

An analysis of Teaching Pyramid Model for early childhood education and Character-Based Holistic Education

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ABSTRACT: Early Childhood Education becomes a strategic institution in organizing character education. This is so because in addition to children being in the sensitive period, the inculcation of characters from an early age will be much more effective than when entering adolescence or adulthood. Two character-education models that have been developed and implemented in Indonesian early childhood institutions, include TPM *Kurtilas* (stands for Teaching Pyramid Model- Indonesian Curriculum 2013 for early childhood education) and CBHE (Character-Based Holistic Education). However, the unique characteristics of both models have not been studied in-depth. So, this article explains an analysis of both models, based on the character values promoted, the strategies used, and the instructional media of each model. Using literature study as the research method, this article describes the uniqueness of the two models, and the findings show that the two models are different in terms of the foundation of character value development, the strategy focus applied, and the instructional media used. It is expected that this article can be made a reference for evaluation and consideration in implementing the models.

1 INTRODUCTION

Currently, behavioral issues among children become an important concern in the world of education, especially in Indonesia. Besides the research proving that every 10% of the children entering the kindergarten have behavioral problems (Hemmeter et al. 2007), the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) reported that from January to July 2016, there were approximately 16,000 child convicts, and the number has continued to rise each year with an increase of up to 100%. This condition indicates that behavioral issues that occur in childhood should be of a particular concern, and if these issues are not seriously and appropriately addressed since early on, they will create a weak of generation of the nation (Lickona 1992).

One of the fundamental efforts that can be made in solving the above problems is by inculcating character values through the process of character education in formal schools. Social skill development programs developed in education institutions are known to be able to significantly (50-82%) reduce behavioral problems in children and improve children's social competence, as children spend more time at school (Durlak & Well 1997, Pala 2011, Salirawati 2012). Character inculcation must be carried out seriously since children are at early child-

hood education in order to have an impact on the behaviors at the next age (Berkowitz & Bier 2004, Branson & Demchak 2011)

The unique characteristics and ways of young children's learning require the character development programs in early childhood education institutions to have the right approach and strategy. Effective, fun, and integrated social skill development programs will have an impact on the positive changes of children's behaviors (Hemmeter et al. 2007, Nelson et al. 2007).

In Indonesia, two models of character development have been implemented at early childhood education level, namely TPM-*Kurtilas* (a model of children's basic character development through the teaching pyramid model based on Curriculum 2013) and Character-Based Holistic Education or PHBK in Indonesian term (IHF 2004, Listiana et al. 2015). TPM-*Kurtilas* has only been implemented in three kindergartens in Bandung with the coverage of urban, suburban, and rural areas (Listiana & Rachmawati 2016a). Nevertheless, TPM-*Kurtilas* has received positive responses from teachers. The implementation of TPM-*Kurtilas*, with its appropriate procedures and management, has enabled children to understand the abstract rules, values, and teaching delivered by teachers (Listiana & Rach-

mawati 2016b). From the limited implementation, it is also found that this model has a significant effect on the development of children's basic characters, namely their social and spiritual characters, especially in improving discipline and manners in children (Pratiwi et al. 2016, Maryadi, et al 2016). The finding is different from that of CBHE, which has been implemented in 34 provinces in Indonesia (IHF 2004). Based on the results of previous research, it was reported that not only does TPM-Kurtilas have an effect on children's character, it also has a positive impact on children's multiple intelligences (IHF 2004, Latifah & Anggraeni 2009).

Thus, this article will attempt to describe and examine the two models, in particular in terms of the character values promoted, the strategies used, and the learning media used in each model. This study is expected to describe the unique features of the two models, so that it can eventually be used as a reference and considerations in deciding which model is most likely to be further implemented in early childhood education institutions.

2 METHODOLOGY

The method used is literature study, by analyzing the guidelines book for the implementation of TPM-Kurtilas and the official website of CBHE (ihf.or.id) and also the related journal articles. In this study, an analysis was carried out to the unique characteristics and differences of the two character-education models that have been applied in early childhood education institutions, namely TPM-Kurtilas (*Teaching Pyramid Model*-Curriculum 2013 for Early Childhood Education) and Character-Based Holistic Education (henceforth, CBHE) in terms of the character values promoted, the strategies used, and the learning media used in each model.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Character Values Developed

Every character education model should clearly set the expected and desired character values to be realized (Lickona 1992, Park & Peterson 2006). These values are conceptualized by adjusting them to the expectations and values that prevail in the society (Park & Peterson 2006). Although both of CBHE and TPM-Kurtilas have been implemented in the same society, Indonesia, they promote different concepts of character values. Based on the results of the study, CBHE promotes nine pillars of character that must be developed in children, including: love of God and His creation, responsibility, discipline and

independence, honesty, courtesy, cooperation, confidence, creativity and hard work, leadership, humility, and tolerance (IHF 2004). Meanwhile, TPM-Kurtilas model divides the character values into three aspects: social, emotional, and spiritual attitudes (Listiana & Rachmawati 2016a).

