

A Comparative Analysis on: The Similarities and Differences of the The Philosophical Perspective and Methodology Adopted in Two Different Qualitative Researches -

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Abstract

Qualitative research has substantial philosophical dimension difference from quantitative research. Instead of adopting positivism, qualitative research focuses on more interpretivism and Relativism philosophical perspectives. From these two analyzed researches (*Local responses to decentralization policy in Indonesia* and *Two sides of the same coin: Modernity and tradition in Islamic Education in Indonesia*), we learn that both of them put their research stance on interpretivism and constructionism, eventhough they use different methodology. This different methodology emerges because of different focus, goals (objectives), and questions of the research. *The Two sides of the same coin* uses ethnographic method, while *The Local responses* adopts interview and official document analysis. Because *The Two sides of the same coin* adopts ethnographic methodology, it takes one Pesantren as its research site and research it as one whole system. Meanwhile, *The Local responses* takes six secondary school students to be interviewed. Thus, qualitative researches can be vary depending on research goals (objectives), focus, and problems (questions).

Keywords: *Qualitative Research, Methodology, Interpretivism, Relativism, Ethnographic method, Philosophical Perspective, Research strategy, Analysis, Case study, Research objective, Research goals, Research Question.*

Can Clifford Geertz use quantitative approach to observe how mysticism in traditional Java emerges and develops? Can he use questionnaire to collect his data? Can he produce a detail description on mysticism phenomena in traditional Java using statistical procedure and numbers? Obviously, Geertz may not use quantitative approach. What he needs to use is qualitative one. This is because what Geertz wants to produce is thick description on how the traditional belief in Java emerges and influences almost all aspects of Javanese lives. Thus, research problem and objective tend to determine which approach a researcher should use.

What is qualitative research? Strauss and Corbin (1998, pp. 10-11) define qualitative research as “any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification.” Similarly, Bryman (2004, p. 266) defines qualitative research as “a research strategy that usually emphasizes

words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data.” In short, qualitative research deals with words to describe its findings rather than numbers.

There are some methods used in qualitative research. Those are ethnography, interview, focus groups, discourse and conversation analysis, and qualitative analysis of texts and documents (Bryman, 2004, pp. 267-268). Different qualitative research may need different methods. This is because each qualitative research is unique. It may have different research question, different time and place of research, different respondents, and different social context of research. More importantly, it has different goal of research. This underlies why Geertz in investigating the religion in Java uses different methods from Nunan when he observes the language development of children.

Based on the above phenomena, I will explore the different methods used by different qualitative researches/researchers. In this essay, I will analyze the methods used by Bjork and Lukens-Bull in their research. Christopher Bjork reports his research in a journal article, “Local Responses to Decentralization Policy in Indonesia.” The other is the research of Ronald A. Lukens-Bull, which is reported in a journal article, “Two Sides of the Same Coin: Modernity and Tradition in Islamic Education in Indonesia.” Both of those qualitative researches take place in Indonesia, but they use different methods.

I divide the discussion in this article into three main parts. The first part covers the overview of “Local Responses to Decentralization Policy in Indonesia” and “Two Sides of the Same Coin: Modernity and Tradition in Islamic Education in Indonesia.” The second part covers the discussion on the similarities and differences of the philosophical perspective and research methods used in those two researches. The third part covers a reflection on the strengths and weakness of each research.

For the sake of brevity, next, in my article, I will use *Local Responses* to refer to *Local Responses to Decentralization Policy in Indonesia*. *Modernity and Tradition* will be used to refer to *Two Sides of the same Coin: Modernity and Tradition in Islamic Education in Indonesia*.

Overview of the Research

In this part, I compare and contrast some important elements of two researches published in different journals. Those are *Local responses to decentralization policy in Indonesia*, which can be accessed in *Comparative Education Review*, 47 (2), 184-216, and *Two sides of the same coin: Modernity and tradition in Islamic Education in Indonesia*, which is published in *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 32 (3), 350-372.

