

## Conference Paper

# Analysis of History Textbooks: A Review of Michel Foucault's Power Relations Theory

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**Abstract.**

History is known as a branch of science that studies human life in the past with its different dynamics and developments. The role of history in school is to provide students with an understanding of the ways of thinking and the processes involved in studying past events, and what is no less important to internalize national identity. Another form of historical writing in formal education is textbooks. Textbooks as one of the learning tools used in school must present historical facts that are truly objective and not only contain the interests of the government. The purpose of learning history is to evoke historical awareness in students so that they know their identity. Students must know their national identity as a whole, free from doctrines that contain political tendencies and must be taught to liberate their minds more broadly and liberate themselves to the complex and comprehensive construction of historical knowledge.

**Keywords:** textbook, power relations, history learning, Michel Foucault

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## 1. Introduction

History is known as a branch of science that studies human life in the past with its different dynamics and developments. The role of history in school education is to provide students with an understanding of ways of thinking and processes when studying past events, and the introduction of national identity is no less important. Students are encouraged to question historical narratives, including their underlying assumptions, as a reference for self-inquiry[1]. Philosophically, history is a never-ending interaction between the past and the future[2]. Therefore, history must be studied thoroughly and comprehensively to provide meaningful learning as a prerequisite for living in the future. The approach used in learning history at all levels of education is different.

According to Kuntowijoyo[3], basic history is taught ethically. This means that history is given to instill a sense of love for the struggle of heroes, homeland and nation.

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In high school, history is studied ethically, meaning that students begin to instill an understanding of their place in cultural society. In elementary schools, history is studied critically and new ways of thinking are introduced with the help of the 5W + 1H concept. At the university level, an academic approach to history is offered which requires students to be able to think in terms of causality (cause and effect). Then be able to understand and analyze a historical event, starting from the background to the continuity and changes caused by the event.

The perspective of writing history is often combined with the interests of the government in power at that time. It cannot be denied that all historical writings have an element of interest, especially in this case the national interest. The writing style of Indonesian history is divided into several stages, the first being traditional historiography, colonial historiography, and modern historiography. Traditional historiography was written for the benefit of the king, such as chronicles, sagas, genealogies. Most traditional historiography does not involve the actions of humans but gods, so they are theogony and cosmogony that explain natural forces and personify them as gods[4]. When western countries began to occupy the archipelago from commercial activities to colonization.

The style of writing history began to lead to the realization and strengthening of an independent national identity after the declaration. Therefore[5], explains several things that must appear in the history of the nation: (a) the growth of our nation's character as an Indonesian nation; (b) the struggle of our people for a united and independent nation; c) great people and schools that influenced the struggle; the mass movement which became the basis of the struggle; d) the struggle to realize the ideals of life.

An independent, just, prosperous and happy nation. In contrast to the various studies above, one of the goals of learning history is to increase historical awareness[6], not only to provide political learning about collective memory, because memory collective and historical consciousness are two different things. Collective memory tends to be characterized by similar distortions due to prioritization of memories, forcing us to emphasize certain aspects of the past. In political life, memory is very selective and can sometimes be wrong in its interpretation. It is at this point that "historical awareness" seeks to provide a more selective and objective interpretation [7]. One of the problems with studying history today is the strong dominance of political history as a form of official intervention in school history textbooks. Studying history in class is the most important part in building the educational policies of the rulers. The presence of rulers in history learning can be traced from the curriculum to the preparation of study materials or textbooks.

Placing great people as protagonists of a historical event. For example, when examining the figure of Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia and even the world. The social movement philosophy taught by Ahmad Dahlan, namely doing good deeds and doing it as a faith commandment then developed until now to become the hallmark of the Muhammadiyah movement. Muhammadiyah will never exist without forgetting social, educational and humanitarian tasks related to the identity of the Muhammadiyah movement[8].

Various problems and stories in these historical events then aroused the author's interest to discuss thoroughly the other meaning of "History Textbooks in Schools". The purpose of this article is to provide explanations and concrete examples of the power of controlling the interests of the authorities, especially in school textbooks and in learning history in general.

## 2. Method

This article was written using the library research method. Some characteristics of the library research method[9] the researcher deals directly with the text; b) ready-to-use sources; c) the source used is usually a secondary source. Library research is considered an appropriate method because the focus of the discussion in this paper is school history textbooks as one of the learning tools used by students. For discussions related to the content of textbooks, the researcher uses several relevant sources to provide a clear picture of one of the problems in history textbooks in schools which are often dominated by stories of political history.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. The phenomenon of learning history

Learning is a series of events or activities carried out in a structured and planned manner using one or several types of media. This learning process aims to enable students to achieve the expected competencies. Learning is a two-way interaction, i.e.. the teacher fulfills the teacher and students do the learning [10], Learning activities are activities that aim to provide learning experiences that involve mental and physical processes through the interaction of students, students and teachers, the environment and learning resources to achieve learning skills that can be achieved through multifaceted and student-centered learning. method. Learning activities include life skills that students

must master [11]. On the other hand[6], learning in schools is an ideal process for developing thinking skills, attitudes and personality.

