

Cultural Diversity Profile and the Values of Bhinneka (Diversity) in Multicultural Education of Elementary School

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Abstract: This study aims to determine the profile of cultural diversity in elementary schools and the diversity of values that need to be developed in multicultural education in elementary schools. The design of this study was survey research. The subjects of this research were 50 school personnel involving principals, teachers and administration staffs in Malang City and Pasuruan Districts. The research instrument used was semi open questionnaire. Data analysis techniques used in this study was descriptive analysis techniques. The results show that cultural diversity at the elementary level encompasses religious diversity, ethnic diversity, diversity of mind-sets and behaviours, and the diversity of socioeconomic status. The diversity values that need to be developed in the multicultural education in the elementary school include the diversity aspect of religious, ethnic, geographical, customs and language diversity; and diversity attitudes that include mutual respect, avoiding discrimination, justice, cooperation and compassion.

1 INTRODUCTION

The diversity of Indonesian can be seen from the aspect of regional condition and socio-cultural aspects. According to the social culture condition, it is seen that the people of Indonesia are composed by various differences, whether religious, ethnic, racial, language and cultural differences. Such socio-cultural conditions tend to create conflict among the life of the Indonesian. The fact also shows that in the life of the Indonesian people there are frequent conflicts between groups of people who are motivated by these differences.

Cultural diversity of Indonesia is beneficial as a source of knowledge for the local community and global society, as a nation identity within international relationship, as an element to encourage a tolerance, unity, and nationalism. Therefore, as the young generation, it is important to understand the diversity as the potency of Indonesia instead of being a reason of conflict.

These days, news in both television and printed-media expose a numerous cases of conflict. For instance, a conflict issues in Lampung, conflict between different religions followers, between different ethnic and race, and etc. In addition, a conflict in Jakarta election which was full of racial

and religion discrimination. These recent conflicts are due to the limited awareness of Indonesian regarding cultural diversity. Moreover, certain group of people think that their group is better than the other. To reduce the conflict and create a harmony social living within society, it urgently needs a solution. To reduce horizontal conflict occurring in society, several countries have made an attempt such as fostering the society by providing peace, human right, civics, and multicultural education (Salomon and Cairns, 2010; Fontana, 2016). Hence, considering the above-mentioned issue in Indonesia, it requires to develop multicultural education within Indonesian education system from elementary school to tertiary education.

Conflict that might be happened within elementary school students related to the diversity issue basically can be prevented. Conflict happens due to wrong perception regarding diversity issue which is existed in the surrounding environment of individual and limited of positive role within the environment (Winkel, 2009). Wrong perception can be clarified by providing a counter information. It is expected in the future, counter information can change students' perception and behaviour. Therefore, it requires an appropriate means to counter the information and systematic plan through the development of multicultural education which take

into account elementary school students characteristics.

Multicultural education is important to be developed in the early age of children, especially starting from elementary school. Elementary education is the foundation for the establishment of all values necessary for social life. Elementary school-age students are at a level of development that allows them to receive as much information and behavioural models as possible, both positive and negative. It is expected that the community environment can provide information and behavioural models that are positive for the development of children. Awareness of the diversity of the Indonesian cannot be developed instantly instead, it needs continuous attempt. Therefore, it is important to provide multicultural education from an early age, in elementary school, to encourage the awareness of the importance of diversity that exists in our country.

Previous research findings reveal the importance of systemic attempt to teach children from diverse cultural backgrounds and establish collaboration between schools, families and communities (Cousik, 2015). Further, the results of the study confirms the need for a model of multicultural education designed which is adjusted with the characteristics of elementary school students. The developed multicultural education needs to be designed that involves the role of the family and the community. The importance of family and community involvement in multicultural education is essential to create a continuous learning process within family, school and community environments. In addition, in the designed multicultural education, the school has an obligation to improve teachers' knowledge and pedagogic skills in the practice of teaching students from diverse cultural backgrounds. The quality of teachers in multicultural education affects the students' sensitivity in accepting the cultural diversity around them.

Multicultural education will help students recognize the cultural diversity around them and establish the awareness of cultural diversity. Jackson et.al (2006) research findings suggest that when children are given the opportunity to interact with peers from diverse cultural backgrounds, they tend to be less biased. The findings of this research provide the basis for this research to create a profile of cultural diversity in elementary schools as well as to identify the values of diversity that need to be developed in multicultural education in elementary schools.