A. Local Responses to Decentralization Policy in Indonesia (Local Responses)

How do the local schools respond to the Local Content Curriculum (LCC) which has been implemented in Indonesia since 1994? This central question implies other questions, such as How the Indonesian teachers react to this new policy? What kinds of skill and training required by the Indonesian teachers to implement LCC? What has done by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) to help the Indonesian teachers carry out LCC program? And more importantly, can the Indonesian Educational culture be changed? This is because implementing LCC program means reforming educational system in Indonesia. Previously, all the school subjects in Indonesia are centralized designed by the Department of Education and Culture. Today, the Department of Education and Culture (MOEC) gives authority for each school in Indonesia to design some school subjects by their own. Those subjects are called "Local Content Subject." The local content subjects may vary from school to school because the local content subjects are designed based on the students' needs, interests, and local assets.

To find the answer for his research questions, Bjork (the researcher) conducted his research in Indonesia from 1996 to 1998. He selected some junior secondary schools in East Java as the sample of his research. In his research, Bjork combined some research methodologies. Those are secondary analysis (including policy and documents analysis), interview and participant-observation (ethnographic method)

He found that there is a contradiction between what the official documents say and what the reality says. The official documents record that LCC is

successfully implemented in Indonesia. Conversely, the teachers feel reluctant to implement LCC because of some reasons. Firstly, they do not have sufficient skills to design curriculum of local content subjects and skill to create innovative pedagogy which responds to students' needs and interest. Secondly, it is difficult to change the educational culture in a very short time. Previously, all the Indonesian teachers and practitioners are asked to be always loyal to the Department of Education and Culture. This means that those teachers must teach subjects which are already designed by Department of Education and Culture. However, today, they are asked to be creative, and self-dependent in designing local content subjects.

B. Two Sides of the Same Coin: Modernity and Tradition in Islamic Education in Indonesia (Modernity and Tradition)

How does a *Pesantren* (an Islamic boarding school) in Java negotiate its traditional value with modernity? How does a *Pesantren*, the symbol of Javanese traditionality, maintain mysticism while at the same time accepts modernity? How does *Kyai* (the traditional Javanese leader) introduce modernity to the students of *Pesantren* and to the traditional Javanese community? All of those questions become the central research questions of Lukens-Bull's research.

In 1995 he came to Malang (a city in East Java, Indonesia) to find the answer. He conducted an ethnographic observation to see and understand how a *Pesantren* in Java can produce a hybrid educational system that combines traditionality and modernity. He decided to select a case in a particular *Pesantren*. He selects *Pesantren Al-Hikam* as the place where he conducted his research. Participant observation and interview are used as his research methodology. Above all he uses combination between ethnography and case study.

As the result, he records that *Al-Hikam Pesantren* in Java has several unique ways to negotiate with modernity. Firstly, *Al-Hikam Pesantren* offers religious subjects, which mostly deal with religion, tradition, and local culture, and non-religious subjects, such as economics, law, politics and many others. The non-religious subjects represent the modernity and globalization. The students of *Pesantren* (*Santri*) learn religious subjects very early in the morning, at night, and at

weekend. The non-religious subjects are learnt from Monday to Friday within the school hours. Secondly, *Al-Hikam Pesantren* implements “Arabic and English speaking area” in *Pesantren*. This is because Arabic language is considered as the key language in learning Islam. English is considered as the language of modernity. Thirdly, *Al-Hikam Pesantren* implements modernity characteristics in its practical education. For instance, self-independent is considered as one of some characteristics of modernity. To teach this practically, each student is given a small pond where they can grow some fish for their own food.

Similarities and Differences between *Local Responses* and *Modernity and Tradition*

Different qualitative research may use different research tools. As mentioned by Yin (1994, p. 4) the use of different research strategies in qualitative research depends on three factors. Those are the type of research questions, the relationship between the investigator and the investigated, and the focus of the research (is it focused on the contemporary or historical events?). Based on those three factors, it is noticed that *Local Responses* and *Modernity and Tradition* have some differences and similarities in some areas.

