



Engaging Opportunities and Challenges: Students' Perspectives Towards Developing Islamic Education Learning Media

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Abstract

This qualitative research examined the challenges of the character education for Malay-speaking Muslim children in Sambas Regency, Indonesia, a post-conflict region marked by inter-ethnic tensions. Based on observation, interviews, and literature review, the discussion explored the impact of prolonged ethnic conflict on the education system, character building, and transitional peacemaking. Schools in Sambas faced significant challenges in integrating peace and multicultural education into teaching practices. The discussion illustrated how institutional character education fosters multiculturalism and peace by addressing the residual effects of conflict while aligning with government regulations and local wisdom. It argued that while character education is a long-term effort, it held promise for fostering sustainable positive peace and inter-ethnic harmony. The insights from Sambas offered a framework for character education in similar conflict-affected regions, emphasize the importance of peace and multicultural values in education.

Keywords: Character education, Post-conflict, Negative peace, Ethnic relations, Sambas

A. Introduction

A heterogeneous society in terms of ethnicity can be positive or negative depending on how it is viewed. When it comes to public awareness about the importance of living peacefully and multiculturally, it certainly will not be a problem. However, a problem arises when heterogeneity in society becomes the reason for the division and triggers violent conflict among them. This trend occurred in Sambas in 1999 between Sambas Malay and Madurese. Although these two ethnic groups embrace Islam, it turns out that there is no guarantee for the two not to hurt and even kill each other.

The inter-ethnic conflict that occurred in Sambas twenty years ago was on a massive scale. Hundreds of people were reported have died from both sides, hundreds of houses and public facilities were destroyed, and the number of refugees was evidence of how massive the inter-ethnic conflict was in Sambas (Cahyono, Tryatmoko, Adam, & Satriani, 2008). The escalation of the Sambas conflict seemed to have been suppressed by the Indonesian Armed Forces [Tentara Nasional Indonesia — TNI] and the police, in the sense that it appears on the surface, but not in the sense that the work carried out has succeeded in 'clearing up' the residues.

Conflict resolution has also, to some extent, been carried out to reconcile the two ethnic groups that are fighting in Sambas. Based on our records, resolutions have been carried out many times by involving many elements in society, especially from the two conflicting ethnic groups, both formal and informal. Some of them are: First, the Peace Determination of the Nation's Offspring of Kalimantan, which was held on March 22, 2001; Second, the Peace Determination of the Kalimantan People which was held on 1-3 February 2002; Third, the Dialogue between Leaders in the Framework of Building National Integration on June 13, 2002; Fourth, the Malay-Madurese Mediation Forum which was held on August 3, 2002, and November 10, 2007 (Fahham, 2010). Although this case was already handled by the TNI and the police, the resolution effort is still having difficulties in neutralizing the post-conflict residues of Sambas.

The assimilation between the Sambas ethnic Malay and the ethnic Madurese, as the two ethnic groups clashed decades ago. A stigma prevailed in Sambas as if no safe place for Madurese. Sambas, according to Johan Galtung, has only reached a negative peace, but positive peace is non-existent (Galtung, 1969). Negative peace is a condition in society that is only shown by the absence of direct violence, such as the absence of inter-tribal wars that occurred twenty years ago in

this area. Positive peace is indicated by conditions in which the community can interact without fear, be free to act and be free from exploitation, get justice, live in prosperity side by side in a tolerant and cooperative manner, despite the history of conflict in the past (Galtung, 1969). This type of peace, according to Lambang Trijono, is 'a fragile peace'. (Trijono, 2007, 2009)

Recognizing the fragility of peace in Sambas, these post-conflict residues must be considered. These residues can trigger inter-ethnic clashes in the Sambas community in the future. Learning from the violent conflict that occurred twenty years ago in Sambas, unfortunately, the post-conflict residues were not completely cleared up (De Jonge & Nootboom, 2006; Klinken, 2007, 2008; Nordholt & Klinken, 2014; Kristianus, 2011; Saad, 2003; Alqadrie, 1999, 2003, 2015; Tanasaldy, 2009). What happened in Sambas twenty years ago is very likely to repeat itself, as the conflict that occurred in the same area in 1999 repeated the episodes of inter-ethnic clashes that had occurred before, which can even be traced since 1770. (Aju & Isman, 2015; Ar., 2013; Kristianus, 2011; Zakiyah, 2017).

Neutralizing the post-conflict residues of Sambas is clearly not an easy task because what is being targeted here is public awareness about the importance of peace and multicultural awareness. There are no immediate results. Nevertheless, these efforts must still be made to complete the previous work to reduce the escalation of conflict by the Police and the TNI, and/or to reconcile the two conflicting ethnic groups through leaders from both sides.

