

IMPLEMENTING CHARACTER VALUES AT AN ISLAMIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN ACEH BESAR

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Abstract

Characters or attitude should be trained for children since the very young age. It is also taught at schools but the process of personal attitude should be started by parents since one is given birth. Their willingness to queue in public, ability to listen and respects others, and disciplines are examples of characters education which are impossible for children to do without self-habituation from children environment. This self-habituation is not an instant process and many youths are now losing good attitude. To overcome this, an Islamic school located in Aceh Besar was established in 2012 and adopts the word 'Character' as the name of the school. This study tries to investigate the process of characters building implemented at that school. The data were collected through direct observation and interview with the principal. The results show that the school uses seven characters abbreviated as 'Dahsyat'. Each word represents one character and indicators were set for each character. Various activities are done inside and outside school. The process of teaching and learning runs successfully. However, some weaknesses are also found such as this school accepts so many new students every year, thus, the school needs quality control towards both teachers and students.

Keywords: Character, School, Character Education, Islamic Teaching

INTRODUCTION

The Law (Qanun) of the Government of Aceh No. 5 of 2008 on the Implementation of Education is the key foundation to Islamic education implementation in Aceh. In addition, the Law No 14 Year 2005 on teachers and lecturers endorse the stipulation of this Qanun, which gives people of Aceh an opportunity to implement Islamic education in this province.

Law No 20 Year 2003 on National Education system emphasizes that the aim of national education is the mastery of knowledge as well as *taqwa* (piety) (Kemendiknas, 2010). The mastery of knowledge requires student's intelligence and is usually influenced by several dimensions such as: emotional, intellectual, and spiritual meanwhile *Taqwa* puts emphasis on the spiritual actions of a student. Chapman (2011) states the character education is now becoming important issue of curriculum due to students' behaviors. Therefore, there is a need for an establishment of a brilliant and outstanding education management models not only emphasis on cognitive but also affective process.

In Aceh Besar, a new school has been established to fulfill the needs of community to train students in character-based learning. The name of the school also adopts the word 'character' to strengthen the point that the school staff will focus the learning to develop students' characters in every aspects of the learning process. The name of the school is Elementary School of Character-Based School Nurul Qur'an (SDIK NQ). The

name Nurul Qur'an means that the characters formed will be based on the values of Islamic teaching. The school has been running for six years with selected headmaster and teachers. All teachers have Islamic learning and teaching experiences. We, therefore, are interested to find out what characters have been implemented at this school, and what activities are developed in order to educate students with good characters.

Character-Based Learning as Basic Foundations

Character is an attitude, akhlak, or good characters of a person that need to be developed through long training in order to achieve a strong fundamental attitude of a person to view, interact, act, and think in his/her life (Kemendiknas, 2010, p. 3). Character is seen through someone's tendency of acting in his social life (Fahmy, et al, 2015). Characters are trained through habitual learning. Further, it also states that character is then integrated into education system since education is a way to develop potential things that a person may have.

Kemendiknas further develop five aims of character education:

1. Develop potential things of a student
2. Develop good habits and good attitude of a student
3. Develop leadership ability and responsibility
4. Create an independence, and creative student
5. Create good school atmosphere: safe, honest, full of creativity, friendship, and dignity

Kemendiknas (2010) also states that school and teachers must train students to have at least five characters such as religious, honest, tolerate, discipline, work hard, creative, independent, curious, friendship, communicative, care, responsible, and so on. Zubaedi (2012) concluded from several experts that there are nine pillars of characters building which include responsibility, respects, fairness, courage, honesty, citizenship, self-discipline. Caring and perseverance. Kurniawan and Hindarsih (2013) say that characters are developed through five phases: knowing-familiar-habit-and integrated. A person, whom characters have been integrated in his life, will automatically apply those characters in his life without being forced to do so.

METHOD

This research study applies an observation and interview as method of collecting data. The observations were done within one semester. The process of learning was observed either in or outside of classroom. The teaching and learning process were observed in eight classrooms. We took note all aspects of character implemented at this school. Beside observation, an open interview was done to the headmaster of the school. This aimed at obtaining more detail information. We use the result of observation as a platform of the question. The interview was done once for 1 hour. The results of interviewed was elaborately written in result and discussion section.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of School Activities (Monday - Thursday)

The Seven Characters

Teachers try to train students to have at least seven characters. Each character represents a day in a week. Even though students do not go to school on Saturday and

Sunday, students are encouraged to practice one character on Saturday and Monday. The represented character on the particular day does not mean the school ignores other characters. Instead, teachers try to make it easier by separating each character every day, just as representative characters. All characters are trained. Below are the characters based on the vision and mission of SDIK NQ:

