Exploring Multiculturalism and Intolerance: Understanding the Dynamics of Diversity

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Abstrak

Di tengah meningkatnya tantangan global, multikulturalisme dan intoleransi memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk masyarakat yang beragam. Konflik kepentingan dan perbedaan budaya seringkali berujung pada intoleransi sehingga mempengaruhi interaksi sosial dan kebijakan publik. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi multikulturalisme dan intoleransi untuk memahami dinamika keberagaman dalam masyarakat. Memanfaatkan tinjauan literatur, menganalisis berbagai artikel jurnal dan buku yang relevan dengan topik penelitian. Selain itu, penelitian ini mengungkap kompleksitas hubungan antara multikulturalisme dan intoleransi. Faktor-faktor seperti perbedaan budaya, politik identitas, konflik kepentingan, dan ketidakadilan sosial menjadi pengaruh utama terhadap tingkat toleransi dalam masyarakat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana faktor-faktor tersebut berinteraksi, mengevaluasi dampaknya terhadap multikulturalisme dan toleransi, serta menciptakan strategi untuk meningkatkan pendidikan multikultural dan kebijakan publik yang inklusif. Temuan-temuan ini menekankan pentingnya pendidikan multikultural dan kebijakan publik yang inklusif dalam mendorong pemahaman lintas budaya dan mengurangi prasangka. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah perlunya kolaborasi antara pemerintah, lembaga pendidikan, dan masyarakat sipil untuk memperkuat pendidikan multikultural dan menerapkan kebijakan inklusif yang mendukung toleransi dan keharmonisan antar kelompok budaya. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan penting untuk memperkuat multikulturalisme dan mengatasi intoleransi masyarakat melalui pendekatan yang berfokus pada inklusivitas dan keadilan sosial.

Kata Kunci: Multikulturalisme, intoleransi, keberagaman.

Abstract

Amidst growing global challenges, multiculturalism and intolerance play a significant role in shaping a diverse society. Conflicts of interest and cultural differences often lead to intolerance, affecting social interactions and public policy. This research explores multiculturalism and intolerance to understand diversity dynamics in society. It utilizes a literature review, analyzing various journal articles and books relevant to the research topic. Additionally, this research reveals the complexity of the relationship between multiculturalism and intolerance. Factors such as cultural differences, identity politics, conflicts of interest, and social injustice are the main influences on the tolerance level in society. This research aims to analyze how these factors interact, evaluate their impact on multiculturalism and tolerance, and create strategies to enhance multicultural education and inclusive public policies. These findings emphasize the importance of multicultural education and inclusive public policy in promoting cross-cultural understanding and reducing prejudice. The implications of this research are the need for collaboration between the government, educational institutions, and civil society to strengthen multicultural education and implement inclusive policies that support tolerance and harmony between cultural groups. This research provides essential insights for strengthening multiculturalism and addressing societal intolerance through an approach focused on inclusivity and social justice.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, intolerance, diversity.

1. INTRODUCTION

Multiculturalism and tolerance are increasingly relevant issues globally, especially in an increasingly connected digital era. Information and communication technology development has removed geographical boundaries, enabling interaction between individuals and cultures without physical boundaries (Azizul, Riski, Fitriyani, & Sari, 2020; Rosnaeni,

2021). It opens the door to a broader and faster exchange of information, ideas, and views between diverse communities worldwide, including Indonesia. Using social media and digital platforms has enriched multicultural discourse in Indonesia but has also raised new challenges in maintaining harmony and managing differences (Jackson, 2019;Indriani & Prasanti, 2019). Indonesia, one of the world's most diverse countries, with more than 300 ethnic groups and various religious beliefs, faces unique challenges in maintaining harmony and managing cultural differences in this digital context. Even though Indonesia has long been known for its spirit of tolerance, there are still cases of intolerance that arise, whether in the form of inter-religious conflicts, horizontal conflicts, or oppression of minority groups. Factors that trigger intolerance include social injustice, conflicts of interest, fear of change, and lack of intercultural understanding.

