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Implementation of Character Education in Different Background Elementary Schools

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Aims of the study were to identity: character education implementation in different background elementary schools, problems of character education implementation, and the power of three mainelements which support character education. A qualitative method was employed, and the interview technique was used to collect data. Participants consisted of twelve teachers of civics/ *pendidikan kewarganegaraan* (PKn) and Islamic education/Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI). The results indicated that: 1) most respondents confessed that they understand character education aims, but they don't know how to apply it; 2) the implementation of character education is still sporadic, and 3) the character education implementation was still focused on students, however the school and teacher have not provided support to implement the character education programs.

Keywords: character education, character values, teacher

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mengidentifikasi implementasi pendidikan karakter di sekolah dasar berlatar belakang berbeda, mengidentifikasi masalah-masalah yang muncul dalam aplikasi pendidikan karakter, dan mengidentifikasi kekuatan tiga elemen dalam mendukung terlaksananya pendidikan karakter. Metode penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan interviu. Subjek penelitian meliputi 12 guru Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan (PKn) dan Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) dari 12 sekolah dasar berlatar belakang berbeda. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa: 1) mayoritas responden mengaku telah memahami tujuan pendidikan karakter tetapi belum mengetahui cara menerapkannya; 2) penerapan pendidikan karakter masih bersifat sporadis; dan 3) penerapan pendidikan karakter baru terfokus kepada anak didik, kedua elemen yang lain yaitu karakter sekolah dan staf belum mendukung terselenggaranya program pendidikan karakter.

Kata kunci: pendidikan karakter, nilai-nilai karakter, guru

The concept of character education is currently the focus of attention of the population, both the general population and the academic population, making a large number of academics and practitioners interested in researching it. The reason is the amount of problems the Indonesians are currently having, such as corruption, inter-group conflict, violence, and other kind of problems (Said, 2011; Kesuma,Triatna, & Permana, 2011; Samani & Hariyanto, 2012). Friedman (2012), taking notice of the symptoms, stated that the low credibility of a nation is the reflection of the individuals without character's behavior. In that statement, Friedman aimed to convey that character problems are not simply personal problems, but also the problem of the nation.

Lickona (2012) explained that the character quality of a nation can be seen from the character quality of the young generation in that country. He identified ten negative characteristics of the young generation that will cause the destruction of a nation, which are: 1) the increase of violence between adolescents; 2) the use of bad language (and conversations); 3) the strong influence of cliques in violence; 4) the increase of self-destructive behavior; 5) the increasing vagueness of morale guides between good and bad; 6) the decrease of work ethos; 7) the decrease of respect towards elders and teachers; 8) the low level of responsibility in individuals and citizens; 9) the increase of dishonesty culture; 10) the decrease in values of tolerance; and 11) the feeling of suspicious and hatred towards others. The characteristics are related to the problems this nation currently has, and it can be seen

This study was supported by the multiyears research grant for doctors of UMS badge 2012-2013 (Model development of character education based on positive psychology in schools with different backgrounds).

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that the Indonesian character is in a worrying condition. Because of this phenomenon, the Indonesia Bersatu II National Cabinet Educational Ministry, through the National Education Ministry Strategic Plan 2010-2014, put forth the theme of "Character Education" for the following five years (Majid & Andayani, 2011).

In general, character education is rooted from the psychological and philosophical perspectives that can be taught and studied through education (Cooley, 2008). According to Lickona (2012), character education is the deliberate effort to cultivate virtue. Prestwich (2004) explained virtue as the ethical values developed and grown in and by the community. Clouse (2001), as well as Agboola and Tsai (2012) stated that character values are unconsciously taught from time to time. Specifically, Berkowitz & Hoppe (2009) related character education with the world of formal education. Character education is growing the value of discipline using various efforts in order to increase the ethical behavior of the students. Milliren and Messer (2009) stated it as encouraging students to practice character values in their everyday lives. The definitions can be stated as that character education would be successful if it is conducted through a plan, and the implementation based on the understanding of benevolent values, attitudes, and behaviors (Katilmis, Eksi, & Ozturk, 2011). In other words, character education is the efforts conducted systematically and simultaneously by teachers in order to increase the character value quality of students using integrated learning system.

