

THE STRATEGIC FUNCTION OF EDUCATION BETWEEN INHERITANCE AND SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGE IN THE CIREBON ENVIRONMENT: A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

^{*1}Fifit Fitria Ratnaningsih, ²Tamsik Udin, ³Asep Mulyana

^{*1,2,3}UIN Siber Syekh Nurjati Cirebon

Email: ^{*1}fitriaratnaningsih@gmail.com, ²tamsik@uinssc.ac.id,

³asepmulyana@syekhnurjati.ac.id

Abstract

This article discusses the strategic function of education in the context of cultural and social heritage transmission and change in the Cirebon community, using a sociological approach. Education plays a role not only as a means of preserving local cultural values and traditions but also as an agent of change that encourages society to adapt to evolving social and cultural dynamics. This study examines how the education system in Cirebon strives to balance maintaining cultural heritage and responding to the challenges of modern social change. Using qualitative data and sociological analysis, the article reveals the crucial role of education in strengthening social and cultural identity while initiating constructive transformation within the Cirebon society.

Keywords: Cirebon, Strategic Function of Education, Social Heritage and Social Change, Sociological Approach

Abstract

Artikel ini membahas fungsi strategis pendidikan dalam konteks pewarisan dan perubahan sosial budaya di lingkungan Cirebon dengan menggunakan pendekatan sosiologi. Pendidikan tidak hanya berperan sebagai alat pewarisan nilai-nilai budaya dan tradisi lokal, tetapi juga sebagai agen perubahan yang mendorong adaptasi masyarakat terhadap dinamika sosial dan budaya yang terus berkembang. Studi ini menelaah bagaimana sistem pendidikan di Cirebon berupaya menjaga keseimbangan antara mempertahankan warisan budaya dan merespons tantangan perubahan sosial modern. Dengan menggunakan data kualitatif dan analisis sosiologis, artikel ini mengungkap peran krusial pendidikan dalam memperkuat identitas sosial dan budaya sekaligus menginisiasi transformasi yang konstruktif dalam masyarakat Cirebon.

Kata kunci: cirebon, fungsi strategis pendidikan, pewarisan dan perubahan sosial, pendekatan sosiologi

INTRODUCTION

Education as one of the social instruments has a strategic function in the formation and development of society. In the socio-cultural scope of Cirebon, education not only functions as a medium of inheritance of cultural values and norms, but also as a dynamic agent of social change. The people of Cirebon, which are rich in local cultural traditions, face various challenges of modernization and globalization that have the potential to

change the local social and cultural structure. Therefore, it is important to examine how education can play a strategic role in carrying out these two main functions—cultural inheritance and social change. Education is one of the social instruments that has a strategic function in the formation and development of society. The function of education is not only limited to improving individual knowledge and skills, but also plays a role as the main medium in the inheritance of cultural values and norms between generations (Banks, 2015). In the socio-cultural sphere, especially in Cirebon, education takes a dual role as an agent of cultural inheritance as well as a catalyst for dynamic social change.

Education, as the main foundation in the social structure, plays a crucial role not only in transforming the individual through the acquisition of knowledge and the mastery of practical skills, but also in shaping the landscape of society as a whole. More than just information transfer, education serves as a vein that flows noble values, traditions, and cultural norms from one generation to the next (Banks, 2015). In a rich and unique socio-cultural context like in Cirebon, the role of education has become increasingly complex and interesting. On the one hand, educational institutions in Cirebon carry a great responsibility in preserving local cultural heritage which includes the art of mask dance, *trusmi batik*, oral traditions, to strong mutual cooperation and religious values. Curriculum and extracurricular activities are often designed to introduce and instill a love for Cirebon's cultural identity in the younger generation. However, on the other hand, education in Cirebon also plays a role as a driving force for dynamic social change. With exposure to global scientific and technological developments, as well as interaction with new ideas, education equips individuals with the ability to think critically, innovate, and adapt to changing times. Therefore, education in Cirebon is in a strategic position to balance the preservation of local cultural wealth with the demands of modernization and social progress, making it an important agent in shaping the future of Cirebon society that is rooted in tradition but still responsive to global developments.

