

THE TRANSFORMATION OF CHARACTER VALUES THROUGH TEACHING TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' DISCIPLINE

Ridhahani

This study aimed to establish character values entailed in a subject, the way teachers transform students' characters, challenges faced in character transformation and a clear picture of how character values are transformed through the teaching and learning processes. The study used a descriptive naturalistic method with the help of a hermeneutic inquiry approach, study of documents and activities. The object of this study were fifth grade teachers at three national primary schools (SDN) in Banjarmasin. This study found that character values embedded in subjects can be transformed through the teaching and learning processes, if the teachers are able to find and develop these values themselves and comprehend the concept of integrated learning as a way to instill discipline within the students.

Keywords: transformation, teachers, teaching, students, learning, discipline and character values

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly changing society, it is very important to teach students good values or discipline. Teaching good values is not only the work of religion but it is an all-round aspect that must be taught by all teachers within the school. To integrate character values with subject content, teachers are key in facilitating this integration process (Hadi, 2015) because they have the ability to take on this task (Lickona, 1991) of striving for three main goals required to build discipline of students, that is to maintain productive learning environment, to teach students to be self-directing and responsible, and to promote civility among all members of the class (Charles, 2011).

The belief that character value implementation in schools is related to academic achievement of students in schools is of great intrinsic appeal (Benninga *et al.*, 2003). It has been of interest to the Indonesian government since the time of colonialism to the present time. Because of the importance of an upright society, the Indonesian Government has been vocal in promoting good values. In 2010, during the commemoration of National Education Day one of the important issues raised was the connection between education and character building. It is believed that good and strong character, whether personal, public, or even national, is reflected in people with good morals and manners (Yudhoyono, 2010).

Character building has been highlighted lately, as Indonesia is facing a multi-dimensional crisis, stemming from a crisis of values (morals and ethics), which is

* Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Antasari Banjarmasin, *E-mail:* ridhahani@iain-antasari.ac.id

affecting the life of both state and nation. Various phenomena and social symptoms, such as decreasing politeness, increasing violence, motorbike gangs, fights between pupils and communities, corruption in government officials, drugs, and violence between pupils are increasing in number and seemingly reported daily.

Budimansyah (2011: 47) explained that in mass media, we see a paradoxical condition between values and facts, which includes issues such as violence, traffic violations, public lies, power abuse, collective corruption, collusion disguised in professionalism, etc. School, as an educational institution actively working to transfer good values to pupils, always pays serious attention to character building in order to shape dignified characteristics and civilization, made up of people who have faith in God.

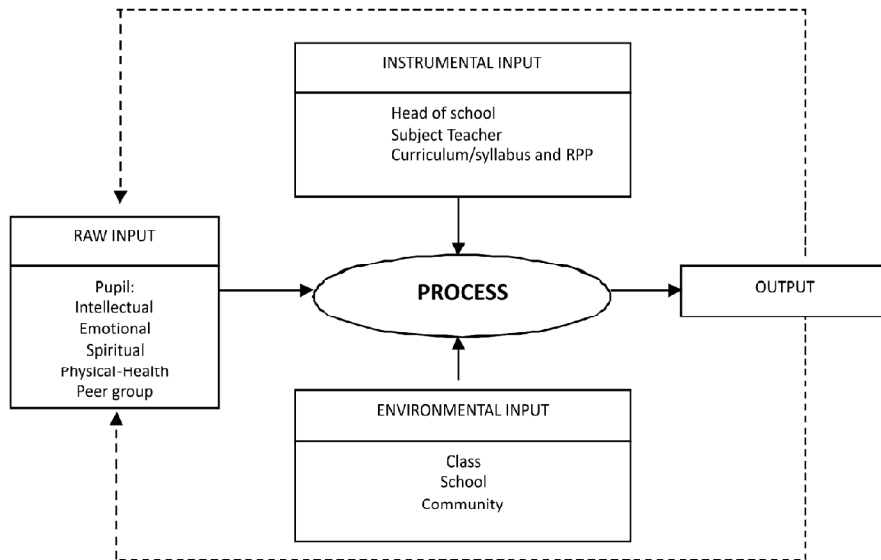
Government policies related to the tasks of teachers in the learning process stipulate that in drafting the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP), teachers must include “results in pupil character” following the Standards of Competency and Basic Competency and Learning Goals. It is understood that character is a key element in education. It can be found in the list of keywords (such as divinity, faith, piety, personality, ethics, good morals) related to the goals of [Indonesian] national education covered in education laws and regulations.

