



Strengthening Civic Education in a Multicultural School: A Local Wisdom Approach

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This research examines how schools effectively address diversity by integrating local wisdom within the educational context. It further investigates the participation of diverse ethnic and religious groups in school rituals and explores the implementation of an inclusive and participatory education system within a multicultural school environment, utilizing a local wisdom framework. **Method:** Employing a descriptive qualitative research design with a case study approach, data collection involved observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The data analysis process encompassed data condensation, data presentation, and drawing appropriate conclusions.

Findings: The study's finding conducted in a public senior high school in Gorontalo City, Gorontalo Province, underscored the implementation of the local wisdom of *ilohelumo* (consensus) and *mohoyula* (communal responsibilities) as crucial components in strengthening civic education. **Implications for Research and Practice.** This is evidenced in the multicultural school setting where students, teachers, school principals, and other academic stakeholders actively foster positive outcomes through student participation, cultural diversity empowerment, and heightened civic awareness. Such outcomes are achieved by accommodating differences within the educational space, involving ethnic groups in collective rituals, and establishing an inclusive and egalitarian education system.

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Introduction

Civic education is a subject that aims to shape the character of citizens who are democratic, tolerant and respect cultural diversity. In the context of multicultural schools, Civics plays a role as a means of developing multicultural values among students who come from different backgrounds. It helps students appreciate and understand the diverse perspectives and backgrounds within a multicultural society (Amri, 2022). It fosters empathy and respect for different cultures, promoting social cohesion and inclusivity. Civic education also crucial in creating responsible, educated, and involved citizens who make valuable contributions to both their local communities and the broader society. Fostering students' multicultural awareness as responsible citizens becomes imperative to foster acceptance of inevitable differences. Moreover, civic awareness serves as a preventive measure against conflicts that may stem from multiculturalism.

Educational institutions fulfill a dual role by serving as both centers of learning and catalysts for developing civic consciousness. They also hold a pivotal position in instilling an early appreciation for diversity among students (Pitaloka et al., 2021). Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge the current emphasis on strengthening civic education in order to develop a country's character (Jubba et al., 2022). Data from Wahid Foundation indicates that conflicts grounded in cultural, ethnic, and religious disparities persist, with their incidence even exhibiting an upward trajectory annually. This aligns with information from Detik.com, highlighting the frequent occurrence of interreligious and interethnic conflicts in society. For instance, the prohibition of using hijab that happened in 2017 in SMAN 1 Maumere. Another incident of intolerance occurred at SMAN 8 Yogyakarta in 2019 when the school principal mandated students to participate in a camp on Easter Day. Despite objections from Catholic and Christian teachers, the school principal remained unresponsive until external parties voiced their concerns (Ihsan, 2021). These cases show that some schools do not implement civic education based on local wisdom which can teach students about tolerance, respect for differences, and participation in community life.

Regarding the rise of conflict caused by multiculturalism and how civic education in multicultural schools can help prevent or reduce these conflicts, there are numerous studies which have extensively explored civic education, but the prevailing focus has primarily centered on three fundamental aspects. Firstly, civic education as an instructional approach within the school context has been investigated (Hidayah et al., 2019; Jasrudin et al., 2020; Kusumawati & Wahono, 2021; Putri & Dewi, 2021). This entails teaching and learning activities that encompass the conceptual elucidation of civic education content (Putri & Dewi, 2021). Secondly, civic education is mandated as a subject to be integrated from primary to tertiary education levels (Anatasya & Dewi, 2021; Dewi et al., 2020; Hidayah et al., 2019). The primary education curriculum stipulates the inclusion of civic education (Anatasya & Dewi, 2021). Thirdly, the ramifications of civic education instruction have been examined (Finkel et al., 2023; Kiranadewi & Hardini, 2021). Challenges related to the efficacy of teaching civic education in educational institutions and teachers' limited competence in fostering students' interest in civic education have been acknowledged (Muliana, 2019; Sahjohan & Riyanto, 2021).

