Multicultural education through social studies subjects for junior high school students in Maluku, Indonesia

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The purpose of this study is to describe the multicultural education learning model in the subject of social studies at the First Middle School in Maluku, Indonesia. Multicultural education has a very important role in every learning process, because multicultural education is able to have a positive impact on futures for Indonesia as a multicultural country. Maluku is one of Indonesia's regions that is very distinctively multicultural, so research into the role of social studies subjects is important. This qualitative study engaged with students, teachers and principals from various junior high schools in Maluku. Findings show that teachers have a high level understanding of multicultural learning, which facilitates teaching in social studies, using a number of learning models. Although there are differences, in general, cross-cultural interaction is a learning model often used by teachers in teaching multicultural education.

Introduction

Indonesia is a country with diverse ethnicities, cultures, and religions. Data from Statistics-Indonesia (BPS) (2014) based on the 2010 Population Census showed that Indonesia has 633 different ethnic identities. Each ethnicity has its culture and belief as well as religions. This diversity is a social richness for Indonesia in a positive way, although this richness could arose tensions in society. Examples of some previous social conflicts in Indonesia include anti-Chinese riots in Jakarta in 1998; the conflict between the Dayak ethnic and Maduranese in Kalimantan; the ethnic and religious conflict in Maluku and Poso in 1999; Sambas conflict; Sampit conflict; and bloody Wamena (Adams, 2002; Chan, 2018).

The conflict in Maluku is one of the most significant in Indonesia, especially related to ethnicity and religion, after the reformation in 1998 (Nurman et al., 2022; Tjipto & Bernardo, 2019). This conflict started since 1998 and is the longest conflict in Indonesia (Duncan, 2005). Greg Acciaioli (quoted in Duncan, 2005) argued that conflict in Maluku, especially in North Maluku, occurred between indigenous people and migrants. The Maluku war that occurred in January 1999 is generally known to be the start of the war. The war began with a personal conflict between a bus driver in Ambon and passengers of the Bugis ethnic group. The conflict developed rapidly by involving the Christians and the Muslims in the community. After a few days, the cases spread to all cities and to other cities on Ambon Island and Central Maluku (Prasetya et al., 2020). It resulted in the deaths of around 8500 people, 29 thousand burned houses, and hundreds of destroyed buildings including 92 worshipping places, 719 shops, 4 banks, and 38 government facilities (Prasetya et al., 2020; Zid et al., 2020). Most villages in Maluku are populated according to religion; Muslim and Christian residents live in different neighbourhoods. Therefore conflicts occurring between citizens, especially male citizens, are often aligned with religion (Casmana et al., 2022; Komarudin et al., 2019).

Diversity could be addressed positively through improved understanding of multiculturalism, to reduce conflicts, (Zakiah et al., 2023). Multiculturalism has been expressed in many fields of study, including linguistics, cultures, religions, politics, migration studies, and education (Nayasi et al., 2022). It has become one of the main concerns in many societies, especially those enriched by diversities. Multiculturalism is widely accepted as a way of life where people from different backgrounds can live together in harmony, in a tolerance-based manner with recognition of differences (Patmisari et al., 2022). It is an idea where equality and justice can be given to all people despite their skin colours, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, political views, or other sociocultural differences. Multiculturalism socialisation in school can shape youth racial identities, ethnic biases, cultural competence and adjustment (Yukselir & Ozer, 2022).

As a cultural richness country, Indonesia has a national motto to unify diversity, "Bhinneka tunggal ika" ("Unity in diversity") (Farisi, 2014). But in fact, this motto has not been integrated into education (Raihani, 2014). Education is considered as an effective medium to introduce that diversity as a part that should be appreciated to the young generation (Perdana, 2019). Indonesia has not implemented a clear concept of multiculturalism in schools and awaits a clear vision for multiculturalism education (Raihani, 2014). Raihani (2014) found that schools in Indonesia did not use education that promotes tolerance and diversity as a part of the subject curriculum.

These multiple and overlapping identities complicate the concept of diversity and multicultural education. Educational institutions are challenged with the issue of addressing different needs of students from a diverse cultural spectrum (Husen et al., 2022). Another challenge faced by multicultural education is how to provide fair education practice to achieve social justice including considering the perspectives of different groups (Nayasi et al., 2022). Teachers are required to have a proper understanding of students' sociocultural backgrounds, as well as adequate skills to optimise it in the classroom setting. A study in one of higher education institutions revealed four challenges in implementing multicultural education in Indonesia, namely language barriers, familiarity with the topic, cultural differences, and teaching practices (Prasetiyo et al., 2020).