Sabda (2002: 688) said that “in the world of education, transformation is a teaching model oriented in a transformational process both individually and socially in attitudes, values, knowledge or skills”. Learning processes in schools are designed based on inter-component interactions, such as goals of education and teaching, pupil, teachers, learning planning, methods, media and evaluation. Every component is related and affect each other in the process of achieving goals.

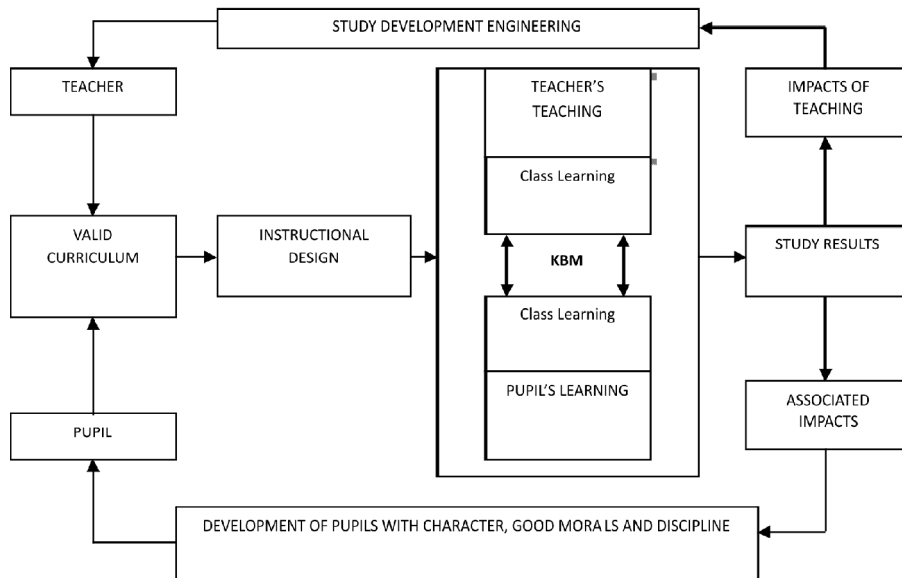
Therefore, teachers are obliged to have the ability to master and comprehend the proper material to achieve learning goals. They are also obliged to be skilful and creative in presenting materials, mastering different teaching strategies and methods, being patient and diligent in guiding/counselling pupils in applying religious teaching, and becoming a fine example of daily life. Teacher behaviours can affect their pupils. Experts claim that regardless of how good the curriculum is results depend on what the teachers do in their class, applying the ‘actual curriculum’ (McNeil, 2006).

The aim of this research is to obtain a general product of the character value transformation process in learning, at three primary schools (SDN) in Pemurus Baru in Banjarmasin. The objectives of this research are: (1) to discover character values embedded within subjects at primary school; (2) to discover ways teachers transform character values in the learning process at primary school; (3) to discover obstacles faced by teachers in transforming character values through the learning process in class; (4) to discover a picture of pupils’ disciplinary atmosphere after the learning process; (5) to obtain a picture of the results of character value transformation efforts through the learning process at SDN Pemurus Baru,

Banjarmasin. Based on the basic concept, background, objectives and theoretical framework of this research, the research framework is drafted as follows:



Teacher’s involvement with other educational elements in the learning process can be mapped, as follows:



This research applied descriptive qualitative and naturalistic approaches that required a direct, intensive, in-depth interaction with information sources and research subjects, in order to accurately gain information about the transformation of character values in the learning process at SDN Pemurus Baru, Banjarmasin. Qualitative research emphasises real characteristics that are formed socially, the close relationship between the researcher and research subject and situational pressure that forms the research. Qualitative researchers put emphasis on the value of their research. Researchers find answers by highlighting the emergence of social experiences and their meaning (Denzin, Norman and Yvonna Lincoln, 2009: 6).

