

# Building Children's Character Through Piano Learning

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**Abstract**—The structure and the design of piano are enabled someone to be able to ring the tone of piano easily, unlike the violin which needs much time to produce one tone. However, this thing does not mean that someone can play the piano created by Chopin in a jiffy. The research problem of this research is by the piano learning be able to build the children characters (student). This research use pedagogy and psychology approach, the research method is descriptive qualitative. According to the research result and the discussion that learning piano needs high discipline, continuous practice, diligence, support from the parents and a conducive environment. This is appropriate with the characteristic in building the children character (student), there are honest, patient, work hard, responsible, discipline and independence. In the process of creating the student will experience how to be patient in creating something, responsible to the thing they did, honest in the creative process (do not confess others works as their works), discipline in doing something so that it is on time, and independence in the creative process. All of those are the characters need to build this nation. Through piano learning, the children characters can be formed.

**Keywords**—character, children, piano, learning

## I. INTRODUCTION

A piano is one of music instrument seen to be easy to sound. Thus, based on the observation in one of the music schools, a piano is music instrument which frequently chosen by the children after vocal at the step of a placement test. A vocal class has the highest rating, and the second one is the piano. According to observation, children under five years like various kind of tone in the piano which has 88 tones produced by the wooden laths (tuts). Different from the violin, which the children lack interest with it, based on the observation. That violin is only to behold on, the string is pulled one by one, and then someone has put the violin back. Considering that an early age phase is the age of play, every child has a different personality and there is a unique personality. Play and sing are serious activity but it is also diverting for them. Usually, children are not easy to do concentration for more than several minutes. So anyway with the limitation of the violin's string can cause the children who can't concentrate for a long to leave that music instrument. The temporary observation that piano is more interesting because it has various tone, moreover the way to play it is by pressed or beaten as the habit of children at that age, which can help the development of sensory and motor skill on children [3]. But if we look at the process of piano learning to go to the learning purpose which is desirable that

is to be able to play the piano correctly, based on the curriculum from those music school, of course, it will experience various problem whether for the student, the teacher or the different environment [6]. The writer wants to know the children character (student) through the process of piano learning.

According to the formal reference, The Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 2 the Year 1989 about the National Education System; Education is a conscious effort to prepare the learners through the guidance activity, teaching and or practice for their role in the future as has delivered by Ki Hajar Dewantara that the core of education is more to dedication and sacrifice, defending the future through continuous regeneration [10]. While art is activities which are consist of 2 kinds, they are art activity based on the modus of imitation and expression [12]. So if it is combined, the definition of art education is a conscious effort to prepare the student through guidance activity, teaching and or practicing in order to master the skill of arts. There are two roles of student, first is to influence the skill of the art and the second to function the art education (Read, 1945 and Wickiser, 1974 in [12]). Art education is a part of important cultural assets. However, when the development happened where the figure of influencer moved from artist to the side of art expert, it will impact on the process of education, which is changing from non-formal studio system to academic system which is embodied in the art institution of formal vocational. Afterward, since the middle of the century of 20th appeared, the art education of formal non-vocational, then the definition or art education is no longer one and only. Beside, it is art spreading concept (education in the art) [12]) which is the continuation of past concept, also the new concept of art functioning (Education Through Art) (Read, as quated by Suhardjo [12]). Which contains meaning that each as the cultural asset in order to its preservation and as the education asset which its mission is to make the best use of art to be able to function as the media to develop individual potential of a student in order to prepare the future. Digging the meaning of music in the context of education is to understand the music until its principle, the character, the soul, not only meaning, ration and intellectuals, and not only just to be matched with the word training, practice, and exercise [11].

Art education is given to children basically is to grow the creativity and the sensitivity in order to be formed the attitude of appreciative, critical, and creative on the

children. This can be observed, analyzed, practiced and evaluated in every children's art activities [8].

In 2010 the government through the Ministry of National Education proclaim the implementation of character's education for all of the education levels, from elementary school until college. Character's education is a system which implants the character values to a student, which contains knowledge component, individual awareness, strong will also there are desire and action to do the values, whether to The Only God, themselves, human being, environment or nation so it will form a perfect human being [1]. Human of education is not only ordered and demanded to be skilled in developing the cognitive and physical aspects but also to be the expert in carrying out the mandate and sharpening the feeling aspect [9].

