
The Teaching of Social Studies in the Global Perspective

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Abstract

The teaching of Social Studies are interested to be researched because the discussion concerning its importance has never finished since the launching of Social Studies education in 1968 and strengthened further in the 1975 curriculum. There are two obstacles in the teaching of Social Studies, namely internal and external obstacles. The internal factors are related to the concept, perspective, and teaching model of Social Studies which have not yet clearly finalized. The external factors are related to the perspectives of the society, students, and government who consider that Social Studies are not important, resulting in only a few people are interested in Social Studies. Meanwhile, we now have to face the globalization which is full of expectations, problems, and challenges as well. Therefore, there is no other choice than reorienting the teaching-learning of Social Studies to make it able to meet the demand of global challenges. With regard to the characteristics of interdependency and the raise of moral ethics in the globalization, the development of integrated teaching for Social Studies is the solution. The teaching of Social Studies with actual and contextual themes based on the reality and social problems---either locally, nationally, or globally--- will result in human resources who have good ethics and are competent, competitive, and collaborative within the heterogeneity of the global world community.

Introduction

The studies concerning the teaching of Social Studies have never finished although only a few people who are interested to do so. Since the Social Studies were introduced in schools in 1968, there has never been one

single understanding concerning the concepts, purposes, teaching materials, and application of Social Studies within the national level. The students and their parents are not interested in Social Studies. This is due to the raise of materialistic culture together with the pragmatic, formalistic, and technical life styles. The mindset of the society tends to be practical, pragmatic, and materialistic. The satisfaction achieved tends to be temporary (superficial) and does not last long. Working to earn high income is the priority rather than working to get the best result and substantial satisfaction. This mindset has spread out even to the students at schools. They don't like Social Studies since it doesn't have a correlation with money. Also, they are not interested in the subjects which are not tested in the national exam like Social Studies. Moreover, their parents do not respect Social Studies as well; therefore, their children are suggested to major in Science rather than in Social Studies when they study at Senior High Schools. The society has low awareness about the importance of learning Social Studies for the society and for the nation's life. These attitudes and views become an obstacle in developing the process of teaching-learning Social Studies at schools.

There are still many other problems found in the teaching and learning process of Social Studies. Learning Social Studies tends to focus on memorizing the materials which is boring and not interesting. As the nature of human life is a system (which consists of various aspects that are interrelated to one another), such a teaching-learning process of Social Studies so far is not meaningful because its implementation is not integrated but separated. The teaching of Social Studies at schools is separated based on the disciplines such as Geography, Economy, History, and Sociology. Consequently, this way of learning cannot solve the real life problems which tend to be complicated. Moreover, the society itself has recently been globalized. The society does not only face the social problems but also has to deal with the intervention of globalization and its values which are now blended in our daily life. The problems of integration and interrelatedness to grow the meaningfulness and challenge of the globalization must be solved through Social Studies learning. With regard to the problems above, this paper discusses "The Teaching of Social Studies in the Global Perspective".

The Meaning of Social Studies Learning

In formal education, learning is a concept of teaching and learning activities. In this case, there must be an interaction between the teachers who organize and provide a conducive condition to run the teaching-learning

process and the students. Learning is an activity of changing the behavior not only related to the knowledge, but also improving the values of moral ethics, mentality and skills (see Raka Joni, 1977:7). In relation with this, Nasution (1980:10) states that the educational process and the learning process must be able to build philosophical foundation and develop the essence or values in every substance as well as process of the human interaction (here: teacher and students) itself. In other words, therefore, learning becomes a process of developing students' behavior to build such a character and personality so that they understand their position: who they are, where they are, what they are for, and where they go (Sardiman AM, 2010:61). The expected learning outcomes are not only knowledge but also experience, mental attitude, broader interest, respect to norms and rules, talent and soft skills.

With regard to the explanation above, teaching must be defined as a learning process, i.e. a process of providing a situation which stimulates and directs the activities for the students to gain knowledge, attitudes, and skills which could bring a transformation for their behavior to be better, wiser, having good ethics and morality. Due to this reason, the teaching and learning at schools is supposed not only to transfer knowledge but also to reconstruct knowledge and values.