The research objects were the material and subject teachers at SDN Pemurus Baru, Banjarmasin. Six teachers were selected for this research from three schools (two teachers from each school). The selected subject was social science, as the material discusses issues related to human interactions as social creatures that require certain characteristics. The study materials chosen in this research were materials from class I to VI. This research was conducted at the national primary schools in Pemurus Baru administrative village, Banjarmasin Selatan sub-district, Banjarmasin.

Required data in this research included characteristics in subjects at primary school, teacher performance (teaching planning, teaching implementation), school discipline, school policies related to learning, adequate teacher qualifications (educational background, teacher competency training and upgrade) and teacher competency. The research data was collected from learning documents, such as: curriculum/syllabus of primary school learning, text books, RPPs, pupils, head of school and other education staff at the research locations (SDN Pemurus Baru 1, 2, 3) in Banjarmasin.

Data collection was undertaken using several techniques: hermeneutic inquiry, document analysis, action research. Hermeneutic inquiry was applied to examine and explore data on characteristic values of the subject. It was an in-depth examination and exploration, which required good understanding in order to collect information and interpret data. The technique was applied particularly in discovering teachers' understanding of policies undertaken by educational institutions and school practitioners. It is applicable because hermeneutics is a study to understand and reveal data through interpretation. Document analysis was required to examine documents that included: curriculum/syllabus and teacher's learning planning. The analysis covered policies, curriculum guidelines and text books. Action research was conducted to collect data on teacher actions from class observation during a study session. The researcher worked with the teachers as a peer in the class. Action research was conducted in order to find out the performance of teachers in transforming characteristics during the learning process. In this way, the researcher could observe the teachers whole learning performance, through the stages in the learning process applied.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Subject Characteristics

Syllabus, learning tools and text/teaching books were reviewed in order to examine character values. Expected pupil characteristics included in the syllabus are (1) discipline, (2) respect, (3) diligence, (4) honesty, (5) fairness and accuracy, (6) cooperation, (7) responsibility, (8) tolerance, (9) gratefulness (to God), humility and friendliness/hospitality.

Teacher Planning

Before attempting to transform such values, a teacher should draft a Learning Implementation Plan (RPP), which would be used as a guideline by teachers in class learning. Expected characteristics of pupils listed in the RPP were discipline, respect and attention, diligence, honesty and carefulness. Learning steps in the RPP included: 1) introductory activities (praying, registration, motivation and apperception); 2) core activities (exploration, elaboration and confirmation; 3) closing activities (summarising, reflection, feedback and planning follow-up). Expected characteristics of pupils are listed in the RPP after the Standards of Competency and Objectives of Learning. However, pupil characteristics did not appear in the activity detailed, particularly in exploration, elaboration and confirmation.

Teacher Implementation

In implementing character values, teachers would start by preparing the text books, listing attendance, reviewing past lessons, explaining materials according to the subject, giving opportunities to pupils to ask regarding any unclear issues regarding the material, reviewing pupils' exercise books, giving homework, closing the session and also advising pupils to study diligently. The learning process used a normative approach, supported by modern contextualised illustrations. This was apparent during the explanation of historical figures during the Hindu-Buddha and Islam period in Indonesia. The teacher highlighted the effort of these figures to create unity and the spirit of tolerance. The spirit of tolerance (*tasamuh*) in modern present time was repeatedly emphasized by the teacher during exploration. It is important to transfer the idea of tolerance to pupils from an early age.

In delivering learning materials, teachers adapted various methods and strategies, in accordance with the characteristic competencies in the learning framework. In administering main activities, teachers tried to bring out the characteristics listed in the RPP along with the learning materials, and this was repeated at the end of the lesson when they gave advice to their pupils. The teachers only used materials provided in their text books and did not try to add more, or explore a variety of learning materials, which resulted in a less contextualised

study process. In the learning steps, no explanation of teacher activity was provided regarding how to connect the character values with exploration, elaboration and confirmation activity. Teachers did not have additional materials, which meant they could not improvise to improve the learning material. During closing activities, teachers summarised the learning material, motivated the pupils and gave suggestions to the pupils to be engaged in useful activities as a way for them to be grateful to God for an independent life.

