

Unifying the Socio-Cultural Differences Among Students in Primary School Education

Santi Susanti, Kismiyati Elkarimah and Fitri Perdana
Fakultas Ilmu Komunikasi, Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung, Indonesia
santisusanti2202@gmail.com

Keywords: Socio-cultural Difference, Primary School Education, Interactive Method, Togetherness, Equality.

Abstract: School is the right institution for leading the differences among primary students into unity. Students are guided and directed to appreciate the differences among them to create a harmonious life, away from conflict. The principle of togetherness and equality among students, embedded in an entrepreneurship-based school in Garut, SD Bestari Utami. This school provides equal opportunity to every child in Garut to get quality education without considering their social and cultural background. This study aims to describe the pattern of education at SD Bestari Utami, which educates students to get quality education with the principle of respect for differences and create togetherness based on local wisdom of Sundanese culture. This research uses qualitative-phenomenology method to reveal the experience the school managers in educating their students to be individuals with good characters such as intelligent, active, moral, and respect differences. In-depth interview, observation and literature study used to collecting data. The results showed that interactive teaching method used to build equality and togetherness among students at SD Bestari Utami. Teachers always encourage their students to involve actively in the learning process. In the classroom, teachers creatively provide teaching materials to encourage children to interact with each other. Togetherness is accustomed in every opportunity during study and during rest. Periodically, teachers provide learning programs to work within groups. The curriculum of Sundanese art is also applied as a binder of togetherness. Through art performances, all students participated without exception. The conclusion of this study is that schools have an important role in embedding togetherness and equality to their students. The right curriculum and methods, as well as creative and big hearted teachers, are a supportive force in building togetherness and equality to enhance quality in character education for students from different social and cultural backgrounds.

1 INTRODUCTION

God created human beings into different nations to get to know each other, to help and to respect each other. Difference is the colours of life as an element that reinforces the achievement of common goals. The Indonesian nation, consist of various ethnicities spread across various regions of the archipelago, has the motto of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), which signifies how diverse the nation of Indonesia as a unity, whose territory extends from Sabang to Merauke.

Diversity can be a potential support for the formation of a large and strong Indonesian nation if the elements of diversity are used as treasure that must be maintained, not as a difference that can trigger interethnic conflict in this archipelago. The similarity of mind and feeling as a nation that must

unite becomes crucial to the formation of a strong Indonesian nation rather than promoting primordialism over other ethnicities.

Schools are the right institutions to train the unification of differences among students. Through school, the students are guided and directed to be a figure who respects the differences between them so as to create a harmonious life, away from the conflict.

Character education is one effort to form a child into a figure who has a good character. Character education is an effort to develop and educate one's character, namely psychology, morality and character to be better. The cultivation of these character values includes the components of knowledge, consciousness or willingness and not to carry out those values (Rosala, 2016)

One school in Garut, SD Bestari Utami implements character education based on togetherness and equality for students. Students are directed to become an individual who can appreciate each other without questioning their background. SD Bestari Utami strives to produce students who have intelligent, active, moral character and respect differences.

One effort to build character education of students in elementary school studied by Rosala (2016). His study emphasizes the importance of moral values embedded in the learning of art and culture in elementary school through the art of dance to build human character forming civilized and prosperous society. The purpose of this article is to gain an understanding of the character education theory contained in the local wisdom of dance art in elementary school institutions.

The attempts to build the character of students in elementary school were studied by Supraptiningrum and Agustini (2015) in one school in Nganjuk. The results showed that the effort to embed the character in the students was done by habituation through various activities, namely: (1) routine activities conducted by students continuously and consistently; (2) spontaneous activity by the students on the spot; (3) exemplary behaviour, attitudes of teachers, education personnel, and students in providing examples through good actions and (4) conditioning by creating conditions that support the implementation of character education.

Compared to previous studies and studies, the research at SD Bestari Utami is a combination of character education and cultural arts education to create individuals who have the character of appreciating differences and applying equality in interacting with other students at SD Bestari Utami. In addition, the students observed in this study were heterogeneous students, composed of ethnic Chinese and Sundanese students, who at the beginning of entry, had different views of their peers. Togetherness and equality are the cornerstones of education in this school.

This study aims to explore the learning methods implemented by SD Bestari Utami to create a harmonious togetherness among students consisting of two ethnic groups, Chinese and Sundanese. The scope of this study is limited to learning activities at SD Bestari Utami which describes the way of learning and the effort to direct the formation of togetherness among the students.

2 RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses qualitative phenomenology method to express the experience of SD Bestari Utami elementary school managers in applying quality equity based education to realize togetherness as one Indonesia among its students. Understanding of equivalence-based education is delivered from the point of view of the informant who experienced it. There is no statistical calculation in this qualitative research. Statistical data is only a complement, not the main data as in quantitative research.

