

SCHOOL CULTURAL AS THE MAIN PILLAR OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT: Facing the era of globalization, character education gets serious attention in Indonesia. However, studies show that character education has not been effective yet, so the Government of Indonesia issues the Presidential Regulation No. 87/2017 on Strengthening Character Education. However a research conducted by MOEC found 10 schools have successfully developed character education based on the values of Pancasila philosophy combined with local wisdom.

The purpose of this research was to find the main pillar of successful character education, especially in elementary schools. The research used qualitative research methods with multi sites in the three primary schools mentioned in the MOEC study. Data were collected through a series of observations and in-depth interviews from January to May 2017. Data analyzed simultaneously through data condensation, data display and conclusion.

The research found school culture was the main pillar of character education success. When school culture was built on the basis of the values that are believed to be good, then the school leaders, teachers and other school staffs will behave daily according to the culture. Then students will imitate their behavior and that means behaving in accordance with the values of the characters developed. It confirmed that everyone has a tendency to adapt to his environment.

Key words: character education, school culture

INTRODUCTION

Facing the era of globalization, character education gets serious attention in Indonesia. However, studies show that character education has not been effective yet (Samani, Daryono, Ratnadewi, 2017), so the Government issues the Presidential Regulation No. 87/2017 on Strengthening Character Education.

Basically character is formed from the interaction between the nature of a person with the environment in which he/she stays for a long time (Lapsley, 2008; Soedarsono, 2009). Assuming that the nature can not be changed, then the environment where he/she lives is a key factor in character formation (Lexmond & Reeves, 2009; Samani & Haryanto, 2012)

Character is formed in a long time and have been started since childhood (Schulman & Mekler, 1994). In the process of character formation, children are more likely to imitate the behavior of adults around them or

characters of whom become his/her idol. Therefore modeling is the most importance in character education (Lickona, 1992; Latif, 2014; Mak, 2014).

Because character formation takes a long time and needs consistency, so some studies show that successful schools in carrying out character education are schools which based on religion or certain beliefs, because the values of characters developed are associated with that religion or belief (Kemdikbud, 2010; Samani & Haryanto, 2012)

In primary school-aged children who do not yet have the ability to understand the concept of character values, character building will be effective if it begins with habituation so that behavior becomes habit. Then step by step, the habituation is enriched with the understanding of why it must be done, so it becomes the process of enculturation and the habit converts into culture showed in everyday activities (Schulman & Mekler, 1994; Sudrajat, 2011). Such patterns are also often applied to society in general.

Although in general character education has not run effectively, a research conducted by MOEC found 10 schools that successfully developed character education based on the values of Pancasila philosophy combined with local wisdom (Kemdikbud, 2010; Samani, Warson, Rahayu & Supardjo, 2015).

Methods

The purposed of this research was to find the main pillar of successful character education, especially in elementary schools. If the main pillar can be found, it can be used to design dissemination in other elementary schools.

The research used qualitative research methods with multi sites in the three primary schools mentioned in the MOEC study. Those schools were chosen because they were stated in the MOEC research as a very successful primary school in carrying out character education (Kemdikbud, 2010).

The data were collected through a series of observations, in-depth interviews and examined documents from January to May 2017. To obtain comprehensive data, interviews were conducted on teachers, school personel, students and parents. Member check and prolonged engagement was done to ensure the data obtained is valid. Further data were analyzed simultaneously through data condensation, display and conclusion data.

Result and Discussion

The three primary schools had different characteristics. School "A" was based on religion "X" and most of its students came from society with upper middle social economy. School "B" was based on religion "Y" and most of its students came from society with lower middle social economy. School "C" was not based on religion and its students came from society with very various social economy. Nevertheless all three were known by the public schools that implement discipline and their students had excellent character, and made them as favorite schools.

Interviews with teachers and examined the existing documents indicated that the three schools had long time carried out character education seriously. Even in the school "B" since its inception, the character was understood more important than the academic achievement of the students, so each teacher was required to integrate character building in the teaching-learning process. In contrast, school "A" and school "C" relied more

on character building through extra-curricular activities and had incorporated aspects of character in the teaching-learning process when applying the 2013 Curriculum.

Although the approach applied was different, but the observation for 4 months found the similarity of student character in the 3 schools. *First*, they were very disciplined of time. Very rarely teachers and students who were late to get school or late to class when the lesson begins. Even the teachers of school "A" arrived at school 10 minutes before the lesson begins.

Second, the three schools succeeded in cultivating a clean and healthy life behavior. For schools, the three schools' neighborhoods were very clean. The gym, school cafeteria and toilets were very neat and clean. At school "A", students were required to clean up their classrooms before going home. In school "C" there was a cleaning picket schedule for students, to clean up the classroom and the yard in front of it. From observations and interviews with students, it appeared that students did it with pleasure. Some students at the school "C" said if you want to be healthy you have to keep clean.

