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Digital Multiculturalism: Intensifying the Utilization of Online Technology for Peaceful Coexistence

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Abstract

In the Indonesian context, multiculturalism is one of the basic values forming the nation-state. However, we are recently living at a time when intolerant groups use cyberspace to create ideological tensions among multicultural identities which obviously degrades peaceful coexistence. This phenomenon should be responded through adequate attention and treatment in Indonesia, which has had so many traumatic tragedies with regard to multicultural conflicts, ethnic conflicts, and the like. For example, from 1952 to 2000 in West Kalimantan, conflict between different ethnicities has occurred at least 12 times. Therefore, it is necessary to develop digital multiculturalism that can primarily be taught through the main agents of multicultural education in formal education, namely the Citizenship Education teachers. Intervention is required to establish a sort of "counter-propaganda" over the tensions between cultural identities those accidentally triggered by certain groups through cyberspace. The optimization of the teacher's role is very relevant due to their mandate to deliver multicultural education at least in the form of content integration.

Keywords: Digital multiculturalism, citizenship education, peaceful coexistence

Introduction

The multiculturalism or diversity in Indonesia is theoretically an irrevocable fact. Many experts, such as Tim Lindsey and Helen Pausacker [8] acknowledged the objective fact and consider Indonesia as a plural, diverse and multicultural nation.

Multiculturalism is also one of the building fundamental values of the nation-state. It is not only manifested as the conceptual philosophical values but also as the formal political nation-state foundation through the wording "Unity in Diversity" formally stated in the national emblem, Garuda Pancasila.

The peaceful coexistence as wished by the Founding fathers is the requisite of multiculturalism building and maintenance. In the context of describing the Just and Civilized Humanity principle, Sukarno states, "...never mind when people are living in different coexistence; yet, both living side by side. In English, it is called coexistence, peaceful

coexistence. It turns out to be, perhaps, not only possible more, but it turns obviously could. [14]

However, the preliminary study showed that many intolerant groups have recently used the cyber space to bring ideological tension among the distinguished cultural identities based on the religion and other sociocultural identities in the forms of discourse, propaganda, hate speech, etc.

The phenomenon supposedly receives adequate attention and treatment due to many past traumatic experiences occurred in Indonesia dealing with multicultural and ethnic conflicts and the like. Between 1952 and 2000, for instance, conflict in West Kalimantan between various ethnic groups occurred at least 12 times. These conflicts include: disputes between Madurese and Dayak in 1952, the events of the expulsion of people who are ethnically Chinese by Dayaks in 1967, the riot between Madurese by Dayak ethnics in 1979 in Kalimantan, a dispute between Madurese and Dayak that occurred in 1983, riot between

Dayak and Madurese happened in Sanggau Ledo in 1997, the conflict between Madurese and Dayaks in Kalimantan in 1998, the conflict between Malay and Madurese ethnics in Sambas and the riots between Pontianak Malay and Madurese ethnics which occurred on October 25, 2000. In addition, the multicultural conflict also took place in Sampit Kotawaringin Timur (Kotim), Central Kalimantan involving the Madurese and Dayak ethnics. In this conflict, hundreds even thousands of residents were confirmed dead, mostly Madurese. The conflict has also resulted in about 55 323 inhabitants refugee flows that cause abandonment, as evidenced by the death of 357 refugees, epidemics of disease, poor quality of life and inadequate sanitation. Wide impact that occurs in the form of an atmosphere of fear, psychological trauma, and thousands of people who lost possessions [13].

Answering the situation, the digital multicultural development is urgently performed; moreover, through the multicultural education agents of the formal education, that is citizenship education teachers. Furthermore, the digital world development allows the discourse exchange go fast and not avoided. Intervention is required to establish a sort of "counter-propaganda" over the tensions between cultural identities that accidentally triggered by certain groups through cyberspace. The optimization of the teacher's role is very relevant due to their mandate to deliver multicultural education at least in the form of content integration introduced by James Banks [1]. In addition, their capacity of civic knowledge, civic disposition, and civic skills are generally adequate.

Multiculturalism and Online Technology

Multiculturalism, with its diversity and tendency toward its concepts and practices by Parekh [11] is classified into five types. First, isolationist, refers to a society with groups of cultural background individuals who autonomously live and interact with at least one another.

