

Integrating Said Nursi's Spiritual and Educational Perspectives into Contemporary Multicultural Education Systems

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Abstract

Multicultural education has become an important aspect of the modern school system, which aims to provide equal educational opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds while promoting appreciation for cultural diversity. However, integrating spiritual and moral dimensions into multicultural education remains a major challenge. The aim of this article is to explore Said Nursi's educational perspective, which combines spiritual depth with a strong moral foundation, and to suggest ways to integrate these ideas into contemporary educational practice. The methodology of this research includes an evaluation of the application of the nurture approach in different multicultural educational contexts, through a case study and an analysis of current literature. These findings suggest that the spiritual and moral values taught by Said Nursi can improve social relationships and understanding among students from different cultural backgrounds, thus reducing conflict and promoting social harmony. Hopefully, integrating Nursi's perspective can revitalize the modern multicultural education system by educating an ethical, knowledgeable, and socially responsible generation.

Keywords: Said Nursi's Spiritual, Educational Perspectives Contemporary Multicultural, Education Systems

Introduction

Multicultural education has become a crucial aspect of modern schooling systems due to the increasing cultural diversity in global societies. It aims to provide equitable educational opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds while promoting respect and appreciation for cultural differences. However, integrating spiritual and moral dimensions into multicultural education remains a challenge. Said Nursi's educational philosophy, which combines spiritual depth with a strong moral foundation, offers valuable insights for

addressing this challenge. This article examines Nursi's perspectives and proposes ways to incorporate them into contemporary educational practices (Ihsan et al, 2021; Faiz, 2013).

Discussion

Foundations of Said Nursi's Philosophy of Education

Said Nursi emphasized that effective education must integrate the high spiritual and moral values taught in Islam. Nursi believes that education is not only about imparting academic knowledge but also about developing personal ethics and character. He asserted that faith and belief in God are a necessary foundation for building a harmonious and just society. This is reflected in his *Risale-i Noor*, where he states that faith-based education can reduce hostility among people and increase compassion (Nursi, 1996). Incorporating these spiritual values into the modern education system is essential for raising a responsible and ethical generation (Noor & Latif, 2012). Nursi saw education as the most important tool for conflict resolution and peace-building. He emphasized that education should instill the values of justice, tolerance and patience. In the modern context of conflict between many ethnic and religious groups, Nursi's educational approach plays an important role in overcoming tensions and promoting peace.

Nursi emphasized the importance of interfaith dialogue as an important component of education. He believes that it is possible to resolve differences and improve mutual understanding through dialogue. Education that integrates interfaith dialogue approaches can help reduce prejudice and negative stereotypes among students. According to Zaidin (2017), Nursi saw dialogue as a way to strengthen social harmony and promote cooperation among different communities. In today's educational context, curricula that encourage dialogue among students of different faiths can help create a more inclusive and peaceful society.

Nursi emphasized that education should focus on developing dignity and moral integrity. He believed that values such as fairness, justice, patience, and generosity should guide education. This character education not only develops a person with good moral character but also helps reduce conflict and tension in society. Nursi's teachings on the importance of ethics and morality in education can be applied to the modern education system to produce a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also morally strong. It is important to implement character and morality-based education to create a just and harmonious society (Cemal S., 2022).

Spiritual and Moral Values in Multicultural Education

Integrating spiritual values such as honesty, patience and compassion into multicultural education can help strengthen social relationships among students from different cultural backgrounds (Novi et al, 2025). According to Said Nursi, education should include spiritual elements to develop a morally correct person. Teaching that integrates spiritual values improves students' ability to appreciate and respect cultural diversity, thereby reducing conflict and increasing social harmony in the classroom (Himmawan & Sadam, 2023).

Moral education plays an important role in building students' character, especially in a multicultural environment. Said Nursi emphasized that moral education is important in guiding students to live ethical and responsible lives. Education that emphasizes moral values

such as justice, equality and compassion helps students understand and appreciate different points of view and develop tolerance and acceptance of differences (Ridwana & Zainal, 2024).