Character education is possibly an important instrument and an effort to build public awareness about the importance of peace and multicultural awareness. It is assumed to be the case because its function is related to efforts to equip a person with knowledge, mental attitudes, and skills that are in line with the need to build an atmosphere of peace and multiculturalism in society. Some researchers, such as Margaret Nugent's about post-conflict Ireland (Nugent, 2014), Louis Zandoni about post-conflict Kenya (Zandoni, 2015), Saeed Ahmed Aden about post-conflict Somalia (Aden, 2017), and Alsayid Mohammed about post-conflict Iraq (Mohammed, 2015), have revealed how important the function of character education in countries where regions just emerged from bloody conflicts is used for the society reconstruction to build the atmosphere of peace and multiculturalism.

Based on the research we did, character education developed in schools/madrasas in Sambas currently got lack of support to build awareness of

children at school about the importance of peace and multicultural awareness. As a result, the education at school did not provide them with knowledge about how to neutralizing the post-conflict residues, in their family or in their community in the Sambas Muslim-Malay community.

As the works of Nugent, Zanoni, Aden, and Mohammed suggested the importance of character educational aimed to neutralize post-conflict residue. Departing from the social setting of schools/madrasas in post-conflict Sambas, this article dealt with the character education about peace and multicultural perspective for Muslim-Malay children in Sambas who attend schools/madrasas in post-conflict Sambas. This article was written using the interactive data analysis method, with the data being collected through field research work and literature review as well as qualitative research procedures which included data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing suggested by Miles and Huberman (Miles et al., 2014).

B. Method

This qualitative study combined literary and fieldwork data to understand how the development of post-conflict society has been maintaining inter-ethnic tension in the multicultural setting of Sambas Regency, Indonesia. Taking a case study about post-conflict Sambas, this article argued that the fragile peace may easily relapse into conflict affecting transitional peacemaking process, education system, and inter-generational character building. Based on literature review, observation, and interviews, the data illustrated how the institutional character education and the management of emotions in such an unfavorable background occurred within the educational institution to raise public awareness of the transitional process of peacemaking and neutralize the long-haul residues of inter-ethnic conflicts.

C. Result and Discussion

1. Character Education, Peacemaking And Multiculturalism

The peaceful and multicultural character education is indicated in the national laws and regulations. Law on the National Education System No. 20 of 2003 excerpts the opportunities for character education in a peaceful and multicultural perspective in schools/madrasas, as well as the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 7 of 2012 concerning Social Conflict Handling and Government Regulation Number 2 of 2015 concerning the Implementation of Law

Number 7 of 2012 concerning Social Conflict Handling which authorizes local governments to carry out conflict prevention through any efforts deemed relevant under the needs and capabilities of each region, including by utilizing the education sector.

Referring to Johan Galtung about two types of peace, namely negative peace and positive peace, thus we should not limit our view of peace to a condition where there is no direct violence or war, but it also means a condition in which people can interact without fear, act freely, be free of exploitation, get justice, live in prosperity, and be able to live side by side in a tolerant and cooperative manner, even though they have a history of conflict in the past (Galtung, 1996). Functionally, the field of education finds its relevance here (Fisher, 2016; Johnson & Johnson, 2006; Maunah, 2016), especially the field of character education that touches on the fundamental aspects of individual development, namely cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects.

The functional role of character education with a peace and multicultural perspective is very urgent to build individual awareness from an early age about peace and multiculturalism in society. Through character education received from an early age in Schools and Madrasahs, children learn about tolerance, mutual respect, and appreciation, which are important for building an atmosphere of peace and keeping multiculturalism in line with that atmosphere. (Affandi & Wahyudin, 2015; Buchert, 2013)

Regarding this peaceful atmosphere, the condition of a multicultural society is like two sides of a coin, one side of which can be beneficial while the other is detrimental. It is beneficial as long as its multicultural conditions are managed so as to create harmony and then become social capital. On the other hand, it is potentially detrimental when these multicultural conditions are not handled properly which may trigger conflict. The trend occurred in Sambas in 1999, inter-ethnic conflicts involving the Sambas Muslim-Malays and Muslims-Madurese, as already mentioned, had added to the list of cases of inter-ethnic conflict in this area which is estimated to have occurred since 1770. (Aju&Isman, 2015; Ar., 2013; Kristianus, 2011; Zakiyah, 2017)

The inter-ethnic conflict that occurred in Sambas is indeed difficult to understand because the two conflicting ethnic groups both adhere to Islam. Yusriadi, a board of the West Kalimantan Malay Cultural Customary Council, for instance, mentioned how these two ethnic groups are known for their strong

Islamic identity. Anyone from both of these ethnic groups who gives up Islam is no longer regarded as Malay or Madurese (Yusriadi, 2017). When these two ethnic groups killed each other during the conflict in Sambas, it was even more difficult to understand given the teachings of Islam, as stated in Q. 04: 93, which strictly forbid such acts (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 1980).

