

Indonesia and Malaysia: Comparison on The Efforts Of Maintaining National Identities to Higher Education Students

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ABSTRACT

Globalization may also effects education. Nevertheless, every country tries to maintain their national's identity since national's identity should be one of every country's strenght. Education is one of tools to maintain national identity. This particular article seek to efforts of the government of Indonesia and Malaysia in maintaining their national's identity in higher educations. The relationship of these two countries has been hot and cold over times. One of issues that has been arisen is in regards of cultural heritages. Thus, it is relevant to arise these questions in regards to that facts, they are: 1) how do higher education students in Indonesia and Malaysia learn about their national identity?; and 2) what are the learning methods applied on the subjects? This article limits the higher degree students are bachelor degree students only. The method which is implemented is qualitative approach. Data are gathered from relevant regulations and articles from journals and mass media. The results based on data show that: 1) bachelor degree students in both countries must learn compulsory subjects. In Indonesia the cluster of the subjects are called *Mata Kuliah Wajib Umum* (General Compulsory Subjects), which contain of four subjects. While in Malaysia the cluster of the subjects are called *Matapelajaran Pengajian Umum* (General Subjects); and 2) in Indonesia, the learning methods applied to the compulsory subjects are based on constructivism. While in Malaysia, they implement interactive learning, e-learning, and group activity.

Keywords: National Identity, Higher Education, Bachelor Degree

A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia and Malaysia are two neighbouring countries which have faced some challenges due to their citizens' pluralities. Both countries have ideologies which consist five principles. Indonesia has *Pancasila* while Malaysia has *Rukun Negara*. There are also five principles stated in *Rukun Negara*, they are: belief in God, loyalty to King and Country, upholding the constitution, rule of law, and good behavior and morality (UNESCO, 2011). Malaysia is

considered as one country that achieve success in promoting unity to its citizen through higher education (Lee Wei Chang, et.al, 2013).

Comparative studies on Indonesia and Malaysia have been conducted many times. Two examples of works that were found are: education in Islamic's perspective (Kikue Hamayotsu, 2002); and in politics issues (Garry Rodan and Caroline Hughes, 2014). However, this particular work aims to find the efforts of these two neighbouring countries to maintain their national identities knowledge to bachelor degree students.

Recently, there are many cases which regards to pluralities issues. Looking at what has been happening in Indonesia, thus it is important to seek how the higher education institutions in Malaysia promotes unity in regards with their pluralities. In accordance to what the former of *Presiden Majelis Bekas Wakil Rakyat Malaysia* (the Former President of Parliament) Tan Sri Dr. Abdul Aziz Rahman conveyed to Yudi Latief, then, *Kepala Unit Kerja Presiden Pengembangan Ideologi Pancasila* (Head of the Presidential Work Unit on Pancasila Ideology Development) in February 2018. He was willing to have a cooperation with Yudi Latief to establish a similar unit in Malaysia. Furthermore, he stated that Malaysians need to develop *Rukun Negara* from its ideology side—by the implementation as well as internalization. As for the first step in realizing the plan, there will be seminar held to discuss about *Pancasila* and *Rukun Negara*. The seminar will be attended by 1.000 participants. Latief conveyed that the two countries have their own advantages. Indonesia has advantages in Pancasila (as an effort in nation building) while Malaysia's is in the development of state building. (Republika.co.id, 2018).

The aims of this article are seeking answers of these questions: 1) how do higher education students in Indonesia and Malaysia learn about their national identity?; and 2) what are the learning methods applied on the subjects?

The organizational of this writing are exploring the higher education system in Indonesia and Malaysia, The research method which is applied to this work, the finding and discussion, conclusions and recommendations. This writing, however, focuses on students on bachelor's degree level only.

B. HIGHER EDUCATION IN BOTH COUNTRIES

In Indonesia, the government gives authority to the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education (*Kementerian Riset, Teknologi dan Pendidikan Tinggi*), while in Malaysia it falls to the authority of Ministry of Higher Education.

In Indonesia, the higher education is regulated with the Law Number 12 Year 2012 regarding Higher Education. While in Malaysia, higher education is regulated through: Education Act 1996 (Act 550); Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996 (Act 555); Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 (Act 30).

