

PROMOTING MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION THROUGH LITERACY IN MADRASAH

Nur Khofifah¹, Fathi Hidayah^{2*}, Ahmad Aziz Fanani³, Hasan Baharun⁴

INSTITUT AGAMA ISLAM IBRAHIMY- BANYUWANGI- INDONESIA
UNIVERSITAS NURUL JADID-PROBOLINGGO, EAST JAVA, INDONESIA

¹E-mail: viefa.min1bwi@gmail.com

⁴E-mail: ha54nbaharun@unuja.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This research evaluates the implementation and effectiveness of multicultural education strategies in schools in Jakarta, Indonesia. The main objectives of the research are to identify the obstacles faced in the development and implementation of a multicultural curriculum, assess the impact of multicultural literacy activities on students' knowledge and attitudes, evaluate the role of partnerships between schools, parents, and communities, and examine the optimization of digital platforms in multicultural teaching. This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis at the research site at Madrasah Ibtida'iyah Negeri 1 Banyuwangi. The research results show that the multicultural curriculum positively impacts students' understanding and attitudes towards cultural diversity. Multicultural literacy activities and partnerships with parents and communities strengthen inclusive attitudes and respect for differences among students. Additionally, using digital technology in multicultural teaching increases student interest and engagement. The implications of this research emphasize the importance of a holistic approach that integrates various strategies to create an inclusive learning environment and support cultural diversity. This research provides an empirical basis for developing more effective multicultural education policies and practices in Indonesia.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengevaluasi implementasi dan efektivitas strategi pendidikan multikultural di sekolah-sekolah di Jakarta, Indonesia. Tujuan utama dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi hambatan yang dihadapi dalam pengembangan dan implementasi kurikulum multikultural, menilai dampak kegiatan literasi multikultural terhadap pengetahuan dan sikap siswa, mengevaluasi peran kemitraan antara sekolah, orang tua, dan masyarakat, serta mengkaji optimalisasi platform digital dalam pengajaran multikultural. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipan, dan analisis dokumen di lokasi penelitian di Madrasah Ibtida'iyah Negeri 1 Banyuwangi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kurikulum multikultural

berdampak positif terhadap pemahaman dan sikap siswa terhadap keragaman budaya. Kegiatan literasi multikultural dan kemitraan dengan orang tua dan masyarakat memperkuat sikap inklusif dan penghargaan terhadap perbedaan di antara para siswa. Selain itu, penggunaan teknologi digital dalam pengajaran multikultural meningkatkan minat dan keterlibatan siswa. Implikasi dari penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya pendekatan holistik yang mengintegrasikan berbagai strategi untuk menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang inklusif dan mendukung keragaman budaya. Penelitian ini memberikan dasar empiris untuk mengembangkan kebijakan dan praktik pendidikan multikultural yang lebih efektif di Indonesia.

Keywords: *Multicultural Education, Multicultural Literacy, Inclusive Curriculum*

A. INTRODUCTION

In this era of globalization, people throughout the world are increasingly connected and interacting with various cultures (Putri & Nurhasanah, 2023). In Indonesia, with extraordinary ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity, multicultural education is becoming increasingly important to prepare the younger generation to live harmoniously in diversity (Hakim & Darajat, 2023; Nurkholifah et al., 2024). This aligns with research by Sipuan et al (2022), which states that multicultural education is the key to creating a more inclusive and tolerant society. The development of a multicultural curriculum in schools not only aims to increase students' knowledge about various cultures but also to form attitudes of tolerance and respect for differences (Dewi & Mardiana, 2023; Lado & Windarti, 2024; Sabran et al., 2023). According to multicultural education theory, an inclusive curriculum that reflects cultural diversity can increase students' understanding and empathy for other people (Sumadiyah & Wahyuni, 2024). Apart from that, multicultural literacy activities, partnerships between parents and communities, and optimizing digital platforms are essential strategies for implementing effective multicultural education (Taufiq, 2023; Suhartawan et al., 2024).