Islamic reference sources, especially the Qur'an, address the importance of multicultural conditions wisely. According to Islam, the multicultural conditions have been designed by God as a form of trial for His creatures in a test of piety and gratitude for the gift of diversity that God has created, through which we should be competitive and get an opportunity to learn to socialize to get along with one another, as mentioned in Q. 35:43; Q. 05:48; and Q. 49:13 (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 1980; Taufik, 2020).

In fact, no individual in society is perfect. Therefore, he must need the presence and help of others in his association in society, which is *condicio sine quanon* for his own existence. No society is truly a unity, and even if there is, the possibility of the unity that appears on the surface hides a "shattered heart" as implied by Qs. 59: 14. (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 1980). Even though the two groups both embrace Islam, it is not a guarantee that the adherents will not clash with each other. In the case of Sambas twenty years ago, this conflict involving two ethnic groups who both embrace Islam showed the evidence. The inter-ethnic conflict in Sambas is on a massive scale, involving thousands of people and resulting in many casualties, both in terms of loss of lives, damaged houses, and public facilities, causing many to become refugees. (Cahyono et al., 2008; Taufik & Humaira, 2020)

Eventhugh the escalation of this conflict, which for the time seemed to be brought under control by the state through the Police and the TNI, and community leaders from the two ethnic groups, does not mean that the residues no longer exist. Instead, these residues have become a 'stumbling block' for the work to build a positive atmosphere of peace in Sambas. During this research in Sambas, some people of the Sambas ethnic Malay still discreetly showed their rejection of the Madurese who had clashes with them twenty years ago. So, let alone living in Sambas for a long period, even for just a short visit there is a feeling of fear among the Madurese.

Neutralizing post-conflict residues is difficult in the post-conflict Sambas but it is not impossible to do through character education with a peace and multicultural perspective, although overnight results are not to be expected.

Character education with a peace and multicultural perspective builds principles and commitments, as well as any necessary efforts to prepare students with knowledge, attitudes, and characters so that they are in line with these needs. It is expected that those who receive character education with a peace and multicultural perspective will serve as pioneers of peace and multiculturalism in a multicultural society (Page, 2008). Thus, the expected peace as the acommitment written in the truce between the two ethnic groups as revealed by Cahyono, Tryatmoko, Adam, & Satriani (2008), and Fahham (2010) can be realized.

Ian Harris and John Synott shared their thoughts on this. According to them, education really needs to be designed to raise one's desire and longing for peace, through which one is encouraged to be critical of unjust social structure and culture, and to change it they can use methods that adhere to the principles of justice, peace, and nonviolence. (Harris & Synott, 2002) Similarly, the United Nations General Assembly assessed the importance of education in shaping values, attitudes, traditions, ways of behaving, and ways of living based on respect for life and an end to violence, as well as promotion of non-violent life practices such as human rights, respect for and guarantees for these rights, and a commitment to peace resolve conflicts. (UN. General Assembly, 2008).

In the context of Indonesia, which generally has a multicultural typology and is prone to conflict, character education plays an important role play. As Lestari argued in her work which stresses the importance of efforts to instill awareness in students about their role in building a world that requires justice, non-violence, mutual respect and respect for human rights, by not exploiting one another, and fostering peaceful social life (Lestari, 2017). That is why character education with a peace and multicultural perspective is crucial to be given to Sambas Malay Muslim children in school, especially considering that post-conflict residues are still visible in their families and communities.

Even in Sambas, the Malay-Muslim community has erected a monument called "*Ketupat Darah*" to commemorate the tragedy that took place twenty years ago. The replica of three hands holding up a bloody diamond-shaped rice cake (*ketupat*), according to one of the informants interviewed, symbolizes the three young men who were murdered on 1 Shawwal 1419 AH or 19 January 1999. Ironically, the construction of the monument was accompanied by an unbalanced narrative around the perpetrators of the conflict, which put their group as the only victims of that tragedy.

Obviously, this tendency becomes a problematic issue for the atmosphere of peace, because every form of memory, both individual and collective, is an attempt to redefine what happened in the past. The most important component of memory is narrative or story. The past is not an empirical fact, but a story that is always a combination of imagination and real events. When an event has passed, it becomes a memory. Indeed, physical traces remain, that is what is called an artifact, i.e. traces that they can use to create a story or narrative about the past, in order to explain it, as is the case with the building of *Ketupat Darah* [Ketupat of Blood] Monument, which refers to the bloody and violent history of inter-ethnic clash in Sambas between the Malays and the Madureses.

