Incorporating 'Ahmad Dahlan Values' in the Curriculum of Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

In 2012 the Directorate General of Higher Education of Indonesia required all higher education institutions to implement the Curriculum of Higher Education. As a part of higher education institutions, English Education Department of UniversitasMuhammadiyah Yogyakarta has been implementing this curriculum for five years. Curriculum of Higher Education has shifted the old paradigm of teacher-centered learning to the new pedagogical approach called student-centered learning. The implementation of the Curriculum of Higher Education necessitates all study programs to alter their curriculum oriented to produce competent graduates. English Education Department of UniversitasMuhammadiyah Yogyakarta has also been making attempts to incorporate the Muhammadiyah values proposed by its founder, KH. Ahmad Dahlan. The research is aimed at exploring how the Ahmad Dahlan's' values are implemented in the CHE setting at the EED of UMY. The data were collected by means of interviews with a head of department and two lecturers, teaching observation, and document analysis and focus group discussion with 20 students. The research found that the principles proposed by Ahmad Dahlan including the curriculum structure, pedagogical techniques, and character education had been successfully incorporated in the implementation of CHE and the Ahmad's Dahlan values' correspond to the CHE principles.

1. INTRODUCTION

Implemented in 2004 (Directorate General of Higher Education/DGHE, 2008), the curriculum which was focused on the competency development was applied by sixty per cent of the total 372 tertiary institutions in Indonesia. The emergence of the curriculum which was then known as the competency-based curriculum (CBC) was aimed at producing graduates who had skills needed by the job markets.

The curriculum which fulfilled the need of the world of works, as Richards-Wilson (2002) point out, has become a challenging homework for teachers and educators. In fact, the implemented curriculum must be critically reviewed from the point of view of whether the existing curriculum has matched with the job market's needs. In the Indonesian context, the tertiary educational institutions (TEI) were familiar with the application of the curriculum focusing on the knowledge contents which was known as the content-based curriculum. Within this type of curriculum, teachers' role became dominant, acting as the purveyors of knowledge while students were the receivers of knowledge. The weaknesses of this teacher-centered curriculum and learning had been identified by the Indonesian government. As a result, the CBC which was believed to be potential in producing more employable graduates was launched.

The CBC introduced by the Indonesian government should be supported by teachers' awareness in that they have to shoulder responsibility not only to transfer knowledge but to equip them with the skills for gaining their career. Therefore, the teaching and learning process should be directed toward helping students for competency development. Indeed, in addition to designing the structure of the curriculum, assisting students to develop knowledge and competencies is an inseparable part of teachers' responsibility.

In 2014, Indonesian government initiated the new curriculum, namely the Curriculum of Higher Education (CHE). The impetus for launching the CHE is twofold. Firstly, while CBC is instrumental in developing students' competencies, it fails to identify and distinguish the level of

competencies of the graduates in each level of their study program, such as the graduate and post graduate levels (DGHE, 2015). Secondly, the Indonesian government has been actively involved in the international agreement including AFTA, WTO and GATTS. One of the consequences of its involvement, Indonesian government should encourage its higher education institutions to produce graduates who have international standard of competency levels, so that they can compete globally.

Although the CHE is associated with the notion of CBC, it obliges the higher education institutions (HEI) to incorporate the Indonesian Qualification Framework which has not been known in the CBC. Indonesian Qualification Framework (IQF) is a qualification leveling of Indonesian human resources that pair, equalize, and integrate educational and training sectors as well as working experiences in a framework of working recognitions that is in accordance with structures of various working sectors. IQF that comprises the manifestation of Indonesians' Qualification and characters which is associated with national educational and training systems in Indonesia has nine levels. These qualification levels not only refer to the qualifications obtained in formal educations, but they also include the qualifications that are achieved from informal educations, autodidact, and working experiences.

