

# Literature Review on Multicultural Education at International Schools

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## ABSTRACT

In the era of globalization, international schools play an important role in providing education that accommodates cultural diversity. This study conducted a systematic literature review to identify the benefits, challenges and implementation strategies of multicultural education in international schools. The results show that multicultural education can enhance intercultural understanding and social inclusion among students from diverse cultural backgrounds. However, challenges such as lack of teacher training and difficulties in adapting the curriculum are significant barriers. This research emphasizes the importance of supporting educational institutions and policymakers in providing the necessary resources and training to overcome these barriers. Practical recommendations include the development of ongoing teacher training programs and the involvement of the whole school community in creating an inclusive learning environment.

**Keywords:** *Multicultural Education, International Schools, Cultural Inclusion, Intercultural Understanding, Literature Review*

## INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization, cross-border migration and cultural diversity have become common phenomena that affect various aspects of life, including education (Munadlir, 2018). International schools, which are generally established to serve multinational communities, have an important role to play in providing education that accommodates the cultural diversity of their students (Eden et al., 2024). Multicultural education, as a pedagogical approach that values and utilizes cultural diversity, is becoming increasingly relevant and important in the context of international schools (Abduh et al., 2023).

Multicultural education aims to create an inclusive learning environment that respects cultural, ethnic, and linguistic differences (Hariyadi & Rodiyah, 2023). This multicultural education not only increases intercultural understanding and tolerance among students, but also prepares them to participate in an increasingly connected global society (Fitriani & Munir, 2023). However, the implementation of multicultural education in international schools does not always run smoothly and faces various challenges, such as differences in curriculum, pedagogical approaches, and cultural perceptions (Matshikiza & Luggya, 2019).

Research conducted by (Kudadiri et al., 2023) explains the concept and purpose of multicultural education and the strategies that can be used to implement it in schools. She emphasized the importance of creating an inclusive learning environment that respects cultural differences. In addition, (Firdaus et al., 2023) discusses the importance of multicultural education in the social and political context. Firdaus also provides practical guidelines for teachers to integrate multicultural education into their daily curriculum.

Research by (Muhanna et al., 2022) highlighting the implementation of multicultural education in international schools, shows that while there are many benefits to be gained, there are significant challenges in its implementation, such as teacher readiness and curriculum adaptation. (Agustin et al., 2024) in his study found that teachers often lack adequate training to integrate multicultural

approaches in their teaching. Meanwhile, a study by (Byrd & Alexander, 2020) highlights effective strategies to support multicultural education, including the importance of teacher training and curriculum adaptation.

Based on these relevant studies, multicultural education still needs to be improved, both in terms of teacher training and curriculum. Therefore, the researcher will provide an overview of a systematic and comprehensive literature review on multicultural education in international schools. The purpose of this study is to find out the concepts and theories of multicultural education, the practices and strategies needed to implement multicultural education, the challenges, obstacles and impacts of multicultural education. It is hoped that this literature review research can provide deeper insights and practical recommendations for educators and policy makers in developing effective multicultural education in international schools.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a systematic literature review method to identify, analyze and synthesize relevant research on multicultural education in international schools. This method was chosen as it allowed the researcher to collect and assess the findings of previous studies and identify patterns, themes and gaps in the existing literature.

The first stage was the preparatory stage, where the researcher determined the focus of the study which included concepts and theories, implementation practices, challenges and barriers, and impacts and recommendations of multicultural education in international schools. We also developed inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure that the studies reviewed were relevant and up-to-date, i.e. published within the last 5 years, focused on multicultural education in international schools or comparable contexts, and were peer-reviewed scholarly articles, books or reports. Data sources used included academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, ERIC, and ProQuest.

The second stage was data collection, where the researcher searched for relevant literature using keywords such as "multicultural education," "international school," "cultural inclusion," and "intercultural tolerance." Afterward, the researcher evaluated the articles found through an initial screening of the titles and abstracts to ensure suitability to the research focus. Articles that met the criteria were then retrieved for further analysis.

