

The dynamics of the development of Nahdlatul education (multicultural education perspective)

Syahri Ramadhan

UIN Mataram

Email: SyahriRamadhan@gmail.com

Abstrak. This research examines the implementation of multicultural education within the Nahdlatul Wathan (NW) educational institutions in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), Indonesia. Founded in 1953 by Tuan Guru Kyai Haji Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid, NW has grown into one of the nation's largest religious organizations, establishing a range of institutions from elementary schools to universities that serve as centers for both religious instruction and the inculcation of moral and social values. In the culturally diverse context of NTB—characterized by ethnic groups such as Sasak, Samawa, and Mbojo—NW faces significant challenges in harmonizing varied cultural, ethnic, and religious needs. Adopting a qualitative-descriptive approach, this study employs interviews, observations, and document analysis to capture the perspectives of teachers, students, and community stakeholders regarding the application of multicultural education. The findings reveal that NW integrates Islamic values with multicultural principles by utilizing diverse approaches including contribution, additive, transformation, and social action strategies. These methods not only enhance the curriculum by incorporating general subjects alongside religious studies but also promote critical thinking, tolerance, and empathy among learners. Despite challenges such as stereotypes, prejudice, and the pressures of globalization and socio-political dynamics, NW's efforts in multicultural education contribute significantly to fostering an inclusive learning environment. The study provides practical recommendations for further development of multicultural education in Islamic institutions, ultimately aiming to nurture graduates who are well-equipped to thrive in and contribute to an increasingly pluralistic society.

Keyword: *Multicultural Education, Islamic Education, Inclusive Curriculum*

INTRODUCTION

Nahdlatul Wathan (NW) is one of the largest religious organizations in Indonesia with strong roots in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB). Founded in 1953 by Tuan Guru Kyai Haji Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid, NW has a vision to develop Islamic education that is able to shape the character of young generations who are smart, moral, and faithful. Since its inception, the NW has established various educational institutions ranging from elementary schools to universities, which are spread across the NTB region and several regions in Indonesia. These institutions function not only as centers of religious learning, but also as a place to instill moral and social values. . In the context of educational development in Indonesia, NW education faces complex challenges related to cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. NTB society consists of several ethnicities such as Sasak, Samawa, and Mbojo, which have different customs, traditions, and languages. This diversity presents its own challenges in uniting and accommodating the different needs and expectations of each community. In facing this challenge, a multicultural approach to education is important to be studied .

Multicultural education is an approach that aims to accommodate and appreciate cultural, religious and ethnic differences in the educational process. In the midst of globalization and modernization, multicultural education is becoming increasingly relevant because it can create an inclusive learning environment, where every learner can feel accepted and valued regardless of their background. In the NW context, this multicultural approach aims to integrate Islamic values with local and national cultural diversity .

The implementation of multicultural education in NW educational institutions is also in line with the values taught in Islam, such as tolerance, brotherhood and justice . However, in practice, integrating multicultural principles in Islamic education is not always easy. There are dynamics that arise in trying to balance between the preservation of religious traditions and responding to the needs of an increasingly plural society. This research is important to understand how NW addresses these challenges .

Along with the times, NW education not only aims to impart religious knowledge, but also to prepare learners to be able to adapt to a changing world. The NW education curriculum includes general subjects such as science, math, and language, in addition to religious studies. This demonstrates NW's commitment to providing a holistic education that prepares learners to face challenges in the world of work and in society. In multicultural education, it is important for educational institutions to not only teach tolerance as an abstract value, but also to create an environment where learners from different cultural backgrounds can learn and grow together. NW education in NTB,

which serves a very diverse community, is in a unique position to apply these principles of multicultural education in their daily lives. In this regard, NW needs to continue to innovate and develop teaching methods that integrate Islamic values with the principles of multiculturalism .

One of the main challenges in implementing multicultural education in the NW is how to deal with stereotypes and prejudices that may arise among learners and the community. In culturally diverse areas such as NTB, social conflicts can occur if there is no serious effort to build intercultural understanding and tolerance. Therefore, NW educational institutions need to be agents of change that are able to form positive attitudes towards diversity and reduce the potential for social conflict .