Second, accommodative, that is the plural society who has dominant culture, making

certain adjustment and accommodation for the minority cultural needs. Third, autonomist, a plural society of which the main cultural groups are trying to actualize the equality with the dominant culture and accommodating the autonomous life of the political framework which is collectively accepted.

Fourth, critical or interactive, a plural society in which the cultural groups do not really concern on the autonomous cultural life, but demand more on building the collective culture which reflects and strains their distinguished perspectives. Fifth, cosmopolitan, this society tries to remove the cultural boundaries in order to build a society where every individual is no more tied and committed to certain cultures, but freely involved in an intercultural experiment and develop each cultural life.

The terms in use, "multiculturalism" is often interchangeable with pluralism. Reviewing multiculturalism more clearly, it is necessary to look the mapping proposed Bhikku Parekh about the multicultural society [11]. First, a society which holds the common cultures, but in some cases, it has a belief and its practice which are different regarding the distinguished life zone and life style. Its people do not wish for building the alternative culture, but differ the cultures with their distinguished existence. Parekh calls this group as the subculture diversity.

Second, a group of society with the critical circles concerning various values and main principles of the dominant cultures, to reform and reconstruct the cultures. Parekh calls this as the perspectival diversity.

Third, a group of society which has different self-awareness, well-organized, and they have to live with the system of beliefs and practices of different beliefs. This phenomenon is called the communal diversity.

So, multicultural society is a society whose components represent one, two, or three of the classifications simultaneously. Different from pluralism that the scope covers the bigger sub-components, such as religion, ethnicity, and

race. Multiculturalism involves the more micro components, like thinking and life styles.

As the connecting line of the above explanation, multiculturalism is a concept of cultural diversity society controlling, of the slightest level and cultural diversity scope, by giving a recognition for the diversity component existence. The recognition in contemporary phenomena is a demand. That's why, no recognition, which means no demand, potentially brings up the conflicts.

Multiculturalism control is complex which cannot be handled by a single individual, such as the state government only. The complexity is increasing as the information and communication technology (ICT) is growing, in particular the internet which presents the virtual reality, an essential reality without physical existence. In the virtual reality, everyone freely makes up their identities under no law regulations, acknowledging her/himself as anyone and anywhere. If one wants to do it, anyone can false his/her identity [10]. The situations bring the tension and conflict between the mono-culturalist or anti-pluralist easily contradistinguish the diversity of each cultural identity which can supposedly be led to have a balanced coexistence.

Of that context, digital multiculturalism is one of the alternatives of overcoming the issue through the main program that is called online discussion boards [7]. The online features can be expanded on the recognition and appreciation for the difference and culture under multiculturalism perspective [9].

Methods

This research is a research and development (R&D). Research, with in-depth data collection techniques and inductive data analysis done to find information, prepositions, and important materials in accordance with the purpose of the study. The results are then used as material for developing digital multiculturalism development models.

The research was conducted in several places, namely the Special Region of

Yogyakarta, Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, North Sulawesi, Bali, and Maluku.

The subjects of this study are the teachers and students of junior and senior high school within the research areas.

Research subjects are determined by a combination of purposive and snowball technique.

Data collection and analysis techniques are divided into two groups, desk study and field study, including in-depth interview, observation, literature study/secondary data analysis, peer group discussion, and focused group discussion.

Data validation technique used is triangulation.

The role of Teachers in Developing Digital Multiculturalism

Given that Indonesian education system does not have either curricular and non-curricular formal programs or digital program for the multicultural education; the digital multiculturalism relies on the citizenships education teachers' initiatives. Based on the researcher's observation, some initial digital multiculturalism initiatives are as follows.

First, the e-learning development of citizenship education. Some e-learning services provide, such as moodle, have been well equipped by the teachers to develop the digital multiculturalism, at least as part of the lessons taught.

In the e-learning, the teachers provide opportunities for the students to conduct discussion about the diversity and pluralism that is objectively natural reality and political consensus of the founding fathers. The internet community users often called netizen (acronym of internet citizen) can discuss their individual identity through discourses which develop around them.

In the Indonesian context where media literacy and digital literacy are not good, this form is categorized complex for it requires the good competition and digital literacy from the teachers except if they are guided by the e-learning technical operators. There are not many teachers, especially the senior teachers,

who can develop this e-learning basis, besides it also requires the students' ability to perform the features and the very detailed and complex services.

Second, the website and personal blog. There have been many citizenship education teachers initiate to develop a simple website and personal blog from free service providers to invite netizen, especially the youths who concern on the citizenship issues to bring them into an actual discussion of a public discourse.

