



Transformation Towards Multicultural Awareness Through History Learning to Realize Social Harmony

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Abstract. Multicultural education is a process of transformation, not just tolerance, which means multicultural education does not only teach about diverse cultures. As a transformational process, multicultural education must be present and rebuilt based on the ideal of equality and social justice in a plural society. Multicultural education is based on the principles of equality, mutual respect, acceptance, and understanding of a moral commitment to social justice. In line with these principles, historical learning can be used as a medium for transforming multicultural education. The history education curriculum that has been compiled also seeks to develop insights into the cultural diversity of the Indonesian nation by showing a historical journey that illustrates cultural diversity in the past, present and needs to be maintained in the future. Synchronization between multicultural education and history learning is one of the keys to the importance of integration between the two. The purpose of this idea is to find a picture of transformation towards multicultural awareness in the process of learning history as an effort to realize social harmony in Indonesia's plural society.

Keywords: Multicultural Awareness · Historical Learning · Social Harmony

1 Introduction

Indonesia is a highly diverse country with a complex pluralism of its ethnicities. Indonesia can be referred to as a 'highly plural country' [1]. The geographical factors such as various terrain conditions, the strategic point between two major continents, and different climates resulted in Indonesia becoming a multicultural environment for its people [2].

The diversity in race, religion, and ethnicity became the strong point of Indonesian people. But this diversity also comes with several issues. These differences among the people can also spark a conflict between groups of people with different cultures [3].

The negative side of plurality comes in form of identity politics which then may cause disturbance or conflict between people from different cultures [4]. In this context, it is used in political disputes during the election [5]. Primordialism issues can be found in some cases related to the election as a form of impure means from both the individual and communal political agenda. Especially in some cases like Regional Election and

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Presidential Election where the primordial issues result in social disputes [5]. During the second round of the Jakarta Regional Election in 2012, racist issues start to emerge through religious preaches, social media, and other communication platforms [5].

The racism comes with a bold statement claiming that the electee was not an Islam and was originated from a minority religious group, the descendant of a forbidden political party, and various negative track records [6]. The media who should be a neutral platform also started to shift and take sides. And at the same time, various false claims and hoaxes were also widespread [7]. The racist issues that built up during the election period were so strong and crystallized that resulting in psychological pressure among the people who will give their vote in the election [8]. According to the research of Judita [9], there are 6.711 articles and 39.696 issues spreading on social media between January to August 2018. This shows that the negative sentiments through social media tend to outnumber the articles on the news sites.

According to Puskapol Universitas Indonesia [10], there are several reasons why racial issues were still used in the 2019 Presidential Election. The first one is the aftermath of the previous polarization and identity issues. Fundamentally, the racial issue is an extremely sensitive topic in Indonesia. After the Presidential Election in 2019 was done, the tension among the people was still high. A case of racism was reported in the National flag incident at the front of Papua Dormitory in Surabaya [11]. This event leads to massive riots and demonstrations in Papua and West Papua [12].

Gender equality has not been implemented yet. There are some cases where women are having some opportunities and important roles in society, but most of the time it is not a common thing yet [13, 14]. The major cases of historical writing tend to emphasize the role of man than the role of women [15]. This type of marginalization leads to concerns about whether women will become more inferior beings compared to men. These unsolved issues about gender equality are more or less the same as what occurred to the people with disabilities.

Along with the article from Tempo, the National Consortium for Disabled Rights of Indonesia has analyzed the government policies regarding disabled people and the actual impact of those policies on their daily lives. The analysis was based on the articles from the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the main purpose is to find the other issues that have not been discovered yet. The analysis concludes that the disability rights were inconsistent and still inconsiderate to the ten sectors of disability in the daily lives, such as mobility, disaster management and prevention, rehabilitation, social security, information and communications, education, health, employment, sports, cultural recreation and entertainment [15].

Various issues related to pluralism in Indonesia need to be addressed quickly. Multiculturalism, on the other hand, tends to not only acknowledge the existence of the differences but also encourage more policies to be made to regulate and maintain the balance of power and interaction between the minority and the more dominant majority [1]. Multicultural education has been successfully implemented in countries like the United States, Canada, and Australia who were thoroughly researching and developing concepts and theories regarding multiculturalism and multicultural education [16].

Local culture and indigenous potencies can be utilized to develop multicultural education. The purpose of this development is to answer the concerns regarding the limited

understanding of plurality [1]. Through education, the concept of multiculturalism can be cultivated into each of Indonesian citizens so that they will be able to encourage the notion of unity in diversity throughout their daily lives.

Multicultural education can be a hidden curriculum that is implemented in each learning subject, including history. History can thoroughly study and utilize the indigenous cultural potential as means to reflect and encourage the multicultural awareness that serves a purpose in creating social harmony in Indonesia.