A. Similarities and Differences in Philosophical Perspective

The “ethnography and case study” of Lukens-Bull and the “combination of ethnography and secondary analysis” of Bjork share some similarities as well as some differences.

In some aspects, *Modernity and tradition* and *Local Responses* are based on constructivism/interpretivism philosophical perspective. As stated by Bryman (2004, p. 17) the constructivists believe that social phenomena are not pre-determined, it is socially and constantly constructed by its actors. Thus, understanding the meaning of certain symbols in Javanese culture should be understood from the point of view of Javanese people, the human being who constructs that meaning together. It can not be understood from the point of view of Dayak people or American since Dayak people or American can interpret that cultural symbol differently. For instance,

based on the field note of Lukens-Bull, when he visits Syaikh Abdurrahman, the researcher never looks Syaikh Abdurrahman straight in his eyes. Lukens-Bull should creep slowly, take Syaikh Abdurrahman's hand and kiss Syaikh Abdurrahman's hand. For Javanese these attitudes symbolize a respect. However, American, for instance, can interpret "does not look somebody straight in the eyes when talks with him/her" as an inappropriate behaviour. Similarly, from Bjork's research, the teachers should be always obey what the central policy says and never criticize the central policy is the manifestation of "respect culture." Thus, it can be seen that cultural meaning is subjective. It is not objective. As believed by Crotty (1998, p. 43) meaning is not discovered, but it is constructed by people who interact in the process of construction. Thus, it is not objective. The subjectivism of certain meaning is similar to the concept of interpretivism. This is relevant to the argument of Denzin and Lincoln, as follows:

"Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representation, including fieldnotes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (2005, p. 3).

Different from positivism, which sees meaning (truth) as an objective reality, interpretivist claims that social phenomena are different from natural phenomena. Social phenomena are subjective. This means that each human is unique. Each human behaviour cannot be exactly the same. Culture, as the product of human activity, is also unique. Thus, culture should be seen based on the interpretation of people who have that culture. It should be understood through the interpretivist approach. As mentioned by Crotty (1998, p. 67) "the interpretivist approach looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world." Hence, it can be seen that cultural phenomenon is not objective, but it is subjective. For instance, based on Lukens-Bull experience, when he wanted to use his video to record the picture of Syaikh Abdurrahman, the students prohibited him. The students asked Lukens-Bull to ask permission to Syaikh Abdurrahman before

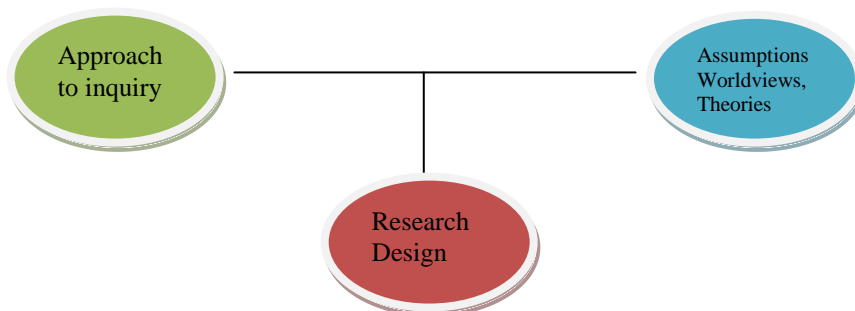
videotaping him. Objectively, other people/non-Javanese will say that recording without asking permission is violating the ethic of the research. However, for Javanese (the community of *Al-Hikam Pesantren*) this is not because the matter of ethic. They believe that without asking the permission of Syaikh Abdurrahman, Lukens-Bull will fail in capturing his picture. This is because Syaikh Abdurrahman has a mystical power. Anyone will fail taking his portray/picture, except with his permission. Thus, it can be seen that the cultural belief should be understood in terms of people who share and construct that belief together.