Third, the liveliness of the students in the three primary schools in carrying out the school cleanliness obligation showed the school succeeded in fostering the attitude of student responsibility. As is known responsibility is one aspect of character that is very important and must be grown from an early age.

Fourth, empathy for others was successfully grown in the three schools. Document data and interviews with teachers and parents indicated high levels of student care in the three schools to the affected communities and underprivileged communities. Interviews with students in school "A" and school "B" indicated that the concern is a religious teaching they profess.

Fifth, although it was not yet ideal, honesty has grown in all three schools. Observations during the examination showed no students cheated. In school "A" the known slogans was that cheating was a sin, in school "B" cheating was considered as corruption and in school "C" cheating was equated with stealing.

Interviews with students indicated they have understood that cheating was a sin and should not be done. They would remind their friends who were cheating. Interviews with teachers noted that honesty, especially not cheated was implanted since grade 1 and always reminded every examination periode, so it was natural that had become the daily behavior of students. Interviews with parents were informed that honesty character was the hallmark of schooling that they sent their children to the school. For parents, honesty will be an important provision when the child is an adult.

In-depth interviews with teachers, students and parents accompanied by a four-month observation found that the success of these schools fostered the character of the students was sustained by the school culture which supported by teacher daily behaviors as models. Honest, discipline over time and following school rules, maintaining cleanliness, as well as the spirit of helping others become everyday behavior in the school and teachers and school personel become models. Figure 1 showed the relationship factors that affected to students' character.

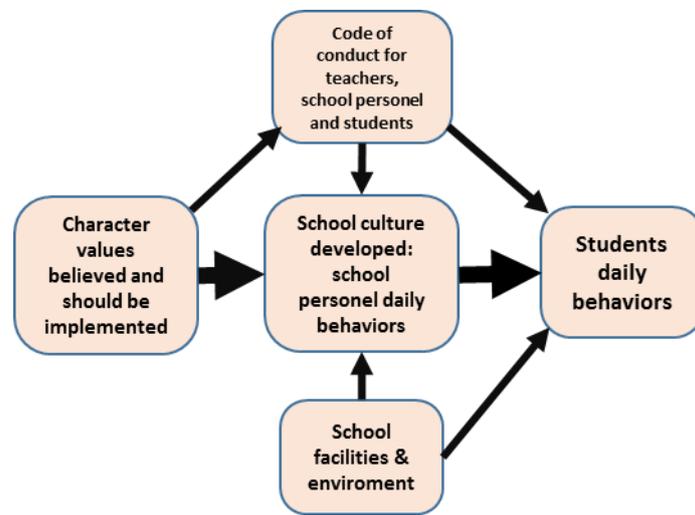


Figure 1. Character Development at Schools

Indeed schools have code of conduct and rules that must be obeyed by teachers, employees and students, but interviews and discussions with students, found out that most students did not understand it, but they followed what the habits at school and imitated what was done by the teachers. These findings reinforced the opinion of Lickona, (1992) and Mak (2014) that the behavior of children basically mimics what adult adults around or idolized.

Another finding that was also very interesting, teachers also did not pay much attention to the school code of conduct and rules, but rather hold the aspects of the character that was believed to be good and has been agreed to apply at school. Teachers did things not for fear of breaking school rules, but because they had to avoid disgrace and sin. These findings reinforce the findings of Bialik, Bogan, Fadel & Horvathova (2015) that people's behavior is more related to what is believed to be true or good and not by existing rules.

Therefore, the three schools started character education by determining aspects of character that must be done in school, based on religious values and local wisdom. In general, the character aspects were in accordance with the values that grew in the community around the school, so there was a strengthening between what happens in schools and in the community around (Samani & Haryanto, 2012; Lapsley & Woodbury, 2016).

School facilities and environments also contributed to teachers', school personel's and students' obedience, but not something dominant. When the garbage bin at school "A" was being cleaned and painted, it turns out students did not throw garbage carelessly. They placed garbage in the location where garbage bin was usually placed and when the garbage bin had been returned, the garbage would be put into it. When at school "B" the electric power went out, some students took the well water to fill the tub in the toliet, to keep the toilet in use. The emergence of awareness of students taking well water to fill the tub in the toilet and not littering even though the trash was not there was the emergence of a sense of responsibility. Bialik, Bogan, Fadel, & Horvathova, (2015) say the sense of responsibility for children is very important and must be grown from an early age, so the phenomenon in the three schools is very encouraging.

Conclusion

Based on the above findings, it can be concluded that the school culture that was supported by the exemplary

teacher was the main pillar in building the character of the students. Although the school had a code of conduct, but students did not notice it and more imitated the behavior of teachers and what day-to-day seen in school. School facilities did support the implementation of character education, but not a decisive factor.

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