2 Discussion

2.1 Multicultural Awareness

As a citizen of a highly diverse country, the people of Indonesia need the concept of multiculturalism as a form of awareness. Allport in Connerley & Pedersen [17] quoted that insight might be one of the means to achieve tolerance. The other means is to build awareness. Awareness here refers to the ability to precisely assess a cultural situation from various viewpoints. Multicultural awareness is a form of acceptance that everyone is born different, both physically and non-physically. These differences had manifested in various cultures, norms, religions, and faith.

In education, multicultural awareness helps the students to understand, embrace, and respect other people from different races, cultures, norms, and religions. The learning model is used to show each different culture, not disclosing other cultures nor generalizing them as a single national culture [18]. Learning models like this will hopefully cultivate the understanding and acceptance of different cultures, as well as to learn and reflect on each other.

According to Hadziq [19], the characteristics of multicultural awareness include the appreciation of living in diversity, the sentience to trust each other, attention to tolerance, open-mindedness, the ability to resolve a conflict, and reconciliation without violence. To build and cultivate this awareness and skills, the role of a teacher is fundamental.

To be able to cultivate the values and awareness skills, a teacher needs to possess 11 characteristics. These characteristics are complied with the competence within the multicultural boundaries according to Pope & Reynolds [20]. These characteristics including respect and learn; eager to take risks and acknowledge; committed to justice; contribute to social development; trust the values and the importance of cultural heritage; eager to self-check and contrive; embrace for a change and faithful; accepting the perspective from the other side of the world; knowing that cultural differences can still contribute to an effective communication and meaningful relationship; aware to their own culture; aware that their behaviour; acknowledge the interpersonal process.

The students are expected to achieve multicultural awareness. According to Liliweri [21], the achievement of multicultural awareness provides several benefits. The benefits include acquiring a greater awareness towards themselves and other people, developing new friendships, enhancing intrapersonal skills, able to stand against stereotypes and stigma, promoting peace and harmony between groups of people, and becoming more qualified to live in a multicultural world.

2.2 Cultivating Multicultural Awareness in History Learning to Create a Social Harmony

History learning is one of the methods to cultivate multicultural awareness in education. According to Supardan dan Ahamad [22], subjects about national history can be utilized to mediate the relationship between multicultural elements within society. Cultivating multicultural awareness is considered important in history learning sessions. In history subject, the values can be found in historical events and figures from the historical timeline of Indonesia which can be developed into more multicultural values.

According to pragmatic historical philosophy, the fundamental element of history is to reflect and explain practical reasons or benefit from learning about past events. History is trying to find moral values that possess material and formal objects. Material object means that history is a value and formal object means that the values can be applied as a source of moral teaching [23]. Through history, multicultural values can be transferred to the students thus creating multicultural awareness.

1) *Synchronic Analysis*

The curriculum of history subjects in schools must contain multicultural elements. To cultivate multicultural awareness, the curriculum in history education must contain and acknowledge every regional culture, protecting their cultures, and respecting each other cultures to create a social harmony [24].

To construct the curriculum in history education, a multicultural approach is necessary. The subjects must include and consider the cultural background of the students. Each culture from every student will be showcased to stimulate exchange in ideas between the students as they discuss the topics related to the current context of the learning session. Along with the cultural arrangement, the matter of gender equality should be put into consideration also.

The superiority of man throughout historical writings should be less emphasized in the curriculum of history education. The role of women could be more standing out in historical writing and have a more balanced amount compared to the other gender. This form of equality will increase the confidence in female students and provide more understanding towards emancipation for male students.

According to Hasan [25], the curriculum in history education should be able to turn difference into equality. The curriculum required to develop insight on Indonesia's cultural diversity by showing its journey through history, be it in the past, present, and what needs to preserve in the future. Aside from that, history education should be able to develop a nation's insight to study various events that happened in national history and local history altogether.

Identifying from the syllabus of the first and second year in high school, research from Lionar dan Mulyana [26] shows that multicultural values can be found in some parts of the subject. The multicultural values from the first year's subject including the life of prehistoric people and the ancestors of Indonesia; the spreading of Hindu and Buddha religion in Indonesia; the development of society, government, and culture during the period of Hindi and Buddhist kingdoms in Indonesia; the spreading of Islam religion in Indonesia; and the development of society, government, and culture during the period of Islamic kingdoms in Indonesia.

Multicultural values that can be found in the second year of high school are the development of Christianity, national movement, and proclamation of Indonesia's freedom [26]. From the Zending and Missionaries movement that introduce Christianity, we can learn that the religion was spread with peace. From the national movement, we can learn multicultural values from various figures and organizations that were created during the period to achieve freedom for the people. From the proclamation of freedom, we can learn that every part of the nation has rejoiced because of some incredible and reliable figures, Indonesia can become an independent country.