The fieldwork techniques (interview and participant observation) used by both of the researchers reflect the use of symbolic interactionism philosophical perspective, except in secondary analysis done by Bjork. As claimed by de Laine (1997, p. 166) to understand “others,” the researcher should take others’ role as his role or has an empathy on “the others.” Thus, Lukens-Bull wore skull cap when he met Syaikh Abdurrahman, he adapted with the languages used in *Al-Hikam Pesantren*, and accepted the existence of mysticism believed by the community of *Al-Hikam Pesantren*. Similarly, Bjork understood the frustrations experienced by the observed teachers relating to the implementation of LCC Program.

Different from the philosophical perspective of interview and participant observation, Bjork in his secondary analysis takes relativism as its philosophical position. As mentioned by Crotty (1998, p. 64) the relativists believe that the meaning of a reality depends on how we make sense of that meaning. Different sense of meaning can be caused by different place and time. Therefore, a certain meaning can have various interpretations. For instance, through the official documents, the official staffs interpret that LCC has been successfully implemented. Differently, from the finding of his research, Bjork interprets that the LCC Program is not successful. He interprets that the success of LCC Program is just in print. Thus, it can be seen that the truth is relative.

B. Similarities and Differences in Methodology

The qualitative research methodology is strongly depending on its philosophical stance. This is relevant to the model of Creswell (2007, p. 224) as follows:



Visual diagram of the three components of qualitative research

Selection of Respondents

Firstly, their different research strategies can be seen through different way of selecting their respondents. In *Modernity and Tradition*, the researcher employs case study method. This means that the researcher observes one particular place closely. This is as defined by Berg (2004).

“A case study is a method involving systematically gathering enough information about a particular person, social setting, event, or group to permit the researcher to effectively understand how the subject operates or functions”

He selects one *Pesantren* in Malang (in East Java, Indonesia) as a place where he collects the data. He chooses only one *Pesantren*, but he observes it thoroughly and collects the data in more detail. He observes a single case, that is how *Al-Hikam Pesantren* negotiates its traditional value with modernity. He chooses single case study method based on some factors.

The first factor is the type of his research question. His research question is how does *Pesantren* negotiate with modernity. The “how” questions above require explanatory answers. Case study is suitable method to answer the “how” questions. As claimed by Yin (1994, pp. 5-6, in *Case Study Research. Design and Methods*) “who” and “where” questions more likely lead to the use of survey and archival records analysis, while “why” question is more likely answered through the use of case study, histories, and experiments.

The second factor is the focus and goal of the research. *Modernity and Tradition* is focused on the contemporary (today) condition. It is conducted to see how in 1995 *Pesantren* can dialog with the modernity as the impact of globalization. Thus, it is conducted to see the impact of globalization in a particular time. As claimed by Yin (1994, p. 8) case study is more likely used to observe the contemporary events. The other factor is the goal of the research. The researcher wants to get more detail and deep information. Thus, he only selects single case. Gomm, Hammersley, and Foster (2002, p. 2) state that the amount of the collected detailed information heavily depends on the number of the investigated cases. The more the cases which are investigated, the fewer the detail information will be collected.

In selecting the *Pesantren*, the researcher conducted a preliminary site survey. What kind of *Pesantren* he wants to observe? Based on his research problem, he needs a *Pesantren* which is both preserving tradition and opening itself to modernity. From the collected information about the quality of the graduate of the *Pesantren*, the researcher decided to select between *Gontor* and *Al-Hikam Pesantren*. As noted by Gomm, Hammersley, and Foster (2002, pp. 84-85) the research site selection can be based on the information about the condition of the site or the outcome of the site. There are some differences between *Gontor and Al-Hikam Pesantren*. Even though, both of them represent modernity and traditionality, *Gontor Pesantren* is located in a small village in Ponorogo. It is the only school in that village. Thus, it faces less modernity challenge from its external environment compared to *Al-Hikam Pesantren*. In contrast to *Gontor Pesantren*, *Al-Hikam Pesantren* is located in the city of Malang. *Al-Hikam Pesantren* is surrounded by over 300 non-religious higher educations. Thus, *Al-Hikam Pesantren* faces enormous modernity challenge from its external environment.

