

The Development of Elementary School Students' Multicultural Attitudes through the Saturday Culture Program: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT. Indonesia's high level of cultural and religious diversity makes the development of multicultural attitudes among elementary school students an urgent educational priority, yet multicultural education in elementary schools is still often oriented toward cognitive and symbolic transfer of tolerance values rather than lived social experience. This research aims to examine how the Saturday Culture Program contributes to the development of students' multicultural attitudes at SDN 5 Ampenan, Mataram City. The study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation involving the principal, program coordinator, teachers, and students from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. Data were analyzed through the stages of data reduction, coding, categorization, data display, and conclusion drawing, while data validity was strengthened through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking. The findings show that the program contributes to the development of five multicultural attitude indicators: awareness and appreciation of diversity, anti-prejudice attitudes, commitment to justice and equality, critical perspective-taking ability, and participation in an inclusive school culture. These attitudes develop through three interrelated mechanisms: direct experience of diversity, repeated cross-cultural social interaction, and an inclusive school culture. Notably, these mechanisms were found in a local wisdom-based program originally oriented toward cultural preservation rather than a specifically designed multicultural education program. These findings provide empirical support for intergroup contact theory and Banks' multicultural education framework in the Indonesian elementary school context, while also demonstrating that consistently implemented local wisdom-based programs can function as relevant multicultural education media in culturally and religiously diverse school settings.

Keywords: *Multicultural Attitudes; Saturday Culture Program; Multicultural Education; Local Wisdom; Elementary School.*



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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with a very high level of diversity, encompassing more than 663 ethnic groups, 652 regional languages that are still in use, and six official religions embraced by its society (Salfiyadi, 2024). This diversity serves as both an identity and a social richness of the nation that needs to be preserved through education that instills the values of tolerance and respect for differences. In a multicultural society, schools play an important role not only as places for knowledge transfer but also as social spaces where students learn to coexist with individuals from different cultural, religious, and behavioral backgrounds. However, the development of multicultural attitudes among elementary school students still faces various challenges. Students tend to feel more comfortable interacting with peers who share similar backgrounds, so opportunities to understand differences become limited (Lestari & Ain, 2022). In addition,

exposure to intolerant content, stereotypes, and hate speech on digital media can potentially shape negative perceptions of different groups if it is not balanced with positive social experiences in the school environment (Saragih, Novalina, & Pakiding, 2021). These conditions indicate that the development of multicultural attitudes requires continuous social experiences that are closely related to students' daily lives.

On the other hand, multicultural education in elementary schools is still often oriented toward cognitive and symbolic aspects. The value of tolerance is generally taught through learning materials, verbal advice, or moral slogans, but has not been fully realized in real social experiences. In fact, attitudes of respecting diversity grow through direct interaction, cooperation, and shared life experiences in a diverse environment. Social experiences involving cross-identity interactions play an important role in reducing prejudice and building positive social relationships (Banks & Banks, 2016). Therefore, an educational approach is needed that not only emphasizes conceptual understanding but also provides space for students to experience and practice multicultural values in their daily school life.

In this context, local culture can serve as a learning medium that is close to students' lives and relevant for developing multicultural attitudes. Cultural activities not only introduce traditional values but also open social interaction spaces that allow students to learn to respect differences naturally. Through involvement in shared cultural activities, students learn to cooperate, respect one another, and build a sense of togetherness regardless of their backgrounds. Thus, local culture does not only function as heritage that must be preserved but also as a means of forming inclusive social attitudes.

Mataram City, as the capital of West Nusa Tenggara Province, is one of the regions that represents real multicultural community life. The pluralism of society is visible from the existence of mosques, Hindu temples, churches, and Buddhist temples standing side by side within the same social environment. This condition places schools in a strategic position to prepare a generation capable of living harmoniously amid cultural and religious diversity. One of the efforts made by the local government is the development of the Saturday Culture Program as a local wisdom-based educational policy through Regional Regulation Number 16 of 2021 on Cultural Advancement (Dinas Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat, 2023). This program is implemented as a co-curricular activity that presents various local cultural activities, such as traditional dances, traditional games, the use of regional languages, traditional food bazaars, and *begibung* activities as a Lombok communal eating tradition. Through these activities, students are not only introduced to local culture but also gain social experiences that allow the development of multicultural attitudes through shared cultural interactions.

