

Multidimensional Approach to Curriculum Transformation in Increasing Multicultural Appreciation

***Supsiloani¹, Ratih Baiduri², Bakhrul Khair Amal³, Sulian Ekomila⁴**

^{1,2,3,4}Universitas Negeri Medan, Jl. William Iskandar Ps. V, Deli Serdang, North Sumatra, Indonesia

*supsiloani2023@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: *The need for curriculum transformation in Indonesia to support multicultural education is increasingly evident. This study focuses on how a multidimensional approach to curriculum transformation can effectively enhance students' appreciation of multiculturalism. This approach fosters tolerance and respect for cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity. This study used qualitative methods. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and documentation. Data analysis using thematic coding and triangulation techniques to ensure data validity, consistency, and reliability of findings. Curriculum transformation at State Junior High School I Medan integrates cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and socio-cultural dimensions to foster multicultural appreciation. Key changes include shifting the curriculum's focus from academic achievement to developing tolerance and respect for cultural diversity. Teaching materials now incorporate multicultural perspectives, and project-based participatory learning methods actively engage students in cultural activities. Classrooms are organized to promote gender and religious balance, and assessments are more holistic, evaluating students' academic performance and involvement in multicultural activities. This transformation creates a more inclusive and culturally responsive educational environment, helping students develop the academic and socio-emotional skills needed to live in a diverse society. This approach prepares students to be more tolerant and inclusive, positively impacting their interactions in an increasingly globalized world. This research provides valuable insights for educators and policymakers on increasing multicultural appreciation among students.*

Kebutuhan akan transformasi kurikulum di Indonesia untuk mendukung pendidikan multikultural semakin nyata. Penelitian ini berfokus pada bagaimana pendekatan multidimensi terhadap transformasi kurikulum dapat secara efektif meningkatkan apresiasi siswa terhadap multikulturalisme. Pendekatan ini penting dalam menumbuhkan toleransi dan rasa hormat terhadap keberagaman budaya, suku, dan agama. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dan dokumentasi. Analisis data dengan teknik pengkodean tematik dan triangulasi untuk memastikan validitas data, konsistensi dan keandalan

¹  orcid id: <http://orcid.org/0009-0006-9057-8210>

³  orcid id: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5461-6773>

⁴  orcid id: <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3869-0783>

temuan. Transformasi kurikulum di SMP Negeri I Medan mengintegrasikan dimensi kognitif, afektif, psikomotorik, dan sosial budaya untuk menumbuhkan apresiasi multikultural. Perubahan utama meliputi pengalihan fokus kurikulum dari prestasi akademik ke pengembangan toleransi dan rasa hormat terhadap keberagaman budaya. Materi pengajaran sekarang menggabungkan perspektif multikultural, dan metode pembelajaran partisipatif berbasis proyek secara aktif melibatkan siswa dalam kegiatan budaya. Ruang kelas diatur untuk mempromosikan keseimbangan gender dan agama, dan penilaian lebih holistik, mengevaluasi kinerja akademik dan keterlibatan siswa dalam kegiatan multikultural. Transformasi ini menciptakan lingkungan pendidikan yang lebih inklusif dan responsif secara budaya, membantu siswa mengembangkan keterampilan akademis dan sosial-emosional yang diperlukan untuk hidup dalam masyarakat yang beragam. Pendekatan ini mempersiapkan siswa untuk menjadi lebih toleran dan inklusif, memberikan kontribusi positif terhadap interaksi mereka di dunia yang semakin mengglobal. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan berharga bagi para pendidik dan pembuat kebijakan tentang peningkatan apresiasi multikultural di kalangan siswa.

Keywords: *Multicultural Education, Curriculum Transformation, Multidimensional Approach, Cultural Diversity, Student Appreciation.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Multicultural education has emerged as a crucial topic in various fields, including politics, religion, social sciences, culture, and education (Setyowati et al., 2019). In Indonesia, particularly in Medan, the significance of multicultural education must be considered. As a reflection of Indonesia's broader diversity, Medan is a city where various ethnicities, religions, and cultures coexist. This diversity is both a strength and a challenge. On one hand, diversity offers excellent potential for enriching social interactions and fostering mutual understanding (Samuels, 2018). On the other hand, it can also lead to conflicts and social fragmentation if not correctly managed.