The main data of this study were obtained through in-depth interviews and observations and secondary data obtained through documents relate to the research theme.

Interviews were conducted to 8 informants, consisting of principals and vice principals, 6 teachers / guardians 1st through 6th grade. Data collected included background of school establishment, curriculum, learning pattern, and learning activities conducted at SD Bestari Utami.

Observations were made to supplement the data obtained through in-depth interviews. Observations were made to observe, among other things, the school environment, either outside the classroom, or in the classroom; learning activities in the classroom and classroom that lead students to build togetherness.

Documentation is used as supporting data in this research. Documentation is collected in clippings in magazines, photographs and articles on the internet related to this research.

Collected data is processed using qualitative data analysis techniques from Miles and Huberman (1992) through the process of reduction, data presentation and verification. The process of reduction is done by selecting and sorting the data relevant to the research focus. Interview results are transcribed and grouped into themes appropriate to the research objectives. The results of the grouping of data are then presented in the form of a descriptive narrative that describes the focus of research. The data presented is then inferred inductively. Verification is done by reviewing the data by comparing the results of interviews with observations and secondary data sources obtained. When the data were found to be the same, the researcher assumed the data was appropriate. In this study, we also used data checking through the triangulation of place and time, which is asking the same question at different place and time to the

research subject. When the answer was the same the data is appropriate.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 School Based on Togetherness and Equality

The school was founded by an educator in Garut, Christanti Gomulia, a Chinese descendant who feels comfortable with the absence of differentiation of treatment from the Sundanese to his family while living in his current environment. Establishment of Bestari Utami School is a manifestation of the desire of its founder to restore Indonesian education to its place that is education for all without differentiating.

The Bestari Utami School was built with the ultimate goal of providing education to any child willing without discriminating their social, economic, racial, religious and cultural background. All students have the opportunity to get the same educational rights without being treated differently while in school.

3.2 Interactive Learning Method

The process of character education to students at this time is more appropriate to use learning model based on social interaction and transaction. This social interaction learning model is implemented based on the following principles:

- Involve students actively in learning;
- Basing on individual differences;
- Link theory with practice;
- Develop communication and cooperation in learning;
- Increase the courage of students in taking risks and learning from mistakes;
- Improve learning while doing and playing;
- Adjust the lessons with the level of cognitive development that is still at the level of concrete operation.

Interactive learning is a special form of school learning, from the necessity of keeping up with the transformation in the socio-human activity. These are methods that help students search, research, find the knowledge they are about to learn, discovering themselves solution to the problems, processing knowledge, in other words they teach the student how to learn. One of the advantages of these interactive methods is that they can be used both in

learning and evaluation. The impact of using active methods as follows:

- It motivates students to think boldly, without being discouraged by other people's opinions;
- Students participate with pleasure in such activities;
- They are confident in their own forces.

Teachers are the spearhead of formal education, which play a main role in building the students' character. Thus, teachers have to be professional. Law No.14 year 2005 about teachers and lecturers mentioned four competencies must be had for teachers: personality competence, social competence, pedagogical competence, and academic competence. According to Hidayatullah (2010), teachers should be kind-hearted, meaning that teachers should have a big heart and be relieved and patient in dealing with the students. The first thing to do by teachers is knocking and touching the student's heart. In teaching, teachers should use their hearts and be kind with the students.

Interactive learning method is a method applied in education at SD Bestari Utami as part of the formation of equality among students. In the process of learning, teachers provide materials that train creative children, and dare to express opinions and appear to present their work. Teachers are required to be creative in providing learning materials to their students. They patiently guide their students in the learning process.

3.3 Sundanese Art and Culture Curriculum

Being in the Sundanese community in Garut, Christanti not forget the cultural roots where he grew up, the Sundanese culture. He wanted to have a mix between Chinese children and Sundanese children in his school. Children to have a character as an individual who appreciates the local cultural arts.

To realize its appreciation toward Sundanese society, the composition of students at Bestari Utami is determined by 70 percent of Sundanese children and 30 percent of children of Chinese descent. Determination of this composition is done with the intention that there is mixing between children of two different ethnicities. If the composition is not regulated, it is feared there is an imbalance in interacting in school.

Davidson et al. (2007) claimed that there is the role of character in all school achievement, whether curricular or non-curricular activities. The study was

conducted in 24 good schools in the US. The findings show that characters consist of two big parts: performance character and moral character. Performance character involves the whole values which enable people to actualize their potentials in the classroom or work place.