There may be various facts and artifacts except for this monument, but all of them only have meaning if there is a story that compiles them into an explanation that can be accepted by common sense. The effort to compose the narrative is what is called the "reconstruction" effort. When someone is asked to carry out a reconstruction process, namely the process of assembling a narrative based on existing data, "they" are influenced by the situation in which the original information was obtained and the context in which they were asked to rewrite it. In short, one can imagine what the consequences would be when the traumatic experience of the 1999 Sambas inter-ethnic conflict was passed down without any reconstruction in a positive direction to their children.

2. State of Character Education in Post-Conflict Zones: Trends and Opportunities

In the Law on the National Education System Number 20 of 2003, it is stipulated for example in Article 3 of Chapter 2, that national education serves to develop capabilities and forms a dignified national character and civilization in the context of the intellectualization of the nation's children, aiming at the development of their potential so as to become a human being who believes in and fears God, has noble character, is healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and becomes a democratic and responsible citizen. Furthermore, Article 4 of Chapter 3 stipulates that this education is held in a democratic and fair manner and is not discriminatory by upholding human rights, religious values, cultural values, and national pluralism. (*See: Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, 2003*)

The point here is that the Law on the National Education System Number 20 of 2003 provides positive trends for character education in a peaceful and

multicultural perspective in schools in Indonesia. However, this tendency is indeed not given much attention, even though it is clear that education with this kind of perspective is relevant to the needs of post-conflict areas, such as in Sambas, where peace is fragile. Therefore, in its implementation, character education as a national policy that also applies in post-conflict areas such as in Sambas does not collide with this need.

The opportunity to provide a paradigmatic shift within local character education in a peaceful and multicultural perspective is also made possible by the Law of the Republic of Indonesia concerning the Social Conflict Handling Number 7 of 2012 which supports post-conflict social reconstruction efforts. As indicated in Article 1 of this law, the handling of social conflict is a series of activities carried out in a systematic and planned manner in situations and events, both before, during, and after the occurrence of conflict which includes efforts to prevent, stop, and recover post-conflict. Meanwhile, in Article 3 of the same law, it is stated that the purpose of handling social conflicts is to create a safe, peaceful, and prosperous community life, and to maintain it in a harmonious social life, to tolerate each other, and to maintain state functions in order to protect life, property, as well as public infrastructure and facilities. (See: Law Number 7 of 2012 concerning the Handling of Social Conflicts, 2012).

This opportunity is increasingly opened with the issuance of Government Regulation Number 2 of 2015 concerning the Implementation of Law Number 7 of 2012 concerning the Handling of Social Conflicts. In this government regulation, local governments are given the authority to carry out conflict prevention efforts through any efforts deemed relevant; according to the needs and capabilities of each region. The opportunity is open, it's just a matter of whether there is a commitment to make it happen or not? The choice lies in the policies of each region, as well as in this context the post-conflict Sambas.

3. Challenges and Local Particularities in a Post-Conflict Zone

As previously mentioned above, how the post-conflict residues greatly interfere with the post-conflict assimilation process between Sambas Malay Muslim and Muslim-Madurese in Sambas have the opportunity to be neutralized by works in the field of character education that are built based on a peace and multicultural perspective. It because there is a correlation between character education and public awareness about peace and multiculturalism. As Affandi and Wahyudin stated character education aims to build the character of students so

that virtues such as mutual respect, tolerance, appreciation, and responding to conflict positively can be applied by them in their social life. In other words, character education with a peace and multicultural perspective that they receive as students in schools/madrasas has a correlation with the future of a society that supports an atmosphere of peace and multiculturalism. (Affandi & Wahyudin, 2015). They will in turn take over the social roles and responsibilities in society, and this means that they should be functionally able to build an atmosphere of peace and even be able to minimize or reduce conflicts that exist from multicultural settings surrounding them (Kusuma, 2018).

The character education in question is “character education plus”, which is basically a teaching program that aims to develop the character of students by living up to the values and beliefs of the community as a moral force in their lives, both in the context of the cognitive, affective, and skill domains (Zubaedi, 2011). Character education, according to Mochtar Buhori quoted by Uswatun Hasanah, aims to introduce students to cognitive value recognition, affective value appreciation, and real value practice (Hasanah, 2016). Meanwhile, according to Jamal Ma'mur Asmani, character education is important in its purpose to improve the quality of education implementation and outcomes, which also leads to the achievement of students' character building in a complete, integrated, balanced manner in line with the desired graduate competencies. According to him, character education is relevant in providing students with learning experiences that are important for the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need in their daily social life (Asmani, 2011).

