

# THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MULTICULTURAL CHARACTER EDUCATION

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## Abstract

Character education which is intensively being implemented in the field of education is one of the solutions to the moral crisis in Indonesia country. The reform government actually has formulated the national development missions which put character education as the first mission of the eight missions in order to realize the national development vision. The objective of the implementation of multicultural character education is to develop the learning process in the school environment which is effective and efficient on the basis of the acknowledgement and acceptance of differences related to gender, race, and social class. Character education has the same essence and meaning as moral education or ethic education so that the implemented value education becomes complex if it is also based on noble values originating from the nation's cultures. The process of the character education implementation can be carried out through multiple learning strategies in the micro (classroom) level; character education is more effective with the support of the school management which is consistent and synergistic. On the hand, the positive school culture empowering all school members also becomes one important component affecting the success of the character education implementation. Therefore, the inculcation of multicultural character education as a whole will be able to create equality and fairness in the school environment. Hence, the implementation of multicultural character education offers two alternatives through the application of educational strategies and concepts based on the use of the diversity in the school environment. The multicultural approach is an educational strategy utilizing the diversity of students' cultural backgrounds as power to build multicultural and tolerant attitudes and mutual respect for the differences among school members.

Keywords: Character Education, Multicultural

## INTRODUCTION

Law No. 20 Year 2003 on National Education System (see Chapter 2 Section 3). One of the innovation is the implementing national character education through the educational process. Based on the functions and the objectives to be achieved, character education is not only an educational innovation, but also an education reform should be prepared and implemented properly and involve any parties related to education. In internalize the character education through all the subjects, in other words, the existing education must be with commitment and consistent attitude from the stakeholders and the entire education practitioners involved (Marzuki, 2012: 34).

The Government has formulated a National Development Mission of character education as the first mission of the eight missions in order to achieve the vision of national development (Setiawan, 2013: 54). The problems that occur is a manifestation of the poor quality of the character of Indonesian young generation. Problems being faced today is very

complex, ranging from the number of gaps that arise caused by differences in culture, language, ethnicity, race, religion and gender. The difference lead to social conflict among the learners. Social conflicts that are often encountered in the current reality is a matter of fighting between groups of students, lack of awareness of the students, a moral crisis and many more.

The reality of what happened is in line with the statement of Nieto (Hanum, 2010: 2) reveals the importance to test how culture affects learning and achievement in school. Since each individual was raised in an environment of each culture, which may make them a different way of thinking, interests, behavior, language, and academic skills. Another important thing to note in multicultural education is a teacher is not only required to teach professionally the subjects taught. Moreover, a teacher must also be able to instill the values of multicultural education (Hanum, 2010: 3). In addition, the character is also very necessary for a teacher because through this soul, the teachers will have a more efficient work orientation, creative, innovative, productive and independent (Suyitno, 2014: 2-3).

Based on the reality of what happened in Indonesian education, it is associated with the degradation of morals or character of the young generation. It was found that the diversity does not make students understand the meaning of the differences, but most students consider the differences as gaps, it can be seen from how students' attitude in the school environment, the activities of the students in the classroom during the learning process. The students associate by forming groups, egocentrism to a particular tribe or religion, and the students do not show mutual respect the opinion of their peers, as seen in the teaching and learning process. On the other hand, teachers are still less sensitive to the importance of planting the values of character education, and teachers do not fully understand that the multicultural students can become a boomerang, if not directed by planting the value of good character and continuously.

Based on the elaboration above, the implementation of education-based multicultural character offers an alternative through the implementation of strategies and concepts based education exploiting the diversity that exists in the school environment. Multicultural approach is an educational strategy that utilizes the diversity of cultural backgrounds of the learners as a power to make a multicultural attitude. This strategy is very useful, at least for the school as an educational institution can make an understanding of the concept of culture, cultural differences, balance, and democracy in the general. So that the character education implemented by the school will able to support the multicultural purpose in general.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND PROPOSITION**

### ***Character Education and Learning Strategy***

Character education is very important and it is now a necessity because the relations of life is getting degraded of characters (Setiawan, 2011: 116). Therefore, character education must be able to internalize all positive values as the foundation of thinking, being and acting. On the other hand, Zamroni (2011) explains that the character education terminology provides a view of various aspects of learning in order to develop a personality. In the learning

process, one must link between morality education with various aspects of personal and social learners in everyday life. For example: reasoning, social and emotional learning, life skills education, a caring and loving community, prevent violence, resolve conflict, and ethical life. In other words, the character education with regard to the guidelines of daily life that are needed to make a decision and solving the problem faced.

