

The Baseline of Multicultural Education: An Examination from Islamic and Buddhist Standpoints

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Abstract: *This paper examines the fundamental principles of multicultural education within the philosophical frameworks of Buddhism and Islam. The significance of this subject lies in the fact that the examination of multicultural education is mostly focused on accounts of educational reform methods and movements, with very less exploration of the theoretical underpinnings and conceptual elements, particularly in relation to the philosophical foundations of multicultural education. This report compiles data from many literary sources, employing a qualitative analysis approach. This study scrutinizes the comparative analysis of multicultural education through the lens of Buddhism and Islam, utilizing a conceptual framework that emphasizes the investigation of ontology, epistemology, and axiology as key variables for comparison. The study revealed that there exist conceptual distinctions in the context of multiculturalism when comparing Buddhism and Islam. Divergences arise as a result of the distinct historical foundations of Islam and Buddhism. However, it is important to note that there exist inherent similarities in the domains of ontology, epistemology, and axiology, thus indicating a convergence between Islam and Buddhism in the context of developing a multicultural framework for education. Both Islamic philosophy and Buddhist philosophy offer a solid foundation for the practical application of multicultural education..*

Keywords: *philosophical foundations, Buddhism education, Islamic education, Islamic philosophy, multicultural education.*

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1970s, when it first appeared in American discourse, multicultural education has gained widespread recognition on a global scale (1). Indonesia is encompassed within this context. During the period spanning the 1970s and 1980s, the Indonesian New Order regime shown a notable commitment towards the promotion and development of the Pancasila doctrine. Given that multicultural education aligns with the unitary state ideology and respects the principle of Bhineka Tunggal Ika, its integration into the national education system is quite straightforward. Based on the presented evidence, it can be argued that the multicultural education paradigm effectively meets the criteria set forth by the Indonesian educational system.

The concept of Pancasila had a pivotal role in establishing the foundation of Indonesian education throughout the New Order period. This phenomenon occurs due to the perception of Pancasila as a singular principle. Pancasila, despite its inherent compatibility with religious beliefs, holds a prominent position as the prevailing political ideology across several domains such as educational institutions, bureaucracies, professional groups, mass organizations, youth organizations, and even religious organizations (2,3). In order to assert that education does not necessitate a philosophical framework beyond Pancasila, it is imperative that all educational endeavours are grounded upon it. One of the contributing elements to the deficient intellectual basis of Indonesian education, particularly in the realm of intercultural education, is the aforementioned problem. The inherent vulnerability of multicultural education becomes notably evident inside educational institutions that possess a pronounced religious element. Moreover, numerous religious organizations only establish educational institutions with a lack of genuine commitment and dedication. On one side, there exists a prevailing inclination to obtain a religious basis, while on the other hand, a singular governing principle is evident. The philosophical underpinning of their argument is somewhat indeterminate due to the confusing nature of the situation. The formulation and implementation of curricula are perceived as intrinsically linked to their respective religious underpinnings, as it is believed that genuine religious sources do not serve as a source of inspiration for the intellectual underpinnings of multicultural education.

Multicultural education in Indonesian religious institutions is frequently grounded less in religious thought and more in response to the demands of an increasingly diverse social milieu, while also being rooted in the Pancasila doctrine. The justification for multicultural education is rooted in the very existence of multiculturalism. It is indisputably true that multicultural education can be cultivated through the incorporation of pre-existing cultural variety. Banks and Banks propose that the establishment of multicultural education can be achieved through the utilization of four distinct stages of cultural integration, including contribution, additive, transformation, and social action (1). Within the realm of multicultural education, it is observed that various cultural components tend to adopt different characteristics, progressing from minimal involvement in the initial stages of addition and contribution, to more equitable and comprehensive engagement at the latter stages of transformation and social action. By employing this framework, the development of multicultural education can be facilitated.

