CHARACTER EDUCATION IN MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVE: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Asep Saepurokhman
Universitas Sebelas April
sepdeans44@gmail.com

M. Makhrus Ali
STAI Ibnu Rusyd Kotabumi, Indonesia
muhammadali2518@gmail.com

Abstract

This research aims to examine the importance and implementation of character education in a multicultural perspective through literature analysis. Multicultural character education focuses on teaching values that encourage respect for cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. The results of the literature review show that this education not only develops the cognitive aspects, but also the affective and social aspects of learners, in order to form individuals who are aware and sensitive to differences and able to interact harmoniously in a heterogeneous society. Challenges in its implementation, such as lack of understanding, awareness, resources and training, are obstacles that need to be overcome with supporting policies and ongoing training programmes. With a holistic approach and commitment from various parties, multicultural character education has great potential in forming a generation that is intelligent, empathetic, and able to coexist in a society full of diversity.

Keywords: Character Education, Multicultural Perspective, Literature Review.

Introduction

In this era of rapid globalisation, intercultural interactions are becoming more frequent and complex. Cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity has become a hallmark of modern society, which presents both challenges and opportunities in various aspects of life, including education (Astuti et al., 2023) ; (Andrian et al., 2024) ; (Triyuni et al., 2024) ; (Hapinas et al., 2025) . Education is not only responsible for providing academic knowledge, but also must be able to shape the character of students to become individuals with integrity, tolerance, and able to interact with various cultural backgrounds (Ham et al., 2020) .

Character education is an educational process that aims to shape and develop learners' moral, ethical, and personality values, so that they are able to act in accordance with these values in everyday life. Character education focuses not only on academic achievement, but also on developing positive attitudes and behaviours such as responsibility, honesty, empathy, discipline, and respect for others (Smagorinsky . , 2022)

Character education is an important foundation in the development of superior human resources. Characters such as honesty, responsibility, cooperation and respect for differences must be instilled from an early age. However, a homogeneous approach to character education may ignore the cultural diversity in the classroom. Therefore, a multicultural perspective in character education becomes increasingly relevant to ensure that universal values can be integrated with respect for cultural diversity (Mahmudulhassan et al., 2023) .

Multiculturalism is an educational approach that recognises, values and utilises the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, religions and backgrounds of learners as a source of richness and uniqueness in the teaching and learning process. It seeks to create an inclusive and equitable learning environment where every individual feels valued and accepted. Multicultural education emphasises the importance of understanding and appreciating differences, as well as teaching universal values that cross cultural boundaries, such as tolerance, cooperation and justice (Idawati et al., 2024) .

The importance of multiculturalism in character education cannot be ignored, especially in an increasingly globalised and connected world. By integrating a multicultural perspective, learners learn to live and work harmoniously in a diverse society. This prepares them to be more empathetic global citizens, appreciative of differences, and able to communicate effectively with people from different backgrounds (Chotib & Maskuri, 2021) . In addition, multicultural character education helps reduce prejudice and stereotypes, strengthen social solidarity, and build a more inclusive and just society. Thus, teaching and implementing multicultural values in character education is crucial to build a more tolerant and responsible generation (Fadlah & Amrullah, 2024) .

The multicultural approach aims to accommodate differences in the teaching and learning process and create an inclusive environment. This is not only important to foster mutual respect among learners from different backgrounds, but also to prepare them to become global citizens who are able to think critically and empathise with other cultures (Barsihanor et al., 2024)

However, integrating character education with a multicultural perspective is not free from challenges. For example, there are stereotypes and prejudices that can emerge in the school environment, lack of understanding or teacher training in implementing inclusive character education, and education policies that do not fully support the implementation of multiculturalism

To address these challenges, this research aims to examine the concept of character education in a multicultural perspective. Through this literature review, it is expected to identify effective strategies that can be applied in this integration and understand both the challenges and opportunities that exist.

Research Methods

The study in this research uses the literature method. The literature research method is a systematic approach to identifying, evaluating, and synthesising published scholarly works related to a particular research topic. This process involves searching for sources of information from various journals, books, articles, and other relevant documents, then analysing and critiquing the content to gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the issue under study (Suparlan, 2014) ; (Suprayogo & Tobroni, 2003) . Literature research aims to examine developments, trends, and gaps in existing knowledge, as well as to develop a solid theoretical framework that can be used as a basis for further empirical studies. Through this method, researchers can discover new perspectives, confirm previous findings, or propose new hypotheses based on existing literature (Barlian ., 2018)

Results and Discussion

Character Education in Multicultural Perspective

Character education in a multicultural perspective is an educational approach that aims to shape learners' moral and ethical values by considering their cultural diversity. This approach emphasises the importance of recognising, respecting and integrating the values of different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. This is done to create an inclusive and harmonious learning environment where every learner feels valued and accepted. Multicultural character education also focuses on delivering universal values such as tolerance, justice, and co-operation that can be accepted by all groups (P. Putra & Aslan, 2019) ; (W. S. P. Putra & Murdiono, 2024) .

The importance of character education in a multicultural perspective cannot be overlooked, especially in an increasingly diverse and globally connected society. By teaching learners to understand and appreciate differences, it helps them develop critical thinking skills and empathy towards other individuals with different backgrounds. Moreover, multicultural character education prepares learners to better face future social challenges, as they will have cultural sensitivity and more mature responses to issues of difference and conflict (Chaiklin ., 2022)

Character education from a multicultural perspective also plays an important role in reducing discrimination and prejudice in schools and communities. By teaching multicultural values, learners are encouraged to recognise and appreciate diversity, and overcome stereotypes that are often the main cause of discrimination. This education helps to build a sense of solidarity and unity amidst diversity, and encourages active participation in creating a more inclusive and just social environment (Neumann & Lütje-Klose, 2021) .

