

# Multicultural Classroom Management of Students in Elementary Schools

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## ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine how teachers manage classes in elementary schools in multicultural educational settings. Elementary school teachers must design a learning process that integrates multicultural education so that teachers contribute positively to fostering students' nationalism and multicultural attitudes from an early age. The introduction of multiculturalism aims to shape the character of a country's children who can accept, understand, and respect all people of different races, personalities, social, ethnic, customs, and religions. Efforts to learn multicultural education in elementary schools must be carried out as a means of training and awareness for the younger generation so that they can accept and appreciate all multicultural differences. The research approach used is qualitative by conducting a literature review. The data analysis technique of this research is descriptive qualitative using the content analysis method. The results of this study are that multicultural education in elementary schools is systemic and holistic and needs to be developed based on national culture and character. The strategies teachers use in managing multicultural classrooms are an important part of realizing the lofty ideals of building the next generation who have the traits and characteristics of respecting, tolerating, and being fair to others regardless of their social background, ethnicity, religion, race, and class.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Classroom management is organising the classroom environment through students and teaching materials, creating a learning process (Ambarwati et al., 2021). On the other hand, class management is an attempt to solve problems in the classroom, which aims to maintain and create a classroom atmosphere that supports effective learning (Ubaidillah et al., 2021). In this case, classroom management must be implemented by the teacher in the classroom. This relates to the continuity of the teaching and learning process in the school, which is meaningful as well as practical and efficient. Therefore, excellent and effective classroom management is an absolute requirement in teaching and learning. Research (A. I. Mastur & Bambang Budi Wiyono, 2022) reveals that the most difficult challenge teachers face in creating an optimal learning environment is managing the classroom environment. This view is reinforced by (Oliver et al., 2011), which confirms the findings of many

teacher complaints due to difficulties in managing the class. According to (M. Mastur et al., 2022), good classroom management impacts the effectiveness of achieving learning objectives. Conversely, a type that cannot be adequately managed becomes a source of various problems that hinder the smooth running of learning activities (Hardiansyah & Zainuddin, 2022).

Indonesia is a plural country of various ethnicities, religions, races, languages, customs and cultures. Of course, this plurality has both positive and negative impacts. The negative effect is in the form of conflicts arising from this diversity. The conflict was in the form of SARA (ethnic, religious, racial and inter-group) conflicts, human rights violations, discrimination, injustice, thuggery, terrorism, radicalism and others (M. Mastur, 2023a). There is a tendency for social responses to be negative, prejudiced, and anarchist when other groups are different or incompatible (M. Mastur, 2023b). On the other hand, the wave of significant changes in people's lives is related to the entry of the globalization era, which demands openness to all aspects of life (Hardiansyah et al., 2023). The existence and unity of the nation are tested. The conflicts that occur in the regions are signs of national disunity. The encounter of various diversity and cultures in the classroom is unavoidable. Each student has different characteristics, needs and backgrounds (Hardiansyah, 2022b). If this diversity cannot be adequately managed, it can create gaps/conflicts that hinder learning success. Feelings of egoism, arrogance and exclusivity also have the potential to grow and thrive due to this phenomenon (Keser & Yavuz, 2018). Therefore, teachers can build an academic atmosphere that respects cultural diversity to accommodate variety. The statement above is in line with the results of research (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2010) that teachers need help managing students in the classroom due to the lack of teachers who teach by paying attention to the diversity or individual characteristics of their students. The teacher's expertise in managing student diversity is also believed to impact the comfort and socio-emotional conditions built between teachers and students in the classroom (Nurbatra, 2018).

The study revealed that out of 24,650,000 students who were bullied and not bullied, male students were the most participants, at 50.9%, and female students, at 49.1% (Berger et al., 2018). The results concluded that some bullied students reported their experiences due to possible threats from bullies. 20.2% of reported bullying cases were considered very bad, considering the total driven student population was 4,986,000. Strict punitive measures were highlighted to control and eradicate attacks on school grounds. However, multicultural practices and education are more recommended to foster a healthy learning community free from victimization and oppression. In conclusion, multicultural educational practices can be a pedagogical tool to teach students about the dangers of victimization and bullying among fellow students (Benediktsson & Ragnarsdottir, 2019).

