

Embracing multiculturalism: Exploring cultural values among students in the global era

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Abstract

This research was motivated by the UNIMUDA Sorong, one of the multicultural campuses in Papua. This research aimed to measure the level of application and understanding of students at the Department of Pancasila and Citizenship Education, Universitas Pendidikan Muhammadiyah (hence: UNIMUDA) Sorong, in strengthening the existence of multiculturalism values in the academic environment. This research was conducted using a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. The subjects and objects of this research were conducted in the Department of Pancasila and Citizenship Education. The results of this study indicated that the value of multiculturalism had been integrated into the department's curriculum. Besides, students from various ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds could apply the value of multiculturalism to the Papuan environment. Then, students believed that citizenship within the scope of multiculturalism played the most important role in advancing the diversity of Indonesians, so diversity is not a source of conflict but rather for mutual tolerance and mutual respect in building the foundation of Indonesia's ethnic diversity.

Keywords: Global era; Pancasila and Citizenship Education: multicultural values; Papua



Introduction

UNIMUDA Sorong is a multicultural campus in Southwest Papua, Indonesia. Students on this campus are known as multicultural individuals from various tribes in Indonesia, including students in the Department of Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn). Asmuri (2017) said that students in the department come from the Toraja tribe, Javanese tribe, Moi Papua tribe, Sulawesi, Ambon, and so on. The department's diversity harmonizes multiculturalism, which is often considered an efficient concept for strengthening the value of unity among students.

The diversity that appears in the department creates a phenomenon of harmonization, where multiculturalism is not just effective but a powerful tool to strengthen the value of unity among students. Warikoo (2020) stated that despite the ongoing debates, there is a broader view of multiculturalism. This diversity not only creates an inclusive learning environment but also significantly contributes to intercultural understanding and acceptance among students, reflecting the empowering role of multiculturalism in the context of higher education.

The description of multiculturalism is a form of curriculum-based multiculturalism values. May (2019) emphasized that multiculturalism is a part of strengthening the value of unity as a manifestation of the value of Pancasila. Multiculturalism, as defined by Lundeto (2017), is a concept where a community in the context of nationality can recognize diversity, differences, and cultural pluralism – racial, tribal, ethnic, and religious. It is a concept that provides an understanding that a plural nation is a nation with diverse cultures (multicultural).

The values of multiculturalism in the department are integrated into the components of implementing Pancasila and Citizenship education courses. The course is a component that contains multicultural education as a means of strengthening cultural values and diversity (Wahab & Sapriya, 2011). Therefore, facing the reality that Indonesia is part of the application of the value of multiculturalism or as an effort to anticipate the factors that trigger conflicts in the name of diversity, a breakthrough in curriculum development based on multiculturalism is necessary.

Some previous studies that reviewed multiculturalism included the study by Celeste et al. (2019), See et al. (2020), De Schutter (2023), Tetrault et al. (2020), and Lambrecht (2023). These studies drew a main thread: whether this research is novel because it can enrich students' cultural values. In this sense, Mahfud et al. (2018) stated that the purpose of multiculturalism in society is to reduce feelings of threat from outside groups and reduce prejudiced attitudes. Therefore, this research is an effort made to strengthen the multicultural character of students as implementers of the value of the precepts of unity, especially in Indonesia.

This research focused on how multiculturalism values have a concrete impact on creating harmony among students in the global era. Hidayah et al. (2022) stated that harmony in differences is social capital. Therefore, the researcher assumed that this research not only explored cultural diversity among students but also sought a deep understanding of how multiculturalism values played a crucial role in strengthening student unity in the face of global challenges such as [specific global challenges]. This research not only identified ethnic and cultural diversity but also aimed to detail the contribution of multiculturalism values in responding to global issues and addressing potential conflicts that might arise.

The urgency of this research was to form awareness among students at the Department of Pancasila and Citizenship Education of UNIMUDA Sorong on preserving, selecting diversity, and maintaining the existence of multicultural values amid civilization that could erode the value of multiculturalism so that, hopefully, these values could be applied in their daily lives. Previously, Stokke and Lybæk (2018) suggested that intercultural dialogue must be combined with critical multiculturalism. Therefore, the direction of this research focused on the department's efforts to maintain Pancasila values through the integration of a multicultural education curriculum.