Different from *Modernity and Tradition*, which uses a single case study in one *Pesantren*, *Local Responses* uses six junior secondary schools as its sample. In selecting the area of his research, Bjork uses theoretical sampling method. Neuman (2006, p. 222) notes that theoretical sampling method tends to be used when the selection of sample is guided by grounded theory. Similar to Neuman's concept,

Bjork decided to take six junior secondary schools in East Java as his sample after reading some government documents and educational researches conducted by government officials relating to the implementation of LCC program. There are some criteria used to select the schools as the sample. Firstly, the school must have already implemented LCC program and have offered some Local Content subjects, such as cooking, computer, local language learning, or electronics. Secondly, the schools must be various. This means that those schools represent different type of schools in Indonesia. Thus, those six schools consist of the combination between public-private, religious-secular, and prestigious-lowly regarded schools.

Different from *Modernity and tradition*, which mostly uses people (the students, staffs, and the leaders of *Al-Hikam Pesantren*) as its sample, *Local Responses* combines some types of sample. Those are people (students and teachers in six junior secondary schools), some government documents, and formal events. This is because the aim of the research is gaining deep understanding on historical, political, social, economic, and religious factors that affect the teachers' responses to the LCC program. The sample of MOEC (Ministry of Education and Culture) documents is drawn using purposive or judgemental sampling. As noted by Neuman (2006, p. 222) "purposive or judgemental sampling uses the judgement of an expert in selecting cases or it selects cases with specific purpose in mind." Thus, in selecting the MOEC documents, the researcher is helped by the international consultants who are involved by the Indonesian government in designing LCC program for Indonesia.

Research Tools/Sources of Evidence

The different research objectives and questions can lead to the different methods, tools, and sources of evidences used. *Modernity and tradition* and *Local Responses* share some similarities in some aspects and show some differences in the other aspects.

Firstly, both *Modernity and tradition* and *Local Responses* in some parts principally use ethnographic method. As mentioned by Edwards (n.d., p. 29) ethnographic method is used to observe the cultural aspects by understanding the

“native’s point of view.” This is similar to Brewer’s (2000) description on ethnography as follows:

“Ethnography is the study of people in naturally occurring settings or “field” by methods of data collection which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researchers participating directly in the setting, if not also the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner” (p.6).

Delamont (2004) clarifies as follows:

“Participant observation, ethnography and fieldwork are all used interchangeably...they can all mean spending long periods watching people, coupled with talking to them about what they are doing, thinking, and saying designed to see how they understand their world” (p. 218)

In *Modernity and tradition*, Lukens-Bull wants to understand how the traditional culture in *Pesantren Al-Hikam* can negotiate with modernity. In *Local Responses*, cultural aspect is becoming one of some observed aspects. This is because cultural aspect is one of some other aspects which lead to the barrier of the implementation of LCC program. Both of those researchers spent months (years) to immerse with their informants. As written by Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p. 165) in ethnographic method, the researcher experiences what his/her informants experience.

The ethnographers are not only *living with* but they are also *living like* the informants. Similarly, Lukens-Bull and Bjork tried to experience what their informants’ experience. Lukens-Bull, for instance, when conducting his research in *Al-Hikam Pesantren*, wore skull cap because all male in *Pesantren* should wear skull cap. Thus, Lukens-Bull wore what his informants’ wear. Moreover, in conducting their researches, Lukens-Bull and Bjork used the language used by the informants. Bjork used Indonesian language when he spoke to the teachers, students or government officials. Even though sometimes he found difficulty in understanding some terminologies, he asked the informants to clarify those terminologies. Differently, Lukens-Bull had to use some different languages. This is because he had to adapt with the languages of his informants.

