Exploring Multicultural Education: A Case Study of Singkawang

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Abstract.

This article investigates multicultural education in Singkawang, Indonesia, where diverse ethnicities coexist. Rapid social changes often trigger ethnic migration, leading to a convergence of cultures. Ethnocentrism can impede inter-ethnic communication, fostering stereotypes and ethnic conflicts. Multicultural education, emphasizing democratic, humanistic, and pluralistic values, is proposed to address these issues. Singkawang, recognized for its ethnic diversity, serves as a unique case study. The research method involves qualitative analysis with interviews from students, teachers, and parents from various ethnic backgrounds. Findings revealed the city's friendly atmosphere, preserved harmony, and respectful behavior, especially among students. "Ngopi bareng" (coffee gathering) is identified as a key practice among adult locals stated by parents of students in maintaining multiculturalism. Schools also actively promote tolerance through democratic practices, curriculum diversity, and inclusive instructional strategies. The article concludes that multicultural education is vital in fostering acceptance, understanding, and appreciation of diversity, emphasizing the dynamic nature of this approach in shaping open-minded individuals in a diverse society. Further research is recommended to explore this topic's nuances.

Keywords: Multicultural education, Singkawang and multiculturalism.

I. INTRODUCTION

Rapid changes in the social structure of an area often trigger migration phenomena between ethnic groups. The impact of this ethnic migration is the convergence of several ethnicities in one region [1]. Each ethnic group brings with them a rich and diverse cultural landscape, including unique cultural heritage, traditions, and values [2]. One characteristic of an ethnic group is the presence of ethnocentrism [3], [4] which can act as a barrier in inter-ethnic communication [5]. Subjects perceive communication with members outside the group as inferior or less valuable than communication within their own group [6]. Lack of communication can lead to a lack of understanding of the ethnic group, resulting in the development of stereotypes and negative prejudices [7] which can then lead to ethnic conflicts communication [5]. Encounters between various ethnic groups in a region can give rise to conflicts in various forms. These conflicts may involve the dominance of a particular ethnic group, indicating inequality [8], the formation of negative views, or the imposition of stereotypes on other ethnic groups, alienation or discriminatory actions impacting resource access or opportunities, as well as the emergence of ethnofobia and xenophobia, indicating rejection of human rights [9]-[11]. In addition, social and administrative-territorial injustice can also be part of the dynamics of these conflicts [9]. Previous research suggests that multiculturalism values or ideologies can help prevent or address ethnic issues [12] such as gaps, discrimination, and stereotypes [13]. Therefore, to instil these values, multicultural education can be implemented [9], [14] Nakaya states that multicultural education has been successful in addressing ethnic issues in Indonesia.

Additionally, in China, the government uses multicultural education as an effort to address ethnic issues such as social, economic, and political disparities [15]. Other studies state that any issues related to race, ethnicity, and tribe can be overcome and prevented through multicultural education [16]. Multicultural education is a developmental process for individuals to become more dignified human beings[17], developing human potential, such as knowledge, self-awareness, morality, religiosity, and more [16]. Furthermore, multicultural education emphasizes the recognition, appreciation, and integration of diverse

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cultural, ethnic, and social identities. This concept reflects the understanding that society consists of individuals with diverse backgrounds and characteristics, including differences in culture, ethnicity, language, religion, and social status [18]. Multicultural education can be seen as a form of learning that provides an understanding of the acceptance of human plurality and homogeneity consisting of various cultures, races, ethnicities, and more [19] In achieving its goals, multicultural education applies basic values consisting of democracy, humanism, and pluralism [20]. Learning democratic values, such as freedom, equality, justice, and human dignity, can help reduce student prejudices and enhance their positive attitudes toward tolerance, respect, and appreciation for differences [21]. Democracy has principles that include tolerance, freedom of expression, respect for differing opinions, understanding of diversity in the community, open communication, respect for humanitarian values, self-reliance without dependence on others, mutual respect, self-control ability, togetherness, and balance [22].