According to Akhmad Sudrajat [1] in order to make us understand easily the meaning of the character's education, we should first understand the meaning of character education itself. The meaning of the character is having personality, behavior, characteristic, and nature. From the definition and the expert's opinions above about the character, it can be concluded that character relates to moral, that is about the teaching what is good and bad which generally accepted about the action, attitude, obligation, character, nature; morality. Characters mean also the mental condition that makes someone to remain courageous, energetic, enthusiastic, discipline, willing to sacrifice, suffer, face the danger, the heart's contents, the feeling condition revealed from the action. So the good character planted in the student will make them be moral human, that is human who has a good character, still having consideration between good and bad before doing something.

Based on the theory of moral development explained by Piaget, there are two steps in the development of human morality. The first is heteronomous morality step or the step of moral development happened while the human in the step of children. In this step, moral is implanted by the adult people to the children. This moral intellectual activity created conviction on children that the moral rule is a permanent and don't change.

According to Hamalik [4] learning is a combination of learning component which is compiled include human element, they are student, teacher, and other elements; material, include book, board and chalk, photography, slide, and movie, etc.; facility and equipment, consist of classroom, audio-visual equipment and computer; and the procedure include the schedule, method, practice, learning, and test. Thus, in every learning process it will be found, there are 1) human elements, they are student and teacher; 2) material element that is teaching material; 3) facility and equipment elements include equipment, and media; 4) procedure elements include purpose, method, and evaluation.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This research using descriptive qualitative research method. The data collection technique used is an observation method, interview, and documentation. While the analysis technique consists of data reduction, data presentation and draws conclusion/verification [7].

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of piano learning needs a process. In every learning process, there will be found 1) human elements, that are student and teacher; 2) material elements that are material, in the form of book about etude of piano and score of piano song; 3) facility and equipment elements include piano, metronome, helping media to explain the song in order to not be monotonous, such as writing tool, crayon-colored pencil, sticker, and small beads (to give reward to children) even pictures to tell a story; 4) procedure elements, including the purpose of learning piano (student can play the piano well and correct), the method of piano teaching in the form of learning piano while playing (draw, sing, dance even storytelling or listening to characterize story), the teacher gives an example demonstrated, and the student imitated, evaluation that shows the student play the piano in public, to develop their confidence, other evaluation the student can do the test, to know the student skill after learning for about 1 year. Besides learning the piano, the process of character education mostly done in their house with the parent. The parent also has an important role to the children character's education, whether in practicing the piano in their home or teaching a good character to the children.

The teacher is a knowledgeable creature to guide the student to recognize the basic element from music as one the door to the character's education, who has double responsibility whether as the instructor or as the tutor or the guardian [11]. The piano teacher is an adult person who teaches piano professionally (responsible to the teaching material, facility and procedure element) which all of these are appropriated with each student psychology. The teachers are responsible to the student teaching material, means that the teacher knows the initial skill of the student, so they are able to determine from where or what book the student will start to learn the piano. They are responsible about the facility (music instrument piano), so the student is able to feel the musical instruments used, whether the hearing, the feeling, the touching or the sensitivity of student's fingers. It is also responsible for the procedure elements (purpose, method, and evaluation). All of those are the teachers' responsibilities, if it is done, of course, it will through a long enough process, so it can form the character of each student. The teacher is the central attention of the student. All of their movement and their behavior will easily recognize by the student. If the teacher capable to give a good example and model, the student will learn by following it. In such a way on the contrary, if the teachers don't give a good example, so don't ever expect that the student character will be better from what is expected.

The piano student is someone with a younger age than the teacher, having the purpose to gain the knowledge from the teacher. Music instrument piano is the first choice music instrument of the student or the parent. The reason is that it is easy to be played. Usually the student who joins the piano class is in the age of 4-6 years old (the golden age of children), however, there is also a student at the age of 7-12 years old (school age), even at the age of 19 years old and above (productive age). The phase of character building is at the age of 4-6 years old (the golden age of children), at the age of 7-12 years old (school age) where the student is

always obedient and follow the teacher's instruction. Character building is not only done in school, but also in their house. Because 85% of student are in their house, so besides the teacher in the school, the parent also has a significant role in the student character building.

Honest is one of the forms of character building. The learning of piano, honest seen in the student frankness in practicing a song which is done as a home assignment. This is proved from the piano play by the student who plays the assignment song given the previous week. If the student eluded, the reason why they are not practicing at home because there is much homework at the school. The teacher can ask the student's parent about the student activity at home. In the piano learning, it needs communication between the teacher and the parent for the goodness of the student. Honesty can be formed from themselves through the practice schedule. The student should be honest to obey the practice schedule made by themselves.

