

Cultivating Multicultural Values in Learning History: *A Unifier of the Nation's Plurality*

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Indonesia is full of diversity, either ethnic, religious, culture, custom, racial, territorial, and so on. In having a common perception on Indonesian diversity as a nation, multicultural education has become a necessity. Incorporating multicultural education into the curriculum is very urgent, at least by incorporating it with other relevant subjects, such as Civics, History, and Religion. Multicultural education is a response to the growing diversity of school populations, as well as the demands of equal rights for every citizen. Another dimension, multicultural education is the development of curricula and educational activities to tap into the views, history, achievements and concerns of non-Europeans. Multicultural education encompasses all learners regardless of group, such as: gender, ethnic, racial, cultural, social, territorial, and religious strata, which has become a demand and necessity in building a new Indonesia. However, multicultural education requires an in-depth study of the concepts and praxis of its implementation, even to the present the concept of multicultural education has not been studied seriously in education. However, when judicially judged, Act no. 20/2003 on the National Education System has provided an opportunity to elaborate further on the concept of multicultural education, particularly in Article 4 paragraph (1) which regulates the implementation of education which takes into consideration the diverse cultural values of society.

Keywords: *Multicultural Values, Historical Learning, Unifying the Nation.*



Introduction

Historical subjects are given to build the character of the young generation as the successor of a democratic and responsible nation. Ali (2015) suggested that there are at least 3 (three) characters obtained from the learning process of history. First, ontologically, history learning concerns the process of awareness raising, empowerment, and value culture to learners to become an individual as well as citizens. Secondly, epistemologically, learning history must prioritise multicultural and multi-approach approaches, it is related to the reality of diversity of the community and the potential diversity of learners. Thirdly, axiologically, historical learning can increase the learner's responsibility as an individual and as a society member in a nation/country.

On the one hand, the problem of learning history cannot be disengaged from the history teachers themselves, because in the series of the learning process, teachers have a big role. It is that important that the government from year to year seeks to improve the quality of teachers. Although various efforts have been made, the packaging has not yielded significant results. This is reflected in the number of highlights on teachers, including history teachers. Complaints also appear that the history learning seems boring, so it is natural that these subjects are underestimated and that the lesson material is considered very easy, because it can be read overnight for examination the next day (Abdurahman, 2012).

On the other side, the process of learning as an understanding and awareness can be a source of inspiration and base for the growth of nationalism and responsibility and obligations for learners. In this case the spirit of nationalism can be instilled among the younger generation that starts from learners. This refers to the understanding that without ideals and aspirations about the homeland and nation, the appreciation will be superficial and ultimately embedded only to materialistic and consumptive aspects (Madjid and Wahyudi, 2012). This condition also occurs in a plural, multicultural and diverse country that is Indonesia.

Multiculturalism is a diverse cultural understanding. In the diversity of culture, it is the necessity of understanding, mutual understanding, tolerance, etc., in order to create a life of peace and prosperity and avoid prolonged conflict (Wibowo, et al. 2015). As a new discourse, multicultural education is still debated by educational experts, but that does not mean multicultural education is absent or unclear.

Borrowing Andersen and Cushner's opinion in Parekh (2012); multicultural education can be interpreted as education about cultural diversity. Furthermore, Banks defines multicultural education as education for people of colour. That is, multicultural education wants to explore differences as a necessity (God's grace). In line with that thought, Slamet (2016) argues that in simple terms multicultural education is an education about cultural diversity in responding to demographic changes and the pluralistic society such as Indonesian society. Thus, history

teachers who act as the front spearhead in the learning process need to understand the multicultural values that exist in this country, to then be applied in the learning process that is expected to unite the various backgrounds of learners from diversity, plural, and multicultural backgrounds.

Methodology

This research used a qualitative design, while the approach used is phenomenology that seeks to reveal the events according to actual conditions and is highly dependent on: 1) perception; 2) comprehension; 3) understanding; and 4) one's assumptions (Bungin, 2012). The research implementation took place in Semarang City with several public and private high schools as objects. The key informants were stakeholders of the education office of Semarang City, while additional informants were high-school history teachers.