Several previous studies have shown that the Saturday Culture Program can improve cultural literacy, strengthen character and national pride, and foster students' appreciation of local culture (Ma'ruf & Hastomo, 2025; Rizkikaddhuhani, 2024; Tahir, Sobri, Novitasari, & Fauzi, 2024). However, these studies have mostly focused on the function of the program as a means of cultural preservation and general character building. Research that examines how cultural activities within the Saturday Culture Program contribute to the development of elementary school students' multicultural attitudes, particularly through cross-cultural and interreligious interaction experiences in the school environment, is still limited. In addition, studies examining the implementation of the program in schools with high levels of student diversity and consistent program execution are also still scarce.

SDN 5 Ampenan was chosen as the research site because it demonstrates consistent implementation of the Saturday Culture Program and actively involves students. This school achieved the highest school cultural literacy score in the "very good" category compared to other elementary schools in Mataram City (Tahir et al., 2024). In addition, students at SDN 5 Ampenan come from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds, including Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, Catholicism, and Buddhism, making it a relevant context for examining the development of students' multicultural attitudes. Based on this description, this study aims to examine how the

Saturday Culture Program contributes to the development of elementary school students' multicultural attitudes. The focus of the study is directed toward students' experiences and interactions related to the development of attitudes of respect for diversity, anti-prejudice attitudes, awareness of equality, the ability to understand others' perspectives, and participation in an inclusive school culture. The findings of this study are expected to broaden the scope of multicultural education studies based on local culture and serve as a reference for elementary schools in developing more inclusive learning practices through cultural activities.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to obtain an in-depth understanding of the development of students' multicultural attitudes through the Saturday Culture Program in a natural school context. The case study design was chosen because this study seeks to deeply understand students' experiences in facing cultural and religious diversity through school cultural activities (Yin, 2017). The focus of this study is how the Saturday Culture Program contributes to the development of students' multicultural attitudes at SDN 5 Ampenan through various cultural activities carried out during the program. The study was conducted from December 2025 to February 2026 at SDN 5 Ampenan, Mataram City, as a school that consistently implements the Saturday Culture Program and shows achievement in school cultural literacy in the very good category based on previous research (Tahir et al., 2024).

Research informants were selected purposively by considering direct involvement in the implementation of the Saturday Culture Program as well as the ability to provide information relevant to the focus of the study. The informants consisted of the principal, one program coordinator, three upper-grade teachers, and two religion teachers (Islam and Hinduism). In addition, the study also involved six students representing diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, as presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1 Student Informant Profile

No.	Background	Ethnic/Region of Origin	Religion	Number
1.	Local residents	Sasak, Mataram	Muslim	3 students
2.	Migrant students	Bali	Hinduism	2 students
3.	Migrant residents	East Nusa Tenggara	Christianity	1 students
Total				6 students

The selection of the six students was based on considerations of diversity in cultural and religious experiences so that the data obtained could more deeply describe the development of students' multicultural attitudes in the implementation of the Saturday Culture Program. The number of student informants was determined based on the principle of data sufficiency in qualitative research, namely when the information obtained shows repeated patterns and supports the focus of the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Research data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted directly during the implementation of the Saturday Culture Program activities to observe students' behavior in respecting diversity, participation in joint cultural activities, and students' attitudes toward cultural and religious differences during the activities. In the research process, the researcher acted as a non-participant observer to maintain the naturalness of students' activities during the program. Interviews were conducted flexibly while still referring to the interview guide so that informants could explain their experiences and perspectives more openly. Documentation in the form of activity photos, program schedules, and school supporting documents was used to strengthen the results of observations and interviews.