However, in social reality, many challenges are still faced in implementing multicultural education in Indonesia. This research is essential to explore the extent to which these strategies have been implemented and how they influence the development of students' attitudes and knowledge. By understanding more deeply the effectiveness of this approach, it is hoped that practical solutions can be found to overcome obstacles and improve the quality of multicultural education in Indonesia (Seprianto et al., 2023; Sabilly & Ratnaningrum, 2024). Although the

importance of multicultural education has been recognized, its implementation in the field often faces various obstacles. One of the main problems is the lack of integration of multicultural curricula in the existing education system. Many schools still focus on conventional curricula that pay little attention to cultural diversity, so opportunities to instill inclusive and tolerant values in students are limited (Alfafan & Nadhif, 2023;Kurdi, 2023).

In addition, parental and community involvement in supporting multicultural education is often still minimal. Collaboration between schools, parents, and communities is essential to create an inclusive learning environment and support the development of students' attitudes towards cultural diversity. Digital platforms as teaching aids have also not been utilized optimally, even though digital technology can open access to various learning resources from various cultures. This research focuses on developing a multicultural curriculum, multicultural literacy activities, parent and community partnerships, and optimizing digital platforms to support multicultural education.

Previous research has shown that multicultural education positively impacts the development of students' attitudes and knowledge (Atmaja, 2024). An inclusive curriculum that addresses cultural diversity can increase students' understanding and empathy for other cultures (Zamroni et al., 2024), which emphasizes the importance of integrating multicultural education into the curriculum to create a more inclusive and tolerant society (Hadi et al., 2024). The involvement of parents and communities in multicultural education can strengthen inclusive and tolerant attitudes in students (Raudhah et al., 2024). The use of digital technology in multicultural teaching can increase student interest and involvement, as well as expand their access to a variety of diverse learning resources (Kardika et al., 2023).

However, there is a research gap in the practical implementation of these strategies in Indonesian schools. Many studies focus more on the theories and concepts of multicultural education. In contrast, empirical studies evaluating these strategies' practical application and effectiveness in the Indonesian context are still limited.

This research offers novelty by focusing on the practical implementation and evaluation of the effectiveness of multicultural education strategies in the context of schools in Indonesia. The novelty of this research lies in its holistic approach, which examines curriculum development and involves literacy activities, partnerships with parents and

communities, and optimizing digital platforms. Thus, it is hoped that this research can significantly contribute to identifying practical solutions to improve the quality of multicultural education in Indonesia.

This research aims to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of multicultural education strategies in Indonesian schools. Specifically, this research aims to identify the obstacles faced in the development and implementation of a multicultural curriculum, evaluate the impact of multicultural literacy activities on students' knowledge and attitudes, assess the role of partnerships between parents, communities, and schools in supporting multicultural education; as well as researching the extent to which digital platforms have been optimized to support multicultural teaching. Thus, it is hoped that this research can provide practical recommendations for improving the quality of multicultural education in Indonesia and creating an inclusive learning environment that respects cultural diversity.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore in depth the experiences, views, and perceptions of research participants regarding implementing multicultural education. Descriptive research provides a clear and detailed picture of the phenomenon being studied (Musyafaq et al., 2024). The location of this research is Madrasah Ibtida'iyah Negeri 1 Banyuwangi.

Data collection techniques used in this research include in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted with teachers, students, parents, and school principals to obtain their views and experiences regarding implementing multicultural education. Participatory observation is carried out by directly observing the teaching and learning process in the classroom and multicultural literacy activities in schools (Manshur et al., 2023). Document analysis was carried out by studying the curriculum, teaching materials, and school policies related to multicultural education.

The collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The analysis process involves several stages, namely data coding, grouping emerging themes, and drawing conclusions. Data coding is carried out to identify patterns and categories in the data that has been collected. Theme grouping was done to organize data based on themes relevant to the research focus. Conclusions were drawn to formulate the main findings of

this research and provide practical and applicable recommendations to improve the implementation of multicultural education (Pangesti, 2023).