The people of Cirebon are known to be rich in local traditions and wisdom that have been inherent for centuries. There are many traditions that originate from Cirebon, such as the tradition of batik art, Gamelan music, and typical religious rituals (Syarifuddin, 2018). This tradition is the foundation of socio-cultural identity that is inherited through various channels, including formal and non-formal education. However, in the era of modernization and globalization, the people of Cirebon face significant challenges in the form of changes in values, patterns of social interaction, and social structures that can erode the sustainability of local culture (Robertson, 1992) and (Appadurai, 1996)

The main challenge faced by the people of Cirebon in the era of globalization lies in the tension between maintaining local cultural identity and the need to keep up with the flow of modernity. As a region rich in cultural heritage, such as the art of mask dance, Cirebon batik, Islamic boarding school traditions, and noble values in community life, Cirebon has strong social and cultural capital. However, globalization brings universal values that are often not in line with local wisdom, such as individualism, materialism, and cultural homogenization through mass media and digital technology.

In this context, education plays a strategic role in navigating these challenges. As agents of cultural inheritance, educational institutions—whether formal, informal, or informal—play a role in transmitting cultural values, norms, and practices from one generation to the next. On the other hand, education is also a means to prepare individuals to face a new reality that demands the ability to think critically, adaptively, and future-oriented. Therefore, this dualism of educational functions must be interpreted integratively, not as two contradictory poles.

The multicultural and contextual education approach is relevant to be applied in the Cirebon education system. Multicultural education enables students to understand and appreciate cultural differences, both local and global, as well as to build an inclusive self-identity. Meanwhile, contextual education emphasizes the importance of relating learning materials to the socio-cultural environment in which students live, so that learning becomes more meaningful and applicative. In practice, a local content curriculum needs to be developed systematically in order to be able to accommodate Cirebon's cultural richness in the educational process.

For example, learning local history that raises the narrative of the Cirebon kingdom, the role of Wali Songo in Islamic da'wah, and local folk stories can be included in elementary to secondary school subject matter. In the field of cultural arts, students can be invited to be directly involved in traditional art practices such as mask dance, Cirebon gamelan, and regional written batik, not only as an extracurricular activity, but also as part of character formation and a sense of pride in local identity. The strengthening of local culture-based education is also in line with the principles of the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes the differentiation of learning and local wisdom as a source of learning.

In addition, the role of teachers is very decisive in bridging local and global values in the educational process. Teachers not only act as conveyors of information, but also as facilitators who guide students to think reflectively and critically about the social changes that occur. For this reason, the development of teacher competencies in the pedagogic, cultural, and digital fields is crucial. Teachers must be able to integrate information technology in learning without ignoring the roots of local culture, for example by creating digital content based on Cirebon culture, such as educational videos about the batik making process or local legend stories.

Education in the pesantren and madrasah environment also has an important position in maintaining the continuity of Cirebon traditions, especially in spiritual and moral aspects. The tradition of recitation, mujahadah, and the use of regional languages in religious interactions is part of the cultural ecosystem of pesantren that is still sustainable in various corners of Cirebon. Through a contextual approach to religious education, pesantren can become a fortress of local values as well as a forum to form the character of students who are moderate, tolerant, and open to changing times.

However, it is undeniable that efforts to maintain local culture through education face a number of challenges. One of the main challenges is the lack of attention to the integration of local culture in national education policies. Although there is already a local content policy, its implementation in various regions is still a formality and is not fully integrated

into the core curriculum. In addition, the lack of competent human resources in the field of local culture, the limitation of local-based teaching materials, and the lack of support from the local government are also obstacles. To overcome this, synergy is needed between the government, educational institutions, cultural leaders, and local communities in designing sustainable education strategies. Local governments can act as facilitators by allocating special budgets for the development of local culture-based education, including teacher training, preparation of teaching materials, and the implementation of project-based learning activities that raise the theme of regional culture. Collaboration between schools and art studios, cultural communities, and traditional institutions can also enrich students' learning experiences outside the classroom.

On the other hand, openness to global developments must still be accommodated in the education system. Mastery of foreign languages, technological skills, and understanding of global issues such as climate change, human rights, and democracy still need to be instilled in students as part of 21st century literacy. However, this must be done without sacrificing the noble values of local culture. In this case, the glocalization approach—that is, the adaptation of global values by considering the local context is a relevant and adaptive strategy. For the people of Cirebon, education that is able to integrate local and global values will strengthen cultural identity while increasing the competitiveness of the younger generation. Values such as mutual cooperation, religiosity, politeness, and respect for tradition can be a moral foundation in facing the challenges of modernization. On the other hand, the ability to adapt to technology, think critically, and collaborate across cultures is an important provision in entering the increasingly complex world of work and social life.