The research instrument was developed based on indicators of students' multicultural attitudes, which include awareness and appreciation of diversity, anti-prejudice attitudes, commitment to justice and equality, critical perspective-taking ability, and participation in an inclusive school culture (Banks & Banks, 2016). The details of the data collection focus are presented in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Data Collection Focus

Multicultural Attitude Indicator	Observed Focus	Technique
Awareness and Appreciation of Diversity	Students' attitudes in respecting differences in culture, language, and religion among peers; acceptance of cultural activities originating from different backgrounds	Observation, Interview, Documentation
Anti-Prejudice Attitude	Students' openness toward peers from different backgrounds during activities; absence of discriminatory behavior or mocking of differences	
Commitment to Justice and Equality	Students' behavior in giving equal opportunities to all peers to participate; response to unfair treatment around them	
Critical Perspective-Taking Ability	Students' ability to view cultural differences from various perspectives; openness to values and traditions different from their own	
Participation in an Inclusive School Culture	Students' active involvement in cross-background cultural activities; initiative to interact and collaborate with peers from different ethnicities, languages, or religions	

The credibility of the data was strengthened through source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from the principal, teachers, and students, while technique triangulation was carried out by matching the results of observations, interviews, and documentation against the same findings. In addition, interview results were reconfirmed with several informants through member checking to ensure the accuracy of the meaning of the data obtained. Observations were also carried out repeatedly during the activities until the data obtained showed consistent patterns.

Data analysis was conducted in stages from the beginning of data collection until the completion of the research. Data from observations, interviews, and documentation were first transcribed and organized based on data sources. Subsequently, the researcher performed data reduction by selecting information relevant to the focus of the study on the development of students' multicultural attitudes. The coding process was carried out by identifying student behaviors that demonstrate attitudes of respecting diversity, openness to cultural and religious differences, and student participation in inclusive cultural activities during the Saturday Culture Program. Data with similar meanings were then grouped into several themes, such as appreciation of diversity, anti-prejudice attitudes, awareness of equality, and student involvement in an inclusive school culture. These themes were then presented narratively to facilitate interpretation of the relationships between findings, resulting in a comprehensive understanding of the development of students' multicultural attitudes through the Saturday Culture Program (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2020).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Awareness and Appreciation of Diversity

Students at SDN 5 Ampenan consistently demonstrated attentive, responsive, and appreciative attitudes toward cultural performances representing different cultural backgrounds throughout the implementation of the Saturday Culture Program. Behavioral changes were evident when students spontaneously approached the stage during performances of traditional dances from other regions, namely the Merak Angelo Dance and the Puspanjali Dance from Bali. They showed enthusiasm without any prompting from teachers and displayed no negative reactions. Religious education teachers from two different religious backgrounds also confirmed that students paid close attention to the performances and expressed their interest through applause and positive curiosity (Observation at SDN 5 Ampenan, January 28, 2026; Interviews with the Islamic Religious Education Teacher and the Hindu Religious Education Teacher at SDN 5 Ampenan, January 2026).

A similar pattern of acceptance was also observed in students' everyday classroom interactions. A sixth-grade classroom teacher reported that when a Christian student performed a different prayer gesture, classmates responded naturally because they had become accustomed to such differences. Some students even expressed appreciation by saying, *"Oh, so this is how it is in another culture."* (Interview with the Sixth-Grade Teacher at SDN 5 Ampenan, January 8, 2026). Likewise, the Hindu Religious Education teacher described how one student quietly observed a cultural activity before approaching and asking, *"Ma'am, do we have something like this too?"* This response was interpreted as reflective appreciation rather than mere passive politeness (Interview with the Hindu Religious Education Teacher at SDN 5 Ampenan, January 12, 2026).

Students themselves also expressed their enthusiasm directly. One student explained that they enjoyed watching the performances and repeatedly exclaimed, *"Wow, that's so cool!"* while watching them. The student further stated that the program had helped them learn about dances and cultures that they had not previously known (Interview with a Student at SDN 5 Ampenan, January 21, 2026).

