

Implementation of Multiculturalism Values in the Campus Environment

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Abstract: *This study examines the implementation of multicultural values in the campus environment through a critical analysis of tolerance, inclusivity, and social integration among students. Using a descriptive qualitative approach based on observation and interviews, the study explores how students interact within a culturally diverse academic setting. The findings reveal that students generally demonstrate positive attitudes toward diversity through mutual respect, cooperation, and openness. However, challenges such as stereotypes, symbolic discrimination, cultural barriers, and unequal participation remain evident. By comparing the findings with previous studies, this article argues that multiculturalism in higher education should move beyond symbolic acceptance toward transformative inclusivity. Universities must strengthen multicultural education, intercultural dialogue, and institutional policies that promote equality and social justice*

Keywords: *Multiculturalism; Campus Diversity; Tolerance; Social Integration; Citizenship Education*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is widely recognized as a multicultural nation characterized by ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural diversity. Universities represent miniature versions of Indonesian society because they bring together students from diverse backgrounds (Ramadhan et al., 2020). Consequently, higher education institutions play a strategic role in fostering democratic values, tolerance, and social cohesion. Baidhawry (2005) argues that multiculturalism is not merely the recognition of diversity but also the commitment to equality among cultural groups. Similarly, Parekh (2008) and Ramadhan & Eiranda (2025) emphasizes that multicultural societies require dialogue, recognition, and equal participation of all cultural communities. In higher education contexts, these principles are particularly important because campus life serves as a social laboratory where students learn to interact with people who differ from themselves. Previous studies have demonstrated the importance of multicultural values in higher education. Permana (2023) found that students in multicultural campuses generally exhibit positive tolerance through openness and respect for cultural differences. The study also highlighted that democratic values within student organizations strengthen social harmony. However, the existence of exclusive groups and isolated students indicates that diversity does not automatically guarantee social integration. Furthermore, Mohammad Rudiyanto et al., (2024) argue that the integration of multicultural and character education significantly contributes to the development of tolerance, empathy, ethical behavior, and openness among university students. Nevertheless, the implementation of such integration often faces institutional constraints, including limited resources and insufficient curriculum support. Research conducted by Efaningrum et al., (2022) reveals that multicultural awareness among Generation Z students is influenced by socio-cultural experiences and educational backgrounds. Their findings indicate that multicultural competence consists of awareness, understanding, and intercultural communication skills.

These dimensions are essential for maintaining social cohesion within diverse educational environments. In addition, Anggraini et al., (2022) emphasize that multicultural education serves as an important strategy for preventing intolerance and radical tendencies among young people. They argue that students must understand diversity as a social asset rather than a source of division. This perspective reinforces the need for universities to promote multicultural values not only as social norms but also as instruments for strengthening democratic citizenship. Although previous studies generally report positive outcomes of multicultural education, there remains limited research examining how

multicultural values are implemented in everyday campus interactions and what challenges continue to hinder inclusive participation. Therefore, this study aims to critically analyze the implementation of multicultural values in campus life by examining both its achievements and limitations. Based on the observation report, the study addresses the following research questions: 1. How are multicultural values implemented in everyday interactions among students in the campus environment? 2. What challenges hinder the realization of multicultural values and inclusive participation on campus? 3. How do student organizations contribute to strengthening tolerance, inclusivity, and social integration among students? These questions guide the analysis and provide a framework for critically examining both the achievements and limitations of multicultural implementation in campus life.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative case study design to critically examine the implementation of multicultural values within a higher education environment. A qualitative design was selected because multiculturalism represents a complex social phenomenon that cannot be adequately understood through numerical measurements alone. Instead, it requires an in-depth, contextual exploration of students' lived experiences, perceptions, interpersonal interactions, and interpretations regarding diversity, tolerance, and social integration. The research was conducted at Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri, East Java, Indonesia.

Active enrolment (semesters 2 to 6), representation of diverse ethnic and regional backgrounds, and active involvement in daily campus life or student organizations. The demographics consisted of three local Javanese students representing the regional majority, six migrant students from Eastern Indonesia (specifically East Nusa Tenggara and Papua), and six student organization leaders across legislative bodies, activity clubs, and departmental associations to provide institutional perspectives.

Data collection was carried out over a three-month period from February to April 2026 using a combination of systematic non-participant observation and semi-structured in-depth interviews. Observations were conducted across key campus spaces such as formal academic classrooms during group assignments, student association offices, the library garden, and the campus cafeteria to capture natural interaction patterns and social groupings. Semi-structured interviews lasting 45 to 60 minutes were conducted individually in neutral campus settings to ensure privacy. All sessions were audio-recorded with explicit written informed consent, focusing on personal experiences with diversity, interaction barriers, casual discrimination, and the role of campus activities.

Data analysis followed the qualitative interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), comprising three concurrent flows of activity. First, during data reduction, audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and coded into thematic categories such as tolerance, cooperation, stereotypes, dialect barriers, symbolic discrimination, and organizational contributions. Second, in the data display stage, the reduced data were organized systematically using thematic matrices and descriptive tables accompanied by verbatim interview excerpts. Finally, conclusion drawing and verification were conducted by triangulating observation logs with interview transcripts and comparing empirical findings against established multicultural theories. To ensure analytical rigor and eliminate researcher bias, member-checking was performed with several informants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on observations and interviews, the implementation of multicultural values on campus has generally been successful. Students demonstrate mutual respect for differences in religion, culture, language, and social background. Interactions within academic and organizational activities reflect tolerance, cooperation, cross-cultural communication, and the ability to adapt to diverse environments.

