

MULTICULTURAL VALUES IN INDONESIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY IN MAKASSAR METROPOLITAN AREA

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Abstract

The research aimed to understand ways of implementing multicultural values in Indonesian primary schools. This case study attempted to discover the multicultural values in primary school curriculum documents and teachers' perspective on how to promote the multicultural values in primary school students, by interviewing primary school teachers in Makassar and examining primary school curriculum documents. The investigation showed that teaching the values of tolerance, respecting diversity, acknowledging similarities and maintaining native languages and local identity should be done gradually by initially introducing the symbols of multicultural values through pictures, videos, and observations, then teaching children through modeling and attitudes of inclusiveness. More importantly is teachers' knowledge on multiculturalism so that they could behave equally towards students and colleagues in school setting. Finally, multiculturalism should be embedded in the schools through celebration of cultures, ethnics and language diversity, through cultural festivals, food exhibition, local arts and dance shows, music contests, drama, and literature.

Keywords: *Multicultural values, implementing, primary schools, teachers views.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami cara-cara menerapkan nilai-nilai multikulturalisme di Sekolah-Sekolah Dasar di Indonesia. Kajian ini mencoba menemukan nilai-nilai multikulturalisme dalam dokumen kurikulum Sekolah Dasar serta perspektif para guru tentang bagaimana mengembangkan nilai-nilai multikulturalisme pada siswa-siswa SD, dengan cara mewawancarai guru-guru SD di Makasar, dan menguji dokumen-dokumen kurikulum SD. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa mengajarkan nilai-nilai toleransi, menghargai perbedaan, mengakui persamaan, dan memelihara bahasa-bahasa pribumi dan identitas lokal seharusnya dilakukan secara terus menerus dengan pertama-tama memperkenalkan symbol-simbol dari nilai-nilai multikulturalisme melalui gambar, video, dan observasi, kemudian mengajarkan anak-anak melalui pemodelan dan sikap keterbukaan. Dan yang lebih penting adalah pengetahuan guru tentang multikulturalisme sehingga mereka bisa bersikap adil dan sama terhadap semua siswa dan semua rekan kerja di lingkungan sekolah. Multikulturalisme seharusnya disisipkan kedalam kegiatan-kegiatan sekolah melalui perayaan budaya, pertunjukan keragaman etnis dan bahasa dalam bentuk festival budaya, pameran makanan, pertunjukan dansa dan seni lokal, kontes musik, drama dan sastra.

Keywords: *Multicultural values, implementing, primary schools, teachers views.*

Introduction

We are many but we are one is perhaps the best expression to illustrate the Indonesian nation. “A nation of unity in diversity (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*)”, that is the national motto established at the time Indonesia proclaimed her independence in 1945. Long before the independence, in 1928, a group of young Indonesians declared the unity of their future nation: “One country, one nation, one language, Indonesia” (*Satu nusa, satu bangsa, satu bahasa, Indonesia*). It is interesting to note here that *bahasa Indonesia* was cited as the ‘national language’ at the time Indonesia was still colonized by the Dutch. Winarto (2006) argued that it is more interesting to know that those young Indonesians consciously chose *bahasa Indonesia* as the lingua franca among the existing hundreds local languages spread over the archipelago.

The existence of more than 700 local languages throughout Indonesia (see Fox of his quotation on the number of languages in Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Java and Bali, Nusa Tenggara, Maluku and Papua as quoted from *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* [Grimes 1992 in Fox 2004:15]) as an evidence of the dynamic condition of multiculturalism in Indonesia. Winarto (2006) further explained that if language is used as an indicator of cultural diversity, it means that only from the larger islands and regions, there are seven hundreds cultures in Indonesia. We could thus imagine how enormous the diversity in Indonesia is. In such a situation, if *bahasa Indonesia* can function as the lingua franca, to what extent could the national identity and sense of belongingness function as the 'tie' of more than 200 millions people with their heterogeneous cultural identities and backgrounds? It is not at all a simple and easy thing to realize.

Therefore, this research seeks the representation of multicultural education in Indonesian primary school curriculum and teachers understanding of diversity in school context.

The research aims to explore the representation of heterogeneous cultural and languages in primary school documents and teachers view of the ways of promoting multicultural values in Indonesian primary schools.

Concept Underpinning the Study

Defining Multiculturalism

Drew (2009) defined multiculturalism as multiethnic societies that relates to reflection or adaptation to diverse ethnicities. The idea of being able to fluidly self-identify with a variety of cultures and races seems backward in the linear and categorical quest for self-identity. But in essence, all people are multicultural; a rich mixture of cultural origins and ancestors.