These findings indicate that students responded positively to cultural performances representing different cultural backgrounds and demonstrated a genuine interest in learning about the diverse cultures presented through the Saturday Culture Program.



Figure 1. Documentation of Students Watching Traditional Dance Performances from Other Regions.

Anti-Prejudice Attitude

Throughout the implementation of the Saturday Culture Program, no instances of ridicule, negative labeling, or derogatory comments toward students from different cultural or religious backgrounds were observed. Hindu and Christian students reported that they had never experienced discriminatory treatment from their peers. When students encountered cultural practices that were unfamiliar to them, they expressed their curiosity through positive questions rather than ridicule. Religious education teachers explained that students asked questions to understand other cultures, *“not to make fun of them, but because they wanted to know more”* (Interviews with the Islamic Religious Education Teacher, the Hindu Religious Education Teacher, and the Fourth-Grade Teacher at SDN 5 Ampenan, January 2026).

The Hindu Religious Education teacher also described how students normalized everyday differences through shared activities: *“When they eat together, they also drink together, even sharing the same bottle. So, no one is treated differently.”* (Interview with the Hindu Religious Education Teacher at SDN 5 Ampenan, January 12, 2026). A similar pattern was reported by the sixth-grade classroom teacher, who explained, *“If they come across something they have never seen before, they simply ask about it. They just ask they don't make fun of it.”* (Interview with the Sixth-Grade Teacher at SDN 5 Ampenan, January 8, 2026).

The same attitude of acceptance was also reported beyond the school setting. A parent described how their child voluntarily joined Muslim friends in fasting out of empathy, explaining, *“My child said it didn't feel right to eat alone, so they decided to fast as well.”* (Interview with the Parent of a Hindu Student at SDN 5 Ampenan, January 12, 2026).

These findings indicate that students' interactions throughout the program took place in an atmosphere of mutual respect, with no evidence of behaviors reflecting prejudice or discrimination based on cultural or religious differences.

Commitment to Justice and Equality

Students' commitment to justice and equality was reflected in the participation of all students in every activity of the Saturday Culture Program, regardless of their religious or cultural backgrounds. One of the activities that most clearly demonstrated these values was *begibung*. During this activity, students sat together, shared meals from the same serving tray, and interacted without social boundaries based on identity. A classroom teacher explained that *“all students were treated the same by their peers; no one was treated differently,”* while the Hindu Religious Education teacher observed that students often spontaneously embraced and invited their peers to participate without being prompted (Observation at SDN 5 Ampenan, January 20, 2026; Interviews with the Fourth-Grade Teacher and the Hindu Religious Education Teacher at SDN 5 Ampenan, January 2026).

This commitment to equality also extended to the sharing of cultural resources. A Hindu student lent a kebaya to a Muslim classmate who did not have one for a cultural performance. This act was independently confirmed by the Hindu Religious Education teacher, who recalled that the student first asked their classmate, *“May I lend it to you? I asked my friend first whether they wanted to borrow it. If they agreed, then I brought it.”* (Interview with the Hindu Religious Education Teacher at SDN 5 Ampenan, January 12, 2026; Interview with a Student at SDN 5 Ampenan, January 12, 2026).

The sixth-grade classroom teacher further emphasized that non-Muslim students were never excluded and were always given equal opportunities to perform and participate in group activities, describing this equality as a genuine practice rather than merely a symbolic gesture (Interview with the Sixth-Grade Teacher at SDN 5 Ampenan, January 9, 2026).

These findings indicate that all students were provided with equal opportunities to participate in school activities and engage in social interactions without differential treatment based on their cultural or religious identities.



Figure 2. Documentation of the *begabung* activity (Students from different religious and cultural backgrounds were grouped together and shared meals during the activity).