However, the application of this step to an educational institution rooted in religious principles presents inherent difficulties. The assimilation of microcultures, such as other religions, into religious education institutions is highly challenging, mostly due to the dominant influence exerted by the macroculture within these institutions. Although Islamic educational institutions accommodate a diverse student body and academic community, they remain steadfast in their commitment to derive their primary inspiration from Islamic beliefs. The aforementioned statement is applicable to various other religious beliefs. Due to the prevailing influence of organizational culture within religiously based educational institutions, the emphasis on multicultural education may not necessarily prioritize an equitable representation of all cultures. It is imperative to emphasize that there exists an assurance that the rights of the microculture encompassed therein will be upheld (4). Understanding various cultures and beliefs is necessary for this. For the religion itself, having a solid grasp of multicultural realities—including those of other religions—is tremendously helpful (5). Hence, it is imperative that the conceptual foundation of multicultural education be robust and well-developed to effectively provide equal opportunities for all individuals in society to achieve their maximum capabilities.

The literature on multicultural education is still dominated by research on multicultural education as an educational reform movement and as an educational process, but there are still few about ideas or concepts, hence studies on the foundations of multicultural education are still limited. Whereas, according to Banks, the three areas of idea or

concept, educational reform movement, and process compose the scope of multicultural education (1).

The foundations of multicultural education have been the subject of several research. According to Randolph, cultural relativism eventually gives way to cultural pluralism, which serves as the basis for multicultural education (6). Hiraoka offers an intriguing point of view; according to him, the foundation of multicultural education must be subject to constant change to prevent it from being fixed on one specific factor (7). According to Pang et al., the ethics of care serve as the cornerstone of multicultural education. He makes the case that this idea is at the heart of many different social activities, including multicultural education (8). Thandeka K. Chapman asserts that a historical perspective can also be used to examine the foundations of multicultural education (9).

Numerous research endeavours have been undertaken to investigate the foundations of multicultural education within the Indonesian circumstances. Rukiyati did a comprehensive study on the fundamental principles and foundations of multicultural education in the broader context of Indonesia. She asserted that the fundamental underpinning of multicultural education is pluralism, however in the context of Indonesia, it is Pancasila. Ahmad Khairuddin authored an essay discussing the epistemology of multicultural education in Indonesia. He endeavors to tackle the implementation of intercultural education initiatives within the framework of public education (10). The study presented by Syamsul Bahri was found to be quite intriguing. The Progressive-Reconstructive philosophy is posited by the individual as the theoretical foundation of multicultural education within the realm of educational philosophy. He perceived this philosophical movement as possessing contextual, critical, constructive, and forward-thinking attributes (11).

This paper explores the foundations of multicultural education in two traditions: Islam and Theravada Buddhism. The later has dominated Indonesian archipelago since the 7th century AD (12), which occurred simultaneously with the growth of Hinduism (13). While Islam in early second millennium. Because they arose from different roots, Islam and Buddhism have many conceptual differences. Islam, like Judaism and Christianity, has Semitic roots, whereas Buddhism has Aryan roots, which is also a criticism of the Vedic tradition (Hinduism). This fundamental difference distinguishes the two styles. Islam is very theistic, whereas Buddhism is non-theistic; Islam recognizes the spirit and the unseen as the essence, whereas Buddhism is principled without a soul; Islam's ultimate goal is to go to god, heaven, and eternal life, whereas Buddhism's goal is to achieve eternal annihilation. Because they have very different fundamental tenets, it begs the question of whether these two traditions also have different perspectives on multicultural education.

Studies that place Buddhism and Islam as research subjects in the context of education have appeared in several works. For example, Wijayanti and Widhanarto discussed the dialectic of applying the Islamic curriculum to schools in countries with a dominant Buddhist culture, to be precise at Anuban Islam Songkhla School in Thailand (14). In the context of school curriculum, Yanyan Suryana discusses about how Buddhism and Islam have been assimilated (15). Khareng et al. have addressed on the values of liberty and observance of human rights in Islam and Buddhism. He observed parallels between the teachings of Islam and Buddhism, particularly in the area of appreciation for diversity, but there are also variances, such as in how those who leave religion are viewed (16). However, the debate has not yet moved on to how these libertarian ideas might be used in the field of education. Richard Wade has also researched the meeting of Islamic and Buddhist values, particularly in terms of character building (17).