In a practical context, this research could contribute in the form of a clearer view and deeper understanding of how multiculturalism values could strengthen harmony among students. The results of this study could be used as a basis for designing educational programs and campus activities that support cultural diversity, promote intercultural understanding, and minimize conflicts that might arise. This practical application of the research findings can inform and equip educators and policymakers with the necessary tools to create a more harmonious and inclusive educational environment.

From a theoretical perspective, this research could contribute significantly to the development of theories on multiculturalism, especially in the context of students in the global era. The results of this study could reveal new insights into how multiculturalism values are applied and lived by students, as well as the extent to which it can affect social harmony and interaction in the higher education environment. In addition, the research findings could serve as a basis for developing or improving theories related to multicultural integration in the context of university students, providing a stronger theoretical foundation for future research in this area. This theoretical contribution can stimulate further academic discourse and research in the field of multicultural education, engaging the audience in intellectual exploration.

Method

In this study, we employed a thorough qualitative research methodology with a descriptive approach, focusing on the Department of Pancasila and Citizenship Education at UNIMUDA Sorong. The research aimed to understand the experiences and behaviors of students regarding multiculturalism values. Data was meticulously collected through interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis, and then rigorously analyzed using thematic analysis to identify emerging themes related to multiculturalism values. To ensure data validity, we used triangulation, and closely observed ethical considerations. The study spanned five months, from July to November 2023, and culminated in a comprehensive research report with recommendations for promoting multicultural harmony in higher education settings.

Result and Discussion

This study used interviews as the primary data collection method, which was conducted by involving the academic community in the department at UNIMUDA Sorong, including students and lecturers. The results of the interviews indicated that students in the department of Pancasila and Citizenship Education at UNIMUDA Sorong have successfully applied multicultural values in their daily practices. This is reflected in their participation in playgroups and interactions with other students from different ethnic, racial, religious and linguistic backgrounds. The implication is that multiculturalism values are not only recognized, but also effectively implemented in social and academic life on campus.

This finding reinforces the concept explained by Machfu (2016), that multiculturalism is an ideology that values differences and advocates equality among diverse groups. Individual and group differences are seen as cultural variations that must be respected. The strengthening of the concept also supports Soekarba (2018) view that Indonesia is a nation that grows and develops in the context of multiculturalism, where cultural diversity is not only considered as a wealth that needs to be worshipped but also must be considered in the context of survival as a nation.

Based on the results of interviews with, multiculturalism is not an old concept that must be mastered by all students, but something that will always be around our lives, living together, breathing based on the values of Pancasila. This awareness of differences helps students explore the nature of multiculturalism itself.

Based on the results of these interviews, it can be concluded that multiculturalism is not just a concept that every student must master, but a reality that is always present in our lives,

where we live together with the framework of Pancasila values as a guide. This awareness of differences has contributed significantly to students' understanding of the nature of multiculturalism. Students are not only faced with an idea, but also understand more deeply the meaning and importance of living together within the framework of Pancasila values. This shows that awareness of multiculturalism is a strong foundation for students to further explore and live the essence of diversity in everyday life.

The awareness of learning and living multiculturalism has existed since the State of Indonesia was formed by the founders of the Indonesian nation. For Indonesians today, the concept of multiculturalism is new and foreign. In its development, the Indonesian nation has experienced social, political and cultural dynamics that make multiculturalism an increasingly relevant and urgent aspect to emphasize. This awareness not only illustrates the long history of multiculturalism awareness in Indonesia, but also recognizes that in the contemporary era, understanding and implementing this concept is becoming increasingly important to build an inclusive and harmonious society.

Furthermore, an interview was conducted with one of the lecturers at the study site, in terms of his background, one of the causes of the fading of students' multiculturalism values also occurred due to the rapid development of technology that cornered students' attitudes on the fact that differences are a conflict and trigger an individual attitude. Callens et al. (2019) convey that the interaction between perceptions related to greater support for assimilation that is culturally distant. This opinion has proven that students at the department have been able to maintain the authenticity and purity of Pancasila values through multiculturalism.