Critical Perspective-Taking Ability

Students' critical perspective-taking ability developed in a simple yet consistent manner. Although they had not yet demonstrated complex critical thinking skills, they began to show curiosity about the cultures they encountered. This was reflected in their questions about the meaning of particular cultural elements, their respectful responses to cultural differences, and their willingness to share their cultural experiences with their families at home. The parent of a Hindu student reported that their child frequently talked about Sasak culture and showed great interest in the *gendang beleq* performance (Interviews with the Fourth-Grade Teacher and the Sixth-Grade Teacher at SDN 5 Ampenan, January 2026; Interview with the Parent of a Sixth-Grade Hindu Student at SDN 5 Ampenan, January 12, 2026).

A similar pattern was observed in everyday classroom interactions. The sixth-grade classroom teacher recalled that a student once asked, “*Ma'am, what is Ngaben?*”, after which the teacher explained that it is a Hindu funeral ceremony (Interview with the Sixth-Grade Teacher at SDN 5 Ampenan, January 8, 2026). Students themselves described the same learning process from their own perspective. One student explained that they asked the religious education teacher directly about an unfamiliar practice “*because I didn't know about it and wanted to learn more.*” (Interview with a Student at SDN 5 Ampenan, January 12, 2026).

These findings indicate that students demonstrated curiosity and openness toward different cultures, as reflected in the questions they asked, the attention they gave to cultural performances, and the cultural experiences they shared with their families.

Participation in an Inclusive School Culture

Participation in an inclusive school culture was the most clearly observable indicator. Hindu and Christian students actively participated in dance performances alongside peers from different religious backgrounds within the same performance groups. No grouping based on cultural or religious identity was observed. For example, the *Dikideng* dance from Flores, East Nusa Tenggara, was performed by a culturally and religiously diverse group of students without any separation based on their backgrounds.

This inclusiveness was also reflected in the program's explicit policy. The sixth-grade classroom teacher explained that cultural performances were never limited to traditional Sasak dances, stating, “*Whether the dances come from eastern Indonesia or Sumatra, they are all welcome. We do not limit performances to traditional Sasak dances.*” (Interview with the Sixth-Grade Teacher at SDN 5 Ampenan, January 8, 2026).

This openness also provided opportunities for students from minority backgrounds to present their own cultural heritage. The only Christian student in the class, who came from East

Nusa Tenggara, was given the opportunity to perform the Sajojo dance from their home region alongside their Muslim classmates. The student simply described the experience by saying, “*I performed the Sajojo dance.*” (Interview with a Student at SDN 5 Ampenan, January 21, 2026).

Students also expressed their experiences through simple yet meaningful statements, such as “*We all had the same opportunity,*” and “*We danced together with our friends.*” (Documentation at SDN 5 Ampenan, January 10, 2026, and March 19, 2023; Interviews with Students from Multicultural Backgrounds at SDN 5 Ampenan, January 2026).

Overall, the findings indicate that all students were provided with equal opportunities to participate in school cultural activities without restrictions based on their religious or cultural backgrounds.



Figure 3. Documentation of Students from Diverse Cultural and Religious Backgrounds Performing Together with the Majority Group.

Discussion

The Saturday Culture Program as a Space for Students' Multicultural Experiences

The findings of this study indicate that the Saturday Culture Program serves as a space where students gain multicultural experiences through direct engagement with cultural diversity in the school environment. Through various cultural activities conducted on a regular basis, students are provided with opportunities to recognize, understand, and experience diversity as an integral part of their everyday social lives.

These findings suggest that multicultural attitudes among elementary school students develop through authentic experiences that are closely connected to their daily lives. At this stage of development, children learn more effectively through direct experiences than through abstract concepts. Experiences involving cultural diversity have been shown to foster openness, curiosity, and the ability to understand differences among elementary school students (Aslan & Aybek, 2020).