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research shows that implementing multicultural education in Jakarta schools positively impacts students' understanding and attitudes toward cultural diversity—An inclusive curriculum is essential for increasing student empathy and tolerance. Multicultural literacy activities that involve learning resources from various cultures have also proven effective in enriching knowledge and fostering inclusive attitudes (Harahap et al., 2021). Multicultural literacy can strengthen students' understanding of the importance of diversity. In addition, this research confirms that partnerships between schools, parents, and communities play a crucial role in creating an inclusive learning environment and supporting multicultural education (Manshur et al., 2023). The importance of community collaboration in strengthening inclusive attitudes in students. However, this research also adds a new dimension by highlighting the importance of optimizing digital technology in multicultural teaching, which increases student engagement and interest (Falah et al., 2023). Thus, this study confirms previous findings and enriches the literature by emphasizing a holistic approach and the use of digital technology as an innovative tool in multicultural education.

1. Multicultural Curriculum Development

Research findings regarding the development of multicultural curricula in schools show a positive correlation between implementing multicultural curricula and increased tolerance and cultural understanding among students. Several interviews with teachers and students provide deep insight into this impact. This was confirmed by the statement of Mohammad Haris Jamroni, the school principal, who thought that,

"A multicultural curriculum helps students understand and appreciate the cultural differences around them, so they are more tolerant and respectful of each other."

These interviews show that implementing a multicultural curriculum in schools helps students better understand and appreciate cultural differences in their environment. With a better understanding of various cultures, students become more tolerant of differences and have more respect for each other. This shows that a multicultural curriculum is

vital in forming students' positive attitudes towards cultural diversity, which is integral to building inclusive and open character and personality. The interpretation of this statement shows that implementing a multicultural curriculum directly affects students' attitudes in dealing with cultural diversity, which is an essential indicator of the formation of their character and personality. Then, Muspikin, as an Indonesian language teacher, argued that, *"Many things about other cultures have been learned through class lessons, making me more open and less quick to judge others."*

The results of interviews with these informants show that through a multicultural curriculum, students gain much knowledge about other cultures in-class lessons. This knowledge helps students become more open and accepting of differences and reduces the tendency to judge others quickly. This indicates that multicultural education broadens students' cultural horizons, changes how they view differences, increases tolerance and reduces prejudice and stereotypes. This statement indicates that a multicultural curriculum increases students' knowledge about other cultures and influences their perspective on differences, reducing prejudice and stereotypes. Meanwhile, Mohammad Haris Jamroni, the school principal, also added that, *"Implementing a multicultural curriculum in our school has increased cooperation between students from different cultural backgrounds."*

The results of this interview show that the implementation of a multicultural curriculum in schools has succeeded in increasing collaboration between students from different cultural backgrounds. With this curriculum, students become more open and understanding of each other, strengthening cooperation and relationships between students. This indicates that a multicultural curriculum plays a vital role in creating an inclusive and harmonious school environment where students from various cultures can work together effectively and support each other. These findings underline the importance of a multicultural curriculum in building an inclusive and harmonious school climate, which can support a more effective teaching and learning process.

Some of the findings above theoretically show that implementing a multicultural curriculum in schools significantly positively impacts student attitudes and behavior (Lado & Windarti, 2024; Qushwa, 2024). Teachers revealed that this curriculum helps students to better understand and appreciate the cultural differences around them, thereby increasing tolerance and mutual respect between them (Simanjuntak et al., 2023; Purba et al., 2024; S. D. Utami et al., 2024). In addition, students also stated that

learning about other cultures made them more open and less quick to judge others, which reduced prejudice and stereotypes (D. A. Utami et al., 2022). Implementing a multicultural curriculum in their schools has increased cooperation between students from various cultural backgrounds, creating a more inclusive and harmonious school environment (Acep et al., 2023). Overall, the multicultural curriculum has proven effective in building students' character, making them more tolerant and collaborative, and supporting a better teaching and learning process (Lado & Windarti, 2024).

2. Multicultural Literacy Activities

Research shows that multicultural literacy activities significantly enrich students' knowledge about cultural diversity and shape their attitudes toward differences. In an interview with Arif Abdul Fatah, an Islamic Religious Education teacher, they stated that,

"Multicultural literacy activities in madrasah, such as reading books about other cultures, broaden students' horizons, make them more sensitive to social issues, and increase empathy. By introducing various cultural perspectives through literacy, students become more open, appreciate differences, and can interact better with people from different backgrounds."