IQF has formulated nine education levels that are based on a comprehensive mapping of employment conditions in Indonesia from the point of view of supply push and demand pull of Indonesian labours. Level 1- 3 constitutes a classification as operators, level 4-6 are qualifications for technicians or analyst, and level 7-9 comprises qualification for experts. Graduates of elementary education are equal to level 1. Graduates of high schools are comparable to Level 2. Diploma 1 Graduates are minimally paired with level 3. Diploma 4 or applied bachelor and bachelor degree graduates are at least equivalent to level 6. Graduates that take professional education are comparable to level 7. Master and Applied Master degree graduates are at level 8. Doctor, Professional Doctor, and specialist are at level 9.

As the continuation of the CBC, CHE has CBC characteristics such as constructing the curriculum structure based on the stakeholders' need analysis. Citing Choudaha, Kouwenhoven (2011) explains that curriculum construction which focuses on competency development should comply with the application of the current studies in skills and competency enhancement. Several attributes to CBC were proposed by Kouwenhoven (2011). With regard to the nature of the competency-based curricula, as the name implies, the curriculum aims to equip students with competencies and skills needing for the success in jobs. This leads to the curriculum structure which is not generated by the disciplinary content knowledge, but by a pragmatic need of arming students with occupational skills after the completion of the program (Van Loon, Teunissen, Diressen, &Scheele, 1997; Karsten et al., 2016).Competency-based Education has several attributes. Firstly, the contents of the curriculum emphasize the enhancement of the students' occupational skills. Secondly, as a result, the linkage to the world of works, as Bunyi (2015) and Kouwenhoven (2011) point out, is paid a great deal of attention. Thirdly, teachers in the CBE context are encouraged to use the constructivist approach (Motching-Pitrick and Holzinger (2002). Different from behaviorism and cognitivism which focuses on the students' knowledge acquisition, the constructivists are interested in arming students with the competency development (ibid, 2002).

Curriculum in tertiary education is often perceived as the final level of formal education, signifying the final process of learning. As a result, different from the dynamic debate on the curricula implement in secondary schools, the ones applied in tertiary education has been rarely debated. This is somewhat misnomer as the CBC initiated by the government promotes the lifelong learning (DGHE, 2008) and allows the students to deal with the educational requirements.

As one of study programs in tertiary education in Indonesia, the English Education Department of UniversitasMuhammadiyah Yogyakarta (EED of UMY) should apply the CHE. The implementation is challenging in this department since it has unique organizational values, namely 'Ahmad Dahlan Values' (ADV).

Founded by a Moslem cleric named Ahmad Dahlan in 1912, the term Muhammadiyah denotes the meaning of the Muhammad's followers. As pointed out by Burhani (2010), with its 29 million members, Muhammadiyah has become the second largest Moslem organization in the Indonesian archipelago. In the Indonesian history, Ahmad Dahlan was described as a socio-

religious activist. One of his radical thought in the Islamic religion was his calling for Moslems to exercise individual interpretation of Quran and the teaching of the prophet Muhammad rather than blindly adopting the traditional interpretation of 'ulama' (ibid, 2010).

Dahlan's movement in educational fields was inspired by two reformist figures in the middle east, namely Rashid Rida and Muhammad Abduh (Ruswan, 1997). Both figures were of the opinion that the backwardness in Moslem society was because Moslems did not follow the teaching of Qur'an and Hadith. As Wertheim (1986) put it, given this reasoning, these activists intended to revitalize the Moslem society. Dahlan, Abduh and Ridha considered Islam as a religion which accommodate progress, thus encouraging Moslems to be open for development and progress (Ruswan, 1997).

Muslim society in Indonesia, in the reformers' opinion including Dahlan's, was regarded as being deviated from the teaching of Qur'an and the prophet Muhammad. Dahlan said that Indonesian Muslims were suffered from a number of spiritual malaises (Wirjosukarto, 1962). First, Muslims were unaware that they still conducted spiritual practices derived from the Hinduism, Buddhism and animism. In addition, conservatism to the interpretation of certain religious scholars which they considered sacred was still embraced by common Muslims. At that time, the critical review and independent interpretation on theological and legal questions in the holy book and the teaching of prophet was closed. This condition was worsened by the fact that there appeared a paradigm to separate religious and secular schools in which the former produced scientists and the latter created religious scholars. No students in Islamic schools learnt the 'secular' subjects which were only taught by the Dutch colonial's schools. As a result, Muslims society lacked of human resources and they were not sensitive to the social problems such as poverty.