This research will also explore how social, political and cultural dynamics in NTB affect the development of NW education from a multicultural perspective. Like other regions in Indonesia, NTB is also influenced by national policies related to education, including the national curriculum that requires schools to teach civic education and Pancasila values. This adds to the complexity of formulating an educational approach that can accommodate both local and national interests.

On the other hand, NW also faces the challenge of globalization which brings in outside cultural influences that can potentially conflict with the Islamic values being taught. Globalization not only brings changes in people's mindset and lifestyle, but also demands changes in the way education is delivered. NW educational institutions need to adapt quickly to remain relevant in the midst of global change, without sacrificing the values on which its teachings are based. .

The role of teachers in multicultural education is also an important aspect that must be considered. Teachers in NW educational institutions not only function as conveyors of knowledge, but also as agents of change who are responsible for instilling multicultural values and tolerance among students. Therefore, developing teachers' competence in multiculturalism is a very important thing to be considered by the NW. Active participation from the community is also needed to support the implementation of multicultural education in NW. The involvement of parents, religious leaders and other stakeholders can help create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. Education does not only take place in the classroom, but also in everyday life, where the community plays an important role in shaping children's attitudes and values. This research is expected to provide a deep insight into how the dynamic development of Nahdlatul Wathan education in NTB is influenced by the multicultural approach. By understanding the challenges and opportunities that exist, it is hoped that NW can continue to

contribute in creating a more inclusive and harmonious society in the midst of diversity . The results of this study are also expected to provide practical recommendations for the development of multicultural education in other Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia.

It is important to note that this research will not only look at NW education from an internal perspective, but will also consider the influence of external factors such as national education policy, technological developments, and socio-political dynamics in Indonesia. Thus, this research will provide a comprehensive picture of the NW's position in Indonesia's increasingly complex and diverse educational landscape. In order to achieve these objectives, this research will use a qualitative approach with interview and observation methods in several NW educational institutions in NTB. Interviews with teachers, students and other stakeholders will be conducted to understand their perceptions of multicultural education and how the principles are applied in practice. Observations will be made to see how intercultural interactions occur in the school environment and how this affects the teaching and learning process. .

This research is expected to make a meaningful contribution to the development of Islamic education that is more inclusive and responsive to the needs of a diverse society. By integrating the principles of multicultural education into the curriculum and educational practices, NW can continue to be a pioneer in creating young people who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also able to appreciate differences and live harmoniously in the midst of diversity. In the perspective of multicultural education, every individual is recognized as a unique and valuable part of the global community. Thus, NW education should be able to create a space where every learner can feel that their cultural identity is valued and taken into account. This will help shape a generation that is more tolerant, open and ready to face challenges in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative-descriptive methodology, which focuses on capturing and interpreting social and cultural phenomena through textual and observational data. This approach is particularly suited for exploring how Islamic religious education strategies contribute to the preservation and development of the Perang Topat tradition as a form of acculturation between Islam and Hinduism in Lombok. By using qualitative methods, the research seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the educational, cultural, and social dynamics that shape this tradition. Data collection is conducted through interviews, observations, and document analysis. Interviews involve

discussions with key stakeholders, including religious leaders, educators, students, and local community members, to explore their perspectives on Islamic education's role in fostering interfaith harmony. Observations are carried out during the Perang Topat ritual and related educational activities to document real-life interactions and cultural expressions. Additionally, document analysis includes reviewing religious education curricula, historical records, and academic studies to contextualize the integration of multicultural values in Islamic education. The collected data will be analyzed using thematic analysis, focusing on identifying recurring patterns and key themes related to religious education, cultural adaptation, and interfaith relations. The analysis involves data reduction, where information is categorized based on relevance; data display, which structures findings in narrative and visual formats; and conclusion drawing and verification, ensuring that interpretations are grounded in empirical evidence. This structured approach allows the study to provide a comprehensive and insightful perspective on how Islamic education plays a crucial role in sustaining cultural traditions and promoting social cohesion in Lombok.

