

Impact of Multicultural Pedagogy on Early Childhood Children Social Skills: A Systematic Review

Xinyue Yang¹, Mohd Nazri Abdul Rahman^{1*}, Norasyikin Mahmud², Widyastuti³

{mohdnazri_ar@um.edu.my*}

¹University of Malaya,

²Universiti Poly-Tech Malaysia,

³Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo

Abstract. This article synthesizes an overview of the relationship between multicultural pedagogy and children's social skills—guidelines for the preferable reporting items for systematic reviews. After screening, there are nine studies eligible for inclusion were identified. Results showed multicultural pedagogy is advantageous for developing children's social skills because it enables children to recognize cultural diversity and comprehend their own and others' cultures. Using multicultural literature is a means of promoting multicultural pedagogy in early childhood education settings. Educating teachers about multicultural pedagogy is a primary challenge. The lack of studies with high heterogeneity calls for further research to explore the difference between traditional teaching methods and multicultural pedagogy on the influence of children's social skill development.

Keywords: Multicultural Pedagogy, Social Skills, Early Childhood Education, Systematic Literature Review.

1 Introduction

Multicultural pedagogy, or multicultural education, refers to a set of educational strategies and practices that incorporate knowledge and perspectives and integrate the perspectives of persons from various cultural origins into teaching and learning processes (1). The multicultural approach recognizes the value of diversity and prepares students to function effectively in a multicultural world (2). In addition, Multicultural education is a social movement and a process that aims to provide children of various racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds with the same high-quality educational experiences (3). Its goal is to make classrooms and schools more representative of modern society's cultures and demographics. To achieve this goal, it addresses a wide range of issues, including but not limited to integrating content, building knowledge, minimizing bias, employing an equality pedagogy, and creating a supportive school culture and social structure (4).

Recognizing and valuing diversity broadens children's perspectives and fosters a sense of belonging and acceptance, building a foundation for a more inclusive society. Multicultural pedagogy in early years emphasizes the importance of acknowledging, respecting, and integrating diverse cultures within educational practices. By embedding cultural responsiveness, educators create inclusive environments that foster understanding and acceptance among young learners (5). Multicultural pedagogy equips educators with the tools and knowledge to work

effectively in diverse settings, allowing them to address the unique needs of all students (6). There are several ways to promote multicultural pedagogy during teaching, such as Incorporating diverse cultural perspectives in teaching materials, stories, and activities and fostering a global understanding (7). Specifically, Garces-Bacsal (8) indicates that diverse books contribute to culturally responsive pedagogy. Such books allow children to identify with characters, promoting inclusivity and broadening social awareness. Designing classrooms that reflect diverse cultures, from displays to resources, ensuring every child sees their culture represented (9); Collaborating with families to integrate their cultural practices into the classroom, building stronger home-school connections (10); Training teachers in culturally responsive strategies, empowering them to address and celebrate diversity in their classrooms (6).

Students with strong social skills can effectively communicate with people in various contexts and settings, both verbally and non-verbally. Specifically, social skills include flexible communication with friends without bias on their religion, culture, and race; students can show respect, listen to others, and have critical ideas to work with others (11). In an early years setting, Social skills encompass a wide range of behaviours and understandings, including cooperation, turn-taking, conflict resolution, understanding and expressing emotions, assertiveness, and self-regulation. For example, young children start learning to cooperate and take turns, a crucial part of social interaction (12).

It is necessary to promote the development of multicultural pedagogy in education. Ratts et al. (13) believed that the goal of multicultural education in the profession has been to make students more aware of cultural diversity and social justice in counselling relationships, as well as to help them develop advocacy skills as they deal with power, privilege, and oppression on both an individual and a systemic level. According to Bush and Saltarelli (14), it is sometimes impossible to avoid misunderstandings between various ethnic groups regarding administration, the economy, education, language, religion, and culture. Specifically, It could negatively impact the social interaction of students who appear to have difficulty forming friendships and getting along with fellow students from diverse backgrounds, resulting in a lack of mutual respect among children (15).