Implementing multicultural education, which has the principle of "recognition of diversity above equality", can provide educational services that align with human needs and respect differences with a human approach. (Kwok, 2021) recommends preventive efforts to manage student diversity in the classroom through efforts to accommodate the variety of students who respect diversity and are responsive to culture. One thing teachers can do to address this diversity is through classroom management (Dlamini & Mbatha, 2018), which explains that among the aspects that are the focus of classroom management is how to manage the variety of student backgrounds and their learning abilities. This is also relevant to research (Kustati et al., 2020), which states that among the techniques that can be applied in learning to accommodate students from various diverse backgrounds, there is more focus on managing the classroom environment. Multicultural classroom management can provide educational services that are equally comprehensive and by needs with a human approach and respect for differences amidst the diversity of classes. Multiculturalism, in practice, is a strategy that truly recognizes and respects existing cultural diversity. Therefore, to answer the problems above, teacher innovation in managing the variety of students must be done through classroom management based on multicultural values. Through multicultural classroom management, it is hoped that it will become an alternative class management strategy that is humane and open to diversity (Hardiansyah & Mas'odi, 2022).

Based on the description above, teachers must be able to create a multicultural classroom environment by implementing learning environment management strategies that respect the cultural diversity of students. With classroom management that respects cultural diversity, it is hoped that they will be able to develop skills to develop themselves and collaborate with others who support diversity and social justice (Tarbutton, 2018). Based on these reasons, it is crucial to conduct this study to provide new insights and an understanding of the accurate picture of implementing classroom management strategies that respect the diversity of students in the classroom.

## 2. METHODS

This study uses the literature review method. A literature review is a type of library research carried out by reading various books, journals and other publications related to research topics to produce an article about a particular issue (Jabeen, 2019). In this study, the authors reviewed primary documents from quality journals from the years of publication, from 2016 to 2023, according to the research topic. The journal the author uses comes from Google Scholar, setting the year of publication from 2016-2023. After the writer collects materials related to the problems discussed in this study, the writer analyzes and narrates to conclude. Data analysis uses a descriptive method so that the results can be explained in depth, detail and detail. The analysis step begins with determining the research topic, reviewing the literature, reducing the literature to find evidence and findings, organizing the literature, reviewing the literature and drawing conclusions (Lawrence A. Machi, 2016). The focus themes of this research study include: diversity and character of students, classroom management, classroom management issues, multicultural education and its principles and values as a basis for finding classroom management strategies that value diversity more

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 *Class management*

Classroom management is part of the teacher's activities in managing learning in the classroom. Classroom management is considered important because of its role in organizing and conditioning students during learning activities. No matter how smart or good the teacher is at conveying learning material, if class conditions cannot be organized properly, the teacher will also have difficulty providing meaningful learning experiences to students. Regarding the meaning of class, (Runyan et al., 2018) defines class as a space or place where students learn. The room is identified as a place that is bounded by four walls, and there are grades. This view aligns with the opinion of (Franklin & Harrington, 2019), who view the class from a narrow perspective as a room bounded by four walls and a place for students to gather to participate in learning. However, from another point of view, the class as a small community is part of the school community. Meanwhile, from a management point of view, classroom management can be interpreted as an effort to manage classes with a set of plans and implement classroom management and classroom control (Calkins et al., 2021). In other literature, (Vallone et al., 2022) argue that classroom management is a teacher's effort related to physical management (classrooms) and fostering student behaviour. Therefore, classroom management is not just about managing classroom aspects but also how to manage students in class so they can carry out learning activities properly. This is also reinforced by the opinion of (Caldera et al., 2020), who divides the objectives of classroom management to include two, namely: physical arrangements (classrooms, furniture, and assignments) and also student arrangements (student behaviour and learning activities in class) so that classroom conditions remain stable, optimal for learning. On this basis, (Buzzai et al., 2022) interpret classroom management as all teacher actions aimed at building a stimulative and comprehensive learning environment.

Based on these goals, it emphasizes that the teacher as a class manager does not only prepare learning materials, convey learning, and evaluate the development of student learning outcomes but also deals with the task of fostering and creating, maintaining and improving class systems or

organizations so that students feel comfortable and comfortable. In the classroom, to build motivation, always learn. This is where the teacher's role in classroom management becomes important to utilize and develop students' potential. Effective classroom management requires teachers to implement dynamic lessons, reinforce positive behaviours, and intervene early and efficiently on bad behaviours (Stunell, 2021). Through good classroom management, it is hoped that it can support the success of the teaching and learning interaction process. This is in line with the views of (Debbag & Fidan, 2020), who put forward the purpose of classroom management to maintain and foster class conditions both physically-materially and in student behaviour. Classroom management is very important for teachers because, with good management, students can learn well while still paying attention to the satisfaction and needs of students from various aspects of their needs and development – intellectual, moral, social and individual character traits. The results of (Runyan et al., 2018) also show a relationship between the teacher's classroom management style, the classroom climate and student achievement in school.