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, students must develop a deep appreciation for diversity and an ability to navigate complex cultural landscapes (Abtahi & Planas, 2024). Therefore, it is essential to explore how multicultural education can be effectively integrated into the curriculum to harness the benefits of diversity and mitigate its challenges (Wibowo et al., 2023). However, as several studies have pointed out, there are significant gaps in the current understanding and implementation of multicultural education. Maulana et al., (2024); Nugraha (2022) identify the lack of a holistic model for multicultural education that can be applied across different educational contexts. While there is a growing awareness of the need for multicultural education, much work remains to be done in terms of developing effective curriculum models and appropriate teaching strategies.

The multidimensional approach and curriculum transformation theory emphasize the need for comprehensive changes in educational curricula to address social injustices and promote equity (Luckett & Shay, 2020). The multidimensional approach to curriculum transformation has proven to effectively increase multicultural appreciation among

students (Cook, 2024). This approach recognizes curriculum as a complex phenomenon, field, and design process, acknowledging various perspectives and variables (Johnson-Mardones, 2015). It aims to provide accurate and complete understandings of all subjects, integrating diverse resources, including web-based materials, to support transformation efforts (Chabalengula & Mumba, 2022). The multidimensional approach incorporates cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions into the learning process. This approach integrates intellectual, emotional, and social aspects to create a more comprehensive learning experience (Spelt et al., 2017). Integrating diverse perspectives and disciplines, the multidimensional approach is increasingly recognized as an effective strategy for improving students' cognitive understanding of cultural diversity and positively influencing their attitudes and behaviours (Anderson et al., 2023).

The challenges of managing diversity in Medan are emblematic of the broader challenges faced by Indonesia as a whole. As noted by Sangadji (2016), the development of a multicultural curriculum must go beyond mere tolerance of differences; it must actively promote respect and appreciation for these differences. This approach requires a comprehensive strategy that includes curriculum development, teacher training, and the creation of inclusive learning environments (Windayani et al., 2024). Although research by Banks (2009) emphasizes that multicultural education in schools must be comprehensive, encompassing fair attitudes among students of different religions, races, ethnicities, and cultures, and supported by both explicit and hidden curricula, inclusive evaluation, and teachers who possess the necessary understanding, attitudes, and actions to provide effective multicultural education, significant gaps remain in its implementation.

The role of Indonesia's National Department of Education in adopting multicultural education is crucial, as recognized by (Abdullah et al., 2023). These studies highlight the importance of implementing multicultural education from elementary to high school. However, challenges in implementation persist, as highlighted by (Jalwis & Habibi, 2019; Sangadji, 2016; Sayuti & Wiyatmi, 2017), who emphasize the need for integrating multicultural education into school curricula, whether as a separate subject or integrated into existing subjects. These gaps in implementation indicate the need for a clear design and vision to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, have access to an inclusive education that reflects the society in which they live.

Yasin & Rahmadian (2024) emphasizes that the socialization and development of multicultural education curricula need to be strengthened at various educational levels, particularly in primary education. However, the reality shows that implementing multicultural education as part of curriculum development has yet to be fully realized in academic practices in Indonesia and other countries such as Turkey. Aydin (2013) notes that although Turkey has long been a multicultural society, its education system remains ineffective in addressing cultural diversity. In the United States, multicultural education is closely related to diversity issues. Still, its implementation focuses on selecting and developing learning content, interaction with students and parents, and developing democracy-based pedagogy through inquiry, group work, and collaboration (Mukti & Susanti, 2023). A similar situation exists in Indonesia, where a study by Jalwis & Habibi (2019) indicates that multicultural education has yet to be fully integrated as a subject within educational institutions due to a lack of clear design and vision. This process also involves overcoming institutional barriers, such as standardized testing and rigid curriculum structures, which may not align with the goals of multicultural education (Fox & Gay, 1995).

Effective multicultural education enhances students' academic performance and develops essential social-emotional skills such as empathy, critical thinking, and the ability to collaborate with individuals from diverse backgrounds (Sengupta et al., 2020). By providing equal opportunities for all students, multicultural education can help bridge the achievement gap among students from various cultural backgrounds and promote social cohesion and equity (Alghamdi, 2023). Teachers play a crucial role in implementing multicultural education as they create inclusive learning environments, design culturally responsive curricula, and model values of diversity, equality, and inclusion (Gube & Bhowmik, 2024). As Banks & Banks (2004) asserts, schools committed to fostering pluralism should "cultivate an appreciation for ethnic diversity within school activities, build cohesion through shared participation of various cultural groups, maximize opportunities for all individuals and groups, and facilitate constructive changes that enhance dignity and democratic ideals" (Suryaman & Juharyanto, 2020).