In the past few years, the government has socialized character education to schools in the country, and most schools claimed that it has been implemented. There have never been any evaluations regarding the effectiveness in the field. The government itself seemed to be lacking in seriousness, because it launched the program without any mentoring activities as support. The education staffs (headmasters and teachers) are left alone to develop the character education according to their understanding. This causes each school to use different methods, and even in the same school, each teacher has their own way of implementation. The symptoms, according to Adnyana (2011), showed that the character education program has not been conducted seriously by the Ministry of Education, as the center of education facilitation in Indonesia.

The number of problems need a serious effort from various sides related to it in order to implement the ideal character education program properly. Several schools have proceeded by conducting character education training, but even when they are already being proactive, there is no direct supervision from the Ministry of Education as the coordinator, making each school implementing their own concept of character education and character values. This caused the information flow to be haphazard, causing the character education program to be implemented, but using inaccurate and unguided methods and values.

This study focused the analysis on two educational subjects, which were civics (Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan or PKn) and Islamic Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam or PAI) on two different background elementary school, which were Islamic Elementary School and Government Elementary School, accredited A, B, and C. Different backgrounds were used in hopes that the data collected will be varied in nature, so the researcher would have a good picture regarding the implementation of character education on all kinds of schools. The two educational subjects were chosen because of the assumption that both are orientated in the growth of morale and the development of character values, so the researcher assumed that character education has been implemented through the two subjects. The main issue of this study was how the character education has been implemented and the role of academic staffs and the students in the matter. Different background elementary schools were used in order to collect a concept image regarding character education from various backgrounds, having enough information to see the development pattern of the character education model that has been implemented in the schools so far.

In general, the goal of this study was to identify the problems related to the implementation of character education in elementary schools. The problems were focused on these information: whether the headmasters and teachers have understood the concept and goal of character education, what problem are there in the implementation, and the role of the three basic elements, which were the school character, staff character, and student character in supporting the success of character education.

Method

Based on the type of data used and the goal, this study used qualitative approach (Yardley & Bishop, 2008). Data collection was conducted using in-depth interviews (Wegner & Fabrigar, 2004). Based on the goals, interviews was developed based on these components: 1) the understanding of concept and the goal of character education; 2) the problems of the implementation of character education; and 3) the synergy of roles of the three basic elements (the aim, the staff development, and the character of students) in supporting character education.

The study subjects were teachers of PKn and PAI in the elementary schools of the city Solo. They taught in different background elementary schools, referring to

Table 1
Study Subjects

School	Subject	Accreditation		
		A	B	C
Islamic	PAI	NN, male, 36 years old	M, female, 28 years old	SW, female, 24 years old
	PKn	RS, female, 35 years old	BN, female, 35 years old	JK, male, 49 years old
Government	PAI	SS, female, 28 years old	AB, male, 30 years old	ST, female, 34 years old
	PKn	W, male, 45 years old	LA, male, 42 years old	TK, female, 27 years old

Islamic Elementary Schools and Government Elementary Schools, having the accreditation of A, B, and C.

Study subjects/informants were chosen purposively based on the variation of the data types, subjects with different backgrounds were hoped to be able to give different information, different point-of-view, and attitude in order to enrich the collected data. First step was by identifying the types of elementary schools in Solo. Second step was by classifying the types of school in six groups, which were groups of Islamic and Government Elementary Schools that were accredited A, B, and C. Third step was to contact the related institutions in order to gain access. Last step was to collect the data in the selected schools.

The data analysis technique used was the descriptive technique, which was explaining or picturing the collected data as it was, without making any general conclusion. The researcher made the image of views, attitudes, and conditions of the respondents based on their answers in the questionnaire and interview.

Results and Discussion

In accordance to the goal and the problem focus of the study, the three main findings were regarding: the teachers' understanding of the character education, the problems regarding the implementation of character education, and the role of the three main elements supporting the success of character education.