RISULT AND DISCUSSION

a. The Substance of Multicultural Education in Nahdlatul Wathan Perspective

Multicultural education is an approach that gives every learner the opportunity to learn in an inclusive and diverse environment. James Banks, a pioneer in this field, argues that education should place more emphasis on teaching critical thinking rather than simply providing information about what to think. Within the framework of multicultural education, learners are taught to understand different types of knowledge and actively discuss different knowledge constructions and interpretations (Banks, 1993) . This is in line with the Nahdlatul Wathan (NW) educational philosophy, which also encourages learners to accept and appreciate differences. According to Banks (2001), multicultural education involves a set of beliefs and explanations that value the importance of cultural and ethnic diversity in everyday life. This education aims to change the structure of educational institutions so that learners from different cultural backgrounds, religions, genders and abilities have equal opportunities in achieving academic achievement. In the context of NW, this becomes relevant given the ethnic and cultural diversity of the West Nusa Tenggara region, where NW operates. Multicultural education provides a framework for dealing with errors in the transformation of specific cultural values and ethics, which often

trigger inter-ethnic conflicts. Howard (1993) emphasizes the importance of multicultural education from an early age to help children accept cultural differences. Thus, education in NW is expected to educate its students to have empathy, tolerance, and the ability to live harmoniously in a diverse society. NW can play a strategic role in building this understanding, both through the curriculum and learning activities. Multicultural education not only addresses cultural differences, but also aims to prepare learners to actively participate in a multicultural society. This means creating an environment where all learners, regardless of their background, can feel accepted and valued. NW, as a faith-based educational institution, needs to integrate universal Islamic values with the principles of multicultural education to create harmony among differences .

Parekh (1997) describes that multiculturalism is concerned with three things: culture, diversity, and specific actions in response to that diversity. Multicultural education in NW needs to respond to this challenge by taking into account various aspects of society, such as differences in religion, gender, economic conditions, and physical and mental abilities. With an inclusive approach, NW can play an important role in creating learning spaces that allow every learner to express their cultural identity. Multicultural education also emphasizes the importance of awareness of the value of cultural diversity. Each learner has unique characteristics that must be respected. NW education, based on Islamic values that value diversity, has a strong foundation to teach learners to accept differences as a gift from God. With this approach, NW can create learners who have an open and tolerant mentality towards differences .

Multicultural education can also be seen as a renewal movement in education. One issue that often arises is inequality in access to education, where learners from certain groups find it easier to get quality education than other groups. Multicultural education in the NW should try to address this inequality by providing equal opportunities for all learners, regardless of their cultural or economic background. The process of multicultural education is an evolving one. This is in line with the goals of NW education which also focus on holistic learner development. Education in NW does not only pursue the improvement of academic achievement, but also aims to form a strong character and be able to adapt to social changes. In this case, multicultural education becomes relevant in equipping learners with critical thinking skills, tolerance, and the ability to work together with people from different backgrounds. .

Just as education in the NW is constantly evolving, multicultural education also changes its concept over time. In the beginning, multicultural education focused more on changing the curriculum by

adding new material about different cultures. However, over time, multicultural education now also includes changes in teaching styles, classroom climate, and institutional policies that support diversity. Multicultural education in the NW needs to reflect these values by providing space for all learners to develop themselves without feeling marginalized . This can be realized by reviewing all existing educational practices, including learning theories, teaching approaches, and evaluation. In this way, NWs can ensure that their educational institutions provide equal opportunities for all learners.