The interview results show that implementing a multicultural curriculum in schools has a significant positive impact on student attitudes and behavior. Teachers expressed that this curriculum helps students better understand and appreciate the cultural differences around them, thereby increasing tolerance and mutual respect. Students also stated that learning about other cultures made them more open and less quick to judge others, reducing prejudice and stereotypes. The principal added that implementing a multicultural curriculum in their school has increased cooperation between students from various cultural backgrounds, creating a more inclusive and harmonious school environment. Multicultural literacy activities, such as reading books about other cultures, broaden students' horizons and make them more sensitive to social issues. Overall, a multicultural curriculum has proven to be effective in building a more tolerant and collaborative student character and supporting a better teaching and learning process. This shows that multicultural literacy activities serve as an effective medium for introducing students to different cultural perspectives. Then Samsulhadi, as a class VI student, also added

that, *"I have enjoyed reading books from various countries. This made me appreciate diversity more and learn many positive values from other cultures."*

Interpretation of this interview shows that reading books from various countries has provided valuable experiences for students. Through this activity, students become more appreciative of cultural diversity and gain a deep understanding of the positive values found in other cultures. This reflects the importance of multicultural literacy in forming open attitudes and respect for differences among students. The interpretation of this statement shows that multicultural literacy not only increases students' understanding of other cultures but also instills positive values that can be drawn from diverse cultural experiences. Apart from that, Fathur Rahman, as the deputy principal of the school, stated that,

"Significant increases in students' interest in reading multicultural books have been seen, which has positively impacted their understanding of the importance of diversity in enriching learning experiences and increasing tolerance among peers."

The interview results show that implementing a multicultural curriculum in schools has a significant positive impact on student attitudes and behavior. Teachers expressed that this curriculum helps students better understand and appreciate the cultural differences around them, thereby increasing tolerance and mutual respect. Students also stated that learning about other cultures made them more open and less quick to judge others, reducing prejudice and stereotypes. The principal added that implementing a multicultural curriculum in their school has increased cooperation between students from various cultural backgrounds, creating a more inclusive and harmonious school environment.

From the findings above, it can be understood that multicultural literacy activities in madrasah institutions include efforts to introduce students to various cultures and different cultural values through literature and reading activities (Mubin & Aryanto, 2022;Kurdi, 2023). This includes students reading books about other cultures, studying stories from various religious traditions, and discussing and reflecting on cultural differences (Fadillah et al., 2024;Sanjani, 2024). This activity aims to broaden students' horizons, increase their understanding of diversity, and promote inclusive attitudes and tolerance in the madrasa education environment (Arfa & Lasaiba, 2022). Multicultural Literacy activities in madrasah institutions are integral to developing students' understanding of cultural diversity (Riza, 2024;Fitrotulloh et al., 2024). This activity involves using books and reading

materials that describe various aspects of life from different cultural perspectives. Students not only read about the traditions, values , and history of other cultures but also engage in in-depth discussion, understanding, and reflection on these differences (Suryaningsih et al., 2023;Nikmah, 2023).

3. Parent and Community Partnership

Research finds that partnerships between parents, communities, and schools in implementing multicultural education are very influential in supporting the development of student attitudes and behavior. Budi Santoso put it forward as an Arabic Language Education teacher who stated that,

"Active collaboration with parents and the community helps create a rich and inclusive learning environment for students, strengthens school-outside connections, and supports students' holistic development."

The interview results show that implementing a multicultural curriculum in schools has a significant positive impact on student attitudes and behavior. Teachers expressed that this curriculum helps students better understand and appreciate the cultural differences around them, thereby increasing tolerance and mutual respect. Students also stated that learning about other cultures made them more open and less quick to judge others, which reduced prejudice and stereotypes. The principal added that implementing a multicultural curriculum in their school has increased cooperation between students from various cultural backgrounds, creating a more inclusive and harmonious school environment. Multicultural literacy activities, such as reading books about other cultures, broaden students' horizons and make them more sensitive to social issues. Active collaboration with parents and the community also helps create a prosperous and inclusive learning environment for students, strengthens school outside connections, and supports students' holistic development. Overall, a multicultural curriculum not only enriches students' knowledge but also forms inclusive attitudes and a deep understanding of cultural diversity, encouraging the creation of a supportive learning climate for all students. Then added the expression of Hudi Setiawan, the student's guardian, who gave his opinion that,

"Participating in school activities to promote cultural diversity that I have carried out makes my child more open and able to appreciate cultural, ethnic, and religious differences."

