The Model of Implementing Character-based Holistic Education in Learning

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Abstract: Character-based holistic education is an important concept in line with the world getting more complex due to the development of science and technology. The key to face the development is the quality of human resources. This article aims to explain the strategy of character-based holistic education. The strategy includes curriculum and other aspects contributing to the implementation of character-based holistic education. Therefore, the method used is descriptive-analytic, explaining the concept of character-based holistic education to get a relevant model. The analysis concludes character-based holistic education into two main points. (1) Character-based holistic education aims to develop student's physical, emotional, social, creative, spiritual, and intellectual aspects optimally. This model combines intellect, emotion, and religion. (2) Implementing character-based holistic education is conducted through: (a) applying a learning model involving active participation of students. They receive learning materials which are concrete, meaningful, and relevant to their life context; (b) creating conducive learning atmosphere, so students can learn effectively in a safe condition; (c) giving explicit, systematic, and sustainable character education involving *knowing the good, loving the good, and acting the good*; (d) providing learning based on the principle of multiple intelligences, paying attention to the uniqueness of every student.

Keywords: holistic education, character, learning model

INTRODUCTION

Currently Indonesia is facing two big challenges: decentralization and complete globalization era in 2020. The country must be prepared for the challenges. The success key to face the challenges relies on the quality of human resources. Therefore, the improvement of human resources should be seriously thought.

One of the attempts to improve the quality of human resources is implementing character-based holistic education. To this end, *Indonesian heritage foundation* has developed a model of character-based holistic

education which is focused on whole aspect of human life. The curriculum of character-based holistic education is designed based on competency and implemented using an active, integrated, contextual, collaborative, and multiple intelligence learning approach which can create effective and fun learning atmosphere and develop all aspects of human life holistically. This model of character-based holistic education has been used by the Ministry of National Education of Indonesia (Kemdiknas) in developing integrated learning project for early education and early grade of elementary school (the Directorate of PSMP Kemdiknas, 2010).

According to Lickona (1991), the implementation of character-based holistic education is needed to anticipate 10 age symbols recently emerging, namely, (1) the increase of juvenile delinquency; (2) the use of bad words and language; (3) strong peer influence in crime; (4) the increase of self-destruction behavior, such as drug, alcohol and free sex; (5) good and bad moral is getting blurred; (6) the decrease of teachers' ethics; (7) the decrease of respect to parents and teachers; (8) the decrease of the responsibility of individual and citizen; (9) the spreading of dishonesty, and (10) suspicion and hatred happen among society.

These symbols seem to have emerged in Indonesia. Apart from these age symbols, another problem faced by Indonesia is the education system which focuses more heavily on left brain (cognitive skills) than right brain (affective, emphatic, and feeling), while character building is more related to the development of right brain. In fact school subjects connected with character education such as moral and religion stresses more on left brain (memorization, or simply for information).

All these problems bring the consequence that building students' character should be done systematically and sustainably,starting from early to higher education involving such aspects as intellectual, spiritual, moral, culture, emotion, and character behavior. This article therefore attempts to present some aspects of character-based holistic education, especially character education as a curricular program. This article aims to propose how character-based holistic education can be conducted optimally at educational institution.

HOLISTIC EDUCATION

The term holistic refers to the whole. Heriyanto (2003)argues that holistic can be seen as a whole view in perceiving reality. Holistic view means seeing the whole, instead of seeing the parts, as being integrated, systemic, complex, non-mechanic, and non-linear.

Besides, the term holistic comes from the words *heal*and *health*whose etymology is similar to the term whole (Noah Webster, 1980). This indicates that thinking holistically is healthy thinking. In education, holistic education is an educational model which builds humans holistically by developing all their potentials. The objective of holistic education is forming holistic human. Holistic humans are those who can develop all their potentials such as social, creative, emotional, and spiritual potentials. Holistic humans are learning humans who are aware that they are a part of wide life system, so they are always willing to contribute to their surrounding (Megawangi, 2005).

The objective of education in Indonesia written in the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 Year 2003 is to make holistic humans with character. This is the foundation for the development of a nation. According to Latifah (2008), the implementation of holistic education bases on three principles: (1)*Connectedness*, an interconnection concept coming from holism philosophy which then develops into ecology, quantum physics and system theory; (2) *Wholeness*, is not only the accumulation of every part. The

components of *wholeness* are dynamic; (3) *Being,* is about feeling. This is related to the depth of soul, wisdom, horizon, honesty, and originality.

