Early Childhood Education: Best Practice from Indonesia and Malaysia

Abstract---Indonesia and Malaysia have been implementing their own early childhood education system in developing their young generations for future. This paper discuss limited to the best practice of early childhood education (ECE) in Indonesia and Malaysia. Previous studies show that the two countries are allied because they have many geographical similarities as they are located close together. Therefore, the social, economic and cultural conditions have much in common. In terms of culture, although it is very diverse, it includes various dances, music, clothing, sculpture, sculpture and customs, as well as the diversity of languages and culinary, but there are similarities with each other. Generally, it shows similarities and differences between Indonesia and Malaysia. The similarities could be an idea to have mutual collaborations between the two countries in generating higher quality of childhood through education. From the differences, it is suggested to be consider for both countries in establishing best practices for early childhood education.

Keywords: policies, ECEC, learning, Indonesia, Malaysia

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the future investments of a country to reduce inequality and poverty. Campbell's study [1] reveals that education plays an important role for a good and productive life. Education also increases the value and smoothness of one's life. Similarly, Darling-Hammond [2] discusses in detail that education is increasingly becoming very important for the success of people and countries.

Furthermore, this paper illustrates that early childhood education is the center of attention throughout the world. Education is an important aspect in the life of a country. So important is its position, even the benchmark for the progress of a country is measured by its education. The education system applied by each country is indeed different. This is influenced by various things such as socio-cultural, environmental, historical, and other things. In implementing the education system, each country must have considerations other than those factors namely the long-term and short-term implementation goals. The aim of implementing an appropriate education system will lead to the creation of quality human resources in accordance with the nation's ideal ideals. Education of a country needs to be planned and arranged into a system in such a way, because without a clear system of education in a country, the direction, travel, and desired output becomes unclear or gray.

In this case, Malaysia and Indonesia are two countries that have the same family, adjacent areas, almost the same language, and various cultures that are almost the same. Based on these similarities, a harmonious two-state diplomacy relationship has been established. Regarding the education sector, these two countries both have great attention in early childhood education. However, the question is the system implemented successfully? This paper describes the best practices of both countries with differences systems of education in the two countries, Indonesia and Malaysia

II. BEST PRACTICE FROM INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA

2.1. Type of Early Childhood Education

In Malaysia, the education system for preschoolers is carried out in the name of Taska and Tadika. Taska is intended as a place to keep children from zero to four years old. While children aged four to six years are educated in Tadika. Both of them use an integrated curriculum used in education programs prepared by the state. In Indonesia, these two models of education can be categorized into kindergarten and early childhood education.

| Country   | Name of ECE         | Type             | Range of Age     |
|-----------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Indonesia | PAUD                | Public and private | Below 4 years old |
|           | TK                  | Public and private | 4-6 years old    |
| Malaysia  | TASKA (Taman Asuhan | Public and private | Below 4 years old |
|           | Kanak-kanak)        |                  |                  |
|           | TADIKA (Taman Didikan | Public and private | 4-6 years old    |
|           | Kanak-kanak)        |                  |                  |

Table. 1. Type of ECE
2.2. Learning approach
The learning approach in Taska and Tadika mostly uses project-based learning. This is apparently somewhat different from Indonesia. Although both of them follow a curriculum designed by the Government, the practice of early childhood learning in Indonesia is not yet fully project based. This is seen when children use more worksheets in each of their activities.

Regarding assessment, there is currently a trend in Malaysia to develop natural-based learning tools. [3]. In Indonesia alone, several schools have started implementing this before [4]. This nature-based learning will increase children's understanding and enthusiasm by 40%.

2.3. Facilities
In Tadika and Taska, special spaces are available for children to carry out their various activities and be accompanied by a caring teacher. In each of these spaces, children are free to move according to the stage of development. In addition to indoors, learning activities are also conducted outside the classroom. An interesting and different thing in Indonesia is the sewing room. In Malaysia, this room is used by teachers to make their own media and learning equipment such as costumes that will be used by children during learning.

2.4. Education for Special need children
If there are children with special needs, they are still united with other normal children in the same class. This union is so that children with special needs get the same opportunities and guidance in fostering their development and growth. Besides that, there is also a special room for these children with a variety of tools provided to make them special. In Indonesia, inclusive learning practices have not yet been fully realized; there are still many ABK children who follow the education level in SLB (tend to be exclusive, differentiated). Only a few schools in one province have implemented inclusive learning.

2.5. Equipment
In different classes children also learn by doing experiments. For example, to find out the process of the occurrence of caterpillars through rubbish decay. The teacher asks each child what is seen and observed in decaying garbage. All children have the same opportunity to see and observe the garbage. After that, they gave their respective answers to the results of the observation.