Obstacles

Obstacles faced by the teachers in transforming character values were: 1) teachers were not accustomed to having to find for themselves the character values directly related to the learning material they were teaching; 2) teachers did not have a wealth of knowledge regarding material discussed in relation to character values, so were unable to develop breadth and depth of material; 3) some teachers were not accustomed to integrating character values into the learning process, resulting in difficulty presenting material; 4) teachers did not understand the concept of integrated learning; 5) teachers felt that they had not found a fixed format of RPP on the expected pupil character values.

Pupil Disciplinary Atmosphere

Most pupils walked to school, some cycled and only a few was taken by their parents on motorbikes or cars. Fourteen out of the ninety-four pupils observed arrived late. It is not always the same pupils who come late. Based on interviews of pupils who arrived late, various answers were received. Reasons given for late arrival included waking up late, eating breakfast late, not getting a lift from their parents, taking too much time to find school attributes and waiting for their parents to come back from the market. They were unexpected external factors. The pupils also stated that they were not in the habit of coming late to school and added that it was their first time arriving late, and it wasn't too long after school started.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, the **value of discipline** can be found in every study field of subject at the primary school level. Therefore, discipline must be improved by subject teachers, because discipline includes divine and human value. Research data showed that some teachers at the primary schools were not capable of finding for themselves the character values in the subject that they taught, because they focused on only the core material of the lesson included in the RPP. Teachers lacked courage to come out and improvise in explaining the core material related to disciplinary value, and this affected the character value transformation process within the subject.

Similar to this finding, Yudianto (2011: 256) explained that the paradigm of successful science learning must be changed, in which teachers do not only record

cognitive grades, but also success in behaviour, manners and ethics. In this case, learning material must become a tool in forming manners and character, by embedding intrinsic values in the subject. Teachers face difficulty in transforming characteristics because the current curriculum does not explicitly include integrated characteristics, specifically discipline, in the learning material. Sabda (2006: 27) explained that experts in school curriculum see that an integrated curriculum concept does not only cover content design and is a part of planning, but it has also become a whole concept model of curriculum (as an idea, plan, process or result). Integrated curriculum also includes complete design of objectives, materials, learning strategies and evaluation. Curriculum experts discussing the abovementioned integrated curriculum concept are Fogarty (1991), and Kniep *et al.* (1995) among others.

The wholeness of the integrated curriculum concept can be seen from the definition of integrated curriculum. Foragy (1991: xii-xiii) explained integrated curriculum as a curriculum model that can integrate skills, themes, concepts and topic interdisciplinary and between disciplines or the combination of both. Criticisms of the present curriculum raised by Sudjana (2008: 96) as problems to be faced, include:

- The curriculum has been left behind, outpaced by rapidly growing scientific and technological advances.
- It is difficult to adapt the curriculum to developments in public life which are constantly changing, whether in social, cultural, political, or economic fields.
- As a result of the variety of local culture, it is difficult to create a standard curriculum.
- Differences in quality of education/intelligence between regions (cities, villages, provinces) makes it difficult to implement a standard curriculum.
- Difficulties in selecting material and composing an appropriate curriculum to support the various aims determined according to pupils' ability and mental development.

In the context of religious teaching, character values are valuable in a person's life, because they not only comprise divine values, but also human values that enable the creation of more harmonious relations with other human beings. In the same vein, Buseri (2004) found that values can be divided between God and humankind, or divine and human values. Since religious teaching does not only cover theological aspects, but also covers all aspects of life, the values of humanity, embedded in school subjects, must be discovered by teachers to be passed to their pupils through the learning process.