2 METHOD

The design of this present research is a survey research. Survey research was used to reveal the the cultural diversity condition within elementary school and also the values of bhinneka (diversity) which is important to be developed in multicultural education of elementary school. The subject of this research involved 50 personnel of elementary school around Malang City and Pasuruan Regency. It consisted of head of school, teacher, and administration staffs. This research employed descriptive analysis technique. The instrument of data collection used semi-open questionnaire. The data were then analysed descriptively with the percentage calculation.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Cultural diversity profiles in elementary schools obtained from this study include: conditions of cultural diversity in elementary schools, students' perceptions of cultural diversity, attempt taken by schools to introduce cultural diversity, constraints faced in the attempt to introduce cultural diversity, and the values of diversity that need to be developed in multicultural education of elementary school. The results of the five aspects achieved in this study are described as follows.

Cultural diversity profiles in elementary schools include: 1) conditions of cultural diversity in elementary schools, 2) students' perceptions of cultural diversity, and 3) constraints faced in the attempt to introduce cultural diversity. According to the 50 respondents, 62% of the respondents stated that there is a diversity of religion, ethnicity, culture and socioeconomic status in the background of students. While 36% of respondents reported that the background of students tends to come from identical religion, race, culture and socioeconomic status and 2% of the respondents reported that they did not know the diversity of student background

In terms of students' responses to cultural diversity in schools, from 50 respondents, 80% of the respondents revealed that students were able to accept cultural differences between themselves and their friends, while 20% of respondents revealed that cultural differences were one of the causes of the emergence of problems among students. Relating to the problems faced by students regarding cultural diversity, 42% of the respondents revealed that students from minority cultures have difficulty in adjusting to their peers, 30% of the respondents reported that there are no problems arising on

students related to cultural diversity, and 22% of students from culture minorities often become victims of their peers jokes.

The perception of school personnel regarding the cultural diversity includes: 1) the understanding of school personnel regarding the cultural diversity, 2) the importance of introducing cultural diversity among students, and 3) the degree of school personnel regarding their own culture and student's culture understanding. According to the respondents answer during the survey, it was obtained that most of the school personnel, equal to 90%, admitted that the cultural diversity is a common phenomenon. They, additionally, confirmed that they respect the differences. However, 6% of the respondents remained difficult to accept and admit cultural diversity within their surrounding and required to take an effort to accept cultural diversity. Meanwhile, 4% of the respondents are even difficult to accept cultural diversity and consider that their culture is the best one.

According to the respondents response analysis, it was obtained the data regarding the importance of cultural diversity among students which includes: 70% of the respondents affirmed that it is important to introduce cultural diversity in order to encourage the acceptance and respect within students, 34% of the respondents reported that it is important to create a harmony and positive environment surround the students, 20% of the respondents confirmed that conducive school environment importantly contribute to learning process, and 6% of the respondents claimed that it is important to introduce cultural diversity for avoiding horizontal conflict among students due to inability to accept other cultures.

According to the respondent's response analysis, it was obtained the understanding of school personnel about their own culture and student's culture. Based on 54% of the respondents response, they understood well their own culture and students culture, 42% of the respondents understood well their own culture but not the culture of students, meanwhile 4% of the respondents did not understand both their own culture and students culture.

This research also identifies school attempts to introduce cultural diversity to students which include: 1) the attempt taken by school personnel in introducing cultural diversity to students, 2) the attempt of school in introducing local culture in school activities, and 3) the involvement of parents and local community in introducing cultural diversity to students. According to the respondents' response analysis, it was obtained the attempts to introduce cultural diversity to students taken by school. Based

on 70% of respondents' response, they introduced cultural diversity through the celebration of religious feast days and folktale about the uniqueness of each region. Based on 40% of the respondents' response, they expressed positive attitude and behaviour regarding cultural diversity, 30% of the respondents chose to integrate cultural diversity in the learning process, 28% of the respondents encouraged cultural diversity by blending the students with different culture in group work learning. Meanwhile, 14% of the respondents avoided discrimination during the interaction with students.

The results of the respondents' analysis found that the attempt of schools to introduce local culture in school activities include: integrating local cultural content in daily learning (80%), introducing local culture to students through non-curricular activities (18%, however, the rest have not paid attention to local culture (6%). While the school attempt in involving parents and the community in introducing cultural diversity to the students by: involving parents and communities in the religious and national celebrations (60%), inviting parents in an attempt to report student progress as well as problems faced by students related to cultural diversity (34%), inviting community leaders to introduce cultural diversity to students (18%), however the rest have not involved parents and communities in an attempt to introduce cultural diversity to students (8%).