Concerned with the pedagogical approach, Ahmad Dahlan held that education should be directed toward inculcating independent thinking (Ruswan, 1997). Ahmad Dahlan (as cited in Ruswan, 1997) argued that no single person could claim the absolute truth of her or his opinion. Therefore, it was compulsory for Muslims to revisit the reliability of conveyed opinion. Ahmad Dahlan criticized the traditional view which maintained that the door of 'ijtihad' was closed and following one's opinion without critical thinking was an obligation (ibid, 1997). Hence, the burden of producing independent thinkers was reinvigorated in Muhammadiyah educational system.

With regard to pedagogical techniques, as pointed out by Wirjosukarto (1962), Muhammadiyah adopted the system of progressive grades and more students' participation in the learning process. Wirjosukarto (1962) maintained that Muhammadiyah has shifted the teaching systems from individual to group instruction and students were encouraged to ask questions, to argue and to disagree with their teachers.

The previous study exploring the Muhammadiyah values in education has been done by Nurwanto and Setiawan (2017). The study investigated how community-based education as developed by Muhammadiyah constructs its curriculum. The study found that the Muhammadiyah values managed to enrich the government's curriculum. While the contribution of Ahmad Dahlan values in constructing the curriculum was explored, the study focused on the secondary schools' curriculum. Different from Nurwanto's study, this research focuses on the adoption of the ADV in the higher education setting. Hence, this research is aimed at exploring the approach used by the EED of UMY in implementing the ADV in the CHE setting. Specifically, the research is interested in finding out: "How are the Ahmad Dahlan Values incorporated in the Curriculum of Higher Education Setting?"

2.   METHOD

Qualitative, naturalist and interpretative research is employed in this study. The naturalist nature requires the involvement of the participants' real life setting and since it is real life, manipulation and intrusion from the researcher is not allowed. As BogdandanBiklen (2003) put it, the data collected by the researcher, therefore, stems from natural context. After the data is collected the researcher interprets them from the experiences and perspective of the participants;

thus, it is called interpretative. Constructively, through the participants' experiences and story, the meaning and understanding are built.

Case study was employed as the strategy of inquiry. According to Hammersley, Gomm and Foster (2000), case study method is interested in investigating one or more than one case, or some units or set of units deeply. Through case study, an event, a program, a process and an activity are explored in depth by a researcher (Stake in Creswell, 2003).

The site of the research was at an English Education Department of one private university in Yogyakarta. In depth interview was done to obtain the data from a head of department, two English lecturers and twenty students in the focus group discussion as well. In addition to this, teaching observation in the classroom was conducted in order to explore the teaching techniques used by lecturers. As stated in the accreditation document, the HoD was considered as the 'curriculum leaders'. Thus, the HoD should be resourceful to give insights relating to her understanding and experience in implementing the CHE. The reason for selecting the two lecturers were because they had taught more than three years, hence possessing sufficient experiences in implementing the curriculum. Another purpose was because the two lectures taught different subjects; the first lecturer taught a skill-based course while the second lecturer taught a theoretical-based course, thus providing different spectrums in the investigation.

For the FGD, twenty students were recruited comprising ten students of the first' lecturer's class and ten students of the second lecturer's one. The former group of the recruited students was in the first semester while the latter group was doing their fifth semester. Concerned with the number of the participants in the FGD, the size of the FGD, according to Flower (2009), ranges from size to eight people. Different from Fowler, Morgan (1998) proposed the size between four and twelve participants. Hence, ten students per group which were recruited in this research were still in the range of ideal number of the participants proposed by experts. Those students were taught by various lecturers, hence possessing knowledge and experience in using the CHE.