Many countries promote multicultural education implementation in training and education in culturally diverse ecosystems (Patmisari et al., 2022; Yukselir & Ozer, 2022). A study on multiethnic conflict in Indonesia found that multicultural education positively contributes in enabling the inter-ethnic groups to develop mutual understanding and helped the conflict recovery process (Guo & Zhong, 2019). Multicultural education is considered as the basis of tolerance that consists of human dignity principles such as justice, equality, freedom and democracy (Prasetiyo et al., 2020). Multicultural education teaches the young generation to appreciate and accept ethnic pluralism and to realise that diversity is an integral part of the human condition (Patmisari et al., 2022). It is in line with research from Husen (2022) that found multicultural education improves students' critical thinking skills, tolerance values and attitudes. Therefore, it could be concluded that multicultural education is an important way that could reduce the risk of conflict in cultural diversity society.

Some schools in Indonesia already tried to implement multicultural education (Au, 2017; Bergen & Mollen, 2019; Zakiah et al., 2023). Zakiah (2023) measured the implementation of culture-based social studies learning in multiculturalism classes for junior high school students. The results showed that the implementation of learning significantly influences the development of student multiculturalism. Au (2017) also showed that multiculturalism education integrated in 3 different subjects, Pancasila, civic, and religious education, increases the tolerance for diversity and differences between high school students in East Java. Pancasila is considered to be five principles of Indonesian life. It is also an Indonesian ideology which is used by Indonesian governments to rule the country (Abdulkarim et al., 2020). Moreover, research from Kartikawati (2019) measured the implementation of multicultural educational communication within the subject covering Islamic education and character development (IECD) at an elementary school in Bandung, Indonesia.

As it seen from the previous studies, multiculturalism education has already been implemented and integrated into various subjects. However, there is no specific subject chosen as the main subject to educate about multiculturalism. There is a need need to choose one subject that already exists in almost every school in Indonesia to be the main subject for integrating multiculturalism education. One existing subject that is compatible with this requirement is social sciences or social studies (Arphattananon, 2018, 2021). Indonesian Social Sciences (IPS) is a subject which describes culture and character in the context of Indonesia, and also teaches students about human rights, sociology, economy and related other topics. Social Sciences (IPS) has been outlined in the 2013 curriculum by government, following Graduates Competency Standards and Content Standards and has been implemented from elementary school to high school. Objectives include assisting students develop abilities in making rational decisions as citizens in the context of high diversity, various cultures and being in a world of democratic societies that are interdependent (Prasetiyo et al., 2020).

Based on the several considerations above, this research aims to explore the implementation of multicultural education in Maluku that has experienced a serious conflict about diversity. The research also investigates best practice learning models for multicultural education that is integrated into social sciences (IPS) in junior high schools in Maluku. From these objectives, the research questions for this study are:

1. What is teachers' understanding of conflict and multiculturalism in Maluku?
2. How is junior high school multicultural education implemented in Maluku?
3. What is the most effective learning model for multicultural education integrated into junior high school social studies (IPS) in Maluku?

Literature review

Multicultural education

When it was first introduced in the early 1960s, multicultural education reflected the struggle of minority groups for equality of power and freedom (Liu, 2020; Muzani et al.,

2022). In the field of education, it means accommodating minority narrations, experiences, and histories (Muzani et al., 2022). Nowadays, multicultural education is promoted as the foundation for building multicultural societies that show positive behaviour toward other cultural groups (Zakiah et al., 2023). It is grounded upon diversity and initiated to prepare and equip the young generation with knowledge, attitudes, and skills relevant for supporting the idea of peaceful and harmonious life (Ragamustari et al., 2021).