As the world becomes more interconnected, early exposure to multicultural education prepares children to function effectively in a global society, embracing diverse perspectives and ideas (7). It is beneficial to promote multicultural pedagogy in the early years of education. A culturally responsive pedagogy ensures that educational practices reflect and are relevant to the children's diverse cultural backgrounds, making learning more relatable and meaningful (16). Introducing children to different cultures, traditions, and perspectives at a young age helps reduce biases, stereotypes, and prejudices, promoting an inclusive mindset (17). It encourages children to understand, respect, and appreciate differences and commonalities among people, fostering empathy and respect for others' beliefs and traditions (18). In addition, Given the diverse nature of our world, children must see this diversity reflected in their learning environments, making education more realistic and comprehensive (10).

Multicultural pedagogy in early childhood education is essential in nurturing children's social skills, which can encourage and reward diverse cultural expressions and experiences (19). Practising multicultural pedagogy can reinforce social interaction by reflecting the diversity of ethnic backgrounds. Exposing children to various cultures fosters understanding and acceptance

among peers (15).

Moreover, The multicultural concept is instilled in pedagogy practices and curriculums that champion the cultural values of each child, ensuring that every child's background is respected and celebrated (20). Addressing issues related to the hybridity of cultures and identities is paramount. A transformative curriculum incorporating a critical form of multiculturalism can provide insights into students' diverse backgrounds, fostering greater social understanding (6).

Educators can employ various strategies to promote multicultural education, cultivating learning environments advantageous to disparate student populations. For example, they can incorporate students' cultural identities and life experiences into classroom instruction, utilizing these cultural differences as assets rather than barriers to learning (21). This model is known as asset-based pedagogy, which includes culturally responsive teaching approaches, culturally sustaining pedagogy, and culturally relevant pedagogy (2).

The essential aspect of multicultural education is that a teacher must master and professionally instruct the subjects he teaches and transmit the fundamental values of multicultural education (22). However, to ensure that students from all backgrounds have equal access to quality education, teachers can tailor their classes to represent their students' cultural backgrounds better (23).

Multicultural pedagogy and the development of social skills are inextricably linked. Previous research has investigated this connection and derived some major conclusions. Students from underrepresented groups show more significant gains in academic performance, motivation, self-confidence, and sense of efficacy in classrooms where teachers have received multicultural education-focused professional development (PD), according to a study by Parkhouse and Massaro (2). Another case study investigating the role of multicultural books in kindergarten by Kim et al. (24) found that bilingual children were better able to make predictions, use their imaginations, and interact with others to form literary responses. These findings suggest that through multicultural education tools such as diverse literature, Reading can help students get more involved in the material and expose them to new points of view. Such engagement can help improve their communication skills, empathy, and understanding of diverse cultures, all vital elements of social skills.

However, multicultural education's impact on social skills development may not be universally straightforward. For example, multicultural education has been found to promote tolerance, respect for beliefs, and positive interactions (25). In addition, research on cultural literacy skills found that their abilities increased due to multicultural education-based social studies teaching (26).

The purpose of this systematic review appears to be to critically examine and synthesize existing research on how multicultural pedagogy affects the development of social skills. In line with that, the research question is: How does multicultural pedagogy impact social skills development?

The systematic results of this review can provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers about the potential benefits and challenges of applying multicultural pedagogy in diverse educational settings, including analysis of social skills interventions that consider cultural adaptation (27,28) and the role of professional development programs that equip teachers to foster inclusivity and equity in culturally diverse classrooms (2).

In conclusion, multicultural pedagogy fosters an inclusive, diverse, and equitable learning environment that values all cultures and prepares students for a global, diverse world. By incorporating disparate groups' histories, cultures, and contributions into the educational system, multicultural pedagogy empowers all students, particularly those from traditionally marginalized communities, to become lifelong learners and critical thinkers. The literature supports the connection between multicultural pedagogy and social skills development. However, the link may not be straightforward. Therefore, the purpose of this systematic review is to critically explore how multicultural pedagogy affects the development of social skills.

There are five sections within this article. Section I, Introduction, provides the study's historical context and research objectives. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review standards are used. Section II, Methodology, describes the techniques used to identify and evaluate previous studies. This study's findings are provided in Section III. Section IV discussion interprets the results in the literature review context and describes this study's limitations. In the article's final section, recommendations for future research are provided.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Multicultural Pedagogy

Multicultural pedagogy is one of the theoretical frameworks that inform the development of multi-literate learning environments for young children, which makes children feel more engaged (29,30). Primarily, collaborative storytelling teaches youngsters empathy, perspective, and communication. The varied books for multicultural pedagogy are essential (8).