Data collection techniques used: 1) documents; 2) observation; and 3) interviews. The data analysis techniques used interactive analysis models from Miles and Huberman (2010) which included 4 (four) components: 1) data collection; 2) data reduction; 3) data presentation; and 4) withdrawal of conclusion/ verification. The validity test of the data used credibility test either through triangulation of data or checking with members/member check (Moleong, 2012).

Results

Based on the results of interviews conducted with education policy stakeholders as key informants and additional informants from some high school history teachers, the following results were obtained: 1) there is a need for a concept of standardised multicultural education established by the government (education ministry); 2) it is necessary to design an approach to multicultural education in a society that is full of problems between ethnic, racial, religious, cultural, territorial and so on; and 3) there is the need for courage to take a position and immediately implement multicultural education because it is considered urgent.

Discussion

The Concept of Multicultural Education

Andersen and Cusher in Sunarto (2014) argue that multicultural education is defined as education on cultural diversity. Sulaiman, et al. (2015) argue that multicultural education can be defined as education about cultural diversity in responding to demographic and cultural changes in certain communities or even the world as a whole. Hernandez further argued that multicultural education is a perspective that recognises the political, social, and economic realities experienced by individuals in complex and culturally diverse human encounters, and reflects the importance of culture, race, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, religion, social status,

economics, and exceptions in the educational process. Or in other words, the space of education as a science transformation space (transfer of knowledge) should be able to provide values of multiculturalism by mutual respect and respect for the various realities (plural), both the background and socio-cultural base that encompasses it.

Further, Banks (2015) argues that multicultural education has several interrelated dimensions, including: 1) content integration, integrating cultures and groups to illustrate fundamental concepts, generalisations, and theories in subjects or discipline; 2) the knowledge construction process, which brings learners to understand the cultural implications into a subject (discipline); 3) an equity pedagogy, that is to adjust the teaching method by learning learners in order to facilitate academic achievement which varies racially, culturally or socially, and 4) prejudice reduction, which identifies racial characteristics of learners and determines their teaching methods. Then, train groups to participate in certain activities, interact with all different ethnic and racial staff and students in an effort to create a tolerant and inclusive academic culture.

In any educational activity, learners are the object and as well as the subject of education. Therefore, in understanding the essence of learners, teachers need to be equipped with an understanding of the general characteristics of learners. As a consideration, because at least the learner generally has 4 (four) characteristics: 1) learners in a state of being empowered, meaning he/she is in a state of power to use his/her ability, will and so on; 2) have a desire to develop and be mature; 3) learners have different backgrounds; and 4) learners need to explore the natural environment with their basic potentials that are owned individually.

Based on the above explanation, in the theoretical context, multicultural education has five approaches: 1) education on cultural differences or multiculturalism; 2) education on cultural differences or cultural understanding; 3) education for cultural pluralism; 4) bilingual education, and 5) multicultural education as human moral experience, which must be mastered by the teachers to be applied in the learning process.

Multicultural Education Approach

The design of multicultural education at the community level is full of problems between groups, religions, cultures, ethnicities, customs and so forth. Indonesia contains a mild challenge, so it is necessary to realise that multicultural education is not just "celebrating diversity". Moreover, the existing society is still full of discrimination and racism. In such conditions, multicultural education is more precisely directed at advocacy to create tolerant learners. In line with that, Mahfud (2013) argued that to achieve these goals a number of approaches are required, namely:

1) no longer equate the view of education with schooling or multicultural education with formal school programs. The broader view of education as a cultural transmission among

learners is entirely in their hands, but more and more parties are responsible, because school programs should be related to informal learning outside of schools;

