

# The Role of Teacher in Realizing Multicultural Education Practice in Citizenship Lessons in Elementary School

Yhulita Kumala Pramurdya<sup>1</sup>

Sebelas Maret University

yhuliak@student.uns.ac.id

## Abstract

*The purposes of this research is to find and explain: 1) The multicultural values possessed by students in elementary schools; and 2) The role of teachers in the practice of multicultural education in Citizenship Lessons in Elementary Schools. The research method used is descriptive qualitative methode, which is based on a case study at SD Negeri Luwang 01, Sukoharjo Regency as the main object of the research. The results are: 1) Students at SD Negeri Luwang 01 lack multicultural values, especially the value of respecting differences; and 2) Teachers at SD Negeri Luwang 01 should be able to contribute to practical multicultural education in Citizenship Lessons, by providing examples of behaviors and habituation. The conclusion is that teachers must have a strong role in realizing practical-multicultural education in the elementary schools environment, so that students can practice multicultural values well in various environments where students interact.*

**Keyword:** Muticultural Education; Teachers; Students; PPKn; Elementary Schools.

## Introduction

Society according to Emile Durkheim is an objective unit consisting of a collection of individuals as members and interconnected (Tejokusumo, 2014). So that in society it is not possible to have similarities in characteristics. In the study of diversity or multicultural society, it always emphasizes how to understand and appreciate differences (Agustianty, 2011). Multicultural societies are often owned by countries in the world such as America, Australia, and even Indonesia.

Indonesia is a unitary state with islands stretching from Sabang to Merauke, and the islands are inhabited by people with different racial, ethnic, customary, cultural and religious backgrounds. The multicultural element possessed by the Indonesian state certainly cannot be separated from several factors such as geographical factors and historical factors for the formation of the Indonesian state (Boty, 2017).

Diverse and different communities, indirectly lead to conflicts either vertically (community-government) or horizontally (between communities). Although basically

Indonesia has a motto of unity, namely *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, which should be able to be used as a reference for thoughts and actions for the community in dealing with all existing differences. The impact of the conflict includes the emergence of instability in the life of the state in the economic, social, and political fields which further triggers the disintegration of society (Hasanah, 2018). Not infrequently it also has an impact on the safety and right to life of every individual in the community involved in the conflict, such as physical violence and even death.

Seeing the threats that may occur in Indonesian society, efforts are needed to direct people to one of the main values of multiculturalism, namely respecting differences by implementing multicultural education. According to Tolak (2018:25), multicultural education is part of civic education which is formed to face the realities of Indonesian people's life and realize the unity of the state (Nanggala, 2019). Multicultural education can be carried out in the community or in schools. In the school environment, multicultural education is one of the branches of education with the aim of creating the character of students so that they can become citizens with a nationalist spirit, virtuous Pancasila, and high tolerance (Ma'arif, 2019). So that multicultural education is very important to be applied, especially at the elementary school level.

Elementary school is the first education for students, in which it teaches the main subjects, one of which is related to the practice of multicultural education according to the curriculum that has been prepared. Elementary school education is the right choice in implementing multicultural education from an early age to students, because it is able to foster appropriate multicultural values for the development of students. Moreover, it is known that students are

the next generation of the nation who are expected to be able to have good values and morals according to what they get at school (Hendayani, 2019).

The current educational curriculum, namely the Independent Curriculum at the elementary school level, integrates multicultural education into the subject matter of Civics, namely *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*. The purpose of the Citizenship Lessons itself is to create students who are pious, able to take an attitude, think critically, adapt to change, and are able to interpret all historical events in Indonesia (Sulaiman, 2015). So far, multicultural education in elementary schools is only theoretically integrated into Citizenship Lessons, whose material is also limited due to the use of the Thematic Independent Curriculum. The Thematic Curriculum allows for the unification of subjects with one another in one theme, including Civics. Such application makes schools, especially teachers, ignore other aspects of multicultural education practice for students in elementary schools, namely providing examples and habituation of behavior/attitudes.

