



Strengthening the Understanding of History for Generation Z

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ABSTRACT

History is the best teacher in life. By learning history, every citizen will have a high love and loyalty to their country. However, it is undeniable that in the midst of global progress, the younger generation, especially the millennials, are exposed to a lack of historical awareness and understanding. Therefore, this activity was designed to provide an in-depth understanding to the millennial generation related to history, especially those related to the history of Makassar City. This activity in the form of a seminar involved the millennial generation from the campus environment, history teachers. After the activity took place, an evaluation was carried out by asking questions directly to the younger generation regarding this activity. In general, they were enthusiastic about this activity and have an understanding that Makassar City today has a long historical dynamic.

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A. INTRODUCTION

A philosopher and scholar who lived during the Roman Republic, Marcus Tullius Cicero, is famous for the expression *Hitoria Magistra Vitae*, which means history is the teacher of life. This expression is followed by two words, namely *nuntia vetustatis*, which means a message from the past. So if these words combine to become *historia magistra vitae*, *nuntia vetustatis*, then the meaning is that history is a teacher of life and messages from the past. This expression is still used as a basis by various citizens in this world (Rahman, 2024).

History comes from Arabic, namely *syajarah* which means tree (Tarigan et al., 2023). In the English vocabulary, history is equivalent to *historia* which comes from the Greek, *historia*, which means discovery (inquiry) and interview. From here, the definition of history according to language and terms is a statement or result of interrogation from an eyewitness and also a report regarding the results of that action (Ratmelia, 2018). After that, the word *historia* in Greek entered other languages through Latin. History is wisdom that can guide humans in navigating life today and planning the future. History is also human experience and human memory that is told.



Each individual, community, society and nation has its own historical story. History is a complex event from the life experience of a nation. It would not be possible for humans to have knowledge about themselves without the presence of history, especially those related to the process of self-presence and self-direction (Mahdayeni et al., 2019). Such a person does not have memories of the past that are so memorable, so there is no sense of responsibility burdened within him. Likewise, on the contrary, people who have a sense of responsibility usually realize the use of history as something that has an important meaning in the life of the nation and society. History is so important that it is used as a subject in schools, because each nation, including the Indonesian nation, has aspirations to move towards progress, while progress can be achieved when continuing to study historical events from the past.

History has an important position in forming national identity and awareness as a member of the nation. History is not just a story of the past, but more than that, namely as a reflection of a nation's long journey when faced with various kinds of challenges and forming the identity of its people (Nurrahmi, 2018). In the Indonesian context, history has strategic value in forming national identity, especially regarding the story of this nation's long journey with its various dynamics (Mauizah et al., 2021). The dynamics of this nation's journey have passed through various stages, namely the era of empire, colonialism, national movements, up to the current era of independence.

Through history, the younger generation can understand the urgency of past events as forming Indonesia's identity as a multicultural nation, but still in one collective bond. Through history, Indonesian citizens will continue to remember the struggles and sacrifices of the heroes and the noble values contained in the history of this nation. Thus, history has an important position in maintaining national identity and strengthening the sense of nationality (Alfaqi, 2016).

In an effort to strengthen the national spirit among citizens, especially among the younger generation, history is studied in schools. Schools as formal educational institutions have the task of educating the nation's children so that they do not grow tired of loving their nation and country. In the Indonesian education system, especially at secondary level schools, history is one of the subjects that must be studied by students, majoring in Mathematics and Natural Sciences or Social Sciences. However, history lessons are not as familiar as other lessons.

The stigma that is often heard from society is that studying history is boring and makes you sleepy. How could it not be, history is synonymous with memorization in the form of year numbers, events, names of figures and places. Not to mention if a teacher only requires students to make assignments in the form of summaries. The current reality is that the history teaching model is far from being able to enable students to see its connection with present and future life. History lessons only use historical facts as the main material (Rahadian & Setiawan, 2021).

The existence of history among the younger generation, especially generation Z, is increasingly facing challenges. In the current digital era, the challenge of fostering historical awareness among Generation Z is increasingly greater. Increasingly easier access to global information via the internet and social media often makes generation z more interested in



international popular culture rather than local culture which is full of meaning and values. Various efforts need to be made to increase historical awareness among generation z. one of them is through educational activities that invite generation z to learn and appreciate history organized by the South Sulawesi Culture Service.

