

Research Article

Character Education through Good Harmony Activities in School

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Abstract: National character education has been a main need for Indonesians, various methods have been attempted to build and strengthen national character, mainly students' character, and particularly elementary students' character as character building during elementary stage has to be implanted for a well-set character. The process of students' character building in elementary school is a responsibility of all school elements, especially teachers, school principal and education staff. The result shows the school has attempted to implement character building through good harmony activities in school. The good harmony activities are applied through pre-learning activities, learning process, co- and extracurricular, and also break and free time. Those activities are conformable to experts' notion such as Koetjaraningrat (1978) with indigenization in education, Purkey (1990) with good harmony activities in every piece of education and Budimansyah (2012) with strengthening character through student's various activities.

Keywords: Character Education, Student's good harmony in school, Elementary stage

INTRODUCTION

National character education has been a main need for Indonesians. The issue of National character education has citizens draw attention through newspaper, dialogue, speech and interview in electronic media. The attention affects to various aspects of life such as corruption found excessive in electronic media, sexual abuse, crime, vandalism, street brawl among students, consumptive way of life, unproductive politics, etc.

An alternative offered by scientific activity's result, whether it is local seminar or international seminar is education. Education is believed as an alternative which is preventive since education develops a new better generation. Although the effect of education can not be seen instantly in a short period of time; it is durable and has a strong impact to society.

As a preventive alternative, education is expected to develop the quality of youth in various aspects which is able to decrease the cause of social problems.

Education is a cornerstone of youth character building which is capable of strengthening nationality. Advanced education that can build the character foundation is elementary school. The purpose of establishing elementary school is to prepare learners for a higher stage education (junior high school) by providing them skills of reading, writing and numeracy; and also knowledge and basic skills that are found beneficial related to their stage of development. In addition, another point is to adjust attitude, value, norm, or character which is appropriate to manners and culture in society.

Character building in school is able to be applied through various activities such as learning activities, co- and extracurricular and good harmony activities in school. Taruna Papua Elementary Boarding School manages children of Amungme and Kamoro tribes in Timika.

Thus, the research aims to:

- a. Identify types of good harmony activity applied by learners in school.
- b. Identify teacher's method in developing learners' affective potencies as human and social creature which hold national value and character through good harmony activities in school.
- c. Identify role of school in encouraging learners' good harmony activities in school.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Character

Tilaar (2008) defines 'characters' as disposition, i.e., a nature of trademark of a person, community or a nation that is recognisable. Meanwhile, Budimansyah (2012) states that character is a relatively stable personal nature of an individual which becomes the basis for his/her standard behaviour corresponds to social values and norms. The term 'Personal nature' can be defined as personal characteristics which manifested in behaviour. Moreover, the term 'Relatively stable' is formed and established conditions that will not be easily changed. Character is the basis that dominantly influences standard behaviours—either personal, filial or communal—in many areas of life such as economics, culture/art, religion, science and technology, law, politics, defence and security, and global life. The standard behaviours are reflected in everyday life. These behaviours are deeply influenced by rules of religion, science and technology, law, customs and habits are reflected in everyday life.

Therefore, a well-built character is highly desirable; that is a life that follows the straight path with the rules and in

accordance with the human nature oriented to truth and nobility (Prayitno and Khaidir, 2011).

In the context of Indonesia, however, there is a similarity of meaning among the concept of characters such as moral, ethical, *akhlak*, and manners. To take a case in point, there is a strong bond between character and morality, which is inseparable. Character is a person's attitude and habits that leads to moral action (Corley and Philips, 2000). In other words, character is the moral quality of a person. If a person has good morality, then the person will have a good character embodied in his/her attitudes and behaviour in everyday life.

In addition, Bertens (2004) affirms that ethics and morality have the same meaning even though come from different languages. Ethics derives from Greek "ethos" which means custom, tradition character, attitude or way of thinking, whereas morality derives from Latin of "mores", which also means custom or tradition.

There is also *Akhlak* in Indonesian, which is an Arabic term of *khuluk* that means nature, behaviour or custom (Darajat, 1990). As a matter of fact, the term *Akhlak*, is defined by several scholars as the following.

- 1) Ibn Maskawayh: *Akhlak* is the condition of one's soul that encourages him/her to do deeds with or without consideration and weighing.
- 2) Al Ghazali: *Akhlak* is the nature embedded in one's soul from which arises deeds without requiring consideration.
- 3) Abu Bakr Jabir Al Jazairy: *Ahlak* is a form of psychic embedded in human's soul, which gives rise to good and evil deeds.
- 4) Ibrahim Anis: *Akhlak* is a trait embedded in the soul from which arises unconscious good or evil deeds.