In Islam, character education is more familiar with the term moral education. The word *akhlāq* (moral) in Arabic is the plural form of *khuluq*. Linguistically, *khuluq* means *ath-thab'u* (character) and *as-sajiyya* which means demeanor (Zaidan, 1988) According to Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, morality is 'an order that is firmly entrenched in the soul from which various actions can easily emerge without the need for profound thought and consideration' (Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī, 2008). Sharing a similar opinion with al-Ghazālī, Ahmad Tafsir said that morality is human spontaneity in behavior or actions that have been embedded in humans, so that for appear spontaneously.

Regarding to the needs of post-conflict areas where peace is fragile, arguably the character of the community members that is built from awareness about peace and multiculturalism becomes important. Without this character, it will be difficult to build an atmosphere of peace. This shows that either directly or

indirectly, character education with a peace and multicultural perspective, will be correlated with the atmosphere of peace in society. Similar to the assumption that the progress of society depends on the education received by the community, so is the case with character education in the context of post-conflict needs. (Reddy & Sailakshmi, 2018; Turkkahraman, 2015). In relation to realizing character education with a peace and multicultural perspective for Sambas Malay Muslim children, there are a number of important challenges to be considered in the context of those living in post-conflict areas:

a. Improving Educational Curriculum at School and Madrasa

Educational curriculum reforms should be carried out so that the achievement of educational goals will be in line with the needs. This includes the context of the needs of Sambas Malay Muslim children who live in post-conflict areas. As already mentioned, the residues that remain in their social life, both in family and the community, have caused them to have difficulty in blending with the Madurese ethnic because of the burden of inter-ethnic conflicts in the past.

However, improvement here does not mean creating a new curriculum, but rather adjusting the educational curriculum in line with the needs. Improving the curriculum can mean developing a school/madrasa educational curriculum to make it in line with the interests of character education with a peace and multicultural perspective, such as integrating it into all subjects taught to students in madrasas, through local content, or through self-development activities in madrasas. The following are strategies and forms of activities that may be realized for this purpose:

Table 1. Strategies and Forms of Improvement Activities of Character Education Curriculum in Schools and Madrasas

No.	Strategy	Activity
1	Integration into school subjects	Developing syllabus and lesson plans in accordance with the needs of character education in the context of peace education.
2	Subjects with local content	Creating a special subject that is in line with the needs of character education in the context of peace education.
3	Self-development activities	Cultivation and habituation in the form of: conditioning, routine activities, spontaneous activities, exemplary and programmed activities. Extracurricular, such as Scouting, Red Cross,

sports, arts, etc.

Guidance and counseling, namely providing services for students who have problems.

In the context of the needs of Sambas Malay Muslim children living in post-conflict areas, revising the curriculum in schools/madrasas described above could mean developing an educational curriculum to make it in line with the interests of character education with a peaceful and multicultural perspective. Johnson & Johnson identified several important things that must be accommodated in the curriculum: first, uniting social diversity; second, building interdependence as the basis of a peace society and helping students develop the competencies or attitudes they need to work together; third, preparing students with the ability to make difficult decisions in the context of peace; fourth, teaching students about how they can show a peace attitude; and fifth, transferring citizenship values to students (Johnson & Johnson, 2006).

Character education with a peace and multicultural perspective requires a curriculum that refers to aspects of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values needed to bring about behavioral changes that will enable children, adolescents, and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both openly or latently, resolving violent conflicts peacefully, and creating conditions conducive to peace and diversity (Wahyudin, 2015). The aspects that need to be considered in the character education curriculum in this context are as follows:

Table 2. Aspects and Indicators of the Peaceful and Multicultural Character Education

No	Aspects	Indicators
1	Knowledge	Being able to recognize and understand issues related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicts and wars; • Peace and non-violence; • Environment or ecology; • Armaments in war; • Justice and power; • Conflict analysis, conflict resolution and resolution; • Religion, culture, race, and gender.
2	Skills	Being able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate, listen, and reflecting; • Cooperate;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathize with the suffering of others; • Think critically and try to solve problems; • Carry out mediation, negotiation and conflict resolution; • Have patience and self-control; • Act as a good citizen; • be imaginative; • Have leadership skills; • be visionary.
		<hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating attitudes such as: • Being environmentally aware; • Respecting yourself and others; • Tolerance; • Respect for humanity and diversity; • Intercultural understanding; • Gender impartiality; • Care and empathy; • Tendency to promote reconciliation and be non-violent; • Social responsibility; • Solidarity and open-mindedness. <hr/>

3 Attitude

In reality, the various subject materials taught to students at Schools and Madrasass in Sambas should be able to be linked with the indicators of each aspect mentioned above. It is expected that students get important learning experiences that make them resist violence and war, support peace, and have a multicultural awareness (Reardon, 1988; Toh, 2004). Even in providing these materials, it can take advantage of local knowledge sources around student life. Moreover, there have been practices of local wisdom related to efforts to build an atmosphere of peace (Abu-Nimer, 2001; Avruch, 1998; YohannesBahari, 2008).