The implementation of multicultural character education can be done through various methods, such as integrating learning materials that highlight different cultural values, organising extracurricular activities that focus on diversity and inclusion, and

creating school policies that support an inclusive learning environment. Teachers and educators also need to be given specialised training to improve their understanding and skills in teaching with a multicultural perspective. With a holistic and sustainable approach, multicultural character values can be truly embedded in learners (Li, 2023) .

Overall, character education in a multicultural perspective is an important endeavour to create a more tolerant, just and socially responsible generation. Through this approach, we not only equip learners with academic skills, but also prepare them to live in a pluralistic society. Thus, multicultural character education not only benefits individual learners, but also contributes to the building of a more harmonious and inclusive society in the future.

Challenges and opportunities in implementing multicultural character education

The implementation of multicultural character education faces a number of challenges that can affect its effectiveness. One of the main challenges is the resistance to changes in curriculum and teaching methods on the part of schools or educational institutions. Some institutions may still focus on more traditional approaches and be less sensitive to the need for teaching based on cultural diversity. In addition, the lack of understanding and skills of educators in teaching with a multicultural perspective can also be a significant barrier. Without adequate training and support, teachers may find it difficult to integrate multicultural values in their daily teaching (Ford, 2021) .

Another challenge that arises is the diversity of learners' backgrounds which can create complex dynamics in the classroom. Differences in language, customs, and cultural values can lead to misunderstandings or conflicts between learners. Therefore, it is important for schools to create a safe and supportive environment where learners feel comfortable to share and learn from each other. Sensitive and inclusive handling of diversity issues is necessary so that each learner feels valued and recognised (Mitchell, 2020) .

On the other hand, the implementation of multicultural character education also offers various opportunities that can bring significant benefits to learners and society at large. By creating inclusive and diverse learning environments, learners can experience improvements in their social and emotional skills. Interaction with different cultures encourages the development of empathy, open-mindedness and the ability to communicate with people from different backgrounds. This prepares learners to become competent and responsible global citizens (Kim, 2024) .

In addition, multicultural character education can be an effective tool for improving academic achievement. Research shows that learners who feel valued and included in diversity at school tend to be more motivated and better at academic achievement. By utilising diversity as a rich learning resource, schools can create more relevant and engaging educational experiences for all learners (Makram, 2023) .

In the long run, multicultural character education makes an important contribution to the formation of a more just and harmonious society. By equipping learners with the values of inclusiveness and tolerance, we build the foundation for future generations who are able to face the challenges of globalisation and social change with understanding and respect. Therefore, despite the challenges of implementation, the benefits of multicultural character education far outweigh them, making it an important investment in the future of education and our society (Felta ., 2021)

In addition to the challenges and opportunities mentioned, it is also important to consider the role of parents and communities in the implementation of multicultural character education. Cooperation between schools and families can strengthen the teaching of multicultural values implemented in schools. Parents who are actively involved and supportive of the mission of multicultural education will help ensure that these values are also practised at home. In addition, community involvement in school activities that emphasise cultural diversity can enrich learners' learning experiences and strengthen the values of togetherness and mutual understanding (Ma'arif ., 2022)

To achieve success in implementing multicultural character education, it is crucial to provide adequate resources. This includes comprehensive curriculum development, regular training for educators, and learning materials that portray cultural diversity fairly and representatively. Governments and educational institutions need to work together to ensure that educational policies and practices that support multiculturalism are implemented consistently and effectively at all levels of education (Cozma, 2022) .

Furthermore, regular evaluations and reviews of the implementation of multicultural character education programmes need to be conducted to measure their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. By conducting systematic and transparent assessments, schools can continuously improve their approach and ensure that the education provided is in line with the changing needs of learners and evolving social dynamics (Supriyanto, 2021) .

Thus, the implementation of multicultural character education does face challenges such as resistance to change, differences in learners' backgrounds, and lack of teaching skills. However, the opportunities offered by this approach, such as improving learners' social and emotional skills, improving academic performance, and contributing to the formation of a more just and harmonious society, are far greater. Cooperation between schools, parents and communities, as well as adequate support in terms of resources and policies, are key to the successful implementation of multicultural character education. By doing so, we can equip future generations with the necessary skills and values to face global challenges and lead meaningful lives in a diverse society.

Conclusion

Character education from a multicultural perspective emphasises the importance of teaching values that support respect for cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. A review of the literature shows that multicultural education focuses not only on cognitive aspects, but also on developing the affective and social aspects of learners. This education aims to form individuals who have awareness and sensitivity to differences and are able to interact harmoniously in a heterogeneous society. Through the integration of multicultural values in the curriculum and teaching methods, learners are expected to develop the understanding and skills necessary to become wise global citizens who are sensitive to social justice issues.

However, the successful implementation of multicultural character education requires commitment and concerted efforts from various parties, including educators, parents, communities and governments. Challenges such as a lack of understanding and awareness of the importance of multiculturalism, as well as a lack of resources and training, must be addressed through supportive policies and ongoing training programmes. In addition, continuous evaluation and review of the effectiveness of multicultural education programmes needs to be conducted to ensure their relevance and sustainability. With the right and holistic approach, multicultural character education has great potential in shaping a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also broad-minded, empathetic, and able to coexist in a society full of diversity.

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