HOW CAN MORAL EDUCATION SHAPE THE CHARACTER OF *"KIDS NOW"*?

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Abstract

Moral education is integrated with religious education and citizenship education. The purpose of this study were to describe the implementation of moral education to form the character of "*kids now*". This research used descriptive qualitative method with selected case from Al-Iktiar elementary school with using as a moral education basic to build character. The results of this study show that moral education that is taught in daily basis will become embedded character in children and become habit for them. Moral education show visible changes in children behavior who formed by greetings when meeting other people, smiling to others, and being polite to parents and older, teachers, friends, and others. Moral education has positive impacts both in home and school. It can be seen from children's personalities and attitudes in accordance with their age, for example in discipline, regulated rules, mutual respect for older and younger peers, polite to parents, and honest and responsible from regular used. Moral feeling and moral meaning are applied in home and school with the implaned rules to children.

Key words: Knowledge, Attitude, Personality, Globalization, Young generation

INTRODUCTION

Moral education is integrated with religious education and citizenship education (Husni Rahim and Maila Dinia Husni Rahiem, 2012: 454). It is not only formed intelligence in human brain and skills in carrying out the task, but also expected to produce moral in human beings which later create good citizens (Kusrahmadi, 2007). Teaching morality refers to efforts to provide students with the means for developing ethical capabilities (Inkeri Rissanen, Elina Kuusisto, Eija Hanhimäki and Kirsi Tirri, 2018: 64). Moral is an integral part of the educational process. Some points related to moral education are namely: (1) character education; education who has direct contact with the development of moral in children; (2) Value clarification is the process of providing assistance for children to be aware and understand of what is life and to clarify what forms of behavior are worth doing; and (3) Cognitive moral education is an approach based on the beliefs of, students should learn democracy, justice, and others when their moral is in developing process (Gunadi, 2013).

Education is therefore not merely transferring knowledge to learners, but also transfer universal values of morality and humanitarian values. With the universal transferred moral, learners are expected to be able to appreciate others which reflected in their behavior and self-actualization, started at the age of elementary school until become a good citizen adult. (Kusrahmadi, 2007).

In reality, today's children or the so-called "*kids now*" are currently facing big problems about children, not only in numbers (the number of children is increasing in quantity), but also in the increased number of complex problems in Indonesia. Recently, a case of student beat his teacher to death was one of the unfortunate cases due to the lack of cultivation in moral education. Another case that also considered happened in common is some students who are openly expose their free lifestyle to social media. The purpose in cultivating moral education is to preserve courtesy since young age. Moral degradation in children in Indonesia should receive special attention by the government. If we look through the past years or decades, the problems that often occured in children were only revolved around being neglected that caused by the inability to complete the physical needs while mental spiritual and social needs could still be fulfilled by parents and the child's surroundings. There is a moral decline in some cases that are already prevalent in children. the degradation of moral values in our society has become an emerging issue (Deb Kumar Bhakta, 2017: 128).

Amelia Rahmi (2013) states that along with the occured changes, especially the globalization flow and advances in communication technologies which bring positive impacts with its negative consequences, children's problems on current days tend be more complicated. The mischievousness of children in primary school or equivalent age nowadays are not only denied parental advices and skipped school, but they also consume cigarettes, steal money to just watch the play station, and race on the highways. One of the most concerning mischiefs is, children and adolescents are now fond of trying to violate religious values and norms, such as having crush to the opposite sex or even having sexual intercourse. Through this phenomenon we can see the reflected morals in children's behavior disrespect human values such as, impolite to parents, disobey family norms, and undisciplined life. In this globalization era, Indonesian tend to behave harsh, fast, take something for granted, and have instant culture.

