

Understanding Cultural Diversity and Diverse Identities

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Abstract: Cultural diversity or often referred to as multiculturalism is a topic of concern to various countries in the world. Cultural diversity exists because of human development and civilization. Cultural diversity makes a nation more complex and unique. In addition, cultural diversity also reflects the uniqueness and differences between a nation and other nations. Cultural diversity cannot be separated from the existence of diverse cultural identities. Cultural identity is an understanding of something identical or an image associated with a culture. Diverse cultural identity means that a nation has an identity and description of its own culture and of course diversity. Regarding the relationship between cultural diversity and national identity, adequate understanding, views, and evidence must be provided on this matter. This article begins by defining cultural diversity and cultural identity. This article uses qualitative methods and library research by collecting information from several data sources, namely books, journals, the internet, and research reports. The collection of data used is observation with reading and note-taking techniques. The results of the study show that there is a relationship between understanding cultural diversity and national identity.

Keywords: culture, diversity, identity, multiculturalism, unique.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

In principle, understanding and studying culture is an endless issue or topic. Culture can even be said to be an interesting and challenging study because its domain of substance concerns humans both individually and in groups, either synchronically or diachronically, or either partially or overall, due to its complexity.

Human beings were created to know each other. Each nation is created differently, so they have their own identity. Joanna Rummens explains in her 1993 book *Linguistic Consequences of Ethnicity and Nationality* that identity is derived from the Latin "idem," which means equal, i.e., refers to the specific character of an individual, member of a particular group, or social category. In addition, according to him, the concept of identity is not only about equality but

also about what is different. Identity can also mean a character that distinguishes an individual or group from other individuals or groups. A relationship of equality in identity arises when an individual has similarities with another individual in a group. The relationship between differences in identity arises when an individual or a group has a particular character that distinguishes the individual or group from other individuals or groups.

In the context of a nation or country, culture becomes an important factor in shaping a social identity. Social identity is the result of self-identification by others and is an identification approved or given by a social actor to an individual. (Ramens, 1993).

Social identity is closely related to cultural identity. Cultural identity is a basic awareness of the specific characteristics of a group in terms of habits, customs, language, and values. (Santoso, 2006). To categorize a society, one must know its cultural characteristics, or, in other words, an ethnic identity can indicate a cultural or group identity.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Cultural Diversity

Culture is a complex system of values, beliefs, and behaviors that are interrelated and influence each other to form a consistent pattern in the way people experience and respond to the world around them. In this context, cultural diversity can be seen as significant differences in life experiences and related perceptions, as well as reactions to such experiences, which serve as a tool to distinguish one collective population from another. Many people believe that cultural diversity is an integral part of a rich human identity and heritage and is one of the aspects that make human life so diverse and exciting.

According to Marshall (2002), cultural diversity can be defined as "differences in life experiences and related perceptions and reactions to such experiences that serve to distinguish collective populations from each other." In this regard, cultural diversity can be seen as a rich and complex form of human experience that affects how people interact with the world around them. Therefore, understanding cultural diversity is important in understanding how humans interact with the world around them as well as how culture can influence the values, beliefs, and behaviors held by society.

Diverse Identities

Diversity can be described as a condition found within a society where there are many differences that can be found in various fields. Meanwhile, identity is part of the diversity in the cultural system of society. Identity basically refers to the personality of the individual, which is formed by various factors such as family, gender, culture, ethnicity, and socialization processes. Therefore, identity diversity can be interpreted as a condition within a society that reflects the individual's personality and is influenced by various factors such as culture, gender, family, and social conditions faced by the individual. In other words, identity diversity encompasses many aspects that can affect the individual's self and relate to various things in everyday life.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method of research used is the qualitative descriptive method. Qualitative research is a research procedure or method used to process data in the form of words, images, not numbers. Descriptive research is a type of research method that describes a population, situation, or phenomenon being studied. Descriptive research focuses on answering questions of how, what, when, and where.

This data is secondary data, i.e., data obtained or collected by the researcher based on existing sources. (Hasan, 2002: 58). As for data reference sources on secondary data, such as library materials, literature, previous research, books, etc.

As for the technique of data collection carried out in this writing, it is a library study. Martono (2011: 97) said that the study of libraries was conducted to expand knowledge about the various concepts that would be used as a basis or guideline in the research process. Library study in data collection techniques is a type of secondary data used to help the research process, that is, by collecting information contained in the scientific work of previous research, newspaper articles, or books.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Identity Issues in Education

Culture is very closely related to identity, like the way people see themselves and others. The diversity of cultures leads to diverse identities that bring both opportunities and challenges to public education. Today, countries, workplaces, and schools are increasingly composed of people from different tribes, cultures, races, and religious backgrounds. People need to have a level of understanding of each other in order to live together and collaborate with each other, i.e., they need to learn about other cultures and identity ties. This situation requires people to understand the different perspectives of the world in which they live and to reduce misunderstandings, stereotypes, biases, and discrimination about different cultures and people. In addition, cultural diversity gives people the opportunity to go beyond their own way of life and interact with others to understand and experience different ways of life.