However, endeavors are imperative to enhance the effectiveness of civic education in educational settings. These initiatives may entail enhancing teacher competence through training and professional development, revising the curriculum to enhance its pertinence and

appeal to students, and employing interactive and participatory teaching methodologies. The overarching goal is to invigorate students' enthusiasm, augment their civic awareness, and equip them with the necessary skills to become proactive and responsible citizens. However, in spite of these popular study methods, there are still very few studies that examine how local wisdom can help develop collective consciousness in multicultural classrooms which might become a more effective tool to prevent multicultural conflicts. Therefore, educational institutions must take action by implementing a local wisdom strategy in order to foster a thorough understanding of multiculturalism in the educational setting.

Based on these explanations, the primary objective of this research was dual-fold: to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on reinforcing civic education and to underscore the significance of integrating local wisdom into the process of enhancing civic awareness within educational institutions. More specifically, this study investigated three pivotal areas: firstly, the strategies employed by schools to accommodate diversity through the application of local wisdom in the educational context; secondly, the participation of distinct ethnic and religious groups in school rituals; and thirdly, the implementation of an inclusive education system in multicultural school environments, utilizing a local wisdom approach. Therefore, the research question of this study was "What are the opinions and levels of involvement of students, teachers, and other academic stakeholders in these practices, and how does the integration of local wisdom in the educational context—especially through school rituals—affect civic education in a multicultural school setting?". By addressing these three inquiries, this study not only establishes the foundation for its analysis but also endeavors to delineate the potential of multicultural schools in augmenting civic education.

This study is grounded according to the Multicultural Civics theory that based on local wisdom. This theory is a learning model based on the theory that civics is one of the spearheads of multicultural education in the context of forming the character of multicultural citizens who respect plural cultural identities in a democratic manner, and society forms a beautiful mosaic under the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* Unity in Diversity. This theory also utilizes local wisdom as a learning resource that can accommodate students' needs and interests, and that civic education can be strengthened by leveraging the unique local characteristics of different regions. The abundant and diverse local resources found across various areas can help combat the decline of national values. By embracing diversity within educational institutions, it is argued that a sense of multicultural awareness can be nurtured. Furthermore, an inclusive approach to education that embraces differences can play a pivotal role in reinforcing civic awareness. This can be accomplished by actively involving all stakeholders in the school community in collective endeavors that celebrate cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity. In essence, harnessing the inherent local wisdom of each region can offer a viable solution for enhancing civic awareness that is progressively undermined in the face of ongoing technological progress.

Literature Review

Multicultural Education

Multicultural education encompasses the holistic development of individuals while upholding their diversity and heterogeneity arising from cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious differences (Ibrahim, 2013). Bennett similarly defines multicultural education as

an approach aimed at providing equitable educational opportunities for students from various backgrounds, encompassing ethnicity, race, religion, language, social class, and cultural group (Gezer, 2018). This aligns with the overarching objective of multicultural education, which strives for an inclusive education system that acknowledges and respects individuals' diverse cultural backgrounds (Chang, 2012). By embracing multicultural education, students are encouraged to appreciate the value of cultural diversity, exhibit reverence for ethnic distinctions, and foster harmonious intergroup relations (Huang et al., 2017). Consequently, multicultural education equips children with the capacity to embrace and comprehend cultural disparities that shape variations in customs, habits, behavioral norms, and traditions (Najmina, 2018).

Multicultural education embodies four interrelated values – equality, tolerance, democracy, and pluralism – as a response to multiculturalism (Amin, 2018). In the context of multicultural education, teachers assume a pivotal role in realizing multiculturalism, necessitating their ability to establish an optimal learning and teaching environment (Aktoprak et al., 2018). Furthermore, the learning environment is designed to emphasize cultural diversity in instruction, imparting to students the significance of self-expression and the acceptance of differences within their surroundings (Gezer, 2018). This affords students the opportunity to engage and learn alongside peers from diverse cultural backgrounds, fostering attitudes of respect, tolerance, and appreciation toward various ethnic groups (Huang et al., 2017). This perspective aligns with Crawford and Kirby's assertion that multicultural education enhances students' collaborative skills with individuals of differing backgrounds, enabling mutual understanding and the pursuit of solutions to multicultural challenges (Alazzi, 2017).

