

ANALYSIS OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION VALUES IN THEMATIC TEXTBOOKS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

This study aims to analyse the values of multicultural education contained in thematic textbooks of elementary school through literature review. The method used is library research with content analysis technique on thematic textbooks of elementary school curriculum 2013 and other supporting literature. The results showed that the elementary thematic textbooks have integrated various multicultural values such as tolerance, pluralism, democracy, humanism, justice, and equality. These values are spread in various learning themes and subthemes, both explicitly and implicitly through stories, illustrations, and student activities. The integration of these multicultural values supports the creation of an inclusive and harmonious learning environment, and is relevant to the national education objectives to shape the character of learners who are able to coexist in a pluralistic society. However, there are still some values that are not evenly distributed throughout the themes, so continuous evaluation and development of thematic elementary textbooks are needed.

Keywords: multicultural education values, thematic textbooks, primary school, literature review

Introduction

Indonesia is one of the largest multicultural countries in the world, with a wealth of cultures, tribes, religions, languages, and customs that are very diverse. This diversity characterises and strengthens the Indonesian nation in building an inclusive and tolerant national identity (Tubagus et al., 2023). The diversity of Indonesian society can be found in various aspects of life, ranging from economic, social, cultural, to geographical. Each region has its own uniqueness in the way of life, language, arts, and traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation. However, behind this wealth, the potential for conflict due to differences is always lurking if not managed properly (Aslan, 2019).

Education plays an important role in building harmony in a diverse society. Through education, the younger generation can be taught to understand, respect and appreciate the differences that exist around them. Education based on multicultural values is very relevant to be implemented in plural Indonesia (Aslan & Shiong ., 2023)

Multicultural education is an approach that emphasises respect for human uniqueness regardless of race, culture, gender, physical condition or economic status. This concept aims to create a learning environment that is inclusive, fair, and respects the human rights of each individual (Moh. Arif Mahbub et al., 2024) . In the context of formal education, schools become a strategic place to instil multicultural values from an early age. At school, students from various backgrounds can interact, learn together, and build mutual respect for differences. This process is expected to shape the character of the next generation of tolerant and humanist (Suyadi & Sari, 2024) .

Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20/2003 on the National Education System affirms that education must be organised in a democratic, equitable, and non-discriminatory manner by upholding human rights, religious values, cultural values, and national plurality. This emphasises the importance of integrating multicultural values in all aspects of education, including in textbooks (Siti Nurjanah & Ahmad Fauzi, 2023) .

Elementary school thematic textbooks are one of the main learning tools used in the teaching and learning process. This book not only conveys academic material, but also becomes a medium for internalising social and cultural values to learners. Therefore, it is important to ensure that thematic textbooks adequately contain and reflect the values of multicultural education (Aulia Rahmatika Nur Azizah & Erna Andriyanti ., 2023)

However, the reality on the ground shows that the implementation of multicultural education in primary schools still faces various challenges. There are still groups of students who tend to be exclusive based on regional origin, culture or language. In fact, it is not uncommon for acts of discrimination or ridicule stemming from differences in background (Zulaeha Karsono et al., 2022) .

This problem can be caused by the lack of understanding and inculcation of multicultural values in the learning process, including in the textbooks used. Textbooks that are not sensitive to diversity have the potential to strengthen stereotypes and prejudices between groups, thus hindering the realisation of social harmony in the school environment (Much Deiniatur & Uswatun Hasanah, 2023) .

Multicultural education is not only limited to the introduction of local culture, but also instils an attitude of appreciation for plurality, recognition of human dignity, and the development of social responsibility in community life. These values must be reflected in the materials, illustrations, and activities contained in the elementary thematic textbooks (L. Fatmawati ., 2023)

It is important to conduct a literature review on multicultural education values in elementary school thematic textbooks. This analysis aims to identify the extent to which

thematic textbooks have accommodated multicultural values, as well as assess the completeness and relevance of these values to the needs of education in pluralistic Indonesia. By analysing primary school thematic textbooks, a clear picture of the representation of multicultural values in the learning materials is expected to be found. The results of this study can be used as evaluation material and recommendations for the development of textbooks that are more inclusive and responsive to the diversity of the Indonesian nation.

Research Method

The research method used in this study is library research with a qualitative approach. Primary data was obtained from thematic textbooks of elementary schools, while secondary data came from journals, articles, and other relevant literature. Data collection techniques were conducted through documentation studies and content analysis of the material in the textbooks, with steps including identification, coding, grouping, and interpretation of the multicultural education values found. Data analysis was conducted descriptively to provide an in-depth description of the representation of multicultural values in elementary thematic textbooks (Eliyah & Aslan, 2025) ; (Green et al., 2006) .