Both for the teachers as the owners and administrators, and for the netizen, this form digital multiculturalism which is currently developed provides an easy access and invites more participation than before. As a blog or website administrator with the web blog engine, such as wordpress and blogspot, teachers can control and lead the information, discuss, share, and make a digital dialogue with the netizen regarding the diversity phenomenon with its all cyberspace problems and challenges. For the access users, it will provide them an ease to move and interact with the administrators and other netizen.

Third, in the form of social media. The use of social media is the simplest but the most reachable in developing the digital multiculturalism. The greatest strength in the use of social media as a means of digital multiculturalism is performed by its two sides, access and audience. In terms of access for both the administrators and the users, the use of social media is very easy given that the media can be accessed through multi platforms from desktop, laptop, tablet, and smartphone. While, in terms of audience, the digital multiculturalism selection of this channel absolutely reaches wide-range audience; moreover most netizen in Indonesia have social media accounts, seven ome accounts for a user, particularly among young netizen.

Therefore, the citizenship teachers can intensively use their social media accounts to bring the actual cultural and its diversity issues into a discussion to make them accustomed to discuss their own cultural identities associated with the different ones from theirs and around.

Thus, the young netizen has cultural awareness of their own, acknowledge and recognize their distinguished identities one another, and eventually they will have the consciousness and desire to respect what is different from themselves and theirs.

Online Initiative for Multiculturalism

The online initiative developed to deal with the cultural issues and problems by optimizing the role of teachers, particularly who are teaching Pancasila and Civic Education, is a web-based application. The address of the web is mudig.id.

The initiative development is designed for a futuristic vision, namely "Before the century of Indonesian independence, Indonesian society was realized which fully had social resilience in managing diversity". With this social security, Indonesian people will practice and promote tolerance for differences, prevent and avoid the use of violence, promote and promote dialogue in preventing destructive conflict, and make differences in identity as part of the richness of civilization and social welfare.

Meanwhile the missions stated to actualize the vision are as follows.

1. To celebrate the diversity
2. To provide the literacy facilities to increase mutual understanding between identities
3. To provide the spaces for dialogue and meeting between identities

For implementing the missions, mudig.id provide three main features to enhance literacy and encounter among identities, namely:

1. **Kebinekaan Kita (Our Diversity):** MuDig provides articles that will add insight into the diversity. They are intended to enhance the literacy on what the multiculturalism is and how we preserve diversity by strengthening multiculturalism.
2. **Berbagi dan Berjumpa (Share and Meet).** MuDig provides Chat and Discussion Forum features for sharing and meeting among others. Chat features can only be done by registered members, Discussion

Forum Features are guided by the counsellors and Admins, and can be followed by Members and non-Members.

3. Konsultasi Kebinekaan or Diversity consultation. The feature is provided for handling daily issues of multiculturalism encountered by students or youths. If they face problems related to diversity, for example, if they get bad treatment because of their ethnic, racial, religious or intergroup background, they could consult with Mudid.id's counsellors. This feature only applies for the MuDig members. Mudig.id has already provided 12 counsellors spreading from Sumatera to Papua.

Conclusions

From the above discussion, the conclusions are drawn as follows. First, digital multiculturalism is one of the breakthrough alternatives addressing the issues in its major programs, such as provision of the online discussion with focus on respect on the differences not only the cultures under multiculturalism perspective.

Second, of the Indonesian experience, multiculturalism education at schools are developed not in the form of disintegrated lesson, but integrated instead, that is in Civics of the primary and secondary education levels. In addition, the digital multiculturalism is also developed through the informal activities in the form of its own teaching practice which is separated from the citizenship education subject.

Third, given the Indonesian education system which does not have either curricular or non-curricular formal programs, moreover non digital form of the multicultural education, the multicultural development relies on the citizenship education teachers' initiatives. Some initial digital multiculturalism initiatives performed by the teachers recently are in the forms of: a) e-learning development of citizenship education, b) website and personal blog, and c) social media.

Forth, to bridge between problem resolution and teacher's role optimization, Mudig.id was developed to deal with several multicultural issues. Two main agenda are fostered by the web-based initiative, namely literacy and encounter. The application which is located at mudig.id provides features to enhance the multicultural literacy, i.e. several catchy articles and columns, as well as encounters, e.g. chats, forums, and counselling

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