Meanwhile, humanism is a holistic worldview focusing on human interests and values, rejecting belief in the supernatural, and emphasizing individual human honour and values [23]. Humanism is divided into several values including freedom, responsibility, cooperation, tolerance, honesty, democracy, patience, politeness, and activism [24]. Belief in pluralism involves recognizing the existence of many values or principles that vary in moral judgment, challenging the idea of only one single and rational moral framework [25]. In the context of multicultural education, the application of democratic values to students is evident in active student organizations involving students in class elections, providing opportunities for participation in decision-making. The learning process is also designed to provide understanding and freedom of expression to students [26]. According to Khuzaimah & Farid [27] the implementation of democratic principles in students can be demonstrated by giving them the opportunity to actively participate as learning subjects, not just as listeners to explanations from teachers. The learning process becomes more interactive through discussions, allowing students to actively participate. The democratic approach in education is evident in the way teachers manage learning. Teachers give students the opportunity to express their opinions and ideas and respect their perspectives. They also encourage students to be independent and responsible in their learning process. The teaching of humanism values in multicultural education can be observed in the development of students' self-awareness, morality, religiosity, knowledge, and skills.

Self-awareness is formed by understanding oneself and appreciating one's own identity. Morality is formed by behaving in accordance with the values of justice, honesty, responsibility, and caring for others. Religiosity is formed through understanding, respect, and tolerance for different religions and beliefs. Knowledge is formed through the mastery of various fields of science, and skills are formed by the ability to apply knowledge and skills in daily life [16]. Pluralism values in multicultural education are reflected in the acceptance and recognition of diversity, including differences in race, ethnicity, religion, and socio-economic status. Multicultural education encourages students to be open-minded and not judge others based on differences [28]. By recognizing and accepting differences, students are expected to develop positive attitudes and behaviours towards diversity. This can be seen in the way teachers manage the learning process and create a conducive and inclusive learning environment. Teachers need to recognize and appreciate the diversity of students and create a supportive learning environment for all students [29]. They should also provide opportunities for students to express their opinions, share their experiences, and learn from each other. One of the important aspects of multicultural education is the curriculum. The curriculum should be designed to reflect the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, and backgrounds. This includes incorporating diverse perspectives, authors, and historical events from various cultural and ethnic groups. By doing so, students can see themselves represented in the curriculum, fostering a sense of belonging and validating their identities [30]. It also helps break down stereotypes and provides a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of the world. In addition to the curriculum, instructional strategies play a crucial role in multicultural education.

Teachers should use diverse teaching methods that accommodate different learning styles and preferences. This may involve incorporating multimedia, group activities, discussions, and real-world applications into the learning process. Creating an inclusive and participatory classroom environment allows students to engage with the material in meaningful ways and learn from each other's experiences [31]

Professional development for educators is another key component of multicultural education. Teachers need training and support to effectively implement multicultural practices in their classrooms. This includes understanding cultural competence, developing intercultural communication skills, and staying informed about diverse perspectives. Ongoing professional development opportunities can help educators stay current with best practices and continuously improve their ability to create inclusive learning environments [32], [33]. Moreover, promoting cultural awareness and appreciation is a central goal of multicultural education. Schools can organize cultural events, celebrations, and awareness campaigns to highlight the diversity within the student body. This not only fosters a sense of pride among students from different backgrounds but also educates the entire school community about the richness of various cultures [34]. Celebrating cultural diversity helps create a positive school climate where all students feel valued and respected. Community involvement is another aspect of multicultural education.

Schools can collaborate with local communities, cultural organizations, and parents to create a supportive network for students. Engaging families in the educational process and incorporating community perspectives into the curriculum enhance the overall effectiveness of multicultural education [35]. By establishing strong connections between the school and the community, educators can create a more comprehensive and culturally responsive learning environment. Despite its many benefits, multicultural education faces challenges and criticisms. One common challenge is resistance from some individuals or groups who may view multicultural education as a threat to their cultural or social dominance [36]. There can be resistance to changes in curriculum and instructional practices that challenge traditional perspectives. Addressing this challenge requires effective communication, education, and a commitment to promoting inclusivity and diversity. Another challenge is the potential for tokenism, where superficial efforts are made to include diverse perspectives without addressing deeper systemic issues. Simply adding diverse content to the curriculum without addressing underlying inequalities may not lead to meaningful change [37]. Multicultural education should be part of a broader effort to create more equitable educational systems. Critics argue that multicultural education can sometimes lead to essentializing cultures or reinforcing stereotypes. If not implemented thoughtfully, it may contribute to a superficial understanding of diverse groups and perpetuate harmful generalizations. It is essential to approach multicultural education with nuance, recognizing the complexity and individuality within each culture.