Multicultural education should be seen as a wide term encompassing more than mere content, but also includes innovative and inclusive teaching strategies, supportive instructional designs, contextual leadership and evaluation, and an improved learning environment that promotes justice, equality, and high academic outcomes, as well as democratic citizenship (Bergen & Mollen, 2019; Gezer, 2018; Uzunboylu & Altay, 2021). Multicultural education is required to provide learners with equal opportunities to learn and to voice their opinions in a democratic way (Prasetiyo et al., 2020).
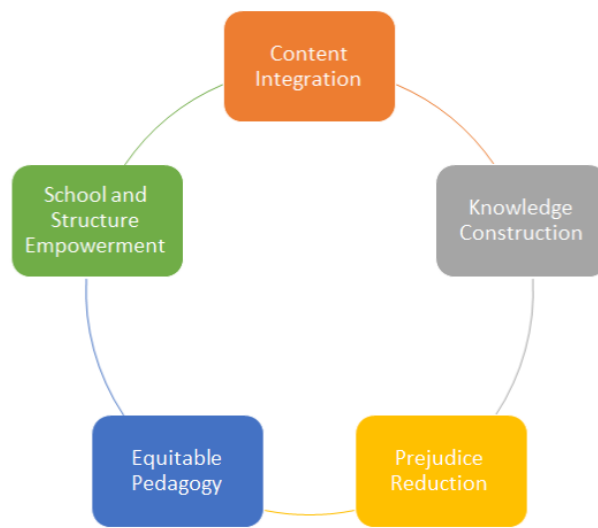

Figure 1: The five dimensions of multicultural education (after Banks, 1995)

Banks (1992) discussed five dimensions that should be considered in implementing multicultural education (Figure 1). The first dimension is content integration, which highlights the integration of multicultural materials into the curriculum to provide relevant information to the students (Kusmawati et al., 2023). It includes how data, examples, and information from various cultures and groups are used to explain the key concepts, principles, and theories in class (Dela Fuente, 2021; Patmisari et al., 2022). The second dimension is knowledge construction. It pictures how knowledge is created and how it is influenced by cultural diversities. The third dimension is prejudice reduction, wherein a positive perception of cultural diversity is encouraged, and stereotyped perspectives are discouraged (Komarudin et al., 2019; Patmisari et al., 2022). It aims to enlighten students about the characteristics of racial attitudes and strategies to increase awareness of

democratic attitudes and values. The fourth dimension is equitable pedagogy that helps students to explore different learning models and methods, including collaborative learning and cooperative learning (Komarudin et al., 2019). Equitable pedagogy concerns facilitating students with appropriate techniques and methods to motivate their achievements notwithstanding their diverse backgrounds (Nayasi et al., 2022). The fifth dimension is to empower the school culture and structure. It explains the process of school restructuring in terms of culture and structure. It ensures the implementation of educational equality and cultural empowerment to promote tolerance and harmony that is considered as one of the sociocultural elements established through interaction and socialisation (Dela Fuente, 2021; Yukselir & Ozer, 2022).

Learning models

Learning models can be described as a conceptual framework reflected in systematic procedure applied to guide the design of classroom learning and tutorials (Prasetiyo et al., 2020). It is close to the term learning strategy that can be understood as a set of learning materials and procedures designed to generate expected learning results (Patmisari et al., 2022). It includes the design of learning objectives, activities, environment setting, and class management optimised to direct the learning process in order to make it easier for students to achieve certain learning goals (Muzani et al., 2022). There are four aspects to consider when choosing the learning model for learning: the theory or materials to be explained, the goals to be achieved, the students' condition, and the learning environment (Zid & Casmana, 2021). It needs to be continuously supervised by the teacher to ensure it attains the desired results. As different classroom situations can raise different needs of learning models, some models relevant for local and regional perspectives are listed in Appendix 1.

Social studies teaching

Social studies education requires teachers to have a certain set of understandings and abilities. They are expected to understand the teaching materials which draw upon sociology, anthropology, history, geography, economics, politics, and culture. They are also expected to be able to deliver it in a simple yet understandable manner, and begin to integrate information and communications technologies (ICT). Since the subject is complex in nature, then the teachers need to be flexible in designing the learning journey to adapt to different needs of students (Husen et al., 2022; Sarkadi et al., 2022). This is the exact reason why research in finding effective methods to teach social studies is important.

Method

Research design

This study used a qualitative, descriptive research design, focusing on providing comprehensive summaries of specific events experienced by a person or a group of people (Creswell, 2014). Using a qualitative descriptive design, this research tried to

identify recurring themes, patterns, or concepts underlying the practice of multicultural education in a specific Indonesian setting. It sought to discover factual details and circumstances of multicultural education, especially as implemented in junior high schools in Maluku. It also sought to describe effective multicultural education learning models in the social studies subject in that level (Creswell, 2014).

This research used data triangulation and source triangulation to ensure credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability (Creswell & Clark, 2018). Three different data collection techniques (semi structured interviews, observation, and focus group discussion) were invoked to attain data triangulation.