There are a few challenges that educators may face during multi-culture pedagogy. For example, the initial shock and emotion experienced by children when they hear their mother tongue in an unfamiliar space, as well as the different reactions of children to their mother tongue, can affect their interactions with the mediator (31). Lack of resources and support from families and the wider community can also hinder the promotion of integration (31).

2.2 Methodology

This systematic review adhered to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews guidelines established by Page et al. (32). Figure 1 illustrates the selection procedure. After removing duplicates and studies meeting the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the search yielded nine studies in this review.

The standards for inclusion and exclusion for the review will be outlined below, as well as how studies were organized for the syntheses. Inclusion criteria in this study are as follows: (1) Research related to multicultural pedagogy and students' social skills; (2) Research conducted by using English; (3) Research method is either qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method; (4) Published in the past ten years (2013 - 2023); (5) Peer-reviewed articles; (6) Research conducted in early years setting.

In addition, the exclusive criteria in this study are as follows: (1) Research only includes one variable, either multicultural pedagogy or students' social skills; (2) Research conducted in other languages rather than English; (3) Systematic review articles; (4) Published before 2013; (5) non-peer-reviewed articles (e.g., books or book chapter, a newspaper or magazine article, thesis,

and dissertation). (6) Research was not conducted in the early years setting.

Information sources come from Scopus, Web of Science, and Science Direct and were assessed in July 2023. The search terms used to identify relevant articles in each database are "multicultural pedagogy" and "early childhood children social skills."