Local wisdom

Local wisdom refers to the collective worldview, knowledge, and practical strategies employed by local communities to address their specific needs (Fajarini, 2014). Essentially, it represents the understanding and values that guide daily activities within these communities (Kurniawati et al., 2019). This reservoir of wisdom encapsulates the cultural heritage and region-specific knowledge gained from past experiences, which are then adopted and transmitted across generations through an evolutionary process (Zulfadrim et al., 2018). Local wisdom is intricately interwoven with broader knowledge systems, encompassing deep insights, beliefs, customs, and ethical principles (Hilman et al., 2019). Philosophically, wisdom can be distinguished into two dimensions: the abstract realm of concepts, ideas, and rationality, and the tangible realm of local wisdom comprising observable elements (Istiawati, 2016). As for its manifestations, local wisdom finds expression in the philosophical outlook on life, collective attitudes, and guiding principles that shape the behavior of a community (Maryani & Yani, 2022).

Local wisdom facilitates wise human interactions within social contexts, human-environmental dynamics, and the connection between individuals and their spiritual beliefs (Halimatussakdiah et al., 2020). Embedded within local wisdom are values that serve as a moral compass, providing an alternative approach to nurturing individuals who embody cultural refinement (Uge et al., 2019). Essentially, local wisdom serves as a fundamental pillar for cultivating virtuous character traits. Within specific communities, local wisdom encompasses the noble cultural values that shape the collective identity of its

members (Priyatna, 2017). It surpasses mere cultural heritage and functions as a distinctive marker of identity for particular communities, as each region possesses its distinctive local wisdom (Widyaningsih, 2019). One strategic means of preserving local wisdom is through education, whereby its values are integrated across various subjects by incorporating them into the curriculum (Suprihatin et al., 2020). Developing character based on local wisdom constitutes an endeavor to equip students for the era of globalization, nurturing within them a profound appreciation and reverence for the cultural values inherent in local wisdom (Faiz & Soleh, 2021).

Student Participation

Active student participation plays a paramount role in the process of classroom learning. Student participation encompasses the psychological and emotional engagement of students within group dynamics, fostering the development of their cognitive abilities and emotional investment to achieve satisfactory learning outcomes (Khodijah et al., 2016). This viewpoint aligns with the assertion made by Widiyaningrum et al. (2016) who emphasize that student participation involves active physical and psychological involvement in various activities. Active participation stimulates students' engagement in the learning process, enabling them to recognize the value of effort in acquiring knowledge and appreciate the significance of learning itself (Khodijah et al., 2016). Engaging in learning activities cultivates students' critical thinking skills and encourages their active involvement in diverse learning tasks. Numerous research studies have consistently shown that active participation enhances the quality of students' learning experiences, leading to a superior mastery of subjects compared to passive learners (Librianty & Sumantri, 2014). Therefore, student participation is a crucial indicator of the effectiveness of the learning experience, underscoring its fundamental importance in the educational process (Jefri & Junaidi, 2019).

The forms of student participation manifest in their engagement when answering questions, completing test items, and fulfilling homework tasks (Anastasia et al., 2021). However, student participation in the learning process often remains low. One of the reasons for the lack of student participation is the utilization of teaching methods that predominantly position the teacher as the central figure in the instructional activities, with limited direct involvement of students. Consequently, students are not encouraged to develop their potential, leading to a lack of familiarity with generating ideas or thoughts. They become passive listeners who merely follow and imitate what the teacher imparts (Rahayu, 2016). Additionally, insufficient student participation is attributed to the inadequacy of the teaching strategies employed by teachers (Betari & Junaidi, 2020). Therefore, a conducive classroom environment is more likely to foster higher levels of student participation and academic achievement when there is a two-way interaction between students and teachers, creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere. Students can actively participate in the learning process as guided by the teacher, while respecting and valuing their fellow students (Noviyanti & Setyaningtyas, 2017).