Participants

This study investigated the implementation of multicultural education and effective learning models for social studies at junior high school level. The context of this study is multicultural education implementation in junior high schools in Ambon, the capital city of Maluku, and one of the most highly impacted areas during Maluku conflict. Indonesian Ministry of Education identifies 52 junior high schools currently in Ambon. The large number precludes reaching all the schools (Cohen et al., 2002), so 11 schools were selected purposively for this study, to meet the requirement of qualitative data saturation.

Table 1: School characteristics

School affiliation	School ID	No. social studies teachers	District	Student enrolment
Public (5)	JHS 1	3	Leitimur	Mostly Moslem
	JHS 2	2	Nusaniwe	Mostly non-Moslem
	JHS 3	3	Sirimau	Mostly Moslem
	JHS 4	3	Ambon Bay	Mostly Moslem
	JHS 5	2	Ambon Baguala Bay	Mixed
Private (7)	JHS 6	1	Leitimur	Mixed
	JHS 7	2	Nusaniwe	Mostly Moslem
	JHS 8	2	Sirimau	Mixed
	JHS 9	3	Sirimau	Mostly Moslem
	JHS 10	2	Ambon Bay	Mostly Moslem
	JHS 11	3	Ambon Baguala Bay	Mostly Moslem

Not all the schools in this population use the same curriculum, especially the private schools. To obtain relevant data, this study used two selection criteria: (1) the school embeds social studies in its curriculum; and (2) multicultural education is taught in social studies. Eleven junior high school from five different districts in the city of Ambon are identified in Table 1 as JHS 1 to 11. Each district is represented by 2 schools, 1 public and 1 private. Only Sirimau has three school representations, since it is the most populated area in Ambon.

Participants in this study were in three categories, namely school management representative (headmaster, vice headmaster, head of curriculum) (Table 2); social studies

teachers (Table 2); and students from grades 7 to 9 (Table 3). From each school, 1 social studies teacher, 1 school management representative, and 2 students from different grades from each school were invited to participate in the interview, observation, and/or FGD.

Table 2: Teacher and school management participant characteristics

	Teacher	School management
Gender	Female (9)	Female (4)
	Male (3)	Male (7)
Age group	21-30 (2)	31-40 (2)
	31-40 (6)	41-50 (9)
	41-50 (4)	
Religion	Moslem (8)	Moslem (4)
	Christian (2)	Christian (4)
	Catholic (2)	Catholic (3)

Table 3: Student participant characteristics

Gender	Grade	Religion
Female (15)	7 (8)	Moslem (14)
Male (7)	8 (8)	Christian (4)
	9 (5)	Catholic (3)
		Hindu (1)

Research instrument

Data were collected by semi-structured interviews, observation, and focus group discussion (Creswell, 2014). The instrument for semi-structured interviews was based on key themes identified from issues prevalent in the research literature: (1) teachers' understanding of multiculturalism and conflict potential in Maluku; (2) multicultural conditions at schools: (3) implementation of multicultural education at schools; and (4) social studies and multicultural education learning approaches at schools. The interview instrument was created as a list of questions, that helped the interviewer to guide conversation towards the research topics, and it was refined after pilot testing (Appendix 2). The semi-structured interview guide was also refined after pilot testing.

The observation instrument was based on the five dimensions of multicultural education: content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equitable pedagogy, and school and structure empowerment (Banks, 1995), and added one more theme about the learning model that is used in class. Guidance for the focus discussion group was also based on the same five dimensions of multicultural education and the characteristics of the learning model.

Data collection

Data were collected during February 2019 in Maluku, Indonesia. The semi-structured interviews and observations were conducted in the same time period, and the focus group discussion was held after the other collections.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis was used to guide data analysis. Collected data are organised to look for patterns and coded into themes, then the researcher interprets and makes sense of it (Creswell, 2014). Many researchers have established a diverse range of thematic analysis procedures (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). However, due to the clear guidance and a usable analytical framework, this study adopted Braun & Clarke's (2006) six steps for thematic analysis. This lead to three themes: (1) Teachers' understanding of conflict and multiculturalism in Maluku; (2) The implementation of junior high school multicultural education in in Maluku; and (3) Multicultural education learning models in Maluku.

