

Multicultural Education for Early Childhood

Gia Nikawanti

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia Campus Purwakarta & STKIP Purwakarta, Purwakarta, Jawa Barat, Indonesia

Corresponding e-mail: gyanikawanti@upi.edu

Abstract

Indonesia is the country with a diversity of cultures. The cultural diversity makes Indonesia as one nation in the world which have a rich language, ethnicity, and religion. The Motto of diversity is *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, the meaning "unity in diversity". *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* is not just slogans but more than that, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* is a spirit which must be assimilated in mutual love, accept differences, and respect. By image diversity of culture can be said Indonesia as the multicultural country. The base of multicultural is democratic and humanitarian values. The human values will emerge and embedded through the provision of education. Education is the process to create the quality human in accordance with nature and culture held. Therefore, the beginning implanting of multicultural education is a right educate for created the quality human. The function of multicultural education is educating children for learning to live together in peace and accept differences in life.

Keywords: multicultural education, early childhood

1 INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is the country has a diversity of cultures. The diversity of cultures makes Indonesia as one nation in the world which have a rich culture, race, ethnicity, language, and religion. On the sighting of such diversity can be said Indonesia including of multicultural country.

Suparlan (2004) explains multicultural is the diversity of the culture in a nation. In the view of a diversity, culture should be guided by democracy and humanitarian values. As explained by Suparlan, Tilaar (2004) states that the multicultural is wisdom to see cultural diversity as a fundamental reality in public.

Arifin (2015) argue in multicultural we are must be understanding for emphasizes the equality of local cultures without ignoring the rights and any cultural existence. The main focus in multicultural is the culture of equality in situations condition of a society composed of many cultures.

Multicultural is not only about culture. Multicultural is the shape of a consciousness that who believes the existence of equality in a society to respect each other. The point is, don't make the

diversity in a nation breaking down because of misconception in a group.

Such as a case problem in Tanjung Balai, North Sumatra in July 2016. The online media *kompas.com* reported about a group of resident does vandalism at Buddhist worship place. The case triggered because of disagreements between groups. However, the case is clear because the religious leaders and leaders of ethnic are facilitated by the government for making a peace (Fachrudin, 2016).

Therefore, awareness to believe in a form equality the difference must be implanted in children. Every school emphasizes on a formation of the human noble character and morals to make children grow into a person who can respect all kinds of difference in his life.

As described by Abdullah (2009) explain about the support of services on educating multicultural makes a potential for had realize to their children being able to live together in diversity.

Implanting of multicultural education at early childhood make the strong character for they are future. Hopefully, the next generation to be a man of faith, noble, healthy, knowledgeable, skilled,

creative, independent, and become a democratic citizen.

It can be said multicultural education as fresh air in the education to give the same opportunities to everyone, regardless of ethnic origin, culture, and gender, to jointly acquire knowledge.

So from the explanation above, I can conclude about the concept of multicultural education. Multicultural education can be an alternative education which given the community-wide view of differentness owned. Multicultural education should able to confirm the identity and encourage the convergence of ideas and accomplishments were strengthening of peace, and solidarity.

Therefore in order to provide the best service for educating multicultural in the school, the school must design, plan and control all elements to support the process of multicultural education well. Schools should plan the learning process, to foster an attitude of multicultural students to become members of a democratic society.

Based on the background exposure, the author interested to writing the article titled about multicultural education for early childhood. The purpose of this article, among others: (1) to know and understand the roles and function of multicultural education in creating a generation the democratic nation and (2) to share insights with the public about Inculcating of multicultural education to early childhood.

2 MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Multicultural is an effort in understanding a difference in the lives. This is closely related to the diversity of cultures, languages, customs, systems social, gender differences, ethnicity, race, politics, religion, and equality of opportunity in education. The meaning of multicultural is how a person can appreciate and respect the human rights.

As described by Hernandez (1989) education can be interpreted as a vision of multicultural education to appreciate cultural diversity as an objective reality in people's lives. The vision of multicultural education should have to be able to create an academic culture that is tolerant and inclusive.