Results and Discussion

Multicultural Education Values in Elementary Thematic Textbooks

The values of multicultural education contained in elementary school thematic textbooks are very important to shape the character of students who are able to live harmoniously in a diverse society. Elementary thematic textbooks are designed to instil an understanding and positive attitude towards differences, so that students can grow into tolerant and inclusive individuals. These values are integrated in various themes and subthemes, and reflected in the stories, illustrations, and learning activities in the book (Reni Puspitasari Dwi Lestariyana & Joko Nurkamto ., 2022)

One of the main values emphasised is tolerance. Students are invited to appreciate differences in religion, ethnicity, culture, and opinions through various concrete examples in everyday life. Thus, they learn to accept diversity as the wealth of the nation and avoid discriminatory attitudes towards friends with different backgrounds. Diversity is also an important value raised in elementary thematic books (Sandi Budiana et al., 2022) . Students are introduced to various customs, regional languages, traditional clothing, and typical food from various regions in Indonesia. Through this introduction, students are expected to be able to understand that each individual has a uniqueness that should be appreciated, thus creating mutual respect among them (Sandi Budiana et al., 2022) .

The value of togetherness is instilled through group activities, discussions, and cooperation in completing tasks. Elementary thematic books often contain stories or

illustrations about the importance of working together regardless of differences. This togetherness builds a sense of solidarity and strengthens unity among students. Justice is also one of the values taught in elementary thematic books. Students are invited to treat everyone fairly, without discriminating against friends based on background. They also learn about rights and obligations, as well as the importance of providing equal opportunities to every individual (Mujahidin Farid et al., 2024) .

Religious values do not go unnoticed in multicultural education. Elementary thematic books teach the importance of respecting different religions and beliefs, and instil mutual respect in carrying out worship. Students are invited to understand the meaning of tolerance between religious communities as part of everyday life. Equality and democracy are also integrated in learning. Students are taught to live in a democratic system, where every voice has equal rights and decisions are made based on deliberation. This trains students to respect different opinions and make decisions together (Arisman Sabir et al., 2024) .

Inclusive values are reflected in the materials that teach the importance of accepting and involving all students in every activity, regardless of background or physical condition. Elementary thematic books emphasise that every child has the same right to learn and participate in the school environment. Helping each other is a value that often appears in stories and activities in thematic books. Students are invited to help each other, both in learning activities and daily life. This value is important to build a sense of empathy and social care among students (Diana Carolina Rincón, 2023) .

Friendship is also taught through learning about the importance of maintaining good relationships with friends, teachers and the surrounding community. Elementary thematic books emphasise the importance of visiting each other, communicating, and maintaining friendship as part of Indonesia's friendly and open culture. Harmony and harmony are values that are highly emphasised in the elementary thematic book. Students are invited to live in harmony, avoid conflict, and resolve differences in a peaceful way. Thematic books often show examples of harmonious community life despite different backgrounds. Nationalism or national spirit is also integrated in elementary thematic books. Students are invited to love their homeland, respect state symbols, and understand the importance of unity in diversity. This nationalism is the foundation for building a strong national identity (Hye-Young Kim et al., 2021) .

The value of humanism teaches students to respect the dignity of every human being, regardless of differences. Elementary thematic books instil an attitude of empathy, compassion, and concern for others, both in the school environment and the wider community. Pluralism recognises the diversity of cultures, religions and ethnicities. Elementary thematic books instil an understanding that all groups have the same rights to live and develop. Students are invited to appreciate differences as part of the wealth of the nation (Huda, 2023) .

Finally, conflict resolution and mediation are also taught in elementary thematic books. Students are invited to resolve conflicts peacefully through dialogue, deliberation and mediation. They learn not to use violence in resolving problems, but to find a fair and wise solution together. This value is important to build a culture of peace in the school and community environment.

With the integration of multicultural education values in elementary thematic textbooks, students are expected to grow into individuals who are tolerant, fair, and able to maintain unity in diversity, so that they are ready to face the challenges of life in a pluralistic society.

Completeness and Distribution of Values in Elementary Thematic Textbooks

The comprehensiveness and distribution of multicultural education values in elementary school thematic textbooks are important aspects that determine the effectiveness of character cultivation in students. Elementary thematic textbooks, especially those published based on the 2013 Curriculum, have been designed to integrate various multicultural values systematically and evenly across learning themes and subthemes (Bahtiar ., 2024)

Based on the analysis, the content of multicultural values in elementary thematic books includes the values of tolerance, diversity, togetherness, justice, religion, equality and democracy, inclusiveness, helping, friendship, and harmony. These values are not only explicitly mentioned, but also internalised through stories, illustrations, and learning activities that are relevant to students' daily lives (Futaqi, 2023) . The completeness of multicultural values in elementary thematic books can be said to be very good. Each main theme in the book, such as "Save Living Things", "Unity in Differences", "Figures and Inventions", "Globalisation", and "Entrepreneurship", contains various multicultural values that complement each other. In each theme, these values are elaborated in different subthemes and lessons, so that students get a full and repeated understanding of the importance of living in diversity (Karman & et al ., 2022)