The notions of *ummatan wasathan* and *majjhima patipada*, or the concept of moderation in attitudes and acts, are examples of the contact between Islam and Buddhism in the field of education (18). Misra and Awang present the perspectives of Buddhists and Muslims on interfaith dialogue. Particularly, female members of the two

religious traditions made up the subjects (16). Sander investigates the impact of Buddhism, Islam, and Judaism on educational achievement in the United States. His research has demonstrated that both Islam and Buddhism have comparable positive impacts on educational achievement when compared to Protestantism and Catholicism (19). Afifudin and Burga investigates the topic of religious ethical teaching within Muslim and Buddhist households residing in the urban area of Watampone. The researcher directs their attention towards families practicing the Islamic and Buddhist faiths, with the aim of examining the content and structure of inter-religious ethical education that promotes multiculturalism and inclusivity (20).

It is hard to find studies that expressly focus on the foundations of multicultural education, despite the fact that some of these scholars have conducted comparative studies on the fundamental values of Buddhism and Islam. As a result, doing this study is considered essential.

Religious foundations are valued in the realm of modern education. Peter Simpson once said in his book *The Philosophy of Education in the Era of Globalization*:

Global religious education is the hope of the world. Only through religion and education therein can people hope to attain in this life (not to mention the next) freedom, happiness, and peace. This thesis will not be accepted by most political or social thinkers, and in particular not by liberal ones; (21).

Globalization and liberalism, which frequently use the Western heritage as a reference, have generated various moral decadences, which have finally led to the resurgence of religion as a standard for morality. Therefore, it is necessary to examine Eastern philosophy, which is embodied in religious traditions, as well as Western philosophy in order to develop a philosophical basis for multicultural education.

METHODOLOGY

This study is characterized by a qualitative research approach. The major data utilized was obtained through extensive study conducted in libraries. This study only addresses the intellectual underpinnings of intercultural education within the two religions. The primary focus of this research lies in the exploration of theoretical concepts, as it places significant emphasis on establishing a solid foundation. There will be a reduced focus on practical matters. The educational philosophy method is considered the most appropriate for addressing this matter, as it aligns with the fundamental principles of multicultural education, which prioritize the pursuit of knowledge. According to George R. Knight, philosophy serves as the essential framework for the implementation of education (22). Hence, the establishment of a solid conceptual framework is crucial in the development of educational systems. The absence of a well-defined philosophy results in a lack of clear guidance for educational endeavors.

A comparative study employing a philosophical method necessitates the utilization of many philosophical variables. This paper considers multicultural education as an academic subject characterized by a fundamental philosophical foundation. The inclusion of ontological, epistemological, and axiological components is important within the realm of scientific inquiry (23). Consequently, an examination of multicultural education within the contexts of Islam and Buddhism will be conducted, employing the three aforementioned variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Philosophical Foundations of Multicultural Education in Buddhist Perspective

Buddhism is referred to as a religion in the East, but Buddhism can be seen as a philosophy in the West, namely the ideas of Siddhartha Buddha Gautama, who lived in

the sixth century BC, and then developed by subsequent philosophers (24) Hence, Buddhist Philosophy is synonymous with Buddhism. The Buddhism discussed in this study is specifically Theravada Buddhism, which is known to be more orthodox in its conformance to teachings of Buddha Gautama and where the purity of Buddhist teachings is better maintained. This school contrasts with Mahayana Buddhism, which is more compromising, contextualist, and acculturative to other cultures where Buddhism developed.

Nama & rupa: Ontology of Buddhism for Multicultural Education

Ontologically, Buddhism has several basic views of human, nature, and absolute reality. To understand these three aspects, the flow needs to be sequenced from the cosmos, anthropos, then to Absolute Reality. This is different from non-Buddhist religions which are based on theism. Theravada Buddhism (hereinafter referred to as Buddhism) is a non-theistic tradition, in the sense that it does not make talking about gods a major concern. However, this position cannot be equated with atheism which rejects the recognition of the existence of God.