With regard to the objective of Indonesian education as stated in the Decree of the Ministry of National Education No. 20 of 2003, which is to "... develop the potential of learners to become human beings who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, noble in moral, healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, creative, independent, and to become democratic and responsible citizens," it can be seen that the characters of Indonesian human beings stated in the objective appear to be in accordance with the character pillars promoted by the CBHE model.

Meanwhile, the concept of character values developed by TPM-Kurtilas emphasizes the social, emotional, and spiritual attitudes of children (Listiana 2016a). The three aspects are based on the basic characters of children's competencies listed on the Kindergarten Curriculum 2013 (Listiana & Rachmawati 2016, Directorate of Early Childhood Education Development 2015). Under these conditions, the inculcation of character values conducted with this model can be adjusted to the expected development at the level of early childhood education.

3.2 The Strategies Used

Based on the results of the analysis, TPM-Kurtilas has a unique strategy focusing on how to shape the character of children by taking into account the basic steps of adapting the original TPM model, in which the formulated objectives, materials, and evaluations of the social and spiritual character development are derived from the content of Curriculum 2013 (Listiana & Rachmawati 2016a). These stages are systematically arranged from the fundamental to personal treatment, namely preventive, development, and curative stages (Listiana & Rachmawati 2016a).

In the first stage, there are two steps that should be taken by teachers in implementing this model, namely to build a positive relationship and design a supportive environment for children. In the second stage, the teacher must make appropriate teaching strategies to develop the character values of the children. For children with behavioral problems, the teacher should approach them individually. In the last stage, the teacher should make special assessment of the children by working with consultants (Hemmeter & Fox 2009, Listiana & Rachmawati 2016a). Figure 1 and Figure 2 illustrate the TPM-Kurtilas implementation strategy

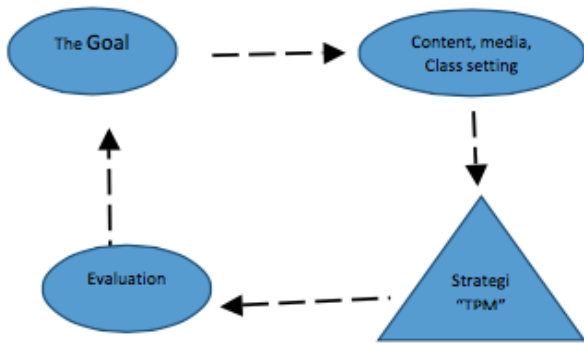


Figure 1. TPM –Kurtilas Model (Listiana & Rachmawati 2016)

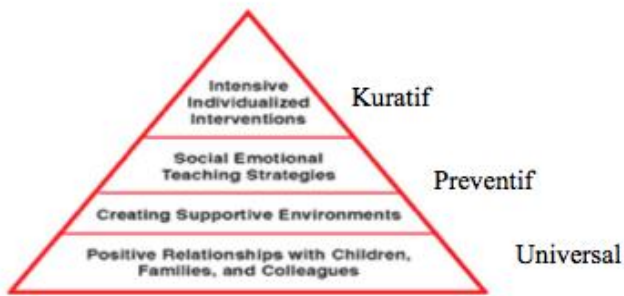


Figure 2. Teaching Pyramid Model (Fox et al. 2010)

TPM-Kurtilas model is different from CBHE, which focuses directly on the nine pillars of character that are explicitly and systematically implemented by applying knowing the good, reasoning the good, feeling the good, and acting the good, as embodied in its own curriculum, namely Character-Based Holistic Curriculum (Megawangi 2010). Through knowing the good, children are accustomed to only thinking of the good things. Reasoning the good is done so children know the reason of why they should behave well. Then, feeling the good is about how the teacher can build children's feelings towards their good deeds. By feeling the good, it is expected that the children will love good deeds. Finally, in acting the good, children practice kindness. These four stages are developed holistically, in which children are actively positioned in exploring learning themes developed by the whole components of the school, including parents, who become facilitators through the Character-Based Holistic Curriculum (Megawangi 2010).