The ultimate goal of multicultural education is to prepare learners to participate fully in a diverse society. This is important in the context of globalization which brings influences from different cultures into everyday life. Education in NW should equip learners with the skills to interact with people from different backgrounds, both locally and globally. Through multicultural education, NW can create graduates who have high social awareness and are able to play an active role in creating an inclusive society. By teaching its students to appreciate differences, NW can contribute to creating a more harmonious society in the midst of diversity. Multicultural education in NW is not only important to form tolerant individuals, but also to create a more just and inclusive educational institution. With the right approach, NW can be a pioneer in multicultural education in Indonesia, setting an example for other educational institutions to adopt values that respect diversity and inclusion.

b. Problems of Multicultural Education in Indonesia

Multicultural education in Indonesia is faced with unique challenges arising from the nation's geographical, demographic and historical complexities. As stated earlier, ethnicity, religion, race and intergroup (SARA) should be a unifying element of the nation, not a cause of conflict. In the perspective of multicultural education, the invitation to peaceful coexistence is an effort to instill the values of togetherness in the midst of diversity. Unfortunately, the issue of multicultural education in Indonesia faces major challenges that are different from other countries. One of the main problems in multicultural education in Indonesia is the diversity of ethnic cultures that can be a potential source of conflict. Indonesia, with its diverse regional cultures, actually has rich cultural capital to build a multicultural nation. However, without intercultural communication and understanding, this diversity becomes fertile ground for conflict. Cases such as the Sampit incident are clear examples of how diversity can be used by provocateurs to provoke division .

To address this challenge, multicultural education plays an important role in instilling awareness about the importance of diversity and teaching

learners to recognize and understand other cultures. Through inclusive education, potential conflicts stemming from incomprehension can be minimized, creating a more harmonious society. In addition, the paradigm shift of power through decentralization also affects the dynamics of multicultural education in Indonesia. During the New Order era, policies related to culture were still highly centralized. However, with decentralization, local cultures began to gain wider recognition. Unfortunately, concepts such as "putra daerah" often trigger tensions between natives and migrants, which can hamper multicultural integration efforts.

The phenomenon of the fragility of our national space is also a major challenge for multicultural education. As Benedict Anderson argues, the Indonesian nation is an "imagined" community, where citizens feel emotionally connected even though they do not know each other directly. However, racial issues often undermine this collective imagination, as seen in religious or race-based conflicts in various regions. Globalization also exacerbates this problem. The borderless interconnections brought about by globalization make societies more globally connected, but also vulnerable to shifting cultural identities. On the one hand, globalization can enrich learners' knowledge of the world's cultural diversity, but on the other hand, it also triggers the phenomenon of cultural bleeding or culture clash, where local traditions are threatened by the dominating global cultural currents.

Economic injustice is also at the root of many SARA-related conflicts in Indonesia. Many bloody incidents, such as the Sampit conflict, are often triggered by social jealousy towards certain groups that are considered more economically prosperous. In this context, multicultural education must go beyond simply teaching tolerance of culture. Multicultural education in Indonesia faces enormous challenges rooted in issues of ethnic diversity, decentralization of power, globalization, and economic injustice. To succeed, multicultural education must be able to bridge these differences and encourage learners to accept, appreciate and utilize diversity as an asset to build a more harmonious and inclusive society

c. Perspectives and Objectives of Multicultural Education in the Context of Nahdlatul Wathan

Multicultural education in Indonesia, including in Nahdlatul Wathan (NW) educational institutions, plays an important role in creating a harmonious society amidst cultural diversity. By referring to Robinson's classification developed by Nasikun (2005), there are three main perspectives in multicultural education that are relevant to be applied in the NW: (1) cultural assimilation, (2) cultural pluralism, and (3) cultural synthesis.

- 1) Cultural Assimilation: This perspective describes the process of cultural assimilation in which learners from different cultural backgrounds integrate into the core society. In the NW context, this can be interpreted as an effort to mold learners into part of a larger society while maintaining Islamic identity as the core culture.
- 2) Cultural Pluralism: This perspective emphasizes the importance of each culture and sub-national community to maintain its identity. In NW, this approach is relevant to the recognition of cultural diversity in the West Nusa Tenggara region and efforts to maintain existing local identities within a more inclusive educational framework.
- 3) Cultural Synthesis: This perspective is a synthesis between assimilation and pluralism, where learners are encouraged to develop eclecticism, i.e. the ability to take the best from various cultures and integrate it within themselves. In the context of NW education, this perspective emphasizes the importance of a process of multiple acculturation where learners are able to absorb Islamic values while appreciating and integrating the cultural diversity around them.

