# Teacher's Perception about the Urgency and Benefits of Multicultural Education for Establishment of Student Tolerance Attitude

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*Abstract*—Primordial issue, especially about religious differences, is one of the latent problems in the life of the nation and state in Indonesia. This can be seen from social media content dominated by hate speech and hoax, dominated by primordial issue content and identity politics. So it is the right time for multicultural education intensively to socialized the students, and conducted training to teacher-related content and learning model of multicultural education. The results of this study indicated that teachers of the elementary school and Islamic elementary school had positive perceptions of multicultural education because it is believed will be able to spread tolerant attitude and behavior to all students.

*Keywords—multicultural education, teacher perception*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Intolerance symptoms in urban communities in Indonesia increasingly strengthened at least that happened in various social media in the form of false news (hoax), hate speech, agitation, and slander. From the observation result, it is known that hate speech content is mostly dominated by religious-based primordialism issue.

According to existing empirical data, the phenomenon intolerance symptom that occurs in social media is parallel with the results of some national survey and research. The most recent data is a national survey conducted by Development Centre of Islamic and Community of the State Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta found that 67.78% of students and 67.08% of teachers and lecturers refused if a non-Muslim serve as a head of regions (PPIM, 2017).

Some surveys have been conducted by government agencies and non-governmental organization related to tolerance and community mutual cooperation (LIPI, 2015, Gus Durian, 2014, Setara Institute, 2011, 2012) obtained that the tolerance of urban communities in Indonesia has decreased. There are some symptoms include: 1) dislike to be close to other people of different ethnic or religious, 2) Forbid their families to marry other people of different

ethnic let alone religion, 3) strengthening the symptoms of radicalism among students 4) 85 % among students will be a terrorists, 5) an increase in the level of religious sensitivity so susceptible to frictions between religious communities.

The growing spirit of intolerance in its time will disrupt the implementation of Pancasila democratic values. Gutmann[1] stated that group identity can be a barrier to the realization of democratic values as well as the will to facilitate democratic values [2]. Ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity are the characteristic of the Indonesian nation and symbolized by the slogan of Bhineka Tunggal Ika (unity in diversity).

Multicultural is a new discourse of society in regulating the life of nation and state as a substitute for racist and elitist monoculture discourse. [3] Giddens also stated multiculturalism is a new symptom marking the globalization era. In other words, multiculturalism cannot be separated from globalization. [4] Added multiculturalism has advantages compared to monoculture especially in terms of equality and justice. This opinion concurs with Hanurawan and Waterworth which showed that the management of social life in a multicultural society demanded recognition of the equal rights and position of each social component. [5]

Meanwhile, Duffy stated that multicultural society has three main characteristics: diversity, position equality, and interaction through role division and responsibilities.[6] McLean said that multicultural society has at least some basic elements: the emergence of diversity; there is at least interaction and sharing among community members; access equality to economic resources and education for all cultural groups; ensuring the civil and political rights of community members; diverse cultural values; and a shared commitment to a nation. [7]

A principle of tolerance and mutual respect between the components of nationality are needed to keep the survival of a nation and accept the difference as reality (multicultural awareness). [5] Curtis stated that multicultural awareness is

one's consciousness that he lives in a society whose members are very diverse in ethnic, religious, cultural, occupational, socioeconomic and others. [8] The goal of social justice which rooted in a democracy is a necessity in a multicultural society. Rooting in the principles of democracy then multicultural awareness needs to be socialized to every individual in the social community.

It is necessary to have the multicultural education to socialize multicultural awareness to all social components. Through multicultural education for students in Islamic elementary school as a religious-based school is expected will be a society that has knowledge and understanding and insight about what it are multiculturalism and the importance of these principles in life together. The goal of the students after getting knowledge, it will generate awareness and finally apply this multiculturalism awareness in their social life. In the language of Louis Gates Jr stated: "There is no tolerance without respect - and there is no respect without knowledge".[8]

Elementary school and Islamic elementary school students are generally between 7-12 years old, from the perspective of citizenship they are categorized as young citizens, with general characteristics have not understood their rights and status as citizens [4]. At the international level, discussions on the status of young citizen as democratic citizenship have been a great concern to policy-makers, politicians and researchers from various countries in the world[9][10][11].