In recent decades, increased intercultural interactions have raised important questions about how societies can manage diversity more effectively (Abu-Nimer & Smith, 2016; Stahl & Maznevski, 2021). There is a new approach to overcoming the problems of multiculturalism and intolerance, with a special focus on education and public policy As well as focusing on the influence of multicultural education and inclusive policies on social tolerance (Cherng & Davis, 2019; Siritheeratharadol, P., Tuntivivat, S., Intarakamhang, 2021). In the long history of the Indonesian nation, plurality has given birth to beautiful collaborations in various forms of culture thick with diversity. Tolerance has become a characteristic of Indonesian society in respecting and accommodating differences (Syah, 2022). However, in this increasingly complex digital era, the role of information technology and social media is also an important aspect that must be considered in building perceptions, strengthening understanding, and fighting the spread of discrimination and hatred (Lestari & Sudarsri., 2018; Suni Astini, 2020). It is important to understand the dynamics of multiculturalism and intolerance in the Indonesian context, not only as a social phenomenon but also as an issue with significant political, economic, and security implications (Saputra, Hardi, & Rahmat, 2022; Suradi, 2018). Previous research shows that the impacts of intolerance include socio-economic and political losses, threats to national stability, social cohesion, and democratic values (Sunarno, Firman, Ikbal, & Indrawati, 2023). These findings show that intolerance causes harm at the interpersonal and community levels and has far-reaching consequences at the national and global levels.

In this context, efforts to understand and overcome intolerance become critical. A comprehensive approach is needed, including policies and regulations, educational initiatives, and intercultural dialogue to build understanding and tolerance. Effective multicultural education and inclusive public policies can play an important role in changing the narrative of intolerance into a narrative of tolerance and respect for diversity (Azkiya, Tamrin, Yuza, & Madona, 2022; Khairun, Sihotang, & Mulyadi, 2023). In addition, the role of social media and information technology in shaping public perception must be addressed. With more and more information available online, education about media literacy and being critical of information becomes very important. In an era where information can be quickly disseminated and accessed by many people, efforts to combat disinformation and spread messages of tolerance and diversity must be a priority. Previous research findings state that multiculturalism is a step toward maintaining harmony as an answer to past failures in managing a pluralistic society in Indonesia (Khairun et al., 2023; Syah, 2022). Multicultural education will form a good character for students to participate in becoming a society that loves different (Suradi, 2018; Utoro, 2023). Other research states that multiculturalism in diversity is crucial for creating an inclusive, just, and dynamic society where everyone can feel valued and fully participate (Azkiya et al., 2022; Yusufa, 2018). Given the increasing social and political polarization in various parts of the world, this research becomes very relevant and urgent. The goal is to understand the dynamics of existing diversity and create a

framework that policymakers and educators can use to promote social harmony and tolerance. Thus, this article seeks to identify the challenges faced in managing multiculturalism and intolerance in Indonesia and explore comprehensive and sustainable solutions. Through in-depth analysis and a multidisciplinary approach, this research aims to significantly contribute to understanding how society can more effectively manage diversity and promote tolerance in this increasingly connected digital era.