Methodology

Research Design

This research utilized a qualitative research design, as it ideally suited to examine the

implementation of local wisdom-based Civic Education being practiced in public secondary schools of China.

Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was adopted to identify participants of the study who were representative of the population, and relevant to the research focus, and who would facilitate in-depth information about the implementation of local wisdom-based Civic Education in a multicultural school context. The sample was drawn from SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo since this school had succeeded in implementing Civic Education by integrating local wisdom in their curriculum, creating an inclusive learning environment. Second, this school prioritized the value of respect for diversity, and was an example of respecting cultural differences. This can be seen in the diversity of students, teachers and staff of SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo, who come from different religious background namely Islam, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, and various ethnicities such as Gorontalo, Bugis, Makassar, Javanese, and Chinese. Lastly, SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo had adopted diverse and inclusive teaching practices, as well as provided resources capable of supporting inclusive education, including those with physical or intellectual limitations.

Research Instruments

Research instruments of the study included observation and interviews. Observations were carried out by visiting the studied school to observe student interactions in a multicultural school environment, while interviews were conducted with students, teachers, parents and principals to understand their perspectives and experiences.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using a narrative approach with stages of data reduction, data presentation and data verification. In the data reduction stage, information was arranged thematically and systematically, while the data display stage presented findings through the use of data, images and interview quotes. Data verification stage drew conclusions by identifying patterns and trends. The processed data were analyzed using descriptive methods and presented in the form of data and images. The descriptive data provided a foundation for interpreting the findings within their specific contexts. The analytical stages and techniques employed in this study facilitated the development of conclusions pertaining to the enhancement of civic education, grounded in local wisdom, in multicultural schools.

Ethical Considerations

The informed consent was taken from all the participants to seek their voluntary agreement to engage in the research. This informed consent comprised a concise explanation about research objectives, procedures, duration of participants' involvement, and the rights afforded to participants. They were explained about aims and benefits of the research, as well as the procedures and techniques that will be carried out during the research process. An explanation of potential risks and discomforts was also provided to participants to ensure full understanding of aspects that may affect them during the study. In addition, participants

were given the right to withdraw at any time without pressure or influence from the researcher, thus ensuring that their participants were willing and in accordance with their own wishes. As an additional protective measure, guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality were provided to participants, guaranteeing that the research results would not be linked to their identities, and their views and opinions would be kept confidential.

Results

Accommodation of differences within school's educational spaces through consensus

The study premised that in order to ensure inclusivity and meaningful learning experiences, it is necessary to accommodate student differences within the educational landscape. Recognizing and catering to these differences enable students to learn in ways that align with their individual learning styles, optimizing their learning capabilities and minimizing the conspicuousness of ethnic disparities within the school setting. Consequently, fostering inclusive and empowering learning experiences requires educational institutions to proactively embrace and address student diversities.

The school profile data spanning from 2019 to 2022 revealed a total student population of 1,008, with 62 students identifying as Christians, 9 as Buddhists, and 10 as Hindus – with the remaining identified as Muslims. The school consisted of 32 classes (School Profile Data, 2019-2022). Nonetheless, it was imperative to note that the presence of diversity within the school did not inherently lead to conflicts. This sentiment is echoed by a male participant, ZT, 13 years old, who articulated the following viewpoint:

In our school, we have never had any conflicts based on religion or ethnicity. This is because the students understand that they are part of a nation founded on Pancasila, which promotes unity in diversity with the motto 'bhinneka tunggal ika,' meaning being one despite differences (Jan. 5, 2023).

