

# The Importance of Multicultural Education at an Early Age in Indonesia

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***Abstract**--This article is made to identify the importance of multicultural education in early childhood in Indonesia. Multicultural education can be regarded as human beings who wanted education to accept and understand that the difference is the gift of God Almighty. Indonesia has a very high level of diversity, such as the diversity of race, religion, culture and customs. Based on literature reviewed, this article gives the results of how the importance of implementing multicultural education based on early childhood in Indonesia. For the long-term impact, it is very useful for the development of Indonesian human characters who love peace and mutual tolerance for differences.*

***Keywords**--Multicultural Education, Early Childhood Education, Character*

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## I. Introduction

Indonesia is a very diverse country, which has a diverse ethnic, cultural and religious. In terms of geography, Indonesia is an archipelago with thousands of islands scattered in all corners of Indonesia. This factor is the cause of the large number of ethnic groups in Indonesia. Indonesia as a country that has the largest number of ethnic groups in the world, has thousands of tribes. The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) on the population census in 2010 recorded as many as 1331 parts category. Then in 2013, BPS and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) produces a new classification that can be used to analyze the data rate population census in 2010. Produced 633 major ethnic groups of tribal codes available in the population census of 2010 ([www.bps.go.id](http://www.bps.go.id),2015).

Diversity is a challenge and an opportunity for Indonesia. Will be a challenge if every citizen can not understand the concept of diversity of Indonesia. That is, every citizen can be fractured by means behalf of such diversity. So what will happen is the emergence of disintegration among citizens that could trigger national disintegration. One example of cases relating to diversity are local elections in Jakarta. During the selection process once discovered many issues that smelled of diversity such as ethnicity, race, religion and inter-group. The impact is still felt to this day, as can be found in social media. While going to be a potential opportunity if we can educate the citizens so that they know the concept of multicultural, so that they would be able to collaborate in managing diversity in Indonesia. National life are in harmony, security, peace will be achieved.

Multicultural education as education for *people of color* (Banks, 1993: 3). The statement can be interpreted that multicultural education it wants us to understand and accept that the difference is a gift from God. Furthermore, we are required to accept any differences and promote mutual tolerance of differences. If it is associated with Indonesia's cultural

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diversity, multicultural education is very important. To develop continuing education, it is necessary once the multicultural education is taught early on to the future generation of Indonesia. Referring to the background, the authors are interested to learn about the importance of multicultural education to be done for children by in Indonesia.

## II. Literature Review

Some research into the study of literacy in this study is the research conducted by Tatang M. Arimin premises contextual title of multicultural education implementation approach based on local wisdom in Indonesia. It stresses that the multicultural education in Indonesia should be focused on the understanding and appreciation of learners towards their own culture and the culture of others and cultural diversity recommend loading material on citizenship education, social science and religious education. In particular, the implementation of multicultural education should be based on local knowledge of each area.

The study titled multicultural learning through multicultural education based on national values by Laurencia Primawati. In this study it can be concluded that multicultural education is implemented in teaching multicultural-based national values to produce learners who have competence as insightful and knowledgeable broad concept of multicultural, has an attitude aris and wise as members of the multi-cultural society, and have skills in make decisions and provide an alternative to multicultural issues in an effort to maintain harmonious and integrated society.

The next study is about the implementation of multicultural education in the educational practices in Indonesia are carried out by Akhmad Hidayatullah Al Arifin. This study describes about multicultural education which is seen as an instrument of social engineering is done in schools to cultivate awareness in a multicultural society and develop an attitude of tolerance and tolerance so that learners are able to work together in diversity.

Furthermore, studies with the title of the implementation of multicultural learning models in elementary school in the Province of Yogyakarta Special Regions conducted by Farida Harum and Sisca Rahmadonna. Studies using the approach of research and development (R & D) have developed a previous study in the same subject that multicultural learning model. This study specifically aims to enhance multicultural learning modules in elementary school. The conclusion that can be drawn from this research that schools should promote multicultural activities undertaken. Because of multicultural education that can be instilled early settlement alternative the many problems experienced by the nation's diversity.