Different from common schools, which use Indonesian language as their formal language, *Al-Hikam Pesantren* uses some languages. Particular language is

used for particular time. For instance, during the school hours, all people in *Pesantren* should speak in either English or Arabic. During the meeting with Syaikh Abdurrahman, *Krama Inggil* language should be used. *Krama Inggil* is one type of Javanese language which should be used when speak with older people or respected man in traditional Javanese community. Thus, it can be seen that both of the researchers tried to take part in their informants' life. They tried to get immersed not only in the formal time but also in the informal time. Lukens-Bull, for instance, often had informal conversation with *Santri* (a terminology to refer to the students of *Pesantren* in Indonesia) to know the meaning of certain joke in Javanese culture. Bjork also had a chat with some teachers in Javanese dialect. This is similar to what Malinowski (1922, cited in Wolcott, 1999, p. 33, in *Ethnography, a Way of Seeing*) mentions that "it is useful for the ethnographer to interact with the informants in their informal time, follow their walks, their visits, or sit with them and have a joke.

In conducting their ethnographic method, both of the researchers have to deal with semiotics. Both of them have to understand the meaning of certain cultural symbols. As mentioned by Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p. 165) ethnography is crossing the territorial and semiotic territory. This means that a certain symbol of the Indonesian culture should be understood from the point of view of Indonesian (Javanese) people. For instance, when the visit of Syaikh Abdurrahman, Syaikh Abdurrahman touched the researcher's shoulder and head. This symbolizes the parent-child relationship. It means that Syaikh Abdurrahman cares with the researcher and regards him as his son. Similarly, Bjork had to understand the cultural meaning of being civil servant in Indonesia.

Secondly, both of the researchers use interview as one of some ways to get the data. The difference between those two researches is besides employing interview, Bjork also analyzes some official documents of the Indonesian MOEC.

In *Modernity and tradition*, Lukens-Bull interviews Hasyim Muzadi (the head master of *Al-Hikam Pesantren*), Nafik (the assistant of Hasyim Muzadi), the students (*santri*), and teachers of *Al-Hikam Pesantren*. Interview is a valuable method for collecting data in qualitative interview. This is as supported by Byrne (2012), as follows:

“Qualitative interviewing is particularly useful as a research method for accessing individuals’ attitudes and values – things that cannot necessarily be observed or accommodated in a formal questionnaire. Open-ended and flexible questions are likely to get a more considered response than closed questions and therefore provide better access to interviewees’ views, interpretation of events, understandings, experiences and opinions. They are also more open to hearing respondents’ views ‘in their own words,’ which allows for a more complex analysis.” (p. 209)

All the interviews he conducted are face to face interviews. As claimed by Wolcott (1999, p. 54) any naturalistic inquiry needs both person-to-person and face-to-face communication. With Hasyim Muzadi, he conducted five face-to-face interviews. Since Hasyim Muzadi is very busy, the interview was conducted during his travels. Thus, the researcher followed the visits and walks of Hasyim Muzadi. The questions of the interview could be raised around things that wondered the researcher as he traveled with Hasyim Muzadi. With Nafik, the researcher also conducted six face-to-face interviews. Similarly, with the teachers, the researcher also conducted face-to-face interview. Differently, with some students the researcher conducted four group interviews. Bryman (2004, p. 346) notes that in group interview, the interviewees can discuss a variety of matters. This is different from focus group, since the discussion in focus group tends to be deeper than broader. In his interview with the students, the researcher asked them their opinion about modernity. In their group interview, the students were participated in broad discussion about the effect of modernity. Some of them relate modernity with westernization. Some of them talked about mysticism, the others talked about the impact of modernity on the Javanese culture.

Similarly, Bjork also interviewed some informants; those are the staffs of MOEC and some teachers. The interviews conducted are unstructured face-to-face interviews. Bryman (2004, p. 320, in *Social Research Methods*) notes that in unstructured interview, the interviewer frequently gives only one question to give the opportunity to the interviewees to respond more freely. Similar to this concept, Bjork tried to deeply understand the teachers’ perception on the LCC training, which is conducted by the MOEC staffs, by limiting his questions. For instance, in interviewing the teachers after the LCC training, Bjork only gave one question, that was “what are your impressions of the training?” Then, the teachers were free to

respond. Most of them expressed their frustration and only one teacher saw the use of the training. This is supported by Edwards (n.d., p. 50) who notes that in unstructured interview, the interviewer gives broader opportunity to the interviewees to reveal their beliefs, feelings, ideas, or values.