Furthermore, manners contain several meanings, namely (1) an inner mind that guides reason and feeling to weigh good and evil; (2) behaviour, *akhlak*, disposition; (3) good deeds; (4) efforts; (5) sense (Dictionary of Bahasa Indonesia, 2002)

Based on the similarity of meaning explained above, it can be said that efforts to build students character are synonymous with efforts to foster ethics, morality, *akhlak*, and manners.

Character Education in Macro Context

Within this context, character building can be divided into three stages: namely planning, implementation and evaluation (Grand Design of Character Education (Dasim, 2012)). In planning stage, character traits are developed, crystallised and formulated using various sources, i.e., (1) philosophical considerations, namely religion, Pancasila, Constitution and Act number 20 Year 2003 on National Education System and its derivative legislations; (2) theoretical considerations, namely theories of the brain, psychology, education, values and morality as well as social-cultural; and (3) empirical considerations, in the form of experience and best practices among the respected public figures, education units, *pesantren* (religious schools), cultural groups and so forth.

In implementation stage, learning process and experience that lead to students' character building are developed. This process is carried out through empowerment and expose to culture as mandated in the principles of the implementation of national education. This process takes place in the three pillars of education in school, family and society. Within each pillar of education there are two types of learning process built through two approaches: intervention and reinforcement. In intervention approach, the school units develop conducive atmosphere of teaching and learning process to achieve the goal of character building by deliberately implementing structured activities. In order for this process to succeed, teacher, as the role model, is very an important and decisive factor. Meanwhile, in reinforcement approach, a conducive situation and condition are developed in student's school, home and society to reinforce them to behaving accordingly. This behaviour is then internalised and personalised from and through the process of intervention. The process of empowerment and exposure to culture include giving examples, education, habituation, and reinforcement.

Character education in a micro context

In this context, character building takes place in the context of education units holistically. Educational units, as a leading sector, strive to utilise and empower all existing learning environments to initiate, improve, strengthen and refine character education process in educational units continuously.

Character building in this context can be divided into four pillars, namely teaching/learning activities, co-curricular and extracurricular activities, daily activities in the form of positive reinforcement of habits and culture in school as well as daily activities in the family and community.

Daily activities in education units that are implemented in the form of positive reinforcement. It is necessary to facilitate these reinforcement in school units to develop a culture of autonomy as conceived in school-based management. Hence, each unit of education is gradually and systemically developed into a dynamic and advanced unit (Purkey, 1990)

RESEARCH METHOD

Data collection technique

Data collection is done through the following research steps:

- 1) Planning the observation and negotiation activities to determine the timing of the implementation of the interview and observation activities related to the activities of students in carrying out good habituation activities conducted at school
- 2) Conduct interviews with school stakeholders and observation of student activities while in school in implementing good habits at school
- 3) Discussing the results of the observations with the stakeholders in the school to find out the relevance.
- 4) Make a final note to compile the report.

Data analysis technique

After the data collected then performed data analysis that includes the selection, simplification, abstraction and transformation of field note results. This process takes place by creating a summary, theme drawing, data grouping, and research report writing

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Activity "good student habituation at school" gives strengthening to student character grouped in:

- 1) Positive Reinforcement Activities in School: Pre-learning
 - a. Welcoming Students by the on-duty/on-shift Teacher and Head Teacher

This kind of activity needs to be reinforced given that most on-duty/on-shift teacher and head teacher occasionally welcome students at school. The positive outcome results from this reinforcement activity is that the students will feel the warmth and attention similar to when they are welcomed by their parents as well as older friends. As if welcomed and greeted at home by their parents and older siblings, this activity will affect positively on the students' emotional development. This is in line with (Goleman, cited in Ratna Megawangi, 2004) that family plays an important role in character building of children, but the children's social maturity is strongly influenced by the school environment from an early age to adolescence. School is a strategic place to build students' character because students from all walks of life are in school. In addition, students spend most of their time at school, hence, what they get in school will affect their character building. This is based on Goleman's observations that even though many parents fail to educate their children at home, this failure can be corrected by providing character education to children at school, especially from an early age.

- b. Morning Ceremony

Morning Ceremony, among others, is a positive reinforcement necessary to build students' character. This activity accustoms students and will instil in them the habit of discipline, responsibility and courage.

- c. Learning Hours

Learning hours can be used routinely by teacher to do various activities that strengthen the character building of students such as collective prayer, reminding students of homework and tasks, checking homework, checking students' points earned that day and giving rewards and punishments. This activity can be a positive reinforcement activity to do to build students' character of discipline, responsibility, confidence and cooperation.