Given its societal background, the school is one of the agents which exerts influence on a young generation's values (Wing Sze MAK, 2014: 143). The given moral education in elementary school is expected to change or shape the behavior of children. When they grow and become adults, they hopefully will be more responsible, respect others, and able to face the challenges of this fast-changing era. The moral values that serve as a medium in human transformation, especially Indonesian people, hold an important function to; be better, have excellence and intelligence in various fields: both emotional intelligence, social intelligence, spiritual intelligence, kinesthetic intelligence, logical intelligence, musical, linguistic, spasial intelligence (Habibah, 2007: 1). The role of parents (teachers) are limited to only give their best supports in accordance with what the children will be facing on this era. Thus, the children will be like an arrow who loose from its bow; speed forward rapidly, be able to overcome their own problems, but still has good moral and excellence virtuous.
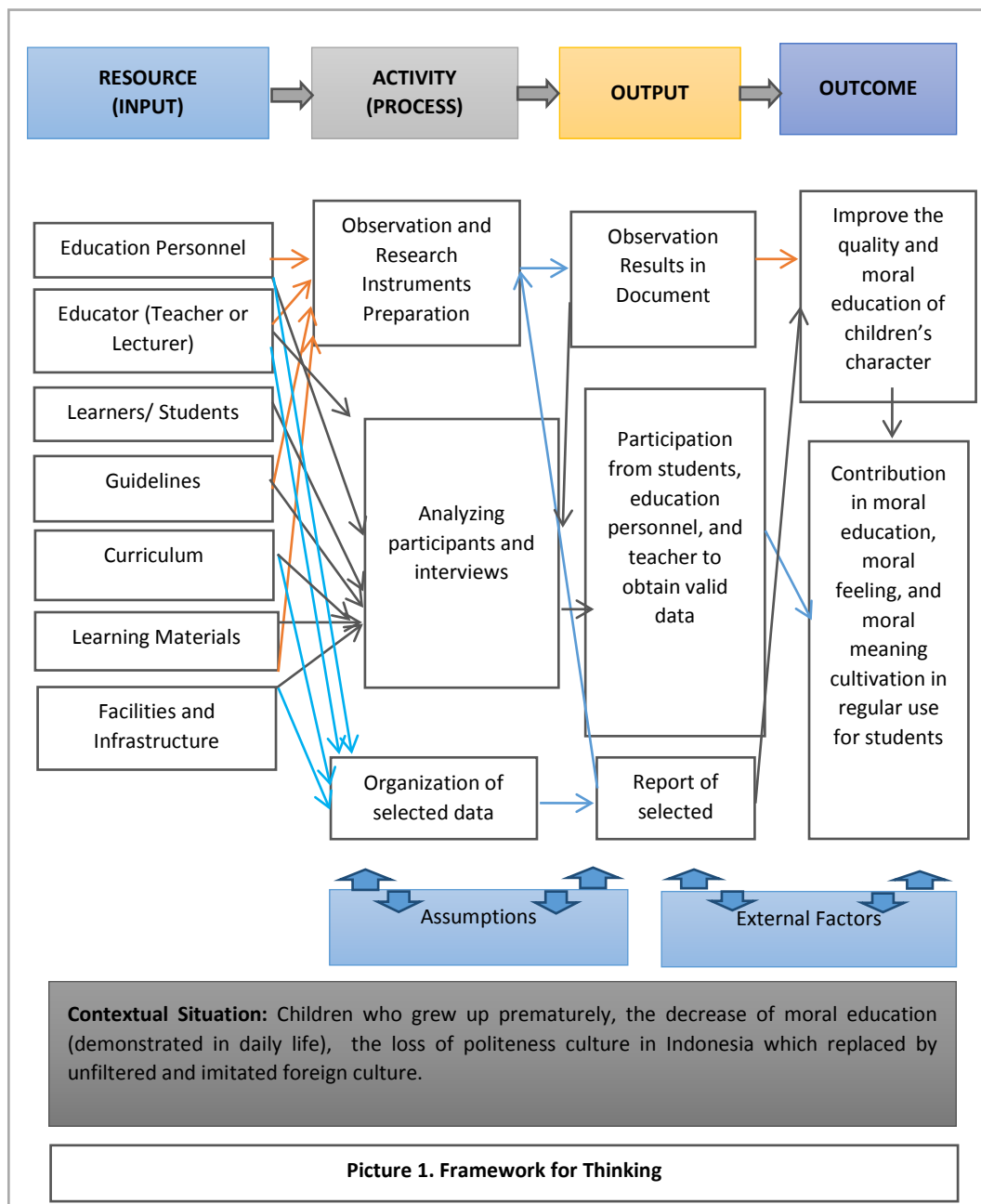
Based on the background above the question of the effectiveness in education, where moral education becomes one of the learning sections in the characterization of the learners. Associated with character-based education, Koesoema (2010) suggests that character education will only become a discourse if it is not understood comprehensively in our national education. In fact, a partially understood character education which gets the wrong target is considered as counterproductive for the character formation of students. A partial approach that is not based on a strong pedagogical approach, rather than instilling values of virtue in children, leads them to less moral behavior. Education is termed **to educate** which means to improve moral and train intellectuals (Wiji Suwarno, 2006: 19)