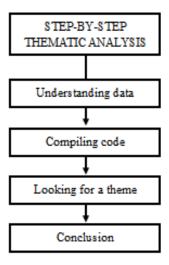
Furthermore, the lack of teacher preparation in multicultural education can hinder effective implementation. Educators may not feel adequately equipped to address issues related to diversity and may unintentionally perpetuate biases. Providing comprehensive training and support for teachers is essential to ensuring the success of multicultural education initiatives [31]. To conclude, multicultural education is a dynamic and evolving approach to teaching and learning that recognizes and embraces cultural diversity.It aims to create inclusive and equitable educational environments where students from diverse backgrounds feel valued, represented, and empowered. By incorporating diverse perspectives, content, and instructional strategies, multicultural education contributes to a more comprehensive and enriched learning experience for all students. Research on multicultural education in Indonesia is still limited, despite its crucial significance, especially given Indonesia's diverse cultural landscape with numerous ethnic groups coexisting in one region. For instance, Singkawang is a city that hosts various ethnicities, making it imperative to prioritize research in this area. The city is located in the province of West Kalimantan, Indonesia. In the 18th century, Singkawang was known as an area bustling with trade activities, especially in tin trading. This made Singkawang an important trading center in West Kalimantan at that time. Multicultural life has existed in this city for a long time, with the arrival of Chinese and Malay immigrants participating in various aspects of city life. The origin of the name Singkawang itself comes from the word "Sing," meaning "West," and "Kawang," which is the name of a local tree species that grows abundantly in this area.

The name Singkawang is believed to have emerged from a mutual agreement between the Chinese and Malay ethnicities living in the city in the past. Singkawang, with its recognized ethnic and religious diversity in Indonesia, has transformed into one of the leading multicultural cities in the country. Singkawang is a city with various ethnic groups, including the Hakka Chinese and a small percentage of Tio Ciu Chinese, accounting for about 42%, while the rest consists of Malay Singkawang (Sambas Tribe) (30%),

Dayak (10%), Javanese (10%), Madurese (5%), and other newcomers. This diversity reflects the potential excellence of Singkawang, where various cultural backgrounds coexist harmoniously and tolerantly. Aligning with the diversity and religious tolerance in Singkawang, Saliro noted that Singkawang in 2018 achieved the highest tolerance city index [38]. In this era of smart society 5.0, living side by side with various diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural groups has become a necessity that requires smart multicultural behavior. Multicultural behavior is needed in the dynamics of social life and should be instilled from an early age, both in the family environment and in schools. Based on this explanation, the researchers are interested in understanding how multicultural education is applied to junior high school students and multiculturalism practices are conducted by their parents in the city of Singkawang. The researchers concentrated on exploring students', teachers' and parents' perceptions of multiculturalism within the context of their experiences in Singkawang.

II. METHODS

This research employed a qualitative approach with a case study method that explores a problem with detailed limitations, involves in-depth data collection, and includes various sources of information [39]. The selection of the research location was based on the fact that Singkawang city has been recognized as the best pluralism or multicultural city in 2018 stated by Indonesian government. As a multicultural city, Singkawang is inhabited by people from various ethnic backgrounds. The data collection technique in this study involved in-depth interviews, aiming to obtain information through face-to-face question-and-answer sessions between the interviewer and the informants. The informants were 3 students, 2 teachers and 3 parents. They have been selected from the largest ethnic groups, namely the Chinese, Malay and Dayak. The data analysis technique used was thematic data analysis, which aimed to identify specific themes through data considered as basic knowledge [40]. The stages of thematic analysis are as follows:



