Dur's concept of multicultural education emphasizes on cultivating a life of respect and tolerance for diversity that lives in a pluralistic society and fostering generations who are not only knowledgeable and skilled, but also able to live together in society as the nation's successor. This study uses literature research by reviewing several Gus Dur books. The results of the study show that there are differences in religion, race, and culture that do not conflict with each other and are not a source of division in society. So that multicultural Islamic education is a very urgent thing to be carried out to bring flexibility and openness to each other.

Keywords: plurality of society, multicultural education, Gus Dur

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is famous as a country that has a very diverse and rich diversity of cultures, religions, ethnicities, and languages. However, this diversity is often a challenge when not managed properly, especially in terms of creating a common awareness that respects differences (Izzah, 2020). In this context, it is important for us to understand the meaning and importance of multicultural education. Multicultural education not only aims to increase knowledge, but also to form a character that is tolerant, inclusive, and respectful of diversity.

Abdurrahman Wahid or familiarly called Gus Dur is a figure who is very concerned about the issue of pluralism and multicultural education in Indonesia. As a scholar, intellectual, and president, Gus Dur provides a complete view of the significance of education based on human values and respect for diversity. According to him, multicultural education plays an important role in shaping a harmonious and prosperous society, where diversity is seen as wealth, not as a threat (Olfah, 2020).

Multicultural education is one of the crucial elements in strengthening the unity and unity of the Indonesian nation which has cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity (Maulidan & Darmawan, 2024). However, in its implementation, multicultural education still faces various challenges, such as the lack of integration of multicultural values in the curriculum and the lack of public awareness of the importance of tolerance (Hasanuddin, 2024). Research conducted by Irawati, (2020) which shows that students who receive multicultural education are more able to appreciate differences than those who do not receive multicultural education. Meanwhile, the research conducted by Rudiyanto et al., (2024) who found that the diversity of student backgrounds is a driving factor in fostering mutual respect.

Although there have been various previous studies, studies on the contribution of national figures such as Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) to multicultural education in Indonesia are still limited. Therefore, this research is important to fill the literature gap and provide a new perspective that emphasizes the multicultural educational approach based on human values and pluralism taught by Gus Dur.

The novelty in this study lies in the approach that examines the contribution and thinking of Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) to multicultural education in Indonesia. Different from previous research that focused more on the implementation of multicultural education in schools and universities, this research will explore the human values, pluralism, and respect for diversity taught by Gus Dur as the foundation of multicultural education. This approach offers a new perspective that highlights the role of national figures in formulating the concept of multicultural education which is not only theoretical but also based on Gus Dur's experience and outlook on life. This study also provides a contextual analysis of the relevance of Gus Dur's thinking in facing the challenges of globalization and increasing intolerance in Indonesia today.

This research aims to examine the concept of multicultural education according to Gus Dur, analyze its relevance to the education system in Indonesia, and explore its contribution in facing the challenges of globalization and intolerance. The results of this research are expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of a multicultural education curriculum, as well as a practical reference for educators and policy makers in creating an inclusive and harmonious educational environment.

METHOD

The literature study approach is a research method that involves collecting and analyzing data from various relevant reading sources such as books, journals, scientific articles, official documents, and other written sources (Firdaus et al., 2023). This method is used to deepen understanding of a particular concept, theory, or phenomenon by utilizing pre-existing knowledge (Priadana & Sunarsi, 2021). In research situations, literature studies have an important role in helping researchers to gain theoretical understanding, establish conceptual foundations, and formulate a solid framework of thinking.

By using this method, researchers can find differences in research, compare various points of view, and enrich the analysis with arguments that have been recognized in the academic sphere. Using literature studies has also proven to be an effective method in research that focuses on the discussion of concepts, history, or philosophy, such as those contained in the analysis of the concept of multicultural education in the style of Gus Dur. This method is not only cost- and time-efficient, but it also provides a wide range of opportunities to browse through a wide range of references related to the topic being studied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Multicultural Education According to Gusdur

Multicultural education, according to Gus Dur, is based on his belief that diversity is an important element in human life that should be welcomed, rather than avoided. Gus Dur considers that education has a crucial role in deepening intercultural understanding and reducing prejudice which is often a source of tension in society (Napitupulu, 2019). According to him, education has a broader role than just teaching knowledge, namely shaping a person's personality so that they can live a harmonious life in the midst of various differences.

The special attention given by Gus Dur is to the humanization aspect in the world of education. He believes that in the teaching and learning process, an understanding of universal human principles, such as justice, equality, and respect for individual rights, should be imbued. Multicultural education not only introduces cultural diversity, but also teaches how to optimize diversity as a foundation for building an inclusive society (Gumilang et al., 2024).

Gus Dur strongly emphasized the importance of dialogue as the main method in multicultural education (Gama, 2023). For him, dialogue is not only a way to understand differences, but also a means to resolve conflicts peacefully. In the world of education, this concept can be realized by learning

activities that combine discussions between students from various backgrounds, simulations of multicultural life, and group work projects that encourage intercultural cooperation.

In addition, Gus Dur also criticized the diversity of the education system which tends to be homogeneous and less responsive to differences. He believes that a curriculum that focuses too much on one cultural or religious identity can give rise to an exclusivity attitude. Therefore, he encourages the development of an inclusive curriculum, where every group can feel recognized. As an illustration, the curriculum can include learning about the history of various ethnic and religious groups in Indonesia, as well as reflecting their important role in the formation of the state.