- 2) avoid the view that equates culture with ethnic groups. It means that we no longer need to associate cultures solely with ethnic groups as they have been. Traditionally, educators associate cultures with relatively self-sufficient social groups, rather than with a number of people continuously and repeatedly engaged in one or more activities;
- 3) since the development of competence in a "new culture" usually requires the interaction of initiatives from people who already have competencies, it can be seen more clearly that efforts to support ethnically separated schools are antithesis to the goals of multicultural education. Maintaining and extending group solidarity will inhibit socialisation into a new culture for cultural pluralism and multicultural education is not logically equated;
- 4) multicultural education increases competence in some cultures. Which culture will be adopted is determined by the situation and conditions in proportion;
- 5) the possibility that education (formal and non-formal) raises awareness of competence in some cultures. This kind of awareness will then distance the concept of bi-cultural or dichotomy between indigenous and non-native.

In the context of Indonesia and its diversity, these five approaches must be harmonised with the conditions of Indonesian society, because society is a collection of humans or individuals embodied in social groups with a specific cultural or tradition challenge. Thus, it can be understood that the core of society is a large collection of individuals who live and work together in relatively similar times, so that individuals can meet their needs and absorb social character (Slamet, et al. 2017). These conditions then make some of them into organised communities who think about themselves and differentiate their existence from community extensions. The other side is when life in society means the interaction between individual and social environment, then what makes up an individual is education or in other terms, the educator community.

Multicultural-based Education Discourse

Since its emergence as a discipline in the 1960s and 1970s, multicultural-based education (MBE) has been defined in many ways from multiple perspectives. In educational science terminology known as the terminology that is almost the same as the MBE, namely multicultural education as used in the context of multicultural life of Western countries. A number of definitions are bound in certain disciplines, such as: anthropology, sociology, psychology, and so forth.

Hernandez in Naim and Sauqi (2013) suggests two classical definitions to emphasise the important conceptual dimensions of MBE for educators. The first definition emphasises the essence of MBE as a perspective that recognises the political, social, and economic realities that individuals experience in complex and culturally diverse (plural) human encounters. This

definition aims to reflect the importance of culture, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, social status, economy, territoriality and exceptions in the educational process. Over the past decade, Hernandez has developed an operational definition of MBE. In its conceptualisation, MBE is an educational activity that is empowering. Therefore, MBE is a vision of education that should be and must be applicable and understood by all learners.

With regard to learners, MBE issues about ethnicity, gender, class, language, religion, and exceptions that influence, shape and pattern each individual as a cultural creature. MBE is the result of a complete development of the constellation or unique interaction of each individual who has intelligence, abilities, and talents. MBE prepares citizens for citizenship in diverse and culturally diverse cultural and linguistic communities. MBE also deals with significant educational changes.

MBE portrays a complex cultural, political, social, and economic reality, which broadly and systematically affects everything that happens in school and outdoors. MBE involves all educational assets manifested through context, process, and content. The MBE reinforces and re-exemplifies exemplary practices and seeks to improve the opportunities for rejected optimised education. He discussed the creation of educational institutions that provide a dynamic learning environment, reflecting the ideals of equality, equality, and excellence.

The Urgency of Multicultural Education in Indonesia

After describing the epistemology of multicultural education and the concept of multicultural education in the previous discussion, the following outlines the urgency of multicultural education in Indonesia. Realising multiculturalism in the world of education, multicultural education needs to be incorporated into the national curriculum which can ultimately create a multicultural society of Indonesia, as well as other efforts that can be done for that manifestation. According to Madjid and Saleh (2014), in realising this, it should be noted that: 1) multicultural education serves as an alternative means of conflict resolution; 2) with multicultural-based education lessons, learners are expected not to be uprooted from their cultural roots: and 3) multicultural education is applied in national and relevant curricula in the current democratic world.

As an alternative way of solving conflict

The implementation of multicultural education in the world of education is believed to be a real solution to the conflict and harmonisation that occurs in the community, especially those that often occur in Indonesian society in a plural reality. In other words, multicultural education can be an alternative means of solving socio-cultural conflicts. The spectrum of cultures of the diverse nation such as Indonesia becomes a challenge for education to cultivate the distinction into an asset and not a source of division. Currently, multicultural education has 2 (two) major responsibilities, namely: 1) preparing the nation of Indonesia to

face the flow of outside culture in the era of globalisation; and 2) "unifying" the nation itself which consists of various cultures.