For Buddhism there are *nama* and *rūpa* (mind and matter). But what is meant by mind or inner (*nama*) is not spirit or soul. In the terms of Aristotelian philosophy there are *hyle* and *morphe*; material and form. The *nama* in Buddhism means the same as the Aristotelian *morphe*. The *nama* is more similar as the forming potential, while the *rūpa* is the material that is formed. This can be seen from the teachings of Buddhism which views humans as a stream of life consisting of the *pancakhanda* (five elements), which includes matter (*rūpa*), feelings (*vedana*), perception (*sanna*), mental formations (*sankhara*) and consciousness (*vinnana*). The five *khandhas* are interrelated and are subject to the law of cause and effect (*paticcasamuppada*).

Humans, like everything else in the cosmos, are only concentrated on *nama* and *rūpa* that have specific qualities. It is referred to as *tanha* (craving) and *upādāna* (attachment). People will continue to suffer (*samsara*) as long as their desires and attachments are tied to lower things (materialism and sensuality). They will experience *punarbhava* (many rebirths) if they suffer real damage (death) while still in a condition of *samsara*. They will stop when they are able to *nibbana*, the disengagement from attachments and desires (25).

Nirvana or *nibbana*, is characterized as a state in which energy vanishes, much like the flame at the end of a candle. That is the Absolute Reality, the deliverance from *samsara* that Buddhists believe to be their ultimate goal. This contrasts with theistic religions, where "going home" to God is the ultimate objective. Buddhism seems to aim for total oblivion and disappearance. *Nibbana* is a state of consciousness reached through the eradication of clinging (26).

It is clear from Buddhist logic that, in the Buddha's opinion, people are identical to other objects in the cosmos. So, neither racial superiority nor any other bodily predicates exist in Buddhism. Humans are not only similar to one another, but also to other natural elements like animals, plants, and so forth, in that they share *nama* and *rūpa*.

Unlike the Abrahamic religion that knows the spirit, Buddhism holds that everything, including man, does not have an eternal core self (*anatta*). Belief in the existence of a true soul/spirit/self is considered a misunderstanding of human consciousness (27). There is simply a certain attribute called *karma* behind *nama* and *rūpa*. The level of awareness required to achieve *nibbana* increases with better *karma*. Because of this, according to Buddhist teachings, people must train themselves to attain the deepest consciousness. With *tapa* (*samadhi/bhavana*), one practices.

Buddhists find it simple to appreciate people from different cultural backgrounds if all humans—from all races, ethnicities, nations, and even religions—are regarded as equals. For Buddhists, multiculturalism is not a strange idea; rather, it is a fundamental idea that

is included into the teachings of their faith. Buddhism's knowledge of people, in Thathong's opinion, enables people to become people who place a priority on loving kindness and good-will toward others (28).

Therefore, from an ontological standpoint, Buddhism sees all people as equal. They are all viewed as equal parts of nature that are working ceaselessly to end *samsara*. The universe also has *nama* and *rupa*, and a degree of consciousness of its own. Buddhists must appreciate nature since human views about it are also the same as human attitudes toward living, intelligent nature. Buddhists who don't talk about God aspire to obtain nibbana as the ultimate goal.

Right Mind: Buddhist Epistemology in Multicultural Education Perspective

In a Buddhist perspective, epistemologically education is a way to get rid of ignorance. The concept of ignorance (*avijja*) receives serious attention in Buddhism because it is considered the cause of failure to achieve goals. It is mentioned in Dhammapada Chapter XVIII: 243, regarding Mala Vagga or taints:

“Worse than all these stains is stupidity. Ignorance is the worst stain. Monks, get rid of this stain and become blameless.” (29)

Tanha (desire/compulsion) arises because of ignorance (*avijja*), namely not knowing what is beneficial and what is not. So education is useful in guiding people in making priorities in their lives, so that their lifetime is useful for continuing to improve themselves.

Pursuing and carrying out education is part of *Dhamma*, which entails following the moral principles that the Buddha taught. Meanwhile, the *Dhamma* must constantly be practiced with compassion and goodwill. Therefore, it is necessary to teach about Buddhism without using violence. This rule is based on the Buddha's invitation to Yasa in the Vinaya Pitaka:

“Here, Yasa, there is nothing to worry about. Here Yasa, nothing hurts. Come here Yasa, I will teach you,” (vinaya.i.15).

