Anti bias education practice in pre-school education in rural Malaysia

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ABSTRACT: This study will aim at describing the Preschool Education Anti-Bias practice in rural Malaysia. It explores two key aspects. Firstly, teacher demographics which influenced anti-bias education teaching practice in pre-school. A few factors are scrutinized namely gender, academic educational background and teacher service period. Both methods and teachers' classroom teaching strategy are examined. Researchers concentrate on teacher application to develop interest, knowledge and pupil understanding of anti-bias educational practice. This study is a qualitative case study. Research respondents consist of 2 groups. A total of 4 pre-school teachers and 16 pupils will be involved as study participants. Data collection will be done through interview, lesson observation and document analysis. Triangulation technique and expert examination will be used to ensure trustworthiness and credibility.

Keywords: anti-bias education; preschool; rural Malaysian

1 INTRODUCTION

Malaysian society is composed of a variety of religions, languages, ethnic groups and cultures. The diversity of the Malaysian population is seen in the different ethnic customs and beliefs that have filled the background with unique cultural and ethnic practices. Therefore, anti-bias education practices are important in Malaysia in order to integrate the students at all levels of education.

2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Preschool education context shows that the practice of anti-bias education has a broad applicability. This can be approached through western researchers’ view as well as the Islamic perspective. Based on studies in the West, the concept of Anti-Bias Education Practice is a concept that promotes equality of teaching human rights in the classroom. According to Derman-Sparks and Olsen (2010), the Anti-Bias Education Practice is a concept and an approach that gives special privileges to every human being to be treated with respect, dignity, equality and justice without distinction (Derman-Sparks & Olsen, 2010; Lin, Lake, & Rice, 2008).

Anti-bias education practice requires educators to fulfill “the practice of freedom” (Freire, 2000). This practice gives the students exposure and practice facilities for socialization with decency. Through it, students learn how to manage an environment in critical and creative ways; as a result, each student is allowed to have a positive self-identity, be confident and more concerned (Derman-Spark & Olsen, 2010). The practice of freedom is also bridging the differences among students. This allows existence of multiple communication, critical thinking and skill to stand alone in the face of injustice.

In an Islamic perspective, the concept of Anti-Bias Education Practice translates as nature educator-Justice on behavior, balanced or match (Abdullah Nasih Ulwan, 2008). Justice here is also related to the conduct of the teachers not to be extreme in the process of nurturing students. They were also seen placing justice in the right place and not being harmful. This is in contrast with the views of Muslims now that puts fair education in terms of equal position or equality of rights.

The concept of effective education is the practice of teaching and educating students in accordance with their capabilities, and their learning style (Yusuf Al-Qardhawi, 2003; Al-Ghazali, 2010). This is because what benefits a person does not necessarily benefit someone else. Its implication is that effective teachers properly convey their knowledge appropriate to the maturity level of the students. In education, it is considered an injustice to educate the non-committed members or students in a manner that the students cannot afford.
3 REVIEW PROBLEMS

Pre-school teachers play an important role in delivering the anti-bias education practices to students. According to Mariani (2012), anti-bias education practice teaching in Malaysia is considered important because Malaysian society is a plural society that diverse in terms of cultures, ethnicity and religion. Its implementation is seen as a necessity to education policies and programs that serve as prevention and encourage partnerships between communities. Several factors can be put forward as challenges in teaching practice-driven anti—bias education.

In the education sector, Saedah Siraj and Mohammed Sani Ibrahim (2012) stated that the community generally is more confident of the long-serving teachers who are more knowledgeable and committed. This is because teachers with limited background experience are associated with less effective presentation in the classroom. This is consistent with findings in other countries showing nearly 80% less effective delivery of new teachers (Parsad, Lewis, & Farris, 2001). While in Malaysia, about 50% of the teachers are teaching at the effective level category (MOE, 2012). Among the causes of teacher teaching being seen as less effective, is that educators lack pedagogical mastery and are less ready when faced with students comprising various ethnic, background and culture differences (Parsad et al., 2001).

People living in rural and remote areas require intelligent commitment and more motivated high school managers (Haznurah Zainon & Mohd Zuri Ghani, 2012; Syed Ismail & Ahmad Subki, 2010). This requirement aims at eliminating the rural-urban students’ achievement gap. In addition, this challenge is trying to bridge the local community relations with educators (MOE, 2012). The results from Amar, Hazri, and Passes (2013) show that teachers and school managers’ socialization is more likely to reflect the ethnicity as negative socialization processes. This situation can cause minority pupils to feel marginalized and have “low self-esteem to succeed” (SUHAKAM, 2010, 2012).

Educators need to intelligently handle the confines of negative issues, especially bias in practice, behavioral bias, gender bias, language bias, the stereotypical attitudes and attitudes of prejudice. Preconceptions towards pupils only pose less confident teaching especially of minority students (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006; SUHAKAM, 2010). This group requires a teacher to exhibit anti-bias and put pupils at ease, making them feel always appreciated and well managed. Wise teachers create a learning system that is fair and leads to formation of character and personality of pupils. This is because pupils desire a varied instruction involving multicultural understanding and flexible methods.

