MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

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ABSTRACT

Diversity is life’s real background nowadays or even in the future. The openness of the world with various access available makes human beings with different backgrounds interact in every aspect of life. It is inevitable for the future generations especially these backgrounds are experienced by childhood as the nation’s successors. The challenges faced by them in future life depend on how the environment supports their development and at once as a place they study and take part as a part of global society. Education background offers the support with settings that bring together child and diversities. Pedagogical approach that is sensitive on multi culture value is an effort that can be used in supporting children develop appropriately to their identities and their environment.

Keywords: multicultural, Childhood, learning, teaching.
INTRODUCTION

In a time of advanced technology and globalization nowadays cultures cross from all around the world meet. The uniqueness and characteristical in the context of state, nation, and society will cause diversity in social culture. Diversities like this is shown by Indonesia which is nation-state composed of various ethnics, religion, and language (Saenz, Embrick, & Rodriguesz, 2015). These diversities need to be managed seriously and willingly in a form of value order which can be divided together.

The reality happening now is forms of violence on one group to another group causes prejudice to always happen between groups (Staub, 2013). (Baidhawy, 2007) It seems the impact above has become a phenomenon that is also happening in Indonesia, looking at conflict situations between class interest that keep on happening the understanding for multiculturalism is really needed to deal with these problems.

The lack of understanding on diversity, differences, and justice that must be enforced for every circle including childhood. Hawkins (2014). In his studies states that young children has come to know there are diversities between humans and this phenomenon is one of the potential that is used to build multicultural understanding early on. In accordance to that, multicultural education is considered as one of the ways pursued to achieve understanding between classes through school background which often meets diversities (Ozturgut, 2011).

Understanding on multi culture done by education are expected to not finish on the theoretical part only when the education takes place. There for below it will be elaborated about multi culture education until appropriate practices that is in accordance in childhood education reviewed from various literarture.

UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY

Humans as part of society basically are individuals that have conscience on their personal desires fulfilled which is none other than a manifestation on culture that has raised them (DomNwachukwu, 2010). Based on that it is understood that humans as a individual encouragement to fulfill their needs, but on the other side culture influences it.
The form of that relationship leads to how someone’s identity is really shaped so that he and other individuals can be called as part of a specific culture (Brewer, 1991). Individual as part of his social group interact and contribute to form interpersonal relationships. Roles of individuals that interact in groups turns out to shape influences on culture between them. In other words behavior of individuals from a group is a reflection of its culture.

Subsequently what does connect the description above with the true diversity? Individual contributes in their groups, create loyal relationship between members so bonding happens as part of their culture. So the cultured feeling owned by one group and another can be purely exclusive when they form interpersonal relationship between groups. There for even one person existence is significant in good relationships between on group and the other (Kramer, Leodardelli, & Livingston, 2011). Individual, minorities or even majorities, whole group are important as part of diversities that influence.

**MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION BASE**

Diversity obviously has become part of society without exception in the scope of childhood education. Responding to the challenges that there is in diversities, childhood education should be able to adapt its content with the situation among society (Ryan & Grieshaber, 2005).

The understanding on the multicultural realization given to early childhood is based on the effort to give provision so they aren’t isolated with the differences between children from early on as provision to socially interact better (Ryan and Grieshaber, 2005). From that point of view it is understood that multicultural awareness is rightly introduced from early on because with an understanding of diversity it carves a path for children to realize diversity as something normal. Realization of this value is also a form of children understanding to live side by side peacefully with people different from them.

**CONNECTION BETWEEN CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURE DIVERSITY**

The growth and development childhood thoroughly obviously has definitely become hope from the education done for them. One of that viewpoint is based on the importance to give children the best service with
its need. That concept need is used in formulating education for early childhood (James & Prout, 2005), that children need love and care which is related to psychological health, social adaptability, and the concept needs is different in every culture.

In accordance to the description above, Spencer (2013) explains that the aspects in understanding children using one point of view is not enough. In understanding child development it can’t be generalized and needs a different approach even to the realm of assessment process (Frongillo et al., 2014). Therefore a sensitive education approach on background culture can be a start so children development no longer get misunderstood by its teacher.