III. RESULT DAN DISCUSSION

Research question one explores participants' perceptions of multiculturalism in Singkawang. Three prominent themes emerged from the interviews. The first theme revolves around the friendliness of the locals, who are widely recognized for their welcoming attitude and high tolerance toward outsiders. A local resident emphasized, "the people of Singkawang are known for their ability to maintain harmony in their social life," contributing to the establishment of friendly and open environments that foster harmonious relationships among diverse groups [34]. Moving beyond friendliness, the second theme underscores the pivotal role of preserved harmony among ethnic and religious groups in Singkawang's multicultural context. This harmony reinforces the community's consistent efforts to cultivate positive relationships. A source affirmed, "tolerance in Singkawang is maintained because the community is not easily provoked or incited". This

resilience suggests that the people of Singkawang have successfully built a robust foundation for sustaining tolerance, preserving ethnic and religious diversity without succumbing to provocations or friction [34]. The third theme highlights the respectful behavior exhibited by almost all students in Singkawang, irrespective of differences in religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Multicultural practices manifest in various aspects, particularly in student communication, where diverse languages are used without hindrance. Students in Singkawang engage in multicultural communication by utilizing different languages based on their ethnic backgrounds.

Notably, language differences are not perceived as obstacles but rather embraced as a positive form of diversity [28]. For instance, individuals with a Chinese ethnic background comfortably communicate in Chinese. An intriguing finding emerged from a student of Chinese descent who initially hesitated due to language limitations but found acceptance from peers. The student remarked, "the first time I came to Singkawang, I felt shy because I couldn't speak Singkawang Chinese. In this school, all friends from various ethnicities warmly accepted me, including my Chinese friends."In relation to the second research question, about the practices in maintaining multiculturalism in Singkawang, this research highlights the practice of "ngopi bareng" (coffee gathering) as a significant way to maintain harmony in the multicultural community of Singkawang City. One source claimed that "the people of Singkawang have a habit of drinking coffee and gathering at coffee shops. This habit is beneficial for exchanging and observing every news; it is also used to align perceptions. Some even form communities, so they embrace and understand each other." The activity of gathering for coffee may create benefits as follows. Firstly, coffee gatherings create a relaxed and informal space for discussion. This allows people from different cultural backgrounds to meet, talk, and openly share views and experiences. Such discussions contribute to the exchange of ideas among various community groups, broaden insights and understanding among individuals from diverse backgrounds, and eliminate prejudices that can lead to conflicts. This aligns with previous research[16], [41], stating that dialogue can help build mutually agreed-upon understanding and constructively address issues. Secondly, coffee gatherings pave the way to strengthen relationships among community members with different backgrounds.

Exchanging stories, experiences, and perspectives results in a better understanding of cultural differences and outlooks on life. This, in turn, strengthens social bonds, builds trust, and enhances harmony and peace among individuals from various groups. Thirdly, through coffee gatherings, people learn to listen, understand, and respect differences. This contributes to the development of better intercultural communication skills. Additionally, this activity also fosters tolerance, nurtures a culture of mutual respect, and enhances the courage to accept differences. This supports the theories presented by [42] and [43] stating that frequent interactions with others can improve communication skills as individuals encounter various perspectives. Finally, coffee gatherings bring benefits in maintaining social harmony. Having an open space for interaction and storytelling strengthens social bonds among community members from different backgrounds. This helps create an inclusive and friendly environment, supporting social harmony and stability in that community. This aligns with the statements of past researchers [44], [45] suggesting that dialogue can foster understanding of others, generate ideas, and resolve conflicts, thus preserving friendships.Regarding the third research question, the practice of multicultural education, school provides the following activities that foster tolerance and appreciation of differences. Students hold deliberation forums to discuss school-related issues, such as art activities, significant days, and religious events. They can provide input and reach agreements on specific policies or decisions. Moreover, students conduct general elections to choose representatives such as the student council president, class representatives, or school committee vicechair, giving them a voice in school decision-making.

