



## Multicultural Education in the Cultural Arts Festival at Sahabat Alam Palangka Raya School

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### Abstract

This research is motivate by one fact that cannot be denied for Indonesia, namely a multicultural society. A multicultural society has the potential to become a capital for the nation's progress, but it does not rule out the possibility that it will become a gap and an opportunity for turmoil to arise, such as social conflict, intolerance, and even division. Providing education in the form of instilling the value of multicultural education from an early age is a form of strategic alternative efforts to suppress and prevent destructive social conflicts. Multicultural education is an attempt to build a person's mindset to appreciate diversity within a framework of equality in order to develop social skills. One of the formal education that implements and internalizes multicultural education through special programs in order to realize student's understanding of the urgency of multicultural education is Sekolah Sahabat Alam. Sekolah Sahabat Alam holds an arts and culture festival at the end of each semester. The cultural festival functions as a concept to provide understanding to students so that they live with mutual respect, appreciation, and tolerance. The problem formulation of this research is how to apply multicultural education in cultural festivals at Sekolah Sahabat Alam in Palangka Raya. This research method was used descriptive research intended to describe the context of multicultural education in the cultural arts festival at Sekolah Sahabat Alam in Palangka Raya. Multicultural education is used as a concrete first step planting good things, this planting can be seen from several activities implemented by Sekolah Sahabat Alam; 1) Cultural festivals as tool for cultural encounters and seeds for seeding multicultural awareness 2) Multicultural education in the creativity of cultural festivals.

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## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background

Indonesia is a multicultural country with a high level of pluralism (Dera Nugraha, 2020). It is characterized by diversity, which refers to the condition of society that consists of differences and variations in various fields (Osman Shalih, 2019). It comprises various ethnic groups, races, languages, cultures, and religions that span from the west to the east (Shofiah Fitrian, 2020).

One undeniable fact for Indonesia is its multicultural society, and the essence of multiculturalism is the willingness to accept other groups equally as one entity (Nana Najmina, 2018). A multicultural society has the potential to be a driving force for the nation's progress, but it also poses a risk of social conflict, intolerance, and even division (Sri Suneki, 2019).

Social conflicts can transform into a scary specter and a potential crucial issue because it affects the existence of national unity (Suheri Harahap, 2018). Providing education in the form of multicultural education since early childhood is a strategic alternative effort to reduce and prevent destructive social conflicts (Tri Diyah Lestari and Nurus Sa'adah, 2021). Multicultural education is an effort to build one's mindset to appreciate diversity in the context of equality to develop social skills (Nuraswami, 2021).

The planting of multicultural education values can be carried out through formal, informal, and non-formal education (Susilo Surahman et al, 2022). One formal education that implements and internalizes multicultural education through specific programs to realize students' understanding of the urgency of multicultural education is Sahabat Alam School. Sahabat Alam School prioritizes the planting of multicultural education values through special programs to support early implementation.

Based on the initial interview with Dudut Tunggi, S.H, the Director of Sahabat Alam School, who stated that at the end of each semester, the school always holds a cultural festival that is presented by students as a result of a joint agreement between teachers and students as a venue for students to identify and deeply understand the culture in their environment and the meaning of the cultural festival. The cultural festival serves as a concept to provide understanding to students to live with respect, appreciation, and tolerance for diversity and to manage conflicts arising from differences effectively from an early age, proving to be effective in planting multicultural education values (Maimun Maimun et al, 2020; Salis Husniatin and Asrul Anan, 2019; Karta Jayadi, Amirullah Abduh, and Muhammad Basri, 2022).

Upon further examination, although the cultural festival has been proven effective in planting multicultural education values, it lacks the collaboration and creativity of students in the role of the festival. Therefore, the main problem in this case is the collaboration and creativity of students, and the key to solving this problem is to use the cultural festival as a tool for cultural encounters and collaboration, as well as the seeding of awareness and creativity in planting multicultural education. The research problem formulation is how to apply multicultural education in the cultural festival at Sahabat Alam School Palangka Raya?

