Strengthening the Class-Based Character Education
(Case Study of SMP Negeri 6 and SMP Negeri 8 Kota Banda Aceh)

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Abstract: Globalization progress taking place after the earthquake and Tsunami at Aceh has made it easier for new cultures to come into the society, leading to changes in social lives and characters of the students in the society. Formal Education in schools is one of the most effective ways of building the characters of individuals, so they can grow up and be better people in society. This research was carried out to find out the progress of the implementation of character values in the students' learning process. This research is a case study for the experiment carried out by collecting data from SMP Negeri 8 and Negeri 6 Banda Aceh. The results show that teachers write down the character values being applied in the learning steps, in the students' study plan. The implementation of these character values is executed in the classroom, by integrating them into the lesson materials. The teacher shows the various character values contained in the lesson material by using examples related to events and situations currently taking place where the student lives, by telling stories that bring up these characters, and by using the source of the study. The character values being implemented are related to the lesson materials and the religious character has been prioritized.

Keywords: Strengthening, class-based and character education

INTRODUCTION

The various developments of the globalization era affect the lives of people in the world. One of the impacts of the globalization advancements of information and communication is the increase in global cultural values (Ger, 2017; Hong & Cheon, 2017). Historical, cultural, social and other factors influence the formation of an individual's behavior, values, and personality (Caspi, et al, 2005). Cultural background can shape a person's character (Peng, et al. 2010) and ultimately affect the character of the nation.

Education as a part of the culture is also influenced by globalization, it has a very important role in strengthening the Indonesian character (Rokhman & Syaifudin, 2014). The character education is one of the main discourses in Indonesia's national policy. In the National action plan, it is stated that the character education is a key element in the achievement of the national development vision and mission, included in the Long Term Development Plan for the period of 2005-2025. Moral decadence in the people of the nation has been considered to be evident due to the weakening of the nation's character, both internally and externally. Formal education in schools has been seen to be effective in the formation of an individual's character, making it easier for them to grow well in the environment (Hadi & Chaer, 2017). Schools have great responsibilities in character education, refining students to form intelligent and good people. The character values of all school residents should include knowledge, awareness or willingness, and actions to implement these values.

Character education is not different from other subjects (Afandi, 2011), but its existence is applied to every subject and to all aspects of school culture, such as religious activities, praying, worship, religious holidays and other professional and ritual activities. The school culture then becomes the characteristics of the schools that bring together all existing units, as it is also the important aspect of creating the school (Wasono, & Sutarto, 2015). All school residents need to support and make a conducive environment for the character-based programs in the schools (Aminah, et al, 2014).

Many persons' character are built in school and these characters are reflected in the school's culture, this is the foundation for the idea of character building for students and all the school residents (Suzanne, 2010). Yatmiko, et al, (2015) concluded in the research that the implementation of the character values should be carried out through integrated strategies in learning, self-development, and additional allocation of learning time.

Character education must be established and developed in every educational institution. Character education is basically a consciously planned method of empowering students' potential and civilization, to build the unique characters of a person or group of people for the best future generation.

The Indonesian government has acknowledged the character education as the most important aspect of education implementation in Indonesia. This is shown by the issuance of Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2017, on Strengthening Character Education. This regulation enacts the character education as the national education platform to equip the students as the golden generation of 2045, with the spirit of Pancasila and good character to deal with the dynamics of change in the future. Hokanson & Karlson (2013) concluded in their results, that any generation that lacks the character power, will lack the abilities to overcome challenges and failures.

The educational unit has a responsibility of strengthening the character education, and the character of students is to be strengthened through the harmonization of heart, taste, thoughts, and physical processes, and involvement and the cooperation between education, family and community units as part of the Mental Revolution Movement. The basic character values that are the main focus of strengthening the character education are nationalism, integrity, independence, cooperation, and religion.

The 2013 curriculum is a very important aspect of strengthening the character education, and it is carried out through a class-based character education approach, school culture-based character education and community-based character education. These three approaches are integral and comprehensive character education approaches that must be applied in the education units. Strengthening the character education must be integrated into intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities conducted in the education units.

The main focus of strengthening the character education in this research study is the class-based character education approach. The class-based character education is carried out through interaction between teacher and students in the classroom, and the careful strategies taken by the teachers to integrate the character value into the learning process through the selection of the learning methodology, the classroom management, and the learning evaluations.

Strengthening character education requires a good and specific system. Strengthening character education includes the steps of learning, teaching tools, methods, and others (Akhwan, 2014). The research result of Prihastanto, et al, (2016) clearly stated that the character education implementation in schools is not as effective as expected and that the character education teachings only focus on the intellectual aspects. Principals, vice principals, subject teachers, administration head, parents, and school committees still partially implement the character education. The teachers ignore the spiritual and psychomotor aspects and give more attention to the cognitive aspects of the students.

The interview results with several junior high school teachers in Kota Banda Aceh revealed that they follow the technical guidance on the implementation of strengthening character education. After teachers' participation in training, they are expected to be able to create a learning plan for their students, by identifying the students' activities and adding the character education to the activities from beginning to the end.

The objective of this research study is to describe and analyze the learning plan created by the teachers, the integration of the character education strengthening processes to the learning process, and the various character values integrated into the learning process.

METHOD

The approached of this study is qualitative, Sugiyono (2016) argued that "Qualitative research is research carried out to examine an object's condition naturally and profoundly, as well as contain meaning based on facts found in the field so that it can be constructed into hypotheses and theories". The qualitative study was intended to understand the uniqueness and dynamics of the natural phenomena, and used in this research study to understand the progress of strengthening the character value in the learning process. The study was conducted at SMP Negeri 8 Kota Banda Aceh located in the area near the coast and SMP Negeri 6 Kota Banda Aceh located in the center of Kota Banda Aceh.