Al-Iktiar is one of the Islamic private schools located in Semarang, Central Java. Al-Ikhtiar School itself is a school that successfully implements and performs moral education on a daily basis to mandatory activities for students. One of the examples from moral education implementation is, the students are used to kissing hands and greet their teachers or older people (parents) by saying hello in every morning. Moral education is also applied in everyday activities as an evidence of harmonious life that should be instilled early since early age to become a habit of virtuous behavior. The formed moral education for children is different and various from each other, but the fundamental difference can be seen in Al-Iktiar students if we compare it to the other students. The simple actions yet potential to become good habits, such as greetings (saying hello, smiling to others), asking for help, apologize and be grateful sometimes underestimated and forgotten due to the technological advance. It make the children become precocious. Technology in globalization is like a time bomb that will explode in time if people cannot use it wisely.

Moral degradation in children will gradually destroy the children from inside, just like a destruction within a country. Hence, moral education should be re-applied not only in the school environment but also in family or society circle. Al-Ikhtiar School is a school that implements moral education in the midst of globalization to provide provision when the development stage and curiosity begin to appear (because their beliefs or knowledge limited to the faith that has been embedded to lead into positive things) in children. Therefore, children can grow according to the child's development and learning exact age.

From the agitated problems and differences that occur in the elementary school or community by the group of learners mentioned above, it is necessary to do an investigation on how the implementation of moral education in schools, especially elementary school, change the children's character at current days. Due to the limited time, energy, and opportunity from the researcher, this study only focused on moral education applied by the objected school. How are the efforts of schools and families in implementing moral education for the student's development to become independent? The problem of this research is how moral education implemented in Al-Iktiar school to change the character of "*kids now*". This is a case study at Al-Iktiar school in Semarang, Central Java. With the framework for thinking as follows:

RESOURCE (INPUT)	→	ACTIVITY (PROCESS)	→	OUTPUT	→	OUTCOME

Education Personnel

Educator (Teacher or Lecturer)

Learners/ Students

Guidelines

Curriculum

Learning Materials

Facilities and Infrastructure

Observation and Research Instruments Preparation

Analyzing participants and interviews

Organization of selected data

Observation Results in Document

Participation from students, education personnel, and teacher to obtain valid data

Report of selected

Improve the quality and moral education of children's character

Contribution in moral education, moral feeling, and moral meaning cultivation in regular use for students

Assumptions

External Factors

Contextual Situation: Children who grew up prematurely, the decrease of moral education (demonstrated in daily life), the loss of politeness culture in Indonesia which replaced by unfiltered and imitated foreign culture.