Character education is the main pillar in create a character of a person through education. Unlike the previous opinion Wibowo (2012: 34) explains that education should be an active part in preparing the quality of human resources (HR) is educated and able to face the challenges of the times, because the character education is one of a system to embed the character values to all citizens community through formal or informal education, which includes knowledge, awareness, volition, and action to carry out the whole range of values. According Samani and Hariyanto (2013: 46) there are 18 values contained in character education as follows; religious, honest, tolerance, discipline, hard work, independent, creative, democratic, patriotism, curiosity, friends, love peace, love reading, environmental care, social care, recognize excellence, respect and responsibility. From those values, there are four values that synergize with multicultural values, namely; tolerance, democracy, mutual respect, and peace.

On the other hand, Lickona (1991) explains that moral education that produces character, it contains three components of good character (component of good character), namely: the knowledge of the moral (moral knowing), a sense of morality (moral feeling), and moral conduct (moral action). The three components of character education should be awakened related, so the value of education presented becomes complex when based also with noble values originating from the culture of the nation itself. There are several reviews on the subject of character education into a national issue is learning should be open to the public, and the basis for decision-making at the basic education level and university. The character education as one of the most need, demoralization, moral degradation and knowledge, other causes birth discourse character education is an encouragement to achieve the ideals of Indonesia gold in the future, and in order to meet the lofty goal of national education.

The Discourse of character education above, supported by the opinion Koesman (2007: 134) which states that the objective character education should be placed within the framework of a dynamic dialectical, in the form of individual responses to the social and cultural surrounding, to be able to put himself into perfect, so the potentials will be fully developed that make them more humane. In line with previous opinion, character education goal is to improve the quality of education and the results of the education towards the formation of character and noble character of learners as a whole, integrated and balance (Muslich, 2011: 81). Furthermore, character education goal is to improve the personal disposition of individuals as proposed by Arthur (2003: 11) that "the aim of the institute was to improve the habits, dispositions, and general character of the children". Thus, character education aims to improve habits, character, and character in children.

Generally, character education goal is to encourage the birth of good children. Grow up in a good character, children will grow up with the capacity and commitment to do best things and do everything right, and tend to have a purpose in life. Effective character education is found in a school environment that enables all learners demonstrate their potential to achieve a very important goal. Based on some opinions above, it can be concluded that the goal of character education is more focused on instilling values and reform of life, so can be fully create the character and noble character of learners, integrated and balance, and can be performed continuously in daily life-day. This becomes very important because of the character education has a strategic position in creating the human with a noble character.

Learning activities in order to develop the character of the students is one of a very important part. Learning strategies can use contextual approach as the concept of teaching and learning that helps teachers and students find connections between what is taught with real-world situations. Contextual learning includes several strategies (Mulyasa, 2013: 88), namely: (a) problem-based learning, (b) cooperative learning, (c) project-based learning, (d) learning services, and (e) work-based learning. The fifth strategy can give nurturant effect to the development of students' character. In line with the statement above, the results showed that the model of effective character education is to use a comprehensive approach (Zuchdi, Prasetyo, and Masruri, 2011). Meanwhile, Zuchdi (2014: 4) also describes an implementation strategy of teaching character education are as follows: (a) integrate the content of curriculum that has been formulated into all subjects, (b) integrate character education into daily activities at school, (c) integrate character education in the programmed activities, (d) establishing communication and cooperation between schools and students' parents.

Character education learning strategies can also be done with a variety of methods including inculcation, exemplary, and soft skill development. The whole method and approach, if implemented correctly, it will easily achieve the goal of character education. In addition the school must prepare creatively in order to develop innovative learning, so as to produce teaching and learning more effective and meaningful.

**Proposition 1: Character education can form a soft skill through multiple learning strategies**

## **MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL CULTURE**

The most important component in instilling the value of character education in the school environment is an educator or teacher. Teachers are at the forefront of the quality of education, so that teachers can be considered as the main instrument in the attainment of the whole process that involves learners. Associated with character education, the role of a teacher is very important. Besides must have the understanding, skills, and competencies of the character, the teacher also must have good character in themselves. Teachers are important factors that give major influence in achieving the success of character education

in schools, and even determine the success of learners in developing a personal intact. Education is difficult to produce something good, without starting from good teachers.

According Mulyasa (2013: 71) the function of the teacher is multifunctional. So that teachers can develop effective character education, and to improve the quality of education, especially in the personal improvement of learners, teachers need to have the following.

1. Master and understand the character education and its relation of learning well.
2. Liking character education.
3. Understand the learners, experiences, skills, and accomplishments.
4. Using the method of varying character education.
5. Eliminate materials that are less character and less meaningful.
6. Following the development education characters.
7. Prepare the educational process in a mature character.
8. Connecting past experience with a character that will be formed.