Through July, August and September 2018, data were collected from the primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were gotten from interviews and observations, these interviews were conducted on

informants, namely principals, vice principals, teachers, school supervisors, and students, to gather information on the focus of the research problem. Observations were done to know the progress of strengthening of the character education in the learning processes conducted by the teachers. Secondary data were obtained from the schools' policies and activities through document study. Data analysis was carried out in accordance with data analysis techniques from Miles and Huberman (Sugiyono, 2016) by data collection, data reduction, data display, and verification/conclusions.

The researchers checked the data validity by triangulating the data to avoid mistakes or data errors (Moleong, 2012). The triangulation techniques used were the triangulation of sources, methods, and theories. Source triangulation was done by comparing information obtained by the researcher from each informant until it was proven that the answers were similar and consistent. Method triangulation was done by comparing information or data in different ways, such as interview, observation, and document study. Theory triangulation was done by comparing relevant theoretical perspectives, to avoid biased information from individuals on the findings or conclusions taken.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that before preparing the implementation plan of learning (RPP), the teachers analyze and identify the values contained in the learning material. Then, the teachers design the RPP including the strengthening character focus, by choosing relevant learning methods and classroom management. In the learning plan, the teachers write down the character values to be taught in the learning steps, character values appear are in accordance with the subject materials.

The researchers also saw that there were teachers who have not designed the RPP that includes the character education. The interview results with the teachers who did not write the character education in their RPPs presented that the character values were included, but they did not write them down in their RPPs. So, the difference is only that the character values were not written in each learning activity.

The teachers are responsible for preparing the RPPs well before conducting the learning process. The RPP can be prepared by arranging the lesson material, setting the criteria for analyzing the expected characters in line with the curriculum development, determining the learning media, considering the learning approaches or methods, designing the learning activities in accordance with the situation, conditions and the school's potentials, and regarding the time allocation to achieve the learning objectives (Silanoi, 2012).

The observation results presented that the learning implementation by the teachers is in accordance with the RPPs. However, there were some teachers who did not make the RPPs as a guide in implementing learning. Learning done in accordance with the RPPs is better than learning that is not in line with the RPPs.

Strengthening character education through the classroom learning process is carried out using an integrated approach in all subject materials. The teachers reveal the character values contained in the learning materials by giving examples and making comparisons according to the events in the students' environments, telling stories to bring out the expected characters, expressing the character values through discussion, role play about various activities, media use, learning tools and resources in accordance with the subject materials.

Activities that are not important in the character education implementation in the learning process is that of students having teachers as their role models. Ethical deviation by the teachers can create greater problems when the teachers are considered as educators and role models by the students and the public or society (Calabrese & Roberts, 2002).

The teachers develop various learning processes according to the subject materials so that students are more active. The teachers stated that the learning process was developed to provide opportunities for the students to internalize the character values and to show them in their behaviors. Agung (2018) concluded that "The lesson is expected to be a tool and opportunity for students to develop various good characteristics such as religious, honest, integrated, tolerant, disciplined, independent, hard-working, creative, patriotic, and friendly qualities."

The observation results show that the strengthening of the character education is done by the teachers in the learning process. For example, before learning starts, the teachers together with students pray to be grateful for the health given by God, to give the religious character. Also, the teachers motivate the students by telling them stories of the struggles of heroes when fighting for Indonesian independence, to embed the nationalism value. The teachers also give assignments to the students in groups to inculcate the cooperative character. In addition, the teachers ask the students questions individually to capture the independent character. The teachers conduct tests and ask students not to cheat, in other for the students to develop the integrity character.

The teachers argue that the values of the main characters raised in a subject material are applied repeatedly to the next material. This is done so that the main character values can become a habit that is

carried out by the students, in order for it to become a culture. Ferdiawan and Putra (2013) stated that one of the means that can be used to form the basic character is the approach of cultural values because cultural values are always attached to humans whenever and wherever they are.

The class-based character values that are implemented include religious, honest, tolerant, discipline, hard work, creative, independent, democratic, curious, national spirit, patriotic, respect for achievements, communicative, peaceful, love reading, environmental care, social care, and responsible values. The researchers' observations show that teachers more often emphasize the religious character, which can be seen when teachers connect whatever is conveyed to the students or carried out in the classroom to the Islamic religion. The teachers argue that the emphasis on the religious values in the learning process is also in accordance with the implementation of education in Aceh which is based on Islamic law.

Strengthening the character education that makes Islamic values the main characters, can be done with a comprehensive approach namely, educating and developing the students' characters by giving knowledge, supporting environmental conditions and providing opportunities to practice and shape the students' characters (Izfanna, & Hisyam, 2012).

CONCLUSIONS

Indonesia is a multicultural nation that is committed to developing the national character as an important and inseparable part of the country's development, and education has a very important role to play in the country's character development. Strengthening class-based character education is one of the focuses of the character education approach implemented in the 2013 Curriculum. The character education implementation in the classroom learning process has not run optimally, and this has led to a mandate that every teacher must prepare the RPP according to their respective subjects, and implement learning based on the RPP. Religious, nationalism, independent, cooperative and integrity values are the values of the main characters developed in the learning process, depending on the subject materials. The importance of the character education in the learning process is that it provides the means to build the character of the nation and equip the students as the golden generation in 2045.

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