At the beginning of the class, teachers are encouraged to lead the class to sing the national anthem of Indonesia, Indonesian Raya, to foster a sense of nationalism. Moreover, at the end of the class, teachers are encouraged to lead the class to sing one of the regional or compulsory-known national songs.

The singing of the national anthem is in line with the decree of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 21 Year 2015 on Strengthening Character Education. The decree states that the school should build students' character through numerous efforts. One of the efforts is singing the national anthem every day at the beginning of the class. Besides, the students are also encouraged to sing everyday songs or patriotic songs at the end of the lesson. (Syarif Oebadillah.mediaindonesia.com,15 July 2015). Furthermore, the Director General of Teachers and Education Personnel of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia asserted that the government will warn the schools that do not conform to the decree. In addition, schools are also suggested to do other positive activities such as *silaturahmi* in the form of attending the relatives who experienced disaster or misfortune.

- 2) Positive Reinforcement Activities in School: Learning Process

- a. Hand Signal

Hand signal is one of positive reinforcement activities that has been proven by several research findings. Teachers are suggested to encourage student to use finger symbols in their activities. Aside from using fingers in every day are such as for writing, holding, scratching, grasping; it can also be used as a symbol. This is conducted in a boarding school of Taruna Papua. Symbol of number one, by the use of only index finger, indicates the student wants to convey something to the teacher, the number two or the letter "V", by showing the index finger and middle finger, indicates that the student asks permission to go to the toilet. Moreover, the number three, or three of the index, middle finger, and ring finger, is agreed to means that the students ask teachers' permission to drink.

The importance of gesture is corroborated by Daniel Mashuri's opinion (compasina.com) about the gesture of the index finger that is meant to command or point a direction such as front, side, up or anywhere else. Furthermore, two fingers forming the "V" means "peace". This two-finger gesture was originally introduced by the United States President Richard Nixon and Winston Churchill (Daniel in compasiana.com) to declare victory, which later means a peaceful meaning.

- b. Class Contract

Class contracts is a student activity, which is guided by a teacher, at the beginning of the lesson year to plan the activities within year. This activity is a positive reinforcement conducted by the students at school and should be organised and pre-programmed. As stated by Handoko (in <http://achmad sudrajat/2009/10/15>) a plan is generally not ready for implementation. In order to implement the plan, it needs elaboration so that it becomes more operational. This process is called programming and the result is called the program. Some of the requirements to make plan include (1) the aim of the plan must be clear, (2) the activities and sequence of implementation should be clear, (3) it should be simple in

content and practical to implement, (4) it should be flexible to implement according to students' needs, and 5) the sources to implement the plan should be available. This idea is in line with Sugiono (2004: 85) who states that planning is one of the most important steps in the process of preparing a set of decisions about the actions to take at a certain time and on how to implement them to collective goals.

3) Positive Reinforcement Activities in School: During Break Time

a. Strengthening sense of nationalism

One of positive reinforcement activities essential for students' character building during break time is strengthen their sense of nationalism. According to some research studies, this sense of nationalism can be strengthened by the singing of national songs through school speakers. The on-duty/on-shift teacher is responsible to play the national songs while teacher responsible for character building is to provide the text of the songs with a frame. The frames, then, are made in a way to attract the students and hanged in the class wall for students to read. When on a break, they read and follow the tune of the song or imitate the song being played. With frequent listening to the mandatory songs, the students are expected to memorised and understand the lyrics of the songs.

b. Providing Exemplary Character

Character building is related to the quality of teachers as a role model. It is necessary the heads of school have a standard to guide teachers to be good role model or the exemplary to the students. The standard should emphasise on high commitment of teachers to strengthen the character of students.

The teachers should be aware that the students will most likely imitate them. To take a case in point, when a teacher is carrying a bottle of drinking water, a student may ask, "How many glasses of water have you drunk until this hour?" (At 13.00). The teacher gave the answer, "I drunk already six glasses". Then the student commented, "Wow, Sir, you drank more glass than me". By analysing the transcription of the conversation, it is indicated that what the teacher did and how he answered the student is important. This is essential in instilling a good habit of drinking. In science class, teacher always explains that every day, people should drink at least 8 glasses of water. This habit is strengthened at school by preparing mineral water supply in gallons at every class and school officers are always monitoring the water supply in the gallons.