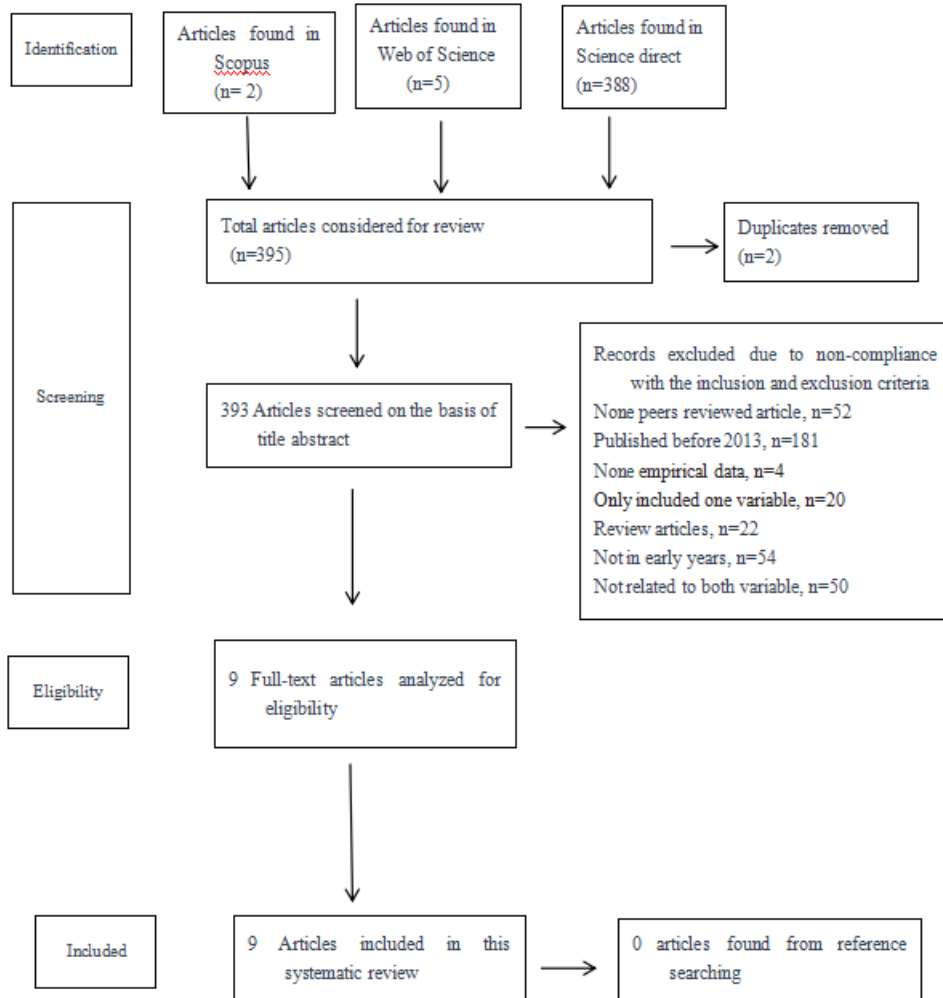


Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart of the Literature Review Procedure

3 Results

The table presents the authors, region, purpose, sample, study design, main research instruments, data analysis, and selected research results. The selected nine research were conducted in the United Arab Emirates (n=1), Slovenia (n=1), United States (n=3), Russia (n=1), Iceland and Israel (n=1), Norway (n=1), and Italy (n=1). Lack of research investigates the direct relationship between multi-culture pedagogy and children's social skills. However, they all

indirectly illustrated that multicultural pedagogy benefits children's social skills development. The following table presents nine selected articles, which included authors, region, research purpose, sample, study design, principal instruments, data analysis, and results.

Author (year)	Region	Purpose	Sample	Study Design	Main instruments	Data Analyse	Results
Garces-Bacsal (8)	United Arab Emirates	Create a database of multicultural and international picturebooks that investigates the five SEL competencies.	N/A	Qualitative (interview)	multiple face-to-face discussions	grounded theory open coding	Students can learn essential social skills like empathy, respect, and perspective-taking through multicultural pedagogy and varied books in the classroom.
Kafol et al. (33)	Slovenia	Examine preschool teachers' arts and culture status, their perspectives on arts and culture areas in the planned and operational curricula, and their implementation of arts and cultural education objectives.	245 preschool teachers from all over the country	Quantitative (online questionnaire with closed-type questions)	Self-developed questionnaire	frequency distributions, mean ratings, and non-parametric tests (χ^2 -test, Kruskal-Wallis test)	A multicultural and intercultural approach to education can foster tolerance and understanding of others and other cultures. Children do not learn how to feel about their own culture and the cultures of other countries due to a lack of awareness of cultural diversity and the significance of cultural heritage.
Sung & Akhtar (34)	United States	How preschool teachers' perspectives on linguistic diversity relate to their beliefs about multicultural pedagogy, and how these beliefs may provide important information about the environments young English learners encounter upon entering preschool.	21 preschool teachers from childcare centres	Mixed method (questionnaire and survey)	survey was used to collect demographic information and assess classroom characteristics the Q sort statement	PQMethod Q factor analysis	Multicultural teaching can help students develop a healthy self-concept, an appreciation for diversity, and the skills and information needed to navigate an increasingly globalized world.
Logvinova (35)	Russia	Implement socio-pedagogical theory as the premise for multicultural education's methodology	Seven preschool educational institutions	Qualitative (observation, unstructured interviews)	unstructured interviews	paper trail analyses comparative analysis	socio-pedagogical approach can be seen as a form of multicultural pedagogy, which necessitates the education process to foster the growth of a person's social needs and abilities.
Schwartz et al. (36)	Iceland and Israel	examines how teachers enact their agency in a highly diverse classroom and how they think and rethink their language	11 teachers	Qualitative (semi-structured interviews)	semi-structured interviews	thematic analysis	Multicultural pedagogy can help children develop positive attitudes towards people from different backgrounds and cultures, resulting in increased