ZT's statement suggests that students are able to maintain harmony and avoid conflicts despite the presence of ethnic and religious diversity. This harmonious coexistence can be attributed to the students' recognition of their shared national identity rooted in Pancasila, which promotes the motto *bhinneka tunggal ika* (unity in diversity) and emphasizes values of tolerance, respect, and a strong awareness of the diverse backgrounds within the student body.

Moreover, religious differences also often result in various perceptions regarding many aspects, including the selection of school uniforms. Field observations indicate that the choice of uniforms in this multicultural school must align with religious teachings. For instance, female Muslim students are required to wear hijabs, while students of other religions, such as Protestant Christianity, Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Kong Hu Chu adhere to the standard uniform regulations. These uniforms are expected to be modest, clean, and neat, in accordance with the dress code outlined in Article 4, which stipulates that attire should be clean, tidy, and complete (including the use of ties, wearing hats during ceremonies, and using belts), and must comply with the regulations while within the school premises. This fact is further elaborated upon by one of the parents, MW (52 years), who stated the following:

As for the attire for non-Muslim students, it was agreed upon during the initial meeting of new students' parents and the school would adapt their clothing to match the Muslim dress code, which

consists of long-sleeved blouses and long skirts without wearing a hijab (Jan. 6, 2023).

MW's statement suggests a consensus regarding the dress code for non-Muslim individuals, which was established during the introductory gathering of new students. Parents and the school willingly adapt to the attire of non-Muslim students to conform to the Muslim dress code, including the use of long-sleeved blouses and long skirts, without the inclusion of a hijab. This reflects a concerted effort to foster sartorial harmony between Muslim and non-Muslim students. The presence of religious and ethnic disparities underscores a shared awareness of adhering to mutually agreed-upon regulations or conventions for the overall welfare of the community.

Inclusive Involvement of Different Ethnic/Religious Groups in Rituals

The engagement of diverse ethnic or religious groups in inclusive communal rituals presents challenges due to the diversity of religious practices and cultural customs. Consequently, proactive measures are required to promote constructive dialogue and collaboration among ethnic groups while cultivating inclusive religious practices that value and embrace differences. Through inclusive communal rituals, diverse ethnic or religious groups can reciprocally demonstrate respect and gain understanding of each other's beliefs, customs, and religious observances. Religious activities conducted by schools invariably entail the active involvement of the respective ethnic groups, with decisions made collectively by the school committee. There is no dichotomy among parents, teachers, and students of different religions and specific ethnicities. An illustration of such a religious activity is Maulid Nabi or the commemoration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday (PBUH). The inclusion of this religious event in the school curriculum is a consensual determination made by the school committee, and its execution relies on collaborative efforts between the local government program, the school, and parental cooperation. The school principal, AD (55 years), articulates this perspective as follows:

We followed up on the government and school program and discussed it in a committee meeting. The outcomes of the meeting were also discussed at the class level, resulting in an agreement to implement it (Jan. 03, 2023).

A similar sentiment was expressed by student NP (13 years) as follows:

We conducted class meetings to follow up on the plan, and then we formed a committee to ensure the success of the celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday (PBUH) (Jan. 3, 2023).

In relation to diversity in the context of inclusive religious rituals at school, it is essential to consider an important perspective. In the following quote, student NW (14 years) provides valuable insight into their personal experience with diversity within the school environment.

We were very happy and actively participated with our Muslim friends in the celebration of the Prophet's birthday because we feel like brothers and sisters, all united as Indonesian citizens (Jan. 3, 2023).

The sentiments expressed by NW are further reinforced by another student, IN (15 years) as follows:

We were not forced to participate in the celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday. We

are happy to join as a way of cooperating, respecting other religions, and in our civic education class, we have learned that we should help each other as an embodiment of NKRI (the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (Jan. 3, 2023).