The distribution of multicultural values in elementary thematic books is also fairly even. Each subtheme and lesson is attempted to contain more than one multicultural value, so there is no theme that only highlights one aspect. For example, in the theme "Unity in Difference", students are not only taught about tolerance, but also about togetherness, justice, and inclusiveness. This strengthens the internalisation of these values in students (Saptadi ., 2023)

The integration of multicultural values in elementary thematic books is done through five main dimensions: material integration, the process of reconstructing knowledge, adjusting learning methods, reducing prejudice, and strengthening school culture and social structures. These five dimensions ensure that multicultural values not only become knowledge, but also become part of students' daily attitudes and behaviour (Yaqin ., 2021)

In the material integration dimension, multicultural values are presented in the form of readings, stories, and illustrations that describe the lives of diverse Indonesian communities. Students are invited to recognise and appreciate differences through concrete examples that are close to their lives. The process of reconstructing knowledge is done by encouraging students to discuss, ask questions, and express opinions on issues of diversity. The teacher acts as a facilitator who helps students understand the meaning behind every difference that exists in the surrounding environment (Wulandari, 2024).

The adjustment of learning methods can be seen from the use of various active learning strategies, such as group work, discussion, and simulation, which involve all students without discrimination. This fosters a sense of community and mutual respect among students. Prejudice reduction is done by providing an understanding of the importance of avoiding negative stereotypes and prejudices against other groups. Elementary thematic books contain stories and activities that emphasise the importance of mutual respect and acceptance of differences (Rodiyana, 2024).

Strengthening school culture and social structure is realised through the cultivation of multicultural values in every aspect of school life, both inside and outside the classroom. Students are invited to apply these values in daily interactions, such as in ceremonial activities, community service, and celebrations of national and religious holidays (Mardhiah, 2024).

Although in general the completeness and distribution of multicultural values in elementary thematic books is very good, some studies note that there are still themes or subthemes that are not fully equitable in displaying all values. However, overall, the elementary thematic books have met the content eligibility standards set by the government and are relevant to the needs of education in pluralistic Indonesia. Another advantage of thematic primary school books is the link between multicultural values and the core competencies and basic competencies stipulated in the Permendikbud. This ensures that the cultivation of these values cannot be separated from the objectives of national education (Sumaryanto, 2025) (Aslan & Wahyudin, 2020).

The dissemination of multicultural values is also supported by illustrations and activities that actively involve students. For example, in group assignments, students are invited to work together with friends from different backgrounds, so they learn directly about the importance of tolerance and togetherness. In addition, the elementary thematic book also provides space for students to reflect on personal experiences related to diversity. This reflection helps students understand the meaning of multicultural values in the context of real life (Akbarwati, 2024).

The dissemination of multicultural values in elementary thematic books is not only limited to the subject matter, but also integrated in assessment and evaluation. Teachers are encouraged to assess students' attitudes and behaviour in applying these values, not just the cognitive aspects (L. Fatmawati, 2023).

Overall, the completeness and dissemination of multicultural education values in elementary thematic textbooks have supported the creation of an inclusive, fair, and harmonious learning environment. This is an important foundation for the character building of Indonesia's young generation who are tolerant and able to coexist in diversity.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that thematic textbooks for elementary schools have integrated multicultural education values quite completely and evenly. Values such as tolerance, diversity, togetherness, justice, religion, equality, democracy, inclusiveness, helping, friendship, harmony, nationalism, humanism, and pluralism are found in various learning themes and subthemes. The integration of these values is not only reflected in the reading materials, but also in the illustrations, activities, and assignments that encourage students to understand and practice multicultural attitudes in everyday life.

The distribution of multicultural values in elementary thematic textbooks is fairly evenly distributed across themes, although some studies noted that there are still themes or subthemes that do not fully display all values in a balanced manner. However, in general, these books have supported national education goals and are relevant to the needs of Indonesia's pluralistic society. The values are also aligned with the core and basic competencies stipulated in the curriculum, thus strengthening the role of textbooks as the main medium for student character building.

Thus, the analysis shows that elementary thematic textbooks play a strategic role in instilling multicultural education values to students. The existence of these values is expected to form a young generation that is tolerant, fair, inclusive, and able to live harmoniously in the midst of diversity. However, continuous development and evaluation are still needed so that textbooks are increasingly responsive to social dynamics and the needs of multicultural education in Indonesia.

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