To enable teachers to fulfil this critical role, they need to engage in continuous professional development to enhance their cultural competence and acquire the necessary strategies to integrate diverse perspectives and experiences into their teaching practices (Supsilani et al., 2021). This may include training in cross-cultural communication, anti-racism education, and the integration of multicultural content across all subject areas. Based on the above context, the implementation of multicultural education in schools requires well-thought-out and integrated strategies. This approach addresses the need for inclusive education and leverages the positive potential of societal diversity. The model for implementing multicultural education must be carefully designed, incorporating multicultural values into a transformational curriculum and consistently reflecting on the backgrounds and conditions of the students.

Multicultural education is an approach that acknowledges the social, political, and economic realities experienced by individuals within complex and diverse human interactions (Vezzali et al., 2023). It reflects the importance of culture, race, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, religion, social status, economy, and privilege in the educational process Aydin (2013). Multicultural education aims to empower students by providing them with tools to critically examine social biases, challenge stereotypes, and engage in meaningful dialogue across cultural boundaries (Suryaman & Juharyanto, 2020).

This research aims to address the specific question of how multicultural education can be effectively integrated into the school curriculum in Medan to promote social cohesion and respect for diversity. Furthermore, it seeks to identify the strategies needed to overcome the challenges associated with implementing multicultural education in a diverse city like Medan. The goal is to contribute to developing an inclusive educational environment that fosters multicultural awareness among students and provides valuable insights for local governments and academic institutions in Medan to create relevant and effective implementation strategies.

II. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design, which is defined as a research process that produces descriptive data, both in textual and verbal forms, sourced from subjects or participants who are informants for this study (Moleong, 2018). The subjects of this study included principals and teachers at State Junior High

School I Medan, who were chosen as the main subjects because of their direct involvement in curriculum planning and implementation. These participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that the data collected would provide rich and relevant insights into the focus of the study. In addition, secondary data sources include relevant documents such as school policies, curricula, meeting minutes, and activity reports related to the implementation of multicultural education.

Data were collected using a combination of semi-structured interviews and documentation. Semi-structured interviews with principals and teachers were conducted to gather detailed information about their perspectives on the multidimensional approach to curriculum transformation. These interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Documentation was used to complement the interview data, providing contextual information and additional evidence to support the findings. To ensure the validity of the research findings, the technique proposed by Sugiyono (2015) was applied, namely triangulation was used to compare interview data with documentation to obtain more comprehensive and valid results. Data analysis followed three main steps, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Interview data were transcribed and analyzed to identify initial themes, which were then coded into relevant thematic categories. These themes were organized into descriptive narratives that captured participants' perceptions and the impact of curriculum transformation on students' multicultural appreciation. Conclusions were drawn to provide a comprehensive understanding based on empirical data (Miles et al., 2014).

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Multidimensional Approach In Curriculum to Enhance Multicultural Appreciation

In the development of a multidimensional curriculum at State Junior High School I Medan, the primary focus is on creating a comprehensive framework that integrates cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and socio-cultural dimensions. These dimensions are crucial in transforming the learning process to enhance students' understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. The multidimensional approach ensures that all aspects of student development are addressed, resulting in a more holistic educational experience (Hasanah, 2024).

The curriculum encompasses cognitive, affective, and psychomotor elements in the learning domain dimension, which are critical in shaping students' engagement with multicultural values. On the cognitive level, the curriculum is designed to foster critical thinking about multicultural perspectives. By integrating lessons on various cultures, traditions, and historical contexts, students are encouraged to critically evaluate cultural differences and similarities, leading to a deeper appreciation of global diversity. Based on classroom observations, students actively engaged in discussions about local and international cultures, enriching their understanding of cultural interactions' complexities (Teacher, 2024).

In the affective domain, the curriculum seeks to nurture empathy and respect for diversity. Interviews with several teachers revealed that students became more open to differences after participating in discussions emphasising the importance of understanding and appreciating diversity. Some students shared that, through case studies and cultural stories, they were able to develop a sense of community and mutual

respect among their peers from different backgrounds. This experience helped foster inclusive attitudes among students, aligning with the curriculum's goal of promoting active engagement with diverse perspectives (Nafiati, 2021).