Findings

RQ1: Teachers' understanding of conflict and multiculturalism in Maluku

The topic of multicultural education cannot be separated from the urgency for discussing this topic, the conceptual understanding of teachers about multiculturalism, and the contextual situation of multiculturalism in the area. Rooted in a long history of conflicts, cultural diversity in Maluku often raises potential conflicts based on religion, ethnicity, or different personal/group interests. Interviews with teachers showed that some have only a superficial knowledge about conflict in Maluku.

> Yes, I know there is long conflict in Maluku. As I know, the conflict happened because of immigrants - Teacher 1.

> The conflict just happened because of the personal conflict between people with different religion. Commonly, the neighborhood in here is also separated by the religion - Teacher 2.

The headmaster of JHS 2 admitted that it is hard to make sure every teacher develops a proper understanding of multicultural education and other specific materials.

> Although all teachers are linked to their Professional Learning Community (MGMP) which is formed to enhance their knowledge in their respective study areas, not everyone comes with the same level of concern and understanding - Headmaster JHS 2.

MGMP is the name of the teacher organisation that was created as a place for subject teachers to discuss problems that may arise in their school. Members of this organisation come from different schools but they teach the subject of Indonesian social studies. Different degrees of teachers' understanding are also related to age gaps and culture gaps among generations.

> Older teachers may experience more dramatic situations in terms of multiculturalism. However, the long age gap between them and the students sometimes make the examples they bring to the kids become less relevant to the current state of multicultural society, especially when they couldn't highlight the relation well. Senior teachers also tend to lecture and talk all the time, while students nowadays usually more attracted to visual materials delivered in PowerPoint or discussing things in teams - Vice Headmaster JHS 3.

It is little bit different with Teacher 5 who thought more about the conflict.

> From my opinion, the conflict is influenced by various aspects such as religion, competition in gaining natural resources, and social gaps. It started when the immigrants which have different culture and religion with the native came to Maluku. The native felt that the immigrant grabs the natural resource, and live a different culture - Teacher 5.

Low understanding of conflict is also seen in students. The focus group discussion showed that most children don't know the reason for the conflict. They are just being told not to follow the fight and respect each other.

Teachers' understanding of multiculturalism and multicultural education can also be seen from interviews and the focus group discussion. Most informants agreed that multiculturalism is a state where all the people with various backgrounds can respect each other, and that it has become important to socialise about multiculturalism in education.

> In Maluku, multicultural education is a very important matter to be taught to children. It is the basis for peacekeeping initiatives to ensure that people from different cultural backgrounds can live together peacefully - Headmaster JHS 5.

A similar statement was given by some other interviewees including Teacher 2, Teacher 9, and Teacher 11, and also in the focus group discussion by Student 20 who lived in a multicultural neighborhood:

> I think it is really important to learn more about somebody else's culture, because even my parents come from different ethnic backgrounds - Student 20, FGD.

The need to embed multicultural education into school subjects cannot be doubted. However, teachers' perception and understanding of that matter is still questionable. Teacher 7 admitted that sometimes he faced difficulties in talking about multiculturalism, especially related to history:

> ... although Ambon itself was a part of that huge conflict in the past, recalling all the number of lost lives is almost impossible to me. I then only tell it briefly in the class and move toward more common examples around the world - Teacher 7.

RQ2: Implementation of junior high school multicultural education in Maluku

After understanding the awareness of teachers and students regarding threats in their area because of diversity, this study also describes how the implementation of multicultural education that is considered as an effort to reduce the risk of conflict due to diversity. The interviews show that multicultural education has indirectly been applied to the subjects of religious education, citizenship education, and social studies education. This can be seen from the interviews with the Vice Headmasters for JHS 6 and JHS 7 Curriculum. Vice headmaster of JHS 7 also stresses that multicultural education has been integrated to the national curriculum. But the school policy does not support integration to the teaching material. This can be seen in the school materials.

> Multicultural education has been integrated into several subjects, such as religious subjects and civic education which teach religious values in national life and also social values to respect other communities in national life as a material from national curriculum. Our school does not have different or specific curriculum to address multicultural education - VH Curriculum JHS 6.

> In accordance with the national curriculum, there is material contained in several subjects that teach multiculturalism, such as civics and social studies education. Civic education teaches "Bhineka tunggal ika" (Unity in diversity) as a unifier of diversity in Indonesia. For social studies in Grade 8, there is a special chapter about pluralism. Besides that, multicultural reality is embedded in many more chapters, like globalisation or cross-cultural interaction in Grade 9 which of course provides an understanding of social conditions in Indonesia which refers to diversity - VH Curriculum JHS 7

Teacher 9 indicated the importance of teacher awareness:

> I think it is more about how much the teacher understands the issue. That multiculturalism is a part of nowadays reality. We can mention it in many parts of the social studies topics. However, teachers with no real concern about tolerance or multiculturalism may not quite remember to highlight it in the classroom - Teacher 9, JHS 9.