The expressions of NW and IN indicate their joy in participating in the celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday alongside their Muslim friends. They perceive themselves as part of one family and share a sense of belonging as Indonesian citizens. This reflects an attitude of mutual respect, cooperation, and understanding towards different religions and beliefs. Furthermore, they mention that they have been taught the importance of helping and collaborating with others in their civic education class.



Figure 1: Celebration of Prophet Muhammad's Birthday (PBUH).

Source: Compilation of research documentation data, 2023.

The demonstrated attitude of tolerance and understanding by the students not only enhanced their learning experiences but also served as a model for the entire school community to embrace diversity with an open and receptive mindset. Consequently, this fostered an inclusive and supportive learning environment where every student was valued and accepted, regardless of any distinctions.

Furthermore, apart from commemorating the Prophet's birthday, the participation of diverse ethnic and religious groups in rituals was also evident during Christmas festivities. This inclusivity is practiced to ensure equitable implementation of Christmas Day and to mitigate potential conflicts arising from religious and ethnic differences. These findings were corroborated in an interview conducted with the school principal, AD (55 years), as follows:

The Christmas celebration is still held in each person's home, but it provides an opportunity for students, parents, and other school community members to visit each other (Jan. 4, 2023).

Based on the data presented, it is clear that the participation of diverse ethnic and religious groups in religious festival rituals has significant implications for fostering tolerance and mutual respect. This inclusive engagement contributes to the development of a unified and harmonious environment among students and the school community, thereby demonstrating their heightened civic awareness.

An Egalitarian (Participatory) Education System

In an egalitarian education system, robust engagement and reciprocal assistance among educators, parents, students, and school constituents strive to fortify the close rapport between the school and its local community. Through efficacious collaboration, educational institutions can construct resilient connections between the scholastic

environment and students' daily lives, engendering pertinent and meaningful learning encounters that cultivate practical skills and knowledge. Embracing a participatory and inclusive pedagogical approach, schools foster an atmosphere that acknowledges the unique requirements and potentials of each learner, transforming it into an inspiring and empowering setting where students attain personal academic triumph. This school's prevailing educational framework manifests a noteworthy degree of egalitarianism, evident in the dynamic involvement of teachers, parents, students, and school constituents, as they reciprocally reinforce one another throughout the instructional process. Inclusive initiatives embody the comprehensive engagement of all individuals, including those with distinctive educational necessities or diverse requirements, ensuring equitable accessibility and active participation in the learning journey alongside their peers.

In order to achieve learning objectives, an egalitarian and participatory approach to education is implemented. This is expressed by teacher RY (45 years), who stated: *We always involve students in classroom learning, especially in creating teaching materials* (Feb. 8, 2023). A similar sentiment was shared by informant EJ (43 years), who stated:

When it comes to making decisions at school, regarding the teaching and learning process and other matters, the school always includes parents from different ethnic and religious backgrounds to seek solutions during report card distribution" (Feb. 9, 2023).

In addition, the assessment of an inclusive curriculum, which considers the diverse requirements, interests, and backgrounds of students, involves an examination of whether the curriculum integrates diverse content, presents a fair and balanced range of perspectives, and demonstrates respect for different cultures, religions, and identities. This evaluation also encompasses the equitable assessment of students, ensuring they are given equal opportunities to express their abilities.

In line with the preceding elucidation, a teacher identified as TI (50 years) expressed: *Our school offers an inclusive curriculum that values diversity* (Mar. 22, 2023). This sentiment is further supported by the statement of the informant, teacher IK (52 years), who expressed: *When it comes to assessments, we are objective and do not consider the students' ethnic backgrounds* (Apr. 24, 2023). TI and IK's statements affirm the presence of an inclusive curriculum that prioritizes diversity within the school. Specifically, IK highlights the objective approach employed during assessments, disregarding students' ethnic backgrounds. This signifies a robust commitment to cultivating a just educational setting, wherein evaluations are rooted in students' capabilities and accomplishments, devoid of any influence from ethnic factors.