History is a discipline that systematically studies the process of changing the dynamics of people's lives in the past in all areas of life [12]. Meanwhile[13] states that history is all the changes and events that actually happened. Based on this opinion, it can be concluded that history is the study of the past that occurred in reality, which is systematically related to changes in the dynamics of people's lives. I Gde Widja, [14] explains that one of the main functions of history is to have past experiences of society which can be taken into account by a community in solving the problems it faces at any time. Through history, one can learn past values and use them to deal with the present.

One proof of this success, for example, is the findings regarding the Muhammadiyah Student Association (IMM) in East Jakarta. In the process of learning history which is usually carried out through studies and social activities, in the end the values grow in every IMM board and cadre. Then it becomes an important provision for steps and movement of IMM in East Jakarta in its life in the campus community and even in social life[15]. Achieving the goals of learning history is important for the life of a society, including the nation and state. The purpose of studying history is to raise historical awareness. Because the study of history is a study of humanity, all its aspects create awareness and the nature of the development of human culture and civilization [16].

This is because history contains important moral values that shape the knowledge and future character of a nation. History subjects are an important part of teaching and education because they can develop students' ability to recognize national values that are fixed, changing and owned at the present time, so that history education is the most effective means of presenting students. to his people in the past[17].

Learning foreign history in the 2013 curriculum is designed to equip students with historical skills and ways of thinking, create awareness of forming national values, develop inspiration, and connect local events with national events in the Indonesian History Series. The subject of Indonesian history is the study of various historical events in Indonesia which aims to form collective memory as a nation for identification of national identity and the basis for building the life of the nation and state today and in the future or the future[18].

Features of learning history according to Leo Agung and Wahyuni[19], are as follows; (1) history is about the past and historical events only happened once; (2) History is chronological in nature, history learning materials must be based on the chronological order of historical events; (3) History has three essential elements, namely humans, space and time; (4) the temporal perspective is a very important dimension, because

history learning materials must be related to present and future subjects; (5) history is the principle of cause and effect, history teachers must be able to explain that one historical event can be caused by another historical event, and one historical event is the cause of subsequent history; (6) history is essentially a historical event and the development of society, which affect various areas of life, such as politics, economics, social, culture and religion. Adopting a multidimensional approach in historical studies (7), historical studies is a subject that examines the problems and developments of society from the past, present, and in Indonesia and so on. Focus The main subjects of high school history are the birth of human civilization, the development of social systems, and the development of culture and science.

Kochhar[20] emphasized that the main objectives of historical studies are: (1) to increase understanding of the process of change and development experienced by mankind to reach its current development; (2) growing understanding of the roots of civilization and respect for the basic unity of humanity; (3) appreciating the different contributions of all cultures to human civilization as a whole, (4) strengthening the understanding of mutually beneficial interactions from different cultures is an important factor in the advancement of human life; (5) provide opportunities for students who are interested in studying the history of a country in relation to human history as a whole.

### 3.2. Textbooks as learning resources

Another form of writing history in formal education is textbooks. Textbooks for learning history play an important role. Textbooks are often regarded as the only learning materials that can be used in the classroom, so students depend on them. This dependence makes the role of textbooks very important in shaping student knowledge. Even though in reality these textbooks are as if they are an extension of the government trying to legitimize its power. Cases like this were experienced during the New Order regime (1966-1998) because their propaganda was very thorough at the educational level[21]. The role of history learning textbooks becomes quite central when the teacher has no more innovation in teaching and learning activities. Therefore, the role of textbooks as one of the teaching materials used by students in information technology is very important. In general, this type of learning tends to be monotonous because it places learning materials - textbooks - as one of the central sources.

Such a learning paradigm cannot be changed at all, even though many articles in the form of books or journals have been written on innovation learning theory in the application of learning models, as well as the use of certain media to support the

teaching and learning process. Thus, it is almost certain that if learning is carried out continuously with such traditional methods, the teacher personally will not develop his teaching skills and students will become bored[22]. The strong position of textbooks in history class seems to limit students' minds from daring to search other information outside the textbook. The rapid development of technology today must be utilized in history education. With the help of a student's device, you can search for additional information outside of the textbook. Therefore, teachers must be updated with the latest information so that students learn more actively and critically.