Saeed Ahmed Aden gave an example that in Somalia there is 'Xeer' and in South Africa there is 'Ubuntu' as a mediation model in conflict resolution (Aden, 2017). In Indonesia too, a similar mediation model is also found. George Junus Aditjondro and Ridwan Rosdiawan in their articles discuss how people in Kalimantan, Maluku and Sulawesi have long practiced mediation models that originate from their local wisdom. In Maluku, they have "*pela*" and "*gandong*" which are relevant for peace. *Pela* was created based on historical agreements of friendship and brotherhood between two or more villages, and *gandong* implies friendship formed by genealogical awareness. In Sulawesi, especially in Poso

(Central Sulawesi), similar local wisdom is called *Pekasiwia* which means equality. There is also the *motambu tana* which encourages reconciliation, namely *mampaka sidamago ne'emo ndapau-pau anu liumo*, which means "to make up with each other, don't bring up issues from the past." In addition, the *porapa* oath is in the form of a peace agreement after the conflict (Aditjondro, 2007; Rosdiawan, 2007). Alamsyah wrote in his article, that in South Kalimantan it is known as '*adat berramai baakuran*', in West Sumatra there is "*kerapatan kaum*", in Papua there is "*muakhi*", in Tapanuli North Sumatra there is "*dalihan natolu*". The Balinese have "*menyama braya*", in West Nusa Tenggara there is "*saling jot*" and "*saling pelarangan*", in East Java there is "*siro yo ingsun, ingsun yo siro*", in Central Java and in Yogyakarta there is "*alon-alon asal kelakon*". In Aceh, there are "*di'iet, sayam, suloh, peusijok, and peumetjaroe*", which have become part of people's daily lives. (Alamsyah, 2013) Likewise, ethnic Malays in West Kalimantan, including those in Sambas, usually resolve problems in their community through negotiation or deliberation. (Fahham, 2010) The material in the curriculum presented by incorporating local knowledge sources that exist around students lives, which Azra calls local genius (AzyumardiAzra, 2002), will allow the material taught to students to be functional in social life.

To choose relevant materials, teachers need to critically examine them in the textbooks distributed during the learning process, so as to avoid 'bias'. This is important because there is a possibility that the material in textbooks contains bias which Donna M. Gollnick and Philip C. Chinn refer to as 'labeling other groups, ignoring minorities, being partial, not referring to reality, and various other invisible biases (Gollnick & Chinn, 2006;).

Unless an important approach is given in a multi-approach manner (Ihsan & Ihsan, 1998), the importance of evaluation should not be ignored with regard to curriculum upgrading. In order to measure the extent of effectiveness of character education with a peace and multicultural perspective, instrument of evaluation should be designed to measure it. If the expected competence after providing character education with a peace and multicultural perspective is the development of students' domains of knowledge, attitudes, and skills, then the evaluation should also be directed to measure the extent to which these areas have developed (Amin et al., 2020; Yusriadi & Muttaqin, 2018).

Jane R. Mercer suggested that the tests used should focus on measuring and assessing the achievement of students' competency on the material they have learned. Thus, as far as the need for character education with peace and

multicultural perspective is concerned, evaluation needs to measure and assess the extent to which students respect one another, especially outside their community. Such learning outcome could affect Malay Muslim children's appreciation of people of other ethnic groups, including Maduranese. In other words, the tests given should be relevant to measure and assess the extent of their understanding in addressing the 'other' in the context of ethnicity, religion, social class, gender, etc. Therefore, the test Mercer referred to includes students' academic and non-academic aspects. (Mercer, 1989) The evaluation technique can be adjusted according to needs, whether by means of questionnaires, inventories, portfolios, and observation or direct experience. (Mueller, 1986; Wyatt & Looper, 1999)

b. Improving Ethical and Practical Skills of Education Apparatuses

The performance and character of the school/Madrasas principals is one of the elements that determine the creation of a school culture that supports the realization of character education with a peaceful and multicultural perspective in the school/madrasa his/her leadership (Zuchdi, Prasetya, & Masruri, 2012). Article 12 paragraph 1 of PP 28 of 1999 states that a Madrasas head is responsible for organizing educational activities, madrasa administration, fostering education staff in madrasas, and including the utilization and maintenance of madrasa educational facilities/infrastructure. In this regard, a madrasa principal has an important role as a leader, administrator, innovator, mentor, manager, motivator, and supervisor of the madrasa (Kurniawan, 2017).