		beliefs and practices.						empathy, understanding, and respect for others, which are part of social skills.
Loyola et al. (30)	United States	Investigate the processes that preschool instructors use to design their learning environments	a Laboratory Preschool for children aged 2-5 years old	Qualitative (observation)	Observation Checklist	Thematic Analysis	Coding	Multicultural pedagogy can help develop children's empathy, understanding, and appreciation for different people, thus leading to positive social skills.
Bubikova-Moan, (37)	Norway	Examine the experiences of Polish migrant parents in Norway and their perspectives on their children's education in early years educational institutions.	38 parents who have children aged 3-8 years old	Qualitative (semi-structured interviews)	semi-structured interviews	thematic analysis		Multicultural education may help develop a positive self-image and a sense of belonging in children., regardless of their cultural or linguistic background. It can also promote empathy, respect, and understanding of different cultures and perspectives, which can help children develop social skills and build positive relationships with others.
Flynn (29)	United States	investigate children's active, meaning-making practices in story circles to understand how dialogic dialogue, solicited and encouraged by oral storytelling, fosters meaning-making in lower SES preschool classrooms.	24 children aged 3 to 5 years old	Qualitative (observation)	Observation Checklist	discourse analysis		Dialogic discourse and meaning co-construction in multicultural story circles improve children's social skills.
Messetti & Dusi (31)	Italy	Determine the educational practices nursery school instructors employ to promote the integration of migrant families and their children.	15 Nido professionals, including five coordinators and ten educators	Qualitative (semi-structured interviews)	conversational interview	phenomenological approach		multicultural pedagogy may help children develop social skills by promoting empathy, understanding, and acceptance of diverse cultures and backgrounds

4 Discussion

By reviewing the selected nine articles, seven adopted the qualitative research method, 1 adopted the quantitative research method, and 1 used a mixed research method. Lack of research investigates the direct relationship between multicultural pedagogy and children's social development skills. Lack of research compares how the efficiency of traditional teaching methods and multicultural pedagogy can influence early childhood children's social skill development. In addition, limited research illustrates the challenge that exists in multicultural pedagogy. Regarding this point, the recommendation is for further research to explore it further.

As previously stated, the objective of this research is to examine and synthesize research on how multicultural pedagogy affects the development of social skills, and this section will be based on reviewed articles to answer the research question -how does multicultural pedagogy impact social skills development? No research investigates the relationship between multicultural pedagogy or multicultural education and children's social skills. However, Multicultural pedagogy can help children develop a more nuanced awareness of diverse cultures and perspectives, improving their social and emotional development (34). In addition, multicultural pedagogy can help children develop a sense of cultural identity and pride in their own culture, which can also contribute to their social development (34,36,37). Also, multicultural teaching helps children appreciate others and comprehend how varied cultural backgrounds affect communication and social interaction by understanding and integrating multiple cultural concepts and experiences (29–31,33,36).

Moreover, developing the multicultural competence of preschool instructors is the cornerstone of a successful multicultural education (35). Kafol et al. (33) also suggested preschool education. More attention should be given to performing arts, music arts, and cultural heritage, as teachers often achieve most skills. Cultural education aims in their work, but they pay less attention to aims such as investigating and expressing the cultures of other nations, developing cultural identity awareness, expressing one's own culture, and expressing other nations' cultures. However, the challenge is that most teachers are unaware of the importance of multicultural pedagogy and lack a strategy for implementing multicultural pedagogy (33).

Parents with immigrant backgrounds may experience difficulties communicating with teachers due to differences in culture, values, languages, and expectations between the preschool and the parents. For example, not all parents can participate in multicultural education to the full extent, and many of them face a significant obstacle – the language barrier (35). Teachers and immigrant parents' relationships emerge as asymmetrical power relations, which may manifest unequal access to power and cause misunderstanding (36). Regarding these, Messetti & Dusi (31) suggested using mediators who speak the children's mother tongue and Italian, and the educators can also offer activities such as drama to help children relax and interact more easily with the mediator. In addition, creating spaces in early childhood classrooms for child-led, dialogic talk can support children's meaning-making capacities by exchanging, building on, and co-constructing a world of ideas in ways that resonate with culturally shaped interactional styles maintained in home and community life (29). In addition, culturally relevant stories engage young children more, allowing them to make relevant connections from school lessons to their life experiences. They also model teachers' interest and acceptance of diversity in the classroom (8).

5 Conclusion

This article overviews the relationship between multicultural pedagogy and children's social skills. The general results indirectly showed multicultural pedagogy is beneficial for children's

social skills, as it can make children realize cultural diversity and understand others and their culture. The way to promote multicultural pedagogy in early years settings is to use multicultural books, and teachers should create more chances for parents to get involved in multicultural pedagogy. However, the challenge is to awareness-raising for teachers about multicultural pedagogy.

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