Anxiety, let alone physical or emotional agony, should not be caused by education. Multicultural education is considered as consistent with Buddhism on this premise since it necessitates an educational structure free of fear and pain (nonviolence). Minorities do not need to be concerned about receiving painful treatment in the educational process since multicultural education respects diversity.

The epistemology of Buddhism is generally based on the *Hasta Arya Marga* (Eight elements of the Path of Goodness) taught by Buddha. The eight elements of the main Path are: Right Understanding (*sammâ-ditthi*), Right Thought (*sammâ-sankappa*), Right Speech (*sammâ-vâcâ*), Right Action (*sammâ-kammanta*), Right Earning (*sammâ-ajiva*), Effort. Right (*sammâ-vâyama*), Right Mindfulness (*sammâ-sati*), Right Concentration (*sammâ-samâdhi*) (Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta; Samyutta Nikaya 56.11)

Hasta Arya Marga pays close attention to the mind if you examine closely. Buddhism places a strong focus on the use of the mind in the pursuit of intellectuality. "We are born without weapons, our thoughts are our only weapon," stated Ayn Rand, a Russian-American novelist-philosopher. Buddhism places a high value on the role of the mind. As a result, education is extremely essential in Buddhism. However, the application of ideas must be right. The quality of daily deeds is considered to be in line with *Dhamma* if someone ensures that he/she is always right in thoughts and acts. Actions that are in accordance with dhamma will not harm anyone.

c. Axiology of Multicultural Education from a Buddhist Perspective

In contrast to Western axiology, the ethical and aesthetic components of Buddhist axiology are not concentrated on sensory beauty. Because the ultimate objective of

Buddhism is annihilation (*nibbana*), Buddhism's axiology has a special focus towards holiness, the good and the beautiful are holy. In this instance, Buddhism ensures that holiness is possible after performing *hasta arya marga*. The purity achieved is: 1). *Sila-visuddhi* or Purity of *Sila* as a result of the implementation of *Sila* and the erosion of *Kilesa* (Defilement), 2). *Citta-visuddhi*, *Inner Purity*, as a result of the implementation of *Samadhi* and the eroding of *Nivarana* (inner Obstacles), 3) *Ditthi-visuddhi*, Purity of View as a result of the implementation of *Pañña* and the eroding of *Anusaya* (prejudicial tendencies). 4) *Kankhā-vitarana-visuddhi* is purity against doubt. 5). *Maggāmagga-ñānadassana-visuddhi* on purity concerns the path and not the path that leads to enlightenment. 6) *Patipadā-ñānadassana-visuddhi* is purity leading to insight and knowledge. 7) *Nānadassana-visuddhi* is perfect purity of knowledge and view. (Rathavinīta sutta. Majjhima Nikaya.24).

Multicultural education as *dhamma* will also help people develop this pure character. It is consistent with the dimension of multicultural education, which is prejudice reduction. Prejudice reduction is essential for equal status and cooperation in multicultural communities.

Islamic Philosophy's Standpoints for Multicultural Education

Islamic philosophy emphasises axiology before discussing ontology and epistemology as doctrinal-based critical reasoning. Western philosophy, which places ontology at the beginning of everything, differs from this practice. Although axiology is the primary focus of Muslim philosophers, the ontological part of Islamic philosophy has received considerable attention. All that is required is to bring it up once more and provide a theoretical justification. (31) This is crucial if Islamic philosophy is to serve as the conceptual underpinning of new fields of study, such as multicultural education.