The psychomotor dimension focuses on engaging students in practical activities emphasising multicultural issues. During classroom observations, it was found that activities such as role-playing and simulations helped students directly explore cultural diversity. Students participated in activities such as reenacting traditional ceremonies or presenting cultural practices, enriching their understanding of multicultural concepts and improving their communication and interpersonal skills. One student remarked, "I feel more confident talking about my culture, and I've learned a lot about my friends' cultures through these activities" (Student, 2024).

The second major dimension is the socio-cultural domain, which emphasizes cultural and social awareness in the curriculum. The cultural inclusion aspect ensures that learning materials reflect the diversity present in society. Based on curriculum document analysis, it was revealed that the teaching materials at State Junior High School I Medan have been infused with content representing various cultural groups, both within Indonesia and globally. One teacher noted that by teaching materials from diverse cultural backgrounds, students were able to see their own culture as part of a larger spectrum.

In addition, the social awareness aspect of the socio-cultural dimension equips students with the skills to understand and navigate the complex dynamics of social and cultural interactions. According to interviews with several students, many reported that they were more aware of social issues such as discrimination and inequality after learning about these topics in the curriculum. One student shared, "I learned about the inequalities faced by some groups, and it made me think more deeply about how we can be fairer to each other" (Student, 2024). This aspect prepares students to engage with individuals from different backgrounds meaningfully and respectfully.

The implementation of these multidimensional strategies can be observed in various areas at State Junior High School I Medan. Developing teaching materials that integrate multicultural values is one of the core strategies. Based on observations, teaching materials are designed to convey factual knowledge and encourage students to think critically about issues of cultural diversity. Using real-world examples, cross-cultural comparisons, and case studies helps bring these concepts to life, making them more relatable to the students' everyday experiences (Zaprul Khan, 2020).

Additionally, strategically arranging classrooms and the broader learning environment to support multicultural education is another key strategy. Since 2018, State Junior High School I Medan has made significant changes to its classroom structure to ensure gender and religious representation. According to interviews with the school principal, these changes were designed to create an inclusive environment where students from different backgrounds can learn and grow together. The broader school environment supports these values through cultural inclusion policies and anti-bullying programs, creating a socially safe atmosphere for students.

Adopting a multidimensional approach in teaching practices allows teachers at State Junior High School I Medan to employ diverse methodologies. Based on classroom observations, teachers encourage students to study historical events, cultural practices, and social issues from different cultural perspectives. In art classes, students are invited

to express their creativity through artwork inspired by various cultural traditions, which deepens their appreciation for diversity (Lamirin et al., 2023).

Extracurricular activities also play a vital role in supporting this multidimensional approach. Based on observations during school events, cultural festivals and art exhibitions allow students to engage actively with cultural diversity outside the classroom. These activities help reinforce the concepts learned in class by offering hands-on experiences. A teacher noted that through these events, students learn about different cultures and share their own, fostering stronger social bonds within the school community (Teacher, 2024).

Transforming the curriculum to better reflect cultural diversity is the culmination of this multidimensional approach. Based on document analysis, the curriculum has been continuously revised to ensure that learning materials represent the experiences and perspectives of various cultural groups. Topics such as tolerance, mutual respect, human rights, and social justice are now central to students' learning experiences. Through interviews, students reported feeling more connected to the broader world and better prepared to engage in discussions about global issues (Student, 2024).

Curriculum Transformation as a Strategy to Foster Multicultural Appreciation

The implementation of curriculum transformation at State Junior High School I Medan has been carried out to foster multicultural appreciation through several vital adjustments in the learning objectives, materials, methods, assessments, experiences, and environment. The transformation observed reflects a significant shift toward a more holistic approach in education, which accommodates the diverse socio-cultural backgrounds of the students.

The revised learning objectives at State Junior High School I Medan indicate a departure from the traditional focus on purely academic achievement toward a more comprehensive educational framework that integrates the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Field observations and teacher interviews revealed that the new objectives have explicitly incorporated the goal of fostering socio-cultural awareness and appreciation (Teacher, 2024). Teachers noted that these objectives aim to cultivate academic and interpersonal skills, such as tolerance, empathy, and respect for cultural diversity. This shift was reflected in classroom practices, where students were encouraged to discuss the importance of multiculturalism and the value of appreciating differences. Students were observed to respond positively, showing greater openness to learning about other cultures and displaying more respect for their peers from diverse backgrounds. This transformation has been instrumental in shaping students' social attitudes, making them more attuned to the multicultural realities of the world around them.