The third stage was data analysis, where the researcher read in depth the selected articles to identify the main themes, implementation strategies, challenges and reported outcomes related to multicultural education in international schools. These data are then synthesized to provide a comprehensive picture of the research topic. The researcher will also identify gaps in the existing literature and provide recommendations for further research as well as practical implications for educators and policy makers.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

The results of a review analysis that has been carried out by analyzing 10 scientific articles obtained from the last 5 years, multicultural education has provided significant impacts and benefits, but also has considerable challenges. The results of research conducted by (Naz et al., 2023; Tira, 2023) revealed the importance of creating a learning environment that respects and values cultural differences as the basis for achieving these multicultural education goals. Furthermore, effective strategies such as continuous teacher training and appropriate curriculum adaptation to support the implementation of multicultural education were revealed by (Acar-Ciftci, 2019; Naz et al., 2023).

Following the positive impacts, there are also challenges in the implementation of multicultural education in international schools that cannot be ignored. The challenges in multicultural education have been expressed by (Farhaeni, 2020; Windayani et al., 2024) which found that many teachers in international schools lack adequate training to integrate multicultural approaches in their teaching. This is also the case in adapting the curriculum to fit the context of Indonesian curriculum standards. These constraints point to the need for greater support from educational institutions and policy makers to provide teachers with the necessary resources and training.

Based on the results of the literature review analysis, it can be concluded that multicultural education has great potential to improve the quality of education in international schools. However, to

overcome the barriers, more structured and systematic efforts are needed, including the development of a comprehensive and sustainable teacher training program and the involvement of the entire school community in creating an inclusive learning environment that respects cultural diversity. These results provide an important message for the school community to consider the importance of commitment from all parties to support and facilitate the implementation of multicultural education.

## Discussion

The results of this study show that multicultural education has great potential to promote intercultural understanding and social inclusion among students from different backgrounds. The importance of creating a respectful and appreciative learning environment for cultural differences has been expressed by (Arfa & Lasaiba, 2022; Kudadiri et al., 2023). To create an effective learning environment, there needs to be attention from all parties to support this multicultural education, one of which is by conducting continuous training for teachers and being able to adapt the curriculum in accordance with effective strategies (Arfa & Lasaiba, 2022; Pudyastuti et al., 2023; Setyowati et al., 2023).

To achieve this, it turns out that multicultural education in international schools has challenges in implementation. This expression is based on the thought (Abacioglu et al., 2022; Acar-Ciftci, 2019; Hadi et al., 2024; Tonbuloglu et al., 2016) which found that many teachers do not have adequate training to integrate multicultural approaches in their teaching. The difficulty in adapting the curriculum without compromising academic standards is also a significant barrier. This points to the need for greater support from educational institutions and policymakers to provide teachers with the necessary resources and training.

This research is still a literature study, so there are still many weaknesses in the findings. However, the novelty of this study lies in its systematic approach in reviewing the literature related to multicultural education in international schools, covering various aspects ranging from concepts and theories to implementation practices, challenges and impacts. This research not only identifies the benefits of multicultural education but also offers practical recommendations to overcome the barriers, such as the development of a comprehensive and sustainable teacher training program and the involvement of the whole school community in creating an inclusive learning environment. Research using literature studies also has limitations. The limitations in this study are limited to the size of the years of articles analyzed, which is only up to the last 5 years. Then the limited access of researchers in finding articles that are not open access.

## CONCLUSIONS

This research highlights the importance of multicultural education in international schools in promoting intercultural understanding and social inclusion. Despite significant challenges such as the lack of teacher training and difficulties in adapting the curriculum, multicultural education has great potential to create learning environments that are inclusive and respectful of cultural diversity. Overcoming these barriers requires structured and systematic efforts, including the development of comprehensive teacher training programs and the involvement of the entire school community.

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