The philosophical foundations of multicultural education in Islam derive from Islamic philosophy, specifically the philosophy developed from the height of Islam, particularly the Al-Kindi era (9th century AD), to the present. Although Islamic philosophy spans a wide spectrum, in this essay we will focus mostly on Classical Islamic philosophy. The rationality of Muslim scholars is the cornerstone of Islamic philosophy. The deductive reasoning of the philosopher is applied to create an educational viewpoint when it manifests as Islamic Educational Philosophy. Getting to grasp an Islamic philosophical system, for instance, and then explaining how it relates to education. (32)

In general, there are four schools of thought that can be used to categorize Islamic philosophy during the Classical period: Masya'i (peripatetic), Hermetic Pythagorean (Isma'ili), Isyraqi (illusionist), and Transcendental Theosophy (Wisdom of Muta'aliyah). Peripatetics (masyaiyah), a synthesis of Aristotle and Plato's Greek philosophy, relied on deduction, reasoning, and reasoned speculation. Ibn Sina is a representation of a Muslim philosopher who fits this category. The Ikhwan al-Shafa created the rational-metaphysical school of thought known as Pythagorean Hermetic, often known as neoplatonism. Isyraq (illusionism), in contrast, is founded on inner purity (sufism) and supra-rational mystical intuition; Suhrawardi is an example of a scholar in this movement. While Mulla Sadra is an example who holds this viewpoint, Hikmah Muta'aliyah (Transcendental Theosophy) is more of a synthesis of Islamic philosophy. (33)

Islamic philosophy encompasses various perspectives, each of which presents distinct notions pertaining to ontology, epistemology, and axiology. From multiple perspectives, it is plausible to identify philosophical foundations for multicultural education within an Islamic framework.

Human Soul: Islamic Ontology in Multicultural Education

From an ontological perspective, traditional Islamic philosophy conceptualises humans as beings of divine nature, possessing an inherent essence in the form of a soul, commonly referred to as "nafs." However, it is important to note that there exists a wide range of interpretations regarding the nature and characteristics of the soul within this philosophical tradition. According to Ibn Sina, the essence of human nature is in the soul. The soul represents the inherent state of excellence within the physical form, known as "*kamal al awwal li jissim*," and serves as the primary constituent of human beings. (34)

The concept of nafs is non-material in nature, coexisting with the physical body and persisting beyond the body's demise. Education is directed towards the cultivation and advancement of the human soul due to its intrinsic connection with human nature. According to the perspective of the Ikhwan al-Shafa, the soul is regarded as possessing a spiritual nature, characterized by its ability to transcend physical limitations, rather than solely being immaterial as posited by Ibn Sina. The soul possesses vitality, luminosity, cognition, and dynamism. Mulla Sadra's conception of human essence centers around the notion of rational souls, albeit with slight variations. The concept of the rational soul, as proposed by Mulla Sadra, differs from the perspectives of Ibn Sina and Ikhwan Al-Safa. While Ibn Sina and Ikhwan Al-Safa argue for the immaterial and transcendental nature of the soul, Mulla Sadra's interpretation incorporates empirical-logical and intuitive aspects. According to Sadra, intuition constitutes an integral component of human rationality. The concept of reason in the Western paradigm, in contrast to other perspectives, is often limited to cognitive processes occurring within the brain. This particular paradigm, which diverges to some extent from traditional philosophical perspectives, originates from the viewpoint espoused by Suhrawardi. The concept of the soul was not explicitly addressed by the individual in question; however, their understanding of the human essence revolved around the notions of light or intellect, sometimes referred to as *logos*. Upon closer examination, it becomes apparent that Suhrawardi's notion of intelligence has striking resemblance to the fundamental nature of the soul as perceived by other philosophers. According to Suhrawardi, human beings are considered integral components of the luminous emanation originating from God, known as "*nur al-anwar*." The development of the intellect or reasoning soul in humans facilitates the realization of additional potentials inside the soul.(35)

By using the framework of classical Islamic philosophy, it is posited that human nature is not contingent upon the physical body's differences. Furthermore, it is not solely determined by one's cultural background. The distinguishing factor among humans lies solely in the inherent character of their souls. In isolation, this idea has disregarded elements that are tangential in character. From the standpoint of Islamic educational philosophy, racial, social, and cultural disparities do not pose a predicament. In essence, Islamic philosophy has ensured the inclusion of diverse cultural viewpoints.

The Epistemology of Multicultural Education from Islamic Perspective.