In terms of learning materials, the curriculum has been enriched to include content that reflects Indonesia's diverse cultural and historical landscape. Document analysis of the instructional materials used at the school shows that including multicultural perspectives has become central to several subjects, particularly in history, social studies, and language arts. Teachers explained that students are now introduced to lessons that incorporate cultural narratives from various regions in Indonesia, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the country's rich ethnic diversity. These materials were designed to engage students cognitively by encouraging them to critically evaluate historical events from different cultural viewpoints. Additionally, the materials provided opportunities for students to explore and appreciate the contributions

of various cultural groups, promoting affective learning outcomes related to empathy and respect for others. Teachers reported that this has led to an increased interest in the subjects, as students see the relevance of their lessons to their own cultural backgrounds and those of their peers (Teacher, 2024).

The transformation of teaching methods at State Junior High School I Medan is another critical component of the curriculum shift. Field observations indicated that teachers had adopted more participatory and collaborative teaching approaches, moving away from traditional teacher-centred methods. The school has embraced project-based learning and group work, encouraging students to collaborate on multicultural topics. This collaborative approach enhances students' cognitive understanding of the subjects and fosters socio-cultural interactions among students from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. For instance, during cultural festival preparations, students worked in groups to research and present various cultural traditions across Indonesia. Teachers observed that these projects helped students develop a deeper appreciation for cultural diversity, as they had the opportunity to interact with peers who brought different cultural perspectives to the group. Furthermore, these collaborative activities allowed students to develop critical social skills, such as teamwork and communication, which are essential for fostering inclusive and respectful classroom dynamics (Suwahyu, 2024).

Assessment strategies at State Junior High School I Medan have also been transformed to align with the multidimensional nature of the new curriculum. Teachers now assess students not only based on their cognitive abilities but also on their affective and psychomotor development. According to teacher interviews, assessments have been expanded to include reflective essays, presentations, and practical group activities that require students to engage with multicultural content. These assessments are designed to evaluate students' understanding of cultural diversity, their ability to work with others from different backgrounds, and their emotional responses to diverse cultural narratives. Observations of student presentations confirmed that students are increasingly able to articulate complex ideas about cultural interactions and demonstrate their ability to apply what they have learned in meaningful ways. Teachers noted that this holistic assessment approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of students' overall development, including their social and emotional growth and academic progress (Yunarti et al., 2022).

The curriculum transformation has made students' learning experiences at State Junior High School I Medan more varied and inclusive. In addition to classroom-based learning, students now have opportunities to participate in various extracurricular activities that promote cultural engagement. For example, cultural festivals and art exhibitions have become regular features of the school's annual events calendar, allowing students to actively showcase their own cultural heritage while learning about those of their peers. These events are practical applications of the concepts students have studied in class, offering them real-world experiences interacting with different cultural traditions. Interviews with students revealed that they found these activities highly enriching, with one student commenting, "I never really thought much about my own culture until I had to share it with others at the festival, and now I see how important it is to appreciate what makes us unique" (Student, 2024). This sentiment reflects the broader impact of the curriculum transformation, which seeks to instil in students a sense of pride in their own cultural identities while fostering respect for the identities of others (Puspita et al., 2024).

The learning environment at State Junior High School I Medan has also undergone significant changes to support the inclusive nature of the new curriculum. Observations of classroom settings showed that seating arrangements have been intentionally designed to promote interaction across different cultural and religious groups, ensuring that students are exposed to diverse perspectives on a daily basis. Teachers and students alike reported that this inclusive environment has helped reduce social tensions and promote a more harmonious school culture. One teacher noted, “Before, students would tend to stick with their own group, but now we see them mixing more freely and learning from each other’s experiences” (Student, 2024). This shift in the learning environment has contributed to a more supportive and respectful atmosphere in the school, where all students feel valued and included.

Approaches to Curriculum Transformation for Multicultural Education

The curriculum transformation at State Junior High School I Medan was driven by a critical strategy that involved developing teaching materials that integrated multicultural values. Teachers and instructional designers collaborated to create resources reflecting diverse cultural, historical, and social perspectives, mainly from various regions of Indonesia. This approach moves beyond traditional academic content by embedding multicultural narratives encouraging students to engage critically with diverse worldviews. Through classroom observations, it became clear that history and social studies lessons incorporated multiple cultural perspectives, allowing students to analyze historical events through the lenses of different ethnic groups (Alfafan & Nadhif, 2023).

This observation was further confirmed during teacher interviews, where educators highlighted the importance of these materials in fostering critical thinking and empathy. For instance, history lessons prompted students to explore the contributions of various cultural communities to national development, thereby enhancing their understanding of Indonesia’s multicultural identity. These findings suggest that incorporating multicultural values into teaching materials plays a pivotal role in shaping students’ socio-cultural awareness (Teacher, 2024).