The teaching material of history should be carefully constructed and identifying history thoroughly to the local level. Local history is a branch of history that studies the events or locality of some specific place. According to Supardi [27], local history can be utilized to achieve multicultural awareness because local history provides the reality of a smaller but detailed aspect of history in a certain place.

Unfortunately, various history textbooks distributed to schools have not yet covered topics about local history. The majority of the topics covered are the historical events that happened in the Java region. Few historical writings cover topics about local histories. According to Supardi [28], if the historical writing is in closer proximity to the object of history, the development of the teaching material can be more emphatic and diverse. The understanding of the local history will be more emphasized and enrich Indonesian history.

2) *Diachronic Analysis*

Historical teachings are using humanistic and constructive learning theory to conduct multicultural education. The humanistic learning theory emphasizes equality. Humanistic education focuses on the students. The teacher pays more attention to responsive education to give the students more affection they need. According to Combs in Djiwandono [29], the purpose of humanistic education is to develop a sense of sincerity, respecting each other, and conflict management for the students to overcome their problems.

Constructive learning theory pointing at the relationship between humans and knowledge. Humans learn and then acquire new knowledge. In the frame of constructivism, knowledge is developed through a series of interaction processes with the environment and the people around it. In constructivist learning theory, a teacher needs to encourage their students to become more proactive in learning sessions by engaging in social interaction between the students in the class [30].

According to humanistic and constructivist theory, the learning process is focusing more on the students and their behavior and interaction during the class. By making an ideal environment for the students to express their idea and opinion. The class is conditioned to have a positive air and become a less intimidating environment. The students participated during the class in a small group. The teacher is more focused on observing the behavior of the students in expressing their ideas and opinions. The school has to acknowledge the talent of their students and utilize them to improve the quality of the education.

The source material of the education can be provided not only by the teacher but also from various events that can happen in daily occurrences. Teachers become facilitator, mediators, and use all kinds of learning utilities to optimize the knowledge and understanding of their students. According to James A. Banks in Rosyada [16]

to convey multicultural education, a teacher needs to fulfill some qualifications such as Possessing the skills in pedagogy, understanding, experience, and good cultural values; able to reflect on themselves, whether if they were able yet to give equal attitude and treatment to all students who come from different backgrounds; Able to enrich the multicultural understanding related to culture, race, religion, ethnicity, gender, disability, stereotypes, and prejudice; Sustaining the knowledge about history, characteristics, and internal differences regarding groups of ethnicity, race, religion, and other certain groups; Able to conduct a comparative analysis and provide conclusions from theories that can be utilized to manage social diversity.

Extracurricular activities can also be used to cultivate multicultural values in learning sessions during the class. According to Saihudin [31], extracurricular activities can develop the skill and creativity of the students according to their potential, talent, and passion as well as developing social skills and responsibilities. When students are possessing social skills, they will be able to determine and take action corresponding with the existing concepts, issues, and problems. Social skills will provide the ability to conduct social critique and train the ability in decision making for the students.

Multicultural education evaluates the learning process simultaneously, intact, and comprehensive. The evaluation was not only conducted on the students but also on the teacher to correct the imperfections during the learning sessions [32]. The evaluation can be done in a test or non-test by written or oral, performance observation, attitude observation, project assessment, portfolio, and self-assessment. According to Syafe'i [33], a multicultural-based assessment can inquire, analyze, and interpret data from the process to the result of students' learning activities that can be conducted in a structured and sustainable manner.

Multicultural awareness can be invoked by learning about history. The awareness can be manifested from history subject which contains knowledge and information about past events and historical figures in which also contains multicultural values. A curriculum that applies multicultural principles, conducted with humanistic and constructivist theories, and supported by a qualified teacher can develop the potential of the students with various backgrounds so that they can feel acknowledged and less discriminated. The evaluation will provide corrections for both the students and the teachers so that they can develop further according to their capabilities. The sustainable process will be able to cultivate multicultural awareness. And the awareness will contribute to the establishment of social harmony.

Social harmony is a balanced state where a sense of respect and tolerance between members of society is achieved. The supporting factor to social harmony is the manifestation of the interaction between the diverse community with various backgrounds but maintaining the positive relationship without seeing the social identity. The awareness will further contribute to creating a peaceful life in society [34].

3 Conclusion and Suggestion

Multicultural education is a highly urgent concept to be integrated into the learning process, including the history subject. Through multicultural education, a school can be

a place to eradicate prejudice and at the same time prepare and build the character of the students to become more excel at being democratic, humanist, and pluralist. Two things need to be carried out during the development of multicultural education in school: first, engaging in a mediation that treats every civilization and culture on the same level. Secondly, developing a sense of tolerance and respect, giving a chance for every culture to understand each other. And the concept should be enacted in practical and operational means.

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