Said Nursi believes that spiritual and moral values are universal and can be applied to any culture. In multicultural education, these values can be used to promote tolerance and mutual respect among students. The education based on universal values such as justice, equality and love can reduce prejudice and discrimination and promote constructive dialogue among students from different backgrounds (Albert Frolov, 2022).

The spiritual and moral values taught by Said Nursi can be used in multicultural education to increase understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. According to Cetin (2022), educational approaches that integrate these values help students recognize cultural differences as strengths and resources for learning. It can improve students' ability to collaborate and interact with peers from different cultures more effectively and harmoniously (Rebecca, 2024).

Teaching Strategies Based on Nursi's Thought

Said Nursi stressed the importance of including religious and scientific education in the curriculum. He believed that these two areas complement each other and create a comprehensive understanding of the world and life and should not be separated. According to Nursi, teaching science without a spiritual basis leads to moral emptiness, while teaching religion without scientific knowledge leads to narrow-mindedness (Nursi, 1996). Therefore, learning strategies that combine these elements help students develop a balanced and comprehensive understanding. Erik (2024) also said that integration can increase students' interest and desire to learn and strengthen their moral and ethical values.

Teaching based on wisdom (hikmah) and deep reflection (tadabbur) is one of the strategies prioritized by Said Nursi. He emphasizes that students must be encouraged to think about and understand the deeper meaning of what they are learning, rather than just memorizing facts. This approach encourages students to think critically, reflect, and apply knowledge in their daily lives. According to Stacey (2003), learning strategies that emphasize wisdom and reflection help students develop critical thinking, creativity, self-awareness, and social responsibility.

Said Nursi also emphasized the importance of collaborative learning in education. He believed that collaboration and interaction between students from different backgrounds would enrich their learning experience and strengthen the spirit of brotherhood (ukhuwah). In multicultural education, collaborative learning strategies can help overcome cultural differences and promote mutual understanding and tolerance. This method improves students' social and communication skills and strengthens mutual respect and cooperation (Mariyono & Akmal, 2024)..

The values of love and compassion are at the heart of Said Nursi's educational approach. He emphasizes that teachers must treat their students with love and compassion and understand each individual's unique needs and circumstances. This approach creates a positive learning environment and supports students' emotional and social development. According to Fanny (2022), teaching based on love and empathy improves student mood and strengthens

teacher-student relationships. It is important that every student feels valued and supported in their educational journey.

Application of Nursi's Approach in Multicultural Education

Interfaith Dialogue in Nigerian Schools

The introduction of spirituality-based educational programs in Nigeria has shown significant success in reducing radicalization among youths. These programs are rooted in Said Nursi's emphasis on interfaith dialogue and spiritual values. Schools have integrated activities where students from various religious backgrounds engage in discussions and collaborative projects aimed at fostering mutual understanding and respect.

For example, the Nigeria Interfaith Dialogue Platform has established the Pigba Kindergarten School in an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp, where nearly 200 students are enrolled. This platform supports teachers' salaries, provides learning materials, and works towards the official recognition of the school.

Additionally, the newly formulated Interfaith Code of Conduct in Nigeria, a collaboration between the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), demonstrates the country's dedication to interfaith dialogue. This code is driven by core values, including love and mutual respect, human rights and dignity, ethical standards, honesty, and transparency. (<https://www.kaiciid.org/stories/features/nigeria-interfaith-dialogue-platform-establishes-school-idp-camp?>).

The integration of educational programs that emphasize interfaith dialogue and spiritual values aligns with Said Nursi's teachings. This approach has helped reduce radicalization among Nigerian youths by fostering understanding and mutual respect among students from diverse religious backgrounds.

Character Education in Turkish Schools

Several schools in Turkey have integrated Said Nursi's emphasis on moral education into their curricula, focusing on teaching values such as justice, patience, and generosity. This approach aligns with Nursi's educational philosophy, which advocates for the integration of spiritual, intellectual, and moral elements in education. Nursi's concept of Medresetüz Zehra embodies this integration, aiming to cultivate well-rounded individuals who embody these virtues (Nur Hadi et al, 2021).