Higher education in Indonesia is conducted based on Pancasila, the Constitution Year 1945, the Unitary State of Republic of Indonesia, and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity). While in Malaysia, they have what they call *Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan* ((National Education Philosophy), as stated below:

“Pendidikan Malaysia merupakan satu usaha berterusan ke arah mengembangkan lagi potensi individu secara menyeluruh dan bersepadu untuk mewujudkan insan yang harmoni dan seimbang dari segi intelek, rohani dan jasmani berdasarkan kepercayaan dan kepatuhan kepada Tuhan. Usaha ini adalah bagi melahirkan rakyat Malaysia yang berilmu pengetahuan, berketerampilan, berakhlak mulia, bertanggung jawab dan berkeupayaan mencapai kesejahteraan diri serta memberi sumbangan terhadap keharmonian dan kemakmuran masyarakat serta negara.”

(Malaysia's education is a continuous effort towards expanding the potential of individuals in a comprehensive and integrated way to create harmonious and balanced intellectual, spiritual and physical persons based on God's belief and obedience. The effort is to produce Malaysians who are knowledgeable, skilled, noble, responsible and capable of achieving well-being and contributing to the harmony and prosperity of society and the nation.)

In Indonesia, based on the Article 1 number 2 of the law Number 12 Year 2012, Higher education in Indonesia is level of education which covers programs of diploma, bachelor, master, doctorate, profession, specialist. While in Malaysia, based on the Act 550, it is stated that “higher education means education provided by a higher educational institution”. Furthermore, it is stated that the higher educational institutions provide education of diploma, degree or other which are equivalent.

Objectives of higher education in Indonesia as stated in Article 5 Law Number 12 Year 2012 regarding Higher Education, they are as stated below:

- a. *berkembangnya potensi Mahasiswa agar menjadi manusia yang beriman dan bertakwa kepada Tuhan Yang Maha Esa dan berakhlak mulia, sehat, berilmu, cakap, kreatif, mandiri, terampil, kompeten, dan berbudaya untuk kepentingan bangsa.*

(develop the potential of the Student to become a man of faith and fear of God Almighty and noble, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, skilled, competent, and cultured for the benefit of the nation.)

- b. *dihasilkannya lulusan yang menguasai cabang Ilmu Pengetahuan dan/atau Teknologi untuk memenuhi kepentingan nasional dan peningkatan daya saing bangsa;*

(generate graduates who master the branches of Science and / or Technology to fulfill national interests and increase the competitiveness of the nation);

- c. *dihasilkannya Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Teknologi melalui Penelitian yang memperhatikan dan menerapkan nilai Humaniora agar bermanfaat bagi kemajuan bangsa, serta kemajuan peradaban dan kesejahteraan umat manusia; dan*

(generate Science and Technology through Research that pay attention to and apply the value of Humanities in order to benefit the progress of the nation, as well as the progress of humanity and the welfare of humanity); and

- d. *terwujudnya Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat berbasis penalaran dan karya Penelitian yang bermanfaat dalam memajukan kesejahteraan umum dan mencerdaskan kehidupan bangsa.*

(to exteriorize Community Service based on reasoning and research work which are useful in advancing public welfare and educating the life of the nation.)

While in Malaysia the aims of the education based on the *Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan* (National Education Philosophy) are: “1) *mempercayai dan mematuhi Tuhan* (believe and obey God); 2) *berilmu pengetahuan* (knowledgeable); 3) *berketerampilan* (skillful); 4) *bersahsia tinggi* (high conscious); 5) *bersedia menyumbang kepada masyarakat, agama, bangsa, dan negara* (willing to contribute to society, religion, nation, and country); and 6) *bertanggung jawab kepada diri, agama, bangsa, masyarakat dan negara* (responsible to self, religion, nation, society and country).

Based on the above explanation, it can be understood that the aims of education in both countries are similar. Both countries organize education to achieve human resources who will become good human beings with good characters, and good skills as well as good knowledge.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

The method which is implemented is qualitative approach. Data are gathered from: (1) educational law system and higher education laws and regulations of Indonesia and Malaysia; (2) relevant articles from journals; (3) and relevant articles from online mass media. The data which have been gathered are displayed. Data which are not relevant are reduced. The relevant data are coded in order to make them easier to be analysed.