### **3.2 Creating a Multicultural Classroom Environment**

The situation of students in a class must be diverse; therefore, each student has various potentials and continues to grow. Students also have different characters and needs (Hardiansyah et al., 2022) because every individual is a social being who needs to belong, be acknowledged, and be accepted (Hardiansyah & Wahdian, 2023). In the family environment, children get different treatment, care and education. Differences in the background of these experiences often influence the formation of attitudes and mindsets of children (Hardiansyah & Mulyadi, 2022). As empiricists believe, experience is a source of knowledge (Ubaidillah et al., 2021). The differences in these students include the diversity of ethnicity, gender, religion and the ability to comprehend the information conveyed by the teacher in learning. In addition to the aspect of absorption capacity. In the class, there is also a diversity of students from other aspects considering students as complex individuals. Starting from the potential, characteristics, personality, identity, talent, and even awareness to learn (Berger et al., 2018). From this diversity, teachers should be able to manage it properly so that positive interactions and diverse individuals can occur. So that these heterogeneous students can work well together in class and accept each other's differences which can lead to the growth of a high tolerance value among students.

Meanwhile, a multicultural class is a class that is inhabited by various characters and backgrounds of students who are different but reflect acceptance and appreciation of this diversity (Benediktsson & Ragnarsdottir, 2019). A multicultural classroom environment is marked by mutual respect and respect for one another regardless of the background and identity inherent in students (Dlamini & Mbatha, 2018). Therefore, intensive effort is required from the teacher to create a multicultural learning environment (respecting and friendly to differences) in the classroom. The class teacher should organize and manage the learning environment so that the atmosphere is fun for all students with different backgrounds but still in an atmosphere full of openness, tolerance, and kinship (Kustati et al., 2020). Therefore, before acting as a multicultural classroom manager, the teacher must equip himself with an understanding of the concepts of classroom management that respect diversity. The intended understanding is the teacher's ability to study and explore theories of classroom management activities that are friendly to diversity and inclusive or open. One is by applying the principles of awareness of the importance of implementing fair and equal classroom management procedures (Hardiansyah & AR, 2022). Of course, it is also based on humanist, pluralist and democratic values to create a multicultural learning atmosphere (Caldera et al., 2020). James S. Cangelosi (2013) also emphasized that the effectiveness of classroom management strategies in learning activities depends on how you relate to students as individuals and your understanding of students' backgrounds. Teacher interpersonal skills are key in fostering diversity in the classroom, as Dreikurs's theory of managing student diversity (Stunell, 2021).

The multicultural classroom environment generally consists of the physical and psychological-social environment. A multicultural physical environment occurs when the classroom (classroom) depicts an environment that respects diversity, such as the arrangement of furniture and seating for students that respects the diversity of students in terms of gender, age, level of intelligence, diversity

of ethnicity, race and even religion (Caldera et al., 2020). Not the other way around; the physical class is designed to prioritize the needs of one gender, age, or student preferences. At the same time, the psychological aspect is described through the comfort of students in class. Comfort relates to how students can accept the existing diversity, feel enjoyed, and are well-received in a classroom with a democratic atmosphere (Buzzai et al., 2022).

Based on the description above, the psychological-social environment is related to how the atmosphere built in the class is characterized by mutual respect and respect for each other regardless of the background and identity inherent in students. This atmosphere is expected to build a conditional learning situation because there is an attitude of respecting diversity in terms of gender, age, level of intelligence, diversity of ethnicity, race and even religion.

### ***3.3 Developing a Multicultural Classroom Management Strategy***

The learning atmosphere is closely related to the environmental climate where learning is carried out. This environment can be interpreted as everything that can be used to support learning activities. An environment formed with a culture that does not respect diversity usually triggers feelings of unfriendly discrimination and negative prejudice (stereotypes) towards different cultures around it. Through multicultural classroom management, it is hoped that various negative prejudices between friends, discriminatory attitudes and attitudes of "looking down" on other people who have different cultures. For example, the belief that one's culture is natural and correct, while other people's culture is something strange, and they tend to think that their culture is the best creates excessive pride in their culture (Debbag & Fidan, 2020).

