

## IMPLEMENTATION OF MULTICULTURAL-BASED LEARNING TO DEVELOP TOLERANCE ATTITUDES IN KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN AT PEMBINA TUALANG KINDERGARTEN

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**Abstract:** *The background of this research problem is the existence of children who tease each other about differences in religion and skin type. This is very interesting to study in relation to this research, namely how the implementation of multicultural education and how to instill an attitude of religious tolerance is applied and implemented in the midst of early childhood, while children are in the process of growth and development with conditions that are not yet perfect to understand the meaning of multicultural education itself. This study aims to determine the implementation of multicultural education in the classroom, to determine the instillation of an attitude of religious tolerance outside the classroom at TK Pembina Tualang. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. The subjects in this study were the principal, teachers, and students at TK Pembina Tualang. The results of the study showed that: (1) the implementation of multicultural education in the classroom at TK Pembina Tualang is an activity that introduces children to cultural identity with the diversity that exists around them and introduces human body organs to God's creations. and religious extracurricular activities as provisions in religion and multicultural education at school (2) the implementation of multicultural education outside the classroom through (a) getting children used to saying hello, living a disciplined life, getting to know each other and being tolerant, and respecting all friends and the school environment. (b) social activities*

**Keywords:** *Multicultural education, attitude, tolerance*

### INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's multicultural society is an Indonesian society whose Bhineka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) is not only meant in terms of ethnic diversity, but also the cultural diversity that exists in Indonesian society as a whole. The existence of cultural diversity is always maintained, which is reflected in attitudes of mutual respect, honor and tolerance between one cultural tribe and another culture. Differences are not an obstacle to uniting to achieve goals and realizing ideals in national and state life as stated in the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila.

It is important to realize that Indonesia is a country rich in culture, as stated in the national motto "Bhineka Tunggal Ika". This fact was also acknowledged by an American Indian history expert, Wolpert, who said that Indonesian society is more pluralistic in every respect than any other on earth, except, perhaps, Indonesia, Rohyani (2018:1-2).

Education is part of social and national life. Therefore, educational activities are the embodiment of the nation's ideals. Thus, national education activities need to be organized and managed in such a way that national education as an organization can become a means to realize national ideals, Maulana (2012).

The progress and decline of a nation is largely determined by the progress and decline of its education system. For example, religious instruction is a compulsory subject in educational institutions, both formal and non-formal, Sugiantoro (2013).

The importance of providing educational services for early childhood has received attention from the government, as formulated in UUD number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. In Article 1 paragraph 14 it is stated that: early childhood education is an effort to provide guidance aimed at children from birth to the age of six years which is carried out through providing educational stimulation to help physical and spiritual growth and development so that children are ready to enter further education. Furthermore, Article 28 states that early childhood education is provided through formal, non-formal and/or informal education channels. Both articles indicate that: (a) educational services need to be provided to all children from an early age (b) Formal education and non-formal education equally need to provide opportunities for early childhood to obtain proper access to education, and (c) to support the continuity of the provision of early childhood education, it is necessary to involve the community.

In Pancasila, especially the first principle, the Indonesian state guarantees freedom of religious rights, such as belief in one's own religion or matters of worship according to one's religion. Being tolerant in religious matters will create harmony so that they are able to live side by side with other religious adherents. The inevitability of diversity in Indonesia has become a potential source of conflict. In general,

conflicts between religious adherents are caused by several factors such as: harassment of certain religions and spiritual leaders, economic jealousy and conflicting political interests.

Schools play an important role in instilling multicultural values in students from an early age. If from the start they have the values of togetherness, tolerance, love of peace, and respect for differences, then these values will be reflected in their daily behavior because they are formed in their personality.

Therefore, what needs to be noted in multicultural education is that a teacher is not only required to master and be able to professionally teach the subjects he teaches. More than that, an educator must also be able to instill the values of multicultural education such as democracy, humanism, and pluralism.

Pembina Tualang State Kindergarten is located in Tualang District, Siak Regency and is a school whose students come from various different religions. The religious backgrounds at the State Kindergarten of Pembina Tualang include Islam, Christianity and Catholicism. What differentiates it from other kindergartens is that, although this school has a heterogeneous background, namely having various religions, this State Kindergarten in Pembina Tualang also includes religious activities, such as Tahfidz activities for Muslim students and for non-Muslim students, they carry out religious activities according to their beliefs. In learning there are also extracurricular spiritual activities, these extracurricular spiritual activities are carried out once a week, these activities are carried out every Friday. It is hoped that this spiritual activity will build good relationships with God and others.