In relation to the explanation above, the teaching of Social Studies can be defined as a process of developing, encouraging and stimulating the students to gain knowledge in all aspects of social life and experience the human values so that this could bring the transformation of the student's behavior and help develop their personality completely. In other words, Social Studies teaching is a process of developing students through messages (of social studies) in order that the students understand many problems and aspects of social life. This will direct the students to be wiser, more critical, respectful, and have empathy for human beings as well as their environment, so that they will be involved in solving the social problems. To make it clearer, it is necessary to first understand what Social Studies are and what the objectives of learning Social Studies are.

The term IPS (stands for *Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial*) in Indonesia refers *Social Studies*. The term *Social Studies* itself refers to the integrated social sciences (see Zamoni, 2010:7). Therefore, integration and interconnection is supposed to be the main characteristic of the Social Studies subject. With regard to this, Hamid Hasan (2010:2) states that Social Studies are an integrated study of human life in various time and space dimensions with all of its activities. In other words, Social Studies are a study related to the social life and its environment for the sake of education and development of the

social actors. Furthermore, according to the law of National Education System (*UU Sisdiknas*) article 37, Social Studies are a study which must be included in the curriculum of elementary and secondary education which consists of geography, history, economy, health science, etc., which aims to develop the knowledge, understanding, and analytical skills of the students towards the social condition in the community. In addition, the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) explains that:

"Social studies are the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and the natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world." (1994:3)

In line with the definition above, M. Numan Soemantri (2001:92) states that Social Studies are the integration between the branches of Social Sciences and humanities including religion, philosophy, and education. Social Studies could even contain certain aspects of natural sciences as well as technology.

Based on the definition above, Social Studies constitutes a comprehensive subject which can be one of the important instruments to develop character of the students and encourage them to develop empathy and tolerance. Besides, this will support the students to participate in solving the social-national problems in Indonesia as well as in the whole world in accordance with their capability and development. In reference to the explanation above, the objectives of Social Studies learning are to direct, guide, and develop the students potential in order that: (1) they understand the society life in all aspects and its environments, (2) they have basic ability to perform logical thinking, critical thinking, eager, inquiry, empathy as well as having awareness and social skills to be actively involved in solving social-national problems in the society life, (3) they have awareness to build a commitment toward the values of socio-cultural, nation and humanity to develop mature personality, (4) they have an ability to communicate, collaborate, and compete within the heterogeneous society in the local, national and international level (Hamid Hasan, 2010:3). In addition, Social Sciences education is expected to be able to develop the citizen and global world society which are democratic, responsible, and love peace (Anonymous, 2008:1). The democratic society is marked by, among others, such positive behavior as respecting different views

and upholding law. Responsibility is indicated by the ability and willingness to build commitment, to always be consequent, faithful and responsible to themselves, to others, to their environment, and to God. Meanwhile, peace-loving attitudes are indicated by prioritizing togetherness, performing wisdom and easy to give apology, respecting other views, deleting egoism and negative thinking which trigger a conflict. Through these objectives Social Studies teaching is expected to be able to create citizens who are pious, faithful to the God, smart, critical, wise, democratic, and responsible, communicative, independent, and nationalistic in the global world.

Global Perspective in the Teaching of Social Studies

Global Perspective is closely related to the globalization. In the globalization era, the world has been united and integrated. Someone from the one end of the world can easily communicate to another on the other end of the world just within *nanoseconds* (Marwah Daud Ibrahim, 1994:15). People from one area and those from the other in far distance can recognize the same object at the same time. The world is now borderless. All the people seem to live as if in the same community, in one house of the world, and can interact with and communicate to one another anytime easily. The development of science and technology helps human a lot to do activities easily, but the globalization also gives challenges, obstacles and even negative impacts if people cannot filter it and use it wisely.