Holistic education aims to not only give freedom to pupils to develop themselves intellectually but also facilitate physical and mental development holistically so as to produce Indonesians with strong character who are able to increase the dignity of Indonesia. This is similar to what Ki Hajar Dewantara states with regard to free human that "Free human is a human whose life is not physically and mentally dependent to other humans but relies on himself."

Holistic education, according to Henzell-Thomas, is an attempt to promote all students holistically into all aspects of learning including spiritual, moral, intellectual, culture, esthetic, emotion and physic. Those aspects are connected to God, the final end of all lives in the world (Latifah, 2008). Human who can develop all his potentials is a holistic human resource. He is always aware that he is a part of wider life system, so he is always willing to be prepared and to give positive contribution to society through qualified education process. To reach the end of holistic education, the curriculum designed should be led to reach the objective. It includes creating long-life learners who always think holistically that everything is connected. Some learning approaches considered effective are active-learning approach, creativity and skill-stimulated approach, integrated curriculum, etc. (Megawangi, 2005). Educational institutes should be able to develop holistic curriculum, so education processes stresses on not only IQ but also emotional and spiritual intelligence. Therefore, the holistic curriculum should be designed with contextual approach.

The abovementioned notions can be interpreted that the paradigm of holistic education is considering education holistically, not partial, limited, and rigid. Holistic education is an attempt to develop holistic and balanced aspects of learning covering spiritual, moral, imagination, culture, emotion, and physic. These aspects are connected with God as the final objective of all lives in the world.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

Etymologically the word *character* comes from Greek meaning "*to engrave*" (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999). The word *engrave* can be interpreted as sculpturing, painting, or writing (Echoles & Shadily, 1995). In Indonesian language, the *character* means behavior or personality trait which is different from somebody else. *Character* also means letter, number, space, or special symbol on keyboard (Language Center, Kemdiknas, 2008). People with character is people with behavior. Thereby, character is one's behavior that differs himself from other people.

Williams &Schnaps (1999) defines character education as "any deliberate approach by which school personnel, often in conjunction with parents and community members, help children and youth become caring, principled and responsible". It can be inferred that character education is an attempt done by school personnel, together with parents and society, to help kids and youth become a caring, principled, and responsible person.

Furthermore, Williams (2000) explains that character education was firstly used by the National Commission on Character Education in America as the term covering various approaches, philosophy, and programs. Problem solving, decision making, conflict resolution are important aspects of developing moral character. Therefore, character education should give students a chance to directly experience those aspects. Specifically, the objective of moral education is to help students become morally responsible and disciplined

(McBrien & Brandt, 1997).Besides this, with regard to counseling, Charter Education (2003)states that character education aims to "assist students in becoming positive and self-directed in their lives and education and in striving toward future goals." The objective can be reached by teaching students the values of honesty, goodness, generosity, bravery, freedom, equality, respect, and nobility (McBrien & Brandt, 1997).

With the explanation being described above, character is identical to personality. Personality is a specific characteristic of someone coming from environment, family, and inheritance (Koesoema, 2007).In connection with this notion, some people argue that goodness and badness of human character has been inherited from birth. If this idea were true, character education would be useless because it would be impossible to change the character. Some other, on the other hand, argue that character can be improved, so character education can be used to produce human with a better character.

There are several terms used regarding the study of character education, among others, Moral Education, Value Education, Religious Education, Behavior Education, and Character Education itself. Each is used interchangeably. For example, character education belongs to value and religious education (Kirschenbaum, 2000). As an academic study, character education needs to have academic scientific requirements such as material, approach, model, and method. In a number of advanced countries like the USA, there are research centers for character education. These centers have developed materials, models, methods, and evaluation instruments for character education. Some well-known experts in this field are Kirschenbaum, Lickona, and Berkowitz. Character education develops through multidisciplinary approach: psychology, moral philosophy, ethic, law, literature and/or humanity.