Observation results indicated that many social studies teachers have not linked multicultural education with real-life situations in Maluku. In their teaching sessions, they delivered only common knowledge of multiculturalism in Indonesia and in the surrounding areas. In interview, Teacher 4 stated that the reason he did not connect the materials with multicultural phenomena and conflict in Maluku is because it is hard for him to recall the traumatic experience.

> I was 12 years old when the conflict happened. Everything was burnt down, I was separated from my family for several weeks, and my father passed away during the conflict. Remembering it is painful. I just don't know how to tell it to the kids - Teacher 4.

However, this is not the only reason. Other teachers separately mentioned different reasons, such as only reading the examples mentioned in textbook, avoiding debate, avoiding emotional situations, fear of mentioning inappropriate contexts, and fear of hurting people or students from different cultural backgrounds. Not all the teachers who experienced the chaos thought the same as Teacher 4. Teacher 3 who lost her third child and her sibling during the conflict stated,

> ... because I experienced the pain, I will try my best to prevent similar things from happening. As a teacher, educate the students about the importance of tolerance and respect for people of different cultures is one of my priorities - Teacher 3.

This mindset is reflected in her teaching way. In her session with Grade 8 students in her school, she talked about pluralism and conflict. She used her personal memory of conflict and how severely the conflict impacted her family life and her view of the world, to highlight that plurality is inevitable in current life situations.

Vice Headmaster of JHS 6 said that some teachers from different subjects are moved by similar thoughts.

> I remember, when directly observing teachers teaching in their class for some administrative matters, I stumbled upon multicultural education practice in a religion class. The teacher that day reminded the students to pay respect to all kinds of people, regardless of their religion and cultural background. This topic was also brought up in civics subject, especially related to the topic of tolerance - VH JHS 6.

RQ3: Multicultural education learning models in Maluku

The data from interviews, the focus group discussion and observations were collected to investigate learning models that could be applied in multicultural education as a part of social studies. Data from the observation stage showed that in JHS 4, social studies teachers used students' examination sheet (LKS) to encourage students to learn about multiculturalism. The student examination sheet (LKS) is a student book which has a lot of questions for examining students' understanding about the topic that has been taught. This book is often used by teachers at the end of each session, so that the students' understanding can be checked from these books. Teacher 4 who was overseeing that class explained the topic only briefly, for about 15 minutes. She then moved to the LKS and asked students to fill it in by reading and looking at the answers in the book. Many teachers seemed to deliver the content based on textbooks. Teachers 1 to 4, teacher 5, and teacher 8 explained the multicultural situation examples exactly as written in textbook. They do not even use a contextual situation, such as the Ambon conflict in 1999, how that affected the sociopolitical situation in Maluku, what are potential sources of conflict in their near future, and how they could navigate themselves in that kind of situation.

Figure 2: Students presenting their work on a
multicultural education activity, in front of the class

In interview, Teacher 3 stated that he only repeated the learning patterns he copied from his teachers.

> When I was in my school years, teachers mostly lectured the students or gave them some tasks to do. I think it's like the most familiar way to teach for me. That's how I learnt, that's how I grew up - Teacher 3.

His statement shows that familiarity is not referring only to a deep understanding of multicultural concepts, but also refers to techniques applied by teachers in their classes.

Similar practices were found in JHS 1 during the observation period. In this school, teachers briefly explained the concept of multicultural education then asked the students to read, discuss, and present different sub themes of the textbook as well as the example for each part. Some students appeared bored and passive in the group. In the focus group, students stated that this practice is a common one at schools. Student 2 highlighted that he did not enjoy that kind of discussion.

> I hope someday my teacher will give us more fun learning activities. I love games and competition. I hope there will be a way for us to play games in the class. I saw on *Instagram*, people can learn by playing games too - Student 2.

This result is different from what was found in JHS 9, where observations showed that teachers teach and explain the material in a book more comprehensively. In each sub-section of material, the teacher opened a discussion session where students were encouraged to talk about an example in the material with the teacher, especially on the national scale. Teachers encouraged students to participate in the class. The students were also enthusiastic about giving their thoughts and opinions. This finding from observations was supported by answers from students in the focus group. One said that they will understand more and remember the social studies material if it is followed by an example that relates with their daily life.