The pupils require such a teaching of anti-bias involving the use of language, ethnicity, culture, and methods that are understood (Carol Smith, 2013; Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010). Teaching with bias will only put students in a corner and make them fail to manage the environment properly.

4 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study has the following objectives:

1. Demographic Profiling of teachers involved in teaching educational practices in terms of gender bias, anti, academic educational background (professional qualifications) and length of service (work experience).
2. To analyze and identify the method applied in the classroom by the teacher to foster anti-bias practice in pre-school education from the aspect of building interest and knowledge, increasing awareness of pupils and developing critical thinking students.

5 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

The following are definitions of words, phrases and terms as they are used in the study:

5.1 Preschool

This context of study suggests operational refers to preschool class built and supervised by the Ministry of Education Malaysia. Preschool pupils consist of children aged five and six years. This preschool is using the Standard National Curriculum for preschool curriculum, teaching and learning (MOE, 2010).

5.2 Bias

In the context of this study, operational definition of bias applies to explain the issues of disbelief, fear, suspicious, guilt, unfair and prejudiced. Bias in this study also is a tendency or attitude of prejudice to one person or group (Mariani, 2012; Van Keulen, 2004).

5.3 Anti-Bias

Anti-bias in this study applies based on the opinion of scholars of Islam and the West. Anti-bias refers to actions contrary to the acts of bias. These include fair practices, respect, trust, not fear change, and open-minded. This practice also referred to the
intention, simplicity, sincerity, equality and values (Abdullah Nasih Ulwan, 2008; Derman-Spark & Ramsey, 2006).

5.4 Practice Anti—Bias Education

In the context of this study, anti-bias education practice refers to internal and external behavior of teachers in teaching. This behavior was fulfilled on the basis of sincerity without compulsion, holy faith, confidence and responsibility. The result will build interaction with ethnic diversity, cultural diversity, developing critical thinking and skill to stand alone to face injustice (Al Ghazali, 2010; Freire, 2000; Lin, 2008; MOE, 2009).

6 MANAGEMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN PRESCHOOL

Relevant pedagogical knowledge is important in preschool. It plays a role in shaping the culture of learning without affecting the identity of students’ cultural heritage. Its implementation allows teachers to incorporate elements of culture, ethnicity and language in planning teaching (James, 2014). This practice emphasizes the similarities and differences of rights among students. In addition, it develops the power of creative and critical thinking that ultimately strengthen pupils ranging from various ethnic groups and cultures in the classroom. This is seen as important because all forms of action and nursery teachers in preschool gave more positive impact to the development of pupils (Marzano et al., 2003).

In preschool teaching, teachers need to implement the method of learning through play. By implementing this method, the teacher can get involved with building positive communication with pupils. This method is seen as the key in the process of teaching pupils in preschool. Playing is a natural nature preschool students who are able to upgrade the skills of pupils to optimum levels (Broadhead, 2004; Brock et al., 2009; Drake, 2001; Mariani, 2012; Riley, 2003). Method of play helps preschool students to explore their thinking skills, social skills and emotional skills.

Emphasis on language manners and positive regard will impact on preschool students. Preschool students adore good speeches and names that suit them. This is because the use of the name, skin color, physical form, language, behavior in the classroom is a symbol of ethnic identity and culture practiced at home (Najeemah Mohd Yusof, 2010; Miriam Giugni, 2008). Therefore preschool teachers need to avoid classroom practices that are inappropriate or less polite. For that, teachers need to be more creative in creating rules that can apply to a wide range of students and ethnic cultures.

In addition, play can also prevent pupils from feeling bored and get rid of fear of preschool peers of different ethnicity, language and culture. The use of personal dolls in teaching is one of the techniques that expose students to appreciation of differences in ethnicity, language and culture in their environment (Mariani, 2005; Van Keulen, 2004). Play is said to be able to train the pupils in self-control, emotion control, socializing and sharing experience with power (Carol Smith, 2013). It directly provides an opportunity for students to tolerate and accept others and to share power.

7 THE RESEARCH DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Qualitative research design is used in the study. Case study method is applied because the researchers want to explore the situation about teaching practice-driven anti-bias education in preschool in depth and in detail (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Merriam, 2009). In this study, researchers will undertake data collection through document analysis, observation and interview. Preschool teachers and students are the most important and key information providers in this study. Preschool teachers studied will consist of 2 males and 2 females, while the preschool students will consist of 8 males and 8 females of different ethnic groups.

Location of the study will be in Education Ministry preschool classes located outside the city which have basic facilities and are implementing the Standard National Curriculum for Preschool. For effective data analysis, researchers will apply three analytical methods which involve making summaries, reflective annotations and current information gathering through memoing. After data collection, data filtering, data presentation, forming conclusions will be applied to obtain the results. This process will make the review more robust and achieve the targeted objectives.

REFERENCE


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