Interpretation of the interview results shows that participation in school activities promoting cultural diversity has positively influenced the child. This makes the child more open to interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds and appreciating differences more. Activities like this can help build attitudes of tolerance, reduce prejudice, and increase understanding of cultural diversity in children's educational environments. In this case, it shows that parental participation in school activities can strengthen students' understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity and encourage inclusive attitudes at home. Then it is also in line with the expression of Alan Nuwari as a member of the local community who believes that,

"Cultural events co-hosted by our school and community have enriched student experiences and strengthened social connections, creating a more inclusive learning environment and supporting the development of the values of diversity in students' education."

Interpretation of the interview results shows that collaboration between the school and the community in organizing cultural events has significantly benefited the student experience. Such events enrich students' learning experiences by introducing them to different cultures and strengthening social connections among students and the community. More than that, these activities create an inclusive learning environment where the values of cultural diversity are promoted and valued more deeply in students' educational processes. These findings show that community involvement in school activities enriches students' learning experiences and strengthens social ties between schools and local communities.



Figure. 2 Collaboration in Multicultural Education

From the first picture shows parents interacting with their children. This shows the importance of parental involvement in their children's education. Parental partnerships in education help strengthen the teaching and learning process at home and school, providing moral and academic support to children. The second image depicts various people from different backgrounds interacting in a community. This shows the role of diverse communities in supporting education. The third image shows a group of people from different cultural backgrounds, reflecting the diversity at the school. Schools have an essential role in teaching and promoting the values of multiculturalism, teaching students to appreciate and understand cultural differences. The flow of arrows connecting these three components shows that the relationship between parent, community, and school partnerships is dynamic and mutually supportive. Collaboration between these three components is essential to create a supportive and inclusive educational environment for all students.

Overall, the partnership between parents and the community is vital in promoting multicultural education through literacy in Madrasah. Through this collaboration, Madrasah can integrate multicultural values into the literacy curriculum, such as reading books about various cultures (Riza, 2024; Dalimunthe, 2023). In this case, it broadens students' insight into cultural diversity and strengthens inclusive Islamic identity and values in a global context (Rohmah et al., 2023). This partnership also strengthens social relationships between students, parents, and communities, creating a learning environment that supports respect for cultural differences and inclusive character formation (Anugerah et al., 2024; Subasman et al., 2024).

4. Digital Platform Optimization

This research also highlights the importance of optimizing digital platforms to support teaching. By the expression of Imam Suyuti, an Islamic Religious Education teacher, believes that, *"The use of digital platforms allows us to access educational resources from various cultures, which is very helpful in multicultural teaching."*

The interview results show that digital platforms are crucial in expanding Madrasah's access to multicultural educational resources. Through this platform, Madrasah can integrate educational content representing various cultures, enriching students' learning experiences with a global perspective. Thus, multicultural teaching broadens students' knowledge of cultural diversity and strengthens their digital skills. This helps Madrasahs prepare students to face global challenges while strengthening local values such as inclusive Islamic values. Overall, using digital platforms increases the effectiveness of multicultural education in Madrasah, supports student-centered teaching, and is responsive to current global needs. This shows that digital technology can be an effective tool for integrating multicultural content into the curriculum. Then Mohammad Solikin, as a class VI student, expressed his opinion that,

"I have learned about other cultures through online videos and articles, which makes learning more interesting and interactive and broadens students' understanding of global diversity in more depth."

The interpretation of the interview results shows that using digital technology, such as videos and online articles, in studying other cultures has enhanced the learning experience. This approach makes learning more exciting and interactive for students and allows them to understand and appreciate global cultural diversity more deeply. Thus, digital technology is vital in supporting multicultural education in Madrasah, helping students develop a broader understanding and adaptation skills to an increasingly globally connected world. This statement indicates that using digital platforms can increase students' interest and involvement in multicultural learning and expand their access to varied information. Mohammad Haris Jamroni, the school principal, added that,

"Virtual classes with schools in other countries have been held by us, which directly enriches students' understanding of cultural

diversity. These activities broaden students' horizons and build their global collaboration skills, preparing them to become inclusive and open-minded global citizens."