Within the epistemic realm, classical Muslim philosophers engaged in discourse surrounding the optimal educational techniques and strategies aimed at maximizing the inherent potential of the human essence. Ibn Sina demonstrated a systematic approach by employing a hierarchical plan that encompassed home-based education as well as specialized skill development, as a means of shaping his life trajectory. Early education focuses on the cultivation of the soul, whereas in maturity, emphasis is placed on professional education. The educational approach employed by the al-Safa siblings encompasses a series of steps, including *tahzīb* (remediation),

taḥīr (cleansing), *tatmīm* (attainment of exoteric knowledge), and *takmīl* (attainment of esoteric knowledge). In the meantime, Suhrawardi devised a methodology that involved establishing a set of criteria to assess the proficiency of students in the field of science. The initial stage is referred to as *Ṭālib*, denoting individuals who primarily engage in the accumulation of knowledge, assuming the role of knowledge gatherers. The subsequent tier holds a more elevated status, referred to as *ṭālib al-baḥth*, individuals who actively pursue discursive thought, engaging in debates and problem analysis. The aforementioned level is referred to as *ṭālib al-ta'alluh*, denoting individuals who actively pursue divinity or godliness. These individuals possess an orientation that extends beyond just worldly concerns, including both spiritual and mundane aspects of life. According to Suhrawardi, the optimal level is referred to as *al-ḥakīm al-ilāhī*, which can be seen as a synthesis of the second and third levels. In the realm of philosophical thought, Mulla Sadra formulated a comprehensive framework known as the transformation continuum. This continuum encompasses the progressive refinement of practical material intellectual talents (*'amilah*), followed by a transition towards habitus intellect (*al-malakah*), subsequently leading to the activation of intellect for action (*aql bi al-fi'l*), and ultimately culminating in the attainment of active intellect (*aql al-fa'al*). According to Sadra, this transformative process entails elevating human beings beyond their mere human nature, enabling them to embody the qualities of *malakut*, which refers to complete submission to the divine will. Furthermore, this change grants individuals a type of immortality, as they attain everlasting bliss in the hereafter.(32)

The examination of various epistemological perspectives within Islamic educational philosophy as articulated by classical thinkers reveals the necessity for incremental modifications in order to facilitate the realization of human beings' utmost capabilities. The progression typically commences with the acceptance of material possessions and worldly pursuits, which then fosters a deeper understanding of the significance of human agency in attaining spiritual objectives.

The acceptance of worldly entities, under the framework of multiculturalism, can be seen as the acceptance of the various manifestations of variety present in our global society. The attainment of diversity in the global context represents a fundamental milestone that must be achieved, as it paves the way for humanity to progress towards further levels of development, namely utility and spiritual proximity to the divine. As per the author's assertion, this particular hierarchical arrangement effectively confers precedence to diversity, ensuring its prompt recognition without any room for doubt. By adopting this approach, individuals can promptly progress towards a more elevated objective that transcends the concept of multiculturalism. The acknowledgement of the multicultural dimension is essential for individuals to surpass cultural boundaries, enabling them to advocate for universal and transcendent values. The inability to surpass the challenges posed by multiculturalism will perpetuate individuals' entrapment in religious prejudice, ultimately undermining the progress and efficacy of religion(30).

The axiology of multicultural education from Islamic perspectives.

From an axiological standpoint, traditional thinkers argue that Islamic education is oriented towards the attainment of societal benefits for humanity. According to Ibn Sina, education should be oriented towards holistic personal growth encompassing physical, mental, and moral aspects. This approach enables individuals to actively contribute to society by pursuing their chosen professions(36). In contrast, the Ikhwan al-Safa group, characterized by its metaphysical approach, perceives education as a means to facilitate the actualization of the soul's inherent capacities and to refine it in anticipation of the eternal existence. In contrast, Suhrawardi posits that the ultimate objective of education is

the attainment of illumination, sometimes referred to as enlightenment (37). Education is inherently intertwined with one's spiritual existence, as the process of education serves to foster the development of individuals towards greater enlightenment. According to Suhrawardi, individuals who have attained enlightenment possess the capacity to serve as catalysts for the enlightenment of their respective societies. According to the philosophical perspective of Mulla Sadra, it is posited that the ultimate objective of education is the attainment of *istikmal al-nafs*, which refers to the perfection of the soul. This pursuit is regarded as an endeavor to address the fundamental purpose of the existence of human beings. The attainment of soul perfection enables individuals to exhibit flawless conduct in their interactions with one another and in cultivating a connection with the divine (35).

