

The Character Education In Teaching English At Secondary School

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Abstract

Given that character education will go well if the national education system has good support, the values in character education can be implemented differently based on the teacher's method of teaching. Therefore, this study is aimed to identify the secondary and high school English teachers in delivering the character values in their way of teaching in a private school at Bandung area. Employing a qualitative research design through questionnaire, interview in collecting the data, this study yielded that most of teachers at the secondary school had implemented the character values building in their way of teaching, in very various activity in the classroom. To conclude, though, the implementation of the character building implementation can be various for each English teacher, and the progress can't be instantly identified, the efforts have been effectively done. Thus, teachers should continuously change their ways of teaching so the students will not really "aware" that their characters are briefly built, and ignore it as the pointed values education.

Keywords: Character education, secondary school.

Abstrak

Mengingat pendidikan karakter akan berjalan dengan baik jika sistem pendidikan nasional mendapat dukungan yang baik, maka nilai-nilai dalam pendidikan karakter dapat dilaksanakan secara berbeda berdasarkan metode pengajaran guru. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi guru bahasa Inggris SMP dan SMA dalam menyampaikan nilai-nilai karakter dalam pembelajarannya di sebuah sekolah swasta di wilayah Bandung. Dengan menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif melalui kuesioner, wawancara dalam pengumpulan data, penelitian ini menghasilkan bahwa sebagian besar guru di sekolah menengah telah menerapkan pembentukan nilai karakter dalam cara mereka mengajar, dalam berbagai kegiatan di kelas. Kesimpulannya, meskipun implementasi dari implementasi character building bisa berbeda-beda untuk setiap guru bahasa Inggris, dan kemajuannya tidak dapat diketahui secara instan, upaya tersebut telah dilakukan secara efektif. Oleh karena itu, guru harus terus-menerus mengubah cara mengajarnya agar siswa tidak benar-benar "sadar" bahwa karakter mereka dibangun secara singkat, dan mengabaikannya sebagai pendidikan nilai yang diacu.

Kata kunci: Pendidikan karakter, sekolah menengah.

INTRODUCTION

Character education has recently become a big concern for our educational system in Indonesia. Based on the harassments happened, nowadays, the government considered it as the nation educational failure. That is one of the reasons why the curriculum, by character building education included, revised into the new curriculum 2013.

Character building should be delivered properly by teachers in their teaching activity. It can be integrated in every subject, including English. The implementation of this character building can be different for every teacher. Though there are still some misperceptions in delivering this character building educations, we have to give so much appreciation to teachers who have struggled in mixing these ideas into their teaching contents.

Over 2000 years ago, Aristotle noted, "All adults involved with children either help or thwart children's growth and development, whether we like it, intent it or not." As adults get involved with children, educators can avoid of doing the character education, intentionally or unintentionally.

Character education is good, practical politics. It has been long recognized that self-governance itself depends upon the character of citizens. Plato acknowledged this when he crafted the blueprint for The Republic. The American founders repeatedly emphasized that our own national experiment would succeed or fail depending upon the character of its citizenry, clearly perceiving education to be the vital foundation to self-governance and the success of our form of representative democracy. Bluntly stated, the role of the school in the formation of civic character is vital nation interest.

Good character education promotes learning. We need to take character education as seriously as we take academic education. We cannot avoid character education, we cannot afford to implement it half-heartedly or wrong-heartedly.

1. Research Questions

In order to reach the purpose of the study, it is an obligation for the researcher to give a rise to the problems which are going to be investigated. Hence, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How the character education built in teaching English at secondary school levels?
2. What factors are influencing the character building in English teaching?

2. The Scope of the Study

This study is limited to three English secondary school teachers, who teach in a private school in Bandung, and to explore how the character values implemented in their teaching process and what factors influence the gaining process.

3. Significance of the Study

It is worth conducting that this study provides significance for both teachers and other researchers. For teachers, it gives the information about the teaching method has been applied in the class, included the character measuring method. Moreover, it gives clear view of what factors may influence the success. It is also beneficial for teachers to know the approach that affects the character building process in teaching. In the meantime, other researchers can make use of this study as a starting point to conduct researches in covering the students' awareness of being "taught" by teachers that is assumed as a boring thing to be conducted.

