Chapter 56
Promoting Access and Success for Disadvantaged Students in Indonesian Basic Education:
Social Justice in Education

Amirul Mukminin

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6806-1315
Jambi University, Indonesia

Akhmad Habibi
Jambi University, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Although Indonesia has made improvements in the basic education and secondary education, one of the biggest problems is regarding the provision of equitable access and success for disadvantaged children aged between 7-15 years old in obtaining basic education with an acceptable quality in rural, urban, and remote areas. The purpose of this paper is to explore the causes related to disadvantaged children's limited access and success and the social justice educational programs to promote their access and success in the Indonesian basic education. Data gathered from research articles and policy reports are the sources of the chapter. This chapter focuses on the contexts of access and success for disadvantaged children, the constraints on access and success in the Indonesian basic education for disadvantaged children, and how various policies and programs or groups (e.g., programs and policies at national government, local government, school district, and school levels) should address the problems to promote access and success for disadvantaged children in the basic education.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a means to develop students' intellectual, social, and personal potential to their highest level (Bennett, 2003; Nieto & Bode, 2008). Therefore, school's mission is to provide all students regardless of their race, ethnicity, social class, ability, and other human differences with an equitable, equal, and high-quality education (Nieto & Bode, 2008). From the functional point of view, providing such an education is central in order to have "a highly integrated, well-functioning society" and to maintain social order, social cohesion, and harmony in a modern and democratic society (Sadovnik, 2007, p. 4) by creating programs, structures, policies, practices, curriculum that are "technically advanced and rational and that encourage social unity" (Sadovnik, 2007, p. 4). Failure to provide accessible education for all students will confirm what the conflict theorists perceive that society is held together based on the ability of dominant groups to impose their will and values on subordinate groups through force, subordination, and manipulation (Sadovnik, 2007).

Indonesia having population of children around 85 million introduced twelve years of the universal education, targeting to facilitate equal access to education for children between 7-15 years old and all adolescents between 16 and 18 years old in 2016. Through its programs and policies, Indonesia has made improvements for children in basic education consisting of 6 years of primary education and 3 years of junior secondary education. The national primary school net enrollment rates have remained above 90 percent (Unesco Indonesia, 2016) and the national secondary school's net enrollment rates of students tended to move up from 62.74 percent in 2008 to 76.81 percent in 2015 (Unesco Indonesia, 2016). In addition, Indonesia keeps increasing its budget on education since 2009. The national education budget reached 207 trillion Indonesian Rupiah [IDR] in order to reach the level of 20 percent of the total State Budget target mandated by Law Number 20 of 2003 of the National Education System (the Ministry of Finance, 2009 as cited in Jalal et al., 2009). However, although Indonesia has made improvements in the basic education and secondary education, one of the biggest problems is regarding the provision of equitable access and success for disadvantaged children aged between 7-15 years old in obtaining basic education with an acceptable quality in rural, urban, and remote areas. Many school age children across the country have not been able to complete their elementary school. The data show that around one million children between the ages of 7 to 15 years were not attending primary or junior secondary school. Almost 3.6 million adolescents aged 16 to 18 are also out of school due to several factors (Unicef Indonesia, 2018). Additionally, the data indicate that 2.7 million Indonesian children are estimated either as child labour or working children (Unicef Indonesia, 2018).

The lack of access and success for the disadvantaged children in the basic education in urban, rural, and remote areas will lead them to be unable to develop their intellectual, social, and personal potential to the highest level and be powerless to function in a modern society in future because they cannot involve in "socialization and selection" processes (Parsons, 1959, p. 297). From the social justice and functionalist perspectives, given that a number of school age children across the country have not been able to have access and success in the basic education which also means that they will not be able to learn the basic knowledge, attitudes, and moral values to function in a modern society, the Indonesian government should provide "all students with the resources necessary to learn to their full potential" (Nieto & Bode, 2008, p. 12) in order to socialize them "into various roles, behaviors, and values of the society "(Sadovnik, 2007, p. 4) that they will need as productive citizens in a modern society.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the causes related to disadvantaged children's limited access and success and the social justice educational programs to promote their access and success in the In-

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