Another exemplary habit that needs to be presented in this section is reading habit. This habit can be strengthened by providing a role model. One of the possible ways of doing this is to have the on-duty/on-shift teachers read books. Considering that the on-duty/on-shift teachers are always in the front desk, which is quite a strategic position that can be seen by the students when out of class. Therefore, the students will see and imitate this habit.

c. Building Character through "Four Magic Words"

Taruna Papua boarding school in Timika symbolises speech through four magic words namely "Sorry", "Please", "Thank you" and "Excuse me". Positive reinforcement of the use of good words should always be implemented by all units of the school, whether the head of school, teacher councils, employees including security guards and cleaning service as well as students.

As claimed by some teachers, the application of these magic words was initially difficult considering they were very strong in maintaining the mother tongue or dialectic of each tribe. However, through hard work and sense of togetherness of all stakeholders in Taruna Papua boarding school, with the mission of building the character of students through positive reinforcement activities, then, the constraints can be overcome. The result is evident when the researcher is interviewing one of the teachers and happens to be in a somewhat impeded position. Every student who passes the path said the word "excuse me", which indicates that the positive reinforcement take effect.

4) Positive Reinforcement Activities at School: through Extracurricular

a. Scouting

Scouting is one of extracurricular activities that is loaded with character building. Scouting is full of positive reinforcement activities that students can do to build good character, such as tidiness, honesty, cooperation, empathy, caring for each other and environment, discipline, tolerance, meticulous, skilful, confidence, courage, responsibility and many more. Besides, scouting activities, according to Budimansyah (2012: 90-91) are loaded with character building. Some of the activities are (1) studying history of scouting, which will build a character of democratic citizen that accentuates reason and common sense, and law awareness; (2) camping, which builds character of cooperation and prioritises common interests as well as compliance with rules and customs; (3) games, which builds a character of democratic citizens and sportive competing spirit and obedience to law; (4) learning traffic regulations, which will build the character of democratic citizen who maintains the safety of self and others and well-mannered traffic awareness; (5) exploration in the wild, which will increase self-reliance as well as teamwork; and (6) hiking, which will builds character of solidarity, togetherness, discipline, and self-control.

b. Spiritual Activity

In accordance with the vision, mission and objectives of the school that is to prioritise the sensitivity of students to pray, the school strives to optimally facilitate spiritual activities. Among all components of the school, teachers are given a large portion to support these activities

c. Green House

To stimulate student environmental concerns, then school chooses one of teachers who are responsible to this activity, called as Teacher of environment subject (PLH).

A structural implementation of environmental-concern activity provides green house as implantation laboratorium of various plant's species. Every class does experiment based on level of knowledge and species of plant then every group in the class periodically observe and record the development of the specimen. In addition, the teacher also utilizes the rest of area to cultivate several plants such as yam (sweet potato), *betatas* (Papua sweet potato) and corn.

Good harmony activity in school: Strengthening local and culture by shaking hands "kooor"

Shaking hands with a unique way among Papua's highlanders is found unusual. They, the highlanders, attempt 'kooor' shake hands by clamping their middle fingers. When one finger pulls while the other clamps, it produces unusual sound. It is a form of unexpected good harmony activity but applied mostly by male students. This form of harmony is related to Amongme and Kamoro tribes' pattern of hamony, and also other tribes around *Baliem/Wamena* valley. In relation, Koentjaraningrat (1978) also conveys about social culture that depicts an appreciation of value developing in society in each era.

Related to social value, nowadays the process of indigenization has been developed. Indigenization can be understood as utilizing local culture to be learning that aims to juxtapose learning subjects with environment for valuable result to develop nationality concern.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

From the analysis and result of the research, it can be concluded that:

1. The school, the object of the research, has established various activities which are formed as good harmony applied by students in school through pre-learning activity, learning class activity, extracurricular activity and break-time activity.
2. Every teacher has attempted to develop students' affective potencies of humanity and nationality through good harmony in school which further becomes "culture of school"
3. The school's supportive role showed it was cooperative to the activity by representing good manners to students and accommodating tools and materials during the activity.

Recommendation

1. Taruna Papua Boarding School for children of Amongme and Kamoro tribe has significant potency to develop students' character education. All school staffs have attempted seriously as their main tasks and function (tupoksi). However, in order to strengthen the meaning of value for students, School is immediately supposed to implement good harmony activities based on *Permendikbud* No 21 (2015).
2. The research's result shows only scientific review related to good harmony activities in school while the readers are

able to lead similar research in different focal point such as: positive effect of students' good harmony activities in school, the impact of the activity to learning achievement (out come) and also how supportive family and society in accommodating this activity are.

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