Teachers' Understanding of Character Education

Character education program for students is a benevolent goal, planned by the government. At first, academics and practitioners discussed it in their light conversations, small discussions, classroom explanations, and in seminars. In a relatively short time, it is well known throughout the country. If a teacher is chosen at random and asked if he/she has ever heard of character education, the answer would always be "yes", and if questioned specifically regarding the goal of character education, the teacher would easily explain it as to better the nation's morale. This means that as a program endorsed by the government, the Ministry of Education in particular, the character education program has been socialized; successfully.

In the applicative context, the ideally designed program has not been understood completely by teachers and headmasters. The ideal goal encountered various problems in the field. Teachers as the direct force behind the character education have not fully understood and developed the concepts of character education into the curriculum that is supposed to be applicable in their teaching methods.

> "Character education is the study of morale, ethic in order to increase the morale quality of children, but it is hard to practice it in the school." (NN/PAI/P/15)

> "Character education was conducted by giving advices, examples of currently wide spread discussions of events, straightening the wrong attitudes of children, being adamant and disciplined in studies." (TK/PKn/P/41)

Data showed that respondents understand the final goal of character education, but they do not fully understand what and how character education is. The respondents understood character education as the same as ethic education, teachers giving advices based on common cases and stories prepared specifically to be conveyed to the students (Sanchez & Stewart, 2006). So far, they believed that their understanding is correct because it is only based on the assumption that character education is the same as giving advices inside the typical learning process. A small number of them realize that what they have been doing is incorrect, but they do not know how it was supposed to be implemented. This is further addressed by Kesuma, Triatna, and Permana (2011), who stated that most people have a misconception regarding character education in that they know of the goal but they understand it incorrectly. These misconceptions were, such as: 1) character education is identical to PKn and PAI, so character education is the responsibility of PKn and PAI teachers only; 2) character education is the same as ethic education, so character education is identical to giving advices; 3)

character education is the same with morale education that is the responsibility of the family, not the school, therefore the parents must have the central role in educating their children; and 4) character education is a new educational subject that is unrelated to the other subjects, therefore must be conveyed differently from the formal educational subjects.

Implementation Problems of Character Education

Based on the imperfect understanding teachers have regarding the concept and goal of character education, they conduct the application of the concept incorrectly. Each teacher translates the concept of character education based on what they know, without referring to authentic sources (such as the Ministry of Education) that supports their learning. Based on this fact, the researcher found several problems such as:

> "Before implementing character education, starting by first reading the goal of the learning and the topic that is being taught, then choosing which character that is appropriate with the topic at hand. Then we insert character education into the learning process." (M/PAI/W/36)

> "The methods that I use are by making a habit for the students to greet and greet in return; knock on the door to show respect; ceremonies for patriotism; keeping their hair shot for the boys and having prayers together." (SS/PAI/W/64)

> "Directs examples, teachers should set good examples for the students, teachers must be a good model for the students, making a habit of it in their daily lives, and by systematic efforts such as inserting it inside the learning goals." (RS/PKn/W/26)

> "Through the educational subjects that I teach (PKn and Javanese Language) and by doing observation outside the teaching hours; through role-modeling; habituation; stories about good children." (BN/PKn/W/42)

Teachers understand that there are several methods for implementing character education, such as the story-telling method, the recent cases method, and the giving advices method. Unfortunately these methods are just inserted in the middle of the learning process, without detailed understanding about the timing and length of the implementation. In the findings, the methods developed from the affective domain were separated from the learning process at school which was based on the cognitive domain. Most teachers only focus on cognitive learning, while affective learning was left to the teachers who teach subjects like PKn, PAI, and Guidance and Counseling (Bimbingan dan Konseling or BK). Meanwhile, teachers of PKn, PAI, and BK who were relied on by the other teachers to 'teach' character education continue to focus their teachings to the formal curriculum, and if they touch the affective aspects, it was done without proper planning (not integrated into the curriculum). Kesuma et al. (2011) stated that if it is related to the schemas of cognitive, affective, and conation, character education (read: ethic education, morale education) that has been taught so far was identical to affective education, which was separated from the cognitive education.

