

Developing Democratic Culture through Civic Education

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ABSTRACT

Since the era of reformation, people's understanding, knowledge and realization of real democracy in Indonesia have not been made evident by the socio-political realities of life within Indonesia's frame of democracy. An important agenda would be to build school as *a research site or laboratory of democracy* and *the microcosmos of democracy*. A qualitative approach through case study was employed for this research and data collection was done through observation, interviews and document analysis. The results from the study show that (1) in the comprehension of rights and efforts towards enhancing student discipline, democracy education plays a significant role; (2) systematic democratic learning is referred by the planning mechanism and the use of civic learning; and (3) the experience of democracy and socio-cultural values is made possible by the Student Council and extra-curricular activities. In conclusion, the research indicates that the pattern of disciplinary education adopted by the Integrated High School of Krida Nusantara Bandung, West Java, corresponds with the military discipline, religious education, boarding care as well as the National Education System.

Keywords: Civic education , culture, democratic, dicipline, school-based

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INTRODUCTION

The expectations that come with a renewed democracy in terms of understanding and awareness of nationhood is however not evident in the socio-political life of Indonesia since the era of reformation and in a democratic framework. Forms of deviant behavior have been expressed through protests and unruly behavior at election

events in various regions and these erode the foundations of the democratic lifestyle. Referred to as “undemocratic democracy,” by Sumantri (1998), this describes a national and state structure where only the framework of democracy exists, without the true spirit and manifestation of its ideals.

Because of all this, the imminent agenda of the government includes the plan to develop a constitutional democracy parallel to religion and as mandated by the 1945 Constitution and Law No.20 of 2003 is classified as intellectual superiority in Indonesia. Due to the belief that democracy neither teaches itself nor is inherited and is a process that requires a life-time of learning (Gandal & Finn, 1992), it is therefore of many dimensions and needs professional supervision. The idea that democracy is not a machine that would self-generate, but must be consciously reproduced has also been suggested by Alexis de Toqueville (Branson, 1998). To nurture the nation of Indonesia by creating the principles, values and culture of citizens and developing a participatory and civilized society, democracy education needs to be ordered in an organized way instead of being randomly facilitated.

Two reasons were suggested by Azra (2001) for the pivotal role that the teaching of democracy plays in building democratic culture. The first relates to “political illiteracy”. This refers to people’s ignorance of how democracy and its institutions work. The lack and reluctance of citizens to be involved in political processes connects to the second reason of increasing political apathism. It thus follows that laying the

foundations for the concept, principles and values within democratic cultural behavior would require systemic efforts of civic education.

At its core, democracy education is a fundamental part of civic education at school. As civic education is an essential modality towards the formation of a civilized society, Winataputra (2005) argues that a major role in the development of a democratic civic culture is played by civic education.

The curriculum and learning process therefore need to be redirected and aligned with the development goals of the nation’s character to realize that goal. Civic knowledge transformation and civic disposition will translate and make this evident. Emphasis also needs to be placed on civic skills to support the development of civic culture.

Following the same line of argument, Gandal and Finn (1992) further suggest that two major settings showcase the development of democracy education. The first model is the school-based democracy education model. This is basically a model of school-based democracy education which exists within the context of formal education. The primary focus of this model was to create a direct link and to bridge the gap between the learning material and the actual goal of why social phenomena is studied (Suhartono, 2008).

Both intra- and extracurricular learning activities with democratic nuances are related to the development of this model. The society-based democracy education is

the secondary model and it is here that the context of community life. Becomes the arena for democracy education.

The systematic designing and holistic integration of both these models of teaching democracy into the national education system should hopefully create functional-pedagogical interactions both within and outside the school's socio-cultural atmosphere. The environment of the school is a "micro cosmos of democracy", and the larger community an "open global democracy" (Winataputra, 2001). Students will thus be involved directly as subjects as well as objects for the goals of democracy. Winataputra and Budimansyah (2007) refer to this as "learning democracy, throughout; in democracy and for democracy".

The setting of this case study was Krida Nusantara Bandung's Integrated High School. The choice of this school was based on its implementation of the four disciplinary approaches of the education system. These are authoritarian (military) and dormitory discipline following a Religious and National Education System (UUSPN).