1. Monday = Disiplin / Disciplined
The students are trained by means of fun learning methods to be self-reliance in terms of obeying the rules so that they do not feel forced to do so. Examples of activities are: graphic of attendance, reward, Monday Surprise, etc.
2. Tuesday= Amanah / Trustworthiness
Educate students to be honest, loyal, open minded and to trust to one another. Examples of activities are 'Honesty Canteen" (students buy food available on the tray and pay for it just by putting the money into the provided can', speaking honestly, giving charity, found items box, etc.
3. Wednesday = Harmoni (Harmonious)
Students love, have respect for, be fair to, and feel empathy toward one another. Examples of activities: group cleaning, birthday present provision, team games, visits to sick people, etc.
4. Tuesday = Santun (well-mannered)
Students are educated to have good manners in accordance with the Islamic teachings involving good language and actions. Examples of activities are greeting in Islam, asking and giving apology, asking for permission etc.
5. Friday =Yakin / Optimistic
Students are encouraged to develop a strong determination to uphold justice, to not easily give up, and to work hard for their own success. Examples of activities are: telling stories about Islamic heroes, watching movies on prophets, listening to stories about successful people, etc.
6. Saturday = Aktif / Active
Students are provided with students- centered activities. Teachers' roles are facilitator, motivator, a good role model (uswatun hasanah). Examples of activities are: studying in nature, science lab, interviewing people, role play, etc.
7. Sunday = Terampil / skillful
The students' life skill activities are increased to enhance their interest and talent which can be applied in their daily and future lives. Examples of activities are: making handicraft, sewing a button, practice of religious workship or ibadah, art, speech, sports, computer lesson, etc.

Analysis of School Characters Day

SDIK NQ applies study in nature once or twice in a semester. This means that students do the learning activities outside of the classroom. They study at different places to visit. Based on the school vision and mission, SDIK NQ has cooperated with several businesses, such as PT Jantho Farm (animal husbandry and agriculture), SEHAT auto clinic (one-stop service workshop), Jroh Production (printing and Graphic Design), and Dinas Inkubator Kader Peternakan (animal husbandry management training, livestock farming). Below is the example of learning day's out activities that have been done.

Table 1. Students' learning out

No	Lessons	Activities	Places
1	Sport	Football, and gymnastic	Darussaadah

2.	Indonesian Language	1-2 grade: Fast reading 3-4 grade: write a composition 5-6 grade: read a poem	building Putroe Phang Park
3.	Social Science	Taking notes	Aceh Museum
4.	Mathematics	Matematika Cepat / Fast Math Competition	Football Stadium
5.	Skill	Cooking and selling food	Park at the school
6.	Islamic Education	Practice of Hajj	Park at Darussadah

As observed, students are fully motivated and eager to study outside of the classroom. The different places to study make students feel enthusiasm to participate in all activities. Students 'force' their parents to take them to the study areas on time. Students even prepare things such as they were going for a picnic. They have fixed activities before main activities. When students arrive at the places, they stand to pray Dhuha (morning prayer) together. After that, students recite Al Qur'an in group so they will finish all chapters of Al Qur'an in one Friday. These are two main activities before the lesson begins. When they do main activities, they work in individual and in group. There will be winners of the lessons but every student is rewarded even with only some snacks. One example, when studied Indonesian language lesson, students competed individually. Students did different tasks according to the class level. Students of 5th and 6th grade, for instance, read poems and so on. Another example is cooking and marketing day. Here, they worked in group to cook a food and sell the food in the school yard. Parents bought the food. Through this way, students develop the character of discipline, friendship, active, independent, creative, and religious. They also develop their creativity and capability to work in group. Based on the indicator and principles set by Kemendiknas (2010), the school has implemented the principles of character-based learning. Those are character is not taught, character-based learning is integrated in the lesson and school creates fun learning activities.

Extra Curriculum Activities

Kemendiknas (2010) says that one way to develop students' characters is through extra and intra curriculum activities. Intra curriculum activity is activities set by the school staff and is usually trained by students' own teachers. For example, activities that can support the teaching and learning process. While extra curriculum activity is activities set by the school staff not in the school hours. Students are not forced to join to extra activities. Usually, school staff hires professional trainers to train students. Such activity is boy scout and little doctor.

SDIK NQ applies extra curriculum activities on Friday and Saturday. The extra activities are archery club, Karate club, Acehnese traditional club, sains club, tahsin (quran recitation), English and Arabic study and boy scout. The School hires professional trainers for each activity. Interestingly, the activities provided are not common extra activities available at other schools. Based on the writer's knowledge, schools in Aceh Besar usually provide Boy Scout, students Red Cross, Little Doctor, and Drum Band activities. SDIK NQ provides very interesting and meaningful activities that students can join.

The implementation of character learning is seen to be smoothly run despite of some existing issue such as students' background, family background and so on. This makes the building of character education takes longer time that the teacher expects. Family background does influence the students' behaviors. More issue is about school capacity to accept new students more than it can afford. The number of students also limit the building of character process therefore, it is suggested to other researchers to conduct further research on this matter.

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