Learning that focuses on the cognitive aspect is the highlight of the current educational system, showing that character education is not the first priority, compared to educational models in developed countries that has character education in elementary schools as the main study, where children are introduced to good characteristics first before knowing science (Skaggs & Bodenhorn, 2006). Character education should have more attention and better priority than formal learning. Teachers should teach children about positive characters first before moving on to formal knowledge learning. There was also no proper evaluation on the affective context, positioning character education as just an interlude in a learning process that is mainly cognitive in context.

According to Kesuma et al. (2011) the affective and cognitive domains intersect into each other as shown in Figure 1.

The three areas form an integration that completes each other. Character education can not only be taught in the affective domain, but must also be understood in concept, goal, and benefits (cognitive), and more impor-

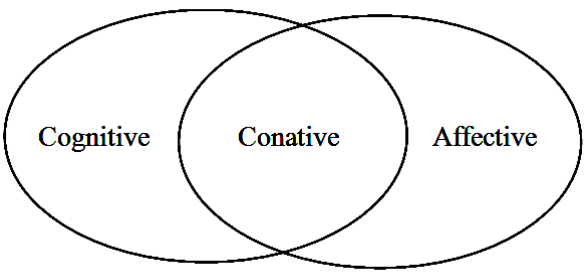

Figure 1. The intersect of the cognitive and affective domains in character education (Kesuma, D., Triatna, C., & Permana, J. (2011). Pendidikan karakter: kajian teori dan praktik di sekolah. Bandung: PT Remaja Rosda Karya.

tantly, how the learned and felt values can be implemented (conative) in everyday life. Ryan (1993) stated that character education help students to understand values (cognitive), love good values (affective), and implement the values (conative).

Related to the learned values, respondents have various opinions as follows:

> "Values are taken from four sources of character values: religion, Pancasila, culture, and national educational goals" (ST/PAI/W/74)

> "Good role model, using certain incidents, stories from the Qur'an and Hadits" (M/PAI/W/89)

> "From the values of religion and ethical culture" (JK/PKn/P/64)

> "Religious values by showing the creations of God, independence and responsibility, and honesty; also answering honestly in tasked /workbook/LKS." (LA/PKn/P/109)

> "Taught values: honesty, patience, determination, dicipline, diligence, humility, independence, tolerance, respect of others, responsibility, and friendship." (NN/PAI/P/121)

Character values taught by the teachers were not planned systematically and were still sporadic in nature. The chosen values depend on the mood of the teachers and the current situation, not based on accurate sources such as the Ministry of Education or other references. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education has focused on twelve main values in character education on elementary school students (Said, 2011), which are: obedience to God, tolerance, discipline, self-respect, responsibility, self-potential, love, sense of belonging, friendship, respect to each other, ethic and morale, and honesty. These values are supposed to be socialized by the Ministry of Education already and understood (theoretically and practically) by the teachers, so they are able to focus on the exploring of character values based on the main values.

Evaluation is an important part in measuring the success of character education, according to Leming (as cited in Fenstermacher, 1999), a lot of schools that have implemented character education have not been evaluated formally in order to measure the effect of character education.

> "Not doing evaluation, only observing the children's behavior change." (JK/PKn/P/98)

> "Not doing evaluation because every educational subject demands good behavior, no specific grading" (SW/PAI/W/111)

> "Occasionally doing evaluation, usually on particular materials" (W/PKn/P/72)

> "Haven't done any routine evaluation, only following the materials" (AB/PAI/P/122)

> "Only evaluating the educational subject, but not the character" (LA/PKn/P/128)

> "Evaluating by observing the behavior change of the students" (BN/PKn/W/144);

> "Using student workbooks to train honesty." (M/PAI/W/130)

> "Everytime a material is finished, asking the children to evaluate their understanding about the conveyed character values" (NN/PAI/P/216)

> "I evaluate, because the educational subjects I teach do not just measure cognitive aspects but also affective and psychomotor aspects, as well, in order that students can become good citizens in accordance to the levels of development." (W/PKn/P/154)

In this study, most respondents stated that they did not evaluate the character values that are being taught. They confessed to not understanding whether character education need to be evaluated, and how to evaluate. Several respondents stated that they evaluated by using qualitative approach, measuring it by how much the students are interested in the conveyed matter, the increase or decrease in the cases at hand, and whether the trouble makers are better in behavior, but these evaluations are not written formally and just noted based on observation. According to Fenstermacher (1999), this model of evaluation was conducted by teachers in the past, but has developed by using various measuring methods, such as: doing observation on the learning process in class by using a video recorder, giving case studies to the students in order to measure the development of their logic and their problem solving abilities, using checklist to analyse the behavior of each student and the progress of their character development from time to time.