In learning, teachers also include activities by implementing play methods, such as playing puzzles, playing with blocks, playing with logos. Apart from that, outside the classroom there is a large playground for children to run around in, and outdoor play that has been provided at school such as seesaws, globes, skateboards, sandpits and others.

The background to this research problem is that there are children who tease each other about differences in religion and skin type. The interesting thing to examine in relation to this research is how multicultural education is implemented and how to instill an attitude of religious tolerance that is applied and implemented among early childhood children, while children are in the process of growth and development with conditions that are not yet perfect enough to understand the meaning of multicultural education it self.

Based on the background of the problem, multicultural education plays an important role in instilling multicultural values in children from an early age. And multicultural education for early childhood is certainly a must to be instilled in early childhood, because early childhood is an important milestone in supporting character from now onwards

## **METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach. The subjects in this study were the principal, teachers, and students at the Tualang Kindergarten, Tualang District, Siak Regency. Data collected through observation, interview and documentation methods. Data analysis using data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data validity testing techniques using source triangulation and technique triangulation.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Multicultural education is a process of developing all human potential that respects plurality and heterogeneity as a consequence of cultural, ethnic, tribal and religious diversity, Ambarudin (2016).

Prudence Crandall stated that multicultural education is education that pays serious attention to the background of students, both in terms of ethnicity, race, religion (beliefs) and culture, Lasijan (2021).

In Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. Early childhood education is an effort directed at children from birth to 6 years of age which is carried out through providing physical and spiritual educational stimulation so that children are ready to enter further education. Ki Hajar Dewantoro argued that children are living creatures with their own unique nature. Educators only help them develop this nature. If a child has a bad nature, it's the educator's job to improve it. If a child already has a good nature, they will be better helped through education, Anita Yus (2011:2).

From the definition above, it is stated that early childhood education is the age from birth to 6 years old. At this age, it is very decisive in the formation of a child's character and personality. Because this age is an important age as the age of their permanent intelligence, and at this age they can absorb very high levels of information.

The form of multicultural education that occurs in early childhood education is in principle a good way to introduce and develop the value of diversity in life. From an early age, we must implement or introduce children to cultural, social and other diversity. In principle, in a new and democratic society, multicultural education occupies a very central place in the development of the new generation of

Indonesians, Sitorus (2017). Therefore, the implementation of multicultural education through the development of multicultural education is carried out by transforming culture in the educational process. The existing culture will be well manifested to children if the noble values of that culture can be absorbed by children through the learning and educational process that children experience.

In essence, multicultural education for early childhood is an effort to foster tolerant behavior towards differences in religion, race, ethnicity, culture, customs, language, etc., among students to prepare children for future social life.

Through multicultural education from an early age, it is hoped that children will be able to accept and understand cultural differences that impact on differences in Usage (how individuals behave); Folkways (habits that exist in society), Mores (behavior in society), and Customs (customs of a community), Najmina (2018)

This was also emphasized by Musa Asya'arie who stated that multicultural education means an educational process: a way of life that respects, is sincere, and tolerates cultural diversity that lives in a pluralistic society, so that students will have the resilience and mental flexibility of the nation in responding to social conflicts in society, Hanafy (2015).

Multicultural education will also train and build students' character so that they are able to act democratically, humanistically and pluralistically in their environment. This means that students are not only expected to be able to easily understand, master and have good competence in the subjects taught by the teacher, but students are also expected to be able to always behave and apply democratic, humanist and pluralistic values at school or outside of school.

According to Siti Rochmaniyah, in the multicultural education process, there are several approaches that can be taken, including the following:

1. A paradigm shift in viewing education as schooling or multicultural education with formal school programs. A broader view of education as the transmission of culture frees educators from the assumption that primary responsibility for developing cultural competence among students lies solely with them, and in fact, more and more parties should be taking responsibility.
2. Avoiding the view that equates culture with ethnic groups. What is meant is that there is no longer a need to associate culture solely with ethnic groups, as has been the case up to now.
3. Since developing competence in a new culture usually requires proactive interaction with people who already possess competence, it can be seen even more clearly that efforts to support ethnically separate schools are antithetical to the goals of multicultural education.
4. Multicultural education increases competence in several cultures. Which culture is adopted is determined by the surrounding situation.
5. Multicultural education, both in and out of school, raises this kind of awareness and moves us away from the concept of biculturalism or the dichotomy between indigenous and non-indigenous people. This dichotomy limits individuals' ability to fully express their cultural diversity.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that multicultural education for early childhood is a good way to introduce and develop the values of diversity in life. From an early age, we must implement or introduce children to cultural, social and other diversity. Multicultural education applied to early childhood is seen as very necessary to create a future generation that is more moral and tolerant. Thus, multicultural education can shape children's ability to socialize in a diverse society, and be able to see diversity as a wealth.

