

Ecological Education For Harmony Life Habituation in Sallie McFague's Perspective of Thinking

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Abstract. During the massive destruction of the earth, the responsibility to care for the earth needs to be instilled through ecological education from an early age. Schools that pay attention to ecological education need to be appreciated. This study took data on the practice of ecological education at the Experimental Mangunan Kindergarten School (TK) using the interview method. The data were analyzed using Sallie McFague's ecofeminism theory. The purpose and contribution of this research are to emphasize that ecological education fosters habits in children to live harmoniously. This research concludes that in Sallie McFague's framework, mutual love is the basis for an ecologically harmonious life. The forms of embodiment of harmonious life are friendship with friends and nature, acts of caring for the earth, and cooperation to help the poor through the habit of caring for the earth in daily life.

Keywords: earth; love; cooperation; habituation.

1 Introduction

Education is a process of developing complete experience through learning in activities or "learning by doing" (Dewey, 1966). Living together in society and the natural environment with all its potentials and problems is part of the experience that becomes a source of learning. The educational process at school is a continuation of the experience of living in a family designed in a complete self-development program for students through various joint activities (Dewey, 1972). Education in the family and school have a common mission to develop the moral quality of the community, which is marked by the realization of common life and a harmonious natural environment. Education is expected to contribute to life together by growing students in critical thinking skills and behaving creatively and collaboratively in the midst of rapidly changing times (Bhati & Song, 2019).

The attention and responsibility of families and schools in developing environmental education (ecology) in the midst of various environmental problems that threaten human life needs to be emphasized. Pollution of water, air and soil, abrasion, deforestation, and waste management are environmental problems that are very worrying and interfere with the health of living together. Environmental damage is increasingly massive due to anthropocentric paradigm factors, attitudes and behaviors of individuals, communities and institutions that do not care about the environment (Simon, 2021). This is the background of this research.

In the context of Indonesia, the results of research with the theme of environmental education are very minimal. In 2017 there was an article written on the results of a literature study on social-ecological education from the perspective of Islamic teachings (Albar, 2017). This paper is a descriptive study of the conceptual framework of ecological education from an Islamic

perspective as a response to various environmental problems. Ichsan and Rahmayanti (2020) researched environmental learning as an effective model for improving thinking and problem-solving skills. Another article published in the same year also focuses more on environmental learning as a learning model that develops students' quality of intelligence and skills in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic situation (Rahmayanti et al. 1, 2020).

In the midst of environmental damage, continuous, programmed environmental learning is needed and aims to develop students to have care, responsibility and habits to preserve the environment. One of the schools with a continuous environmental learning program is the ExperimentalMangunan Kindergarten School (TK) in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Therefore, this study was made to understand the habit of loving the environment through ecological education at the ExperimentalMangunan Kindergarten School (TK).

2 Theoretical Framework

Human domination over other creatures causes damage to the earth (Hernika, 2008). To return a more complete and organic paradigm to the earth, Sallie McFague emphasized his view that the earth is the body of God (McFague, 1987). He explained that God and the earth are organically intertwined because everything originates and exists within God, and nothing comes from outside God (McFague, 1987). The essence of Sallie's thinking is that the body's organs form a unity that influences each other and cannot be separated from one another. Sallie McFague metaphorically shows the unity between humans and nature as part of God's organs. Sallie's thought about *'The Body of God'* is a model that treats creation as a form of presenting God's dignity and sacredness in the world. Earth as God's Body is a terminology of an image and concept of a loving and friendly God (McFague, 1987). Sallie's thoughts that describe the earth as an organic body with the characteristics of love, tenderness and caring can be categorized as ecofeminist and deep ecology thoughts (Öztürk, 2020).

According to Sallie, bodies cannot be separated from each other so that no one is higher or lower (McFague, 2013). This is a metaphor for reality, namely a critique of patriarchal culture. Therefore, Sallie invites humans to love nature because humans and the universe are one entity in the Body of God. According to Sallie, the oppression of nature as it is today will not happen if humans love God's fellow creatures as a unitary body of God (McFague, 1987). As intelligent beings, humans are called to freedom, healing, and sharing self-awareness with others. Humans take part in maintaining the universe. For Sallie, the universe is experiencing new poverty, which means a picture of a poor body. Sallie invites to echo the importance of cultivating a solidarity attitude towards all forms of oppression of nature caused by human attitudes that exploit nature and use nature as a means of satisfying physical consumption needs.

Sallie's idea of the earth as the body of God is the answer to today's environmental problems. Humans must live the spirituality of love in viewing and treating nature. The spirituality of love is rooted in God's call for humans to love and care for the earth and everything in it (McFague, 2013). There are three forms of acts of loving the earth that need to be done by humans. *First*, loving the earth means alleviating the suffering of the earth and its fellow human beings who are poor. *Second*, loving the earth as the body of God means doing acts of sharing and abandoning egoism rooted in individualism. *Third*, loving the earth is manifested by using energy or natural resources wisely and sparingly. Humans love God through and with the real world (McFague, 2013).

3 Research Methods and Objectives

This research includes qualitative research using case and interview methods (Creswell, 2013). The interview study method was chosen to collect data. The subjects in this study were the ExperimentalMangunan Kindergarten School (TK). The researcher chose 3 out of 8 teachers as respondents. They are senior teachers who have taught since the establishment of the School and are involved in designing the School's program. They were chosen as respondents because they can provide information about ecological education, one of the school's flagship programs.

Data collection focused on four questions. First, what are the programs and activities to care for the environment? Second, what are the programs and activities to make friends with fellow creatures of God? Third, what programs and activities care for the poor? Fourth, what habits are instilled in students? The answers to these four questions were analyzed using Sallie McFague's framework of loving the earth as God's body.