Aside from the qualitative measurement, quantitative measurement should be conducted as well, using various methods, for example by using the pre-treatment-post

model. As conducted by The Weber Country Character Education Project in Utah, they conducted the evaluation by using the SMILE model that measures responsibility, care, and how to be a good citizen. SMILE consists of: Stimulating interest about a value, Modeling the value, Integrating the student prior knowledge to emphasize the value, Linking parents and homework assignment, and Extending the values to real-life experiences (Weed, 1993). Evaluation was done for around two years on two groups (experiment and control group). Results showed that the problematic behaviors have decreased significantly on the experiment group, while in the control group, the problematic behaviors increased.

The Role of Three Basic Elements

The three basic elements are: school character, school staff (headmasters, teachers, staffs), and student character.

First is the school character. Aside from the understanding of the concept and goal, teachers are also demanded to understand the methods of character education. In reality, the schools have not understood the implementation of character education in the learning process, and there are no serious efforts to overcome it. School visions are supposed to be the blue print of the learning process, but become only slogans without realizations.

> "Character education practice is fully left to each teacher, without any guidance or detailed program in the implementation." (SW/PAI/W/196)

> "School does not give enough attention to character education, because character education already exists in PKn and PAI" (AB/PAI/P/206)

So far, most of the population and teachers understand character education as related to only two educational subjects, which are Religion Education and Civics. This makes them hope that the two subjects are able to function as the media to increase morale and control the students' behavior. This is different from topic of every subject (Samani & Hariyanto, 2012). Halstead & Taylor (2000) stated that character education will not succeed if it is just focused on one or two educational subjects, and it has to be implemented simultaneously and inspire or be the sole of every educational subject.

Second is the staff. It is impossible for the values to be taught if it is done partially, which means that the students are demanded to have quality characters while the staffs, teachers, and headmasters are not demanded the same in increasing their character quality. Several of the respondents have contradictive behavior, such as teaching the dangers of smoking and banning smoking on the students while doing the act of smoking themself. Several other teachers ban their students from taking their mobile phones to school while sending short messages (sms) during their teaching hours.

> "When I teach, sometimes I still smoke. I give students tasks to do, but I smoke outside the room." (LA/PKn/P/245)

> "I bring my mobile phone into the class; if there's any sms, I open it in case it is important." (ST/PAI/W/216)

> "For *ch*aracter education, I do not do any special preparation, just doing it spontaneously." (BN/PKn/W/175)

Aside from not understanding how to teach values, they are also reluctant in increasing their own quality, especially respondents that are close to their retirement. They are stagnant in their self-improvement, being professionally stuck. There is no innovation and idealism, and ironically their 'laziness' is often contributed to their income (Suyanto & Hisyam, 2000). People say '*ono rego ono rupo*' which means that if the received income is not big, then why bother to give more. In short, if the headmasters, teachers, and staffs want the students' character values to increase, they have to start it first. Several other respondents show their preparation, even though it is still not as expected by the Ministry of Education.

> "Preparing contextual strategy by relating the materials in PKn with daily events, for example the village and district government." (NN/PAI/P/252)

> "Preparing learning implementation plan/*rencana pelaksanaan pembelajaran* (RPP) that consists of character education: checking the student's tidiness (dicipline), homework (responsibility) and practice assisting tools that support character education." (AB/PAI/W/159)

> "Reading beforehand the goal of the study and materials that will be taught, then choosing which character fits the materials or will be practiced by the student. Then, inserting the character education of said character in the learning process." (W/PKn/P/189)

Third is the student character that also supports the success of character education. Students that have strong character support the speed of the character education's success, while students with weak character make teachers work extra hard to teach them. Students with weak characters can be taught better by good educational management. But the reality is different, as teachers think that the weak character of students were a factor in blocking the success of character education.

