

Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Gifted Students from Diverse Ethnic, Cultural, and Linguistic Backgrounds: A Multicultural Literature Review from the Perspective of James A. Banks

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the recruitment and retention strategies for gifted students from diverse ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, as outlined by Donna Y. Ford in the book *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*, edited by James A. Banks and Cherry A. McGee Banks. The objective of this research is to evaluate fair and inclusive approaches in identifying and retaining students from historically underrepresented groups in gifted education programs. Employing a library research method and content analysis, this study reveals three main findings: (1) key recruitment barriers include unequal access to quality education, culturally biased assessment standards, and a lack of multicultural training for educators; (2) recruitment strategies must be systematic, inclusive, and culturally responsive; and (3) retention strategies require the implementation of multicultural education, supportive learning environments, and curriculum development that emphasizes diversity and equity. These findings highlight the necessity of integrated efforts among schools, educators, and policy makers to establish a gifted education system that is equitable and inclusive for all students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most persistent and widespread problems in education is the underrepresentation of African American, Hispanic American, and Native American students in gifted education programs (i.e., classes and services) and Advanced Placement (AP) courses. First, most past and current efforts to address underrepresentation have been inadequate and misguided, resulting in programs that are among the most segregated in public schools. Second, education for the gifted is a necessity, not a privilege. When gifted students from racial, ethnic, and linguistic minority backgrounds are not identified and do not

receive appropriate services and programs, they are denied opportunities to develop their talents and reach their full potential. (James A. Banks, 2010, p. 293). This problem is exacerbated by identification processes that tend to be narrow and culturally insensitive, limited access to early talent development, and service models that are not fully responsive to the needs of students from minority groups. Consequently, participation in gifted programs remains low, and dropout rates tend to be high. (Jhonstone, 2009, p. 3). Furthermore, supporting the identification and education of gifted students from historically underrepresented groups must be a top priority to ensure that all gifted students regardless of race, ethnicity, or language background have equal access to education and opportunities to develop their talents and potential, thereby improving their quality of life. (Chandler, 2022, p. 3).

In the Indonesian context, similar issues occur within inclusive education, as reported by Jawa Pos. Many students with special needs in regular schools experience bullying due to low quality inclusive services and teachers' limited understanding of student diversity. (Asikin, 2020, p. 1). Other cases, such as problems in the New Student Admission System (PPDB in Indonesia), including domicile data manipulation and the exclusion of students from low-income families from public schools, demonstrate how unfair admission policies can hinder gifted students from marginalized groups from accessing quality education. (Napitupulu, 2023, p. 1). In addition to admission policies, the issue of underrepresentation is closely related to the quality and preparedness of educators in understanding and managing diversity within schools. A case reported in Sragen, Central Java, involved an intern teacher who had not yet completed a bachelor's degree cutting a student's uniform as a disciplinary measure. Although the action was carried out at the request of the student's parents, the Sragen Regency Office of Education and Culture deemed the act a violation of the teacher's code of ethics. This incident highlights the importance of recruiting qualified educators who possess not only professional competence but also a strong understanding of multicultural values and ethical standards in education. (Romensy Augustino, 2025, p. 1). This case reinforces the argument that recruitment and retention strategies for gifted students from historically underrepresented groups must be accompanied by improvements in teacher recruitment, training, and professional development to create inclusive and supportive learning environments.

These cases demonstrate that the underrepresentation of gifted students from diverse ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds is a serious and urgent issue requiring scholarly attention and solutions. Therefore, recruitment and retention strategies must be accompanied by improvements in teacher quality and fair student admission processes. These processes include committee formation, admission meetings, information dissemination, registration, selection, admission decisions, and re-registration, all of which must be conducted transparently and inclusively to ensure equal opportunities for all prospective students. (Heriyanto, 2019, p. 162). Effective selection processes are essential to ensure that educational institutions can compete, create equitable learning environments, and support student potential development. Selection programs aim to identify prospective students with excellence in knowledge, skills, abilities, and other relevant characteristics that support educational success. (Ramadhany et al., 2021, p. 25). Consequently, student selection must be carefully designed to recruit high-achieving students from diverse backgrounds in order to support fair, inclusive, and sustainable recruitment and retention strategies. (Siti Farida et al., 2023, p. 3).