Furthermore, students participate in the implementation of the school curriculum, including activities like the "Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project" (P5), extracurricular activities, and involvement in school management aspects such as discipline policies and curriculum. Next activity is the recognition of student leadership. Schools award students who actively support democracy at school or contribute positively to school achievements. Also, students can talk to teachers and school staff about their issues or ideas, obtaining opinions and listening carefully regarding learning issues, individual student matters, and

students careers. Next is that schools give recognition for the cultural, religious, and background diversity of students, promoting an inclusive culture that respects differences. Then, students engage in open discussions during and outside of lessons, such as student council activities, discussing important issues respectfully, and listening to others' perspectives. Lastly, schools organize events or social projects that teach students to participate in the community and understand their responsibilities to society; in this way, schools build social awareness to students. The aforementioned activities indicated that schools have provided learning democratic value opportunity that can help reduce student prejudices and enhance positive attitudes towards tolerance and appreciation of differences [21], [22]. This has been evident in the democratic behaviors reflected in several schools in Singkawang. Democratic behavior among students is characterized by several prominent features.

Firstly, students display an inclusive attitude towards diversity by understanding and respecting cultural, religious, ethnic, and background differences. Within the school environment, a discrimination-free atmosphere is created that embraces all students, establishing an open and friendly space for everyone. Secondly, students actively engage in learning and promoting an understanding of democratic values, such as justice, equality, and active participation in the formal education process at school. They are also involved in developing essential skills, such as integrity in leadership and negotiation abilities. These findings align with statements made by past researchers [26]indicating that democratic values in students are demonstrated by active student organizations involving students in class representative elections, providing opportunities for participation in decision-making. The learning process is designed to provide understanding and freedom of expression to students. Democratic behavior not only creates an inclusive environment in schools but also equips students with the skills and understanding needed to effectively participate in a democratic society [27]. The research findings indicate that school activities that have been conducted in Singkawang may enhance tolerance, appreciation for differences, intercultural collaboration, awareness of cultural diversity, and involvement in activities celebrating diversity. These activities can create an inclusive environment where every individual feels valued and accepted regardless of their background. Students may develop pluralistic behaviour that aligns with the belief in pluralism, recognizing the existence of diverse values or principles in moral judgments.

This belief challenges the idea of a single, rational moral framework [25]. Moreover, the school activities are designed to involve all students without discriminating among them in extracurricular and religious activities, creating an inclusive atmosphere. The learning process also emphasizes an understanding of pluralism by involving all students without considering their differences. The theory supporting these findings is in line with past study [26] stating that school activities are directed to involve all students without distinguishing them in various extracurricular and religious activities, making teachers an example in applying pluralistic values. Also, the researchers outline steps in implementing pluralistic values, including promoting understanding among students with different beliefs through dialogue and the development of multicultural curricula [17]. Multicultural curricula help students have an inclusive environment, support personal growth, and promote human values. This aligns with the values of humanism instilled through social concern and some humanistic learning activities, such as emphasizing active student participation through learning contracts, enhanced learning initiatives, encouraging students to express opinions, individual assessment based on student achievements, and accepting student progress at their own pace [26], [46].

IV. CONCLUSION

In summary, the article explores multicultural education in Singkawang, Indonesia, highlighting its importance in bringing together people from different backgrounds. The research shows how diverse groups have historically lived side by side, emphasizing the chance for harmony and tolerance. Multicultural education is found to play a crucial role in shaping positive attitudes among students, teachers, and parents, even though it faces challenges like resistance and tokenism. The article suggests that effective communication and a commitment to inclusivity are necessary. Specific practices in Singkawang, like "ngopi bareng" (coffee gathering), are noted for promoting multicultural harmony. The article also mentions various

school activities that encourage democratic values, humanism, and pluralism, creating an inclusive and respectful learning environment. While acknowledging limitations and suggesting more research, the article concludes by stressing the dynamic nature of multicultural education. It is seen as a force for societal change, fostering acceptance, understanding, and appreciation of diversity, as demonstrated in Singkawang's experience, which can guide the development of respectful and open-minded individuals in a diverse society.

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