Behavior with character is the manifestation of one's potentials of Intelligence Quotient (IQ), Emotional Quotient (EQ), Spiritual Quotient (SQ), and Adversity Quotient (AQ). The configuration of characters in the context of psychology and socio-cultural processes can finally be grouped into four categories: (1) spiritual and emotional development; (2) intellectual development; (3) physical and kinesthetic development; and (4) affective and creativity development.These four psychosocial processes are holistically inter-connected and completed in formulating character and realizing noble values of someone (Kemdiknas, 2010).Character can be understood as special good values (knowing good values, living good lives, having a good effect to environment) within one's self and is reflected in behavior. Character appears as a result of thinking, feeling, and physical exercises of a person or a group of people. Character is the special identity of a person or a group of people who have value, ability, moral capacity, and determination to face problems and challenges(The Republic of Indonesia, 2010).

All information above can be inferred that that character is connected with behavior, so character is universal human's behavior values covering all human activities which deal with God, themselves, other people, and their environment. Character can be reflected in thinking, behavior, feeling, and saying based on the norms of religion, law, customs, and culture.

THE MODEL OF IMPLEMENTING CHARACTER-BASED HOLISTIC EDUCATION

Holistic learning happens if curriculum can bring about themes which support the exploration of materials authentically and naturally. With these natural learning materials appearing, meaningful learning processes will happen, and materials designed will intertwine with other aspects in the curriculum. Holistic learning bases on inquiry approach in which students are involved in planning, exploring, and sharing ideas, and

they are encouraged to collaborate and learn using their own ways. Students are treated as learners who are able to fulfill their learning needs through themes designed by themselves.

Holistic learning can only be implemented well when learning context is natural and close to students, and the teachers implementing it understand the concept and application of holistic learning. Besides, meaningful learning requires creativity, learning sources, and teacher' experiences in generating thematic models.

The end of character-based holistic education model is to form a human holistically having character by developing students' physical, emotional, social, creative, spiritual, and intellectual aspects optimally. Besides this, it also aims to promote lifelong learners through: (1) applying learning model involving active participation of students; a model which can increase students' motivation because all dimensions of human being are actively involvedin concrete and meaningfullearning; (2) creating conducive learning so that students can learn effectively in the situation which gives safety, praise, and spirit; (3) giving character education explicitly, systematically, and sustainably by involving such an aspect as*knowing the good, loving the good, and acting the good*; (4) providing learning which pays attention to each student's uniqueness and applying the curriculum which adopts eight aspects of human intelligences.

In his study, Gardner (2007) found that character-based holistic education leads to eight multiple intelligencescovering:(1) linguistic intelligence, being competent in using words in an oral or written form; (2) body-kinesthetic intelligence, being competent in using all body potentials to express ideas and feelings; (3) visual-spatial intelligence, being competent in perceiving visual-spatial world and transforming perceptions; (4) inter-personal intelligence, being competent in perceiving and differentiating intention, motivation, and feeling of other people; (5) intra-personal intelligence, being competent in behaving based on self-knowledge; (6) naturalistic intelligence, connected with knowledge one has about nature; (7) musical intelligence, being competent in perceiving, differentiating, and expressing musical forms which involve the sensitivity of rhythm and melody; (8) logical-mathematical intelligence, being competent in using number effectively and arguing well.

Emotional development theory by Erikson explains that the way parents teach their kid will influence the kid's character. Teaching the kid in a wrong way will kill his character. In developing character, Henzell-Thomas (2006) and Baumrind (1996, 1994) also state that the way parents bring up a kid will influence the kid's social and academic development. Type of child upbringing is categorized into 3: (1) *Authoritarian*: parents tend to control and evaluate a child behavior rigidly, stress on obedience, respect, power, tradition, order, and lack of oral communication. Sometimes parents reject the child presence; (2) *Authoritative*: parents tend to guide a child to think rationally, orientate toward action and behavior, support oral communication, give explanation of parents' demand but use power when needed, expect a child to fulfill parents' wants, but support him to be independent, and set flexible behavior standards; (3) *Permissive*: parents tend to behave positively to a child's wants and behavior, use little punishment, not expect much from him, let him manage his own behavior, avoid control, and use rationality to reach a goal.

Character-based holistic education as a curricular program has been practiced in a number of countries. A study by Halstead andTaylor (2000) shows how value-based learning as a way to encourage good character has been developed in schools around the world.

Citizen's good character is a universal goal of civic education in any country in the world. Even though there are many regulations regarding civic education in many countries, good character development cannot be separated from the condition of the countries. For example, in Canada civic education aiming to make good citizen's character is conducted by each state (Kerr, 1999; Cholisin, 2004; Samsuri, 2004, 2009). In the Alberta state, for instance, the ministry of education has implemented the policy of character education by implementing a document called *Theheart of the matter: character and citizenship education in Alberta schools* (2005).