The core concept of Islamic education's axiology centers around the societal welfare of individuals. While the ultimate objective of humanity is the spiritual realm known as the *ukhrawi* dimension, it is noteworthy that Muslim thinkers prioritize the role of social welfare as a pivotal factor in facilitating access to the afterlife. The saying "*khairunnas 'anfauhum linnas*," which states that the best human being is the one who is most beneficial to other people, appears to embody this axiological principle. From the standpoint of Islamic education, the concepts of goodness and beauty hold ethical and aesthetic significance. Specifically, these notions are seen favorable when individuals are able to contribute to their societal milieu, encompassing both fellow human beings and the natural environment. Undoubtedly, it can be asserted that the overarching objective of all social endeavors undertaken by Muslims, including those within the realm of education, is to embody the concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. The notion of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* represents a prophetic undertaking, serving as one of the primary objectives behind the dispatch of the Prophet Muhammad to humanity. The axiological foundation of multicultural education can be derived from the aforementioned facts. The acknowledgement and defense of multiculturalism are driven by the objective of fostering positive interactions among individuals, rather than causing harm or negative consequences.

CONCLUSION

Based on the aforementioned examination of the domains of ontology, epistemology, and axiology within the context of multicultural education as influenced by Buddhism and Islam, the following conclusions can be drawn: From an ontological perspective, the multicultural foundation within Buddhism is rooted in the belief that all individuals possess equal intrinsic value, as they are regarded as equal constituents of the natural world. These individuals engage in the pursuit of enhancing their *karma* with the ultimate aim of attaining *nibbana*, the ultimate goal. While Buddhism does not acknowledge the presence of an inherent essence or soul, the notion of *karma*, which refers to the consequences of one's actions, holds significant importance in comprehending the human condition within the framework of Buddhism. In the Islamic tradition, the human essence is characterized as an engaged and intellectual soul, through which individuals have the potential to attain the utmost magnificence. In order to regard the diversity present in the world as an integral aspect that is above reproach, it is imperative to intentionally embrace and comprehend it in its entirety. From an epistemological standpoint, multicultural education, as viewed through the lens of Buddhism, is rooted in the principles of good thinking and behaving, as exemplified by *hasta arya marga*. This endeavor also serves as a means to prevent engaging in unintelligent behavior (*avijja*). Questioning the concept of diversity is deemed intellectually unsound and lacking in sophistication, as it is commonly associated with materialistic characteristics or aspirations, known as *tanha*. In order to adhere to the principles of Buddhism, it is imperative for individuals to cultivate a

mindset that embraces difference with a genuine sense of acceptance. Education in Islam is characterized as a progressive and incremental undertaking. The initial phase involves comprehending various aspects of the material world, including its diverse elements. Once an individual comprehends the concept of variety, it becomes imperative for a Muslim to promptly address social welfare concerns, and afterwards transcend the confines of mundane existence in order to attain the ultimate purpose of human existence. From an axiological standpoint, the objective of education in the Buddhist framework is to cultivate individuals of moral excellence. By instilling purity within themselves, individuals become devoid of harm and are prepared to offer assistance to others. Furthermore, they develop a sense of egalitarianism, perceiving others as equals, and demonstrate a willingness to engage in cooperative endeavors. From an Islamic standpoint, the objective of education is to contribute to the welfare and betterment of society, commonly referred to as *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. The perception of utility in the mortal realm is widely regarded as a crucial determinant of success in the realm beyond. In the realm of Islamic education, it is imperative for Muslims to adopt a multicultural perspective in order to fully harness its advantages for all individuals, encompassing the concept of "lil' alamin." This approach necessitates the removal of cultural obstacles, with the ultimate objective of attaining divine acceptance.

Author Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the main contributor to this paper, some are as chairman, member, financier, article translator, and final editor. All authors read and approved the final paper.

Conflicts of Interest

We declare no conflict of interest.

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