Difficulties arise when different identities do not necessarily fit and have to compete with each other. This can be a challenge to overcome, especially when there are fundamental biases and misunderstandings about cultural differences that make people with different identities refuse to live together, let alone work together. For people who have spent years fighting all forms of exclusion (e.g., secessionism and racism), teaching the values of social justice and human rights and bringing equality and inclusion from the classroom to society is highly confusing and heartbreaking. War and conflict are triggered by misunderstandings, fears, and hatred of different cultures and identities.

In recent decades, regardless of the form of cultural diversity, the main themes of its discussion have always been equality and justice, which have varied meanings, ranging from demonstrating equal respect for all cultures to preserving cultural variety to recognizing all identities associated with culture and transforming social systems. Since cultural diversity is not only the reality of a diverse coexistence of knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, religions, languages, abilities and disabilities, gender, tribe, race, nationality, sexual orientation,

etc., among human beings, it also extends to how people react to this reality and the way they choose to live with it. Therefore, it is necessary to summarize the current approach in which people react to cultural diversity and the ways in which they believe it would be better to live together in cultural diversity.

Treating People with Different Cultures Equally

Considering that much of the diversity (e.g., cultural, ethnic, racial, and ethnic) and people's differences are human-made constructions to divide people and nurture stereotypes and hatred, this approach suggests that treating people with different cultures and identities differently by adopting these artificial concepts can be problematic. No one shall be discriminated against or exempted solely because of their differences, and everyone shall have the right to participate equally in the decision-making process, especially when they are able to determine whether a minority group may be exempted or not. (Barry 2001). This can be calculated by treating everyone as free and equal beings as long as the following three conditions are met: (1) all basic rights of the people are protected; (2) no one is compelled to adopt values adhered to by the majority of people; and (3) both in theory and in practice, decision makers are responsible (Taylor dan Gutmann 1994).

Benefits of Cultural Diversity

There are many benefits of cultural diversity. The excellence of this cultural diversity is first and foremost to help people or communities learn how to live together. Second, it helps to interact with each other. When interacting, such interaction will bring peace and happiness. Since the nineteenth century, there has been an inter-conversation, dialogue, and interaction with the other nations of the 19th century: the visitors, merchants, and sailors. Through this, people learn the culture of their opponents. It can be said that one of the most important advantages is the interaction between cultures. Cultural diversity helps people interact with each other. As we interact with cultures, we learn how people behave, how they communicate in different cultures, and what they like or dislike. We avoid misunderstandings between different societies. Cultural influences continue to shape specific development, starting before birth, affecting subtle and also clear ways of doing something (Lott, 2010, p. 16). Communicating across differences is not an easy thing, and the greater the cultural gap, the more difficult it is to understand. But that makes cultural diversity unique.

Cultural Diversity Problems

A compact society brings about a lot of tribal cultural diversity, race, and a degree of equality in culture. This must be observed when discussing the problem of a very complex culture as a reality and the wealth of a nation. Therefore, there are a few things to pay attention to.

Cultural diversity is a proud characteristic. However, diversity does not immediately create uniqueness, beauty, pride, and other good things. The diversity of society has characteristic characteristics that, at some point, can potentially negatively affect the life of the nation. Van de Berghe, as quoted by Elly M. Setiadi (2006), explain that the community is unstable or different societies always have the following basic characteristics:

1. Segmentation occurs into groups that often have different cultures.
2. It has a social structure that is divided into non-complementary institutions.

3. Less development of consensus among members of society on fundamental social values. Relatively, there are often conflicts between one group and the other.
4. Relatively, social integration grows beyond coercion and interdependence within the economic sphere.
5. There is political domination by one group over another.

Some important things above need to be taken into account in improving understanding between cultures and societies, including eliminating as many cultural diseases as possible. These diseases can trigger conflicts between groups that arise as a result of cultural diversity. Some of the things that cause conflict and disintegration are ethnocentrism, stereotypes, bad prejudice, racism, discrimination, and scapegoating.

CLONCUSION

Understanding cultural diversity and identity is a must for an increasingly multicultural society. This is important because cultural diversity and identity can reflect human complexity as well as provide an opportunity for us to understand the views, values, and norms of different cultural groups. If we have a good understanding of cultural diversity and identity, we can play an important role in promoting social integration and the recognition of human diversity. As we strengthen cultural diversity and identities, we can work together to solve the problems facing all of humanity and create a more inclusive and sustainable environment.

Moreover, understanding cultural diversity and identity can also bring hope for us to bring people from different cultures together and work together to solve the problems facing all of humanity. By understanding each other and appreciating differences, we can create a more peaceful and sustainable world for all. Therefore, it is important for communities to continue to strengthen their understanding of cultural diversity and identity in order to create an inclusive and harmonious society.

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