In the context of UNIMUDA Sorong, students of the department have succeeded in maintaining the authenticity and purity of Pancasila values through the practice of multiculturalism. This success is reflected in their ability to embrace cultural diversity, including differences in ethnicity, language, religion, and customs. Through cross-cultural interaction and dialog, students manifest the values of Pancasila by treating differences as wealth and building harmony within the campus environment. The authenticity of Pancasila values is not only maintained through theoretical understanding, but also applied in daily actions, showing that the multiculturalism approach in the Civics program is a concrete manifestation of the noble principles of Pancasila.

Character of the nation's children should not be bad due to differences and technology, in fact we cannot avoid progress that brings us to technological intelligence, so to shape the character of the nation's children who are wise in using technology, it requires the role of education, the role of community leaders and also parents. The attitude of the students shown in this study can be described. Based on James Bank's theory, explaining that multicultural education has several dimensions that are interrelated with one another, namely content integration which integrates various cultures and groups to illustrate basic concepts, generalizations, and theories in subjects/disciplines, knowledge construction process which brings students to understand the implications of culture into a subject, and equity pedagogy which adapts teaching methods to the way students learn in order to facilitate the academic achievement of students who are diverse in terms of race, culture, or social (Banks, 1997).

The application of multiculturalism by the students plays a crucial role in shaping characters that reflect the values described in the Pancasila profile. As stated by Randisa & Andriyan (2022), the practice of multiculturalism not only enriches students' experience in interacting across cultures, but also determines the quality of education. The alignment between the values and dispositions contained in the Pancasila student profile is key in measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of multiculturalism in students' daily lives. Thus, this practice not only creates an inclusive campus environment but also permeates the character and actions of students, creating a close relationship between the implementation of multiculturalism and the quality of education produced.

To deepen the results of this research, the department collaborated with one of the Civics lecturers from Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Universitas Terbuka Medan, and STKIP Budidaya Sinjai. The implementation of the research was carried out by strengthening the character of student multiculturalism through a public discussion held on June 1, 2023, as a step to refresh the value of student multiculturalism characters.

This public discussion was carried out by the department as a step to provide opportunities for students to participate directly in the process of preserving the value of multiculturalism in the student environment. The implementation of this public discussion was carried out online, which was attended by all students at the study site.

Citizenship competence implies the character contained in citizens who support the maintenance and development of constitutional democracy (Wahab & Sapriya, 2011), so the values that will be maintained in this civic education will fade if it cannot be preserved, it will trigger the emergence of genocidal crimes that have a major impact. This is reinforced by Furnivall's theory which says that multiculturalism has a lot to do with social and political reality or is homogeneous, but is strongly colored by ethnic, racial, religious and gender chauvinism. If this is not appropriately handled. Then the socio-cultural and political framework in a country will fail to implement its formula (Furnivall 2014).

The results of his research show that our study site has been able to implement multicultural education based on multicultural-based education. This can be seen from applying the curriculum and implementing lectures that have been integrated with multiculturalism values. Certainly, this will greatly help achieve the goals of Citizenship Education (Wahab 2011) This is indicated by the statement of Citizenship Education as a solid foundation in the mental formation of multiculturalism in realizing national ideals and to modernize the nation without leaving local wisdom (Winataputra 2017).

The results also show that the role of Pancasila and Citizenship Education is essential in strengthening the multiculturalism character of students. According to interviews, the department was able to describe a model of communication and student interaction involving various cultures. This finding aligns with Ranco et al., (2020) statement that citizenship education is a significant effort in strengthening multiculturalism by providing knowledge and teaching to the nation's next generation. Parekh (2017) emphasizes that this effort is important to maintain national harmony by continuing to strengthen the implementation of education regarding relations between ethnicities, religions, races, and groups. Our study site acts as an initiative in maintaining the identity of students who come from diverse backgrounds, including ethnicity, language, religion, and customs. Banks (2017) highlighted that the identity of diversity owned by the Civics Study Program reflects the implementation and application of the third value of Pancasila, namely unity, as a strong form of existence.

Based on the results of interviews conducted with the head of the department, the treatment carried out by the department in maintaining the existence of multicultural values in students were shown in Table 1.