An integrated learning approach is intended for a properly thematically organised study material, based on the principles of simplicity, meaningfulness, flexibility and fairness, adjusted to the pupil's conditions and needs. It is expected

that the instructional effects and nurturing effects can be seen directly in the expected objective and character formula. The nurturing effects should include an improvement in pupil attitudes and behaviours. Therefore, in order to maintain good character-building at school, teachers must be able to answer several questions, as follows:

- Is delivery of character education at school planned by the teachers?
- How intensively does character education at school occur?
- Do teachers generally have adequate competence to implement character values for pupils in the learning process?
- How do you comprehend the integration of character values in each subject?

Ratna Megawangi in (Elmubarok, 2008: 111) formulated a set of good characteristics that can be taught to pupils. This is called the nine pillars, and includes:

- Love for God, trust, reverence, loyalty;
- Responsibility, discipline, excellence, self-reliance, orderliness;
- Trustworthiness, reliability, honesty;
- Respect, courtesy, obedience;
- Love, compassion, caring, empathy, generosity, moderation, cooperation;
- Confidence, assertiveness, creativity, resourcefulness, courage, determination and enthusiasm;
- Justice, leadership, fairness;
- Kindness, friendliness, humility, modesty;
- Tolerance, flexibility, peacefulness, unity

Theoretically a properly planned learning process and strong willingness would enable teachers to provide interesting lessons and improve pupils' active participation in the learning process. Therefore, before implementing the study program included in the syllabus, teachers must draft the RPP which includes quality character values. Sulhan (2010: 15) explained that the steps of character building in the learning process can be conducted by integrating character concepts into each learning activity, in the following four ways: 1) introducing the value of good deeds to the pupils (knowing the good); 2) encouraging pupils to do good deeds (desiring the good); 3) building love to do good deeds (loving the good); and 4) doing good deeds (acting the good). Lickona, T. (2004) found that teaching good values requires an integrated counselling that combines moral knowing, moral feeling and moral action.

In delivering core activities, teachers brought up the expected pupil character values as described in the RPP together with the learning material, however these

values were also brought up at the end of the lesson, directly related to the values embedded in the core learning material. This means that teachers used the RPP as their guideline in the learning process, particularly in achieving their aims. As stated by Akbar (2010: 254), the objective of learning describes the learning process and its results that are expected to be achieved by the pupils, in accordance with basic competences.

Several findings of this research show that subject teachers have attempted to transform character values in the learning process, starting from planning learning in the RPP and then implementing them in the learning process, which includes introductory activities, core activities and closing activities. One factor leading to success is having a teaching plan created in advance. Hamalik (2011: 215) describes several functions of planning, as follows:

- Provides teachers with a better understanding of the objectives of school education and its connection to teaching in order to achieve objectives;
- Improves teachers' belief in teaching values provided and procedures used;
- Supports teacher in recognising different needs and interests of the pupils and encouraging learning motivation;
- Reduces trial-and-error in teaching activities;
- Pupils will respect teachers who are well prepared to teach, in accordance with their expectations;
- Supports teachers to have confidence in themselves.

In the implementation process, all teachers undertook the lesson steps according to the procedure listed in the lesson tools. This implementation procedure included: 1) introductory activities: registration, apperception and individual belief to start the lesson, giving motivation and explaining the objective of the lesson; 2) core activities: exploration, elaboration and confirmation; and 3) closing activities: summarising the lesson with the pupils, evaluating and/or reflecting consistently and as programmed on the activities undertaken, providing feedback on the learning process and results, planning follow-up activities. Character values, such as discipline, were transformed in the main core activities, especially during exploration, and teachers would repeat or remind the pupils again during the closing activities in the form of moral messages, delivered normatively, in each teacher's usual way of closing a lesson. The obstacles faced by teachers in developing character values were mainly caused by limited knowledge of teachers related to the main material of the lesson. Teachers must have broad knowledge of the core material and its connection to character values. Teachers must understand the different aspects of character education. Lickona (2004) argued that character building must be done by first understanding:

- Character building must include values that can build good character;

- Character must be defined holistically, covering aspects of thinking, feeling and action;
- Effective character building requires a comprehensive and focused approach, with teachers as role models;
- Schools must provide opportunities for pupils to practise good moral behaviour;
- Schools should become a model of a peaceful and harmonious community;
- Effective character building must include a meaningful curriculum for the pupils' life;
- Every school staff must be involved in character building;
- Character building at school requires moral leadership from multiple parties, leaders, teachers and staff;
- Schools must work together with parents and the surrounding community;
- Periodic evaluation must be conducted in reviewing the achievement of character building at schools.