> "Students are not aware enough and family environments lack attention and caring." (LA/PKn/P/304)
> "Hindrance from children and parents that are busy working." (TK/PKn/W/119)

> "The lack of support from the students' families, different student abilities, personal traits that are hard to change." (SW/PAI/W/256)

> "The lack of collaboration between school and parents who mostly work as factory workers, leaving the house at morning and returning at night." (NN/PAI/P/318)

Based on the responses, it is obvious that the respondents tend to have an external locus of control, where they believe that the problems in the practice of character education is caused by outside factors. As stated by the respondents, teachers believe that the problem of character education lies in the student character, despite the fact that character education has a goal of increasing student character itself, meaning that weak student character is a reality and it is the task of the teachers to increase the character quality (Edgington, 2002). Even though the educating task is a common responsibility of parents, teachers, and the community, teachers should not use the weak student character as a reason to justify the difficulty of character education. This is because there are other factors with important contribution, such as: the quality of the teachers, the collaboration between the school and parents, school management, and the education system.

Brooks & Cole (cited in Elmubarok, 2009) stated that there are three important components in the success of the implementation of character education, which are: 1) schools must be considered as an integrated environment that do not just conduct character education only for the students, but also for the teachers, headmasters, staffs, parents, and even the close community; 2) in implementing the character values, it is better that the value teaching is related to the school system as a whole and taught integrated in the curriculum, supported by the whole component of the school and parents; 3) students must be stimulated in order to enable them to translate the concepts of values in their everyday behavior, or be able to practice the values in their everyday lives.

Character Education and School Background

Different backgrounds result in different point-of-views in understanding character education. Character values that are taught in PKn and PAI on Islamic schools and character values taught in PKn on Goverment schools refer to the values in Islam, written in the al-Qur'an and Sunnah, and the values of nationalism based on the nation's constitution/*UUD '45* and the state's philosophy/*Pancasila.*

> "Based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, the living examples of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, and community norms." (NN/PAI/P/114) (Islamic Elementary School PAI teacher response)

> "Based on the Qur'an and Hadits." (RS/PAI/W/114) (Islamic Elementary School PKn teacher response)

> "Main source is from Islam, but also synchronized with the character values in PKn." (AB/PAI/P/77) (Government Elementary School PKn teacher response)

> "From the practice of Pancasila values and implementation in everyday lives." (TK/PKn/W/137)

> "Based on the results of listening to the official/government guidance and training." (LA/PKn/P/89) (Goverment Elementary School PKn teacher response)

The type of accreditation also affects the methods of character education. Teachers that originated from schools with A accreditation have better understanding and methods compared to teachers from schools with B or C accreditation, while the understanding and methods of teachers from the schools with B and C accreditation do not show any significant difference.

Conclusion

Teachers have understood the main goal of character development but they have not fully understood the concept of character education as programmed by the Ministry of National Education (the now Ministery of Education and Culture). So far, character education was considered to be similar with the ethic education taught to the students by using advices and stories conveyed by the teachers to the students in a top-down manner.

Teachers have not understood the methods to implement character education. Several of the teachers stated that they have implemented character education but without integration, as they implement it at the start of the learning process as advices, in the middle as case analysis, or at the end as messages. The implemented character values have not referred to the twelve character values that have been set by the Ministry of Education, which are: obedience to God, tolerance, discipline, self-respect, responsibility, self-potential, love, sense of belonging, friendship, respect to each other, ethic and morale, and honesty Respondents that have implemented character education have not evaluated the implemented character education, so they are unable to measure the effectiveness.

Character education is still focused on the students, meaning that students are just objects of character education. Teachers and school staffs do not consider their own character quality to be insufficient, despite the fact that character education will not succeed without support from the three elements, especially the teachers that directly act as the model for students' behavior change.

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