Another significant aspect of the curriculum transformation was restructuring the classroom environment to promote inclusive and multicultural interactions. Classrooms were arranged to ensure that students from different cultural, religious, and gender backgrounds sat together, facilitating cross-cultural dialogue and engagement. This deliberate spatial arrangement was observed to have a positive impact on student interaction and collaboration across cultural lines. Teachers reported that these seating arrangements fostered more frequent interactions between students from diverse backgrounds, which helped to break down social barriers and cultivate a more inclusive learning environment (SYAMSUARDI et al., 2024).

In addition, the school’s broader learning environment was enhanced through visual displays promoting cultural understanding and anti-bullying initiatives. These efforts reinforced values of respect and inclusion, creating a school atmosphere that actively supports multicultural education. The findings suggest that the strategic design of both classroom and school-wide environments is essential in creating spaces where cultural interactions can thrive (Student, 2024; Teacher, 2024).

In parallel, the transformation of teaching practices at State Junior High School I Medan was a crucial element in effectively implementing multicultural education. Teachers adopted a multidimensional approach that integrated cognitive, affective, and

psychomotor domains, thereby fostering comprehensive engagement with multicultural content. Classroom observations revealed the widespread use of participatory teaching methods, including project-based learning, collaborative group work, and role-playing activities. These methods not only supported students' cognitive development by promoting critical thinking but also encouraged affective learning through activities that required students to reflect on cultural diversity and empathy.

For example, students worked in groups to research and present cultural traditions from different regions of Indonesia. This approach allowed students to appreciate the complexity and richness of cultural diversity while also developing the social skills necessary for interacting with peers from diverse backgrounds. These findings emphasize the importance of adopting multidimensional teaching practices to support students' cognitive, emotional, and social growth in a multicultural context.

Extracurricular activities emerged as another crucial component of the curriculum transformation, providing students with opportunities to engage directly with cultural diversity outside the classroom setting. Cultural festivals, art exhibitions, and community engagement projects became integral parts of the school's annual calendar, offering students practical experiences with multiculturalism. During these cultural festivals, students actively participated in showcasing their own cultural heritage through performances and displays while also learning about the traditions of their peers (Teacher, 2024).

Interviews with students revealed that these activities helped them develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for cultures different from their own. One student remarked that these events provided a platform for sharing cultural pride while learning from others. These extracurricular activities reinforced the multicultural values introduced in the classroom, contributing to a more inclusive school culture and enhancing students' overall learning experiences (Student, 2024).

The final strategic initiative in the curriculum transformation was the comprehensive revision of the curriculum to better reflect cultural diversity. The school undertook a systematic review of all subjects to ensure that multicultural perspectives were incorporated across the curriculum. The revised curriculum emphasizes key themes such as tolerance, mutual respect, human rights, and social justice, with particular attention to how these concepts are taught in culturally relevant ways. Teachers reported that students are now encouraged to engage critically with multicultural issues, applying their classroom learning to real-world contexts.

For instance, history lessons now prompt students to consider the diverse contributions of various cultural groups to Indonesia's development, while social studies units focus on contemporary social issues such as inequality and human rights through a multicultural lens. This shift in curricular focus has enhanced students' understanding of the interconnectedness of global and local cultures, better preparing them for life in a diverse and globalized society.

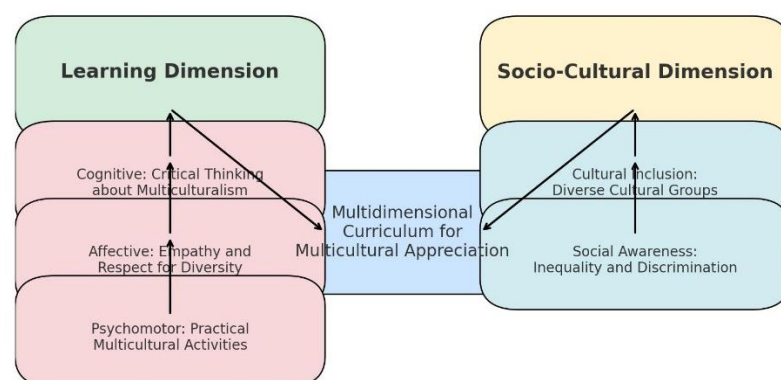


Figure 1. *Multidimensional curriculum integration*

Figure 1 illustrates the integration of multicultural values in the curriculum through a multidimensional approach, focusing on two key dimensions: Learning and Socio-Cultural. The Learning Dimension encompasses cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects, encouraging critical thinking, empathy, and practical activities related to multiculturalism. The Socio-Cultural Dimension includes cultural inclusion and social awareness, fostering an understanding of diverse cultural groups and social issues like inequality. Together, these dimensions contribute to the overall goal of enhancing students' appreciation of cultural diversity within the educational framework.