Meanwhile Muhaimin (2002: 115) explains that a teacher is required to have a noble soul as a code of professional conduct, including:

1. sincere in work or work for the pleasure of Allah.
2. Keep yourself and honor.
3. Being a role model for the students.
4. Apply knowledge into practice and daily behavior.
5. Patience in teaching knowledge to the students.
6. Do not underestimate the other subjects.

In this case the teachers should be positioning themselves as a facilitator, whose primary job provides ease of learning to the learners (to Facilitate learning), without any coercion and violence against learners, because coercion and violence will only give something negative among the learners (Mulyasa , 2013: 66-67). There are several important aspects of character education in the school environment should be considered in character education in schools in the form of Management of schools that includes: revamping the curriculum, improve the competence, performance and character of teachers or principals, as well as the integration of school culture (Kurniawan, 2013: 108). In addition to teachers, character education is also the responsibility of all the elements that exist in the school environment. As principals, school committee, and all the staff.

In this case, the principal is the holder of the policy of the whole system of teaching in schools. Therefore, instill the values of character education is the responsibility of all parties without exception. The school principal has seven functions as follows: as an educator, as a manager of the school, as supervisor, as a leader, as an innovator, as a motivator (Kurniawan, 2013: 122). Leadership of a school principal shall comprise two strategies, namely substantial strategies and managerial strategy.

Managerial strategy, principals seek to focus on the relationship of the school with supporting factors outside the school, through the coordination and synchronization of the school program with parents, education councils, school committees, community, and government. As for the relationship with the government, principals need to have a power-

sharing as a way to bridge between government and school's desire. While substantial strategy, the strategy of school development based on unity of vision, mission, and objectives outlined in the school education program and applies to the curriculum and activities interschool (Kurniawan, 2013: 121). All of the agenda run by each school will be different from other schools, it is caused by the cultural policy of the principal and the school environment is different.

Teachers should position themselves as facilitators, whose primary job provides ease of learning to the learners (to Facilitate learning), without any coercion and violence against learners, because coercion and violence will only give something negative among the learners (Mulyasa, 2013: 66-67). In the process of learning in the classroom teachers are required not to discriminate the students, it can be seen in the learning process that requires students to be critical by asking a few questions. That a teacher should be a facilitator for their students, so that students feel secure and will minimize the possibility of discriminating against students.

**Proposition 2: Education characters become more effective if they are supported by a consistent management school**

Views on school culture proposed by Zamroni (2011: 297) that the school culture is a pattern of basic assumptions, values, beliefs, and habits that are held together by the entire school community believes and has proven it can be used for face various problems in adapting to the new environment and perform internal integration, so that the pattern of values and assumptions can be taught to new members and generation so that they understand, act in the existing environment. School culture needs to be developed, the development of character education in the culture of the school should consider the following matters: teaching and learning, character development with an integrated approach, through a variety of school activities, and through extracurricular activities. School culture conducive environment is the overall physical setting, atmosphere, taste, nature, and productive school climate that is able to provide a good experience for the growth of the character of the students as expected.

School culture refers to a set of values, beliefs and ritual norms that guide the behavior of people in schools. Inside the school culture there is also a positive culture and negative cultures. Positive school culture where the school culture supports the achievement of the objectives of the school, while a negative school culture where hamper school achievement goals. School culture is inseparable from the norms, attitudes, beliefs, values, ceremonies, and others. This is supported by Barth (2010: 1) that: "The school culture is a complex pattern of norms, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, values, ceremonies, traditions, and myths that are deeply ingrained in the very core of the organization". So, the school culture is a complex pattern of norms, attitudes, beliefs, attitudes, values, ceremonies, customs, and legends that are very ingrained in the organization.

While Ahmadi (2004: 187) describes the school culture is the belief of the school which has several important elements, namely: (1) the location of the environment, and infrastructure, (2) a school curriculum which includes the ideas and facts that become overall education program, (3) a good personality of the school community consisting, students, teachers nonteaching specialists and administrative personnel, and the norms of values of the students' character and teachers. In line with the above opinion, Nurkholis (2006: 203) specifically mentions school culture as a pattern of values, norms, attitudes, rituals, discipline, myths, and habits formed in school.

Furthermore, Tableman (2004: 1) describes the culture of the school, "School culture Reflects the shared ideas, assumptions, values, and beliefs that give its organization on identity and standards for expected behavior". This means that the school culture illustrate the variety of ideas, assumptions, values, and beliefs that form the organization's identity and standards for expected behavior. Meanwhile, Sudrajat (2011: 134) describes the school culture is the context behind the scenes that show the school beliefs, values, norms, and habits that have been built in quite a long time by all the school community in cooperation in school. Thus, it can be concluded that the overall school culture includes elements that are in the school environment such as (students, teachers, principals, atmosphere, the learning process, and all the components that have been around a long time).