In agreeing with Hernandez, Banks (1993) suggest multicultural education is an idea, motion, education reform and the education process whose sole purpose is to change the structure of educational institutions so that students both men and women, students with special needs, racial group, ethnicity, and culture are an assortment that will have an equal opportunity for education.

Therefore, with multicultural education learners are able to accept differences, criticism, and have a sense of empathy, tolerance for others regardless of class, status, and gender. Multicultural education provides lessons that can educate the cognitive and social development.

Actually, multicultural education is the beginning of the awareness in children for respect to differences in ethnicity, religion, and culture. Multicultural education does not to block up children for being able to unite and work together in social life.

Mahfud (2006) explained the basic objective of multicultural education is to provide equal opportunities for each child to get a lesson in the form mutual respect. So, there are not the mutual difference between individual contrasted with other individuals and also nothing is sacrificed for the sake of unity. In multicultural education, children implanted lateral thinking for accustomed to living by accepting the uniqueness of each other.

Multicultural education has a function to seed and develops cultural sensitivity, cultural tolerance, respect for cultural identity, the development of attitudes cultural responsiveness and expertise to challenge and conflict resolution.

At the cognitive level, multicultural education has a purpose for the attainment of academic skills, knowledge of the development of cultural pluralism, the competence to perform the analysis and interpretation of cultural behavior, and the ability to develop a critical awareness of their own culture (Hanum, 2009).

Bruch., Higbee., & Lundell (2003) explained that multicultural education is elements of mutual respect for human rights in a pluralistic life. So that, multicultural education is capable of creating a democratic education.

3 THE IMPORTANCE OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

Indonesia is a plural archipelago. There are a wide variety of ethnic groups in it. Plural characteristics of a country that is a country that has diversity in terms of culture, religion, ethnicity, language, social status, gender, and even political views. Plural countries make such a unifying diversity not even make a difference.

Suseno (2014) explained Indonesia is a country of plurality. Indonesia should have to understand and accept the plurality of through mutual tolerance among each other. Live in peace and harmony is the result of the attitude of people who live in plurality.

On the contrary, pluralism can make a country be dispersed. That will happen when people are not able to understand and accept the obvious differences. The typical Conflicts related the elements of SARA (ethnic, religious, racial, and intergroup).

For example, some people think pluralism is negative ideology, they are concerned that all religions and God is a same. In fact, pluralism is a framework of social interaction in a society that shows mutual respect and tolerance of each other, including mutual respect between religious communities.

Pluralist will be negative significantly when examined in the study based on religion because it will be directly correlated to a state that is all in one. Actually, pluralism is substantially manifested in attitudes to mutually recognize at once appreciate, respect, preserve, develop or enrich the state of a plurality (Arifin, 2015).

If pluralism is regarded as a complex and regarded as irreconcilable differences, the State will have a split that led to the destruction. Therefore, for the sake of peace and human rights, education regarded as an important element in the intellectual life of the nation and made the person as a living being democratic. Proper education to achieve this is multicultural education.

Multicultural education brings forth a new pedagogical as well as new insights into the educational Praxis that gives equal opportunity and respect for all children, regardless of their origin and religion (Hanum, 2009).

Multicultural education should be given to children through daily habituation by providing role models from the environment around the child, one of them through the provision of learning in schools.

Supported by research from Berthelsen & Karuppiah (2011) study found that preschool teachers support the needs of multicultural education in kindergarten and believe it is important for children to learn and understand other cultures.

In a study by Buchori & Dobinson (2012) about perspective the early childhood teachers in cultural diversity in Australia. They say that the actual practice of teaching the diversity is hard because the fact many children stay still trapped in their culture of their own and it not easy to dive.

Another case with the findings of the author. The author has visited the kindergarten in Purworejo, Central Java. The Kindergarten has its own advantages. They are an only center of education for early childhood in Purworejo which uses multicultural education.

In there, the children taught to respect and love each other. The kindergarten has five houses of worship according to the five religions in Indonesia. They are always celebrating festivities of religious together and giving greeting feast. The children taught to know the difference of their religion and taught to respect each other religions.