Nasikun emphasized that cultural synthesis is the most suitable perspective to be applied in Indonesia, including in NW educational institutions, because it allows learners to develop a broad understanding of various local and national cultures, and create harmony in diversity.

d. Objectives of Multicultural Education in NW

The objectives of multicultural education in the NW can be divided into three main categories, namely attitudinal, cognitive, and instructional objectives (Ekstrand in Nasikun, 2005).

- 1) Attitudinal Objectives: This objective relates to attitude formation. Multicultural education in the NW is expected to develop cultural sensitivity, tolerance and respect for diverse cultural identities. Learners are taught to be responsive to other cultures and able to resolve conflicts peacefully. In the NW context, this is very important to maintain social harmony amidst the ethnic and cultural diversity that exists in West Nusa Tenggara.

- 2) Cognitive Objectives: Cognitive objectives focus on increasing learners' knowledge of cultural diversity. Learners in NW are expected to have the competence to understand, analyze, and interpret cultural behavior, both from the perspective of Islamic culture and local culture. Thus, they can build critical awareness of their own culture while appreciating other cultures.
- 3) Instructional Objective: This objective is concerned with developing learners' skills in identifying and correcting stereotypes, distortions or misconceptions about ethnic and cultural groups that often appear in learning materials. In the NW, multicultural education aims to provide learners with the ability to communicate effectively in diverse environments and prepare them to live in a multicultural society.

e. **Multicultural Education Approach in NW**

Banks (1993) identifies four main approaches that can be used to integrate multicultural education into the curriculum, namely:

1. Contribution Approach: This approach involves introducing contributions from different cultures and ethnicities into the subject matter. In the NW, this can be done by introducing heroes from different cultures as well as local cultural symbols that are relevant to Islamic teachings.
2. Additive Approach: This approach adds a multicultural perspective without changing the overall structure of the curriculum. In the NW, this approach can be implemented through the addition of material on local culture and pluralism in religion or history lessons.
3. Transformation Approach: This approach changes the basic assumptions in the curriculum, where learners are invited to look at issues from different ethnic perspectives. In the NW, this approach allows learners to see how Islam and local culture can complement each other in forming a harmonious society.
4. Social Action Approach: This approach adds a social action component, where learners are encouraged to take action related to the social issues studied. In the NW context, this could involve learners engaging in social activities in the

community that focus on empowering marginalized groups and strengthening intercultural harmony.

By implementing these four approaches, NW can play a strategic role in promoting multicultural education in Indonesia. Learners graduating from NW educational institutions are expected to not only have in-depth knowledge of Islam, but also a broad understanding of cultural diversity and the ability to live harmoniously in a pluralistic society.

Conclusion

Multicultural education in Indonesia, especially in the context of Nahdlatul Wathan (NW), plays an important role in creating a harmonious society in the midst of cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. By adopting the perspective of cultural synthesis as proposed by Nasikun, NW is able to integrate Islamic values with various local cultures, so that students can grow into individuals who appreciate differences, have tolerance, and are able to adapt to cultural diversity. Multicultural education in NW has three main goals, namely attitudinal goals (developing attitudes of tolerance and cultural sensitivity), cognitive goals (in-depth understanding of culture), and instructional goals (developing skills in overcoming stereotypes and misconceptions about other cultures). Through the contribution, additive, transformation, and social action approaches, NW seeks to integrate multicultural values in the curriculum and learning, so that learners can play an active role in creating positive social change in society. This whole educational process aims to create a younger generation that is not only academically intelligent, but also able to appreciate and cooperate with people from different backgrounds. Thus, multicultural education in the NW is an effective means to promote social harmony and overcome potential conflicts that may arise from differences.

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