Based on a review of the book and previous studies, solutions to these challenges emphasize the importance of understanding recruitment and retention strategies for gifted students from diverse ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. Efforts to recruit and retain students from racial and ethnic minority groups in gifted education must be comprehensive, proactive, aggressive, and systematic. Educators, families, and students must collaborate to ensure that gifted education is not segregated. (James A. Banks, 2010, p. 293). Improving educational quality aims to provide better educational services to society, with one indicator reflected in the student admission process. (Yusup, 2022, p. 1543). School principals must implement inclusive and responsive management strategies that support talent development and ensure that educational services meet the needs of all groups fairly. (Muhibbudin et al., 2022, p. 368). Student administration should focus on gifted student recruitment, academic achievement improvement, and

discipline development to create supportive learning environments. (Safey et al., 2023, p. 2). Furthermore, the selection of appropriate recruitment management strategies significantly facilitates the work of admission committees in implementing recruitment processes more efficiently and effectively. Well managed recruitment systems enable schools to identify and select students based on clear, objective, and equitable criteria, ensuring that the admission process aligns with institutional goals and educational standards. Effective recruitment management not only improves administrative efficiency but also strengthens fairness and transparency in student admissions, which are essential for sustaining inclusive gifted education programs. (Syafuruddin, 2021, p. 215). Therefore, the success of recruitment and retention strategies for gifted students from diverse ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds depends heavily on selecting appropriate recruitment management strategies to ensure efficient, effective, and high-quality admissions processes. (Edy et al., 2023, p. 23).

This article aims to explain recruitment and retention strategies for gifted students from diverse backgrounds and to examine these concepts so that teachers and educational institutions can prepare gifted students fairly and ensure equitable access to appropriate education. These findings highlight the necessity of integrated efforts among schools, educators, and policy makers to establish a gifted education system that is equitable and inclusive for all students.

2. METHODS

This study employs a library research method (Sari Anita et al., 2023, p. 65). The primary source is *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives* by James A. Banks and Cherry A. McGee Banks (James A. Banks, 2010, pp. 291–328), supported by relevant previous research articles. Data analysis uses content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 3) through the following steps: (1) selecting relevant content from the book; (2) presenting the reduced data in the article; and (3) analyzing the data using theories from previous research.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Recruitment Problems and Barriers

Most of the scholarly literature explaining underrepresentation focuses on several aspects of recruitment. In particular, it is assumed that students from racial and ethnic minority groups are underrepresented due to issues related to screening and identification instruments, especially standardized tests. (James A. Banks, 2010, p. 293).

According to Donna Y. Ford, students from minority groups often attend low quality schools dominated by students from low income families. Evidence shows that minority students perform better on standardized tests when attending more affluent schools. One proposed strategy is providing affordable housing in high quality school attendance zones. (Triwiniastuti & Sulasmono, 2020, p. 44). On the other hand, challenging working conditions also force many teachers to seek additional employment because their salaries are insufficient to meet basic living needs. This situation reduces teachers' focus and engagement in the teaching and learning process, which ultimately hampers students' academic progress. (Mohammad Al Farabi, Ayilzi Putri, Abdi Ardiansyah Sihotang, 2024, p. 236).

Educational disparities across countries reflect significant differences in access to education, quality of instruction, and educational attainment experienced by individuals and social groups, both nationally and internationally. Various factors such as economic conditions, government policies, the availability of educational facilities and infrastructure, and discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status often exacerbate these inequalities. In developing countries, for example, children living in rural areas frequently do not have the same opportunities as those in urban settings to access adequate educational facilities, qualified teachers, and comprehensive learning resources. (Judijanto, 2025, p. 12). Another inhibiting factor is the role of the community, which includes peer influence, prevailing cultural norms and habits within the environment, as well as the presence of social violence. Peers play a crucial role in shaping students' character development. When social

environments tend to promote negative behaviors, individuals within such peer groups are at a high risk of being influenced and engaging in similar actions. (Faiz et al., 2021, p. 1772). In addressing various barriers in education such as unequal access, low school quality, unfavorable teacher working conditions, and the influence of the social environment continuous guidance is essential. Guidance helps individuals understand and direct themselves so that they can act in accordance with the expectations of the school, family, and community, thereby enabling them to develop optimally as social beings. (Mayang Sari et al., 2022, p. 88).