In addition to Nursi's influence, character education in Turkish schools has been shaped by various educational reforms and comparative studies. For instance, research comparing character education in the United States and Turkey examines the place and importance of character education in schools within both countries, providing insights into how different educational systems approach the teaching of moral values (Volcan Cicek et al, 2012).

Furthermore, studies on values education processes in Turkish elementary schools highlight the implementation of character education programs that aim to instill virtues like justice, patience, and generosity. These programs often include community service projects and

ethical debates, which help students develop a strong moral foundation and improve social relationships (Cinar & Halil, 2021).

By incorporating Nursi's teachings and engaging students in activities that promote ethical understanding, Turkish schools strive to cultivate individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also possess strong moral character, contributing to a more just and harmonious society.

Spiritual Values in Indonesian Multicultural Classrooms

In Indonesia, schools with diverse student populations have adopted Said Nursi's educational philosophy by integrating spiritual values such as honesty, patience, and compassion into their teaching practices. This approach aligns with Nursi's emphasis on the integration of spiritual, intellectual, and moral dimensions in education, aiming to develop well-rounded individuals.

Teachers in these multicultural classrooms utilize stories and lessons that highlight these values, fostering a more inclusive and respectful environment where cultural differences are viewed as strengths. This method not only enhances students' moral development but also promotes mutual respect and understanding among diverse cultural backgrounds.

By incorporating Nursi's spiritual values into their curricula, Indonesian schools aim to nurture students who are both intellectually capable and morally grounded, contributing to a harmonious and respectful multicultural society (Alhini Zahratana, 2023).

Holistic Education in Malaysian Schools

In Malaysia, certain educational institutions have successfully implemented Said Nursi's holistic approach by integrating religious and scientific education. This method fosters a comprehensive understanding of both spiritual and scientific knowledge, leading to increased student engagement and a stronger moral and ethical foundation among students. For instance, the integration model between science and religion in Malaysian higher education has been analyzed to understand its effectiveness in bridging educational dualism (Hidayaturrahman, et al., 2021)..

These case studies illustrate the practical application of Said Nursi's educational philosophy in diverse multicultural settings. By integrating spiritual and moral values into education, schools can promote social harmony, reduce conflict, and foster a more inclusive environment. These examples provide valuable insights for educators seeking to enrich their teaching practices with Nursi's perspectives.

Challenges and Solutions in Integrating Nursi

Integrating Saeed Nursi's educational perspective into the modern multicultural education system offers tremendous opportunities to enrich students' educational experience with deep spiritual and moral values. However, these efforts face several significant challenges.

A. Challenges in Dealing with Cultural and Religious Diversity

Integrating Said Nursi's educational approach, which emphasizes spiritual and religious values, into a multicultural education system presents challenges due to the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of students. Resistance may arise from students and parents of

different faiths who perceive this approach as favoring a particular religious perspective. The effectiveness of Nursi's approach in such settings depends on educators' ability to adapt teaching methods to be inclusive and sensitive to this diversity.

One significant challenge is navigating the potential perception of proselytizing when incorporating religious content into public education. For instance, the Fort Bend Independent School District in Texas debated adopting a curriculum that includes Bible references. While proponents argued it did not establish a particular religion, concerns were raised by various religious and non-religious groups about promoting one faith over others (Eric Killelea, 2025).

To address these challenges, educators can adopt inclusive strategies that respect and embrace various religious beliefs in the classroom. This involves creating an environment where students feel safe to express their beliefs and learn about others, fostering critical thinking and communication skills. Such an approach not only enhances students' understanding of different cultures but also promotes mutual respect and tolerance (Tracy & Marjaneh, 2020).

Additionally, understanding and valuing religious and spiritual diversity are crucial for educators. Guidelines and strategies that help educators and students appreciate this diversity can lead to a more inclusive and accepting classroom environment (Whittaker et al, 2009).