2. METHOD

This research uses literature review methods to explore multiculturalism and intolerance and understand the diversity dynamics in society. This literature review method involves a structured process of collecting and analyzing various literature sources relevant to the research topic. Search for literature sources was done through academic databases, libraries, and trusted online sources. These sources were selected based on scientific rigor, topical relevance, and contribution to understanding multiculturalism and intolerance. This study adopted strict selection criteria to ensure the sources' validity and reliability. The literature sources must meet high academic standards, be published in reputable journals or publishers, and be directly relevant to multiculturalism, intolerance, and societal diversity dynamics. This selection process also involves evaluating the methodology used in previous studies, the strength of the arguments presented, and the context and scope of the research. The main objective of this literature search is to identify and analyze various perspectives and findings related to multiculturalism, intolerance, and the dynamics of diversity in society. This research examines literature that supports a particular view and considers works that offer different views or findings to obtain a more holistic and objective picture of the issue under study. With this approach, this research seeks to collect extensive and diverse literature sources, ensure the quality and validity of the information obtained, and provide a comprehensive analysis of multiculturalism and intolerance in diverse societal contexts.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Multiculturalism is a theoretical framework that emphasizes recognizing and appreciating cultural diversity. It recognizes that individuals come from different cultural backgrounds and that these differences should be respected and celebrated. Multiculturalism is a term used to describe the social condition of diversity among certain populations seen through various spatial formations but primarily seen through the spatial lens of the state and city of Clayton. Specifically, it refers to differences among populations regarding racial, ethnic, religious, and other cultural characteristics. Based on this recognition of social and cultural diversity, multiculturalism is also a version of political integration that recognizes the rights and needs of minority groups within the political mainstream, the practical application of which varies greatly between places and nations. Additionally, multiculturalism has emerged as a popular way to face the challenges of social and cultural diversity, including inequality and racism; many countries that initially adopted this attitude are now starting to shift back to an assimilation agenda. It raises questions about how diversity should be managed, how multicultural inclusion should be approached, and how notions of personal and collective identity can be conceptualized and defined in the context of globalization and postcolonialism. Multiculturalism refers to several elements: the state of a society or world where many different ethnic and cultural groups are considered politically relevant and programs or policies that promote those communities. Multiculturalism has been used to develop multicultural competence and cultural humility, which are psychological

technologies that adapt traditional psychotherapy approaches to be more inclusive of diverse cultural backgrounds. Multiculturalism has also been used to enhance therapeutic alliances with diverse groups and guide conversations about racism. Multiculturalism is a theoretical framework promoting inclusivity, respect, and celebrating cultural diversity. The results of cities with the highest IKT scores in 2022 are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. 10 Cities with the Highest IKT Scores 2022

Rank	City	Ind. 1	Ind. 2	Ind. 3	Ind. 4	Ind. 5	Ind. 6	Ind. 7	Ind. 8	Final Score
1	Singkawang	6.33	7.00	7.00	6.00	6.00	7.00	6.00	6.00	6.583
2	Salatiga	6.17	7.00	7.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.417
3	Bekasi	5.00	6.40	7.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	5.00	5.00	6.080
4	Surakarta	5.83	7.00	7.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.883
5	Kediri	5.40	6.50	6.50	6.00	6.00	5.00	5.00	6.00	5.850
6	Sukabumi	5.00	6.80	7.00	5.00	5.00	6.00	3.00	5.00	5.810
7	Semarang	4.83	7.00	7.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.783
8	Manado	4.67	7.00	7.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.767
9	Kupang	5.67	6.85	7.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	5.687
10	Magelang	6.00	6.35	7.00	4.00	4.00	6.00	4.00	5.00	5.670

Analysis of the 2022 Tolerant Cities Index (IKT) by the SETARA Institute offers valuable insight into how ten cities in Indonesia implement the values of tolerance and multiculturalism. Each city is unique in celebrating and managing its diversity, leveraging its strengths and resources to create an inclusive and harmonious society. Singkawang stands out for its large ethnic Chinese community and lively Cap Go Meh celebrations, showing how festivals and traditions can be a meeting point for different cultural groups. Salatiga, with nearly the same score, depicts success in community integration through education and local initiatives that promote intercultural dialogue. Bekasi scores high in social and cultural inclusion thanks to ongoing efforts to support diversity in public administration and communal life. Surakarta is known for its holistic approach to multiculturalism, instilling these values through inclusive education and religious activities. Kediri and Sukabumi show progress in strengthening their social structures that support diversity, emphasizing strengthening local communities. Semarang explores the potential for diversity through policies encouraging citizen participation in government and social activities. Manado, with its large Christian and Muslim communities, shows interfaith harmony as an important aspect of its multiculturalism. Kupang shows how tolerance and diversity can be maintained in a unique geographic context with diverse populations. Finally, Magelang offers an example of how history and cultural heritage can contribute to greater understanding and acceptance of diversity. Each city, with its advantages and approaches, illustrates how tolerance and multiculturalism can be realized in practice. Whether through inclusive religious activities, cultural festivals that unite citizens from diverse backgrounds, or public policies designed to promote diversity, their success shows that multiculturalism is a dynamic and adaptive process. They show that tolerance is not just about passive acceptance but about active participation and celebration of the diversity at the core of their identity.