The data which was obtained from the interview was transcribed verbatim and then analyzed. Furthermore, the documents related to the use of the CBC implementation such as the curriculum guidelines, lesson plans and learning materials were also analyzed. As the sampling was selected by purpose, the purposive sampling was employed as the sampling technique. In this type of sampling, according to Holliday (2007), the sampling is not aimed at making generalization of the population but having different insights, leading to the whole comprehensive description. The human behaviors in the context of the CBC implementation were observed and explored. Descriptive and narrative writing were applied to capture the voices and insights of the head of department, lecturers and students accurately.

The data taken from the interview were analyzed thematically. Thematic analysis was defined by Bram and Clarke (2006) as a technique to identify, analyze and report the patterns within the obtained data. This allows rich and detailed organization and description of the data. In thematic analysis, the researchers approached the data more inductively without having too much predetermined ideas. Thus, more flexible data analysis could highly be achieved in thematic analysis (Navilla, 2017). Besides, using a thematic analysis implied that the analysis was not based on the certain theoretical framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006), instead it was a data-driven processes done to explore the participants' perspective through their personal narration. Hence, themes inductively emerged from the obtained data. Thematic analysis, as Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest, requires the researcher to familiarize, code, search for themes, review the themes, define and name the themes and write up.

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The research found that the principles proposed by Ahmad Dahlan including the curriculum structure, pedagogical techniques, and character education had been successfully incorporated in the implementation of CHE. Additionally, 'Ahmad's Dahlan values' correspond to the CHE principles.

3.1. ADV were PartiallyReflected in the Curriculum Structure

In terms of curriculum structure, the skills-based subjects were focused, demonstrated by the inclusions of subjects to develop competencies in the curriculum of EED of UMY including 'Listening and speaking for daily conversation', 'Listening and speaking for formal setting', 'Computer literacy, and 'Listening and speaking for career development'. According to the Head of Department (HoD), the subjects were not arranged subsequently based on the hierarchy of knowledge. Instead, they were based on the targeted competencies needed by the graduates. Hence, the curriculum structure, according to the HoD, implemented the parallel approach, not the serial one.

According the HoD and two lecturers, as the subjects in the curriculum structure were arranged using parallel approach, the subjects at the earlier semesters were not prerequisite for taking subjects in the later semesters. The HoD said that different from the content-based curriculum, the subjects in the curriculum structure aimed to equip students with the occupational skills which were necessary to support their success in the world of work. The document of the curriculum structure confirmed that some names of the subjects did not indicate the hierarchy of knowledge such as listening and speaking for daily conversation in the first semester and listening and speaking for academic purposes in second semester and offline computer literacy in the first semester and online computer literacy in the second semester. However, several subjects indicated that they were prerequisite of the other subjects. For example, 'Capita Selecta on Grammar' 1 was taught in semester 2 while 'Capita Selecta on Grammar 2' was taught in semester 2. The HoD and most of the students in FGD confirmed that there was a gradation in difficulty from the former to the latter subject. This suggested that an element of serial approach of the curriculum structure was still implemented in shaping the curriculum structure.

In Dahlan's opinion, in order to equip Muslims with skills to succeed in the world, education should enhance students' competencies and this should become an important agenda for Indonesian Muslims (Salam, 1962). Dahlan's opinion shared the HoD's view when she was asked about the vision of the CBC. In the HoD's perspective, the ultimate goal of the CBC was to produce graduates with competitive advantages. Hence, according to her, it was inevitable for an educational institution in tertiary education to ingrained competencies in students. In fact, in order to achieve the worldly success, educational specialization was successfully introduced by Dahlan, obliging Muslims to master several skills. However, different from pure secular education, Dahlan always reminded Muslims that despite their worldly success due their high education and promising careers, Muslims still should embrace the Islamic values (Ruswan, 1997).

3.2. ADV were Manifested in the PedagogicalTechniques

In terms of teaching strategy, the application of the student-centered learning had been successfully demonstrated by the two lecturers. For instance, students in the first female lecturer were actively engaged in 'round table' and 'stand-up' discussion, two activities created by the lecturer in the class. The lecturer explained that her main role is to facilitate students' learning in the class. Her statement was proved in which she managed to encourage students to speak and give their opinions, hence reducing her dominance in the class. To conclude, student-learning activities reflecting classroom innovation was observable in the teaching and learning process.