4. Definition of Terms

This research may generate some terms requiring clarification which can bring about confusion and misunderstanding. To avoid such circumstances, the writer is going to explain the clarification-requiring terms in this research. Those terms are character values, character building education, secondary schools.

- Character value in this study is specified to deal with manners or behavioral way of life may be taught integrated in English teaching context, mostly connected with Christianity values applied in the school.
- Character education concerned to the behavioral manners may implicitly include in teaching process, shown in teachers' teaching planning.
- Secondary school for conducting the levels after primary school (including junior and high school levels), located in Bandung that substantially includes Christianity values in running the school program.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

1. Character Value

Character (Nasiti, 2010) is the attributes or features that make up and differentiate individual from other individuals. The way people manage their characters will be shown on how they behave. It will show how they are and as a measuring tool of how good they are in environment.

Though, each school has their own right to have their own kind of values, but there are still some values should be taught in every school in Indonesia, that may support Indonesian character building project. (Suparno, 2010). They are:

- a. multicultural values
- b. honesty
- c. learning to obey the law
- d. justice
- e. empathy to other people
- f. spirit to struggle

In this private school, there is a board character values based on Christianity values called PKBN2K (Pendidikan Karakter Berdasarkan Nilai-nilai Kristiani). It included generosity, kindness, loyalty, honesty, obedience, bravery, caring, self control and patience.

2. Character Education

Nasiti (2010) claimed that character building is the way to strengthen one's character by molds oneself into a productive person within one's sphere of influence—as the purpose of education.

As the phenomenon happened in our citizens nowadays, the educational government considers that it is important to include the character building education in the curriculum—as in the 2013 curriculum. Teachers have to facilitate the students need in moral attitudes as the society expected—a good character. It covers the value knowledge, value awareness and also the value implications.

Though, character building is a long life education, as teachers we still have to try our best to spread the seed of moral and ethical way of life.

Character education is a national movement creating schools that foster ethical, responsible and caring young people by modeling and teaching good character through emphasis on universal values that we all share. It is intentional, proactive effort by schools, districts, and states to instill in their students important core, ethical values such as caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect for self and others.

Lickona, Schaps and Lewis (2007) stated the effective character educations are:

1. Promotes core ethical values and supportive performance values as the foundation of good character
2. Defines “character” comprehensively to include thinking, feeling and behavior
3. Uses a comprehensive, intentional, and proactive approach to character development
4. Creates a caring school community
5. Provides students with opportunities for moral action
6. Includes a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them to succeed
7. Strives to foster students' self-motivation
8. Engages the school staff as a learning and moral community that shares responsibility for character education and attempts to adhere to the same core values that guide the education of students
9. Fosters shared moral leadership and language support of the character education initiative
10. Engaged families and community members as partners in the character building effort
11. Assesses the character of the school staff's functioning as character educators, and the extent to which students manifest good character.

3. Students at Secondary Schools

Sumantri (2011) explained that students at secondary schools, or usually called teenagers, ranged between 12 and 18 till 22 years old, as the transition age from the late childhood to the early adult. They are fast physically and sexually grown. They are really tried to find their self identity. They will think logically, abstract and idealist. They really have a huge curiosity in exploring their life. They try to think of what people think about them. They understand the ideal family, religion, and society, as they compare everything to themselves. On this age, they have to integrate what they've learnt before in their life, as the past continuity and get prepared to face the future. That's what the character education stands for, in influencing their developing crisis.

Bryce and Withers (2003) claimed that a part of learning how to learn and becoming an independent learner involves learning how to handle information, and learning how one best handles this in terms of one's own strengths and weaknesses. This skill in life hopefully can be achieved by the students as the main goal of education itself.

4. Related Research Reports

Over the past few decades, educators have become increasingly interested in implementing character education in their districts, schools, and classrooms, and the pace of this expansion seems to be accelerating. There is rapidly growing, but still inadequate, level of funding available for both practice and research in character education. There is also bewildering programs, vendors, consultant, and concepts for educators to choose from in their search to improve their schools and positively impact the development and learning of their students.

Nevertheless, there is relatively little in the way of systematic scientific guidance to aid a navigating this profusions of options vying for the educators' attention and limited resources.