Therefore, it is important for a school/Madrasas principal to have what Haryadi refers to as 'good leadership'. According to him, good leadership is a description of the profile of a leader who has integrity and ethics, attitudes and principles, insight and vision, enthusiasm, courage and resistance, appreciation and empathy, confidence and commitment, acts consciously, carries out-caderization, understands the situation in the field, and is inspirational and wise. (Haryadi, 2012)

In the context of realizing character education with a peace and multicultural perspective, the head of the madrasa and also the teachers carry out this function. They are important actors that greatly determine the success or failure of the student learning process in this context. (Kurniawan, 2017) But this is certainly not easy. It requires teachers with adequate competence, in the pedagogical, professional, social and personality aspects. They are certainly not the oneswhom Nini Subini refers to as 'unprofessional teachers'. (Subini, 2012)

Pedagogic competence is the ability of teachers to teach certain materials to their students. These competencies indicate the importance for a teacher to, first, understand the characteristics of students from various aspects such as social, moral, cultural, emotional and intellectual; second, understand the students' learning patterns and difficulties; third, facilitate the development of students' potential; fourth, master the theory and principles of instruction and education; fifth, develop a curriculum that encourages student involvement in learning; sixth, designed educational instruction; seventh, carry out educational instruction; eighth, understand the background of students regarding both the family and the community around them, as well as their learning needs in the context of cultural diversity; ninth, use information and communication technology for the benefit of learning; tenth, evaluate the process and learning outcomes; eleventh, do reflective work to improve the quality of learning; and twelfth, developing students so that they are able to actualize their various potentials. (Subini, 2012)

Furthermore, professional competence is in the form of the ability to master learning material broadly and profoundly which allows it to guide students to meet the expected learning competency standards. In addition, professional competence is also related to the mastery of concepts and methods, relevant scientific disciplines, technology or arts as well as adjustments to other teacher tasks. The level of professionalism of a teacher can be seen from his/her competence in the form of: first, the ability to master the educational foundations including understanding the educational goals that must be achieved, be it national, institutional, curricular and learning objectives; second, the ability to understand the field of educational psychology, for example understanding the stages of student development and understanding learning theories; third, the ability to master the learning material in line with the field of study he/she teaches; fourth, the ability to apply various methodologies and learning strategies; fifth, the ability to design and use various media and learning resources; sixth, the ability to carry out evaluation of learning and research; seventh, the ability to develop learning programs; eighth, the ability to carry out supporting elements such as madrasa administration, guidance and counselling, etc.; ninth, the ability to carry out research and scientific thinking to improve performance; tenth, the ability to improve the quality of instruction through evaluation and research; eleventh, the ability to develop professionalism in a sustainable manner by taking reflective actions; and twelfth, the ability to take advantage of information and communication technology to communicate and develop themselves. (Subini, 2012)

Social competence is the competence related to the ability of a madrasa teacher as part of the social system in society. This also includes the ability to: first, interact and communicate with colleagues in order to improve their professional competence; second, recognize and understand the functions of social institutions in society; third, establish cooperation both individually and in groups; fourth, with sympathy and empathy, contribute to the development of students in the madrasa in particular and in society in general, and can take advantage of information and communication technology to communicate and develop themselves; fifth, be inclusive, act objectively, and not be discriminatory in terms of gender, religion, race, physical condition, family background and socio-economic status; sixth, adapt in the workplace, wherever assigned in the context of any social and cultural heterogeneity; seventh, establish relationship and communication with colleagues and others; eighth, interact effectively with the principal, students, fellow teachers at the madrasa, educational staff at the madrasa, students' parents/guardians, etc.; ninth, associate politely with the community both in the environment around the madrasa and in their own environment by acting in accordance with the system of norms and values; apply the principles of brotherhood and togetherness. (Subini, 2012)

Finally, the competencies that must be possessed by madrasa teachers are personality competencies which greatly determine the success or failure of the teacher's role as a role model, inspirator, motivator, dynamist and evaluator in learning. (Asmani, 2011) This implies the importance of a teacher in the madrasa to: first, have a strong, stable, wise and authoritative personality; second, be a role model for students and the community; third, be mature, honest and noble; fourth, be able to evaluate their own performance (reflective action); fifth, be able to develop themselves in a sustainable manner; sixth, act in accordance with the system of norms and values in society; seventh, demonstrate work ethics, responsibility, and pride in being a teacher, and self-confidence; and eighth, uphold the code of ethics of the teaching profession. (Subini, 2012)

These personality competencies require that the teacher exemplifies a positive character. This is an important role of the teacher. This character is arguably as the starting point in the implementation of the character education model in the madrasa in the context of peace education and multiculturalism. This character, as Türkkahraman argued, is certainly much more important than the knowledge and teaching skills possessed by a teacher, because without such character, learning that takes place is not based on empathy, respect, and sincerity.