The research objective is to investigate the scholastic-based democracy education at the Integrated of Krida Nusantara Integrated High School in Bandung. The following are the Research Questions:

1. What perceptions do the principal and teachers have about the idea of democracy education and the school community which is democratic?
2. To what extent is the implementation of Civic Education in schools

effective for the learning of democracy?

3. What constraints, if any, are there in democracy education in School Student Organizations within the school, extracurricular activities and boarding school programs?

METHOD

A qualitative approach was adopted for this study which as described by Creswell (1998) refers to is a discovery based holistic approach. By immersion and deep involvement in real experiences, qualitative research describes itself as a model that slowly uncovers layers and takes place in settings that are natural. This allows the researcher the opportunity to develop. Rather than being deductive, the premises of qualitative research are built on inductive reasoning. Here the researcher will try to make descriptions and give explanations based on these elements of observation.

A case study, as defined by Creswell (1998), ought to be structured along the problem, and issues and subsequently the reasons should be derived. There is extensive data collection for a case study and the sources may be multiple. Examples include interviews and observations. Other sources may include physical artifacts, archival records or documents, and audiovisual materials. Time needs to be spent by the researcher in engagement with the cases under study and on-site interaction may also be needed. Patterns that relate to theories and lessons learned will then be reported.

In this study, both information and data were collected from interviews and participant and non-participant observation. Data also came from library research and document analysis. Two categories were created from the data for the purpose of analysis. The first category comprised the printed material (bibliography). The second category was from human resources or informants. The informants for the interview were identified through purposive sampling. For data analysis, Miles and Huberman's (2007) techniques were used. These consist of three processes that are interactive. The processes are data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification. Table 1 shows the data collection procedure:

Participants

Through the process of purposive sampling, the principal teachers and students of the Integrated High School of Krida Nusantara Bandung were interviewed. This sampling method was used as it permits the selected sample to be of choice based on the criteria of the research (Koerber & McMichael, 2008). The number of subjects was determined according to the requirements of purposive sampling, namely, one principal, three civic education teachers in the three classes X, XI and XII; one vice principal (for curriculum), one vice principal (for student affairs and facilities), extracurricular coaches for dormitories, and one student from each of the three classes, X, XI and XII.

Table 1

Data collection

No.	Research Questions	Interview
1	What perceptions do the principal and teachers have about the idea of democracy education and the school community which is democratic?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • principal • teachers • students
2	How effective is the use of Civic Education in schools for the learning of democracy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • principal • vice principal for curriculum • teachers of Civic Education
3	What constraints if any, are there in democracy education in School Student Organizations within the school , extra-curricular activities and boarding school programs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vice principal of the student affairs • boarding school counselors • Students

Research Setting

Situated in West Java, Indonesia, The Integrated High School of Krida Nusantara is a well-known boarding school in Bandung. It has three pillars of education. These are comprehensively and holistically based on religion, academics, and skills. Three subject groups are drawn from these pillars which begin with general subjects (referring to content based on the national curriculum). The other two are based on religious skills (referring to the local content curriculum).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The following section reports the findings of this research in the order of the Research Questions.

Perceptions About a Democratic School Community and Democracy Education

The interview and the library research indicated that the principal, teachers, and students perceive democracy in education as the provision of an arena for students to further develop themselves in areas they are interested. High regard is placed upon democracy in education, according to the Principal of the school, and building a community of life among the citizens of the school is also deemed important. In this way, students are better able to have a deeper understanding of their obligations and entitlements within the school's discipline framework.

Within Indonesia's formal education context, The *UUSPN* No. 20, 2003, chapter II article 3, reflects the urgency of democracy in education. Here it states that

the chief objective of national education is for the people to "become democratic and responsible citizens." The implications of this make it necessary for schools to construct conducive environments, implement social order-pedagogies and facilitate a conducive place where personal democratic values and principles which are varied can develop. Schools, in other words, need to become democracy laboratories.

Interview data (elicited from the management and teachers) also reflects people's belief that other channels are necessary to promote democratic values apart from subjects like civic education. Democratic principles need to be perceived with a unified vision as the underpinning spirit driving all learning activity. Civic education should be attributed to student-learning both within and outside of the school and not perceived as an isolated subject taught in the school schedule.