Globalization has become a mainstream and cultural paradigm which influences human's life. Moreover, the impact of globalization has spread in the educational field. The process of globalization which has entered 21st century has caused the world widely opened without border, a borderless world (H.A.R. Tilaar, 1996:1). The borderless world consequently bring about the rapid changes and influences of ideas and technology which trigger the occurrence of paradigmatic changes. The development of the technology, information, telecommunication which makes it possible to have easier communication among communities or nations has created a competitive life to develop strengths for each community or nation. In this case, each community or nation is interdependent to one another in the world as a life unit. The unity in economic system is indicated by free trade such as AFTA and APEC. This development must be followed by the development in the field of politics and sciences which raises new tendencies.

Departing from the deeply bitter historical experience in the 20th century which is marked by wars and conflicts, a new vision in politics and morality

has emerged, i.e. establishing the world's peace, mutual collaboration, mutual respects and mutual needs. Meanwhile, the changes in the field of sciences is indicated by the new paradigm. Before the globalization era, science is seen just for science, which resulted from *Aufklärung* development, but globalization in the 21st century has developed a new paradigm of Science, Technology and Arts, which is not free of values and norms. According to Frijof Capra in Mulyana (2004:iii), in this globalization era, a new world vision with its core on life views, life system, and life wholeness should be developed. The development of Sciences and Technology in the globalization era is supposed to be controlled by and based on moral ethics. With regard to this tendency, education should develop not only the logical intelligence but also emotional and spiritual intelligences. In other words, education should be able to build smart, intelligent human beings with good character and personality. Therefore, it is necessary to develop character and values education (Sudiaty, 2009:211). These are some characteristics of the development of the human's life in the global era nowadays.

To cope with the development of globalization which is getting more and more complicated and competitive requires human resources resulted from qualified and competitive education but still with high moral ethics. With regard to this, education system and its implementation must be well managed in order to survive in facing the global world challenges. In managing and improving the quality of education to produce qualified, competitive, and high moral ethics human resources, it requires education system and reorientation which are relevant to the globalization besides improving the quality of the software and hardware as well. The implementation of Social Studies teaching requires new system and orientation which could meet the challenges of the global world. Therefore, both the characteristics of globalization and the principles of Social Studies teaching should be combined and integrated.

In relation with the discussion above, the characteristics of life in the global era are: individual life style, rapid and fundamental changes, borderless world, domination of information and technology, express communication, free trade, mutual influences, competitive, mutual interdependency and collaboration, world peace oriented, and moral ethics-based life. Besides giving a lot of benefits, globalization also brings along negative values and impacts. Meanwhile, the teaching of Social Studies has some principles and characteristics such as: (1) it is closely related to the social life, (2) it is integrated, (3) it is developed based on life themes, (4) it should be based on contextual and problem solving approach, (5) it aims at improving tolerance, wisdom, care, and respect, (6) it develops character and, in Indonesian contexts,

promotes Indonesian values and nationalism.

Taking the characteristics of globalization and those of Social Sciences teaching into account, it is clear that both can be synchronized to develop a more meaningful teaching-learning process. To face the demands of the global world, the human resources as the output of the education must be improved and qualified. This means that they must have the ability, competency, independency, self confidence, Science and Technology mastery, creativity, high competitiveness, high morality, high awareness of world peace in the society with heterogeneity, tolerance, interdependency, and readiness to work with all elements but still by keeping the nation's dignity and sovereignty.

In the teaching of Social Studies, the concept of interdependency or mutual dependency is very important. In the context of science and knowledge, the interdisciplinary collaboration is supposed to happen; therefore, interdisciplinary studies are required. That is the importance of Social Studies which integrates learning social sciences from many aspects and many disciplines. The concept of integration is very important since in the real life is a system which is integrated and constitutes an accumulation from many aspects of life in an individual and/or in the society. The implementation of Social Studies teaching can be through theme-based studies. Those themes can be formulated based on: (1) social problems surrounding the students, (2) the potentials of the local area, (3) actual issues and events, and (4) themes related to character education. Such integrated Social Studies teaching has some benefits as follows: besides being more effective and efficient, it is also more contextual, closer to the student's world, and closely related to daily life. The integrated teaching of Social Studies could increase the learning motivation as well as enrich, develop and broaden student's learning experience (Trianto, 2007:8 and 49). According to Fogarty (1991:77), the integrated teaching of Social Studies could develop thinking skills, social skills, and organizing skills. It can develop cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects as well.