**Proposition 3: Positive school culture that empowers will be able to achieve the goal of character education**

## **MULTICULTURAL**

Multiculturalism asserts the need to create a school where the differences related to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, limitations, and social classes all students are recognized and regarded as a valuable resource to enrich the teaching and learning process. (Hidayatullah, 2012: 75). Multicultural society is the essence of the Indonesian people who are indirectly must be admit without exception. Applying the principle of multicultural should cover various areas, including in the field of education. Multiculturalism etymologically formed from three words yitu: Multi (many), culture (culture), ism (flow / understand). Which means that multiculturalism is the flow or understanding of many cultures means leads to cultural diversity (Hanum and Raharja, 2006: 1).

In line with previous statements, Tilaar (2004: 82) explains multiculturalism implies a very complex meaning that is "multi" meaning plural, "culturalism" unbiased understanding of culture, or culture. Prulal term diversify, because pluralism is not just recognition of the things that is diversified but the recognition is also has political implications, social, economic. Multicultural education can be understood as a process or educational strategies that involve more than one culture, shown by nationality, language support, ethnic, or racial criteria. Multicultural education can take place in formal or informal education settings, directly or indirectly (Zuriah, 2010: 77).

On the other hand, Banks (2005: 3) dividing the multicultural education consisting of three things, namely, plans or concepts, an action related to education changes, and the educational process which the main objective is to change the structure of educational institutions so that students of both women and men, students disabilities, and students who are members of racial, ethnic, cultural and sundry it would have the same opportunity to achieve academic interpretation in school.

As a reform action and the process to create an environment of equal education for all students, multicultural education has principles as follows (Hidayatullah, 2012: 75): The first principle, multicultural education is a political movement that aims to ensure social justice for all people regardless the existing background. The second principle, multicultural education containing the dimensions of learning (classroom) and institutional (school) and between both cannot be separated, but should instead be addressed through a comprehensive reform. The third principle, multicultural education emphasizes a comprehensive education reform can be achieved only through a critical analysis or power system. The fourth principle, based on critical analysis, the goal is to provide a multicultural education for each student guaranteed a chance to achieve maximum performance in accordance with the possessed.

Banks (1993: 5-6) also states that multicultural education can be conceptualized into five dimensions, namely: a. Content integration; integrate the diversity of cultures and groups to describe the concept, principles, and theories in the subject they teach, b. Construction of knowledge; all matters relating to teachers to help students understand, investigate, and determine the differences in the assumptions prejudices that affect the composition of the student's knowledge, c. Reduce prejudice; focusing on the characteristics of the racial attitudes of students and how students can think positively, d. Pedagogic justice; when teachers change their teaching to a way to facilitate students of different racial, religious, cultural, social class academic achievement. This includes using a variety of teaching styles to take advantage of differences in students e. Empowering school culture; the basics of school culture is the interaction of the entire school community to create a school environment that is conducive to a variety of racial, ethnic, and cultural. Furthermore, there are three main goals of multicultural education are referred to as instrumental and terminal objectives, namely:

- 1 Elimination of discrimination education, provide equal opportunities for every child to develop their potential
- 2 Make the children can reach their potential achievement
- 3 Make the children aware of solidarity as citizens of the local community, national, and global (external end terminal purpose) (Gorski 2010, Zamroni, 2011).

Intuitively, students taught by a teacher something about the differences in culture, race, social class would be better in the context of multicultural understanding of those who do not. Teachers can also use learning strategies that combine content multicultural students of social backgrounds and different cultures, so that engage students in cultural exchange

with others who are different, it will be able to teach students to take conclusions from their experience (Sleeter , 2001: 99-100).

**Proposition 4: Understanding the concept of multicultural intact can create equality and justice in the school environment**

**DISCUSSION**

The success of character education is an essential element in order to develop the objectives of the multicultural to the students, characterized by differences in culture, race, ethnicity, and religion so as to achieve equality and fairness. Multicultural education aims to sensitize students that we live in an atmosphere of plurality, so plurality is not something that we must reject, but on the contrary, be something that should be accepted and grateful. Thus, the concept of character education that includes a wide range of values should be in synergy with the goals of multiculturalism. The values of character education is the starting point is the value of democracy, tolerance, values of caring, and so forth. These values must be geared towards the nature of multicultural committed to equality and justice for all elements of the school without discriminating.

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