The cumulative effect of these strategies demonstrates the transformative potential of a multicultural approach in curriculum development. Through intentional adjustments to teaching materials, classroom environments, pedagogical practices, and extracurricular activities, the curriculum transformation at State Junior High School I Medan has fostered a deeper appreciation of cultural diversity among students. These efforts have enhanced cognitive understanding and cultivated empathy, respect, and a more inclusive school culture, providing students with the tools necessary to navigate an increasingly diverse world.

Multidimensional Approach to Curriculum Transformation: Increasing Multicultural Appreciation and Social Cohesion

Implementing a multidimensional approach in curriculum transformation at State Junior High School I Medan provides insightful findings that align with theories on multicultural education. This approach enhances students' appreciation of cultural diversity by integrating cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and socio-cultural elements in the learning process. Banks & Banks (2004) emphasize that effective multicultural education should foster inclusivity and strengthen social interaction among students, reflected in the enriched learning experiences of students at State Junior High School I Medan. Additionally, this study supports Sangadji (2016) argument that teaching materials should promote tolerance and cultural respect, with the multidimensional approach proving to be a valuable strategy. Additionally, curriculum transformation helps address biases and stereotypes that may exist in traditional curricula (Wahyudi et al., 2023). Curriculum transformation, on the other hand, involves modifying and adapting the curriculum to be more relevant to the social and cultural contexts of students (Bećirović & Bešlija, 2018).

When compared with previous research, the study reaffirms Aydin (2013) findings that multicultural education improves students' critical thinking skills. Moreover, this

research adds to the work of Arfa & Lasaiba (2022), who found that experiential learning through activities like cultural festivals fosters social cohesion among students. At State Junior High School I Medan, extracurricular activities centered around cultural diversity significantly impacted students' social attitudes, showing greater inclusivity and appreciation for diverse cultural perspectives, further aligning with Banks (2013) constructivist view of learning. In the context of Islamic education, Akrim et al. (2022) highlight the role of cultural revitalization and the integration of Islamic pedagogy in curriculum development. Their research suggests that such integration can facilitate the development and implementation of curricula that reflect students' cultural and religious values, contributing to a more inclusive and relevant educational experience.

The study's results connect strongly to theories of multidimensional approaches in education. Banks & Banks (2004) posit that multicultural education should focus on cognitive development and affective and socio-cultural dimensions. While the multifaceted approach and curriculum transformation positively impact enhancing multicultural appreciation among students, they also come with challenges that must be carefully managed (Fauzi, 2023). The findings from State Junior High School I Medan support this theory, showing that students who engage in multidimensional learning through cognitive and social activities demonstrate greater cultural awareness and critical thinking skills. This resonates with Sangadji (2016) multidimensional approach, where a holistic integration of diverse aspects of learning helps students connect classroom learning with real-world cultural experiences. Furthermore, Gay (2015) suggests that inclusive education fosters mutual respect among students, and the current study's findings reflect this by showing improvements in social cohesion among diverse student groups. Engaging the entire school community, including parents and the broader community, is essential for creating a more inclusive and supportive educational environment (Yong, 2019).

The significance of these findings lies in their contribution to the growing field of multicultural education. This study demonstrates that implementing a multidimensional curriculum in a culturally diverse school environment, such as State Junior High School I Medan, improves students' cognitive outcomes and fosters positive social behaviours. This adds to the understanding of how curriculum transformation can bridge cognitive learning with socio-cultural engagement, as suggested by Nieto & Bode (2015). Policies supporting multicultural education must be implemented to ensure all students receive an inclusive and relevant learning experience (Gultom & Lubis, 2024). Additionally, this research highlights the importance of creating inclusive learning environments that reflect students' diverse backgrounds, offering practical insights for schools looking to adopt similar approaches. It also underscores the critical role of teachers in facilitating this change, further reinforcing Barrett (2018) call for continuous teacher development.