The question arising is whether character development values should be taught explicitly or implicitly? Halstead and Taylor (2000) did a study addressing the debate on the implementation of the teaching of moral values in the UK (especially during Tony Blair's leadership). Their study shows the importance of (1) history as a tool to help students develop tolerance and national commitment toward democratic values; (2) English as a tool to help students develop independence and respect other people; (3) the teaching of modern languages to ensure truth and personal integrity in communication; (4) mathematics as a tool to help students develop social responsibility; (5) natural sciences and geography as a tool to help students develop particular behavior to environment; (6) design and technology as a tool to help students develop multi-cultural and anti-racist values; (7) art expression as a tool to help students develop fundamental human quality and spiritual response of life; (8)physical education as a tool to help students develop cooperation and other good characters (adapted from Halstead and Taylor, 2000).

The Indonesian government has formulated the policy on developing nation character. In the national policy on nation character year 2010-2025, it is stated that character is composed of four parts: heart, brain, physic, and feeling. Heart is connected with stance and belief, brain with rationality to find and use knowledge critically, creatively, and innovatively, physic with perception, imitation, manipulation, and creation of new activities, and feeling with want and creativity reflected in care (the Republic of Indonesia, 2010).

The character values above are reflected in the five points of Pancasila (foundational philosophy of Indonesia): (1) characters from heart are faithful to God, honest, trustworthy, fair, responsible, empathetic, resilient, heroic, and patriotic; (2) characters from brain are intelligent, critical, creative, innovative, curious, productive, reflective, and technology-orientated; (3) characters from physic are clean, healthy, sportive, reliable, friendly, cooperative, competitive, cheerful, and persistent; (4) characters from feeling are respectful, polite, tolerant, careful, proud of using Indonesian language and product, hard-working, and dynamic.

Among those character values, the Ministry of National Education (2009)has determined four main values which become the spearhead of character implementation at school. They are honesty (heart), intelligence (brain), strength (physic), and care (feeling). Thereby, there are many character values which can be developed at school and integrated into school subjects. Teaching those values is a difficult task. Therefore, there must be priority values to be taught to students.

The Directorate of Development of the Ministry of National Education develops main values summarized from the competency standard of graduate (the Regulation of the Ministry of National EducationNumber 23 Year 2006) and from main values developed by curriculum center of the ministry (Curriculum Center - Kemdiknas, 2009). The main values which should be reached are (1) Religiosity, one's thinking, saying, and acting should be based on the values of God and his religion; (2) Honesty, one should always be trusted regarding his saying, acting, and activities; (3) Intelligence, one's ability to do a task

accurately, efficiently, and fast; (4) Strength, being persistent and resilient in facing difficulties to reach the goal; (5) Democracy, being equal and fair; (6) Care, being willing to prevent and improve destruction (human, nature, and order) around himself; (7) Independence, not relying on other people in completing tasks; (8) Logical, critical, creative, and innovative thinking, a thinking activity based on logic to create a new way and result; (9) Risk-taking, being ready to take risks; (10) Action-oriented, an ability to realize ideas into reality; (11) Leadership, being able to lead and ask people or a group of people to reach the goal; (12) Hard work, showing serious efforts to overcome problems in completing tasks; (13) Responsibility, being able to complete one's task and obligation, for himself, society, environment, country, and God; (14) Healthy lifestyle, implementing good habits and avoiding bad habits destructive to health; (15) Discipline, being obedient to rules and regulations; (16) Self-confidence, being convinced of oneself to reach the goal; (17) Curiosity, trying to know more than accepting what has been learned, seen, and heard; (18) Loyalty, care, and respect for knowledge; (19) Awareness of rights and obligations of oneself and other people; (20) Obedience to rules in society and public interest; (21) Respect for people's works and achievement, encouraging one to produce something beneficial for people and admitting other people's success (22) Politeness, being polite in using language to other people and in dealing with them; (23) Nationalism, thinking and behaving loyalty, care, and respect for Indonesian language, environment, social, culture, economy, and politic; (24) Respect for pluralism, being respectful of various tribes, cultures, religions, and customs (PSMP Directorate, Kemdiknas, 2010).