Picture 1. Framework for Thinking

RESEARCH METHOD

This research used descriptive qualitative method. The sampling technique that used is purposive sampling. The data collected through interview and observation. The used techniques of data analysis were data reduction, data presentation, conclusion and data verification.

Research Participants

The participant of this study were HU (female) as parent of grade V student, AN (female) as counseling teacher, Mr. SB as homeroom teacher, and EG, TA, and RD as students of class V Al-Iktiar.

Data, Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques

The data in this study were collected by instrument tools in the form of interviews, observation

sheets, and documents, and making notes from the result of interviews, observations, and documents.

Data Analysis Technique

This research used inductive approach with interactive model as the data analysis. The process of qualitative analysis in this study had 4 important components; data collection, data reduction, display data, conclusion and verification.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Al-Iktiar is one of the Islamic private schools located in Semarang, Central Java. Al-Ikhtiar School itself is a school that successfully implements and performed moral education on a daily basis to mandatory activities for the learners. Moral education is applied in everyday activities to become

habitatus; moral feeling and moral meaning that are formed with activities done in school. School is like a second life for children because they spend their daily activities in there, thus, moral education should be instilled early in children to maintain or shape a virtuous behavior in school. The formed moral education for children is different and various from each other, but the fundamental difference can be seen in Al-Iktiar students. Character education as formulated by Ibn Miskawayh (Nata, 2003), is an effort towards the realization of an inner attitude that is able to spontaneously encourage the birth of good deeds from a person.

The children who go to Al-Ikhtiar school grow according to the right age of development for children. They grow like the supposedly age; children at age of 6-12 years. Children at Al-Ikhtiar school are those who are educated in a way that is considered good according to the supposed age. The characters that built from school and home environment are discipline, abide to the applied rules, respect older and younger people, polite and careful with the chosen language, and honest. Moral education has always been a perennial aim of education (Sandeep Kaur, 2015: 22). As expressed by Mrs. AN who put forward, "moral education that is formed to build the character of students is honesty and responsibility". For the honesty, most of the children in Al-Iktiar are already embedded from the first grade; it has been accustomed to behave honestly. To the responsibility, we, the teachers and other staffs need to work harder because it need more exercises and practices in its application, for example, classroom or surrounding environment (table, chair, or other settings), their personal hygiene or belongings (where to eat, be responsible for their own bottles of drinks, bags, shoes, sandals, or other items) still have to be guided, supervised, or even counseled. Then the responsibilities of their personal duties, for example, books, homework, or other helpful equipments are sometimes left behind in their house. Therefore, the parents are still have to deliver the items that being left behind. However, the school already have rules that prohibit delivered items for children, and yet some of the parents still delivered it..

The method in cultivating moral education to support the character that can be done at home is by giving a direct example of the good deeds model to the child. Although the parents are required to talk frequently, give many advices, but it will be best than do not give any or less examples or advices at all, then the children might absorb it less. This is crucial because at this age (elementary age) children will copy and imitate what they see in their parents, school, or environment no matter good or bad it is.

Children at this age are considered to be unwise in determining what is good or bad in life. Most parents like to believe that infants and young children are innocent human beings, and that morality develops in a cumulative fashion so that with increasing age children would act more empathically and pro-socially (Marinus H. Van Ijzendoorn and Marian J. Bakermanskranenburg, 2011 : 13). The cultivated moral feeling could be done by instilling faith in to the children that Allah / God will always watch them, thus they will be more careful in doing something. There is no doubt that the moral virtues; temperament and character, are one of the deepest pieces of faith, and the true religious development (Abdullah Nashih Ulwan 1990: 174).