Collective awareness of the importance of education based on local values also needs to be built among parents and the community. The family as the first and main educational institution has a responsibility in instilling a love for culture from an early age. Parents can invite their children to get to know local traditions through daily activities, such as speaking the local language at home, introducing Cirebon specialties, or visiting local historical and cultural sites. The active participation of the community in cultural activities, both at the village and city levels, is also an indicator of the success of local value education outside the school environment. In closing, the role of education in the socio-cultural context of Cirebon extends beyond the transfer of knowledge to encompass the inheritance of values, character formation, and the strengthening of collective identity. During the rapid flow of globalization, education is a strategic arena to create a balance between the preservation of local culture and openness to constructive social change. Therefore, the education strategy in Cirebon needs to be designed comprehensively, collaboratively, and oriented towards cultural sustainability, to create a society that is resilient in identity and adaptive to global dynamics.

METHOD

The writing of this article uses a qualitative method with a literature study approach (library research). This method was chosen because it allows researchers to explore, understand, and analyze various concepts, theories, and findings of previous research

relevant to the topic being discussed. The literature study approach focuses on tracing credible and academic written sources as the main material in compiling scientific arguments and narratives. Research data is collected from various secondary sources such as reference books, scientific journal articles, research reports, and other academic publications that are closely related to the theme and focus of the study. The data collection process is carried out systematically by considering the validity, relevance, and up-to-date information available. The selected sources are the work of experts who have authority in their fields, especially in the realm of social sciences and sociology.

After the data was collected, the researcher conducted a descriptive and interpretive analysis. Descriptive analysis aims to describe social phenomena that are studied in detail and systematically based on the findings of the existing literature. Meanwhile, interpretive analysis is used to understand the meaning contained in the data, as well as to relate the findings to relevant sociological theories, such as Max Weber's theory of social action, Anthony Giddens' structuring theory, or Karl Marx's theory of conflict, depending on the context of the research. Through this approach, the article not only presents a summary of various references, but also offers a synthesis and critical interpretation of the issues raised. Thus, the results of this research are expected to make a conceptual contribution in enriching academic discourse and become a reference in further research in the same field.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Education as a Cultural Heritage Agent in Cirebon

In the context of Cirebon society, both formal and informal education play an important role in the preservation of local cultural values. Formal education through the school curriculum seeks to include materials about Cirebon traditions and culture, such as the history of Cirebon batik which is distinctive with Megamendung motifs, gamelan music art that is integrated in various cultural celebrations, and social norms that reflect diversity and tolerance in a multicultural society (Sanjaya, 2017). For example, local content in the elementary and secondary school curriculum often raises the history and wisdom of local culture to instill a sense of love and appreciation for local identity from an early age (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2016).

In addition to formal schools, informal education that occurs in pesantren also plays a strategic role in inheriting local cultural values as well as religious values as the moral foundation of the Cirebon community. Islamic boarding schools in Cirebon not only focus on Islamic religious learning, but also integrate learning local cultures such as dance and traditional arts in extracurricular activities, strengthening their role in maintaining cultural sustainability (Arifianto A. R., 2019). The presence of informal education is important to build social harmony in a multicultural society as well as a forum for dynamic socio-cultural adaptation. Thus, formal and informal education in Cirebon synergistically contributes as a media of cultural heritage as well as a platform to strengthen a distinctive and multifaceted socio-cultural identity. This is especially relevant given the pressures of modernization and globalization that can threaten the preservation of local culture if it is not balanced with systematic and comprehensive educational efforts.

2. Education as a Driver of Socio-Cultural Change

In addition to inheritance, education also prepares an adaptive society for global change. The teaching of new skills, the use of technology, and the introduction of pluralistic ideas drive the transformation of traditional social and cultural attitudes. For example, the value of tolerance between ethnic and religious groups is increasingly instilled through education as a response to diversity in Cirebon. In addition to the function of cultural heritage, education also plays an important role in preparing society to be adaptive to rapid and dynamic global changes. In this context, education functions as an agent of social transformation by teaching new skills that are relevant to the times, such as digital literacy, the use of information technology, and the introduction of pluralism values that respect cultural diversity and social identity (UNESCO, 2016). Through this learning process, the community not only maintains local traditions, but is also able to make adjustments to social and cultural changes that occur as a result of globalization.