The teacher and the academic community provide lessons about the values of peace, respect of differences, love, responsibility, happiness, cooperation, honesty, humility, tolerance, simplicity and unity, as well as empathy.

According to Nganga (2015) the role of teachers in multicultural education should have a different cultural background with his students. This will make them learn to understand with each other.

As well as described by the Ministry of National Education, that cultivating an attitude to children in school, the teacher has a strategic position as the main actors. The teacher is a figure that can be emulated or a role model for children (Kemendikbud, 2015).

The teacher can be a source of inspiration and motivation for the students. The personality of the teacher becomes a reflective surface for children. Thus, teachers have a great responsibility to produce the next generation of character, culture, and moral.

4 IMPLEMENTATION MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Multicultural education is a process of cultivation of democratic values and morals which aim to establish an attitude of mutual respect. Children need to be given educate guidance mutual respect from adults. So, that they can understand and recognize about tolerance.

The emergence of a tolerant attitude to the child cannot simply be achieved without a process of education. The process begins with the implanted the values of tolerance behavior committed by adults to children (Irvine & Armento, 2001).

As well as an explanation by Chan (2011) explained about early childhood teachers can influence the development of positive attitudes towards others.

In providing multicultural education, children are taught activities for would help a friend, willing to share a toy, played the games together, to cooperate in a group and greetings when they met each other.

By giving the children of multicultural education as a whole will gain knowledge about

tolerance and democracy. When children already have knowledge of it all intact, then the child will realize that these values are essential for life eventually the child will willingly the tolerant behavior.

According to Lickona (2013) tolerance is the attitude and action that respect differences of religion, race, ethnicity, opinions, attitudes, and actions of others who are different from themselves.

For building a tolerant attitude in children is not enough just begins and ends with the stage of the mission alone, but need to be followed by a process carried out continuously throughout life.

Multicultural education instills in children requires a systematic and gradual process in accordance with the phase of growth and development of children (Vogt, 1997).

Described by Lickona (2013) tolerance in children develop not only covers all of the knowledge (moral knowing), but also had to reach the area of emotions (moral feeling) and the habit (moral action), these three components are needed so that children are able to understand, feels, and making the same good values.

Provide multicultural education to the early children is useful for directing the child to learn about the good things that are a preparation for their future. Hopefully, with multicultural education was expected to make their lives happy, successful, and affectionate.

Atmosphere and environment must be safe and comfortable to be created in the process of multicultural education. Teacher and Civitas academic must be realized and believed to children so that they feel that the value was right and beneficial for himself and his environment. Thus, they are motivated from within to implement and continue to maintain these values in their daily lives.

Gauvain & Parke (2009) explains that the multicultural education program is the right program for the character building in the development of young children should be drafted fun, exciting, and democratic in order to attract children to engage in any learning activity.

The school environment is conditioned to allow the child together with the school community accustomed to making daily activities at the school who realize the value of tolerance.

This can be achieved in the form of daily activities such as the creation of school culture displays of affection, respect each other and mutual assistance.

According to Mulyasa (2012) in the learning process of implementing tolerance education

comprehensively can be done using methods that communicate the value inclusion values along with the reasons underlying accompanied by the provision of modeling or giving examples from adults.

Giving the values of tolerance in early childhood can be done with an explanation arouses that very clear to the child through a discussion in fostering a sense of mutual respect in the classroom so that children are able to show a tolerant attitude (Furman, 1987).

Implementation of multicultural education is a lifelong process in character development. The character development of children is an effort that should involve all parties both the family, school, and community. Therefore, all three components (family, school, and community) should work synergistically.

Therefore the Government, social agencies, religious leaders, traditional leaders, and others have equal responsibility in implementing multicultural education for mutual interest.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Multicultural education is an implanting process of democratic values and morals to a child for understanding about tolerance and human right. Multicultural education is needed by the education in the world today, especially for early childhood. With giving on earlier multicultural education make children to learning interact and accept differences in the life.

The implementation of multicultural education will happen if all component in education (family, school, and community) working synergistic.

Hopefully, by awarding an implanting genuine of multicultural education the children be expected to grow into a society and can live in peace without seeing or compare the differences.

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7 REFERENCES

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