> I could remember if I understood the material. And I will easily understand the materials if the teachers also give an example of it - Student 18.

This statement has a similarity with Teacher 11.

> I find it useful to use Internet sources. I usually check some examples on *YouTube* or just *Google* it. When I find related and easy to understand materials, I share them in my class. Sometimes I attach it in a *PowerPoint*, some other times I just mention and narrate the content of the video or article to them - Teacher 11.

Giving examples helps students develop deeper understanding. It is also useful to help them connect with their real-life experiences.

> My students seem interested when I tell them a story. I pick stories from my personal experience, like the one related to cultural diversity, and sometimes I pick the stories from movies, drama, advertising, or some social media posts - Teacher 9.

Every student has their own learning preference. Student 4 from JHS 2 thought that filling in the LKS is somewhat boring. He must do it anyway to complete his classroom assignment. To help him learn more, he used his smartphone to find useful information.

You know, my big brother taught me to use the Internet when I got stuck in understanding something. It is helpful to know some school materials are available on the Internet. I usually skip the long paragraphs, but some posters [infographics] or pictures help me see it better - Student 4.

On the other hand, Students 3, 9 and 12 preferred to take notes to learn better when they reread the notes and/or the textbook.

Sometimes after the teacher gives social studies material, I will reread my notes and relate it to my daily life - Student 9.

Figure 3: Students in a classroom

Figure 3 illustrates learning activities in a classroom, preparing to discuss material about multicultural education. Students from JHS 11 created informal learning groups with their class friends. Here, they could discuss the material that has been taught by their teachers, ask questions and discuss topics they have not understood, and also talk about their homework and resources for finishing school assignments. They said sometimes it helps them to catch up with the materials,

... sometimes it is easier to listen to my friends' explanations rather than the teachers, because they talk in our [daily informal] language - Student 21.

Supporting this, Student 22 from the same school stated that she liked informal discussions where students could laugh all they want and share simple or funny examples from their own experiences.

Collected data from interview, observations and the focus group showed that different strategies are used by the teachers in teaching multicultural education. In practice, multicultural education can be integrated with more than one subject of study. In the field of social studies, multicultural education mostly was taught deeper under globalisation,

pluralism, and cross cultural interaction. It is also relevant in some other sub-topics such as global trade, cultural diversity, and international cooperation such as ASEAN or the UN.

Discussion

Results from this research were discussed and analysed according to five dimensions of multicultural education (Banks, 1995). The implementation of multicultural education in Maluku is still at a low level not attaining all dimensions of multicultural education, as explained below in relation to the first three dimensions.

The first dimension of multicultural education is content integration, which is about combining multicultural materials into the curriculum to provide relevant information to the students (Patmisari et al., 2022). Interviews showed that junior high schools in Maluku don't have a specific curriculum about multiculturalism in schools. There are four approaches to integrating multicultural content into the curriculum: the contributive, additive, transformative and social action approaches (Prasetiyo et al., 2020). The contributive approach is considered as the first and easiest approach to integrating ethnic and cultural content into curriculum (Sarkadi et al., 2022). From the data it seems that the participating schools were not integrating multicultural material formally into the curriculum, but were already teaching multiculturalism in religious, civic and social studies education. The contributive or the additive approaches to content integration could be the best in Maluku. The contributive approach is integrating multicultural content without changing the basic structure, content and goals of the curriculum (Zakiah et al., 2023). It is similar to the additive approach which adds ethnic and cultural content, goals and materials to the curriculum without changing the curriculum's structures, goals, and characteristics (Kusmawati et al., 2023).

The second dimension is knowledge construction. Knowledge construction is one of multicultural education dimensions that explains how teachers help students to understand how knowledge is created and how it is influenced by the racial, ethnic, and social class positions of individuals (Casmana et al., 2022). In this case, the findings suggest that teachers already have criteria to help students in explaining content about multicultural learning in schools. Teachers have tried learning methods and models that can have benefits for student learning about multicultural education.

The third dimension of teaching multiculturalism is prejudice reduction, which is one of the values taught through a multicultural learning model. The aim is to teach students not to have negative prejudices against people who have views and groups differing from themselves (Ragamustari et al., 2021). Whilst prejudice against others may occur when differences in skin colour, hair, religion and ethnicity are apparent, through adoption of suitable learning models by teachers, it is hoped that over time this can reduce prejudice against others.