This finding can be explained through the lens of experiential learning theory. When students observe cultural performances and subsequently ask questions about what they have seen, as occurs in the Saturday Culture Program, they engage in a learning process that begins with concrete experience, continues through reflection on that experience, and ultimately leads to the construction of new understanding (Passarelli & Kolb, 2023). This distinguishes the Saturday Culture Program from multicultural education approaches that merely introduce tolerance as a classroom concept. Rather than simply explaining the meaning of diversity, the program provides students with authentic experiences that enable them to construct their own understanding. Recent research has also identified experiential learning as one of the most effective strategies for fostering students' intercultural attitudes, alongside the integration of multicultural values into the curriculum and teachers' role modelling (Maulana et al., 2025). The Saturday Culture Program integrates these

three strategies into a single program that has become an integral part of the school's culture rather than a stand-alone subject.

In this context, cultural experiences serve not only to introduce students to different cultures but also to help them perceive diversity as a natural and accepted part of living together in society. The integration of local wisdom into educational activities has been shown to enhance students' cultural awareness and social attitudes through meaningful learning experiences that actively engage them in the learning process (Fathurrochman et al., 2025). These findings also reinforce the study by Rizkikaddhuhani (2024), which demonstrated that the Saturday Culture Program fosters students' appreciation of diversity through their active participation in cross-regional cultural activities.

Cross-Cultural Social Interaction as a Mechanism for the Development of Multicultural Attitudes

The findings of this study also indicate that multicultural attitudes fostered through the Saturday Culture Program develop not only through cultural experiences but also through repeated social interactions among students from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. The various activities incorporated into the program provide students with opportunities to interact, collaborate, and build relationships with peers from different backgrounds.

Social interactions that take place within a positive environment help students develop more open attitudes toward diversity. Through these experiences, students learn that differences are a natural part of social life and should be accepted and respected. Previous research has shown that repeated intergroup interactions can reduce prejudice and promote more positive attitudes toward members of other groups (Vrdoljak et al., 2024).

These findings can be understood through the lens of Intergroup Contact Theory. According to Allport (1954), intergroup contact is effective in reducing prejudice when four conditions are fulfilled: equal status among group members, shared goals, cooperation, and support from institutional authorities. The Saturday Culture Program demonstrates all four conditions in practice. The *begabung* activity places all students in equal positions regardless of their cultural or religious identities. Group dance performances provide participants with shared goals and collective achievements. Rehearsals involving students from different religious backgrounds require genuine cooperation, while teachers from diverse religious backgrounds consistently model inclusive attitudes, thereby providing the institutional support emphasized by Allport. Similarly, Karataş, et al., (2023) found that schools promoting equality and valuing cultural diversity are more likely to facilitate high-quality intergroup contact. The findings of the present study reveal a similar pattern within the Indonesian elementary school context, where Muslim, Hindu, and Christian students learn and interact within the same school community.

Beyond demonstrating that intergroup contact can reduce prejudice, this study also explains how this process occurs. A meta-analysis conducted by Pettigrew & Tropp (2008) identified three key mechanisms through which intergroup contact reduces prejudice: increased knowledge about other groups, reduced anxiety during intergroup interactions, and enhanced empathy. All three mechanisms were evident in the findings of this study. Students who asked questions about Hindu rituals after observing them demonstrated increased knowledge of other cultural groups. Students who comfortably shared food and drinks with one another reflected reduced anxiety in cross-group interactions. Meanwhile, a student who voluntarily chose to fast alongside a Muslim friend out of empathy demonstrated that the ability to understand another person's perspective had developed into meaningful action. These findings indicate that the Saturday Culture Program fosters multicultural attitudes through multiple complementary mechanisms rather than through a single process alone.

An Inclusive School Culture in the Development of Students' Multicultural Attitudes

The findings of this study further indicate that the development of students' multicultural attitudes is supported by an inclusive school culture that provides equal opportunities for all students to participate in various school activities. Through the Saturday Culture Program, diversity

is not merely introduced through cultural activities but is also embodied in everyday school practices that enable all students to participate regardless of their cultural or religious backgrounds.

These findings suggest that students do not simply learn about the value of equality but also experience it directly in their daily school life. When all students are treated equally, they develop an understanding of justice, togetherness, and respect for differences through authentic social experiences. Schools that provide equal opportunities for participation have been shown to foster an empowering school culture that supports all students regardless of their social or cultural backgrounds (Banks & Banks, 2016).