This IKT analysis provides a framework for understanding how Indonesian cities practice multiculturalism in various ways, providing the valuable lesson that there is no one-size-fits-all formula for achieving social harmony. Each city offers valuable lessons in implementing sustainable multiculturalism and shows that diversity is a source of strength

and vitality for society. Among the ten cities assessed in the Tolerant Cities Index, Surakarta or Solo is a microcosm of broader multiculturalism in Indonesia. The city, with its rich cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity, reflects the same spirit of multiculturalism that permeates the nation's ranks of tolerant cities. Solo celebrates this diversity in words and through concrete actions and celebrations, showcasing its unique approach to social harmony. The lively celebration of holidays from various religions in this city is not only a manifestation of tolerance but also celebration and acceptance, reaffirming the city's position as an important multicultural center in Indonesia. Some examples show how Surakarta encourages multiculturalism: Eid al-Fitr celebrations: During Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr celebrations, Surakarta becomes a center of religious activities for Muslims. However, what is interesting is non-Muslim citizens' tolerance and active participation in celebrating Eid al-Fitr. Many shops and restaurants in the city join in the excitement of welcoming Eid with special decorations and discount offers and serving special Eid dishes. Christmas Celebration: Surakarta also honors the Christian celebration of Christmas. Every year, the city holds a spectacular Christmas tree unveiling ceremony downtown. Apart from that, churches in Surakarta also hold masses and religious events open to all residents, including non-Christian religions. Vesak Celebration: Surakarta hosts the important Vesak celebration for Buddhists. The event involves parades, religious ceremonies, and various cultural activities that attract tourists from various religious and cultural backgrounds. It shows Surakarta's commitment to upholding religious diversity and promoting tolerance between religious communities.

Through initiatives like this, Surakarta actively fosters a spirit of multiculturalism and respect for cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity. This effort provides a positive example for other regions in Indonesia in creating an inclusive and harmonious society. One concrete example of implementing multiculturalism can also be found at Sebelas Maret University (UNS) in Surakarta. UNS has committed to creating an inclusive campus environment and diversifying religious diversity by providing a place of worship for all religious communities. On the UNS campus, adequate prayer facilities meet the spiritual needs of students and staff from various religions. Mosques, Christian churches, Catholic churches, monasteries, temples, and Hindu temples are spread across the campus area. UNS students and staff can worship according to their beliefs and religion without restrictions or discrimination. The existence of this place of worship reflects an attitude of tolerance and respect for religious diversity, which is an important value at UNS. Students and university staff can carry out worship comfortably and safely, respecting each other in their religious activities. This action shows that UNS understands the importance of multiculturalism and applies it concretely in everyday life on campus. Implementing multiculturalism at UNS positively contributes to building interfaith harmony, strengthening tolerance, and giving birth to a generation that respects diversity. With this example, UNS has become a successful example of how a higher education institution in Indonesia can implement multiculturalism.

Factors Triggering Intolerance

Intolerance, prejudice, and discrimination in Indonesia have complex root causes and are influenced by factors such as history, identity politics, economic inequality, media, and education, which have not been effective in teaching the values of tolerance. The occurrence of intolerance in Indonesia is due to several factors, including Historical factors, which are one of the triggers for intolerance in Indonesia, which has long roots. Conflicts between ethnic, religious, and cultural groups have occurred for a long time, and these conflicts have increased the level of intolerance, prejudice, and discrimination between these groups (Parker, L. 2014; Mu'ti, A., & Burhani, A. N. (2019). Identity politics plays an important role in triggering intolerance in Indonesia. Politicians often use identity politics, such as nationalism, religion, and ethnicity, to gain political support. However, this can strengthen divisions and