## III. Method

Methodology used in compiling this article is the study of literature. A literature study is theoretical study, references and other scientific literature relating to the culture, values and norms that develop in social situations studied (Sugiyono, 2012). Book study is data collection method to seek information through books, magazines, newspapers and other literature that aims to establish a theoretical basis (Arikunto, 2006). Broadly speaking, the research uses literature study will use media such as scientific journals, books, magazines, newspaper, posters, and other theoretical sources that are used as a basis for studying the problems to be studied.

In this article, the materials that are used to study the problems are as follows:

- a. Scientific journals
- b. Books
- c. Articles on the Internet
- d. Magazine
- e. Newspaper

#### IV. Results and Discussion

After reviewing the literature, the following is a description obtained by the author of *the First*, Multicultural Education is a way or method to be used primarily by educators for teach the student so that they can understand and explore about the diversity of Indonesia. The aim is that students are able to understand, collaborate and work together on the basis of the differences that exist in Indonesia. Multicultural education is an education strategy that is applied to all kinds of subjects by using the cultural differences that exist in learners, such as differences in ethnicity, religion, language, gender, social class, race, ability and age so that the process of learning to be effective and easy , (Yaqin, 2005). Furthermore, Yaqin revealed that multicultural education is also to train and build the character of students in order to be able to be democratic, humanist and pluralist in their environment. In other words, through multicultural education learners are expected to easily understand, master, have a good competence, act and implementing democratic values, humanism and pluralism in school and outside of school. Therefore, the ultimate goal of multicultural education is to apply the principles of justice, democracy and humanism at the same time. Education in a democracy such as Indonesia should be oriented towards the interests of the nation whose background multi-ethnic, multi-religion, multi-language and others. Through these opinions, it can be concluded that in implementing multicultural education to produce learners who are able to be democratic, humane and pluralistic, it must pay attention to factors such as the diversity of races, religions, cultures, and languages.

*Secondly*, schools are the main means of education to implement multicultural education. To that end, the school plays an important role in the planning and implementation of multicultural education. Schools need to design a curriculum that supports this multicultural education and schools should also be able to facilitate its activities. For teachers, need flexibility and foresight in teaching multicultural education to the students. Subject is because teachers must take into consideration the factors contained in the difference of learners. Teachers are also expected to be able to package and manage learning in a multicultural education that is able to accommodate a diversity of students, respect for differences of race, appreciate differences in language, appreciate the background, is able to be critical of the injustices against minorities, does not discriminate against other ethnic groups, gender equality and respect for each the differences that exist in every student. It is solely done to create students who are able to understand all the differences that exist in every individual so that they are able to be democratic, respect for diversity (pluralism) and humane.

*Third*, it is important multicultural education from an early age. This is done so that students are able to understand that they live in a heterogeneous environment. Where a lot of cultural diversity around them. They will be given a better understanding of that culture has a strong influence on life in the community. So they were able to identify the cultural diversity that exists around them well and were able to see the diversity of cultures wisely. Diversity differences are reflected in the behavior, attitudes, customs, mindset, customs, rules and ways in society.

#### V. Conclusion

The conclusion to be drawn from this article is that multicultural education is a way to teach the students so that they can understand and explore diversity. Through this multicultural education as well learners are expected to easily understand, master, have a good competence, act and implementing democratic values, humanism and pluralism in school and outside of school. Therefore the ultimate goal of multicultural education is to apply the principles of justice, democracy, multiculturalism and humanism at the same time. Multicultural education is a learning strategy, in which this strategy is integrated with the existing subjects. So it does not add to the burden of student learning.

Then, the school plays a central role in the implementation of multicultural education. Where schools through stakeholder authority is expected to create policies that support the implementation of multicultural education. In addition, teachers also obtain an important role. Teachers must be possessed of competence and knowledge about the concept of diversity itself, so that teachers will be able to build a multicultural education based on values differences.

The importance of the implementation of multicultural education from an early age that is considering that Indonesia is a country with a high level of diversity so that every human being born in Indonesia will be living with a very heterogeneous environment. This diversity if not followed by knowledge and competence through multicultural education, the potential will be even greater schism. Through this multicultural education they will be given a better understanding of that culture has a strong influence on life in the community. So they were able to identify the cultural diversity that exists around them well and were able to see the diversity of cultures wisely.

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