With regard to this, the teaching of Social Studies should be adapted with the globalization and should take efforts to develop qualified human resources within the complexity of life in the heterogeneous and borderless world. Human resources should understand their position and existence as Indonesian people as well as realize its rich, various, and unique but limited natural resources within the ethnic's heterogeneity, cultural diversity, and within the increase of interdependency among human resources (Johannes Esomer, 1996:3). In this case, it is implied that there is a need for each individual to fulfill the responsibility as a part of the community in the local, national or international levels. Therefore, education and Social Studies teaching which are globally

oriented must be able to build awareness about the importance of similarity and togetherness within the heterogeneity among human beings in the world. Every human being and human resources of the educational outputs must understand that difference is potential and wealth to strengthen the togetherness among nations and global world citizens. Besides, every human resource must be aware that the natural resources of the nation are limited, Therefore, it requires awareness from all people in the world to keep and preserve them. In this context, the teaching of Social Studies could be developed by raising some themes related to the actual issues or employing problem-based learning. For example, the teachers can raise the issues on environmental problems, conflicts concerning tolerance and open-mindedness, or problems related to unity in diversity (*Kebhinekatunggalikaan*).

With regard to the global competition, the teaching of Social Studies at school should explore the main potential or strengths of a particular area as mandated by the School-Based Curriculum. For example, the teaching of Social studies could discuss some strengths and uniqueness of the area where the school is located, such as a theme related to the development of local tourism like Borobudur temple in Central Java, Ramayana dance in Yogyakarta, Pendet dance in Bali, and Asmat statues in Papua. In-class discussion of such themes could grow awareness and improve the affection and sense of belonging to the students to the area where they live so that they will, in turn, keep developing the various potential of their area. In such a case, they would be able to succeed in competing with other people from other areas or even other nations. At least, the local area could maintain its uniqueness and attract attentions to be visited by local and foreign tourists.

In relation to the view of Von Laue in I Gde Widja (1991:7), the development of Social Studies teaching could also take certain themes related to international cooperation. In this discussion, it is not only meant to understand political, economy, and cultural cooperation but also to know the tradition, wisdom, and patriotic values from other nations. This is very important since it can be used as a reference to develop character education in Indonesia. For this reason, it is important to develop Social Studies teaching which orient to the nation character education or value-based Social Studies teaching. The themes of Social Studies teaching can be: Indonesia as the Emerald of the Equator, My Ancestors the Skilled Sailors, Unity in Diversity, Patriotism, Nationalism, Social Justice, Let's Save Money, Traffic Ethics, Peaceful World, Anti- Corruption, Self-sufficiency, Honesty and Truth, *Pancasila* Our National Dignity, *Indonesia Raya* My National Anthem, International Cooperation, Indonesia and the Neighboring Countries, Terrorism is the World Enemy,

No Drugs No Smoking, etc. Those are some interesting themes which could be used in teaching the students. The Social Studies teaching should not be material-oriented. Instead, its orientation should be on character building and social problems solving.

Developing Social Studies teaching as explained above is not easy but it is meaningful, innovative and can be realized by the teacher of Social Studies. The keys are teacher's will, capability and creativity. In this case, it requires teacher professionalism and awareness that conducting a teaching is based affection and *roeping* for the sake of the students. Besides, it requires a political will from the leader including a support from the school principals and student's parents.

Conclusion

In reference to the explanation about the teaching of Social Studies in the Global Perspective, it can be concluded that globalization has brought about the fundamental and rapid changes in many aspects of our life. Globalization has given a lot of benefits for human beings on the other hand it also creates many problems and challenges. With regard to this, education as a tool to produce qualified human resources should carry out reorientation which could meet the global challenges. Similarly, the teaching of Social Studies must adapt and take some efforts to develop meaningful teaching to response the challenges of globalization. The integrated teaching of Social Studies would better be implemented through actual and contextual themes which are appropriate for the demands of the society, both nationally and internationally. If this Social Studies teaching could be well implemented, it would create human resources who are smart, wise, democratic, competitive and collaborative in the global world, with high morality and strong nationality.

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