To sum up, it is evident that the data gathered from the participants underscores the school's dedication to instilling a non-discriminatory assessment framework and fostering educational equity. It is also evidence of civic education based on local wisdom in the sampled school. A collective effort by the school principal, teachers and students has succeeded in building an atmosphere of inclusivity, despite diverse ethnic groups.

Discussion

The strengthening of civic education based on local wisdom in the studied school is in three key areas. Firstly, students establish an atmosphere of inclusivity within the educational setting through agreements reached among classmates. Secondly, the participation of diverse ethnic or religious groups in rituals to fosters a sense of unity. Thirdly, an egalitarian and

participatory educational system promotes the development of both teachers' and students' competencies. The findings of this study indicate that students from various ethnic backgrounds are effectively integrated into the teaching and learning process. This integration is facilitated through collaborative agreements among all stakeholders in the school, which draws upon Gorontalo's local wisdom and tradition known as *iloheluma*, which implies to mutual agreement (everyone agrees in making a decision).

Interestingly, the inclusive nature of *iloheluma* is shaped by three factors. Firstly, *ilohelumo* emphasizes equitable treatment for students from all ethnic groups. This principle ensures that every student, regardless of their cultural background, receives fair and equal opportunities within the education system. The emphasis on fairness promotes a sense of inclusivity, creating an environment where all students feel valued and respected. Secondly, the strong emphasis on maintaining discipline, as part of *ilohelumo*, contributes to a conducive learning atmosphere. Discipline is a shared value that is upheld by all stakeholders in the school community. This collective commitment to discipline fosters a positive learning environment, allowing students to focus on their studies without disruptions and creating a conducive atmosphere for effective teaching, and finally, the cultural concept of *mohuyula*, which involves collaboration and working together towards a common goal, adds another layer to the effectiveness of the education system. *Mohuyula* embodies communal responsibility, encouraging students, teachers, and other stakeholders to collaborate in achieving shared educational objectives. This collaborative approach not only enhances the learning experience but also promotes a sense of collective responsibility for the success of the educational community.

The study reveals that the concepts of *ilohelumo* and *mohuyula* are deeply ingrained in the local culture of Gorontalo, contributing significantly to the effectiveness of the education system in fostering a harmonious and inclusive learning environment. The utilization of *ilohelumo*, which signifies mutual agreement in decision-making, plays a pivotal role in integrating students from diverse ethnic backgrounds into the teaching and learning process. The implementation of this culture within the school environment not only benefits the school community but also extends its positive effects to the surrounding individuals. *Mohuyula* also represents solidarity in the decision-making processes related to the interests and goals of a larger group of people. It also transcends trivial matters and encompasses a broader spectrum. It commences with the practice of consultative decision-making in shaping policies, ultimately leading to collective decision-making.

Additionally, the inclusion of students from diverse ethnic backgrounds has contributed to the cultivation of a culture of tolerance within the school. The research conducted by Ibrahim (2013) underscores the significance of multicultural education as a vehicle for fostering multiculturalism. Multicultural education recognizes the presence of ethnic diversity within educational institutions, a viewpoint that finds support in James Banks' (Banks, 1993) perspective, which posits multicultural education as being oriented towards people of color. This notion aligns with Sleeter (1996) definition of multicultural education as encompassing the processes through which schools challenge oppressive groups.

It is imperative to accommodate religious and ethnic differences in order to avert conflicts and promote cohesion among students and school community members. Such accommodation has far-reaching effects on the overall school climate. When students of

varying religious affiliations actively participate in all school activities, a sense of security and harmony is established, fostering a collective sense of destiny and responsibility among the school community. That is why the local wisdom approach is also essential in international schools or education programs which often have student populations that represent a variety of countries, cultures, and ethnic backgrounds. In this setting, multicultural education can encompass global curriculum, cross-cultural learning experiences, and a focus on comprehending the world as a global community.