There are two theories in other theories that is hugely influential in understanding children, that is theory from Piaget and Vygotsky (Kalina, 2009; Semmar & Al-thani, 2015). The development steps stated by Piaget that children as an active student develops their own knowledge gives education concept contribution that centers around children od child center, whereas Vygotsky views that the way children develop their knowledge, is through problem finding process on problems and experience that is built together with others through everyday social interaction (Penn, 2005).

Regarding children development concept from Piaget and Vygotsky the child excelling in academic and social presumably is becoming one expectation that is wanted in early childhood education and brings long term influence in their life (Chopra, 2016). Therefore the requirement on child development that facilitates all that including child requirements including background culture is a way so childhood education can give real significant impact on the children’s future.

Education environment that is peaceful and child supportive from different background is really needed so there are no children left out or ignored because the lack of teacher understanding of their cultural identity (Quitero, 2004). This is hugely influential so the education scene that is formed in schools gives contribution on values of justice and peace. Because the form of racism is an accumulation from the education and social interaction the child does with friends, adults, parents, and authorities responsible in influencing child life (Stephen & McKown, 2008).

MULTICULTURAL PROGRAM FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD
In early childhood education background, multicultural concept is poured in pedagogy practice and curriculum that upholds culture values of each children with the purpose so the child has a better chance to feel real diversity in their lives (Krofh and Slentz, 2001). Curriculum that integrates diversity values chooses teaching material, theme, society involvement, up to literature source that include peace and multicultural values (Quintero, 2004; Stephen & McKown, 2008).

Applying multicultural value responsive curriculum to a class is important, without a proper thinking, pedagogy practice, and understanding on the students, teachers cannot create an multicultural education environment that is successful and transformative (Gray, 2016). Therefore the roles of teacher as the educator, communicating with children and parents can help parents in guiding children through their period of development in its early years regarding cultural identity (Ramsey, 2004). Here are some perspective in multicultural practice teaching that is needed by teachers in the context of early childhood education (Han & Thomas, 2010).

1. **Awareness Perspective on Diversity**

Teachers who are aware of diversity act as active people and keep evaluating themselves to be aware of assumption that is made for others, values, bias, other people’s idea, self-limitation, and such (Sue & Sue, 2008). Teachers with multicultural awareness understands that there is a tendency to not be neutral and lack personal background understanding of their students bought to their teaching practice. Therefore teachers with multicultural awareness should understand their culture identity and creating a learning perspective in a diverse society is a step that helps and benefit teachers.

2. **Multicultural Perspective as Knowledge**

This viewpoint views knowledge towards multicultural to cover knowledge on values, multicultural global values, and social norm in their own culture and others (Sue & Sue, 2008). Teachers with multicultural awareness has to be responsive and have knowledge whether general or specific and information about certain groups according to their working environment.

3. **Multicultural Perspective as a Specialty**

Professional teachers and respond to multicultural values are active and keep on developing themselves and train appropriate intervention
strategies, relevant, and sensitive on diversity. They create and preserve a safe environment. Also a caring attitude is basic teaching and learning foundation done by teachers with multicultural awareness (Han & Thomas, 2010; Leung & Hue, 2016).

At the same time UNICEF (2015) recommends teaching early childhood that honors harmonious and peaceful society as follows:

1. The implementation of inclusive-sensitive early childhood programs on susceptible children and bring groups of different society together to achieve a goal together.
2. Integrating content on peace to parenting programs on parent groups or marginalized society that cannot access early childhood education, and organize a strategy to reach isolated and marginalized families.
3. Integrating content on peace in curriculums and training material for teachers and caretakers.
4. Support on policy development that is based on peace.
5. Ensuring continuous investment and development with long term impact in early childhood education programs that its content is according to social situation, strong, and preserve justice.
6. Building social networks, print media, and online media to understand the roles of early childhood education in promoting peaceful society.
7. Making use of available support up to nationally for contribution as a part of global effort from Early Childhood Peace Consortium to adopt the UN resolution on peace and education.

CONCLUSION

Multicultural education in early childhood education is a way to understand child development wisely and preserve their rights to be appreciated their personal identity and culture community origin. A Harmonious generation is created if multicultural education is taught from an early age, education is prepared to create a generation that has a future that can live side by side in diversity.

Therefore a curriculum that is sensitive on that matter is a step that can be pursued to actualize fair education for every child. Furthermore roles of adults whether educators and teachers is needed to design and support the types of education that preserve this appreciative, peace, and fair value.
REFERENCES