Whether or not it is realised, nationality and ideology education has been widely provided in universities, but multicultural education has not been provided with the correct proportions. Therefore, schools and universities as educational institutions can develop multicultural education with their respective models according to the principle of education or school autonomy. Instead, multicultural education is more emphasised on the subjects of morals and nationalities, including the subjects of history and religion.

Basically, the previous model of learning related to nationality is already there. However, it is still inadequate as an educational tool to appreciate the differences of each tribe, culture, religion, ethnicity and territoriality. It is seen with the emergence of conflicts that often occur in the reality of nations and states today. It shows that understanding tolerance is still limited, even until now the number of students who understand everything that is actually behind the culture of a nation is still very minimal and lacking.

Supriyoko (2011) argues that the public actually knows more about the stereotype of a tribe than what the tribe actually possesses. In fact, in the context of the discourse of multicultural education, understanding the meaning behind the cultural reality of a tribe is essential. Therefore, the implementation of multicultural education can be said to succeed when formed in students and make them tolerant, non-hostile and possess a non-conflicting attitude of life caused by differences in culture, ethnicity, religion, language, customs, or others.

Students are not uprooted from their culture

In addition to being an alternative means of conflict resolution, multicultural education is also significant in fostering learners not to be uprooted from the roots of culture that was previously owned, when they were faced with socio-cultural realities in the era of globalisation. In the current globalisation era, intercultural meetings are a serious "threat" to students. In response to the global reality, learners should be provided with awareness of diverse knowledge, so they have broad competencies in global knowledge, including cultural aspects. Given the diversity of cultural reality in this country and abroad, learners certainly need to be given material about the understanding of many cultures or multicultural education, so that learners are not uprooted from their cultural roots.

It can be argued that the challenges in education today are very heavy and complex. Therefore, anticipatory efforts need to be considered seriously. If it is not taken seriously and with concrete solutions, mainly on education that is fully responsibility for the quality of human resources (HR) in this country, then the children of the nation's generation can lose direction and be uprooted from their own cultural roots.

As the foundation in developing national curriculum

Conducting curriculum development as a starting point in the learning process, or to provide a number of materials and subject content that must be mastered by learners of a certain size or level, multicultural education as the cornerstone of curriculum development becomes very important. The development of a future curriculum based on a multicultural approach can be undertaken based on the following steps:

- 1) to change the curriculum philosophy of today's uniform curriculum to a philosophy consistent with the objectives, mission and function of each level and educational unit;
- 2) the curriculum content theory must change from a theory that defines content as a substantive aspect containing facts, theories, generalisations, meanings that include moral values, procedures, processes, and skills that must belong to the young generation;
- 3) learning theories used in the future curriculum that pay attention to social, cultural, economic, and political diversity should not only base themselves on the theory of learning psychology that places learners as social, cultural, political beings who live as active members of a society, nation, and the world to be uniformed;
- 4) the learning process developed for learners should also be based on processes that have high isomorphism levels with social reality. That is, learning processes that rely on learners to learn individually and competing individualistically competitive should be abandoned and replaced by group learning and group competition in a positive situation; and
- 5) the evaluation should cover all aspects of the competence and personality of learners, in accordance with the developed objectives and content. The evaluation tool used should vary according to the nature, purpose and information to be collected. The use of alternative assessments (portfolio, observation note, and interview) can also be used.

Based on the steps that can be established in the national curriculum base, it can be argued that Indonesia as a pluralistic country, in terms of religion, ethnicity, class, race, and local culture, should draft the concept of multicultural education so that it becomes a handbook to strengthen national identity.