Incorporating Nursi's holistic educational approach requires careful consideration of the diverse cultural and religious contexts of students. Educators must strive to integrate spiritual values in a manner that is inclusive, respects all beliefs, and promotes a harmonious learning environment.

Issues Related to Training Competent and Knowledgeable Teachers

Integrating Said Nursi's pedagogical approach into educational settings requires teachers to deeply understand his philosophy and effectively incorporate these values into their daily teaching practices. This necessitates comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs tailored to multicultural educational environments.

One significant challenge is preparing teachers to address the diverse cultural backgrounds of students. A study by Siwatu (2011) highlights the need for professional development in multicultural education (PDME) to enhance teachers' self-efficacy in multicultural classrooms. The research indicates that PDME positively influences teachers' beliefs about their capabilities to teach in diverse settings, thereby improving educational outcomes for all students (Choi & Lee, 2020).

Effective professional development programs should encompass various aspects to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge:

- **Cultural Competence:** Training should focus on developing teachers' understanding of different cultural norms and values, enabling them to create inclusive classroom environments.

- **Instructional Strategies:** Educators should be equipped with pedagogical techniques that accommodate diverse learning styles and cultural perspectives.
- **Reflective Practices:** Encouraging self-reflection helps teachers recognize their biases and adapt their teaching methods accordingly.

A scoping study by Santoro and Kennedy (2016) emphasizes the importance of such comprehensive professional development initiatives. The study suggests that well-designed programs can significantly improve teachers' effectiveness in multicultural settings (Eseta & Christine, 2021).

To effectively integrate Nursi's educational philosophy, which emphasizes the harmony between religious and scientific knowledge, teacher training programs should:

- **Provide In-Depth Knowledge:** Educators need a thorough understanding of Nursi's thoughts to authentically convey his values in the classroom.
- **Develop Integration Skills:** Teachers should learn how to seamlessly incorporate spiritual values into various subjects, promoting a holistic educational experience.

Research by Abu Darda et al. (2023) on Nursi's educational reforms highlights the significance of curriculum integration in shaping students' morals and spirituality.

Addressing the challenges associated with training competent and knowledgeable teachers in Nursi's pedagogical approach requires robust professional development programs. These programs should be comprehensive, continuous, and sensitive to cultural and religious diversity, ensuring educators are well-prepared to foster inclusive and effective learning environments.

Adapting the Curriculum to Nursi's Educational Approach

Adapting national curricula to incorporate Said Nursi's educational philosophy, which emphasizes a balance between religious and scientific knowledge, presents significant challenges. Traditional educational systems often prioritize academic achievement, sometimes at the expense of spiritual and moral development. Nursi advocated for an integrated curriculum that combines modern sciences with traditional religious teachings to cultivate well-rounded individuals.

Integrating Nursi's approach requires substantial curriculum reforms to address the dualism between secular and religious education. This involves merging modern scientific disciplines with spiritual teachings, a process that can be complex due to existing educational structures and policies. The Nursian model offers an alternative that addresses contemporary challenges while emphasizing essential educational values (Syed Zahoor & Irfan, 2019).

To effectively implement Nursi's integrated educational model, collaboration with educational policymakers is crucial. Engaging policymakers can facilitate the development of curricula that are both inclusive and comprehensive, ensuring that spiritual and moral education is given due importance alongside academic subjects. Such collaboration can help overcome resistance and provide the necessary support for systemic change.

Adapting the national curriculum to incorporate Said Nursi's educational approach necessitates a flexible and comprehensive strategy. By addressing the challenges of educational dualism and working closely with policymakers, it is possible to create an

educational framework that balances religious and scientific knowledge, fostering holistic development in students.

Conclusion

Integrating Said Nursi's spiritual and educational perspectives into the modern multicultural education system will greatly enhance the holistic development of students. By emphasizing moral and ethical values, Nursi teaching can contribute to a more inclusive and coherent educational environment. Despite the challenges, the potential benefits of this integration are enormous and pave the way for promoting intercultural understanding and respect in an increasingly diverse society. Future research should continue to explore practical strategies for implementing Nursi's ideas in different educational contexts.

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