Elements of student-centered learning had also been successfully implemented in the second lecturer's class. Teaching 'Academic reading and writing 2', the female lecture created various activities such as small group discussions and other dynamic activities, encouraging her students to be interactive. It was observable that the lecturer asked the students to engage activities which needed collaboration to understand paragraphs, topic sentences and supporting sentences. This was in contrast with the traditional class in which, according to Wright (2011), most learning process was dominated by lecturers and the students only memorize the information. The lecturer also succeeded in relating the activities with the targeted competencies that she had written in the lesson plans. This is in line with Griffith and Lim's (2014) opinion that specific competencies are achieved through the creation of activities in the class. Weimer (2002) coined it very well that the

teacher is no longer the center of the class whole responsibility is to fill students' brain with information, but instead, he or she acts as a manager in the learning process.

Some elements of the student-centered learning performed by the lecturers were in agreement with Dahlan's spirit in conceptualizing the essence of education. According to Ruswan (1997), Muslims, as Dahlan pointed out, should always actualize religious tenets in real life. On the other hand, Dahlan also stated that the development of knowledge should strengthen the Muslims understanding of the religious teaching rooted in the Quran and the teaching of the prophet. Citing one verse in the Quran, Dahlan explained that understanding the religious principles was not adequate. Hence Muslims should practice what they read in the holy book (ibid, 1997). Dahlan also held an idea that learning should be fun. As Wirjosukarto (1962) said, Dahlan recommended teachers to teach using a simple and interesting technique.

3.3. The ADV Strengthened the CharacterEducation

In addition to the skill-based subjects incorporated in the curriculum structure and the SCL applied by lecturers in pedagogical process, the character education inspired by ADV had also been implemented in the EED of UMY. As Dahlan said, education had to be directed above all towards building character. Ahmad Dahlan regarded character building as an important target of educational objectives. No one, he argued, can achieve 'greatness' in this world or the hereafter except for those who possess good characters (Mulkhan, as cited in Ruswan, 1997). Good character is an aspect that complements the teachings of the Qur'an and the prophet. Since the prophet Muhammad was believed to have exemplified the application of the two sources, the process of building character should be driven toward emulating his ideal.

Some Islamic-based subjects were included in the curriculum structure in this department. The enactment of some Islamic subjects, according to the HoD, was aimed at cultivating the Islamic students' character so that students will behave according to Islamic morality. The subjects included those concerned with matters of faith or 'aqidah', Islamic legal rules or 'ibadah' and 'fiqih, Islamic morality and virtues or 'akhlak', Qur'an reading and writing as well as the knowledge of Muhammadiyah organization.

The HoD, lecturers and students were confident that the Islamic-based subjects taught in the department were instrumental in developing students' noble character personalities. The HoD gave an example of how the 'akhlak' subject encouraged students to exemplify the noble character of the prophet such as honesty, patience and compassion. Additionally, in the subject called 'aqidah', students were to cultivate their faith based on the words of God and the teaching of prophet so that their action would be driven and inspired by the holy sources of Islam. In addition, students will adopt the educational and moral teachings from Ahmad Dahlan when they learnt 'Kemuhammadiyahan'.

The teaching of 'akhlak' aimed to develop noble character, according to the HoD and the lecturers, was not free from the drawbacks and challenges. They explained that lecturers should be creative in creating the learning process which engaged students to practice their knowledge. The HoD felt that this was difficult because 'akhlak' was taught as a stand-alone subject, resulting in the focus on the memorization of concepts rather than the application of the moral knowledge in real life. Students in the FGD shared the HoD's concern and said that the subject of 'akhlak' should be taught creatively and expected that lecturers were well prepared in creating learning activities.

3.4. The ADV is Compatible with the Principles of CHE

The curriculum of EED of UMY is developed within the framework of CHE and this curriculum necessitates the change of paradigm associated with the nature of knowledge and the teaching and learning process. The DGHE underlined that the CHE was the continuation of the CBC, hence the teaching and learning process advocates the use of the Competency-based Education (CBC).