More importantly is how multiculturalism embedded in the school system. The definition of multiculturalism as stated by Barry (in Isa 2003) perhaps is the best the scenario for the study:

“... The view that cultural variation should be presented and transmitted in the school system in order for children to accept it in a given society...” (Barry, J. 1992)

Therefore, it is imperative that individuals be able to have a significant level of identification with the characteristics of people groups they are comprised of and interact with. These characteristics include:

racial, ethnic, gender, disability, religious affiliation and social class. Since self-image and racial identification begins from birth, one of the most important places a child will learn these values are in their education system.

Teaching Multicultural Values in School

Wardle (2008) proposed that multicultural values should be embedded in the schools and the teachers. Therefore teachers of young children may be able to behave and respond appropriately when they face racial and discrimination issues occurring in the schools. For teachers, it is critical they have a clear understanding of the complex process of racial identity development in children, beginning in infancy, as early as possible. However, schools that examine racial and ethnic diversity, yet avoid the theme of racial mixture, can do serious harm to students comprised of all ethnic backgrounds that need to be weaned from their experience in rigid racial categories. As Indonesia national identity is morphing into a multiracial society, the value of a racially mixed discussion on ethnic diversity must be implemented in the classroom.

Methods of Multicultural Education

Banks (2006) proposed a way of gaining multiculturalism perspective in the school by using the ethnic additive approach; when content from different ethnic groups is added to the pre-existing curriculum. The other cultures and religions are added to the discussion on the topic of culture, but this entire discussion takes place within the traditionally structured curriculum.

The other form of multicultural education draws on many fundamental values. According to child development author, Stacey York (2003), this method includes teaching approaches that help children learn about diversity while simultaneously working together to challenge bias and prejudice, creating classroom environments that reflect the child's home culture and aspects of the child's home language. Children must be encouraged to respect and embrace different cultures represented in the children around them. The classroom "should be a place where culturally and linguistically diverse children all feel welcome."

An important step in successfully implementing multicultural curriculum is that the child must be able to develop "a positive, knowledgeable and confident self-identity within a cultural context." Ideally, children will witness and participate in advocating against a

societal injustice, discrimination or prejudice. Ultimately, children will be able to stand up for themselves- and for one another- in the face of bias and thus reverse stereotypes and prejudice (Drew, 2009).

Supporting Home Language

Teachers must support the child's use of a home language that is different than the school's primary language, and also integrate that language into classroom activities. Many schools that follow this method teach interchangeably between English and Spanish, giving children non-verbal cues on classroom instruction.

There is no formula for maintaining a multicultural classroom environment. But history has shown that multicultural education has improved dramatically in the last few decades such as in America (Banks, 2006), Australia (McInerney, 2003). Today, there are dozens of multicultural education methods, which are continually evolving to appropriately cater to the needs of this ever-changing society.

Research method

A qualitative case study employed as the tool for this study because case study is a study of a phenomenon in its context (Yin 1994; Gall et al 2005). Thus, the scope of the case study can be either a single unit or multiple sites depending on what is defined as unit of analysis (Yin 1994).

The data were collected through semi structured interview and documents. The interview is more controlled by interviewer, flexible, and not completely pre-determined (Wellington 2000). Semi structured interview is used to gain understanding of teachers' perspective in relation to the implementation of promoting multicultural values in Indonesian primary schools. The interview data were analyzed by using systemic representational analysis (see Gall, et al. 2005). While, the document used in the research was the curriculum model for primary schools and standard of competences that were published by Department of National Education Republic of Indonesia. The documents were analyzed through interpretative analysis: data display, data reduction, and data interpretation (Huberman and Miles, 2007). The use of interview and document increase the trustworthiness and enhance the soundness of the findings.

Finding and discussion

Multicultural Values in the Primary School Curriculum Document

1. Encouraging tolerance and harmonious lives

The values of respecting other religion are one of the main goals of primary school education. By understanding of other religion, it perhaps increases the acknowledging similarities in order to establish the harmonious lives among heterogeneous community. The tolerance value is as stated below:

... mendorong peserta didik agar mampu bersaing secara global sehingga dapat hidup berdampingan dengan anggota masyarakat bangsa lain... mendukung peningkatan rasa toleransi dan kerukunan antarumat beragama; ... *to encourage tolerance and harmony among different religions; to support learners to compete globally in order to be able to live together with other people*