Discipline is the second form of character education, it is expected that the student is able to obey the agreement which has made between the teacher and the student. The problem happens in piano learning is that the student are often to come late, and there is no time adding to replace the time they late at the beginning. The music school really emphasize this thing to train the student discipline. Classic piano play emphasizes the conformity between score and the play, means that each student tone, beat, tempo and dynamics in the song should be the same with the etude or score is given.

The feeling of confidence is very important to be implanted to the student in order to make them grow to be someone who is capable to develop their self-potential. The effort which can be done by the teacher in the piano learning are: 1) giving a compliment of every student achievement, 2) give the responsibility by playing a song in a show, 3) the teacher taught the student to be friendly and happy to help others, 4) train the piano technique which is lack of practice, until it changes and get advancement, 5) the teacher had better to not criticize the behavior or the play which is not very good in front of the student friends, 6) to grow the confidence, the teacher is not allowed to do overprotective to the student in playing a song. This will impact to debilitate the student's confidence and depend on others (always ask: "Did I do it correctly? I am afraid I am wrong..."). Thus the piano learning in the form of piano play show in the public can grow the student confidence and form their character.

Caring behavior in piano learning happens when the duet plays with their friend in a performance. This care also can be implemented when they practice the piano at their home. They care to practice in their home without being reminded by their parent, take care of the piano book so it will not be lost and damage. Care when playing a song by obeying the marks of music technical term on the score. Care behavior will not grow just at the moment on student behavior, but there should be any model from the teacher and the parent.

Independence in playing the piano is the teacher and parent hope. Because it can help out the teacher's duty at the school, and help out the parent in their home. Independence behavior in playing the piano can be said as the result of characters such as honest, discipline, responsible and caring.

Persistence behavior in piano learning is much needed, which is never give up behavior followed with the strong and steady beliefs to achieve their aspiration. In learning an etude and score it is needed the persistence to finish one complete song with dynamic, ornament also the expression in playing it.

A firm behavior is one of the values needed to be planted on the student. This behavior needed in doing social intercourse especially in order to be able to decide what is right and wrong. The choosing of the piano class is a choice, if it is a choice, the student is expected should not be half in learning. One of the student experience confusion in choosing the music class, so the student will always look at the other class, after the piano learning finish. Those things are because the student is lack of firm in choosing the music class and in doing the schedule made by themselves. Therefore, they are lack of focus on the assignments given in the piano class and finally the piano learning is not agreed with the target.

Be creative always grown by the teacher to the student, by giving the song assignment from the book which never is taught before. Even giving the assignment to guess the tone in a song. By the running of the learning process, the student has accustomed listening to the tone, reading the score of a song and finally can be creative in searching the tone of a song. Usually the student at the age of 4-12 years old, they still waiting for the instruction from their teacher in creativity in guessing the tone. The student at those age seen to be creative when they answering the questions and be brave to show the song performance.

Be critically grown by the teacher to the student is by telling interesting things, explaining the piano material, with an expectation that the student responds and asks (actively) and be able to answer the question from the teacher. The teacher should be also ready to answer all of the questions asked so that it will not decrease the spirit to ask and the critical behavior on the student. Without realizing it, piano learning can build the student character, such as honest, discipline, confidence, caring, independence, persistence, firm, responsible and also creative.

Look at this thing, it is clear that art education especially music art, can be the media to grow the character in the student. The student will be able to find good characters from the teacher also from the parent through piano learning. Through piano learning, the student also demanded to be creative, in this creative process the student will get various good characters which will be their personality.

Based on the result of the research and discussion that piano learning needs a high discipline, continuous practice, diligence, support from the parent and also a conducive environment. This is appropriate with the characteristics in building the children (student) character such as honest, patient, work hard, responsible, discipline and independence.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Through piano learning, besides being able to play the piano, children also get character education through the process of piano learning. The components of piano learning, in every process of learning, found, there are: (1) student and teacher; (2) teaching material (etude piano book); (3) facility and equipment elements include piano

and metronome; (4) procedure elements include the purpose of piano learning, the method of piano teaching and evaluation; (5) parent. The form of character education frequently use are discipline, confidence, independence, persistence, firm, responsible and creative. Thus, the building of student's character can be done through the learning of the piano.

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