Table 1.
The Existence of Multicultural Values on Students at the Department of Pancasila and Citizenship Education at UNIMUDA

Inclusive Curriculum	Development of Module and Learning Materials	Welcoming Guest Speakers
Develop a curriculum that includes a deep understanding of multicultural values and the importance of diversity in society.	Develop modules and learning materials that include case studies, real-life examples, and situations involving cultural diversity.	Invite guest speakers from different cultural, religious or ethnic backgrounds to share their experiences and perspectives.
Include materials that teach about various	Integrate multicultural values in all aspects of learning,	Discussion and dialog with guest speakers can provide

<p>cultures, religions, customs, and beliefs in the department of Pancasila and Citizenship Education.</p> <p>Promote understanding of the importance of respecting and appreciating differences in everyday life.</p> <p>Organize extracurricular activities such as cultural festivals, art exhibitions, and performances that respect and promote cultural diversity.</p> <p>Encourage active student participation in these activities to enhance understanding and appreciation of multicultural values.</p>	<p>including class discussions, assignments, and assessments.</p> <p>deeper insight into the importance of multiculturalism.</p> <p>Build partnerships with local institutions and communities representing different cultural and religious groups.</p> <p>Organizing joint activities to increase understanding and appreciation of diversity in society.</p>
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In addition, in an interview with the head of the department said that maintaining the local cultural identity of the Papuan people, the fusion and implementation of multicultural-based education in the department of Pancasila and Citizenship Education based on multiculturalism education aims for cultural, social and personality competencies. Social competence is the order that allows those involved in communicative action to form solidarity. Personality competence is a competence that allows a person to speak and act and be able to participate in the process of mutual understanding according to a certain context and be able to maintain his own identity in various changes in interaction.

The maintenance of the local cultural identity of the students at the study site is one of the main focuses. In this case, Chin (2019) and Guérard de Latour (2023). A targeted approach to multiculturalism: The case of the Roma minority in Europe. *Ethnicities*, 23(4), 601-615. stated that differences provide a useful normative approach to understanding justice claims for multiculturalism. In the findings of this research, the emphasis on preserving local culture is not only done through a multiculturalism approach but also involves the fusion and implementation of multicultural-based education in the Department of Pancasila and Citizenship Education. Teo (2021) emphasized that multiculturalism is the main requirement for societal inclusion.

The main objective of multiculturalism-based education in the Civics program is to develop students' cultural, societal, and personality competencies. Cultural competence involves knowledge that enables individuals to engage in communicative actions that enrich cross-cultural experiences. Meanwhile, societal competence includes arrangements that allow solidarity to be formed through communicative actions. Personality competence allows a person to speak, act, and participate in a process of mutual understanding according to a particular context, as well as maintaining self-integrity in various changes in interaction.

The commitment of the department to bridge education with local cultural wealth, provides students with expertise in responding to and understanding the social and cultural diversity that exists around them. Shelton & Dwiwardani (2022) stated that multiculturalism has emerged as a major focus in various studies. In addition, Virgili (2020) added that multiculturalism minimizes the complexity of identity to put individuals into pre-made boxes, thus making community essential.

Multiculturalism as a pillar of difference in society (Mathieu 2018). Number of theorists of multiculturalism have proposed contextualism as a suitable approach to theorizing multiculturalism (Lægaard 2021). The focus on local cultural identity also enriches students' learning experiences, forms a strong foundation for character development, and illustrates that multicultural education in the department of Pancasila and Citizenship Education is not only about accepting differences, but also about understanding and maintaining cultural diversity in the department.

Conclusion

Multicultural education is education that respects differences. Multicultural education always creates structures and processes where every culture can express itself. There are two things that can provide space for freedom for all cultures to express themselves in realizing multicultural education. The first is dialogue, and the second is tolerance.

In the results of this research, it has been formulated that multicultural education can include three types of transformation, namely self-transformation, transformation of schools and teaching and learning processes, and transformation of society. The concept of multiculturalism education is an effort made by the department to integrate multicultural values into the curriculum and student learning process as an effort to maintain the existence of these multicultural values.

Through this research, researchers recommend the need to apply two key elements, namely dialogue and tolerance, as the main foundation in the context of multicultural education. Meanwhile, the formulation of three types of transformation, including transformation of self, school, teaching and learning process, and society, indicates the need for a holistic approach in realizing multicultural education. It is hoped that this step can further strengthen the existence of multiculturalism values, shape student characters who are responsive to differences, and ultimately create an inclusive and harmonious educational environment.

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