Concerned with the curriculum content, the main purpose of the CBE is to help students acquire a set of skills or competencies (Kouwenhoven, 2011). This results in two implications.

First, as Hummel and Wigman (1997) and Print (1993) point out, the arrangement of the subjects in the curriculum is not based on the disciplinary contents, but the competencies desired at the end of certain programs. In other words, the competencies needed by a skillful workers should be the foundation on which a curriculum structure is constructed; hence, the curriculum structure is not derived by a disciplinary body of knowledge. Kouwenhoven (2011) added that since the curriculum is competency-based, the notions of jobs and professional cannot be separated from this type of curriculum. Accordingly, programs which try to connect the teaching and learning process with the real working situations should be encouraged (ibid, 2011).

ADV shared the CBE concepts introduced by Kouwenhoven (2011) in connection with the purpose of the curriculum to assist students to achieve competencies. Inspired by Islamic teaching, Dahlan encouraged Muslims to achieve the happiness in the world and the hereafter. To succeed in the world, as Dahlan pointed out, every Muslim should equip themselves with at least one skill (Ruswan, 1997). However, Dahlan advised Muslims to remain pious while they were capable of achieving their success (ibid, 1997).

With regard to the pedagogical process, CBE necessitates learners to be active participants in the learning process. Field and Drysdale (1991) assert that for such a learning situation to occur, some elements including individualized materials, flexible learning time and continues feedback are required. Citing Kerka (1998), Kouwenhoven (2011) said that teachers' responsibility in the CBE context goes beyond merely the provider of information. Instead, she or he should act as a motivator for students to be actively involved in active learning and inquiry. In the context of tertiary education in Indonesia, the government has provided the information of the types and strategies of implementing the SCL in the class in its guideline book.

Ahmad Dahlan in his era was considered progressive in his firm position in advocating learning which was more student-based. The inclination of Ahmad Dahlan toward the preference of SCL, as Wirjosukarto (1962) pointed out, was proved through Dahlan's statement that debating and asking to teachers were accepted. This was quite progressive way of thinking since at that era, questioning and debating to teachers and old people are considered taboo, especially in the Javanese culture setting (ibid, Wirjosukarto, 1962).

3. CONCLUSION

The EED of UMY has been relatively successful in translating the ADV into the curriculum. As has been encouraged by the educational philosophy of Ahmad Dahlan, the curriculum structure of EED of UMY has focused on the skills development instead of knowledge acquisition. Most of the subjects were arranged using parallel approach in the curriculum structure, although few subjects were still arranged serially. This suggests that an element of the content-based curriculum was still mirrored in the EED of UMY's curriculum. Hence, the department needs to alter the subjects which still reflected the content-based into the competency-based in the setting of the CHE.

The pedagogical techniques which were more student-centered as had been advocated by Ahmad Dahlan had also been implemented by EED of UMY. The two lecturers observed had demonstrated the use of the student-centered learning models including small group discussions. This finding, however, could not be used to generalize that all lecturers in EED of UMY had implemented the SCL approaches in their teaching. Hence, another study is needed to explore the use of SCL of all lecturers at EED of UMY so that the extent to which the SCL has been applied among lecturers in the department can be described.

The character building as had been advocated in by Ahmad Dahlan had also been incorporated in the forms of the inclusion of the Islamic based-subjects including aqidah (matters of faith), akhlak (Islamic virtues and morality), Fiqih of Ibadah (Islamic legal rules in the life of Muslims) and Kemuhammadiyahan (knoweldge of Muhammadiyah Organization and its principles). Despite of the inclusion of these subjects which were intended to build the students' character, the approach was still the teaching stand-alone subjects which, according to students, still focus on memorization of knowledge rather than developing students' character. Therefore, the EED of UMY needs to find more effective strategies on how to build students' character through the application of knowledge, hence developing students' affective dimension.

The research is limited to the translation of the Indonesian-English specific-culture terms in particular relation to the culinary terms. A further research, therefore, is necessary to develop other term translations.

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