

Character Education for Children in Indonesia

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Abstract

Character education is one of the aspects in education which is important for students before they face the real world society. Character education can be learned in the formal education with the support of environment such as school staffs, teachers, and also parents. Moreover, character education can also help students to deal with academic field. Character education is not directly taught in school as a subject but it includes in the subjects learn by students such as science, social science, language and many more. Even though character education has been taught at school, there is still something unwanted happens to students especially children. This thing can be prevented using the character education. This study focuses in describing the character education especially for children in Indonesia.

Keywords: *character, character education, children*

Introduction

There are many important aspects in building in a country. One of the most important aspects is education. Education is very important because by having a good education system, a country can have good improvement in other aspects too such as economy, politic, social, culture, and many more. According to Sudrajat (2011), education can be a field where people can transform and change their life through morality and knowledge. Education can be given to society since they are children. Children should have a good education to make a good foundation for building a country. Children need to be guided so they can have a good education. Children can have a formal education in schools since they are about five or six years old. In Indonesia, children can have formal education in elementary school started from five or six years old in the first grade until sixth grade. Elementary school in Indonesia contains some classes started from first grade until sixth grade. The students who have finished elementary schools can get education in junior high school for about three years. They can go to senior high school after graduating from junior high school. Commonly, Indonesian students stay at schools started from elementary school until senior high school for about twelve years. They who have chances can get education in university or college. This is how formal education works in Indonesia.

In formal education, students learn many subjects in schools. In elementary school, students learn basic things of science, social science, math, and language. In junior high school, they learn more about science and social science. In senior high school, they can choose whether they want to study science, social science, or language. After that, it can be specified more in university. Besides studying about many subjects in schools, students also learn other things; one of them is character education. Character education does not include as a main subject in schools. However, students learn character education through how they act in school based on school rules and how they interact with other people such as their friends, their teachers, even their parents. This is supported by Watz (2011) which stated that character education can be found both in formal and non-formal education. Character.org (2017) stated that teachers do not teach character education as how they teach math or other subjects, it is more like practice. Character education cannot be learned instantly, it takes long effort and a time-consuming process (Pala, 2011). It can be found when they observe their students in the classroom. Building a good character is not an easy thing to have done. Character education should be introduced to students since they are children.

Character education is important to avoid something unwanted among students. The unwanted things usually come from the negative behavior of students. Hidayati et al. (2014) states that cheating in examination, fighting with other; consuming prohibited things are the examples of negative behavior of students. Bullying is something which can be found everywhere where it is among adults even among children. Bullying can happen because there is someone who is different with other people in a specific circumstance. A person who gets bullied may have mental health issues even committing suicide. There are many cases out there which can be found in news, internet, and other sources. This is an example of a bad interaction among people. Moreover character education is growing although there are several challenges along the implementation (Howard et al., 2004).

Character of a person can be defined as how he/she normally responds to something such as fascination, terror, difficulties, or other feelings (Pala, 2011). Pike (2010) states that perseverance, honor, and excitement towards something can be mentioned as the criteria of good character. As a person who spends much time at school, character can be received and learned by the influence of the school environment. It can be earned through the character education. According to Adi (2013), the importance of character education influences the development of some aspects like the achievement in academic field and behavior. It means that the academic achievement and how students behave at school depend on how is the character education of the students. According Pala (2011) there are five keys of a successful character education including: well-planned instruction, the application of what students learn, sympathetic teacher in learning process, the support from every aspect of in learning process, and preparation of the students

Moreover, Pala (2011) also states that there three participants of character education namely parents, schools, and teachers. This is also supported by Wadu et al. (2021) which stated that parents, school staffs, and community play important roles to support the building of students character education. Parents have an important role because they are the closest people around the children so the children's act mostly influence by their parents. Schools and teachers are also people who influence children because children spend long time with them beside their parents. Character education can prevent people especially children from something unwanted like bullying. This is why it is important to include character education in student's lesson especially in formal education at schools started from they are in elementary school. It can build a strong foundation of a good character. This article explains about character education for children especially in Indonesia.