Supriyoko (2011) argued that the people and the nation of Indonesia have a diversity of social culture, political aspirations and economic capabilities. This diversity directly affects the ability of teachers to implement the curriculum, the ability of schools to provide learning experiences, and the ability of learners to process, learn and process information into something that can be translated as learning outcomes. Diversity becomes a free variable that has a very significant contribution to the success of the curriculum, both as a process and as a result. Therefore, diversity must be a factor to be taken into account in determining philosophy, theory, vision, document development, socialisation, and curriculum implementation. Curriculum development using a multicultural development approach should be based on 4 (four) principles:

- 1) cultural diversity becomes the basis for determining philosophy;

- 2) cultural diversity serves as a basis for developing various curriculum components, such as: objectives, content, processes, and evaluations;
- 3) the culture within the educational unit is the source of learning and the object of study that should be part of the learners' learning activities; and
- 4) the curriculum serves as a media in developing regional and national cultures.

The position of diversity as an independent variable is at the school and community level, that is, a curriculum is developed and is expected to be a powerful modifier according to perceived nations of a society. In real terms, this influence lies in teachers who are responsible for curriculum development, not on learners undergoing the curriculum. Another important point is that multicultural education can be used as the cornerstone of curriculum development.

For a long time, educational experts and curricula have realised that culture is one of the cornerstones of curriculum development (Taba, 1962), in addition to other foundations such as the development of society, science, technology, politics, and economics. Ki Hadjar Dewantara (1936) stated that culture is an important factor as the root of a nation's education. Another curriculum expert, Print (1993) in Supardan (2005) states the importance of culture as the foundation for a curriculum, that curriculum is a construct of that culture. Culture is the totality of the way people live and develop the pattern of life so that they do not only become the foundation of the developed curriculum but also become the target of curriculum development results.

The cultural position in a curriculum process is very important, but in the development process often the curriculum developers pay little attention to it. In reality, the curriculum development process is often coloured by the influence of curriculum developers' views on the development of science and technology. Consideration of the students and the community needs is often responded with answers to the development of science. Therefore, the position of culture is abandoned as well as other grounds to be considered in curriculum development.

Intrinsically, curriculum developers in formulating philosophy, vision, and educational goals, are strongly influenced by their educational background, life view, and life beliefs. The determinants of philosophy, vision, educational goals are the cultural roots of the curriculum developers. This is what Longstreet and Shane (1993) said: we are largely unaware of the numerous, culturally formed qualities that characterise our behaviour. Therefore, both directly and indirectly, the internal process of curriculum development is strongly influenced by the culture of the curriculum developers.

Another cornerstone needed in curriculum development is the theory of learning, about how learners learn. During this time, people talk about learning theories developed mainly from psychology (Slamet, 2017). The theory of learning as it is known in the literature developed

from various streams and theories in psychology, such as behaviourism (stimulus response, conditioning, operant conditioning, modelling, etc.), cognitive (schemata, accommodation, and assimilation of Piaget, meaningful learning from Ausubel and so on). Learning theory developed from this view is of course very useful, the theory is also developed based on the results of in-depth study and over a long enough time. Unfortunately, in learning theories developed based on psychological views it is often said that learners learn in a situation that is value free or more accurately said, cultural and societal free. The learning theories have not yet taken into account that learners who learn are individuals who live and react to the stimulus, which cannot be separated from the social and cultural environment he lives. In his book *Socio Culture Origins of Achievement*, Maehr (1974) says that the linkage between culture and language, culture and perception, culture and cognition, culture and achievement, and culture and achievement motivation are all factors that affect students.

Webb (1990) and Burnet (1994) studies in Maksum (2014) show that learners' learning processes developed through cultural considerations show better results. This is because, as Oliver and Howley (1992) have argued, culture is governing how people share information and knowledge, as well as how they construct meaning. Why the strong role of culture in an individual's understanding of the environment and learning is expressed by Delpit (Darling-Hammond, 1996): we all interpret behaviours, information, and situations through our own cultural lenses; these lenses operate involuntarily, below the level of conscious awareness, making it seem that our own view is implicit, the way it is.