Therefore, if teachers want to succeed in an effective character value transformation process, they must take the following steps:

- Create physically conducive school and class conditions for sustainable learning;
- Increase responsibility, discipline, togetherness, unity and cooperation in conducting school activities, and create harmonious relationships;
- Becomes an intellectually, emotionally and spiritually smart figure;
- Be consequent in doing good deeds and becomes a good example for the pupils;
- Encourage other to greet each other at school and recite passages from the Quran before the lesson starts;
- Strive to achieve a civilised, ethical, moral school community, supported by a value-based school environment.

Based on interviews with several teachers, it was gathered that they have not grasped the concept of integrated learning, so did not understand how they could deliver it. Some teachers suggested that since it was new, teachers should receive training which would provide them with adequate knowledge.

The learning discipline atmosphere in the class showed low pupil activity. This was caused by the one-way teaching method and monotonous learning strategy, which did not involve pupils in the learning process. In supporting pupils to acquire affective knowledge, there are several strategies to teach character values. Noeng Muhadjir (1988) in Muhaimin (2001: 172) proposes four strategies, as follows: 1) traditional strategy, 2) free strategy, 3) reflective strategy and 4) trans-internal

strategy. All four can be employed by teachers in developing the learning process in classes to overcome their weaknesses. The learning process should no longer be one way, methods and strategies no longer monotonous, so pupils can be actively involved in the learning process. Despite the serious concentration shown by pupils in the learning process, their participation tended to be passive (only listening, taking notes and memorising). Nowadays, a cooperative learning model has been developed which emphasizes pupils' active participation in learning.

In their efforts to transform the above character values, teachers did not attempt to increase their knowledge and enrich their core material with moral values, so teachers were not able to improvise in developing core materials and embedding values in their subject through the learning process, even though the role of teachers as a source of learning is a very important role. As a source of knowledge, teachers are directly related to mastery of teaching material. Difficulties faced by teachers in transforming character values were as follows: 1) teachers were not capable of finding the character values embedded in each subject themselves, even though these values were dispersed throughout the core material of every primary school subject discussion; 2) in teachers' learning implementation plans (RPP), character values could not be found in any of the core activities, whether exploration, elaboration, or confirmation, which meant that during implementation, teachers did not always include character value qualities; 3) although teachers included in the RPP expected pupil character, this was not integrated into the delivery of the main material. It seems that the teachers were not capable enough to relate the main material to the expected pupil character, and teachers only focused on learning objectives included in the lesson plan.

Based on the above discussion and data analysis, it was found that character value transformation in the learning process shows that there is some improvement in the effort of teachers to implement the learning process as an attempt to fertilize discipline among the primary school pupils, although the results are not yet optimal.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above research result and discussion, several points can be concluded: The character values embedded in subjects can be transformed through learning, if teachers manage to find and develop these values themselves, as well as understanding the integrated learning concept as a means of building pupil discipline. If teachers successfully systematically formulate expected pupil character values in their RPP, then the implementation process during core activities of exploration, elaboration and confirmation will be simple to conduct and produce high-quality outcomes.

Difficulties faced by teachers in transforming character values will be overcome if teachers are capable of finding these values themselves and if they have comprehensive knowledge on issues related to character and understand the

integrated learning concept. School discipline will improve if there is awareness among the pupils to obey the school rules and regulations. Encouraging and nurturing pupils' awareness of the importance of discipline must be done through a transformational process of character values using a variety of methods, strategies and approaches. The result of character value transformation attempts will be able to effectively cultivate discipline among the pupils if the values are explicitly expressed in the curriculum, syllabus and teaching material for every subject.

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