Based on this phenomenon, understanding the culture between individuals and groups in the classroom is necessary. (Tarbuton, 2018) stated that the teacher's understanding of cultural diversity would provide positive opportunities for teachers to foster and motivate students to be involved in massive classroom learning activities. Ways or actions were taken by teachers in managing a classroom environment that respects diversity (M. Mastur, 2023a).

Another important aspect that is no less than the strategy above in managing diversity in the classroom is building inclusive relationships and good communication. The way the teacher speaks and communicates with students greatly influences the behaviour and interaction of students in the classroom. Good communication creates a conducive climate for quality learning because students want to work together and show positive discipline (Nurbatra, 2018). This strategy needs to be carried out by the teacher to create a learning environment that understands each other, accepts each other, and respects the differences individually and in groups in the classroom. The following is an example of implementing multicultural classroom management in managing the diversity of students in elementary schools.

### ***3.4 Managing Gender Diversity in the Classroom***

Each class generally consists of different genders, namely boys and girls. The existence of gender differences causes differences in tendencies, development, and different needs between boys and girls. In gender inclusion education, women and men are equal in obtaining the right to education and cannot be differentiated (Hardiansyah, 2022a). To manage gender diversity in the classroom, teachers can do this by understanding the tendencies of the two genders to serve as a basis for managing classes that are principled on gender equality so that teachers can accommodate children with gender differences who are treated unfairly. The strategies that can be used include the implementation of democratic, just, and non-discriminatory education.

Gender socialization in the classroom can ensure that female students know their equal existence with men, whereas male students know they have equal degrees with women in public. As (A. I. Mastur & Bambang Budi Wiyono, 2022) that, the principle of gender equality is a basic strategy for building a gender-sensitive attitude in schools. The teacher can do an example of classroom management based on gender through two types of management. First, through physical management, by managing classrooms and their gender-friendly attributes, not reflecting a tendency towards one type of gender.

Gender management in the classroom can also be carried out through respect for student work regardless of gender; that is, all have the opportunity to display their best work (Dlamini & Mbatha, 2018). Fostering gender-sensitive behaviour in children can be done by instilling the values of equal rights and anti-discrimination by providing examples of fairness and non-discrimination towards certain genders and increasing sensitivity to gender issues (Yaqin, 2005).

### **3.5 Managing Diversity of Social Status in the Classroom**

Social status is generally based on three categories, namely occupation, ideology and descent. To address this, the teacher's classroom management strategy is to provide awareness, foster critical awareness of equality (legality), and foster a socially caring attitude regardless of the child's social status background (M. Mastur et al., 2022), such as placing heterogeneous student seating positions from the child's social status and class and dividing study groups or class discussions with various children's social statuses. This is done to avoid the emergence of groups or gangs "with a certain predicate" based on prestige, such as prestige, dignity, and prestige in society (Debbag & Fidan, 2020). In addition to managing the teacher's seat, the teacher must continue to educate students about diversity. Awareness can be done by instilling the values of diversity by implementing learning activities and classroom management that respects cultural diversity. So that, through the values of diversity obtained, students can live with a high tolerance for various forms of diversity in social status from friends and the community in their environment.

### **3.6 Managing Ethnic Diversity in the Classroom**

If not managed properly, ethnic diversity in the class can lead to the emergence of negative prejudices such as stereotypes and discrimination. If left unchecked, this view can damage both personal and group relationships because stereotypes can make it difficult for a person to develop towards progress on cultural developments outside of himself, as if making a person confined to his own culture and tend to resist changes caused by the influence of other cultures. This was stated by Banks, whom Tilaar quoted in a study of ethnic identity regarding the typology of a person's attitude towards cultural ethnicity, which he referred to as ethnic psychological captivity (Vallone et al., 2022). Therefore, the need for multicultural interaction to be built in the classroom to establish social relations to get to know one another and to be able to create a sense of affection. Interaction can lead to mutual trust; there is no process of hegemony from the dominant culture over the minority culture (Calkins et al., 2021). Implementation of multi-ethnic classroom management can be done through strategies that consider the interests of all students in the class. Class management strategies based on ethnicity can be applied by developing an egalitarian culture (Franklin & Harrington, 2019). The egalitarian culture in question is a culture of equality so that feelings of pride or feeling superior to other ethnic groups can be avoided, which can trigger conflict. Therefore activities that smell of togetherness need to be built in the classroom. So that the atmosphere of mutual respect and mutual trust can be trusted, each person can hold each other's ethics, and they can educate and foster each other (Runyan et al., 2018).