D. DISCUSSION

1. In both countries, there are compulsory subjects. In Indonesia, they are called *Mata Kuliah Wajib Umum/MKWU* (General Compulsory Subjects), while in Malaysia they are called General Studies or *Mata Pelajaran Umum/MPU*.

In Indonesia there is one particular law which regulates higher education. That is the Law Number 12 Year 2012 regarding Higher Education. In Article 35 (3) stated that there are four subjects that must be taught to university students. The subjects are: a. *Agama* (Religion); b. *Pancasila* (the Five Principles); c. *Kewarganegaraan* (Civic Education); and d. *Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian Language). The ideology of Indonesia, *Pancasila*, is one of the aforementioned subjects. It is stated in the part b of the aforementioned article in the Explanation of the Law that “*Yang dimaksud dengan “mata kuliah Pancasila” adalah Pendidikan untuk memberikan pemahaman dan penghayatan kepada Mahasiswa mengenai ideologi bangsa Indonesia*” (the subject of Pancasila is education to provide understanding and comprehension of the ideology of the Indonesians). In addition to that, the subject of *Kewarganegaraan* (Civic Education) also contains *Pancasila*.

In 2017, the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education released a Circular Letter Number 03/M/SE/VIII/2017 regarding the Strengthening Pancasila Education dan General Compulsory Courses in Higher Education (*Surat Edaran Nomor: 03/M/SE/VIII/2017 tentang Penguatan Pendidikan Pancasila dan Mata Kuliah Wajib Umum Pada Pendidikan Tinggi*) which instructs higher education to “*mengintegrasikan dan menginternalisasikan muatan nilai Pancasila, moral kebangsaan serta budaya nasional dalam proses pembelajaran setiap mata kuliah dan kegiatan kemahasiswaan sebagai bagian dari bela negara*” (integrating and internalizing the content of Pancasila values, national morality and

national culture in the learning process of each subject and students activities as part of the defense of the country).

In comparison with Indonesia, which the students must take four compulsory courses (Religion, *Pancasila*, Civic Education, and *Bahasa Indonesia*)—the students in Malaysia have to join some courses which are called *Matapelajaran Pengajian Umum* (MPU), formerly known as *Mata Pelajaran Wajib* (MPW). The MPU must be taken by the students to reach the goals, which are: “*melahirkan graduan yang holistik, menghayati nilai-nilai patriotisme dan jati diri beracuan Malaysia serta menguasai kemahiran insaniah ke arah memenuhi kebolehpasaran kerja*” (to provide hollistic graduates, embracing the values of patriotism and self-indulgence in Malaysia and mastering soft skills towards fulfilling job-oriented skills).

Furthermore Based on the Guideline of General Education Subjects (*Garis Panduan MataPelajaran Pengajian Umum* (MPU)) which has been released by *Jabatan Pendidikan Tinggi Kementerian Pendidikan Tinggi* (2016), MPU contains of four clusters of general subjects. The guideline becomes effective since September 2017. The clusters are known as U1, U2, U3, and U4. Below are the contents of U1, U2, U3, and U4:

- a. U1 contains of subjects which aim to provide *penghayatan falsafah, nilai dan sejarah* (philosophy, values and history). There are 7 (seven) subjects, namely: a. Hubungan Etnik, Tamadun Asia Tamadun Islam (TITAS), B.M. Komunikasi 1, B.M. Komunikasi 2, Pengajian Malaysia 1, Pengajian Malaysia 2, and Pengajian Malaysia 3.
- b. U2 contains of subjects which aim to provide *penguasaan kemahiran insaniah* (advancing soft skills). The subjects are: Bahasa Kebangsaan A and another subjects provided by each institutions.
- c. U3 contains of subjects which aim to provide *perluasan ilmu pengetahuan tentang Malaysia* (Advancing knowledge regarding Malaysia). Subjects are provided by each institutions.
- d. U4 contains of subjects which aim to provide *kemahiran pengurusan masyarakat yang bersifat praktikal seperti khidmat masyarakat dan korikulum* (practical skills in managing

society for example community service and curriculum). subjects are provided by each institutions.