In Cirebon, formal and non-formal education actively encourages the cultivation of values of tolerance between ethnic and religious groups in response to the diversity of the local community (Hasan, 2018). This is important considering the existence of various ethnic groups such as Javanese, Sundanese, Chinese, and Arabs who coexist in the region. Education is directed to form an attitude of mutual respect and strengthen social cohesion in a multicultural society, so that the potential for social conflict can be minimized (Syamsudin, 2020). For example, teaching about pluralism and human rights began to be integrated into school curricula and extracurricular activities as an effort to internalize inclusive values. Thus, education in Cirebon not only preserves local culture, but also prepares the community to become more open, tolerant, and adaptive in facing global challenges without losing its cultural identity. This role is very strategic to ensure sustainability and a balance between cultural heritage and social innovation.

3. Conflict and Challenges

However, in practice, education in Cirebon faces tensions between traditional and modern values that emerge during the process of social and cultural transformation. The rapid changes brought about by modern education, especially triggered by globalization and the influx of new information and technologies, are often perceived as a threat by some elements of local culture who seek to maintain the authenticity and sustainability of their traditions (Geertz, 1963) and (Haryanto, 2019). For example, cultural values and practices such as batik art, local religious rituals, and other local wisdom treasures face the risk of being marginalized by the dominance of popular culture and modern lifestyles that enter through the formal education system.

This tension is not only a challenge for cultural actors, but also for educators who are required to be able to balance the two main functions of education, namely cultural preservation as well as innovation to respond to the demands of the times (Hofstede, 2001). Educators need to design learning approaches that are sensitive to local values, but remain open to beneficial knowledge changes and updates. In this context, the integration of local cultural curriculum with 21st century character and skills education is an important key so that the educational process not only preserves cultural heritage, but is

also able to support the development of adaptive and innovative societies (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2020). Therefore, the development of a holistic and contextual education strategy is urgently needed, involving the active participation of local communities, cultural leaders, and governments to create a harmonious balance between cultural preservation and social innovation. Shared concern in addressing this problem will strengthen cultural sustainability while preparing a society that is able to compete and survive in the global era.

4. The Role of Community and Government

The role of local communities and local governments is an important factor in supporting the strategic function of education, particularly in the context of cultural preservation and encouraging positive social change. Local communities, as the owners and direct actors of culture, provide authentic and valuable cultural resources to be included in the educational process, such as folklore, traditional arts, and social practices that have been passed down from generation to generation (Putnam, 2000). The active participation of this community not only enriches the learning materials, but also strengthens the sense of belonging and sustainability of culture in the midst of changing social dynamics.

Meanwhile, local governments play a strategic role in formulating and implementing inclusive and participatory education policies. Policies designed by involving community leaders, educators, and other stakeholders will be more responsive to local needs and able to accommodate the two main functions of education, namely cultural heritage and social innovation (Warren et al., 2017). For example, the Cirebon local government can develop a curriculum program based on local wisdom that is integrated with 21st century skills development, while providing support in the form of teacher training, cultural arts funding, and facilitation of cooperation between schools and community cultural groups (Kementerian Dalam Negeri Republik Indonesia, 2019). This inclusive approach is vital to create synergy between various elements of society in maintaining cultural preservation while encouraging social transformation through education. Thus, the role of local communities and local governments is not only as a supervisor and implementer of policies, but also as a strategic partner in building an educational ecosystem that is adaptive, sustainable, and oriented towards socio-cultural progress.

CONCLUSION

Education in the Cirebon environment has a complex dual strategic function, namely as a means of cultural inheritance and an agent of socio-cultural change. Through education, local cultural values such as batik traditions, gamelan art, and social norms of the community are systematically inherited from generation to generation, thus maintaining the continuity of local identity and wisdom that is characteristic of the Cirebon people (Syarifuddin, 2018). However, at the same time, education is also an important forum for people to accept, internalize, and adapt to various social changes that occur due to modernization and globalization. This allows for a dynamic transformation of social attitudes, knowledge, and practices that are relevant to the demands of the times (Robertson, 1992). The main challenge in carrying out this strategic function is how to create the right balance between the conservation of cultural values and the needs of the

times, so that there is no cultural disruption as well as the readiness of the community to face change (Inglehart, & Baker, 2000). An approach to education that places too much emphasis on conservation can stifle innovation and adaptation, while an overly strong orientation on modernization risks eroding the traditional values that are the foundation of social identity. Therefore, educational policies and approaches that are culturally sensitive and responsive to social dynamics in Cirebon society are needed. The policy should integrate local content into the curriculum, empower the role of local communities, and adopt inclusive and participatory learning methods to bridge the gap between cultural preservation and social change. With this strategy, education can carry out its strategic function optimally as a bridge between the past and the future of the Cirebon people. research.

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