For instance, Bulach (2000) conducted a research on evaluating the impact of a character education curriculum. This research was based on The Eleven Principle of Effective Character Education (Lickona, Schaps and Lewis, 2007) and 16 behaviors traits, they are (1) respect for self, others and property, (2) honesty, (3) self-control/discipline, (4) responsibility/dependability/accountability, (5) cooperation, (6) integrity/fairness, (7) kindness, (8) perseverance/diligence/motivation, (9) compassion/empathy, (10) courtesy/politeness, (11) forgiveness, (12) patriotism/ citizenship, (13) tolerance of diversity, (14) humility, (15) generosity/charity, and (16) sportsmanship. The character instrument (Bulach, 2000) consists of 99 behaviors for elementary students and 100 for middle and high school students. The extra behavior for the upper grades is a sexually oriented item. Students respond to each of the items on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "never" to "always." "Never" was scored as a "one" and "always" was scored as a "five." Thirty-eight of the items were stated negatively and had to be reverse scored. For example, one of the behaviors is: "Students think it is okay to do something as long as they don't get caught." The instructions tell them to choose the response which comes closest to the behavior that describes what you think other students do or think. It is assumed that if student behavior improves as the result of the character education program (e.g. more respectful, dependable, responsible, honest, etc), the climate/culture of the school should improve.

Through instructional improvement survey, it highlighted some findings that in theory, if a character education program is effectively implemented, student behaviors associated with the 16 character traits should improve. This should result in an improvement in school climate. Furthermore, since there is a positive relationship between school climate and student achievement (Bulach, Malone, and Castleman, 1995), student achievement should also improve. This is an untested theory, but the instrumentation described in the foregoing provide the framework for testing this theory. For those practitioners who are more interested in results and not theory, the instrumentation provides a wealth of data that can be used to develop school improvement plans targeted towards raising student test scores.

5. Synthesis

This sub-section conveys theories related to characters education and the factors influenced the implementation and students at secondary schools in relation to this study. Besides, some previous related research reports are also presented in a way that the research reports bear a resemblance to this study and what is represented in the theories about character education. The researches investigating factors influence the effective character building by the theories drawn in this study. As this study involves elementary and secondary schools, research reports regarding the relationship between students behavior improvement by character education and the culture of the school are also provided.

METHODS

1. *Research Design*

The function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables you to effectively address the research problem as unambiguously as possible. In social sciences research, obtaining evidence relevant to the research problem generally entails specifying the type of evidence needed to test a theory, to evaluate a program, or to accurately describe a phenomenon (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2006). A qualitative research design was used in this study since all the data collected, both quantitative and qualitative data, were analyzed descriptively under descriptive study.

2. *Data Collection*

- Sample/object/respondents, Population, or Subjects

Populations in this study were the English teachers of a private school in Bandung. Out of the populations, 3 English teachers chosen as the samples, assumed that they have already applied the character education in teaching process. These teachers are involved in the questionnaire and interviews.

- Instrumentations

Instruments used in this study were questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire was intended to answer the first research question about character building education. It consisted of 12 open-ended questions. The statements were given in English. The interview was undertaken to answer the second research question to describe what factors may influence in doing the character education, to enrich the result of an open-ended item in the questionnaire. A semi-structured interview consisting of two questions was administered.

- Variables in the Study

Variables in this study are character education, teaching English, students at secondary school.

- Procedure

The data collection, by giving them the questionnaire in school was conducted on 21st April 2014, and being collected on 5th may 2014. As the researcher seems to over look the school system applied, the research permission would be necessary. In undertaking the interview, the researcher tried to communicate the data collecting process and all of the contents may include. Then, the questionnaire was administered to each teacher personally by explaining the needed of his/her participation. Instructions and explanations were delivered to the teachers in order to minimize mistakes in filling out the questionnaire. About two weeks later, the questionnaires were collected and rechecked that all the parts of the questionnaire were completed. Finally, the researcher made time appointments with the teacher. As the time agreed, the interviews were done. Since the interview was in the form of semi-structured interview, some follow-up questions were asked to the teachers to get further information. While students were being interviewed, their responses were also recorded as means of analyzing the data.