To establish the democratic school community, the Principal outlined two strategic aspects that need to be proposed. The first aspect refers to school management whose policies often require the active involvement of many parties. Innovative learning practices are promoted by the second. Here it is seen as an instrument that could improve social awareness. Apart from that, it could also advance intellectual curiosity, and life skills of the school's learner community. Seen from implementation perspectives, a spirit of democracy is essential for schools in many aspects. These include the management, planning, administration, and evaluation

of education. Apple and James (1995) have proposed that two aspects are involved in ensuring democratic patterns in school management. These usually refer to work procedures, an open and flexible design of the curriculum which allows varied student experiences and organizational structure.

The Principal and teachers believed that human rights in school should be a major focus of democracy in education. There should therefore be no unfair treatment of students. Apple and James (1995) in this context, explain that to develop a school that is democratic, one of the criteria that needs development is for the school to ensure that an open channel is provided for ideas so that information will be received in the best possible way by everyone. Apart from this, individuals and groups should be entrusted in their own capacity to deal with school problems. The school should also be able to convey criticism based on analysis. Aspects that need to be evaluated are school ideas, policies, social and public concern. Additionally, the school should also display concern for self-esteem, and the rights of the individual and the minority groups. The message that developed democracy has not reflected an idealized democracy also needs to be projected. Thus, it is imperative that democracy continues to be developed to guide humanity and to become an institution that continues to advance and implement democratic ways of life.

Effectiveness of Using Civic Education in Schools for Learning Democracy

The idea that development of materials,

methods, media, and assessment is included in civic education was conveyed through interviews and observations by the researcher. Competency standards formulated in the Content Standards (Permendiknas RI No 22 of 2006) directed the material development. Methods and strategies together with media and evaluation whose goal was directed at development of civic skills, disposition and knowledge, civic skills and that of civic disposition were also included.

When assessing civic education of democracy, all competency areas of citizenship need to be included. This avoids a product or result oriented approach of assessment. Instead, assessment is carried out at all stages of learning. Permendiknas RI No 20 Year 2007 with regards to the Assessment Standard, indicates that assessment based on this model can be carried out in four ways: (1) Oral or written tests focusing on practice and performance, (2) attitude scale observation of behavior (3) homework or project assignments (homework and project duties), and (4) portfolio assessment of a compilation of student work.

The analysis of documents and interviews was based on Joyce, Weil and Calhoun's (2009) model of democracy. This was applied in civic education at the Integrated High School Krida Nusantara Bandung. This model refers to (1) systematic initial conditioning and formation of concept as well as multicultural groups. It also includes group work and discussion groups, reflection and reinforcement. (2) In the social system, there needs to be mutual

student-teacher respect. Relationships must be good. Good communication, cultural sensitivity and respect for religious, and ethnic differences result in learning. (3) The teacher as a competent facilitator, apart from being a mediator, critic, and counselor, demonstrates the principles of management. (4) A well-equipped support system for the 'mobile class' including audio, LCD, computer, and libraries is essential. (5) Finally, the focus should be on instructional impact, the learning outcomes as opposed to the minimum achievement criteria, where learners are able to answer oral questions, take ownership of learning, explain concepts, and independently question the concepts learned. There is impact accompaniment which includes empathy, acceptance of differences, politeness, cooperation, consideration and respect of others' opinions, and collaboration.

This democratic learning process is significant in enabling the class to become a miniature model of democracy. Through effective cooperation, this can then help to instill in learners the social problem solving skills and knowledge. Winataputra and Budimansyah (2007) refer to this need for democratic teaching strategies and approaches as an effort towards the creation of the school as the center of democracy through democratic processes in learning. Structured in an atmosphere that is open, and intimate, with mutual respect, this democratic learning is significantly different from the stress and tension-filled rigid learning environment, burdened by instructions and prescriptive teaching that

churn out passive learners. According to Tacman (2006) "the democratic attitudes of the classrooms are important for improving people's democratic behaviors."

An important contribution related to the ideals of democratic stated above with each continuum showcasing different characteristics is Kerr's (1999) study on the conception of continuum civic education (Citizenship Education Continuum). The characteristics of the Minimum are exclusive, elitist, civic education with content that is thin, formally-led and knowledge-based, taught through didactic communication, and which is more easily achievable and measurable in practice. The characteristics of the Maximum on the other hand are deeper content, inclusive, activist-based and including citizenship education. Lessons are based on values and participative, with interpretation that is interactive and not so easily achieved or measured.