Table 1. Implementation of Multicultural Values in Campus Life

Aspect	Findings
Tolerance	Students respect differences in religion, culture, and language
Cooperation	Academic groups are heterogeneous
Communication	There is active cross cultural interaction
Organization	Becoming a meeting space for students from various backgrounds
Social Integration	Students are able to adapt to diverse environments

The findings in Table 1 indicate that the values of multiculturalism are not only understood conceptually but also manifested in the practices of daily campus life. Tolerance is evident in students' respect for religious, cultural, and linguistic diversity. Furthermore, collaboration within heterogeneous academic groups demonstrates an acceptance of differences. These results align with research by Ma'arif, (2019) which explains that instilling multicultural values can foster attitudes of tolerance, equality, justice, and the ability to live harmoniously amidst diversity. The study confirms that the continuous internalization of multicultural values can encourage students to live together peacefully and with mutual respect. However, the study also identified several challenges in implementing multiculturalism on campus.

Table 2. Challenges of Implementing Multiculturalism

Challenge	From of Findings
Stereotypes	Labeling of students from certain areas
Exclusivity	Regional based friendship groups
Obstacle Communication	Differences in dialects and communication style
Symbolic Discrimination	Jokes that contain stereotypical elements

Despite relatively inclusive campus conditions, several challenges remain in implementing multicultural values. Stereotypes against students from certain regions, exclusivity within friendship groups, communication barriers due to dialect differences, and symbolic discrimination in the form of stereotypical jokes persist. These findings support the findings of Efianingrum et al., (2022), who explained that multicultural awareness needs to be accompanied by intercultural communication skills for optimal social integration. Therefore, diversity does not automatically result in inclusivity without conscious effort from the entire academic community.

Table 3. Contribution of Students Organizations

From of Activity	Impact
Discussion	Increase understanding diversity
Commitment	Practicing cross cultural cooperation
Community Service	Strengthening solidarity
Training Leadership	Cultivate attitude democratic

Table 3 shows that student organizations play a strategic role in strengthening multicultural values. Discussion activities, committees, community service, and leadership training provide students with opportunities to learn to collaborate with individuals from diverse backgrounds. This finding aligns with research by Mohammad Rudiyanto et al., (2024), which confirms that the integration of character education and multiculturalism in higher education contributes to the development of tolerance, empathy, and ethical behavior in students. Overall, the research results indicate that the implementation of multicultural values on campus has had a positive impact on the creation of tolerance, social integration, and a democratic culture. However, strengthening campus policies, multicultural education, and spaces for cross cultural dialogue are still needed so that multicultural practices do not stop at symbolic recognition but develop into substantive inclusivity.

By evaluating the empirical achievements against the persistent micro-challenges, this study argues that higher education institutions in Indonesia must transition from symbolic multiculturalism toward transformative inclusivity. Symbolic multiculturalism is characterized by superficial or decorative celebrations of diversity such as performing traditional dances at campus ceremonies or publishing diverse demographic statistics while leaving structural and daily social exclusions untouched (Raihani, 2018). In contrast, transformative inclusivity demands that multicultural values are deeply integrated into university governance, pedagogical practices, and student support systems.

The findings demonstrate that while Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri has successfully cultivated a culture of peaceful co-existence marked by tolerance and basic academic cooperation, the persistent presence of casual stereotypes, dialectal exclusion, and regional cliques indicates that students still face a fragmented social reality. This fragmentation restricts non-local students from fully and equally participating in campus life.

To bridge this gap, universities must adopt a holistic, multi-level framework encompassing three core strategies. First, curriculum integration must be pursued by embedding multicultural competencies and intercultural communication training into the standard curriculum, as advocated by Nawangsih et al. (2022) and Mohammad Rudiyanto et al. (2024), ensuring that all students develop the skills to communicate across differences without defaulting to exclusive local dialects. Second, faculty members must engage in active pedagogical mediation, moving beyond simply assigning random groups to actively facilitating group dynamics, mediating subtle communication barriers, and addressing micro-aggressions during class activities. Third, institutional safeguards must be established through formal campus anti-discrimination mechanisms and reporting systems for symbolic discrimination, thereby legitimizing student concerns regarding stereotypical jokes and elevating campus standards of mutual respect. By embedding these structural elements, universities can transition from passive spaces of co-existence into active engines of social justice and democratic citizenship.

The Results and Discussion section focuses on presenting objective findings based on data and hypothesis testing. These findings should be analyzed in depth through comparison with theory and relevant prior research. To improve readability, authors are advised to organize the discussion into subsections based on the research questions.

Regarding visual elements, all tables and images must be centered (at the top or bottom of the page) and must be referenced in the text. Technical requirements include using single spacing for tables and using high-resolution color images. Finally, ensure that tables and images are numbered sequentially according to their order of appearance.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the implementation of multicultural values within the campus environment has generally contributed to the development of tolerance, cooperation, and social integration among students from diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. The findings indicate that students are capable of building positive relationships and engaging in collaborative activities that reflect the principles of mutual respect and democratic citizenship. In this regard, the campus functions as an important social space for cultivating multicultural awareness and strengthening intercultural competence. Nevertheless, their effectiveness is limited when institutional support, inclusive policies, and anti-discrimination mechanisms are insufficient. Therefore, the responsibility for promoting multicultural values should not rest solely on individual students or student organizations but must also be embedded within university governance, curriculum development, and institutional culture. The major contribution of this study lies in its argument that higher education institutions should move beyond symbolic multiculturalism toward transformative multiculturalism. Transformative multiculturalism requires not only the recognition of cultural differences but also the active promotion of equality, social justice, inclusive participation, and the protection of marginalized groups. Universities must therefore strengthen multicultural education, facilitate sustained intercultural engagement, and establish inclusive policies that ensure equal opportunities for all students. Without these efforts, multiculturalism risks remaining a rhetorical ideal rather than becoming a lived reality within higher education.

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