3. *Data Analysis*

As this study used a qualitative research design, the analysis was done descriptively. The analysis of quantitative data was done for the data from 12 close-ended items of questionnaire, while the analysis of qualitative data was for the interview results. The questionnaire was the key in gaining data about the character education implementation in their teaching experience, and the factors influenced the process.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. *The character education*

This sub-section is intended to answer the first research question about how the character education may be implemented in secondary schools. The data collected, then, being analyzed and conclude by using qualitative analysis. The qualitative analysis is a designed study as a set of assumption, principles, and even values about truth and reality.(Thorne, 2000). The findings are:

- ✓ The new 2013 curriculum is a curriculum designed by the government policy of Indonesia enclosing the character education as one of important aspects in teaching any integrated subjects. It is different from the curriculum implemented before (KTSP) that focused on the result and ignoring the gaining process.
- ✓ The character education is very important as the nation character. There are so many smart students (or people) without any good attitudes/ characters. Their smartness as the tool of doing criminal action, such as corruption that in fact is usually done by smart people, but without “good” character.

"Intelligence plus character-that is the goal of a true education."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

- ✓ These teachers have done the character educations in their teaching process. Though, it is not explicitly mentioned in the lesson planning, they "wrap" this building treatment in the teaching process as a moral and manner application.
- ✓ This kind of education, hopefully, can "produce" the future product of people that not only smart but also have good character inside in facing their life.
- ✓ This character education can be measured by identifying the students' responses whilst they're doing the assignments. Spontaneously they will respond on whatever problem they face. These responses then analyzed and categorized into a rubric. It will alter the behavior characteristics into numbers. Though, there is no guarantee that they are concluded as "good behavior" people.
- ✓ There are no bad effects in doing this. So we'd better try to educate them with those good manners.

The results of the questionnaire and interviews from these teachers at secondary school show somewhat interesting findings. In fact, by using the new 2013 curriculum we can conduct some character education, integrated with the materials including in English subject.

2. *Factors influencing the implementation of character education*

In doing the character educations, theoretically there are some factors influence the implementations as Lickona, Schaps and Lewis (2007) stated. Based on the interviews, the researcher finds and concludes the factors influence the character education are:

- **Teacher's preparation.**
Research confirms that the most important in-school factor in a student's success is a strong teacher, and excellent teachers are especially important for our neediest students (Brenchley, 2014). It seems that teacher's preparation is very important as an apperception activity before doing the main teaching process. It must be very wasted if the teacher is not well prepared. The preparations are including in mastering the materials, media going to use, methods and activity in the classroom, and integrating the character education with the materials. The main problem is that not all teachers are "creative" enough in delivering the material. The 2013 curriculum recommends the teachers to use computer technology as the teaching media (IT). The fact is that the use of this media makes the students bored because the teacher is uncreative enough to vary the slides. It might because of the lack of skill in IT. Finally, the students will not achieve the goals of the material or the character education expected.
- **The supporting means**
Along with development of information technology and its important applications in education, the field of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has developed significantly during the past decades. (Shafaei, 2012). In the other hand, this technology needs extra cost that not all of the parents can afford. The use of laptop and internet at school has helped the students to discover the knowledge by themselves. But for those who are not supported by the technology tools will just observe their friends and get minimum achievements.
- **The teacher-parent partnership**
Parents are encouraged to be positive role models and to take an active role in their child's character development. (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, 2014). Teachers have to make a good partnership with the parents in character education. It will make the consistent situations for the students.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

To sum up, the character education secondary schools is very important. It has been applied by the English teachers by integrating it with the subject topics. Hopefully it will repair the national character that is not only smart but also good. There are some factors influence the character education. Practically, the factors are teacher's preparation, supporting means and the teacher-parent partnership.

Hopefully, as the time goes by, the ideal purpose of character education achieve, that is to make a good citizenship. As teachers, we just have to do our best in spreading the seed of character educations. They might be, someday, grows into human basic life skill.

There are some suggestions which can be useful for English teachers and further researches. The suggestions, which are based upon findings of the research, are as follows.

- It is suggested that teachers are more creative in integrating the character education with the materials. So that, the students will not get bored and rejected the idea instantly.
- It is important to facilitate those students with enough technology tools in discovering the knowledge and make a good partnership with the parent. For further research may investigate the students' perceptions and feelings in the character education delivering process.

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