2. Maintaining religion and cultural diversity

The other goal of primary education which is part of multicultural values is the maintenance of religion and cultural pluralities. The diversity of faith and culture is one of the underlying values of Indonesian society, as a nation of unity in diversity. The students are expected to be aware of religion and cultural diversity as stated below:

... meningkatkan keimanan dan ketakwaan serta akhlak mulia; menunjang kelestarian dan keragaman budaya. (...*to increase faith and good character; to encourage sustainability and cultural diversity*)

3. Increasing awareness of rights and responsibilities

Students are expected to be good Indonesian citizens who recognize well their rights and responsibilities understand their status and be able to defend the country, and increase the national patriotism. The increasing awareness of those rights and responsibilities is included in the group of Citizenship and Personality subjects, as explained below:

untuk peningkatan kesadaran dan wawasan peserta didik akan status, hak, dan kewajiban dalam kehidupan bermasyarakat, berbangsa, dan bernegara...Kesadaran dan wawasan termasuk wawasan kebangsaan, jiwa, dan patriotisme bela negara, penghargaan terhadap hak-hak asasi manusia, kemajemukan bangsa, pelestarian lingkungan hidup, kesetaraan gender, ...*(The aim of the subject is to raise learners' awareness and knowledge on their status, rights and responsibilities in the society ...the awareness and*

knowledge of nationalism, patriotism, and respect to multicultural pluralities, environmental sustainability, gender equality...).

4. Appreciating diversity

Learners in primary schools are expected to appreciate diversity as early as possible. The diversity of arts, ethnics and cultural from different society throughout Indonesia is supposed to be introduced as the beauty of Indonesia, as it is stated in the art subjects below:

...Kemampuan mengapresiasi dan mengekspresikan keindahan serta harmoni mencakup apresiasi dan ekspresi, baik dalam kehidupan individual sehingga mampu menikmati dan mensyukuri hidup maupun dalam kehidupan masyarakat sehingga mampu menciptakan kebersamaan yang harmonis... *(the ability to express and appreciate beauty and harmony not only in personal life but also in the society in order to create harmonious lives).*

5. Acknowledging and respecting diversity

Multiculturalism includes the diversity of culture, religions, races, ethnics, and socio-economic lives of society. Besides that, students are expected to work collaboratively with students from different backgrounds in the school and community. Those values are clearly indicated in the primary school graduate standard competence:

...Menghargai keberagaman agama, budaya, suku, ras, dan golongan sosial ekonomi

di lingkungan sekitarnya...Bekerja sama dalam kelompok, tolong-menolong, dan menjaga diri sendiri dalam lingkungan keluarga dan teman sebaya... *(Respect religious, cultural, ethnic, race and socio-economic diversities in the community...work collaboratively, help each other, and protect themselves in the family and friends)*

6. Recognizing plurality

One of the aims of promoting multiculturalism in elementary school students is to recognize that Indonesia is a heterogeneous country. Increasing students' awareness through introducing different ethnics tradition, cultures and values can be important starting point in order to create tolerance community. The theme of recognizing diversity is included in the subject of Religion and Characters, as the standard competence of the unit:

...Mengetahui keberagaman agama, budaya, suku, ras, dan golongan sosial ekonomi di lingkungan sekitarnya...Berkomunikasi secara santun yang mencerminkan

harkat dan martabatnya sebagai makhluk Tuhan...Menunjukkan kecintaan dan kepedulian terhadap sesama manusia dan lingkungan sebagai makhluk ciptaan Tuhan.

(to recognize the diversity of religion, culture, races, ethnics, and socio-economic groups in the community...to communicate politely as a model of good human creature... to show love and care to others and environment).

7. Obeying rules in the community

Learners are educated to obey the rules in the school and community. This value is included in the subject of Citizenship and Personality standard competence:

...Mematuhi aturan-aturan sosial yang berlaku dalam lingkungannya.. Menghargai keberagaman agama, budaya, suku, ras, dan golongan sosial ekonomi di lingkungan sekitarnya...Menunjukkan kecintaan dan kepedulian terhadap lingkungan..

(to obey current social rules in the community...to respect the diversity of religion, culture, races, ethnics, and socio-economic groups in the community...to show love and care to others and environment).

8. Supporting language learning

Foreign language and local language are the most important local content subjects taught in primary schools. Learning language is also learning the way and method of other people utter the expressions and words. The school in Makassar where the case study located is promoting Makassar language as local language, and English as a foreign language.