(Turkkahraman, 2015) Agus Wibowo stated that without having and being inspired by that character, the learning process would also be uninspiring and often boring. (Wibowo, 2012)

Optimizing character education with a peace and multicultural perspective is very likely to be achieved when teachers can: First, relate socially; Second, be open and flexible in managing student heterogeneity; Third, be ready to accept differences in students' ability, background, race, and gender (Rahmaniah & Taufik, 2024); Fourth, be fair in treating minorities; Fifth, be willing to collaborate and form a coalition with any party; and sixth, be oriented to the program and the future. (Elashmawi & Harris, 1993) James A. Banks stated that what teachers need in this context are, among others, to have characteristics such as: first, being sensitive to the ethnic behavior of students; second, being sensitive to the possibility of bias in the subject material; and third, skillfully using relevant strategies and techniques to promote the goals of multicultural education in learning. (Banks, 1989)

c. Integrating Peace and Multiculturalism in the Local Pedagogical Culture

Peace and multiculturalism as an educational culture have a symbolic role in shaping cultural patterns in the educational atmosphere in the school/madrasa. E. Deal Terrence and Kent D. Peterson revealed the importance of this educational culture for educational institutions (Deal & Peterson, 2016). Educational culture in Schools and Madrasas is also a key factor, which according to Ariefa Efianingrum will determine academic and non-academic achievement as well as the implementation of the learning process for students (Efianingrum, 2016). The same should apply to achieve the goals of character education with a peace and multicultural perspective that we encourage so as to make it in line with the needs of post-conflict areas, such as in Sambas.

Educational culture in the school/madrasa referred to here is a set of norms, values and beliefs, rituals and ceremonies, symbols and stories that form the persona of the school/madrasa as an educational institution (Efianingrum, 2016) Educational culture in the school/madrasa is the image of the atmosphere of school/madrasa life, a place where students interact with each other, with their teachers and other stakeholders in the madrasa, as well as between teachers in the madrasa, teachers and educational staff and other elements in the madrasa, etc. Intra- and inter-group interactions are bound by various rules, norms and shared morals and ethics that apply to a school/Madrasas (Wibowo, 2012). School/Madrasas culture can also be a pattern of basic assumptions, values, beliefs.

and habits that are shared by all school/Madrasas stateholders which are believed and have been proven to influence and build the character of members and/or new generations that determine how they should understand, think, feel, and act (Zamroni, 2011).

The students' character can be formed through a conducive school/madrasa education culture and so can the character that we expect to build through character education in a peace and multicultural perspective. Educational culture in the school/madrasa that is conducive in this case will be determined by the overall physical environment, atmosphere, thoughtfulness, nature, and climate of the school/madrasa that are productively able to provide positive learning experiences for the growth and development of character as expected. For example: first, placing the classroom as a conducive space, which allows for interaction and reciprocal communication between teacher and students as well as students with fellow students to take place educatively and democratically; second, classrooms are designed in such a way as to allow the learning process to take place comfortably and communicatively; third, students are placed as subjects in the learning process, which means it is necessary to shift the perspective of teachers who see their work in class as limited to teaching process to efforts that support the learning process (Smith, 2002)

Educational culture is a process that is continuous or sustainable, from one level to another that students go through (Lestari, 2017), because only with such understanding will it make us realize that it has a significant influence on the character formed within students which is relevant to their need for education in post-conflict areas to build awareness of the importance of peace and multiculturalism whose outcome is not instant (Elisa Boulding quoted by Sukendar, 2011). As such awareness is important to be instilled in children in the post-conflict Sambas community, it needs to be understood from this point of view.

D. Conclusion

Curriculum design and character building in the post-ethnic conflict Sambas have been challenging, particularly for students in schools and madrasas. Following the previous discussions, character education was essential for school-aged Muslims in Sambas to cultivate peaceful and multicultural worldview in both domestic and public spheres. This article stressed the importance of character education in the post-conflict societies and the main indicators of fulfilling such pedagogical practices to children of school or madrasa age. Unless neutralized, the

post-conflict residues in Sambas could hinder the policymakers and education specialists in their efforts to blend the multi-ethnic society due to the hostile past. Character building is a long-term project and its outcome may not be expected to be instant but it is quite promising for peacemaking in the region.

This research focused on and limited to the character education related to the post-conflict that occurred in Sambas. It argued that character education was applicable and effective as it was parallel to local wisdom and state regulations. Nonetheless, education system and local/national curriculum in other conflictual and/or post-conflictual regions might pose different challenges, including the trauma-informed approaches in schools and the inter-ethnic relations in general. In the case of Sambas Regency, the main challenge was identifying the suitable moral guideline for its character education following the hostile past among ethnic groups. Accordingly, the core values of peace and multiculturalism were appropriate to be integrated into its local educational system and curriculum.

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