Based on these problems, the author seeks to examine more deeply related to the role of teachers in realizing the maximum multicultural education practice in Citizenship Lessons. This research has a novelty, where previously there was a similar study that could be used as a reference, namely by Akhmad Hidayatullah Al Arifin (2012), stating that the practice of multicultural education is the embodiment of multicultural education that wants a form of actualization of the multicultural understanding that has been given (Hidayatullah & Arifin, 2012). The difference is, in this study, it is more focused on the role of teachers in the practice of multicultural education in primary school level Civics, which is adapted to the problems of the object of research.

## **Literature Review**

### *Multicultural Education*

Multicultural education is based on multicultural understanding, which according to Hall is a characteristic of a cultured community, which seeks to maintain its identity (Fatmawati, Laila, Rani Dita Pratiwi, 2018). The elements of multiculturalism and plurality that cannot be separated, and as an effort to overcome the possibility of conflict, multicultural education was born. According to James Banks (1993: 3-35), multicultural education is a form of appreciation to God for differences so that humans accept them with a sense of tolerance within themselves. Meanwhile, according to Zamroni (2011), multicultural education is one of the reforms in the field of education that aims to make students able to recognize their identity (Aeni, 2020). So that multicultural education can be interpreted as a series of processes that are carried out consciously to know the importance of diversity in society in order to create stability.

### *Elementary School Teachers*

Teacher is a profession that allows a person to have special skills as a teacher with four competencies including pedagogic, professional, personality, and social competencies. The teaching profession can actually be used as a designation for someone who intensively teaches a discipline, both at the school and non-school level. In this regard, elementary school teachers are one of the teaching professions at the elementary or elementary school level. The role of elementary school teachers is to provide guidance, teach, and train students in elementary schools according to the development of their

students (Zulfiati, 2014). Elementary school teachers must be able to contribute or play a role in realizing basic values in accordance with the curriculum that has been determined to students from an early age.

### *Elementary School Students*

Students are generally defined as a person / individual who has not been able to reach maturity, but has some important basic potentials to be developed through schooling (Agustina, 2018). Similar to teachers, students also cover several levels of education, one of which is the elementary school level. Students in elementary schools are at the age range of 6-11 years, where they will receive values and morals that are in accordance with their development (Hayati et al., 2021). Seeing the vulnerable age at an early age, it should be able to make a teacher play more roles in applying branches of knowledge to form values in students.

### *Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn)*

Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) is a subject in schools with the aim of strengthening values and morals according to the four pillars of the Indonesian nation, namely Pancasila, UUD Tahun 1945, Bhineka Tunggal Ika, and NKRI (Sucahyono, 2016). This lessons also focuses on efforts to form good and intelligent citizens, so that they are able to carry out their rights and obligations (Hidayat et al., 2020). Thus, this lessons contain material or substance that has a broad scope, because it relates to all aspects of citizens' lives.

## Methods

This research was conducted at SD Negeri Luwang 01, Sukoharjo Regency. This is because there are problems that deserve further research, namely the role of teachers in realizing the practice of multicultural education in Citizenship Lessons through various strategies or theoretical methods, especially how to implement them/practices. This study uses descriptive qualitative methods, namely research methods that apply a qualitative approach (not based on numerical data or statistical calculations) in describing a problem that is the focus of the research. The characteristics of this method are the narrative of the data that has been obtained (non-statistical) and the research is made in detail (Sudjarwo, 2001).

The selection of this descriptive qualitative method is its suitability with the object of research to be studied, which is related to a social case study in an elementary school educational institution. This research does not try to test a hypothesis, but wants to examine more deeply the conditions that occur in the object of research and the solutions that can be applied to overcome them.

Data collection techniques used in this study were semi-structured interviews and participatory observation. In Sugiyono's book (2013), semi-structured interviews are types of interviews where researchers are more open and free in interviewing parties related to the object of research. Participatory observation is an observation activity that allows researchers to be directly involved with the daily activities of the object under study.

Meanwhile, the data analysis technique used is an interactive model according to Miles and Huberman. This data analysis technique makes it possible for a researcher to analyze data when in

the field or not in the field, so that it is more flexible in use (Rijali, 2019).