Thus young citizens play an important role in actualizing democratic values in their lives. Democratic values such as attitudes and behaviors that nuance respect for others, caring, honest, uphold the diversity of the nation and obey the rules are needed to be implemented. To build awareness as citizens of democracy then citizenship education is required for young citizens. Associated with the formation of tolerant attitudes toward diversity, the material that can be integrated into civic education is the material of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is a flow of diversity, which views everything as plural. The form of multiculturalism in education is known as multicultural education

An important part of multicultural education is how grow the sensitivity of Islamic elementary school students to the plural society's cultural wealth. This is in line with Bennet which stated that the basic assumption of multicultural education is how diverse ethnic groups can determine their own indigenous culture, and at the same time can be multicultural. [6] In other words people can learn about alternatives to perceive, behave, and evaluate other groups so that they can adapt to the macro culture aspects needed for the welfare of society, without reducing acceptance of their own original ethnicity.

By setting the multiethnic and multicultural United States society, Martorella expressed the importance of multicultural education. Explained multicultural education has a very significant meaning for our nation because of the wealth and mixture of races and ethnic groups in our society. [12] Multicultural education will be related with intersecting of the main themes in our history and our national commitment to equitably of each citizen.

Therefore the main issues in multicultural education are: How can we demonstrate the wealth and uniqueness of our diversity and provide various perspectives that show the differences of existing groups, and at the same time emphasizing the importance of unity and unity to strengthen our political, economic and social condition? In this context, the unity and unity of society (as the final result of multicultural education) can act as a social capital for a nation.

More operationally Katz stated that there are four goals of multicultural education. [6] First, it provides a student learning experience that introduces critically and evaluation skills to against issues such as realism, participatory democracy and exism. Second, develop skills for value clarification, including studies to transmit latent values and manifest. Third, to examine the implication for strategic learning of Madrasah teachers with the dynamics of cultural diversity and Fourth, to review the variation of language and the variation of learning styles as the basis for the development of suitable learning strategy.

Meanwhile, Banks emphasized that efforts to support cultural pluralism and introduce multicultural education can be conducted by schools with breaking down the cultural pockets of students and broadening their cultural perspectives. [2] The added goal of multicultural education is to change the overall educational environment so able to promote the awards to other cultural groups and enable all cultural groups to get the similarity in obtaining educational opportunities.

Thus it can be stated that the focus and goal of multicultural education in Islamic school students is to strengthen the diversity bases of society. For multi-ethnic and multicultural societies such as Indonesia, certainly, the above objectives are constructive and positive because they will strengthen community cohesion and can eliminate social conflicts and riots, whether social conflicts that are religious, ethnic, racial or class conflict.

Based on the background mentioned above, the writer can formulate the following problems: 1) What is the opinion/perception of elementary school and Islamic elementary school teachers about the urgency of multicultural education for students? 2) What multicultural education approaches and strategies are appropriate to the characteristics of elementary and Islamic school students? 3) What kind of multicultural learning media is appropriate for Islamic elementary school student to improve national insight?

The objectives of this study are: 1) Want to describe the opinion/perception of elementary school teacher about the urgency of multicultural education for elementary and Islamic elementary school students. 2) Want to explain the kind of multicultural education approaches and strategies that suitable with the characteristics of elementary and Islamic elementary school students. 3) Want to describe and make a prototype of what multicultural learning media is appropriate for the children of Islamic elementary school to improve national insight.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

The population used in this study is elementary school and Islamic elementary school teachers in Sidoarjo regency, a number of 66 teachers spread in three districts, namely: Sidoarjo sub-district, Gedangan sub-district and Taman sub-district. In each of the districts, 22 teachers were taken which described the class variation of teacher grade 4, class 5, and class 6. Data collection techniques were used in questionnaires and interviews, and Focus Group Discussion. Data obtained was analyzed with quantitative descriptive and qualitative analysis.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Result

#### 1. Teacher and Principals Perceptions on Multicultural Education

Data about teacher and principals perceptions of elementary and Islamic elementary school are presented in matrix form from table 1 to table 3. The complete data is as follows:

TABLE1. TEACHER AND PRINCIPALS PERCEPTIONS ON MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

| No | Question description | Ever | Never |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Have you ever heard the term "multicultural education? | 0.72 | 0.28 |

From table 1 it is known that a total of 0.72 respondents have heard the term multicultural education, while 0.28 have not heard the term multicultural education.