One of the biggest things that needs to be overcome in implementing multicultural education is to change the way people view people who still often give rise to stereotypes against other groups (Sarmini & Setyowati, 2020). Therefore, teacher participation as agents of change is very important. Teachers need to have a deep understanding of multicultural values and be able to set an example in applying tolerance and respect for differences.

With an integrated and consistent method, multicultural education in the style of Gus Dur has the potential as a solution to strengthen the unity of Indonesian society, create justice, and peace in the midst of the dynamics of globalization and social complexity faced today.

The concept of multicultural education supported by Gus Dur is very much in line with the diversity of Indonesian society. According to Gus Dur, education is not only a means to convey knowledge, but also a way to form individual characters who appreciate diversity. Education has an important role in shaping a society that can live in harmony in the midst of cultural and religious diversity (Syafi & Arif, 2024).

The importance of the value of tolerance promoted by Gus Dur is in line with religious teachings that promote peace. Multicultural education needs to teach students not only to understand their own identity, but also to appreciate the identities of others. In addition, the importance of dialogue in resolving conflicts is also the main aspect of this educational concept. Gus Dur believes that mutual understanding is the key to overcoming differences.

In terms of application, multicultural education can be inserted into the curriculum through subjects such as religious education, civic education, and local content. Teaching with an inclusive approach, such as group discussions, case studies, and simulations, is helpful in instilling multicultural values.

However, a challenge in implementing multicultural education in Indonesia is the ongoing social segregation and stereotypes between groups. Therefore, synergy is needed between educational institutions, the government, and the community to implement the concept of Gus Dur. By integrating multicultural education into the education system, Indonesia can increase social integration and give birth to a generation that values diversity.

According to Gus Dur, the analysis of the concept of multicultural education concludes that such education has a significant role in shaping a society that respects differences, is inclusive, and is fair. Gus Dur strongly emphasized the importance of values such as respect for differences, tolerance, and social justice in the world of education. He views education as a means that can create harmony in the midst of Indonesia's diverse diversity (Abidin et al., 2022).

According to Gus Dur, multicultural education is based on universal human values which include respect for human rights, efforts to eliminate discrimination, and increase social solidarity (Nurcholish, 2015). The application of this concept is very relevant in Indonesia because it is often faced with the challenge of interreligious, ethnic, and cultural conflicts. With multicultural education, it is hoped that students can appreciate differences as a source of national diversity that enriches, not as a threat.

The literature study method applied in this study reveals that Gus Dur proposes a comprehensive approach, involving various aspects such as religion, culture, and social in strengthening an inclusive education system. His concept is not only theoretical but also practical, as evidenced by his various efforts in promoting interreligious dialogue and pluralism values during his lifetime.

Characteristics of Multicultural Education

Characteristics are traits that need to be studied with regard to the peculiarities that distinguish one person from another (Akbar, 2020). This is done in order to be able to adjust the ways of persuasion. The material teaches the noble values of humanity, national values, and values of ethnic groups (multiculturalists). The evaluation is determined by assessing the behavior of students which includes

perception, appreciation, and action towards other cultures to develop an attitude of acknowledging, accepting, and appreciating the diversity needed in social life in a pluralistic society. Acceptance, recognition, and appreciation of diversity are social attitudes that are necessary in building harmonious social relations in a pluralistic society.

Sonia Nieto, defines multicultural education as actually the same as the characteristics in general, only that multicultural education in the socio-political context, is aimed at society and the educational process as a fixed and static form (Hidayat, 2022). There are seven characteristics conveyed by Nieto, namely

1. Antiracist education
2. Basic Education
3. important for all students
4. Pervasive
5. Education for social justice
6. Education as process
7. Critical pedagogy

Ainurrofiq Dewam added that the characteristics of multicultural education are ultimately oriented to be important in community life (Hikmawati et al., 2024). The orientation contains, among others, humanitarian orientation, togetherness, welfare, and orientation acknowledging the plurality and heterogeneity that exists in society. On the basis of these characteristics, multicultural education is an education that can be accepted by all groups and communities.

In the implementation of multicultural education, Banks explained that there are five dimensions that must exist, namely, first, the integration of education in the curriculum (content integration) in which religion is involved in an educational culture whose main purpose is to remove prejudice. Second, the construction of science comprehensively understands the existing diversity. Third, prejudice reduction which is born from the interaction between diversity in educational culture. Fourth, human equality pedagogy or equity pedagogy which provides equal space and opportunity to every diverse element. Fifth, empowering school culture. This fifth thing is in the purpose of multicultural education, which is for schools to become social or transformatory elements of society structures that are unequal to a just structure.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussions in this study, it can be concluded that Abdurrahman Wahid's (Gus Dur) thoughts on multicultural education have high relevance in the context of Indonesia as a country rich in cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity. Gus Dur's lineage and educational background, which is rooted in the tradition of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and his experience studying at home and abroad, provided a strong foundation for his thinking about the importance of education oriented towards pluralism and tolerance. Multicultural education, according to Gus Dur, is defined as an effort to instill an understanding of cultural and religious diversity that is in harmony with state norms and religious teachings. This approach emphasizes the importance of values such as tolerance, freedom, openness, fairness, and honesty in building harmonious relationships in a diverse society.

Through this analysis, it can be seen that Gus Dur's thinking has made a significant contribution in developing the concept of multicultural education which not only aims to increase knowledge, but also forms an inclusive character and respects differences. Thus, this study reinforces the importance of integrating multicultural values in the Indonesian education system to strengthen unity and prevent potential conflicts caused by differences.

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