

Understanding Multiculturalism Education from Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand

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ABSTRACT

Every nation faces increasingly complex challenges. Differences every day meet us. The purpose of this study is to learn from the implementation of multicultural education in four countries. This study uses a qualitative approach with content analysis techniques. The data source comes from 12 English articles obtained from scopus.com with the keywords "Multicultural Indonesia", "Multicultural Singapore", "Multicultural Malaysia", and "Multicultural Thailand". The findings of this study are that multicultural implementation can be carried out through policies and policy practices that must be consistent; the use of real multiculturalism practices; the use of universal values of culture and religion that exist in their respective societies; the use of multicultural music, and the use of the Education curriculum. The results of this study can be used for discussion on the issue of more effective multicultural implementation

Keywords: *Multiculturalism Education, Multicultural Indonesia, Multicultural Singapore, Multicultural Malaysia, Multicultural Thailand*

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INTRODUCTION

During the twenty-first century, all countries and especially schools in most countries have experienced increased diversity due to globalization and advances in communication technology. As a result, the

concept of 'multicultural education' has been adopted in many countries to provide more relevant, and responsive education to students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Arphattananon, 2018).

Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand are countries in Southeast Asia that have adopted the multicultural education model. The discourse of multiculturalism emerged very strongly in Indonesia after the resignation of Suharto in 1998. The post-New Order multiculturalism discourse competed with discourses on freedom of sense such as ethnicity, religion, and others. New individualistic, and communal ideologies as well as social, and religious imaginary contestations emerged strongly in the reform era. The clash of expressions gave rise to various violence (Hoon, 2017).

Although post-Soeharto Indonesia is a more open, and democratic society, with religious pluralism, religious harmony, and religious freedom have been damaged by radical religious groups. Radical religious groups have used the new democratic space to promote, and politicize their religious agendas and to attack marginalized minorities such as the Shia community, Ahmadiyah, and Christian churches (Hoon, 2017). The implementation of regional autonomy in Indonesia has increasingly added to the emergence of local identity politics which usually explodes during regional head elections (Lan, 2011). Globalization has led to internationalization, including in education, which has led to increased diversity in the classrooms of primary schools, and universities in Indonesia (Choi & Mao, 2021). In the above context, Indonesia requires the implementation of effective multiculturalism education so that Indonesia is able to carry out sustainable development, and prosper the Indonesian nation.

Singapore is a global city-state (Wise & Velayutham, 2020). Here we can witness the influx of foreign immigrants over the years. Singapore is a country whose population is aging so the country must try to accept new immigrants in anticipation of population decline. In Singapore, 40% of marriages are mixed marriages. It is undeniable that

Singapore is experiencing rapid growth of a diverse community, and this will inevitably affect the culture, and identity of the country (Costes-Onishi & Lum, 2015).

Singapore is a city-state of immigrant settlers with a population of Chinese (74 percent), Malay (14 percent), Indian (10 percent) and "other" (2 percent). Singapore experienced racial conflicts in the 1950s, and 1960s so this country must continue to build the Singapore nation in a sustainable manner (Wise & Velayutham, 2020).

Singapore, is a society that has a Confucian cultural heritage. In the implementation of building its nation, Singapore uses Confucian culture to increase multicultural awareness (Wu et al., 2020). In this context, Singapore needs a strong multicultural education so that there is no conflict, and continues to maintain as a developed country in Southeast Asia and the world. Malaysia, with a population of more than 32 million in 2018, is a pluralistic nation. Malaysia's population is heterogeneous consisting of various ethnicities. Its ethnic composition is Bumiputera (69.1%), Chinese (23.0%), Indian (6.9%) ((Lino & Hashim, 2019). The Bumiputera classification consists of ethnic Malays, and indigenous peoples of Sabah, and Sarawak. The 'other' ethnicities consist of Eurasians, Thais, Europeans, and others. Each ethnicity adheres to a different religion, and uses a different mother tongue. For example, ethnic Malays are predominantly Muslim, and speak Malay; ethnic Indians mostly practice Hinduism, and generally speak Tamil. The differences between groups in Malaysia are not just physical; they also differ in terms of religion, culture, and language (Lino & Hashim, 2019). This diversity presents a challenge for Malaysia to implement sustainable development, and become a developed country in Southeast Asia. There is no other option but Malaysia should develop multicultural Education (Koh & Harris, 2020).