Essentially, students need to comprehend salient issues by integrating local wisdom into civic education, thereby facilitating the connection of local values with global concerns (Ross, 2012). Local wisdom approach in international school can encourage students to be sensitive to other cultures. This inclusivity helps students learn to value and accept different points of view and foster sense of belonging regardless their cultural background. It will also help them understand their responsibilities as global citizens. They learn to appreciate not only the diversity within their immediate community but also the interconnectedness of global issues and the importance of responsible global citizenship. In summary, the accommodation of students from diverse ethnic backgrounds in schools amplifies tolerance, prevents conflicts, and engenders positive transformations within the school environment. Empirical support for the importance of an inclusive approach in managing religious and ethnic differences within the educational realm is provided by the studies (Banks, 1993; Ibrahim, 2013; Sleeter, 1996).

The findings of this study underscore the presence of inclusivity in education, encompassing all ethnic groups within the school. This inclusivity is underpinned by the collective engagement of all stakeholders. The inclusivity of education emanates from three fundamental factors: a shared consensus among stakeholders, the cultivation of positive cultural norms aligned with educational values, and a student-centered learning approach. The overview provided strongly indicates that educational inclusivity positively impacts the overall quality of education. Furthermore, the quality of education is further augmented by implementing an egalitarian participatory system. Egalitarianism facilitates equitable access to education for all students in the school community. The participatory approach adopted in the school setting yields two notable outcomes: an upsurge in disciplined attitudes among students and an enhancement of teachers' competence in classroom management. Based on the aforementioned discussion, it can be inferred that the advancement of educational quality hinges on the principles of egalitarian participation. We can also conclude that the deep integration of *ilohelumo* and *mohuyula* into the local culture plays a crucial role in creating an effective and inclusive education system. These concepts promote equitable treatment, discipline, and collaborative efforts, fostering a positive learning environment that extends its benefits to the broader community.

Thus, in order to achieve these goals, it is essential to emphasize the incorporation of local wisdom and culture into civic education. This approach enables students to develop a deeper contextually relevant and meaningful understanding. By doing so, students can cultivate a sense of pride in their cultural identity, while simultaneously gaining an appreciation for the cultural diversity within their surroundings. The significance of locally-based civic education, as it provides students with opportunities to comprehend and value the richness of cultural diversity within their local context (Hidayat, 2018). Consequently, this fosters a heightened sense of identity pride and greater social responsibility towards their community.

Moreover, this approach encourages students to explore how democratic principles can be applied in their cultural settings. It also prompts them to actively engage in society, develop an understanding of the importance of social justice, and learn to collaborate effectively with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that by enhancing civic education through integrating local wisdom in multicultural schools, interethnic collaboration can be fostered despite differences. Incorporating local wisdom creates an inclusive learning environment where the positive values embedded in local wisdom are reinforced and integrated into character education. This, in turn, promotes the development of mutual respect and cooperation among individuals from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds.

The study presents a novel perspective on civic education based on local wisdom in a multicultural school, challenging the prevailing trend where majority ethnic and religious groups tend to assert dominance over minority ethnicities. This counterproductive situation contrasts with the ethos of SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo, where the reinforcement of civic education based on the culture of *ilohelumo* (consensus) nurtured discipline, tolerance, mutual respect, and collaboration among school members. The multicultural foundation of the school significantly contributes to the advancement of democratic education. On the other hand, this serves as a call to action for educators, decision-makers, and other education stakeholders to prioritize students' civic awareness. This can be achieved by enhancing strategies in civic education through the implementation of a contextual multicultural education approach that involves local wisdom as an integral part of the curriculum, teaching methods, and evaluation. The objective is to cultivate students' awareness, appreciation, and participation in diversity by employing a multicultural education approach grounded in local wisdom within multicultural schools.

However, it is important to acknowledge that this study had certain methodological limitations, as it relied on specific assumptions regarding the data and the model employed. Failure to meet these assumptions may yield inaccurate results. Future research could explore the development of more flexible models or techniques that address unmet assumptions to enhance the validity of findings.

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