Question number 2 is related to the information source of the respondent's knowledge on the term of multicultural education. Respondents' answers to the questions are presented in table 2 below.

TABLE 2. SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION TERMS

| No | Problem description | Media | Principal, Education Office, Colleague | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Information Source of the term Multicultural Education | 0.54 | 34.28 | 0.11 |

From data in Table 2, it can be seen that 0.54 respondents stated that they obtained information about the term of multicultural education from mass media, 0.34 from school principals, education offices, or colleagues and 0.11 from other sources. Other sources include (1) lectures, (2) seminars and workshops.

Information collected from respondents related with their perceptions of multilateral education is timing, whether it is time to give multicultural education subjects to the student of elementary and Islamic elementary school. Respondents' answers are presented in the following table:

TABLE 3. THE IMPORTANCE OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION FOR STUDENT

| No | Question description | Now | Not now |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Is it time now to give multicultural education subjects to the student of elementary and Islamic elementary school | 0.83 | 0.11 |

#### 2. Strategy and Approach of Multicultural Education Learning

In terms of strategies and approaches to multicultural education learning in elementary and Islamic elementary school, there are three strategies known: inclusive, exclusive, and case studies. Each of these three has a different designation, customized to the level of needs and maturity of thinking ability of the student.

Data on approaches and strategies of multicultural education learning according to the perceptions of teachers and principals are presented as in Table 4.

From Table 4 it is known 0.84 of respondent stated that inclusive is a suitable strategy. The reasons for the statement are: (1) not add the burden of student learning, (2) the result is more optimal and effective, efficient, practical for students, (3) inclusively has contained in natural science, citizenship education, and religious education subjects. While the reasons from those who agree on exclusive strategies and approaches are (1) multicultural education is specific so it is impossible to infuse into existing subjects, (2) to make it easier for students to understand the material and the values contained in multicultural education. While three respondents choose another answer which is a combination of inclusive and exclusive strategy, and two respondents did not answer.

TABLE 4. APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION LEARNING

| No | Description | Inclusive | Exclusive | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Approach and Strategy of learning for multicultural education in elementary and Islamic elementary school | 0.84 | 0.12 | 50.05 |

After the strategy and learning approaches are asked to the teacher and principal, then the question is developed towards the teaching materials of multicultural education. Data on multicultural education teaching materials are presented in table 5.

TABLE 5. MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION TEACHING MATERIALS

| No | Question description | Teaching equality (A) | Teaching uniqueness (B) | Not know (C) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | If multicultural education is already given to students then the teaching materials more to teach the equality between ethnic or uniqueness of each ethnic | 0.25 | 0.56 | 0.18 |

From Table 5 it is known that 0.25of respondents choose to teach the equality, and otherwise 0.56 of respondent choose to teach the uniqueness, and 0.12 of respondent did not answer. Thus according to the teacher's perception of multicultural education teaching materials more highlight the "uniqueness" of each cultural group.

The next question is devoted to Islamic elementary school teachers. The question asked is whether the values of multicultural education are not against the teachings of Islam? This question according to the research team is important to be asked to Islamic elementary school teachers, considering the widespread social phenomenon as reported by mass media about the action of social violence triggered by different interpretation about the teachings of religion (Islam). The data are presented in detail in table 6.

TABLE 6. ISLAM AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION VALUES

| No | Question description | Against | Not against | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Are the values of multicultural education not against Islamic teachings? | 0.07 | 0.53 | AB 3 (2.1%) K62 (44.2) |

From Table 6 it is known that 52.85% of Islamic elementary school teachers do not state that the values of multicultural education are not against Islamic teachings, only 1 person (0.007%) expresses against the Islamic teaching, who answer both (A and B) only 3 persons or 0.021% and who did not answer as much as 44.2%. The phenomenon that does not answer is quite interesting because according to us we need to be traced the further cause. The reasons of the respondent who agrees to answer are (1) respect for the different religions recommended by the Qur'an and Rasulullah, (2) Islam is a religion that "rahmatan lil alamin", (3) adds "ukuwah Islamiyah". While those who answered A and B combined argued that "the teacher should be careful in teaching the relationship between Islam and multicultural education because if not careful can confuse the two, and it is clearly wrong.