Moreover, according to the respondents response, several obstacles and issues were found during the activity in introducing cultural diversity such as: parents and local community have limited awareness regarding the importance of cultural diversity (36%), school policy still do not reflect the attempt to respect cultural diversity (24%), school personnel have limited awareness regarding the importance of cultural diversity (22%), media and learning source related to cultural diversity are limited (18%), the cultural diversity in Indonesia is abundant, so the introducing is only in general overview (8%), individual behaviour of school personnel do not completely reflect the respect on cultural diversity (6%), and the time to introduce cultural diversity to students is limited (4%).

Additionally, the values of *bhineka* (diversity) which are important to be encouraged within multicultural education of elementary school include: 1) the aspect of diversity and 2) the attitude related to diversity. According to the respondents' response, it was obtained several aspects of diversity which are required to be fostered to students: religion diversity (62%), ethnic diversity (44%), geographical diversity (46%), cultural diversity (62%), and language

diversity (58%). As for attitude related to diversity, it is important to encourage: respect (100%), avoiding attitude (70%), fairness (80%), cooperative (60%), and compassion (64%).

The results showed the background of elementary school students come from diverse cultural backgrounds. Cultural diversity that exist in elementary school, among others, religious diversity, culture, ethnicity, to socio-economic status. The diverse cultural background of these elementary school students is a positive element for introducing and cultivating an awareness of cultural diversity in everyday life from an early age. Although it does not close the possibility of conflict among students due to cultural diversity.

Cultural diversity should be introduced to elementary school students so that students have an understanding that cultural diversity is a unifying factor of community life and do not serve as a cause of conflict. This is consistent with what revealed by Banks & Banks (2010) that multicultural, where social structure is not identical, identity and culture are different but coexist, differences are not regarded as conflict but are seen as sources of welfare that provide change for society. The introduction of cultural diversity from an early age to primary school age through multicultural education will make it easier to facilitate the growing awareness of cultural diversity embodied in attitudes tolerant of cultural diversity. Awareness of cultural diversity is one of the important factors to prevent social conflict in the community. This is in line with the findings of Ameny-Dixon (2004) which reveal that multicultural education increases productivity, overcomes prejudices, develops interpersonal communication, creates cultural awareness, and prevents social conflict.

In the context of cultural diversity in the school environment, will be encountered culture of the majority and culture of a minority. The position of the culture will certainly affect the individual psychology, particularly those who occupy the position of minority culture. The results showed that students from minority cultures tend to have difficulty adjusting to the social environment in school. The difficulty of adjusting for minority students will tend to impact on other aspects of student life, especially academic achievement in schools. This condition must be anticipated by all parties, especially schools. Schools should be able to guarantee and facilitate all of the students, especially minority students, to be able to adjust as well as possible to the school environment without neglecting their academic achievement. Zirkel (2008) states that multicultural

education can improve student academic achievement. Individuals will naturally succeed in educational systems which can facilitate them to discover or explore themselves. Zirkel's research reveals that a student who obtains a chance to express him or herself in his or her mother language will improve his or her academic performance and express it better. From the exposure, it shows the importance of schools to create schools that appreciate cultural diversity in order to facilitate optimal growth of all students through multicultural education.

To be able to facilitate students in order to accept the diversity of cultures and be capable of adapting to the school environment, an active role is required from school and all school personnel. The active role of all school personnel will determine the success or failure of multicultural education in schools. The teacher's positive attitude toward multicultural education has an important role to play in harmony social living; to be peaceful and respectful; to accept all identities with their respective cultural identity uniqueness (Yilmaz, 2016). The active role of school personnel in creating a culture-friendly school begins with how they perceive cultural diversity. The results show that most school personnel acknowledge and realize that cultural diversity is a common phenomenon and there is need for mutual respect for cultural diversity. The results also show that most school personnel recognize the culture they possess and the culture of their students. A good introduction to one's own culture and the culture of others is one of the factors supporting the growth of tolerance in a diverse society.

Characteristics of education in primary schools also requires school personnel, especially teachers, to recognize the background of each student. The recognition of the characteristics and background of elementary school students is very important because the elementary school level is the basis for the individual behaviour construction. In addition, the needs of elementary school students to be paid attention is very high and it requires a figure who can establish good personal close relationship to the students. Attitudes and behaviour of teachers directly affect students and can cause students to show positive and negative behaviours and attitudes both in school and community settings. In order for students to have awareness and apply their multicultural education, students should be given school and educational environments that have equal opportunity regardless of their race, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, cultural background, socio-cultural status, and sexual orientation. Multicultural schools are able to create social justice, create equal opportunities in

education, recognize cultures and be unbiased about students, reflect cultural influences on the educational environment, and organize school programs in accordance with multicultural principles and is accepted into the dimensions of multicultural education (Gay and Howard, 2000; Ameny-Dixon, 2004; Banks and Banks, 2010). Thus, to realize the aforementioned goals, it requires a great teacher who can fulfill the role.