Thailand has 30 ethnic groups with different cultures. There are about 70 languages spoken in Thailand. Thailand has implemented cultural assimilation as a nation-building approach since the early twentieth century (Arphattananon, 2018). At a time when nationalist ideology was promoted, education was used as a state tool for cultural assimilation. In the late nineteenth century, when the expansion of basic education began, the inculcation of the Thai language was carried out through the national curriculum. The policy to teach only standard Thai resulted in the elimination of other languages spoken among people of various ethnicities. For people whose language is closely related to their cultural and religious identity, such as Muslim Malays, the replacement of Malay with Thai language makes other ethnic groups feel depressed (Arphattananon, 2018).

In Thailand, global awareness of multiculturalism, mutual respect, and acceptance of subordinate groups are all considered the foundation of peace in the country. Today, awareness of social pluralism has led to a major cultural shift from assimilation policies to the introduction of multiculturalism in Thailand (Saleemad et al., 2022). The context of the Thai state shows that this country needs an increase in multiculturalism so that the country remains strong in carrying out the development of the Thai state. Based on the explanation above, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand really need the implementation of multiculturalism. If these countries are not strong enough to carry out multiculturalism, it can be predicted that they will not continue (unsustain) as a nation, and state. Many studies have explored, and investigated multiculturalism in Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand. However, no research has been found that compares the implementation of multiculturalism education in Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, and

Thailand. For education stakeholders, this information and knowledge is very important because it will be a stepping stone in the development of multiculturalism education at the basic education level. As explained by Burnett & McArdle (2011) that multiculturalism education is very well implemented since elementary education (Burnett & McArdle, 2011).

On that basis, this study will focus on describing the comparison of efforts, and implementation of multicultural education in the four countries. Through this comparison, we can learn to implement effective multicultural education according to the context faced by each teacher.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to describe the efforts, and implementation of multicultural education in four countries, namely: Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand. This study uses a qualitative approach with content analysis techniques (Louis Cohen, 2005). The content analysis emphasizes the investigation of the consistency of communication content, the meaning of communication content, the reading of symbols, and the meaning of the contents of symbolic interactions that occur in communication (Şekerci & Yörük, 2020). The data source comes from 12 English articles obtained from scopus.com with the keywords "multicultural Indonesia", "multicultural Singapore", "multicultural Malaysia", "multicultural Thailand".

Data analysis was carried out in the following stages: checking the background of multiculturalism education, examining critical things about multicultural education, and examining recommendations for future multicultural education efforts to improve the progress of national, and state unity.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

No	Author	Title	Year	Backround	Finding	Recommendations
1	(Raihani, 2018)	Education for multicultural citizens in Indonesia: policies, and practices	2018	Education in Indonesia can help create tolerant, and multicultural citizens because Education Law no. 20 of 2003 has supported the development, and implementation of multicultural education.	Policies, and curricula in schools have implemented policies, and curricula that are multicultural in orientation with various obstacles.	Strengthening the practice of multicultural education by increasing the consistency between rules, and practices in schools.
2	(Zamroni et al., 2021)	Cross-cultural competence in multicultural education in Indonesian, and New Zealand high schools	2021	Equality in education is one of the main concerns in culturally diverse societies such as Indonesia, and New Zealand.	Based on data on multicultural education practices in Indonesia, and New Zealand, it shows similarities even though the multicultural education practices are different.	A more comprehensive implementation of multicultural education is needed because Indonesian students face more complicated socio-cultural diversity among students in other countries (especially New Zealand).
3	(Firdaus et al., 2020)	Internalizing Multiculturalism Values Through Education: Anticipatory Strategies for Multicultural Problems, and Intolerance in Indonesia	2020	Since the Reformation era, the Indonesian government has adopted a multiculturalism approach to solve multicultural problems. What values of multiculturalism can be used as a spirit in organizing the social system in a pluralistic society.	Education, both formal, and informal, is a strategic institution to internalize values of multiculturalism. It is necessary to internalize multicultural values through education involving the environment, actors, and schools.	It requires a process of internalization that supports each other between knowledge, the process, and the acceptance of the values of multiculturalism by all involved in the educational process.
4	(Wu et al., 2020)	Educating multicultural citizens from a confucian heritage:	2020	The main challenge for multicultural citizenship is superficial	Suggests the use of Confucianism to enhance multicultural in	Examples of the Confucian model of multicultural civic education in Southeast Asia are

No	Author	Title	Year	Backround	Finding	Recommendations
		Examples from Singapore		understanding, and limited interaction between cultural groups within a political unit.	Singapore. First, a multicultural citizen is a person who adheres to, and shows openness to other cultures. Second, multicultural citizens demonstrate, and promote a universal family rooted in humanity.	needed, which are capable of promoting interfaith harmony.
5	(Costes-Onishi & Lum, 2015)	Multicultural music education in Singapore primary schools: An analysis of the applications of a specialist professional development in practical music teaching	2015	Multicultural music education is often approached only through students' exposure to different world music. Whereas through that music students can be drawn for the purpose of broader curriculum reform purposes, such as issues of equality and justice.	Teachers should make changes in the classroom, and call for policymakers to implement provisions on sustainable multi-music literacy. Through this kind of advocacy, truly multicultural music education can take place within the classroom where students are encouraged to be proactive in their communities on issues of equality, and justice.	Music is used as a tool to unite different ethnicities so as to create a strong, and just society.
6	(Wise & Velayutham, 2020)	Humour at work: conviviality through language play in Singapore's multicultural workplaces	2020	Humor plays an important role in making, and mediating human relationships. There is a lot of humour in the workplace, including humour in Singapore's multi-ethnic workplace that employs citizens, and migrants.	Singlish forms a linguistic humor template for workers to bridge significant language, race, and cultural differences. Humor prevents aggressive insults. Then developed a funny metrolingua franca typical of everyday multiculturalism	Humor can be used as a tool to unite the plural in a funny, and fun frame.

No	Author	Title	Year	Backround	Finding	Recommendations
					in Singapore's plural workplace.	
7	(Nor et al., 2016)	From Melaka Law to federal constitution: the dynamics of multicultural Malaysia	2016	Malaysia is a plural country consisting of three main races: Malay, Chinese, and Indian. The three main religions are Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Other religions such as Sikhism, and Christianity are also embraced. Muslims are the majority comprising 67% of the population with a harmony of differences in unity, and simplicity.	If there is no introduction of the common law system, Malaysia will stick with its traditional laws influenced by Islam, and local customs as can be seen from the Melaka Law practiced 1422-1444. Islamic law in Malaysia is limited to Muslim family matters, while civil law covers all matters.	Multicultural studies cannot be separated from their respective contexts, such as Malaysia which is Islamic. Although Islamic, for common things Malaysians only put Islam on the family.
8	(Koh & Harris, 2020)	Multicultural reflexivity: university students negotiating 'pockets', and 'strings' of multiculturalism in Malaysia	2020	Universities are a place for young people to negotiate to become adults, and meet various 'others'. Young people should therefore have an eye for multiculturalism as part of their transition process towards adulthood.	Students have the opportunity to engage in 'multicultural reflexivity' (i.e. the ability to analyse experiences, and observations of racism, and intercultural friendliness).	Information is needed on the extent to which young people grow in multicultural insights. Young people are successors so the concept, and implementation of multiculturalism must be high.
9	(Wong et al., 2016)	General music teachers' attitudes, and practices regarding multicultural music education in Malaysia	2016	The study examines the utilization of multicultural music education by Malaysian music teachers, with an emphasis on the relationship between music teachers' attitudes,	The results showed that there were limitations in the implementation of multicultural music education in music classes due to inadequate preparation, and limited resources,	It is necessary to address the theoretical, and practical aspects of multicultural music education throughout the curriculum in a comprehensive, and long-term manner.

No	Author	Title	Year	Backround	Finding	Recommendations
				and their subsequent level of effort in developing and implementing multicultural music education in their music classrooms	and inadequate knowledge about multicultural music.	
10	(Saleema d et al., 2022)	Leadership Characteristics for Muslim School Leaders in a Multicultural Context in Thailand	2022	Educational Leadership determines the multicultural direction in Thailand. The study used a mixed method that examined the characteristics of Muslim leadership in a multicultural context in Thailand.	The results of this study found that there are five leadership characteristics for Islamic school leaders in a multicultural context, including gentleness, justice, flexibility, tolerance, and interpersonal relationships.	Efforts are needed to explore the universal values of culture, and religion to strengthen the implementation of multicultural
11	(Chandra nsu, 2019)	Integrating multicultural music education into the public elementary school curricula in Thailand	2019	Music can be used in improving multiculturalism. This moodel pays special attention to cross-cultural understanding to help Thai children acquire a sense of cultural conceptualization, and the skills necessary to grow up in a racially, religiously, and culturally diverse society.	Music education through Thailand's formal education system is one of the methods of preparing children to grow up in a culturally diverse world.	Disseminating the use of various musical instruments can improve students' sense of facing the challenges of multi-ethnicity, and pluralism in Thailand.
12	(Arphatta nanon, 2018)	Multicultural education in Thailand	2018	This study examines multicultural education policy in Thailand. Researchers use qualitative research methods with interviews, observations and	A deeper analysis of school practice makes it clear that what appears to be an acceptance of cultural diversity is only another form of assimilation. The established	More in-depth studies of multiculturalism practices are needed so that they do not occur limited to assimilation, but rather create justice for equality, and prosperity of society.

No	Author	Title	Year	Backround	Finding	Recommendations
				examination of documents to obtain data. The theory of multicultural education is used as a theoretical framework. The research sites are eight primary schools serving students from diverse cultures – Muslim, Buddhist, Burmese, Cambodian, and Thai – in Thailand's southern provinces.	features that define Thainess remain intact, and the influx of certain cultural content is not enough to alter unequal power relations between dominant, and minority groups in Thailand.	

DISCUSSION

The four countries namely Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand have a great need to increase multiculturalism. These countries have diverse ethnic groups or ethnicities, diverse languages, and diverse cultures. Understanding each other, and growing with each other between the diverse is a non-negotiable thing. Advances in globalization, and the development of communication technology add to their challenges in managing differences. Mismanagement in the face of differences can have a devastating impact on the respective countries. Therefore, several strategies, and policies have been taken by each country in managing differences.

Based on this research, there are several things can be taken as learning in improving multiculturalism, including: (1) policies, and policy practices that must be consistent; (2) the use of real practices of multiculturalism; (3) the use of universal values of cultures, and religions that exist in their respective societies; (4) the

use of multicultural music, and (5) the Education curriculum.

Consistent policies, and policy practices will result in effective, and massive multicultural Education practices. Multicultural education will take place not only at the surface level but also at the root of why we need multicultural (Ngiu, 2020). Social relations will come to the level of mutual help, and cooperation with different people in terms of religion, ethnicity, and culture (Hoon, 2017). A more comprehensive implementation of multicultural education is needed because Indonesian students face more complex socio-cultural diversity among students in other countries.

The use of real practices of multiculturalism can give a direct example of society the importance of multiculturalism. In the Indonesian context, the existence of Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII) is a manifestation of the real practice of multiculturalism. But the concrete thing needs to be continued with the mental practice that is necessary to carry out practices with different lives. The

establishment of adjoining houses of worship is also one of the real practices of multiculturalism (Miftah, 2016). For this reason, a mutually supportive internalization process is needed between knowledge, processes, and acceptance of multiculturalism values by all those involved in the educational process.

The use of universal values from cultures, and religions that exist in their respective societies can accelerate, and make it easier for people to accept multiculturalism. Islam in Indonesia, and Malaysia, Buddhism in Thailand, and Confucianism in Singapore have universal values to serve as a foothold in developing multiculturalism. In addition to religion, every society has universal values, as the Sundanese in Indonesia has a saying: one-on-one (mutual education), one-on-one (mutual love), and one-on-one (mutual care and growth). Through humor, it can also increase multiculturalism as also did the late KH Abdurahman Wahid in building multicultural in Indonesia, and even the world (Syarif, 2020). An example of Confucian multicultural citizenship education in Southeast Asia is needed, which is able to encourage inter-religious harmony. First, multicultural citizens are people who adhere to and show openness to other cultures. Second, multicultural citizens demonstrate and promote a universal family rooted in humanity.

The use of multicultural music will be easier for young people. The younger generation is the heir of these nations so they can know and love each other. Through this multicultural music genarsi it will be easy to understand multicultural. The K-Pop phenomenon is an example of how music can influence the younger generation between nations. Through music it will grow that there are indeed differences between us but still we are one. Teachers should make changes in the classroom and ask policy makers to implement provisions on sustainable multi-music literacy.

Helping this kind of, truly multicultural music education in the classroom where it can be achieved to be proactive in their community on issues and justice. In addition, the element of humor in music can be used as a tool for plural objects in a funny and fun frame. Socializing the use of various musical instruments can increase students' sense of facing the challenges of multiethnicity and pluralism.

The use of the Education curriculum is the most sophisticated weapon in cultivating multiculturalism. At this level, teachers must be able to instill at all times, and on various occasions multicultural values, including teachers must be fair, respect differences, and uphold humanity. Although it is not "formal" for schools to use a multicultural curriculum, teachers must have a strong commitment to realizing multicultural because it is part of the responsibility to maintain, and build the nation (Firdaus et al., 2020; Guimaraes-Iosif, 2008; Putra, 2021).

CONCLUSION

In line with globalization, and advances in communication technology, every nation faces increasingly complex challenges. The difference every day of birth comes across us. Therefore, the sense of multiculturalism must continue to be improved in several ways that are carried out continuously, namely implementing policies and policy practices that must be consistent, using real cultural practices, using cultural, and religious values that exist in each society universally, using cultural music in the younger generation, and the use of educational curriculum based on cultural values in everyday learning. The implication of this finding is that we must be able to learn from various nations to improve the quality of life together so that life becomes better, and more colorful.

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