Democracy Education's Constraints

The interviews and the observations pertaining to the research question above indicated that the activities of the School's Student Organization at the Integrated High school of Krida Nusantara were not unlike those in other regular schools being similar in student organization activities. It is the students who facilitate the entire process of election.

The diverseness of student religion, ethnicity, language, and cultural backgrounds in the School's Student Organization has provided a more authentic experience in democracy therefore making

it distinct from other schools. It became more crucial to build mutual respect and tolerance among students. The plurality of students who formed the Intra-School Student Organization proved to be one of the challenges towards the process of assimilation. This however could also be seen as an opportunity for communication and integration among students from different cultural backgrounds.

Gandal and Finn (1992) further argued that schools could allow an arena and plan for a forum for democratic activities and learning outside the classroom. Schools could also facilitate events where students could learn and be engaged outside the classroom in democratic activities which could be organized and run by school's Student Organization apart from extracurricular activities. School's Student Organization and activities during extra-curriculum organizations have been created primarily by students and for students, and as such can be utilized as vehicles for developing democratic values in real life. Gandal and Finn (1992) consider these activities as opportunities for students to put into practice in school the norms of democracy where they need to cooperate and collaborate towards achieving common goals, choosing those who will be in leadership positions and also in making personal decisions concerning their own interests, and other co-curricular activities.

At the Integrated High School of Krida Nusantara, the development of democratic culture happens in an atmosphere of familial harmony. This is particularly evident in

the socio-cultural environment of the dormitory. The school teachers perceive the dormitory setting in fact as a symbiotic-mutualism ecosystem, where sense of kinship is evident. This has been fostered through the pattern of communal living. Thus, it potentially resembles nationalism and fosters a sense belonging. It is the responsibility of the head of the dormitory to ensure the harmony in the dormitory. The consistent senior-junior pattern of communications (juniors need to show respect to seniors) which has existed through generations and is considered "hereditary" is more obvious in the activities surrounding life in the dormitory.

Due to existing school sanctions and the possibility of dismissal, seniors are very unlikely to resort to physical contact. The teachers in charge of the dormitories were in agreement that it was the nature of atmosphere (unique due to students' multi-ethnic, multi religious backgrounds) that presented the chief challenge – that of preserving and maintaining harmony. However, this was achieved very satisfactorily by all the students in the dormitories.

Three distinguishing features, religious, nationalist-religious, and nationalist are proposed by Muslimin (2008) in referring to the boarding school atmosphere in Indonesia. The first of these features is religious which is further sub-divided into three patterns, namely, fundamentalist, moderate, and liberal which are reflections of Indonesia's religious patterns. Influences of the military (the symbol of nationalist leanings) are

apparent in this boarding school, with the aim of highlighting the seriousness of the teaching of discipline within democracy. Semi-military education combines with religious nuances in nationalist-religious style guidance in school. According to the teachers, no complications and problems were experienced and throughout it all harmony was maintained.

CONCLUSION

The development of a democratic culture through civic education from the perspective of the school-based democracy education in the Integrated High School of Krida Nusantara Bandung is seen to assume a form of disciplinary education. This is, in turn, closely associated to the National Education System (UUSPN). Aspects that are encompassed are religious education, military discipline, and boarding.

The conclusions of this study are as follows: (1) The perception of democracy education is as education that teaches the understanding of rights and obligations which come with a set of discipline-led sanctions for students. (2) The Standard of Content and the Standard of Process, and within certain limits refers to the norms of democratic learning (Joyce et al., 2009) and is adhered to during the planning and the implementation of civic learning. (3) Within the existing constraints of differences of culture religion, ethnicity, and the dorm, a real experience of democracy is provided by Student Council and extra-curricular activities. Intercultural, interethnic, and interreligious communication is facilitated

by the dorm's unique and conducive environment. This further encourages symbiotic-mutualism harmony. Dormitory tradition is still maintained and seniority and the privileges that come with it are maintained.

Through civic education, democratic culture is developed. "School-based democracy education" at the high school adopts the pattern of education with the application of discipline. This pattern is referred by the National Education System (UUSPN) and includes religious education and a form of authoritarian discipline (military). It also includes the parenting pattern. One of the recommendations of this study is for high school stakeholders to preserve, and continue to support and improve the efforts towards learning that is democratic. The development of a school culture that is democratic should continue to progress and thus transform into a model school for Indonesia.

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