Among examples of strategies that teachers can develop in managing ethnic diversity is to create cross-ethnic study groups. That is, divide the groups in the class as much as possible, consisting of students with different ethnicities, such as children of Arab ethnicity combined with children of Javanese, Madurese, and other ethnicities. This strategy must be carried out to bring students to experience direct interactions with ethnic diversity. For example, by dividing study groups, class picket groups consisting of students of various ethnicities. Modification of the diversity of this group can also be done by accommodating ethnic, gender and cultural diversity at the same time. In addition, in managing classes that respect ethnicity and cultural attributes, intercultural interactions (namely through intercultural communication) can be carried out. This method is recognized to affect our communication process at the level of awareness or ignorance of cultural groups (norms and culture) (Calkins et al., 2021).

### 3.7 Managing the Diversity of Student Intelligence in the Classroom

Differences in students' abilities and tendencies are closely related to the attitudes and behaviour of students in class learning. This diversity is due to student experience factors, such as developmental stimulation and the environment (Vallone et al., 2022). Every child also has different abilities, including cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. In processing information, there are children in the class who are fast (fast learners), moderate (middle learners) and slow (slow learners). The diversity of children's abilities in applying multicultural classroom management requires "respect" for the diversity of children's abilities. This is based on the opinion that every child is unique and special. Therefore, to develop their potential, it is necessary to have assistance, guidance and direction from the teacher so that they can optimally develop all potential through multicultural classroom management; it is hoped that the potential abilities of students can be developed to the fullest. As for aspects of the diversity of students' abilities, according to (Caldera et al., 2020), they are classified into eight kinds of intelligence which Deporter et al. abbreviated as SLIM n BIL (Buzzai et al., 2022). Among others: (1) Spatial-Visual intelligence related to thinking skills in images and pictures, (2) Linguistic-Verbal; proficiency in thinking in words or language, (3) Interpersonal; intelligence related to thinking skills through communicating with other people, usually characterized by sensitivity to the feelings of intentions, motivation, character, temperament of other people, (4) Musical-Rhythmic; the ability to think in rhythm and melody, is synonymous with sensitivity to rhythm, notation and melody, (5) Naturalist; thinking in terms of nature, (6) Body-Kinesthetic; the ability to think through physical sensations and movements, marked by the ability to use the body or gestures to express ideas and feelings as they exist in actors, athletes, dancers, sculptors, and surgeons, (7) Intrapersonal; reflective thinking ability, (8) Logical-Mathematical; the ability to think with reasoning or logic.

The classroom management strategy that respects the diversity of students' intelligence includes; (Stunell, 2021) proposes several strategies to attract students' attention in class as in 1 below;

**Table 1.** The Strategy Of Grouping Students Based On The Type Of Intelligence

No.	Intelligence type	Grouping strategy
1	Linguistic intelligence	Group students based on the first letter
2	Logical-Mathematical	Grouping students based on the order of numbers one to the number of groups to be made
3	Spatial intelligence	Group students based on their favorite color
4	Physical Kinesthetic	Grouping students based on motion intelligence, for example, find a friend who can jump on one leg
5	Musical Intelligence	Group students based on the children's songs they like
6	Natural intelligence	Grouping students based on their favorite animal by imitating the sound
7	Interpersonal Intelligence	Make groups of students from different backgrounds
8	Intrapersonal Intelligence	Group students to make certain projects with different themes

Based on the various classroom management strategies above, the teacher, as a class manager, can determine what class management strategy is appropriate and suitable to use. Therefore, to ensure the success of classroom management, special support is needed from teachers and school institutions to carry out multicultural-based classroom management innovations jointly.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The teacher, as class manager, has a role and responsibility for organizing and fostering the class so that it remains conducive from time to time. Plural and heterogeneous class conditions require efforts to organize classes that can accommodate all the diversity of students. Therefore, before acting as classroom managers, teachers need to equip themselves with an understanding of the concepts of classroom management that respect diversity. With this understanding, the basic capital is to create an environment or class climate that respects diversity (multicultural). Multicultural classroom management strategies need to be implemented to create a learning environment that is conducive and

friendly to differences. Through this multicultural classroom management, skills for self-development and collaboration with others that support diversity and social justice can be developed.

After discussing the above conclusions, the authors suggest that other researchers conduct further and more in-depth research on multicultural classroom management. This topic is an interesting one to explore in more depth.

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