The local culture-based education of Sundanese is an important educational process in the schooling system in West Java, so that students still recognize and appreciate the native culture that is very close to them. In relation to ethnic education in the education process at school, Banks describes that in the early stages of the students need to be introduced first with the cultural values before the cultural values outside the community. At the next stage, the new child is introduced to the global cultural value order. This process is necessary so that the younger generation will not lose their cultural identity when making contact with people outside their ethnic group. Incorporating Sundanese culture and art into the curriculum, not as an extracurricular activity, is a step taken by schools to teach children together to love Sundanese culture that is very close to them.

According to Parsons (1959), education is a process of socialization within each individual that allows the development of a sense of responsibility and various skills (commitment and capacities). These developments are necessary in carrying out all human social roles during their life on earth.

It cannot be denied that nowadays, children prefer foreign culture rather than local culture. The granting of Sundanese arts and culture education is an effort to balance the knowledge of the students so as not to escape the fire.

Learning art and culture is applied to gamelan music, which consists of various musical instruments. Gamelan play is chosen to train the sensitivity of taste and cooperation between players, in order to produce good music heard, although played by many children (see Figure 1).

The Sundanese art and art curriculum is also applied to the musical performances, which is followed by all elementary school students of Bestari Utami. The drama titled "Kabayan City Boy" presents Sundanese stories with a dialogue packed in English with a Sundanese accent. It happened in 2011. All children are involved, without exception. They play together regardless of the background of their friends.



Figure 1: Fourth grade students playing gamelan.

Togetherness and tolerance became the main emphasis in education at Bestari Utami. Students are directed to build togetherness and tolerance to his friends. Togetherness is a student strategy developed through games and rewards of togetherness. Grace is a learning strategy developed through meaningful statements, games to pay attention to something (scenery), games to pay attention to others.

Togetherness in education at Bestari Utami School, manifested among others in the learning process, in the form of games, working on projects together, eating together during breaks and bans bullying friends.

To build togetherness and equality among students, the process of learning in the classroom is done by removing the barriers of bench and desk bench. Students learn by sitting on the floor grounded rubber carpet foam. The chair is used as the base for writing.

Play is learning; basically every child needs to play in their life. In any learning need to play still exist. Therefore, while studying, Bestari Utami School implements the game as one of the learning methods for its students. Through the game, children are trained to work with their peers in solving one problem. They are also required to be able to maintain coordination between the body and mind in answering the questions given through the game.

Joint task projects; Periodically, Bestari Utami's students are given the task of doing project tasks that must be done in groups. The goal is to train the cooperation between students, in doing their duties.

Eat together at rest; to establish cooperation at every opportunity, the school requires students to eat together at rest. The first to sixth grade students gather in one open space for their lunch from home while interacting with their friends (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: All students gather round to eat at rest.

Prohibit bullying; to stay together, schools apply rules that prohibit children from intimidating other students. The goal is to maintain harmony togetherness in school. Rules about no bullying threat installed in each class. If rules are disobeyed, there are sanctions that have been included in the rules (see figure 3 for class rules).



Figure 3: All students gather round to eat at rest.

Efforts are made by schools to stay together among students. From the beginning, it instilled the importance of cooperation and togetherness among them.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The learning pattern applied at SD Bestari Utami is an integrated program that directs students to respect each other's differences, regardless of their socio-cultural background. When at school, they have become a unit of elementary school children Bestari Utami, who must obey the rules set by the school. This condition is indeed exhausting. However, the dedication to deliver high quality education to students encourages teachers to apply the curriculum with all their hearts with high creativity to encourage

students to be a generation that values differences, loves togetherness and not forgets the cultural roots they attend, which is Sundanese culture. Togetherness in learning in school is in line with one of the pillars of education in UNESCO (1996) that is learning to live together and live with others.

REFERENCES

- Davidson, M., Lickona, T., Khmelkov, V., 2007. *Smart and good schools*. Education Week.
- Hidayatullah, M. F., 2010. *True teacher: Building strong and intelligent human beings*. Surakarta: Yuma Pustaka.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A.M., 1992. *Analisa Data Kualitatif*. Bandung, Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Parsons, T., 1959. The School Class as Social System: Some of Its Functions in American Society. In Ballantine, J. H., (Ed). *Schools and Society: A Reader in Education and Sociology*. California, Mayfield.
- Rosala, D., 2016. Pembelajaran Seni Budaya Berbasis Kearifan Lokal dalam Upaya Membangun Pendidikan Karakter Siswa Di Sekolah Dasar. *Ritme*, 2(1).
- Suprptiningrum, S., Agustini, A., 2015. Membangun Karakter Siswa Melalui Budaya Sekolah Di Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*, 2.
- UNESCO., 1996. *Treasure Within*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing