AN ANALYSIS ON INDONESIAN TEACHERS' REASONING IN RESOLVING MORAL DILEMMAS

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Abstract: This study regards ability to use considerations appropriately to overcome a dilemma is essential. It is a moral reasoning process that needs to be done when one meets a dilemma. The absence of a moral reasoning could be an indication that someone is suffering a moral failure. The purpose of this study is to investigate the using of considerations to resolve moral problems in education area. To achieve the purpose, this study employs a qualitative approach. It involves five participants from a senior secondary school in Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia. In the interviews the participants are firstly presented a story containing a dilemma. They are, afterward, given a time to reason the dilemma. A conversation about the decision they make-what their decision is, why and how the decision is made, is then conducted. The result shows twelve considerations are used. They are following the rules, being fair, respecting others' right, agreements, honesty, courage, loyalty, consequences, religious teachings, delegating, pluralism-religious-Pancasila doctrines, and the Javanese cultural teaching: ewuh pakewuh. The considerations used by the participants could be grouped into the PAVE ethics: principle, agreement, virtuous, and consequential (as difined by Henderson, 2005 and Jewell et. al., 2006) and non-PAVE moral viewpoints i.e., delegating, pluralistic, religious, Pancasila and Javanese ethics.

Keywords: Moral reasoning, dilemmas, considerations.

INTRODUCTION

This study will explore the Indonesian teachers' effort in addressing moral dilemmas through moral reasoning. Jewell, P., Webster, P., Henderson, L., Dodd, J., Paterson, S., & McLaughlin, J. (2006) define moral reasoning as an ability to make good decisions about moral dilemmas being faced by combining affective and cognitive intelligence and disposition towards morality by considering environmental, social, personal and situational contexts. "It is a higher order critical thinking skills, which is combined with caring thinking skills, to solve problems of moral nature" (Jewell et. al., 2006, p. 28). It involves "defining what the moral issues are, how conflicts among parties are to be settled, and the rationale for deciding on a course of action" (Rest, Edwards, & Thoma, 1997, p. 5).

According to Cohen (2006), moral reasoning is important to avoid moral failures. Henderson (2005, p. 185) assumes when people are reasoning the moral dilemmas, they attempt to do the right thing. Moral failures can be in various sizes, shapes, and degrees of immorality (Hughes, 2001). Moral failures are caused by

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moral negligence i.e. failing to consider and moral recklessness i.e. failing to give adequate consideration (Cohen, 2006).

In talking about morals, some scholars prefer to use the term dilemmas rather than problems. One may raise a question: are dilemmas and problems different? If so, what is the difference? According to Cohen (2006) dilemmas and problems are different, and although the difference is more figurative than literal "the problems/dilemmas distinction is helpful in appreciating some ethical matters and our dealing with them" (p. 104). Cohen states that dilemmas and problems differ in the way how to answer them. The measure of a good answer for a problem is correctness or truth, while a dilemma needs more than that. A good answer for a dilemma will depend on the reason behind the answer. Table 1 shows some examples of problems and dilemmas (Cohen, 2006, pp. 104-105).

To provide a good answer to the problems, one needs only to answer "4" for problem (a), and "yes" for problem (b). It will be different if we answer the dilemmas similarly. We obviously need to explain why we choose to retrench six of our employees or else ask all twenty of the staff to take a pay cut for dilemma (a). We might choose to make use of the information in dilemma (b), as long as a rational explanation is present.

TABLE 1: PROBLEMS AND DILEMMAS

Problem	*Dilemma*
(a) $2 + 2 = ?$ (b) Someone has serious trouble at the side of the road. Would it be a good thing if you did something to help them?	(a) We could retrench six of our employees or else ask all twenty of the staff to take a pay cut. What should we do? (b) You happened to hear someone reveal some confidential and sensitive information to someone else just as you were walking by the office. Is it morally permissible for you to make use of this information?

An ethical dilemma arises when people "involve choices between right and wrong, good or bad, or people's welfare and interest" in their relation with other people (Jewell et. al., 2006). Some (Bucholz et. al., 2007; Jewell et. al., 2006) believe that when a question of "what should you do?" appears, and there is not a straight right way to answer the question, then, a moral dilemma emerges. Similarly, McConnel (1996) states a moral dilemma is a situation in which each of two things ought to be done but both cannot be done. A person facing a dilemma has to choose between conflicting obligations and he cannot discharge both obligations because failure on either of them would be morally wrong (Mothersill, 1996).

Bucholz (2007) suggests that analysing case studies of similar ethical dilemmas may help teachers make the "right decision" when faced with a similar situation. This is in agreement with Jewell et. al., (2006) who state that involving people in the process of decision making to solve moral dilemmas is a more effective way of

learning morality rather than just expecting them to learn from the examples of good morals of other people. The aim of presenting the moral dilemma is "to arouse the interest, curiosity and sense of personal involvement, such that a meaningful and controversial discussion will develop" (Henderson, 2005, p. 185). The presentation of the dilemmas could be in various forms, such as films, role plays, and short stories (Henderson, 2005).

Aim and Purpose of the Study

This study aims to critically examine how teachers deal with moral dilemmas they face. To achieve this aim this current study investigates the considerations they use while presented with dilemmas. The question of the research is "what considerations do the teachers use while reasoning to a dilemma of moral matter?"

METHODS

This study employs qualitative research methods by administering a series of interviews to five teachers. The participants are selected from a public senior secondary school that is located in the city of Semarang, the capital of Central Java province, Indonesia. This school is chosen as the site of the study with some reasons. School location and access were the first reason. It is easier for the researcher to manage the research activities in this school because it is located in the same city where the researcher works. Access to the participants is not a big problem because the school principal agrees that the current study can be conducted in the school. The other reason for choosing this school is because it can satisfy the eligibility criteria of the current study. The last reason, which is the most important, is that the teachers who fulfil the research eligibility criteria are willing to participate in the study.

Interviews

This study uses interviews to collect the data. In the interview the participants are presented a story containing a dilemma. They are then given an opportunity to understand the story as well as to grasp the dilemma behind the story. When they have a difficulty to guess the dilemma, the interviewer tells them the dilemma. After that, they are given another time to do the reasoning to make the decision about the dilemma. When each participant is ready, a conversation about the decision they make - what their decision is, why and how the decision is made, is conducted.

An interview protocol is used as a guide. However, the conversations are made open and informal in order that the participants can express their feelings, opinions, and attitudes freely.

Data Analysis

First of all, the interview results are transcribed into text. To better understand the data, following Creswell's (2005) suggestion, all words, including pause, laughter, and any interruption are transcribed. The researcher, then, reads through the transcribed interview to obtain a general sense of material. The interviews are video recorded and saved into a digital computer file to make it easier to manage. The researcher can look at the recording at any time a particular words or situation is difficult to understand.

In coding the data several steps are done. Firstly, the researcher tries to understand the whole words in a particular document. While reading it, some ideas that come to mind are written or typed beside the margin. Secondly, the researcher creates codes that describe a segment of text. Segment of text is sentences or paragraphs that relate to a single code (Creswell, 2005). Thirdly, all codes are listed and grouped into similar topics. By doing this, the researcher can reduce any unnecessary codes. After that the codes are reviewed and reflected back to the data.

The last step of the analysis is building themes and descriptions. Themes are formed by gathering similar codes to form a major idea.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the teachers' considerations in resolving moral dilemmas being faced. For ethical purposes, the presentation of the subjects' identity in this chapter will be camouflaged, who are Chris, Mick, Rick, Josh, and Manny. This study does not mainly talk about the participants' decision on the dilemma they tried to resolve.

Following the Rule

Following the rule is the first consideration the participants used. Let us see how Chris responded to this question: *"Why wouldn't you follow your principal's suggestion to upgrade the student's mark?"* He answered *"Don't be confused about that! If he or she could not reach the passing grade, which is 66, then, that's all"*.

Chris' answer implies the use of such a principle. The words '*don't be confused about that*' signify his firm decision to follow the test rule. He did not want to mess up himself with other "non-rule based" stuff. A is A, B is B, just follow the rule. That is why when marking the students' work, Chris always used the passing grade as the guide. If a student could not achieve the passing grade, there was no other choice but failure.

The same principle was also held by Josh, who faced a similar dilemma. He stated *"Honestly speaking, when it is about SKBM, then I will always follow it"*.

SKBM stands for Standar Ketuntasan Belajar Minimal *(Minimum Standard for Learning Competence)*. It is a term in the National Curriculum 2006 that contains rules about marking students' work, including the passing grade for each topic.

In another situation, Rick, who acted as a school principal, confronted a dilemma of whether or not he should discharge a teacher who refused to teach Evolution topic because of her belief. He decided not to give permission for the teacher to teach based on her own belief because the topic was part of the curriculum and would be tested in the national examination. Rick felt that not teaching the Evolution topic meant violating the curriculum. He said: "*The material should be delivered because it is part of the curriculum*".

Respecting Others' Rights

The other consideration revealed from the study is respecting others' right. Let us see what Mick stated during his moral reasoning in resolving a dilemma of whether he, as an Islamic school principal, should apply higher school fees for those who come from other groups of religion as his effort to refuse them to study in the school. He stated: *"There is no need to refuse them, because everybody has a fundamental right to obtain education"*. In another occasion, he stated: *"... because, again, getting education is a human right"*. What Mick stated depicts clearly his principle that getting knowledge through formal education is anybody's rights. It is not true, for any reason, to limit other people's opportunity to study.

Being Fair

The other consideration uncovered from the analysis is being fair. Josh stated: *"I would argue that if I "help" my own students to achieve a particular grade, I will not be fair to the other students in other parts of the country"*. The "help" he mentioned means to do anything that could increase the students' grade. They could be giving key answers during examination, upgrading the students' mark, or allowing his students to cheat in the test. He declined to do that because he thought it would not be fair for him to provide an easy way to his students to pass, even with good mark, while other students in other schools might be in pain to pass the test.

The other participant, Manny, also thought about fair play while reasoning to a different moral dilemma. Manny was confronted with a situation of whether or not he should immediately remind Ms. Min who was making a negative comment about Ms. Aci's teaching ability in the faculty lounge. Manny decided to advise Ms. Min personally. He would suggest Ms. Min not to underestimate Ms. Aci's teaching ability. Although Ms. Aci was still young and new, she had already been awarded a teaching certificate from the college, which meant she had been granted permission to teach English at any level. It would be fair if Ms. Min gave Ms. Aci

an opportunity to teach English at advanced level, and let the school board evaluate her job. He uttered:

> I believe that, although she is still very young, she has fulfilled the teaching requirements. She has been qualified to teach that level of English. So, I would dare to ask Ms. Min to allow her teaching the advanced English… If some day we find her fail teaching the class, then, we might do an evaluation for Ms. Aci. That's, I think, the win-win solution.

Agreements

Agreements are the next concern teachers contemplated in their moral reasoning. Jewell (2006, p. 13) states "a good way to decide the best way to treat people is to ask them how they want to be treated. People can then come to agreements about how to treat each other. A group of friends might agree to play sport on Saturdays, or a community might make laws". This consideration holds a perception that an action, practice, law, or social structure is morally permissible just in case, or principles to which it conforms, would be (or has been) agreed to by the members of society under certain specified conditions (Gauthier, N.D., cited in Vallentyne, 1991). By choosing agreements, one decides one thing by considering the other party's opinion. He or she might also think about the likely- or unlikely-hood of other people's permissibility, the society's acceptability, or law's tolerability on his choice of action. In a school context, to give a more concrete explanation, there is a social contract that exists between the teacher and the student: the teacher agrees to teach and the student agrees to do the work required. So the teacher is obliged to help the student to the best of their ability. However, the teacher also has an obligation contract with the school, to teach the best of their ability and to abide by the school's rules. The teacher, then, can choose the "right action" in any situation by honoring the agreement he has with others in that situation.

Two teachers reflected on agreements in their effort to manage their dilemmas of moral matter. Chris said as long as there was a will from the students, an agreement to conduct a remedial was possible. However, he would not only do this agreement with his students but with the head teacher as well. Through this agreement he attempted to justify that his decision in increasing the student's mark was correct. Chris stated: *"If a student approaches me: "Sir, please give me another chance!" as long as I have time, I will tell the head teacher to consider about conducting another remedial"*. Remedial in Indonesian curriculum terms means giving additional material and test to students who failed in the main test (Syafriani, 2005).

The other teacher who considered making an agreement was Rick. He acted as a principal where one of his teachers refused to teach Evolution topic due to her belief. He needed to choose one of two options; dismissing the teacher or letting her teach in her own way. He chose the first option. However, he also decided to

consult with the head of Kantor Dinas Pendidikan (local educational office) about this problem.

> "To let her teach in her own way for a long period of time is too dangerous… I will consult with the educational office because to look for other teacher with the same qualification is difficult. In this case, I think I will have to wait the Dinas to provide a new teacher while in the same time I will let the teacher teach in her own way " he said.

His decision to choose the head of Dinas Pendidikan is reasonable. Administratively, although he was a school principal, it was not only in his hands to fire or hire a teacher. That was why Rick felt that the rightness of his decision, whatever they were, needed to be guaranteed by someone who had a particular authority. He believed the head of the Dinas Pendidikan was the one who could provide it. The other parties, such as the other teachers in the school or his head teacher colleagues, would not be able to provide such a justification. If they could, it would not be as strong as that of the office head's. So, there was no advantage for consulting about his dilemma with them.

Honesty

Josh felt that when something bad happened, it was unacceptable to always blame the students. He, as a teacher, needed to make a reflection. Not every bad thing was done by students and not every good thing, in reverse, belonged to teachers. Teachers could be wrong. When they were wrong, they ought to dare to admit that they were wrong. This is what he called the corridor of honesty as he stated *"Besides, I will feel that I have to walk in honesty corridor. I will make a reflection… 'Oh yes, it was my mistake'… and I will not be angry with the students by saying 'you are stupid! You didn't pay attention!'…"*

Courage

On a different occasion Chris said *"Hmmm at the moment I am still GTT and I am free, whatsoever, so I will show who I really am, an ideal man, a good teacher, the real spirit... I will give what they achieve".*

Chris' statement uncovers the virtue of courage. At this point, he did not feel able to obey his principals' order to upgrade the students' marks. That decision was taken because of his position as a Guru Tidak Tetap/GTT [non-government teacher]. Having this status provided him a rather strong position in front of his principal. He, indeed, should follow every academic instruction from the head teacher. But when the head teacher asked him to do something non-academic, he should dare to refuse. This time, he considered the order to upgrade the students' mark non-academic.

Loyalty

Mick who acted as an Islamic school principal also thought about a virtue while reasoning his dilemma: loyalty. He felt that his position as a head teacher did not give him an absolute authority. In spite of his position as a school principal, he was still a worker who was responsible to somebody else, in this case the Foundation boards since he worked for a private school. He realized that he needed to follow the Foundation vision and mission. He should be loyal to the Foundation's decision. He said: *"As a head teacher, I am still the subordinate of the foundation boards. So, I have to follow whatever the boards want me to do"*.

Consequences

All participants considered consequences in their moral reasoning. Jewell et. al., (2006) state what makes an action right is whether it has good consequences. That is, whether it increases the welfare of those affected by it. If large numbers of people are affected, we might try to consider the greatest good for the greatest number. By 'good', we might mean happiness, well-being, pleasure, interest or satisfaction.

In the previous discussion about virtues Chris believed that a good teacher would give what the students have achieved. He believed doing such a good deed would bring positive influence to the students. In his case, the students would feel that they always need to study hard when attending his class. He said: *"If I sell good things to the students, everybody will think...' oh we have to study hard to attend Mr. Chris' class' "*. He also believed that every sort of action would bring its own consequence; good deeds brought good influences, bad deeds caused bad effects. And every action that he did as a teacher would affect the school as a whole. *"I am good, the school will be good. I am bad, the school will be bad. All school elements will be affected..."* Chris declared on another occasion.

In another case Rick, a teacher with less than 10 years of experience, who acted as a head teacher facing a dilemma if or not he should fire one of the teachers because she refused to teach Evolution topics stated: "*If Evolution material is not taught, it will become a big problem for us as well as for the students, especially in facing the national examination*". In this reasoning Rick had a similar idea as Chris, that a bad action from a person might mean disaster for others in the school. He also seemed to have similar conceptions about consequences as Chris. Bad deeds meant bad effects, and vice versa. This can be seen in his lack of interest in thinking about whether there was a possibility of good impact from the teacher's refusing to teach Evolution topic.

However, Josh stepped rather further than what Chris and Rick thought about consequences. He believed that one action might not only bring bad or good effects, but probably both of them. This idea is revealed from his reasoning. He stated that applying zero tolerant rules for students would encourage them to be neat, diligent,

and disciplinary. On the other hand, it reduced the students' social development and adaptability. Josh said *"The positive impact of applying a strict rule is that the students are becoming very well organized… but their social development and ability to adjust with situation and condition are a little bit limited"*.

Mick, similar to Josh, was also confronting different tense consequences. Mick uttered: *"If the foundation boards have forced me to do this, then, I will have to take any risks. However, besides thinking about the school, as well as my idealism, I also have a wife and children that need my financial support…"* In his effort to resolve a dilemma whether or not he should adhere to the foundation's vision and mission to reject students coming from different groups of religion, he thought about the plus and minus of the consequences. He felt that any decision he made would result in contradictive consequences. If he followed the foundation's vision and mission, he was in a position of betraying his idealism; respecting others' right and Pluralism. On the other hand, if he rejected the foundation's vision and mission, he would face financial difficulties.

Manny was the last teacher who also thought about consequences. He, different from Josh and Mick, was not interested in confronting different consequences. When asked whether he would talk directly to Ms. Min, the one who suggested wrong information about Ms. Aci in the faculty lounge, he reasoned by creating layers of consequences. He decided to talk directly to Ms. Min because the possible consequence of talking indirectly to her would be miscommunication. Because of the miscommunication, she would probably get angry with him.

He said: *"I would prefer talking to Ms. Min directly. If I talk to others about her wrong perception on Ms. Aci behind her, there will be miscommunication. I worry that she will get angry with me…"*

Delegating

Delegating is a term introduced by Oser (1991, cited in Tirri, 1999). It is one of the ways teachers manage their professional dilemma. In delegating teachers are interested in solving the dilemmas but they do not solve them by themselves. They delegate the decision making to other people, such as the school psychologist. Because there is not any negotiation process this consideration is not included into agreement.

Chris was a teacher who thought about delegating the students' problem to the school counselor. He found out that students' failure in their test might be caused by their personal problems. If this happened, it was not his responsibility to solve the problem. He therefore considered handing this problem over to the school psychologist. He said: *"Well it seems the students face a problem. In my understanding it is the BP (School Counselor) responsibility to tackle this problem. They should do something before the examination"*.

Religious Teachings

Three participants thought about religious teachings in their reasoning; they were Josh, Rick and Mick. Mick, however, used the religious teaching to support his pluralism idea. Therefore it will be discussed separately.

Josh's mentioning the term 'sin' in his statement was an indication that he was thinking about religious teachings. This term originally came from holy books. The Bible and Al-Qur'an, for example, frequently mention this term in their verses. In his reasoning, Josh did not care that the Department of National Education upgraded the students' examination results nationally, because it did not bring the consequence of sin upon him. In daily tests, however, he might commit the sin by "helping" the students. To decrease the sin he committed, he always tried to make improvements. He said: *"I don't care what is happening in the national examination. It is the government's sin if they upgrade the students' marks; not mine nor my teachers' colleagues'. But when it happens in my daily test, of course it is my sin… but I still can make improvement"*.

On the other occasion, Rick also thought about religious teaching. This happened because another dilemma came into his mind when trying to resolve the dilemma of whether or not he should dismiss one of his teachers because she refused to teach Evolution topic. As a Muslim he believes in God's creation, but the Evolution topic, that is part of the curriculum, refuses the creation concept. To solve this gap he came up with a solution. The topic should be given to the students because it is part of the curriculum. At the same time he would brief the teacher, particularly the religious teacher, to also inform the students that there is creation process. Rick said:

> "Evolution topic is included in the national curriculum. So it should be disseminated to all students. However, in my knowledge, if it is related to God the creator, there seems no relation. To resolve this gap, I will debrief all teachers, especially the religious instruction teachers to also explain that the nature of human is from God, there is a process of creation. So, Evolution topic should be given to the students, but don't forget we are also created by God".

Pluralism Doctrines, Religious Teachings, and Pancasila Principles

Mick was the one who united three contradictory doctrines to support his idea; they are pluralism, religious teachings, and Pancasila principles.

"And then is it only the God of Islam that is true? For Muslims it is. But the reality shows that there are a lot of religions in Indonesia… Well, even in Islam there is a teaching about tolerance "to you be your Way, and to me mine". Besides,

we live in Indonesia that still follows Pancasila principles, especially the first one". Mick said.

Firstly he came up with a Pluralism idea. 'Pluralism is the opposite of Monoism, which regards multiplicity as mere appearance and all reality as one' (Power, Nuzzi, Narvaez, Lapsley, & Hunt, 2008, p. 341). Pluralism, they state, can be used in many different contexts. In Mick's case, it is used in religious diversity context. Mick understood that Indonesia is a country with many religions. Mick thereafter suggested there is no need to claim that a particular religion is the truest amongst others.

In supporting his pluralistic idea, he even used an Islamic teaching. He did so probably because he is a Moslem. He quoted chapter 109 (The disbelievers) verse 6 of the Al-Qur'an, which means 'to you be your Way, and to me mine' (Nasir, 2000). This verse implies that Moslem should be tolerant to others (Fatah, 2008). The last consideration he used in the reasoning was the first principle of Pancasila. The first principle of the Pancasila saying "*Belief in the One and Only God*" also reflects the spirit of religious tolerance (Nishimura, 1995).

The Javanese Culture Teaching: Ewuh Pakewuh

The last consideration that was used by the participants is a Javanese cultural concept: *ewuh pakewuh*. *Ewuh pakewuh* according to Cahyadi (2007, p. 7) is 'uneasiness of lower officials when having to face violations done by their superiors'. In Manny's perspective, however, this concept does not merely involve superiors and inferiors. It is also about his relations to other teachers. This is concluded from his statement that he felt more *pakewuh* to his friends rather than to Ms. Min, the real rabble-rouser. He worried his friends would give a negative judgment if he talked directly to Ms. Min. He said: *"I am afraid my friends would make a wrong judgment about me. It's better if my friends said 'you are so quiet Manny', rather than 'How could you be so "chatty"?'... Honestly speaking, I am still thinking about ewuh pakewuh quite strongly"*. The statement shows that as a Javanese person, Manny was still strongly influenced by this doctrine.

CONCLUSION

Twelve considerations are used by the participants in resolving moral dilemmas they face.

The first is those that can be included into principle moral. Those are following the rules, being fair, and respecting others' right. This is based on Jewell et. al., (2006) opinion that Principles are like duties or rules that apply to any set of circumstances (Jewell, et. al., 2006).

The second consideration is an agreement moral view point. In this case, the participants try to accommodate and follow the social contract that exists in the

school. Thirdly, honesty, courage, and loyalty are considerations that can be included into virtuous ethics. Some call it character ethics.

All participants, fourthly, considered consequences in their moral reasoning. They thought about the effect of their decisions before making up their mind.

The four groups of ethical concept above are grouped by Henderson (2005) and Jewell et. al., (2006) under the PAVE ethics: principle, agreement, virtuous, and end consequence.

Five other considerations, which are not included in the PAVE ethics, were contemplated by the participants. They are delegating, religious teaching, pluralism doctrine, Pancasila principles, and Javanese cultural teaching.

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