Teachers' view of promoting Multicultural Values

The Term of Multiculturalism

Teachers' understanding of multicultural education is more focused on the value of tolerance and respect differences. Tolerance is embedded in teachers knowledge on multiculturalism, as stated below:

Pendidikan Multicultural ialah upaya untuk memahami tentang orang lain, antara lain agama, ras dan perbedaan yang ada pada setiap individu (Ia)... Multikulturalisme yakni bagaimana kita toleransi dan menghargai orang yang berbeda dengan kita... (Ib).

Multicultural education is a way of understanding others including other religion, races, ethnics, and respecting the difference of each individual person

(Ia)...Multicultural education is how to implement tolerance and respect others who are different from us (Ib). (Interview, March 10 2010)

Strategies to promote the values of pluralism

There are several ways used by teachers to promote the value of diversity in the school. The first method is using pictures. Teachers like to use symbols of different cultures in Indonesia via a series of pictures, as it was explained by teacher in this study:

...Cara yang terbaik untuk mengajarkan rasa toleransi kepada anak-anak ...dengan mengenalkan symbol-simbol perbedaan agama, budaya, ras dan etnis. Simbol-simbol itu dapat diajarkan dengan melalui gambar-gambar...yang di sediakan baik di dalam maupun diluar kelas (Ia).

...the best way to teach students of tolerance ...is by introducing symbols of other religions, cultures, races, and ethnics. The symbols can be taught through pictures ..that are provided in the classroom and outside the room. (Interview, March 10 2010).

The other strategy to introduce multiculturalism in the classroom includes the use of video or movie containing the value of respect of diversity, as stated as follow:

...Cara untuk menanamkan nilai toleransi dan menghargai orang lain...yakni dengan memberi contoh kepada anak-anak, memperlihatkan melalui video ataupun film. Tetapi yang paling penting bagaimana member contoh sikap tersebut kepada anak-anak karena mereka cenderung meniru apa yang gurunya perlihatkan dan ajarkan...contoh movie ialah AAC (ayat-ayat cinta), ...where community is expected to respect the value of Islamic religions...

(Ib). (Interview, March 10 2010).

The way to promote the values of tolerance and respecting others ...is to model them to students (learning by doing), and to show video or movie...but the most important is how teachers behave towards students because learners tend to imitate what teachers perform and teach ...the example of movie is (ayat-ayat cinta).

Contents of multicultural education in primary schools

Teachers view on the contents of multicultural issues that students ought to be learned are respecting elderly, teachers and other people, loving friends, caring younger people, and acknowledging

similarities and respecting differences. Those values are explained clearly by teachers below:

- ...menghargai orang tua, guru dan orang lain (*Respect parents, teachers, and older people*)...
- mencintai teman-teman sebaya (*Love friends and same ages*) (1a)
- ..melindungi dan menjaga orang yang lebih muda (*Protect and take care of younger people*)...
- menghargai orang yang berbeda agama (*Tolerance with other religion*) (1b) (interview March 10, 2010).

It is interesting to note that multiculturalism has been acknowledged by the Indonesian National Department of Education as it is stated clearly in curriculum documents of primary schools. However, there are several issues that are not included in the document as important vehicle to teach multiculturalism in the school. For detail, the researchers summarize in the table 1. below:

Table 1: Multiculturalism in Indonesian Primary Schools.

category	Multicultural values in the school curriculum document	Teachers perspective of promoting multicultural education in primary school
Current multiculturalism in primary school	• Encouraging tolerance and harmonious lives • Maintaining religion and cultural diversity • Increasing awareness of rights and responsibilities • Appreciating diversity • Acknowledging and respecting diversity • Recognizing plurality • Obeying rules in the community • Supporting language learning	• Teaching multiculturalism through symbols and pictures • Teaching multicultural education through video or movie • Teaching multicultural education values through modelling or learning by doing

Conclusion and Suggestion

As a multiracial country, Indonesia has developed its own mould in multicultural education. Realizing the importance of integrating and uniting the various races and ethnics, education has been utilized as the main tool. Instead of assuming that every citizen in the country is similar, the country acknowledges the differences in culture and lifestyle its people have, and the people are inculcated with values to respect these differences. One way to teach these values is through reaching the young generations in schools.

Primary education is a basic step to expose to multicultural issues where the cultural differences of students are portrayed, thus these differences can be manipulated to increase students' awareness on the various cultures, and eventually they are taught to respect these differences.. Therefore, multicultural curriculum of in primary school education goes beyond the mere objective of producing students who have high sense of creativity and appreciative of diversity, but high level of awareness and respect towards other people and cultures.

The research suggested that multiculturalism should be embedded in the schools through celebration of cultures, ethnics and language diversity, through cultural festivals, food exhibition, local arts and dance shows, music contests, drama, and literature.

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