2.6. Schooling Time
Learning time varies. There is a class that ends at 12.00. There were also those who returned late at 4:00 p.m. After learning, children are accustomed to eating lunch in the dining room according to a predetermined schedule.

2.7. Reading and writing skill
The ability to read and write children can be developed through guidance and support from the planning of teaching and learning that are prepared based on the curriculum according to the theme. In addition, the provision of tools and materials that can make children move with the support of play materials prepared by creative teachers.

Based on observation at NCRDC, Malaysia, this can be found in Taska and Tadika because there are rooms with various works of teacher creativity and children's work. Learning process of both (Taska and Tadika) at NCDRC are equipped with photos of children and families. The goal of this is that children think that the support of parents is very meaningful so that it gives encouragement for them to always attend school. Taska and Tadika are also equipped with a swimming pool that can stimulate children to do body work activities, according to the specified schedule.

Gardening areas are also provided by planting vegetables that can foster children's knowledge and love of plants and the surrounding environment, and foster a sense of responsibility.

Basically, preschool-age children are very much determined by the curriculum used and the planning of learning is arranged and the creativity of teachers that can make children grow and develop according to their age. What Malaysia did through the Permata curriculum used by Taska and Tadika might be interesting to adopt in Indonesia.

2.8. Teacher quality development
Research in the field of teacher development in Indonesia is different compared to other countries with regard to social reality brought about by politics, geography and survival. By considering social and political realities in Indonesia, academics agree that what is needed for teachers is training for self-development and the ability to negotiate with local stakeholders [5][6]. Research by [7] argue that although Indonesia has implemented efforts to improve the quality of teachers / principals through certification and training since 2009. However, these nationally trained teachers / principals find it difficult to lead schools if they do not have social relations with local political offices. These obstacles have prompted [8] to recommend that for Indonesia it would be more beneficial if the research and academic discussion were emphasized on "technical issues rather than [problems] on education reform". The World Bank report on "Teacher Reform in Indonesia" [9] provides a comprehensive review of Indonesia's efforts to improve teacher quality. The structure of the work report carried out around the conceptual framework of teacher reform, detailing the successes and failures affected by the Teacher Law of 2005. In particular, while policies have proposed significant increases in teacher salaries, certification, professionalization, pre-service and continuing professional development, conclusions for future directions in Indonesian teacher policy centers on
"school-wide reform" that integrates knowledge, culture, and the "learning community". Although the government has been trying to expand teaching staff and improve teaching qualifications since Law 14/2005 (also known as the Teacher Law), there is now a teacher surplus, and the relationship between teacher certification and student performance is minimal [10]. The multiplication of salaries also has no impact on student outcomes, and is seen only as a financial transfer to the teacher and improvement of teacher welfare [11]. Fahmi, Maulana and Yusuf [12] note that teacher certification in Indonesia is a confusion of ways and objectives. Although the formal end goal is to improve student outcomes, certification only leads to improvement in the standard of living of teachers. It is important to note that not far different from Indonesia in the broad efforts to improve the quality of education, there is a substantial push in the Malaysian education system, towards efforts to produce equitable student outcomes. The Malaysian National Education Blueprint for 2013-2025 has highlighted many factors regarding educational equality such as the country's economic capacity, the existence of rural and urban schools, the differences between ethnic schools and their varied performances, and the increasing gender-education gap between boys and girls [13].

In Malaysia, there is clear recognition of the role of education for the national economy and the country's drive for 21st century competence, but available domestic research does not always carefully assess the implications for such decisions. The focus of research is in the area of seeing school teaching and leadership as a whole symbiotic. Ahmad [14] believes that the amount of attention in this regard is due to creating SuperLeaders (the appointment of a Malaysian education system for experienced teachers of good quality), this is also in view to develop better leadership capacity to encourage teacher development. Nevertheless, as noted by researchers, although the Malaysian government pays great attention to teacher/school principal training, research in this area is very limited. The research was first carried out by [15] which provided a conceptual stage. Only then Halim and Ahmad [16] propose that the teacher is also part of this and becomes a factor that needs to be considered by experts in his research to then publish the results.

As shown in several studies that the principal's leadership has an impact on teacher performance and ultimately affects the increase in student performance [17][18][19][20][21].

III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This paper describes similarities and differences in ECE policies and approaches of both countries. The similarities could be an idea to have mutual collaborations between the two countries in generating higher quality of childhood through education. From the differences, it is suggested to be consider for both countries in establishing best practices for early childhood education.

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