Activities organized by the South Sulawesi Culture Service are a form of moral responsibility to make history something meaningful among Generation Z. Activities which essentially aim to strengthen historical understanding and awareness among Generation Z are carried out through the involvement of academic people from universities, especially from Makassar State University. This activity is an appropriate packaging for conveying history to the millennial generation, so that they are interested in studying history, including history related to Bugis-Makassar culture, history with a public nuance in the hope of strengthening their knowledge of the history and local culture of South Sulawesi. Generation z is part of the younger generation who has a major role in welcoming Golden Indonesia 2024. They must prepare themselves well, have historical awareness in maintaining national identity, as a nation that is economically independent, sovereign in politics, and has personality in culture.

B. METHODS

The methods used in this activity are lectures and discussions. The speakers consisted of two historians from Hasanuddin University, namely Dr. Ilham Daeng Makkelo, S.S, M.A and Amrullah Amir, S.S., M.A., Ph.D and an anthropologist from Makassar State University, namely Prof. Dr. Andi Ima Kesuma, M.Pd. The presenters conveyed the main ideas regarding the importance of the millennial generation to have an understanding of history, especially the history of Makassar City so that they do not lose their identity. It is hoped that by studying history, the millennial generation will be proud that the existence of Makassar City today cannot be separated from the dynamics of the history of this city. This city is noted as a city that played an important role in trade flows in the past that connected Europe, the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia and Australia. After the presenters delivered the material, the activity participants were given the opportunity to ask questions. The presenters responded well to this question.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Makassar City Government, through the Makassar City Culture Service, held a seminar on writing the history of Makassar City which took place at the Swiss-Belinn Panakkukang Hotel, Makassar. This activity took place on Thursday, November 14 2024. This seminar on writing the History of Makassar City was held in order to provide understanding to the millennial generation regarding the dynamics of the history of Makassar City, so that they will love and be proud of this city even more. This is in line with the wishes of the Ministry of Education and Culture, especially those in charge of the Character Strengthening Center, so that the younger generation can understand past historical events so that they can appreciate figures, especially heroes who have fought for the independence and sovereignty of this country.

This activity was officially opened by Andi Herfida Attas as Head of the



Makassar City Culture Service. Also present were several members of the Makassar City Cultural Council, including Naida Naing, Aminuddin Salle, Arwan Tjahyadi, and Andi Muh. Redo. The activity participants consisted of students from Makassar State University and Hasanuddin University, and some also came from the South Sulawesi branch of the Indonesian History Teachers Association. When delivering his speech, Andi Herfida Attas emphasized that writing the History of Makassar City has several benefits, namely conveying information, finding out the causes of events, presenting a picture of the dynamics of past life, preserving historical data, mapping historical facts, presenting wisdom and insight, providing inspiration, helps convey knowledge and brings recreational uses. Furthermore, it was stated that writing the History of Makassar City was the desire of the Makassar City Government to advance culture with its various dimensions in this city. To advance Makassar City, it is undeniable to remember the past, because there are various kinds of lessons and wisdom inherited from that past. There are various kinds of potential from the past that can be explored and packaged using a contemporary approach, for example peace whose manifestation appears today through a somber or friendly attitude. With the friendliness of all the people of Makassar City, including the youth, this city will look good for everyone.

In this activity, Ilham Daeng Makkelo highlighted the important role of Makassar as a trade center in the past, Makassar during the era of the Gowa Kingdom until it entered the realm of independence. Meanwhile, Amrullah Amir presented material related to Makassar, especially reviewing it from cultural and political ecological aspects, including an economic perspective. Meanwhile, Andi Ima Kesuma conveyed the importance of reconstructing the history of Makassar City so that it can appear again as the main gate of culture and civilization in Southeast Asia.