Habits that are made at home usually started with giving advice or sanctions to children when making mistakes to foster the children to being responsible. Psychological theories of morality have traditionally focused heavily on the formal character of moral reasoning to the neglect of moral conduct (Albert Bandura, 2002: 101). Another habit or custom that can be done regularly at home is giving restrictions and assistance on using gadgets, television, or other electronic devices children. Instead of being a supervisor while assisting the children, parents should also physically and mentally present, for instance, parents could put themselves as in their childhoodness, thus, parents and children might be able to build a close relationship with trust. As Mrs. HU argued, "I, myself do not familiarize children with gadgets because they do not have one, and if I do allow them, I usually give time limitations. This is goes along with watching television and others. We parents are also present there, but not as a supervisor, but as our children's friend". The teaching and learning of the programs should be a happy and stimulating process (Hing-keung Ma, 2009: 295).

The habituation in cultivating moral education conducted in school can be conducted through separations between male and female students in prayer place, rest room, stairways, place to recite 30 juz each morning, the Dhuha prayer, doing simultanously and alternately murrotal, and to monitor children's activities at home through given handbooks. The book is used to monitor the children's discipline in memorizing Al-Quran and prayers. In addition, the cultivation of moral feeling in school is done trough to instilling faith in God, thus children will always do good things because they feel watched by God. The term moral education has been most strongly associated with a constructivist psychological framework (Wolfgang Althof and Marvin W. Berkowitz, 2006: 496).

The moral meaning is implanted by the school through habituate children to use greetings when

meeting other people, a welcoming activity held by the teachers with smile when the students say hello or good morning and kiss the teachers' hands. The sanctions received by students if they made a mistake was writing the mistake that has been done for 100 times in the student's book to get them getting used to responsibilities. Other rules that implanted by the school is prohibit students to run at the school corridor, how to eat and speak according to norms and values in society are also introduced. If we trace the position of moral education from a number of studies, it will be seen clearly that moral education has a very strong theological-legal and juridical foundation (Abuddin, 2012: 210). Besides instilled moral education with moral feeling in vertical way (to God), moral education also instilled horizontally (fellow human beings) by oblige students to join extracurricular activities to provide the balance of moral education in the hereafter and the world. Religion has an important role in human life because it functions as motivation and tool for development and self-control in life and it is very important. (Nur Azizah, 2011).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the description and analysis of obtained data during the study of how moral education shapes the character on "*Kids Now*" (kids on current days) the conclusions are as follows:

1. Applied moral education in Al-Iktiar school has a habituation that demonstrated by discipline, regulated rules, mutual respect for older and younger peers, polite to parents, and honest and responsible from regular used. Moral feeling and moral meaning are applied either in home or school that came through regular actions, such as separation in prayer places between male and female students, rest room, stairways, place to recite 30 juz each morning, the Dhuha prayer, doing simultanously and alternately murrotal, and monitor children's activities at home through given handbooks. The book is used to monitor the children's discipline in memorizing Al-Quran and prayers.

2. The moral meaning is implanted by the school through habituate children to use greetings when meeting other people, a welcoming activity held by the teachers with smile when the students say hello or good morning and kiss the teachers' hands. The sanctions received by students if they made a mistake was writing the mistake that has been done for 100 times in the student's book to get them getting used to responsibilities. Other

rules that implanted by the school is prohibit students to run at the school corridor, how to eat and speak according to norms and values in society are also introduced. Attitudes of holding good manners to their parents, loving younger people, apologize, grateful in simple things by saying thank you are still clearly visible in Al-Iktiar students. These are positive values for "Kids Now". These characters are built through system of moral education in vertical habituation (related to God, done by instilling faith in the children) and horizontal habituation (relationships with fellow human beings, done by inculcating accustomed manners accustomed in the children life).

Based on the above conclusions, the following suggestions are given:

1. To schools, teachers, and academics; intensify further application of moral education in schools, bot public and pricate. Thus, moral education will become one of the subjects school in order to form a habit of virtuous behavior.

2. To the next researcher, the writer suggest to develop and investigate the findings in this research in detail and focus the further research on moral shifting that occur in children on current generation. The writer saw various problems that arose in the application of moral education which are very influential in children development. The problems are worth to investigate for further research.

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