### 3. *Multicultural Education Learning Media*

In multicultural education learning activities clearly required the existence of study media/sources that serve as a tool for students to facilitate in understanding the concepts that in multicultural education. In relation to various types of study media/sources resources, questions about the media and what study media can be used as a source of student learning to learn multicultural education are asked to the respondents. Respondents' answers are described in the following table

TABLE 7. STUDY MEDIA AND SOURCE OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

| No | Kind of study media and source | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Teacher perceptions of the various of study media and sources of multicultural education: | |
| | a) Textbooks of multicultural education | 0.057 |
| | b) Images, photos, ethnic and various posters house of worship in Indonesia | 0.111 |
| | c) Food, clothing, weapons, musical instruments are | 0.07 |
| | d) Custom homes of each ethnic group | 0 |
| | e) A and B | 0.19 |
| | f) A and C | 0.07 |
| | g) A and D | 2.1 |
| | h) B and C | 2.1 |
| | i) A and B and D | 0.7 |
| | j) B,C,D | 0.40 |
| | k) C and D | 0.028 |
| | l) | 5 |
| | m) B,C,D | 0.375 |

From Table 7 it can be seen that most (0.40) teachers perceived that kind of study media and sources should be various either textbooks, pictures/photographs, posters, food, clothing, weapons, and local musical instruments, custom home. With the various kind of study media and sources are expected will facilitate in instilling a variety of concepts of multicultural education in students.

Furthermore, if study media and sources are associated with the values of multicultural education that will be instilled in students, the results can be seen in Table 8. According to data in Table 8, the values of multicultural education that need to be instilled in students include (a) the values of social tolerance and solidarity, (b) togetherness as a nation (the value of unity), (c) respect for diversity, uniqueness, and cultural differences, and (d) mutual cooperation.

While according to teachers the subjects can be inserted with multicultural education materials in Elementary and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level are (a) citizenship Education, (b) Social Sciences, (c) Islamic Religion, and (d) Indonesian language.

TABLE 8. MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION VALUES

| No | Kind of values instilled | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | a) Tolerance and solidarity | 0.17 |
| | b) Togetherness as a nation | 0.0714 |
| | c) Respect for diversity | - |
| | d) A and B | 0.21 |
| | e) A and C | 0.036 |
| | f) A,B,C | 0.38 |
| | g) B and C | 0.44 |
| | h) A,B,C,D | 0.29 |
| | i) Empty | 0.01 |
| | j) Other | 0.035 |

### B. *Discussion.*

Multicultural education is indispensable for Indonesia which is multi-ethnic and multi-religious because through multicultural education it will embody diversity values, acknowledge and respect differences, and try to accommodate these diversities for social life.

Social values that overemphasize unity and unity without being balanced by diversity and admit differences cannot be an effective solution when some regions of the country are hit by horizontal conflicts and social violence. So it is a time in the current reform era of multicultural, multicultural values serve as a counterweight of the values of unity and unity.

Based on the national curriculum in 2013 there is no multicultural education subject both at elementary and Islamic elementary school level. Therefore an effective strategy for incorporating multicultural values is through an inclusive strategy. Inclusive strategies are pursued by the inclusion of multicultural education materials in existing subjects, one of which is Pancasila and citizenship education and religious education. Through an inclusive strategy then it will be more profitable because it does not increase the burden of student learning. For multicultural education materials in elementary and Islamic elementary school more precisely if started by teaching the similarities between individuals, after the age of adolescents then the uniqueness of each individual is introduced.

## IV. CONCLUSION

From the results of research and discussion, it can be drawn a conclusion as follows. First, most elementary and Islamic elementary school teachers stated that they have heard the term of multicultural education. They get the information from mass media, Colleague, their participation in scientific forums or through their activities in lectures. Second, the implementation of multicultural education in elementary and Islamic elementary school will be better if implemented with inclusive approaches and strategies. Third, various study media and sources can be used as a learning resource for multicultural education such as textbooks, pictures/posters/photos, custom house miniatures, musical instruments, and traditional cooking. From the conclusions can be proposed the following suggestions: (a) study and research more in-depth with a more focus and longitudinal theme of multicultural education need to be conducted; (b) more adequate planning is needed if multicultural education will be implemented for elementary and Islamic elementary school; (c) community support in implementing multicultural education is important, both in terms of study source and the development of learning tools, and (d) it is necessary to think that multicultural education will serve as a local curriculum or extracurricular activities in for elementary and Islamic elementary school.

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