## METHODS

This research method uses descriptive research, which is intended to describe the context of multicultural education in the cultural art festival at Sekolah Sahabat Alam Palangka Raya (Hardani Ahyar et al, 2020).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Cultural Festival as a Tool for Cultural Encounter and the Seedbed of Multicultural Awareness

The Cultural Festival is a mandatory activity that must be carried out by Sahabat Alam Palangka Raya School, and it takes place at the end of each semester. The school has a motto:

"Learning anywhere, with anyone, and anytime," with the idea that the more difficult the path taken, the greater the satisfaction when the end point is achieved.

The cultural festival is used as a tool for encounter between different cultures held by students. The students act as cultural agents, and teachers function as bridges to dissolve the barriers of cultural differences among the students' backgrounds (Yenny Puspita, 2018). The cultural identity implemented by cultural agents serves to realize attitudes of mutual ownership, respect, and tolerance. Bonds are formed in the process of preparing for the cultural festival and expressed in the performance of the cultural festival at the end of the semester as a tool for cultural encounter.

Based on an interview with M. Heru Hidayat S.Kom, M.Pd, Chairman of the Sahabat Alam School Foundation, students are instructed to collaborate in this activity and work together rather than compete to be the best. Because without stimulation, competition already exists in every child, unlike synergy which must be instilled and practiced. This narrative implies that synergy is better than competition, and in this case, students are required to collaborate in making the cultural festival a successful tool for cultural encounter (A Nurhuda and N Setyaningtyas, 2021). Working in synergy with this situation, students are required to play an active role in determining the theme to be raised in the cultural festival, so students are expected to blend with the situation and not insist on their own culture, as this is based on the principle of togetherness to avoid compartmentalizing cultures, and students become more familiar with various cultures in Indonesia through the cultural arts festival.

Cultural differences and identities do not become obstacles to collaborating and creating a colorful harmony to dispel disharmony. However, differences can be used as a construction of realizing togetherness through interrelated elements that penetrate into even the seedbed of awareness of the importance of multiculturalism in a pluralistic framework.

### **Multicultural Education in Cultural Festival Creativity**

Differences in ethnicity, religion, race, language, and culture are impossible to avoid (Sokhi Huda, 2020). Although differences cannot be unified, they can coexist and collaborate to achieve common goals. Multicultural education is needed to break down existing multicultural barriers. Multiculturalism is a belief in diversity (Muhammad Rasyid Ridho and Tumin Tumin, 2022). In addition to overcoming multicultural barriers, multicultural education is also used as a process of instilling creativity in students. Creativity is a combination of a series of innovations, flexibility, and sensitivity that can make someone think productively based on existing circumstances (Ihsan Maulana, 2019).

The Cultural Art Festival is one of the most anticipated moments for students at Sahabat Alam School at the end of each semester. The cultural festival is a platform that emphasizes the selfless attitude of students to integrate and correlate different cultures (Sri Marmoah and Jenny Indrastoeti Siti Poerwanti, Suharno, 2022). Culture is used as a capital for instilling multicultural education in students. Multicultural education in the realm of creativity in the students' cultural festival implies the amalgamation of different students who are inherently different (Ketut Suardika, Siti Roskina Mas, and Nina Lamatenggo, 2022). The cultural festival becomes an effective platform and medium for the application of student creativity in this case the emphasis on multicultural education (S Komariah and M Kanzunuddin, 2019). Although not yet perfect in displaying creativity, the awareness of providing an opportunity to showcase other cultures that are not their own is evidence that multicultural education indicators have been practiced well in the creativity of the cultural art festival.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Indonesia is a multicultural country with a high level of multicultural society, which can be seen as both an opportunity and a crucial threat to national unity. Multicultural education is an

important and fundamental aspect that needs to be instilled in students as an alternative effort to suppress and prevent destructive social conflicts. Multicultural education is a concrete first step towards promoting positive values, which can be seen through several activities implemented by the Sahabat Alam School, including 1) Cultural festivals as a tool for cultural exchange and planting seeds of multicultural awareness, and 2) Multicultural education in the creativity of cultural festivals. Therefore, the researcher concludes that the role of schools is very important in instilling multicultural education values through its medium, which in this case is the cultural arts festival at the end of the semester in the Sahabat Alam School.

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