All of the interviews, which are conducted by both of the researchers, use Indonesian language. Lukens-Bull used English language for two of his interviews. This is because the informants asked him to use English language, but for the rest of his interviews, he used the Indonesian language. As mentioned by Spradley (1979, p. 59) the ethnographer should encourage and let the informants to naturally speak in their own language since the aim of ethnographic is to understand a particular culture in its context.

Different from Lukens-Bull, who only used interview, Bjork analyzed the official documents of the Indonesian MOEC in addition to interview. As mentioned by Bryman (2004, p. 386) the state documents can also be useful source of information for the social researchers. In analysing the official documents, Bjork employed a secondary analysis approach. As stated by Chadwick, Bahr, and Albrecht (1984, p. 259) secondary analysis is employed when the researcher uses the data gathered by others. The researcher uses those data for his/her purpose which is different from the purpose of the data collector. Bjork analyzed some documents, including the report of the implementation of LCC Program, state decentralization law, the statistical data on the students' school attendance from 1980s to 1990s, Policy on Local Content Curriculum.

The use of secondary analysis and interview at the same time can give an advantage. The secondary analysis can give an alternative interpretation. As claimed by Bryman (2004, p. 204) re-analysing the existing data can envisage some possibilities as the alternative interpretation. The alternative interpretation can also be seen from Bjork's research. The official documents report that LCC Program has been successfully implemented in Indonesia. This statement is refuted by Bjork. From his research in six junior secondary schools, he interprets that the teachers still give lack response to the LCC program because of three factors. The first factor is the culture of Indonesian Civil Servant. It is difficult to change the "being

loyal/obedient” culture of the Indonesian teachers to “being creative and initiative.” This is because before LCC Program the government highly rewards loyal and obedient teachers. The second factor is lack of incentives and rewards. The LCC Program demanded the teachers to design new local curriculum which takes time and effort, but the government does not provide enough incentives and rewards for the teachers.

The last factor is centre-local relationship. The centre thinks that they have already given enough support to the local, but the local argues that the centre fails in providing sufficient back up. Above all, it can be seen that Bjork analysis can offer an alternative interpretation on the implementation of LCC Program.

Both researchers use participant observation in their researches. Both of the researchers get immersed to the social setting for years. Lukens-Bull observed *Al-Hikam Pesantren* for two years (from 1994 to 1995) and revisits it in 1997 and 2000. Bjork observed six junior secondary schools in East Java for 1 year 5 months (from 1996 to 1998). Bryman (2004, p. 167) notes that in participant observation, the observer has to immerse in the investigated setting for long time and observe the behaviour of the informant in natural setting. This is supported by Travers (2001, p. 29, in *Qualitative Research through Case Studies*) who claims that the participant observer gets immersed in the everyday life of the informants.

C. Reflection on Each Research’s Strengths and Weaknesses

Both of the researches have some strengths in some aspects, and some shortcomings can also be identified from those two researches.

Local Responses

Local Responses has some major weaknesses in some aspects of research. Firstly, the research problems of *Local Responses* are too broad. Bjork wants to cover too many things in his research. He explicitly states in his article that he wants to observe many aspects which influence the teachers’ attitude towards LCC Program. Those are historical, political, social, economic, and religious aspects. Those too broad observed factors bring about an implication. That implication is it is

not clear which tools he uses to gain an understanding on some aspects, especially religious and political aspects. How he observes the impact of the teachers' religion towards LCC Program is not covered. Even, there is no discussion/understanding on religious and political aspects. Thus, some observed factors are neglected. Compared to *Modernity and tradition*, the latter is more specific and focused. It is clear that *Modernity and tradition* is concentrated on cultural aspect.

Secondly, to my mind, Bjork in his research has an ethical problem. This is because he fiercely criticizes the Indonesian government for having different interpretation on the result of the implementation of LCC Program. The official documents say that LCC has been successfully implemented in Indonesia. In contrast, based on his research findings, Bjork refutes the statement in the official documents. Bjork (2003, p. 199) explicitly notes "policy documents, field reports, and public statements by MOEC officials all emphasize the positive accomplishments that have resulted from the introduction of LCC..." Moreover, he says that the success of the LCC just exists in print only, not in reality. It can be inferred that the researcher tend to judge the MOEC officials for producing wrong interpretation on the implementation of LCC.