Based on an interview with the head of Pembina State Kindergarten, information was obtained regarding planning for learning management in multicultural education with the answer being:

“Incidentally, our institution is a public school or has a general nature, so we also have programs for students according to the religions in our kindergarten. It's been a long time, the program is twice a week every Monday and Thursday, and on the other days there are additional activities. We do all this according to our respective religions and they agree, and I convey what I give them. So there's also communication with the parents. The curriculum is the same. We follow the Ministry of National Education, and up until now, we've been following the Ministry of National Education's curriculum. The only difference is the school's unique characteristics. As I mentioned earlier, each school has its own unique characteristics. And our kindergarten's unique characteristic is learning through play.”

The above is confirmed by the answers from the results of the interview with the teacher of Pembina State Kindergarten who gave the answer: “Because this is a public school, we still accommodate all religions. Coincidentally, this year there are two religions: Muslim and Catholic, so we still apply them equally in every lesson; I don't differentiate between them. Because they are still young, the children are introduced to the fact that we live in Indonesia and that there is more than one religion in Indonesia. Indonesia also has many ethnicities, and we must respect and love one another.”

The next question was related to how to overcome religious differences in this State Kindergarten Pembina and received the following answer from the head of the State Kindergarten Pembina:

“In my opinion, the role of educators is crucial, Miss. They must have sufficient insight into how to respect religious diversity. After all, schools are places for developing knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior. To create harmony, collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community is essential. We must also foster mutual understanding among religious communities.”

In line with the Head of Pembina State Kindergarten, the results of interviews with teachers regarding how teachers teach children who have different beliefs to pray are as follows: “If we use national symbols, and we provide an understanding/tell the children that for Muslims the procedure for praying is to raise their hands, while for Catholics there are symbols on the chest and shoulders.”

Meanwhile, regarding the implementation of multicultural learning, the Head of Pembina State Kindergarten answered as follows:

“In terms of implementation, we use common prayers in extracurricular religious activities, such as praying before studying, eating, and playing. We always involve collaboration, especially during play activities. Because our school, like our kindergarten, has a unique characteristic: learning through play. So, as I said earlier, early childhood is the age of play. And children learn through play”.

Furthermore, tolerance means the quality or attitude of being tolerant, a tolerant attitude. Tolerance comes from the English word "tolerate," which means to allow or tolerate the behavior of another person or group without protest. It also means to protect, respect, and cooperate with others, Farhatun (2018). Attitudes arise from stimuli. The formation of an attitude is greatly influenced by stimuli from the social and cultural environment, for example: norms, groups, religion, and customs. In this case, the family plays a significant role in shaping the attitudes of their children. This is because the family, as the primary group for children, is the most dominant influence. Attitudes cannot be formed without human interaction with a particular object or objects, Abu Ahmad (2009: 115).

By having an attitude of mutual respect, acceptance and appreciation for all the differences that surround human life, the world will become a humane and peaceful place.

According to M. Nur Ghufron, religious tolerance is a person's awareness to appreciate, respect, allow and permit the opinions, views, beliefs, faiths, and provide space for the implementation of customs, behavior and religious practices of others that are different or contradict one's own opinions in order to build a life together and better social relations.

In social relations, whether of one religion or in various forms of differences, everyone must have an attitude of tolerance and not impose their will and regulate life.

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (2016), the ways for parents to teach tolerance are as follows:

1. Provide examples of being respectful
2. Be careful when talking about the habits of different people
3. Help children understand the value of tolerance
4. Answer honestly when children ask about religious and cultural habits
5. Give children the opportunity to socialize
6. Maintain and supervise children in the socialization process

The basis of the 1945 Constitution is in Chapter XI article 29 paragraphs 1 and 2, which reads: 1) The state is based on the belief in the Almighty God. 2) The state guarantees the freedom of each resident to embrace their own religion and worship according to that religion and belief. The Constitution stipulates that the Indonesian people must be religious. Furthermore, the Indonesian people protect religious communities, allowing them to practice their religious teachings and worship according to their respective religions.

Thus, tolerance in this context means an awareness of living side by side and cooperating with adherents of different religions. It involves accepting and respecting existing differences and refraining from discriminating against minorities. Tolerance in religious life is the reality that there are many religions among humanity, so they must be recognized as brothers, in the sense that it is more about the active involvement of people in the reality of tolerance and that every religious person can interact positively in a pluralistic environment. So that religious people are willing to accept the reality of different opinions about the truth they believe in, can respect the beliefs of others regarding the religion they embrace, and give them the freedom to practice what they believe without being critical or hostile.