When the discussion and question and answer session arrived, one of the activity participants, namely Adil Akbar, reinforced that when writing history, several things must be taken into account. What is meant is a historical element which is expected to provide meaning and complete each sequence of historical events. There are four elements in history, namely first, humans as subjects and objects in various historical events. Second is time, when writing history you must pay attention to the time period, because the time period is the limit of an event and provides an indication that humans as actors in an event always act based on their will at certain times. Third is place or space, that is, a historical event can be known with certainty where it occurred, because knowing the space or place where an event took place will certainly make it easier for the next generation to understand historical events comprehensively in relation to the background, dynamics and impacts they cause. Fourth is causality, in the sense that a series of historical events must be presented to the public based on a clear and descriptive sequence of facts. These four elements will spark human curiosity, especially the millennial generation, regarding certain historical events.

Adil Akbar further stated that writing the history of Makassar City must also pay attention to the role of minority groups and microstructure, because in the trend of modern Indonesian historiography, history not only concerns grand narratives, but also



the narratives of small people who are marginalized structurally and culturally. Adil Akbar's idea is in line with Jean Francois Lyotard's idea of opposing grand narratives which are comprehensive stories or meta-narratives that try to present a universal understanding of history and the world. Lyotard initiated the recognition of diversity in worldviews. He provides resistance to homogenization and the reduction of the complexities of society into a single grand narrative. Lyotard's thoughts influenced many views in art, politics, culture and social sciences, including history. Lyotard emphasizes the importance of embracing differences and appreciating diversity in human life. On that basis, Adil Akbar reminded us that when writing the history of Makassar City, we should not ignore the role of the Chinese in this city, the existence of artists, and the disclosure of the existence of city parks as public spaces that can be accessed by all groups.

Meanwhile, Naida Naing as a member of the Makassar City Cultural Council recommended that writing the History of Makassar City present novelty or something new. The novelty in question is not historical data, but rather a style of historical writing that is easily understood by the millennial generation. To make it interesting, efforts need to be made to present familiar current conditions in Makassar City, then trace back the narratives related to these current conditions. This is important, because it must be acknowledged that the current millennial generation pays less attention to reading books, but more to their ability to search for information. Their passion for seeking information must be sparked by presenting popular narratives in writing the history of Makassar City. Thus, through this activity, it is hoped that writing the History of Makassar City can open up horizons for positive thinking in the future, form rational thought patterns, have effective conceptions and perspectives on the future, so that the results of writing this history are expected to have clear and clear achievements. has benefits. However, this does not rule out the possibility of producing a more organized and open scope of thought in understanding the factual historical context.



Figure 1. Delivery of activity material



Figure 2. Writer and Makassar City Cultural Council

At the end of the activity, Andi Herfida Attas stated that this effort was an effort to preserve the history and noble cultural values of Makassar. The maintenance of history and culture is very important as part of the commitment to make the nation's life more intelligent and educational material for the millennial generation as a continuation of the nation's development relay. He also added that the Makassar City Culture Service continues to strive to preserve and promote culture based on the mandate of the constitution. This activity has provided many valuable inputs for the success of compiling the History of Makassar City which includes five topics, namely: (1) Nomads from Makassar in the History of the Diaspora in Southeast Asia to Europe (2) The Worldwide Heritage of Sheikh Yusuf (His Thoughts, Teachings and Struggle), (3) Makassar City as a Network Center in Indonesian History, (4) From Makassar to Marege, (5) Amas Madina Sultan Fakhruddin Abdul Khair Sultan of Gowa who was abandoned in Ceylon. Writing this book is a real commitment to continue to protect, develop, utilize and foster the history and culture of Makassar. This is also part of the vision of the Makassar City Government to present a world city that is sombere (friendly) and smart city.

D. CONCLUSION

This activity took place according to plan. The activity participants participated with great enthusiasm. The activity participants, most of whom are from the millennial generation, understand that awareness and knowledge built up from the past can be used to design the future. Writing history related to Makassar City is recognized as an effort to strengthen national insight, help them understand and know the dynamics of the history and culture of Makassar City, appreciate differences, and be proud of being part of Makassar City.

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F. AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Activity organizer: AIK, Article writer: AR, RF, Manuscript reader: SJ, MD.

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