This research is novel for teaching multicultural education in Maluku. This is significant because Maluku can serve as a good pilot location for teaching and learning multicultural education in Indonesia. We expect that with this learning, students will be better educated to avoid conflicts such as the previous conflict in the Maluku region, and teachers will become better prepared for conducting multicultural education in their schools.

Conclusion

Based on the discussions above, it can be concluded that multicultural education is being implemented in Maluku, integrated into the subject of social science. This subject examines various issues and conflicts that occur in society, so that the issue of multicultural education becomes one of the most important and necessary parts. Teachers already know and understand multicultural learning, including in terms of the content knowledge they teach. Content on ethnicity, religion, and race conflicts is amongst the most important topics that can be taught to the students.

The learning model most used by teachers is cross cultural communication. This model provides an intercultural communication approach between teachers and students, as well as between students and other students, so that they are able to continue to work and innovate in all learning activities. Through this communication, the students also become more understanding about the differences that occurred in Indonesian society. The selection of Maluku is significant because this region has experienced several unique events that can be used as a powerful example for learning about conflict resolution.

Although this research has been completed, there are some limitations that could indicate priorities for researchers in the future. Concerning data collection, more data would be helpful in relation to refining the interpretations and the scope for generalisations to other regions. The observation and interview times accorded to each teacher were relatively short, so being able to use more time would be helpful. As there were time limitations in conducting this study, a quick follow up survey in one or more of the schools in order to check upon any changes in student attitudes towards multicultural education and conflict in Maluku, and changes in classroom teaching practices that promote multicultural education through social studies topics.

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Appendix 1: Types of learning model

Cooperative learning	Optimising small groups to enhance students' teamwork and problem-solving capacity. Everyone in the group should have a specific role/function to make an effective teamwork to achieve joint learning goals. Recognition and rewards are provided to build a stronger sense of cooperation (Patmisari et al., 2022)
Collaborative learning	Immersing students in challenging tasks or questions. Students solve the problem, developing understanding, creating a meaning, or making products by working together in a group. It emphasises student involvement, cooperation and teamwork, and civic responsibility (Rachmawati et al., 2022).
Contextual teaching and learning (CTL)	Encourages the students to connect learning materials to their daily life experience. This method allows the students to contextualise their academic understanding to solve simulated or real-life problems that can be done individually or in groups (Syahra et al., 2020).
Case study	Investigating a specific phenomenon thoroughly from investigating and examining real life phenomena. It becomes more relevant to apply when that certain phenomenon has no vivid boundaries. Students can discuss the phenomenon and interact directly with their teacher, give more exposure about the topic, and help them build deeper understanding about it (Zid & Casmana, 2021).
Project-based learning (PBL)	Gaining or forming knowledge by doing a project. It is a student-centred learning approach that can be done individually or in groups, and usually takes a lot of time to finish. The core of this method is research, in which students combine theory and application by using real life problems as a tool and form interdisciplinary relations. During the process, students can propose a question, think hypothetically, design the research, collect and analyse data with the help of technology, make product and evaluation, and share their ideas (Zakiah et al., 2023).
Discovery learning	A process of acquiring scientific knowledge and skills based on the constructivism learning theory. Students can free to contribute their ideas, so the students need to understand and be able to apply their knowledge, solve problems, find something by themselves. The focus of this method is to learn how to analyse and interpret data to able to understand what is learned (Zid & Casmana, 2021).
Problem-based learning	An activity from everyday life that can lead to scenario issues as an active earning process where students need to learn how to solve problems independently. The problem-based learning begins after the teacher gives the students a scenario problem taken from everyday life problems. After the problem identification process is done, the student should try to solve the problem scenario using the previous and existing knowledge (Muzani et al., 2022).

Appendix 2: Semi-structured interview guide

No.	Participants	Interview questions
1.	School management representatives	- The school policy in teaching multicultural education - The school program in creating multicultural education - The school facilities in providing multicultural environment in school
2.	Social studies teachers	- The teachers understanding of the conflict - The teachers understanding of the multiculturalism - The teachers understanding on teaching multicultural education - The teacher strategy in teaching multicultural education - The learning model used by the teachers for teaching in the classroom - The learning content on social studies education used to teach multiculturalism
3.	Students	- The student understanding for learning multicultural education - The students understanding of the concept of multicultural - The student understanding of the conflict - The student understanding of multicultural education

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