These findings are closely related to Banks' fifth dimension of multicultural education, namely an empowering school culture and social structure. According to Banks, multicultural education extends beyond incorporating content about different cultures into the curriculum; it also requires the development of school cultures and practices that ensure all students feel safe, respected, and treated fairly (Banks & Banks, 2016). The Saturday Culture Program reflects this principle through several concrete practices. The program does not limit cultural performances to traditional Sasak dances, consistently includes students from minority groups in diverse performance teams, and organizes activities such as *begibung*, which eliminate social boundaries in students' everyday interactions. This finding is particularly significant because inclusive education in Indonesia is still frequently understood as an administrative policy rather than as a commitment that is reflected in everyday educational practices, resulting in the incomplete implementation of inclusive values (Rentzi, 2024). The findings of this study therefore suggest that inclusive values should not merely be articulated as principles but must be embedded in both the structure and implementation of school programs in order to promote the meaningful development of students' multicultural attitudes.

The findings further indicate that an inclusive school culture, supported by local wisdom-based activities, creates a learning environment in which students can experience the values of equality directly. Such an environment strengthens the development of multicultural attitudes through authentic social experiences while reinforcing previous studies that have highlighted the importance of inclusive participation within the Saturday Culture Program (Akcaoglu & Aarsal, 2022; Fathurrochman et al., 2025; Sajida et al., 2024).

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that the Saturday Culture Program fosters students' multicultural attitudes through three interconnected mechanisms: direct experiences with diversity, repeated interactions with peers from different cultural and religious backgrounds, and an inclusive school culture that provides equal opportunities for all students. These findings are consistent with previous studies showing that multicultural educational experiences promote tolerance, positive attitudes toward others, and awareness of diversity (Akcaoglu & Aarsal, 2022; Aslan & Aybek, 2020; Vrdoljak et al., 2024). However, this study extends the existing literature by demonstrating that these three mechanisms can operate simultaneously within a local wisdom-based program, even though the program was not originally designed as a multicultural education initiative. This is possible because the Saturday Culture Program provides conditions that facilitate the development of multicultural attitudes, including equal opportunities for interaction, cooperation through shared activities, and teachers' support as facilitators (Allport, 1954; Karataş et al., 2023; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). The findings also suggest that the Saturday Culture Program implicitly incorporates three dimensions of Banks' multicultural education framework: prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture, without the need to provide multicultural education as a separate learning program.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Saturday Culture Program contributes to the development of students' multicultural attitudes, which are reflected in five key indicators: awareness and appreciation of diversity, anti-prejudice attitudes, commitment to justice and equality, the ability to take others' perspectives, and participation in an inclusive school culture. The principal finding of this study is that these five attitudes develop through three interconnected mechanisms: direct experiences with diversity, repeated interactions with peers from different cultural and religious backgrounds, and an inclusive school culture. Notably, these three mechanisms emerged within a local wisdom-based program that was originally designed to preserve local culture rather than as a dedicated multicultural education program.

From an academic perspective, this study provides empirical evidence that Allport (1954) Intergroup Contact Theory and Banks & Banks (2016) multicultural education framework remain relevant for explaining the development of multicultural attitudes among elementary school students in the Indonesian context. Furthermore, the findings extend current understanding by demonstrating that a local wisdom-based program can also serve as an effective medium for multicultural education when it provides meaningful learning experiences, opportunities for social interaction, and an inclusive school culture that supports changes in students' attitudes.

This study has several limitations related to its research context and design. It was conducted in a single elementary school; therefore, the findings should be interpreted within the characteristics of the study context. In addition, the qualitative approach focused on understanding the process through which multicultural attitudes develop and did not measure the magnitude of attitudinal change or examine its long-term sustainability. Future research may involve a larger number of schools with more diverse characteristics, employ mixed methods, and adopt longitudinal designs to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the development of students' multicultural attitudes.

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