The same opinion is expressed by Wloodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) that culture is the basis of intrinsic motivation and develops a learning model called a comprehensive model of culturally responsive teaching which they perceive as pedagogy while respecting cultural integrity. Therefore, now is the time to take into account the cultural factors as an important foundation in determining the components of objectives, materials, processes, evaluation of a curriculum and learning activities of learners. Consequently, curriculum developers at the central, regional, and school levels should take advantage of culture as a cornerstone of curriculum development more seriously and more systematically.

It should be realised also that Indonesia is a country rich in culture, as stated in the national motto 'Unity in Diversity'. This fact is recognised by an American Indian historian; Wolpert (1965) who says that the Indian community is more pluralistic in every respect than any other on earth except, perhaps, Indonesia. Therefore, if culture is one of the strong foundations in curriculum development, the curriculum development process in Indonesia should also pay attention to the diversity of the existing cultures. That is, the multicultural approach in curriculum development in Indonesia is a must and cannot be ignored anymore.

The enactment of Law Number 22 Year 1999 and Number 32 Year 2004 regarding Regional Autonomy will not directly make multicultural education applicable in the development of curriculum in Indonesia. The law provides the authority for management of education to local

governments, may produce curriculum according to the vision, mission, and perceptions of curriculum developers in the region. But it is not impossible that the developed curriculum is not developed based on a multicultural approach, since curricula using a multicultural approach must be developed with a deep awareness and understanding of the multicultural approach as mentioned above.

The literature on multicultural education shows the diversity in terms of the term. Banks (2015) stated that among many of these meanings, the dominant is the notion of multicultural education as education for people of colour. This understanding is in line with Burnet's (1994) definition, that multicultural education is any set of processes by which schools work with rather than oppressed groups. This understanding is clearly incompatible with the context of education in Indonesia, because Indonesia has a different cultural context with other countries, although both share the same nation and multicultural.

Andersen and Cushner (1994) have said multicultural education is education about cultural diversity. This definition is broader than the one above. Nevertheless, the cultural position is still the same as what the definition proposes, namely cultural diversity into something which is studied (as the object of study). In other words, cultural diversity is a subject matter for curriculum developers to be aware of.

The understanding of multicultural education above is of course limited and only useful for curriculum developers in one aspect only, namely in the process of developing curriculum content. That understanding cannot help curriculum developers in using culture and in this context uses the reality of multicultural culture, as a foundation in developing the vision, mission, objectives and various components of the curriculum. Therefore, another notion of a multicultural approach should be formulated in order to be used in the above. The definition of a multicultural approach should assist curriculum developers in developing curriculum principles. The curriculum material should be as suggested by Steller in Drajat and Sudarmo (2011) and can maximise the potentials of students and their cultural environments so that the students can learn better. That is, the understanding of multicultural approaches in the curriculum should accommodate the cultural differences of learners, make use of culture as a source of content and as a starting point for the development of culture itself, the understanding of other people's culture, tolerance, the spirit learners' nationalism based on *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), ethical behaviour, and it is equally important to take advantage of the learners' personal culture as part of the entry-behaviour so as to create equal opportunities for learners to achieve.

On the basis of multicultural education position as an approach in curriculum development, the multicultural approach to the national curriculum is defined as a principle that uses cultural diversity of learners in developing the philosophy, mission, objectives, curriculum components, and learning environment so that learners can use their personal culture to understand and develop the desired insights, concepts, skills, values, attitudes, and morale.



Final Results

The expected change in the context of multicultural education does not lie in numerical or statistical justification and cognitive *ansich* orientation as is commonly the successful assessment of educational implementation in this country. Moreover, in order to create conditions which are comfortable, peaceful, tolerant in people's lives, and not always arise conflicts caused by cultural differences and racial intolerance. But in some circles, it is said that the results of multicultural education cannot be determined by the time standard, so in the context of the Indonesian education world it is time to pay great attention to multicultural education, at least by incorporating it with relevant subjects such as civics, history and religion. This needs to be taken immediately as an action, because at least it can provide solutions to some of the social problems faced by Indonesia in the future.



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