Recruitment Recommendations

Recruiting students from non mainstream groups into gifted education is the first step in addressing their underrepresentation in gifted programs. As explained here, recruitment should include a talent development philosophy, revisions to standardized tests and assessment practices, the use of culturally responsive assessments, multicultural assessment preparation for professionals, and the development of effective and equitable policies and procedures. (James A. Banks, 2010, p. 300).

Recruitment is a critically important initial stage because it serves as the fundamental foundation for the success of human resource management functions. (Sobari & Rony, 2025, p. 17). Recruitment is also a crucial aspect of human resource management that plays a major role in determining organizational success. (Ramadhani & Amalina Rizqi, 2024, p. 57). Recruiting individuals to fill specific positions involves a planned effort to identify, evaluate, and select the most suitable candidates. This process includes announcing vacancies, collecting candidate data, and conducting assessments through various methods such as interviews and skill evaluations. Evaluation is carried out on both components and work processes so that, if objectives are not achieved, the components and processes responsible for the failure can be identified. Evaluation refers to decision making based on measurement results and established criteria standards. (Danial, 2021, p. 115). In the context of gifted education, similar recruitment practices must take into account principles of potential development, adjustments to assessment instruments and evaluation practices, the use of culturally sensitive tools, multicultural training for professionals, and the formulation of policies and procedures that uphold fairness and effectiveness. (Darmansah et al., 2024, p. 160). This process involves strategic efforts to fill vacant positions with individuals who possess the knowledge, skills, and potential required to support the achievement of institutional goals and to address gaps in human resource planning. In the context of educational institutions, recruitment includes announcing vacancies, screening candidates based on specific criteria, and selecting qualified individuals to meet academic or administrative needs. (Wildhan Falahati Akbar et al., 2024, p. 97).

Retention Recommendation

Half of the effort to eliminate segregation in gifted education must be devoted to recruitment, and the other half to retention. This section focuses extensively on how multicultural education can be used to retain Black students and other underidentified students in gifted education. At a minimum, teachers and school personnel who work with gifted students require substantial preparation in multicultural education to ensure that classrooms, programs, and services are culturally responsive and culturally responsible. (James A. Banks, 2010, p. 301).

In multicultural education, there is a foundation grounded in the principles of multiculturalism that emphasizes acceptance of individual differences whether in terms of race, religion, culture, or gender and fosters an understanding of democratic values that promote the development of cultural pluralism in society. (Riyadi et al., 2022, p. 22). Multicultural education can strengthen children's cognitive capacities, as exposure to diverse cultures encourages critical thinking and problem solving skills. Interaction with peers from different cultural backgrounds also supports the development of children's social skills, such as empathy, tolerance, and effective communication abilities. (Ulfadhilah & Nurkhafifah, 2024, p. 57). Moreover, learning retention serves as an important indicator in assessing the effectiveness of the educational process, as the knowledge acquired by students is expected to be stored in long term memory.

Students who are able to recall and accurately reproduce information demonstrate a high level of retention, which ultimately supports their success in applying knowledge in relevant situations. (Agustianda et al., 2024, p. 450). In order to prepare younger generations who are able to appreciate and celebrate differences, inclusive and diversity oriented education is essential. Curricula should be designed to reflect diverse social realities, including content related to different cultures, religions, and ethnicities, as well as the development of skills such as intercultural communication and empathy, so that learners can build harmonious relationships with individuals from various backgrounds. (Marbun, 2023, p. 30). This indicates that multicultural education not only broadens students' academic perspectives but also plays a crucial role in shaping social competencies that are vital for daily interactions and for preparing them to live in a pluralistic society. (Atmaja, 2024, p. 1914)

4. CONCLUSION

Recruitment and retention strategies for gifted students from diverse ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds require comprehensive, proactive, and equitable approaches. Major barriers such as unequal access to education, culturally insensitive assessment standards, and teachers' limited understanding of diversity contribute to the low participation of minority students in gifted programs. Therefore, an inclusive, transparent, and socially just recruitment system is essential. In addition, the retention of gifted students must be supported by the implementation of multicultural education that fosters mutual respect, tolerance, and recognition of diversity. Strengthening the role of teachers as multicultural agents, adjusting curricula to reflect cultural pluralism, and improving the quality of educational services are key factors in maximizing the potential of every learner.

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