4 Result

4.1 Environmental care programs and activities

During the pandemic, children take turns coming to school bringing their plants from home. Some brought ornamental plants, vegetables and medicines. Some plants are left at school, and others are cared for at home. Children regularly come to school three times a week to take care of their respective plants and compare their growth with plants that are cared for at home. Parents and teachers accompany the children while caring for their plants. Then the children tell the process and development of their plants through YouTube media or recordings made with their parents. The third response and provide additional information that the program to care for the environment through activities to plant ornamental plants or vegetables or medicine is one of the school programs that aim to help children develop themselves to become children who care about others, nature, and the surrounding environment. This program helps children be skilled at loving the environment through taking care of plants. The first respondent emphasized that environmental care programs and activities or *nandur urip* were inspired by Y.B. Mangunwijaya's idea about the importance of exploring and interpreting experiences in the children's education process to maximize children's sensory functions and activities (Mangunwijaya, 2020).

4.2 Friendly programs and activities with friends and nature

According to the first response, the ExperimentalMangunan Kindergarten School (TK) creates programs and activities that encourage children to interact with their peers and the natural environment. Children acquire sensitivity and concern for God's fellow creatures via play with friends and the environment. This includes greeting each other in the morning, eating together once a week, caring for each other's plants at school and home, sharing stories about plant care activities, and collecting appropriate clothing and food supplies for underprivileged households around the school.

According to the second and third respondents, this caring-sharing program and activity is a habit to cultivate heart sensitivity in living together in harmony. Through *nandur urip* activities, eating together, and caring for poor neighbors, the developed harmony is not only related to

relationships between humans but also relationships with friends and all God's creatures. The third respondent underlined the important of a caring day program for others to cultivate children's sensitivity and concern for others. In collaboration with the Yayasan Visi Maha Karya, the school created a savings program to help people with disabilities buy prosthetic limbs. This activity aims to foster a sense of caring and empathy, cooperation skills, sensitivity, and social solidarity (Bialystok and Kukar, 2018).

4.3 Programs and activities to care for the poor

The three respondents agreed that caring for the impoverished is an important aspect of Y.B.'s pedagogy of the heart. Mangunwijaya at the Mangunan Kindergarten (TK). Every two months, volunteers visit nursing homes and orphanages to distribute supplies. Another activity is to bring food to the school's Muslim inhabitants ahead of Eid al-Fitr. The kids collect money and place it in a Visi Maha Karya piggy bank. The funds will be used to acquire prosthetic limbs for disabled people.

The second respondent added information about the children's activities with their parents. Some children do social service with their parents. There are children with their families who assist the garbage collector. Parents' awareness and willingness to instill the values of caring through social activities and caring for the poor indicates good cooperation between teachers and parents to instill care and compassion for the poor (Bialystok and Kukar, 2018).

4.4 The habit of loving the earth

Three respondents identified three habits ingrained in the educational process at the Experimental Mangunan Kindergarten School (TK). For example, greetings, sorry, please and thank you are daily school and household customs. The second habit is to save for social events. This is done once a week. The third habit is to visit the ill, bereaved families, nursing homes, orphanages, and needy households before Eid al-Fitr. A sense of love for others and all God's creatures is fostered at the Experimental Mangunan Kindergarten School (TK).

The first and third respondents emphasized that ecological education through various habits is part of Mangunwijaya's pedagogy to cultivate explorative, creative and integral characters in each child for complete personal development. Ecological education carried out in learning at school and activities in the family helps children thoroughly investigate, recognize themselves and the natural environment and recognize the beauty of the surrounding nature. It is important for developing social-moral character in the educational process (Evan & Barnes, 2015; Effendi, 2017).

5 Discussion

Through ecological education, teachers and parents work together to assist and develop children in an exploratory, creative and integral way. There is intensive collaboration and dialogue between teachers and parents in the mentoring process. Teachers and parents create a learning climate that allows children to learn with joy and care. The pattern of relationships formed through an ecological education is dialogical because it involves relationships,

meaningful, deep, effective, and mutually influencing interactions (Littleton & Howe, 2010). The ecological education process at the Experimental Mangunan Kindergarten School (TK) unites learning in schools under the guidance of teachers and activities in the family under the guidance of parents. Children experience a learning process that is in contact with community life and the environment (Dick, 2007). Ecology education helps students recognize the biodiversity that is the wealth of Indonesian society. It strengthens students' experiences to live harmoniously in a pluralistic society (Leafler, 2020).

Ecological education applies active, collaborative and creative learning models in the midst of community life and the natural environment (Young et al., 2010). This practice strengthens children's ability to appreciate and adapt to their surroundings. Morally, children are also helped to develop an awareness of their dependence on nature and their responsibility to preserve the natural environment (Hong and Lawrence, 2011). Ecological education has not become a strong current informal education in Indonesia, even though the cultivation of caring and empathetic characters in the environment cannot be instilled instantly. Most schools are still stuck in the classical learning activities.

6 Conclusion

In the current ecological catastrophe, ecological education is vital. Ecological education must be prioritized to foster early awareness and empathy for nature. Ecology education is one of the most popular programs that encourages children to learn about their surroundings and to care for the earth. It allows children to learn about nature, foster brotherhood and collaboration, and care for the disadvantaged. Ecological education provides the foundation for building students' intellectual, emotive, and sympathetic character (D. Grzadziel: 2014).

Ecological education allows instructors, parents, and students to share knowledge and enrich lives. Ecological education promotes sharing, caring, and compassion (Liu: 2014, 139). School is a place to learn about environmental issues and how to support people in need. The qualities of collaboration and caring promote solidarity and brotherhood as a sort of love that strengthens coexistence (Engelbrecht, Heine and Mahembe, 2017).

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