This may raise ethical problem since it violates one important culture in Indonesian education, that is "always being loyal, never fiercely criticize and never being too assertive to the policy of the government." As the non-Indonesian people, the researcher probably has different kind of culture, such as always say the truth, being transparent, or being open. Thus, there is a conflicting value. As noted by Kimmel (1988, p. 36) that an ethical problem can be caused by different values. In this case, the researcher should be aware of the Indonesian's "not being assertive culture." The researcher can convey his objection of the MOEC documents in another way.

Instead of blaming the MOEC officials, he should propose his findings as an alternative interpretation on the LCC implementation. This is because MOEC officials may have different ways in interpreting the LCC Program. The MOEC documents might be based on their own researches. Those researches might be conducted in different time, place, and methodology from Bjork's research.

Moreover, it seems that Bjork tend to “be native.” This means that he is too deeply immersed himself in his informants’ community. As the result, he goes too far, from understanding and describing to criticizing and blaming the MOEC officials.

In spite of its weaknesses, *Local Responses* also has some strengths. Firstly, the researcher uses combined tools (secondary analysis, interview and participant observation). This can help the researcher gain deeper understanding. Moreover, the weakness of one tool can be overcome by the use of other tools. Secondly, Bjork’s finding can be a useful feedback for the Indonesian MOEC. They can perform re-analysis of LCC program and policy.

Modernity and Tradition

Modernity and tradition also has some strengths in some aspects. Firstly, compared to *Local Responses*, it is more focused. It focuses on the cultural aspects to answer the research problem of how *Al-Hikam Pesantren* accepts modernity without losing traditional value. Secondly, compared to *Local Responses*, *Modernity and tradition* contains more field notes instead of only discussion on the finding. *Local Responses* contains a considerable discussion. Differently, *Modernity and tradition* combines the discussion of the research finding with some cultural experiences of the researcher which is taken from his field note. For instance, the researcher tells his experiences on how he should behave when meeting with Syaikh Abdurrahman and how he understands the meaning of sincerity in rural Java when he wants to keep the skull cap that he borrows. Thus, *Modernity and tradition* can give the reader both understanding and real picture/portray of the investigated thing.

In spite of its strengths, *Modernity and tradition* also has a weakness. In the introductory part, before coming to the introduction of his research elements, the researcher notes that there two *Pesantren* in Indonesia. Those are *Classicalist* and *Reformist (modernist) Pesantren*. The *Reformist Pesantren* is more open to the

modernity than *Classicalist Pesantren*. In this case, the researcher does not explain in which variant *Al-Hikam Pesantren* is classified, classicalist or reformist. This classification is an important note, since it can give real picture of what kind of *Pesantren Al-Hikam* is. This explanation can lead to how hard or how easy *Al-Hikam Pesantren* accepts modernity.

Conclusion

Qualitative researches may be different from one research to other researches. They may differ in some aspects, including the philosophical position and methodological stance used. One research may use an ethnographic method; the other may use secondary analysis as its way to collect evidence. This difference is affected by the type of research questions and the aim of the research. However, that difference is not a clear cut.

Modernity and Tradition and *Local Responses* share some similarities as well as some differences. Both of them principally use ethnographic method. However, *Local Responses* combines ethnographic method with secondary analysis, while *Modernity and Tradition* combines it with case study. Both of them also use interview and participant observation as a way to collect data. Both of them embrace constructivism, interpretivism, and symbolic interactionism as their philosophical perspective.

Both researches also have strengths and weaknesses. *Local Responses* has main shortcoming in the area of research focus and ethic, while *Modernity and Tradition* in the area of classification of *Al-Hikam Pesantren*. *Local Responses* has main strength in the area of its useful feedback for the Indonesian MOEC, while *Modernity and Tradition* can provide a real picture of the field of the research to the reader.

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