From the above definition, it can be understood that rules and values are necessary, and how to foster tolerance between religious communities. In this context, humans are required to respect one another without misunderstandings. Therefore, frequent discussions and exchanges of ideas about these differences will foster a spirit of religious tolerance. Because without religious tolerance, if there is a problem that

concerns differences, conflict and bloodshed will occur. By instilling tolerance in children from an early age, it is hoped that children will be able to think openly, not discriminate, be able to appreciate and respect differences and be able to draw a middle line regarding existing similarities so that they can have more opportunities to develop in the future.

Thus, the tolerance of religious communities referred to in this research refers to the attitude of religious communities in accepting diversity in thought patterns, patterns of worship, patterns of belief and recognizing the rights and existence of religious communities.

The things that influence and are influenced by tolerance include social and cultural togetherness in the world of children. Rosita Ending Kusmayani (2017) argues that there are several activities to introduce similarities and differences to children. These activities can help children understand several things that are similar and different when compared to other people. This can be done in the following way:

1. Invite children to share stories about customs and cultural traditions together with friends from other cultures
2. Children are asked to take turns sharing their experiences regarding religious events and believing in other religions
3. Introduce similarities and differences between children. This can be done by showing them through photos, illustrations, music, films, and other media to introduce diversity among them.

According to the Ministry of National Education (2012), the guidelines for solid character education for early childhood mention several indicators that show that children are able to develop an attitude of tolerance, including:

- a. Enjoy working with friends
- b. Want to share food and drinks with friends
- c. Always greet when you meet
- d. Show empathy
- e. Happy to be friends with anyone
- f. Respect your friends' opinions and don't force your own will
- g. Doesn't like making noise or disturbing friends
- h. Enjoy discussing, and
- i. Enjoy helping friends and adults.

Based on the results of the interview with the Head of Pembina State Kindergarten regarding tolerance between religious communities, the following answers were obtained:

“Tolerance is demonstrated through habituation, role models, and social activities, such as filling a charity box daily and filling it as freely as the child wishes. The money is then donated to those in need. These social assistance donations are not only for Muslims but also for non-Muslims. Furthermore, if a friend is sick, we invite the child to visit them. From there, we encourage children to practice recognizing that some of what we have is for friends in need. Despite our differences, differences in beliefs are never an issue at our school. Through these activities, we teach children to care for and respect others. And even when doing good, we should not discriminate.”

Regarding the implementation of multicultural learning, the head of Pembina State Kindergarten responded: “For implementation in extracurricular religious activities, we use a common prayer for prayer before studying, eating, and playing. We always involve cooperation, usually during play activities. Our school, like our kindergarten, has a distinctive characteristic: learning through play. So, as I said earlier, early childhood is the age of play. And children's play is play. Educators play an important role, so we are here to set an example and lead by example. As educators, we also encourage children to do good and avoid bad by leading by example.”

This is confirmed by the results of interviews with teachers with answers: “If we think of it as theory alone, it's not enough, right? What I mean is that if we only provide understanding, it's still not enough, especially for young children. So we have to involve the children directly. And coincidentally, we have a class donation every day, but it's not mandatory. It's up to the children how much they want to give. And when the savings are full, we donate the money to nursing homes, orphanages, or people with disabilities. And there, the children also receive lessons. For example, whose children are the children of the orphanage? Why are they here? So, by directly involving the children, the children can receive the lessons.”

From the results of the interview, it is clear that the multicultural learning activities at Pembina State Kindergarten have been carried out according to plan and the learning process in instilling tolerance among each other continues.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the description above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. In this implementation activity, the facilitator prepares a daily activity plan for the children's learning for one day. The implementation of multicultural education in classroom learning includes: a) A welcoming activity for students before entering school. During this activity, teachers and the principal welcome the students and greet their parents. b) Initial/opening activities. These initial activities before the learning process include various activities aimed at preparing the child, both physically and psychologically. The prayers used throughout the learning process until completion include general prayers or the national language. c) Core activities. Core activities are the main learning activities where the teacher gives all children the opportunity to express ideas or opinions related to the activities to be carried out. d) break time. During break time, teachers and the principal accompany students playing in the school yard. e) Closing activities. The teacher begins by asking the children how they felt that day and inviting them to get ready and pray before going home. f) evaluation.
2. Implementation of multicultural education outside the classroom, namely through a) habituation, the habituation values that are applied are that children are accustomed to saying hello, living a disciplined life, getting to know each other and being tolerant, and respecting all friends and the school environment. b) social activities. These activities include giving donations to those in need and visiting the sick.
3. The attitude of religious tolerance in children at Pembina State Kindergarten is through cooperation, respecting the worship of others, and visiting friends when they are sick

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