The interpretation of the interview results is that virtual classes held with schools in other countries provide direct benefits for students' understanding of cultural diversity. Through these experiences, students expand their knowledge of other cultures and develop global collaboration skills. This helps them become more open to differences and prepares them to interact positively in an increasingly connected global context. Overall, this activity supports multicultural education in Madrasah effectively and inclusively. These findings emphasize digital technology's importance in creating a more dynamic and global learning experience.

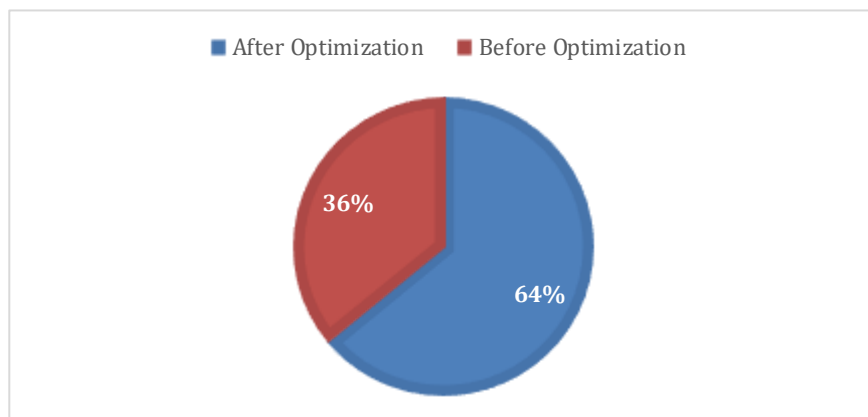


Figure 3. Percentage of Success Before and After Optimization

This pie chart compares the percentage of success before and after digital platform optimization. Before optimization, the success rate was recorded at 50%, while after optimization, the success rate increased significantly to 90%. This diagram depicts a substantial increase in success following the implementation of a digital platform optimization strategy, demonstrating the effectiveness of the steps taken. Overall, the findings above show that developing a multicultural curriculum, multicultural literacy activities, parent and community partnerships, and optimization of digital platforms all contribute significantly to shaping students' attitudes and understanding of cultural diversity. Implementing these strategies can help create an inclusive, tolerant, and rich learning environment with

diverse cultural perspectives (Falakh, 2023;Arfa & Lasaiba, 2022). Madrasah can enrich students' educational experiences by directly understanding and appreciating cultural diversity (Kurdi, 2023). This activity increases students' knowledge of other cultures and promotes global collaboration skills (Rohmah et al., 2023). Thus, Madrasah not only make students more open to cultural differences but also prepare them to become inclusive and open-minded members of a global society (Ali et al., 2024;Kurdi, 2021;Swandari & Jemani, 2023). This reflects Madrasah's commitment to supporting multicultural education that is responsive to current global demands.

D. CONCLUSION

This research has revealed several significant findings regarding implementing multicultural education in Madrasah schools. First, developing a multicultural curriculum has been proven to impact students' attitudes toward cultural diversity positively. Multicultural literacy activities involving books and learning resources from various cultures have enriched students' knowledge and fostered inclusive attitudes. Partnerships between schools, parents, and communities also play an essential role in creating a learning environment that supports multicultural education. Optimizing digital platforms in multicultural teaching gives students broader access to various cultural perspectives, increasing their interest and involvement in learning. The main lesson from this research is the importance of a holistic approach in multicultural education, which involves various strategies to create an inclusive learning climate and respect diversity.

The strength of this research lies in its contribution to the development of multicultural education in Madrasah. This research updates perspectives by showing the importance of multicultural curriculum integration, multicultural literacy, partnerships between schools, parents, and communities, and the use of digital technology in teaching. The research method, which uses a qualitative and descriptive approach, provides in-depth insight into the experiences and views of the research participants so that the results are relevant and applicable in the educational context in Madrasah. Thus, this research provides a solid empirical foundation for more effective multicultural education policies and practices and encourages further research to explore other innovative strategies for supporting cultural diversity in the school environment.

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