### 3.3. Textbooks of history and "interests"

Hasan[23], states that the history taught to students has an identifiable pattern as follows; (a) Historical events are presented with an explanation of the conflict process between the parties, which leads to a black and white interpretation. In fact, history is not always black and white, right and wrong; (b) the story is constructed as if it is black and white in nature to create hatred towards the past and its perpetrators; (c) photography is done by the ruling regime to show its superiority, which seems to exaggerate its role and kindness. Nur Fatah Abidin[24], reveals the comparative importance of governance in history textbooks at the time. The old regime promoted a number of ideologies which were enshrined in textbooks, including: (a) anti-colonialism; b) national integration; c) nationalism; d) diversity. Some of these points were then raised in the discussion of patriotism, nationalism, and geopolitical unity. Given that at that time the political composition of Indonesian society was still very complex, the government felt the need to weave these points into textbooks. When governments change, so do ideology and discourse production. The New Order system that emerged after the events of the 30/9/1965 movement, Adrian Vickers[25], also sees another interest in writing history which is contained in textbooks. Their ideology includes: (a) national resilience; b) state stability; (c) development; d) Strengthening Pancasila ideology; e) anti-communism; (f) national identity, is a form of their preaching in the field of education. The New Order government really understood that history was an effective propaganda tool for indoctrination[21]. The writing of Indonesian history at that time had the nuances of political history, especially the roles of the military/military oriented[26].

Finally, studying history in class seems to emphasize the government's interest in imposing "collective memory" on students' memories, which should not be so ethical when studying history. The learning paradigm is homogeneous, historical learning is one-way, so that government doctrine can be implemented as a whole. We can call

this phenomenon “memory politics”. In this case, the government should have great responsibility to equip students with an understanding of history by presenting objective facts that are no longer based on certain interests or tendencies aimed at weakening certain parties[27]. Full mastery of historical writing, especially in the New Order era. Politically, the power system established by Suharto was authoritarian, which allowed him and the government to enter a learning curve.

The main focus of their scientific media is historical material and content, as well as the use of other media such as films as a form of propaganda. The purpose of learning history is none other than to provide an understanding of history and foster a sense of love for the homeland. It is quite effective if history is transmitted through media available to various audiences, especially students. However, the material that is published and then transmitted must be objective, and facts which could diminish the objectivity of the event itself must not be added or subtracted. For example, the true version of the events of the 30/09/1965 movement, which the Order of Batu calls G30S/PKI, in its famous film which has been shown every year since 1985[27].

The film is full of doctrine that embodies anti-communist sentiment. So that in textbooks up to the KTSP 2006 curriculum, in the material “Threat of Disintegration” they still use the term G30S/PKI from the New Order government version of the story. However, these concepts and paradigms began to change when the 2013 curriculum was introduced. In the 2013 Curriculum history textbook, the term G30S/PKI is no longer used for this event, but instead has been changed to the 30/9/1965 Movement event[27].

After the reformation, several attempts were made to reconstruct Indonesian history which were considered inconsistent with the facts of events, especially modern history. The New Order’s “distortion of facts” created several problems in the paradigm of Indonesian history writing and had a direct impact on learning in schools. There have been several attempts to create newer versions of history books based on recent research. Sjamsuddin[28], describes many developments in textbook production based on various criteria. Relevant criteria include: a) factual content must be held accountable; (b) interpretation or explanation; c) presentation and rhetoric must be adapted to developmental psychology; d) introduction to historical concepts; e) following the applicable curriculum; (f) Complete illustrations in the form of illustrations, photos and historical maps that are informative and narrative. The writer did not find in essence, the meaning of the difference between history textbooks arranged based on the level curriculum education units (KTSP) and the 2013 curriculum. The material presented still focuses on the dimensions of political history, conflict, cooperation and power. Perhaps ideally the writing of history textbooks for students is associated with the standards

set by the National Education Standards Agency (BSNP). However, it would be better if other alternative history topics were also included, so that students' understanding of history is not only fixated on political history[27].

The political interests of teaching and education seem to draw understanding into the black and white (right-false) paradigm of rights. That is what then becomes our collective concern to improve the quality of historical education today. Students must know their national identity as a whole, must not accept doctrines that contain political tendencies, must be made to open their minds more broadly and open themselves to the complex and comprehensive construction of historical knowledge.

## 4. Conclusion

Learning history should provide a complete and objective understanding of history. If then it is said that the writing of history should not be interfered with by an interest, then in my opinion that is a wrong statement. Historical writing must be based on interests, but interests in objectively reconstructing an event for the sake of a complete historical understanding. The problem is that the interests of the authorities, which are not always in line with objective historical writing, always interfere in this matter, causing a distraction to the historical narrative which will have a fatal impact in the form of historical anachronism.

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