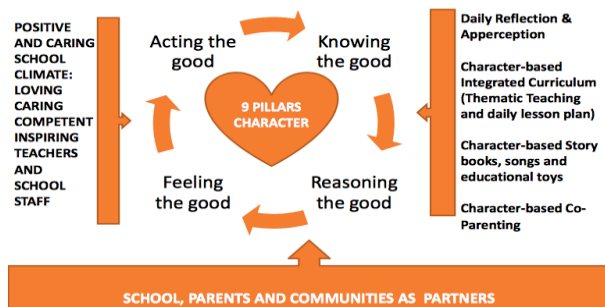


Figure 3. Character-Based Holistic Education Model (Megawangi 2010)

Based on the explanations of the two models' strategies, it can be concluded that TPM-Kurtilas and CBHE have different approaches in their strategies. First, TPM-Kurtilas positions classroom teachers as the key actors in preparing the environment and developing children's behavior. Meanwhile, CBHE gives more emphasis on the experience of children supported by the creation of a comfortable and sustainable learning environment. Secondly, TPM-Kurtilas has clear character development strategies for teachers, from the basic to the curative stage. This is certainly distinct from CBHE that is holistic in presenting all the supporting elements of character development.

3.3 The Learning Media Used

Early childhood is the period when children are at the preoperational stage (Piaget, in Santrock 2007). So, developing the character of young children, of course, requires support of instructional media appropriate to their age. Nurseto (2012) revealed that the use of media in the teaching and learning of children moral and character makes learning process more effective, more comprehensible, and more concrete in explaining abstract concepts, so verbalism can be reduced. In relation to the above conditions, both TPM-Kurtilas and CBHE have prepared their own learning media in the development of young children's character.

First, in developing children's basic characters, TPM-Kurtilas uses posters, story books, and pictures as the main learning media (Listiana et al. 2015, Maryadi et al. 2016). Based on the results of the research by Maryadi et al. (2016) and Rachmawati (2016), the posters used in the implementation of TPM-Kurtilas in kindergartens have an influence on the changes in children's behaviors and manners. This finding is in line with the views of Piaget (in Santrock 2007) and Murphy (2011) that at the age of 2-7 years, when a child learns an instruction, the child needs to see how the instruction is materialized in a behavior, so that s/he can internalize his feelings toward the behavior. One of the things to do is by showing pictures on a poster. This view is reinforced by the opinion of Hawkins (2011) who argued that instruction with visual cues can affect socialization and self-control in children. Therefore, in view of the above opinions, there is theoretical proof that posters as the media used in the TPM-Kurtilas model can affect children's good behaviors. The media make it easy for children in learning and understanding the instructions or behaviors that are expected by the teacher. As a result, children will act

in accordance with the rules as exemplified by the pictures that they see every day.

The media used in TPM-*Kurtilas* are different from those in CBHE learning process. Using the thematic and integrative approaches, the nine pillars of CBHE character are taught through a variety of ready-made materials and learning media that have been provided to teachers. This is because there is an expectation that teachers can provide concrete learning experiences and stimulate children to learn actively and enjoyably (IHF 2004). Megawangi (2010) described several media that are used to develop the character of children, such as a series of books about the nine pillars of character for children's activity, 125 story books forming the nine pillars of character, a package of 70 types of center equipment and educational games, a series of the nine pillars of character songs, and CDs of moral formation.

Besides the availability of complete learning media in CBHE, it is interesting to note that some learning media are not found in the TPM-*Kurtilas* model, namely the audio-visual media in the forms of character education songs and CDs of moral formation. Schellenberg et al. (2015), Good & Russo (2016) revealed that music and songs will trigger sympathy and prosocial behaviors. This argument is reinforced by the finding of Greitemeyer (2009) which showed that listening to songs with prosocial lyrics will improve children's good thinking and behavior, raise their empathy, and assist in foster care. Thus, based on the above views, audio-visual media presented in this model can further strengthen the impact of the development of the nine pillars of character that the model promotes.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the above explanations, it appears that the TPM-*Kurtilas* and CBHE models have some differences. The first difference lies on the character values promoted, in which TPM-*Kurtilas* adapts the character values listed in the 2013 Curriculum for Early Childhood Education, while CBHE promotes the values that are more oriented towards realizing the objective of national education. Second, in terms of the strategies used, TPM-*Kurtilas* focuses on the stages teachers must go through in creating a supportive environment for developing children's character, namely the universal, preventive, and curative stages; on the other hand, CBHE is holistic in its strategy, combining various components to develop the four elements of children's character, namely knowing, reasoning, loving, and doing. Third, with regard to the media used, in general TPM-*Kurtilas* uses more visual media, whereas CBHE has audio

visual media that can support the development of children's character.

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