increase intolerance, prejudice, and discrimination between these groups Simas, E. N. et al., (2020). Economic inequality also contributes to the problem of intolerance. This inequality can cause social injustice and strengthen negative stereotypes about certain groups, exacerbating problems of intolerance, prejudice, and discrimination (Inayatillah, I. (2021). Media, both social media and mainstream media, have a role in increasing the level of intolerance, prejudice, and discrimination in Indonesia: The spread of fake news, the use of discriminatory language, and negative stereotypes can strengthen negative perceptions about certain groups. The education system in Indonesia still needs to be fully effective in teaching the values of tolerance, diversity, and respect for differences. Inadequate curriculum in teaching multicultural values, Lack of training for teachers in teaching multicultural values, learning materials that do not reflect cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity in Indonesia, School environment that is not inclusive for students from different backgrounds, lack of collaboration with communities and community organizations to strengthen the teaching of the values of tolerance and diversity. In order to overcome the problem of intolerance, there needs to be a comprehensive and long-term approach. Solutions must include understanding history, changes in identity politics that strengthen unity, overcoming economic inequality, tighter media monitoring, and improving the education system to teach the values of tolerance. Better and more inclusive education is needed to reduce the level of intolerance, prejudice, and discrimination in Indonesia.

Discussion

This research reveals that multiculturalism, as a theoretical framework, plays an important role in recognizing and celebrating cultural diversity in society. Multiculturalism emphasizes respecting cultural, racial, ethnic, and religious differences (Khairun et al., 2023; Lozano & Escrich, 2017). The concept of multiculturalism is not only limited to social and cultural recognition but also includes aspects of political integration. It shows that the practical application of multiculturalism varies greatly, depending on the country and city context. In facing the challenges of globalization and postcolonialism, multiculturalism has become increasingly important as a tool for managing social and cultural diversity, as well as a response to issues such as inequality and racism. Multiculturalism is a policy that promotes a society with significant ethnic and cultural diversity (Aditya, Sumantri, & Astawan, 2019; Ivison, 2015). However, it is important to critically consider how these policies affect the power dynamics and representation of minority groups and their interaction with concepts of national and global identity. From a broader theoretical perspective, multiculturalism theory emphasizes recognizing identity in a multicultural context (Taylor, 1994). It focuses on protecting the rights of minority groups and social integration (Kasmiati, 2021; Kymlicka, 2017). This view supports the findings of this research that multiculturalism is not only about tolerance but also about social justice and empowerment of minority groups. From a social theory perspective, multiculturalism responds to social and cultural diversity challenges, including inequality and racism. Modern social theory, with its concept of the public sphere, highlights the importance of open dialogue and discussion in multicultural societies. Emphasizes that in a democratic society, public space must be a place where differences and diversity can be discussed and respected (Rahmawati & Dewi, 2020; Yusufa, 2018).

Through this social theory lens, this research recognizes that multiculturalism requires a more inclusive and reflective approach. It is important to consider how multicultural policies can be implemented to address social inequalities and promote inclusion without ignoring each group's cultural identity and uniqueness. This analysis confirms that multiculturalism is a theoretical and practical principle that must be carefully considered in policy-making and social practice. Through an approach sensitive to local context and a deep

understanding of social dynamics, multiculturalism can effectively promote inclusivity, respect diversity, and create a more harmonious and equal society (Huda et al., 2020; Suradi, 2018). Therefore, this research underlines the importance of a more inclusive and adaptive multicultural approach in the face of ever-changing social and political dynamics to ensure that it remains relevant and effective in promoting social harmony and equality (Khairun et al., 2023; Nurhayati & Agustina, 2020). Thus, this research not only strengthens the concept of multiculturalism as a complex theoretical framework but also highlights the need for a more critical and dynamic strategy in implementing multicultural policies so that it can make a real contribution to overcoming the challenges of diversity in the modern era.