Among those 24 values, teachers can choose a particular character value which can be taught to students and adjusted to the content of school subjects. Also, they can integrate character into learning and choose a suitable approach to develop students' character.

The curriculum used is character-based holistic curriculum, an integrated curriculum touching all aspects needed by children. This curriculum is not separated and can reflect skills by displaying interesting and contextual themes. In this curriculum, school subjects are developed within the concept of life skills connected with personal and social education, cognitive skill development, character development, and motoric perception development.

The success of learning life values in enhancing character is influenced by teaching approach. Suparno, *et al.* (2002) state four approaches in character education.

1. Separate subject. In this model, character education is separated from and equal to other school subjects. With regard to this, teachers teaching character education should prepare and develop curriculum, develop syllabus, make lesson plan, and use method and their own evaluation instrument. Consequently, the subject of character education should be scheduled on the list of school subjects. The pluses of this model are material planning is better, teaching is more focused, and material taught is more standardized. The minuses of this model are it relies on curriculum, character teaching seems to be only the responsibility of character teachers, and the effect of character education only touches cognitive aspect, not the internalization of expected values.

2. Integrated into school subjects. In this model, character education is integrated into every school subject and therefore becomes the responsibility of all teachers (Washington, *et. all*, 2008). In this context, every teacher can choose the material of character education suitable to the theme of the subject. The advantage of this model is that all teachers are responsible for planting life

values to students. Besides this, the understanding of character values tends not to be only informative-cognitive but applicative, depending on the context of the subject. The effect is that students will be accustomed to values which have been implemented in various setting. The disadvantage of this model is the understanding and perception of values should be similar to all teachers. However, it is not easy because every teacher has different background. Another disadvantage is that if there is adifference in perceiving values, students can be confused.

3. Beyond-formal-learning model. Teaching character values can also be conducted beyond formal learning activities. This model stresses on teaching values through activities discussing life values. This model can be done by teachers who are assigned to do that or by another institution. The advantage of this model is students get direct real experiences, while the disadvantage is that there is not fixed schedule, so it takes longer time and spends more money.

4. Combined model. This is the combination of second and third model. This model can be done by a team from school or outside school. The advantage of this model is all teachers involved can learn from another institution to develop themselves and students. Students get information about values but at the same time experience the values through well-planned activities.

The above-mentioned information strengthens the notion that character education is an inter-curriculum program. Character education can be conducted as a separate (independent) or integrated subject. However, character education can also be done as an extracurricular activity, community service, or civic voluntary.

CONCLUSION

Character-based holistic education is the combination of intellect, emotion, and religion. If developed well, there will be a holistic human who performs superior identity, behavior, and character. The end of character-based holistic education is forming a holistic human with character. It develops students' physical, social, creative, spiritual, and intellectual aspects optimally.

The implementation of character-based holistic education can be done in several ways: (1) applying a learning model which can increase students' motivation, namely giving them concrete, meaningful, and relevant learning; (2) creating conducive learning environment, so students can learn more effectively in a supporting situation; (3) giving explicit, systematic, and sustainable character education which involves *knowing the good, loving the good, and acting the good*; (4) providing a learning model which considers each student's uniqueness by implementing multiple-intelligence based learning.

SUGGESTIONS

Suggestions with regard to the model of implementing character-based holistic education at educational institutions are divided into four points. (1) Character education should be a national program which makes educational institutions an agent of building students' character through learning processes. The model of character education should lead students to have noble character values such as respectful and careful of other people, responsible, honest, and disciplined. Also, character education should be able to prevent students from bad and forbidden behavior. (2) Considering that character-based holistic education is one of the functions of national education, character education should exist in all learning materials.

Therefore, holistic approach needs to be implemented by all teachers adjusted to their respective task at school. Holistic approach is better for students because they get not only information but also character values through contextual activities. This makes them get experience and have more fun. From this perspective, teachers are required to be able to deliver information and give direct experience to students about various information of character values. (3) Implementing character-based holistic education should pay attention to students' needs and potentials such as intellectual, emotional, physical, artistic, and spiritual aspects. Learning processes become personal and collective responsibility; therefore, learning strategy leads to how people teach and learn. Some considerations regarding developing holistic learning strategy are, among others, (a) the use of transformative learning approach; (b) flexible learning procedure; (c) problem solving through an interdisciplinary area of study; (d) meaningful learning; and (e) community involvement learning.

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