This study supports previous findings by Banks & Banks (2004) regarding the impact of multicultural education on inclusivity and cognitive development. Similar to Gay (2015) work, the study shows that culture-based learning enhances students' critical thinking and social interaction. However, it extends previous research by highlighting the role of extracurricular activities in promoting social cohesion, which was less emphasized in earlier studies. For instance, while Arfa & Lasaiba (2022); Aydin (2013) focus on classroom instruction, this study reveals that out-of-classroom experiences, such as cultural festivals, can significantly contribute to fostering a sense of community and cultural appreciation among students. The study also diverges from previous

research by addressing the challenges of implementing multicultural education at the school level, particularly teacher resistance, as noted by Sleeter (2015). Unlike earlier studies that primarily focused on cognitive outcomes, this research expands the discourse by considering the institutional and social challenges schools face in integrating multicultural values.

The findings of this study have practical implications for curriculum development and educational policy. For schools like State Junior High School I Medan, adopting a multidimensional curriculum transformation approach can promote academic and social development, fostering inclusivity in culturally diverse settings. Policymakers should consider the importance of providing adequate resources and training for teachers, as emphasized by Williams & Calvillo (2002). By fostering an environment that values diversity and promotes inclusive education, we can prepare future generations to contribute positively to a multicultural society (Anwar, 2021).

The study also highlights the need for policies that support comprehensive multicultural education, ensuring that all students, regardless of their cultural or religious background, feel valued in the school environment. This study's findings can inform broader educational reforms incorporating multicultural perspectives across the curriculum, contributing to more tolerant and inclusive educational practices. Governments and academic institutions must also provide the necessary resources to support multicultural education, including funding for developing learning materials, teacher training, and extracurricular activities promoting cultural diversity (Woolcott & Whannell, 2017). By working together, we can create a more inclusive educational system that reflects the diversity of our society and empowers students to thrive within it (Lee et al., 2014).

One limitation of this study is that it is restricted to a single school, State Junior High School I Medan. While the findings offer valuable insights into implementing a multidimensional approach to multicultural education, generalization to other schools with different socio-cultural contexts may be limited. The study also focuses predominantly on short-term outcomes, such as immediate changes in student behaviour and attitudes, without exploring the long-term effects of this approach on students' development. Additionally, the study needs to fully address the extent to which teacher training and professional development were implemented, which could have further influenced the effectiveness of the curriculum transformation.

Future research should explore the long-term impact of multidimensional approaches to multicultural education across different school settings and regions. Additionally, research should focus on developing and testing evaluation mechanisms, as suggested by Banks & Banks (2004), to assess the effectiveness of multicultural education in achieving its goals. Future studies could also investigate how national and regional educational policies can better support integrating multicultural values at all school levels, with particular attention to teacher training, resource allocation, and flexible curriculum design, as recommended by (Nieto & Bode, 2015).

However, such efforts must not be isolated but are part of a broader, coordinated strategy that includes all educational stakeholders from government agencies to community organizations and parents (Hidayah & Prasetya, 2019). With the proper policy support and commitment from all stakeholders, multicultural education can be a strong foundation for building a more harmonious and just society (A.Ghani, 2024; Sleeter, 2015). To ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of these initiatives, it is crucial for policymakers to establish clear guidelines and provide continuous support for schools.

This includes offering professional development programs for teachers, promoting collaborative networks among schools to share best practices, and ensuring that the curriculum remains flexible and adaptable to the evolving needs of students (Haren, 2015).

IV. CONCLUSION

The curriculum transformation at State Junior High School I Medan covers several dimensions: cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and socio-cultural. The cognitive dimension focuses on increasing students' knowledge of cultural diversity, while the affective dimension encourages the development of attitudes and values that promote appreciation of diversity. The psychomotor dimension is implemented through student participation in cultural activities, and the socio-cultural dimension is reflected in an inclusive classroom environment that encourages rich cross-cultural interactions. Several key elements of the curriculum have undergone significant transformation. The curriculum objectives have shifted from focusing on academic achievement to developing social attitudes that support tolerance and appreciation of cultural diversity. Teaching materials have also evolved, now integrating multicultural perspectives that allow students to study historical events from various cultural perspectives. Teaching methods have changed from traditional approaches to more participatory project-based learning, which directly engages students in cultural activities. The classroom environment has been restructured to promote gender and religious balance, encouraging cross-cultural interactions and a more inclusive atmosphere. In addition, student assessment has become more holistic, evaluating cognitive achievement and affective and psychomotor aspects through activities promoting multicultural values.

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