However, MPU actually only learned by students of *Sarjana Muda* (bachelor degree students), *Diploma*, and *Sijil* (certificate) who have not taken the subjects at their previous level. While students of programs: *sarjana dan kedoktoran*; *kursus jangka pendek* (short course); *program bukan penamat* (non-terminal) seperti matrikulasi; *program asasi* (foundation); *kursus profesional* (professional courses), *bagi pelajar yang telah mengambil kursus MPU di peringkat pengajian terdahulu* (students who have taken MPU at previous study); and *Pemberian pengecualian MPU adalah tertakluk kepada peruntukan di dalam Akta yang perlu dipatuhi oleh IPT masing-masing* (MPU is exempt based on regulation of each IPT) .

Thus, from the above explanation—it can be understood that like in Indonesia that the bachelor degree students must learn compulsory subjects, so as with bachelor degree students in Malaysia. (2) The learning methods applied on the subjects the aforementioned subjects are: in Indonesia, based on Article 11 (1) of the Regulation of Minister on Research, Technology, and Higher education Number 44 Year 2015 regarding National Standard on Higher Education (*Peraturan Menteri Riset, Teknologi, dan Pendidikan Tinggi Republik Indonesia Nomor 44 Tahun 2015 tentang Standar Nasional Pendidikan Tinggi*), the characteristic of learning process should be conducted based on:

“*Karakteristik proses pembelajaran sebagaimana dimaksud dalam Pasal 10 ayat (2) huruf a terdiri atas sifat interaktif, holistik, integratif, saintifik, kontekstual, tematik, efektif, kolaboratif, dan berpusat pada mahasiswa.*”

(the characteristic of learning process which is as mentioned in the Article 10 verse (2) alphabet a naturally consist of interactive, hollistic, integrative, scientific, contextual, theme, effective, collaborative, and student centered)

Furthermore, based on Article 14 (3) of the Regulation of Minister on Research, Technology, and Higher education Number 44 Year 2015 regarding National Standard on Higher Education (*Peraturan Menteri Riset, Teknologi, dan Pendidikan Tinggi Republik Indonesia Nomor 44 Tahun 2015 tentang Standar Nasional Pendidikan Tinggi*), the learning method which should be applied (may be chosen):

“diskusi kelompok, simulasi, studi kasus, pembelajaran kolaboratif, pembelajaran kooperatif, pembelajaran berbasis proyek, pembelajaran berbasis masalah, atau metode pembelajaran lain, yang dapat secara efektif memfasilitasi pemenuhan capaian pembelajaran lulusan.”

(“group discussion, simulation, case study, collaborative learning, cooperative learning, project based learning, problem based learning, or another learning method which may be effective to fulfill the graduate learning outcome)

However, there is no specific regulation on what learning method must be applied for MKWU. It is worth to be noted that the learning method which have been mentioned above are included to constructivism, as it is stated in Article 11 (1) alphabet a above, that the learning process is conducted on students as the center.

In Malaysia, the learning method (*kaedah penyampaian*) of MPU are mostly in the nature of *kuliah interaktif* (interactive learning), *e-pembelajaran* (e-learning), and *aktiviti dalam pasukan* (group activity). (the Guideline of General Education Subjects, p. 14)

Based on the findings above, it can be understood that the learning methods in Indonesia are not clearly stated as learning methods which are used or apply technology based. While in Malaysia, it is clearly stated that one of the method is *e-pembelajaran* (e-learning).

It is worth to be noted that the future research will be seek on how the aforementioned learning methods in Malaysia implemented.

F. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The higher education in Indonesia, as well as in Malaysia, have been implemented policy on compulsory subjects that must be taken by the bachelor degree students. the compulsory subjects in Indonesia must be taken without exeptional, while in Malaysia the students may not take the subjects if they have taken them at the previous study. In regards with the learning methods on the compulsory subjects, there is an interesting finding that in Malaysia one of the methods implemented is e-learning. While in Indonesia is not stated clearly about this type of learning method.

Thus, it is recommended that the Government of Indonesia should included this type of learning method in the relevant regulations. furthermore, the higher education are motivated and provided infrastucture to implement such learning method.

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