## Results

### *The Multicultural Values Possessed by Students in Elementary Schools*

Based on the data collected and data analysis that has been carried out on students at SD Negeri Luwang 01, Sukoharjo Regency, it was found that most of the students did not have multicultural values. Students at SD Negeri Luwang 01 tend to be shy, in groups (gangs), and often occur various events that illustrate the absence of feelings or values of mutual respect for fellow friends.

Students in grade 1 as the lower class, have a better attitude than in grades 2 to 6. Where in grades 2 to 6 there are often conflicts caused by the lack of multicultural values in students. Such as the lack of value of caring, respect for differences, and cooperation. Another reason why grade 1 students are better and have some multicultural values in themselves, is because in grade 1 the development of students still seems pure and the character of each student is better.

### *The Role of Teachers in the Practice of Multicultural Education in Citizenship Lessons in Elementary Schools*

Based on the data collected and data analysis that has been carried out on students at SD Negeri Luwang 01, Sukoharjo Regency, it was found that the teacher's role in realizing multicultural education has theoretically been contained in one of the contents in the Citizenship Lessons, namely Bhineka Tunggal Ika. However, in actualizing it through giving examples

and habituation of behavior/attitudes, it has not run optimally.

Teachers at SD Negeri Luwang 01 basically have a teacher's handbook that is in accordance with the Independent Curriculum, with a thematic curriculum for the elementary school level. It contains themes with elements of theoretically introducing multicultural education to students. As in one of the themes, there is a story that describes students having to respect other people, as well as other themes.

Multicultural education carried out by teachers according to book guidelines, was not enough to make students able to practice multicultural values in their lives. This is because the substance or material for Civics in the thematic curriculum has very little content, especially in the lower classes (grades 1 to 3).

The role of the teacher, which focuses on theoretical multicultural education, makes the teacher less emphasis on giving examples to students on how to respect others or how to apply multicultural values to students in everyday life. The broad impact is that students do not understand how to implement the multicultural values they get from the material in Citizenship Lessons in class.

## Discussion

### *The Multicultural Values Possessed by Students in Elementary Schools*

Diversity or multiculturalism in Indonesia is something that is crucial or important to be studied more deeply. Where along with the times, diverse communities also began to experience various threats from the outside (external) such as a new culture or new habits. The diversity of society which is already complex and full of threats from the inside (internal), must be coupled

with threats from outside which make people more skeptical of differences (Dike et al., 2017). Or it can be said that they don't like it when there are individuals who are different from themselves in any way, even considering it as a strange thing. Even though the Indonesian people are known for their hospitality and good tolerance, it does not deny that there are still forms of conflict caused by the diversity of their society.

This conflict cannot be separated from the influence of the characteristics that characterize a multicultural society. According to Van de Berghe, these characteristics include:

1. The emergence of non-complementary social structures
2. The emergence of segmentation or group differentiation based on cultural similarities only
3. Community unity is formed as a formality
4. Lack of mutual agreement regarding social values
5. The emergence of a form of political domination by a majority group only (Chandra et al., 2021)

Basically, diversity or multiculturalism has values that should be able to be applied by every Indonesian citizen. The values in question are as follows:

1. The value of respecting differences
2. The value of respecting diversity
3. The value of unity and group solidarity
4. The value of togetherness and cooperation (Wiyanto, 2018)

When these values are applied in the soul of every individual in society, then the true nature of a multicultural society will be realized, namely giving the highest appreciation to different people (Slamet, 2019). This is in accordance with the motto of the Indonesian state, *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*.

With regard to students at SD Negeri Luwang 01, Sukoharjo Regency,

which lacks multicultural values in itself, actually can broadly have an impact on the formation of the character of students. When students do not have or lack multicultural values, then students will find it difficult to implement them in family, school, and even community life later. In line with the purpose of this multicultural education, it is to form individuals who are able to develop according to the conditions of the diversity of society and are able to take an attitude from that diversity (Wijayanti, 2016).