Method

The method of this research was designed using library research method. It is a method which using various resources such as research articles, journals, books, and other literary medias as the support of this research. The data of this research was collected from many sources related to research and similar previous research done by other researchers. This research is described qualitatively. The data which have been collected were used to support the character education for education in Indonesia. The theories used in this research collected from various sources such as relatable articles to find valid data and information. The articles were used to describe and strengthen the importance of character education for education in Indonesia. It was started from finding and reading the appropriated articles and journals and classifies the data. After that, the data were analyzed to reach the purpose of this research and describe the results in finding and discussion.

Findings

The findings of this study showed that there were eleven effective character educations for students Character.org (2017) including: promoting the center of moral values and values of complementary accomplishment to build a good character, defining character altogether including how to think, feel, and behave, applying an approach of broad, deliberate, and enthusiast to develop character, creating a school community which care to people, providing chances for students to act morally, adding an academic curriculum which is significant and stimulating for students which also respect the students, help them develop character, and achieving success, trying to keep students motivated, involving the staffs of schools to become the community where students can learn about moral and things related to character education, initiating character education which support in a long range and take a part in moral leadership, in the effort of building character, the involve of family and community member can be as partners, assessing the school character, functioning the school staffs to become the educators of

character, and proving how good the student's characters. The eleven principles of effective character education is important to be understood in order to lead students especially children to understand what character education is and how they can implement it in the real world society not only at school but also other environments such as their home, public places, and many more.

According to Berkowitz & Bier (2005), character education can help to build a good character of the younger generation which can create a good society and also give different result if the character education works well. This means that the character education can also prevent students from something that lead them to a bad society and doing bad things in the community. Baker (2013) states that the character education can be a way to make the students to become a better community by teaching them character values such as dignity, truthfulness, and endurance which can also improve their academic success. Parents and teachers have important roles to make the children understand about character education. There are many values that can be taught to the students such as honesty, responsibility, and many more. It can be concluded in the lesson at school. Children's development socially and emotionally is highly influenced by schools (Siregar et al., 2018). Children spend much time in schools which make them highly socialize with their friends. Their communications and interactions can shape their own characteristics.

Discussions

The findings show that there were eleven effective character educations for students (Character.org, 2017) and there is importance of applying character education for students since they were in childhood (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). This can be supported by Agung (2011) which conducted a study about application of character education in social studies in junior high school which included several good characters for students such as honesty, integrity, tolerance, discipline, and many more. According to Sudrajat and Wibowo (2013), school program also have to support the building of character education, this can be divided into three programs namely good quality culture which include the quality in input, academic field, and non-academic field, religious school quality which include character education such as cooperative, togetherness, and many more, and discipline culture which included togetherness, caring, discipline, and religious. Moreover, parents also have big role in shaping the children character. This is supported by Harun (2013) which stated that parents play an important role for children character since they have a lot of time with the family. (Harun, 2013) also stated that beside parents, teachers also play important roles in shaping student character in order to achieve national education purpose in Indonesia.

Character education in school also affects the citizen in democracy-based country (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006). It means that character education plays an important role in shaping the character of the citizen in a country. Since the students take their time in school, school can provide place to shape the character education. This is supported by Weber & Ruch (2012) which stated that the building of character education is important in various context in school.

Character education is also important for students' future. This is supported by Agboola and Tsai (2012) which stated that the result which brought by character education can make the students become good leaders in the future. This shows that character education is important to be shaped by parents and teachers since the students were in childhood. This is also supported by Prestwich (2004) which stated that teacher are given a responsibility to create a curriculum which provided the character education. Character education is also important for students' achievement. According to Benninga et al. (2003) the school which provided good character education for students tend to have good score in academic measurement. Character education is important to be learned by students since they are children since by having good characters, students can improve my things in their life in the future such as in education field, cooperating and communicating with other people.

Conclusions and Suggestions

Character education is very important for students especially for children. It is because by having a good character, students can improve many things in their life including academic and non-academic field. Character education can be included in subjects at school. Students are not the only one who involves in character education; it also needs support from teachers and parents. Moreover, students must be guided by the parents and teachers so they are away from negative behavior which can bring them into something unwanted and dangerous for their life.

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