In everyday life, we cannot ignore the existence of issues of intolerance, which often disrupt harmony and harmony in society. This issue is becoming increasingly important in the context of rapidly growing multiculturalism. Concrete efforts are needed to handle the issue of intolerance wisely and effectively to maintain diversity and promote intercultural understanding, including increasing cultural awareness. The first strategy that can be implemented is increasing cultural awareness. It includes understanding the differences between cultures and understanding that each culture has different values, norms, and traditions (Pratiwi & Roesminingsih, 2021; Triyono, 2019). By increasing cultural awareness, individuals can better understand how certain behaviors or actions may be interpreted differently by people from different cultures. Second, improving intercultural communication skills: The second strategy that can be implemented is increasing intercultural communication skills or competence. It includes understanding how to communicate effectively in different cultures, appreciating their differences and similarities, and avoiding mistakes or culturally insensitive actions. Third, use a contextual approach: This strategy is used in communicating with people from different cultures. It includes considering the social, cultural, and historical context in which the communication occurs. By considering this context, individuals can avoid misunderstandings or actions that are culturally insensitive. Fourth, develop empathy skills: strategies for developing empathy skills. It includes seeing other people's perspectives and understanding their feelings and thoughts. By developing empathy skills, individuals can reduce intercultural tensions and increase awareness of the differences and similarities between different cultures. Fifth, Avoid Stereotypes. Avoid stereotypes or overgeneralizations about people from different cultures. It includes understanding that individuals from different cultures have significant differences and do not simply represent stereotypes about their culture (Oupen, Agung, & Yudana, 2020; Rahayuni, Abadi, & Wiarta, 2020). Intolerant attitudes greatly influence the diversity of a country. So, multiculturalism education is very important to implement (Saputra et al., 2022; Sunarno et al., 2023). Multiculturalism refers to accepting and respecting the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, religions, and other backgrounds. Multicultural education must teach universal values about human rights and respect cultural and religious diversity. Another factor to consider is Leadership Selection. Choose leaders who promote unity and harmony between ethnic and religious groups. Leadership that can recognize diversity, uphold human rights, and respect cultural and religious diversity can positively impact society. Community participation also plays an important role in creating harmony in society. Community participation can be done through dialogue, discussion, and cooperation between different groups. Multicultural societies provide opportunities for collaboration between groups, which can increase social and economic engagement. By harnessing the strengths and talents of various backgrounds, society can achieve better economic growth.

Multiculturalism allows individuals to understand and appreciate the different backgrounds, values, and norms of cultural groups. It helps avoid stereotypes and prejudice, promoting deeper understanding. Through multiculturalism, people can experience the beauty and complexity of various forms of cultural expression (Khairun et al., 2023; Yusufa, 2018).

Society can build a stronger and more inclusive national identity by recognizing and celebrating diversity. It helps create a sense of unity amidst differences. Previous research findings state that multiculturalism is a step toward maintaining harmony as an answer to past failures in managing a pluralistic society in Indonesia (Khairun et al., 2023; Syah, 2022). Multicultural education will impact the formation of good character for students to participate in becoming a society that loves differences (Suradi, 2018; Utoro, 2023). Other research states that multiculturalism in diversity is crucial for creating an inclusive, just, and dynamic society where everyone feels valued and fully participates (Azkiya et al., 2022; Yusufa, 2018). Based on these findings, multiculturalism has a big impact on life. The values of multiculturalism help form the basis for a civilized, inclusive, and united society, creating an environment that supports the development of individuals and groups in all aspects of life. So, collaborative and consistent efforts from all levels of society are needed to increase multiculturalis

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the description above, exploring multiculturalism and intolerance provides a deeper understanding of diversity dynamics in society. Ignorance, stereotypes, prejudice, and conflicts of interest influence the emergence of intolerant behavior. Understanding and respecting other individuals' cultures and beliefs has been proven important in promoting a harmonious social life. To overcome the issue of intolerance, a comprehensive and sustainable approach is needed. Efforts include increasing understanding through formal and informal education, promoting dialogue and intercultural dialogue, building awareness about stereotypes and prejudice, strengthening laws and policies, and building community capacity. In moving forward, individuals, educational institutions, governments, and society need to work together to implement these suggestions. Through these steps, society can strengthen harmony and harmony amidst diversity, create an inclusive environment, and build a society that respects differences in an era of dynamic diversity.

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