In grade 1 students, multicultural values are quite visible. Such as the value of togetherness, the value of caring, the value of solidarity, the value of cooperation, and the value of mutual respect. Some examples are when a friend is sick, other students will try to help him or call the teacher. Then in grade 1, students tend to be shy and do not dare to do bad things to their friends. Although some individuals are ignorant when learning takes place, this attitude can be overcome.

Different situations are found in students in grades 2 to 6. Where students lack multicultural values which result in certain actions that harm other students, especially physically. Or in other words, students in grades 2 to 6 lack the value of togetherness, caring, solidarity, and respect for others, in this case other students. This fact is shown when in the school environment, many students in the class range speak, distinguish between friends because they have different skin colors or physical shapes, and choose friends.

Some of the behaviors possessed by students at SD Negeri Luwang 01, especially grades 2 to 6, do not reflect the maximum application of multicultural values in learning, especially Civics learning. When asked the reason for their actions, some students will give answers that indirectly say that their actions are not wrong.

Apologies are only temporary, then there will be repetition of the action even at a reduced level of intensity.

Thus, the role of schools, especially teachers, must be carried out optimally in the practice of multicultural education. The existence of various forms of strategies that may be applied by teachers in learning, especially Civics learning will help students to instill and strengthen multicultural values in themselves (Munadlir, 2016).

### *The Role of Teachers in the Practice of Multicultural Education in Citizenship Lessons in Elementary Schools*

Schools Multicultural education is motivated by the diverse realities of the Indonesian nation, and as a manifestation of efforts to inculcate multicultural values (Masamah, 2016). In the context of multicultural education at the school level, the role of the teacher is very much considered, especially at the elementary school level. Teachers are required to actively contribute to the practice of multicultural education in classroom learning, especially Citizenship Lessons. Citizenship Lessons is chosen as part of multicultural education in schools, because also includes an understanding of how citizens carry out their social life. Teachers play a role in finding appropriate learning media to realize and integrate multicultural education in Citizenship Lessons (Kurniawan, Zulfahmi, 2020).

Multicultural education in elementary schools which is integrated in Citizenship Lessons material, can be interpreted as still emphasizing theoretical understanding to students which includes only general understanding. Whereas when considering the early history of multicultural education, it is based on

the phenomenon of society. Theoretical-based multicultural education in elementary schools is not wrong, but it should also be accompanied by multicultural education that emphasizes practices and how to implement them in everyday life. Elementary school students should understand how to tolerate and respect differences in society, such as being taught the practice of respecting friends of different races and other things. The implementation of this multicultural education is not optimal, resulting in students in elementary schools not having the thought and habituation from an early age to develop their theoretical understanding because they are not taught properly how to practice it (Najmina, 2018).

The implementation of learning at SD Negeri Luwang 01 is said to be quite good and in accordance with the applicable curriculum, including the content of multicultural education in the classroom. Teachers have made efforts to provide multicultural education materials as listed in the thematic curriculum. Or it can be said that it only focuses on theoretical multicultural education.

In the practice of multicultural education such as giving examples and habituation of behavior / attitudes is still less emphasized, so that many students do not have and instill multicultural values in themselves, especially in grades 2 to 6. Teachers can actually use various strategies or methods in class, one of which is the other is with a story strategy that contains multicultural values or provides real cases that are hotly discussed by the community (Bukhori, 2018). In addition, teachers must also be able to get used to respecting differences to students, and reprimand them if students are seen to do bad things to other students.

## Conclusion

That most students at SD Negeri Luwang 01, Sukoharjo Regency do not yet have the multicultural values that they should have from an early age, considering that Indonesia is a multicultural country with a diverse society. So we need the next generation of the nation who is able to apply multicultural values to minimize the threats that will occur. One of the efforts that can be done is through the practice of multicultural education that is balanced between theoretical and implementation methods.

In realizing the practice of multicultural education, the role of teachers at SD Negeri Luwang 01 is needed, especially in Citizenship Lessons (PPKn subjects), by carrying out strategies that include providing examples and habituation according to the abilities of students. Teachers are responsible for making students understand how to apply multicultural values in themselves and in their environment.

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