To create a cultural diversity-friendly school, it requires a real attempt to introduce and encourage the awareness regarding cultural diversity to all students. Some important attempts have been made by school such as integrating cultural diversity into curricular and non-curricular activities, showcasing a cultural diversity-friendly attitude and behaviour, local culture introduction, and involving parents and local community. What have been taken by school are in line with the sustainable education development in the family, social, and school context. Multicultural education will not achieve its goal if it only relies on school since it requires an active role from all parties related to students development. This is in line with the opinion of Banks & Banks (2010), stating that multiculturalism consists of dimensions of content integration, knowledge construction, bias reduction, pedagogical equity, and empowerment of school culture and social structure. Multicultural education programs in schools are expected to be able to better serve their parents and communities in order to increase their active involvement in multicultural education programs, such as policy formulation, involvement in programs and tangible contributions to the implementation of multicultural school curricula (Nganga, 2014).

It is normal that during the process in introducing cultural diversity to students, schools will encounter several obstacles. According to the results, the obstacles encountered by school are: school policies which are not completely support, limited participation of parents and local community involvement, limited time allocation in school to introduce cultural diversity, and school personnel attitude and behaviour which are not completely aware upon cultural diversity. Furthermore, the results affirm that school personnel attitude, particularly school principal significantly influences school policies. The principal, as a school leader, will be seen as a central figure in the socio-cultural context (Sullivan, 2013) throughout the school development process. Principals who pay attention to the importance of cultural diversity will be able to create school policies that care about cultural diversity. The results of this study are in line with Lizotte (2013) and

Moos (2013) findings, which indicate that the Principal's role in school development is complex, multi-dimensional, and multi-layered. The principal must show the best performance to provide better education to the students; try to meet the expectations of stakeholders in improving teaching and learning, improving school infrastructure, motivating teachers and serving parents of students.

School policy which provide a room for being care of cultural diversity could encourage and motivate the entire school personnel, particularly teacher to recognize and become aware of the importance of cultural diversity. Gay (2000) reveals that culturally responsive teacher will be aware of the symbolic power of curriculum as instructional instrument and will use it to help them communicate, deliver important information, values, and action regarding cultural and ethnical diversity to students. While, culturally responsive school program will understand that communication style of different ethnic groups reflects culturally loaded values and learning (Nieto, 2002; Derman-Sparks and Edwards, 2010).

This research formulates multicultural education model in elementary school which is loaded with *bhinneka* (diversity) values. The developed multicultural education model in elementary school is expected to be able to assist school in generating cultural diversity-friendly school. The *bhinneka* (diversity) values intended are the aspects of the diversity which are essential to be delivered to students and the attitude related to diversity should be encouraged to students. The results of the study show that the aspects of diversity which are essential to be delivered to elementary school students are religious, ethnic, geographic, costumes, and language diversity. These values are compatible with the real condition of Indonesia which is multicultural. As for attitude related to diversity, it is important to encourage respect, avoiding attitude, fairness, cooperative, and compassion. These attitudes should be ideally existed within the character of individual thus it can be concluded that multicultural education is closely related with character education.

4 CONCLUSIONS

This research concludes that 1) the cultural diversity in elementary school are religious, race, thinking pattern, socio-economic status and behaviour diversity. 2) Elementary school students have begun to understand cultural diversity in their daily life and its application example. 3) All school personnel

already understand the importance of cultural diversity and the importance of multicultural education to introduce and foster an awareness of cultural diversity for elementary students. 4) The diversity values need to be developed in the multicultural educational model in the elementary school include aspects of diversity, namely religious, ethnic, geographical, religious and language diversity; and diversity attitudes that include mutual respect, avoiding discrimination, justice, cooperation and compassion. Suggestions proposed from the results of this study are 1) School personnel: from the results of research indicates that elementary students have a demanding need for the importance of awareness of cultural diversity in everyday life, it is better that all school personnel can become a model of cultural diversity for students and able to develop a multicultural education strategy for elementary students, which is certainly adjusted to their characteristics. 2) School: it is expected that school principal as policy maker to realize cultural diversity-friendly school through school policies which can facilitate the growth of student's awareness upon cultural diversity.

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