

# Elaboration and Reflection at the Practical Level Integrating Character Education in Schools

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**Abstract**-Character education is a phenomenon that is difficult to define because it includes various kinds of results, pedagogical strategies and philosophical orientations. Character education in its field is much more difficult to map. There was great interest in education for the character development beginning in the late 19th century and continuing through the first four decades of the 20th century. John Dewey defines character as 'interpretation of habits' and the effect of action consequences of the habits. This behavioral orientation represents an important legacy for the field development. This study uses literature studies as comparative sources from several national, international scientific journal and several book sources related to the elaboration support and reflection on the integration of character education. The results of this study will be used to explore the extent of elaboration support and reflection on the success of character education in schools. The main objective of this study is to compare the application of character education that has not been absorbed entirely. It is for the sake of educational renewal in schools to make progress and improvement of characters to be unique, distinctive and to be a differentiator between one nation and another.

**Keywords:** *character, character education, elaboration, reflection*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2017 concerns on the Strengthening of Character Education (PPK) as an educational movement to reinforce students' characters through the harmony of heart, senses, thought and exercise. This movement involves units of education, family and society as part of the National Movement for Mental Revolution. This movement involves and utilizes the education ecosystem in the school environment as a means and infrastructure to support the creation of character-based education [1]. Character education has existed since school in ancient times in the 20th century. Character building is usually given a primary rank. Due to a variety of different reasons, several decades before the end of the 20th century this goal disappeared from the curriculum in Western democratic countries. The contemporary character education which is supported both by the ethics of virtue and the latest trends in the field of Social Sciences, such as positive psychology that has been revived, is by far academically better than its predecessor.

Indonesia is categorized as the third largest country after Russia and China that have not fully implemented character education as a foundation for human survival to achieve morality, good behavior, and to become fully human with a comprehensive personality. A society with an environment that allows its members to live well will

treat character education as something that must be owned by children. Schools should raise questions about what kind of people of their students are; how good character development contributes to life; and how to weigh scales the various virtues and values that will be applied.

The Greek term '*ethike arete*' or '*arete*' often appears in Aristotle's writings to show the 'superiority of character' or called only as 'excellence'. Most importantly, Aristotle does not really distinguish between technical and moral goodness. Instead, being good is a skill that is applied to a specific goal, and not an applied moral attribute. For Aristotle, being a 'good' person or having a 'good character' has in common to be a good craftsman or a good cook. This is something that can be obtained by someone through skills development or practical wisdom. Aristotle states: '*we are what we repeatedly do. So, excellence is not an action, but a habit* [2]. Seeing the results of Akbar's research, technical skills (hard skills) are often associated with one's success. While on the other hand, the research fact proves that a person's success is not determined only by his knowledge and technical ability (hard skills), but rather by his ability to manage himself and others (soft skills). Akbar reveals that success is only determined around 20% by hard skills and the remaining 80% is established by soft skills. The most successful people in the world can succeed because they are more supported by soft skills rather than hard skills. Character is the values of human behavior that relate to God Almighty, human self, fellow human beings, environment, attitude, sayings, and deeds based on religious norms, legal order, manners, culture and customs [3].

Therefore, character is a complex idea from a quality picture that makes a person 'good' or 'not so good', but also a set of skills that contribute to personal success and well-being. In addition to how we can build character compatibility when we know it is important for our success and well-being. Yet, it is also necessary to avoid prescriptive and culturally exclusive attitudes about how 'good' life is?. The answer is to hypothesize characters as individual ability. Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum conceptualize the ability as a system or a set of general abilities which is developed, both in ethical and instrumental terms [3].

The activities in the character education learning can be implemented through elaboration activities. Teacher can integrate several character values inside learning process in school during elaboration activities. Elaboration learning requires students to have learning skills which has an aim at managing internal processes, students' way of remembering and thinking during the learning process. it also comprises students' skills by using pictures, diagrams

and equipment familiarization related to the subject matter. Elaboration learning is carried out based on the following principles: presenting the content framework, elaboration stages, presenting the important part first, optimal elaboration coverage, gradual presentation synthetization, the presentation of synthesizing types and the summary of presentation stages. There are five steps in the elaboration learning stage, namely: (1) the epitome presentation that contributes as the most essential and / or most important part of the lesson, (2) the first phase elaboration, which describes each section in the content framework; (3) the making of summary and synthesis between parts; (4) the second phase of elaboration, which details the sub-sections in the first phase of elaboration with the intention of bringing students into the specified depth level of teaching objectives; (5) the summary and synthesis along with a summary of the entire contents of the given lesson [4].

In addition to the elaboration activities, the supporting success factor of character education in school is the reflection assessment technique. Abdul Rohman explained that reflection is an assessment technique that is very effective in exploring the spiritual values, morals, motives, attitudes, even motoric and cognitive aspects of students. In other words, this technique invites students objectively to look inward by observing their own condition honestly and openly. Another positive impact of self-assessment technique effectiveness is where students are accustomed to always being honest. If children are accustomed of always maintaining the condition of his attitude, it will surely contribute positively towards students' building character efforts both in school and their daily environment [5]. King in Coughlan provides also a reflection view where the process of involving students in various activities aimed at improving students' ability. Reflection becomes something that is very necessary and important for students in considering the good and bad things as students have already seen, Rohana [6]. Elaboration learning is carried out based on the principle of presenting the content framework; the administering of elaboration within stages; the most important part is presented first; the optimal elaboration coverage; the gradual presentation synthetization; the presentation of synthesizing types and the summary of presentation stages.

Here, the author wants to explore the extent of both roles, the implementation of elaboration process and the reflection of character education success in schools. In other words, this application can be either an ethical nor instrumental commitment. Although, usually both commitments will be applied. In addition, there is a relationship between those two. One cannot have a truly character without being truly righteous. It is like that a person cannot become good to a certain extent, but he/she has the instrumental abilities needed to actualize his/her good intentions.

## II. RELATED WORKS/LITERATURE REVIEW

Relevant journals related to this research, namely Journal of "Principal, Teacher, Parents, and Community Leadership Strategies in shaping Student Character" by Ahmad Suriansyah and Aslamiah published by Lambung Mangkurat University Banjarmasin [7]. This study explains the analysis of Principals, Teachers, parents, and

communities that contribute to building students' character in school. The Headmaster has a commitment and always strives to improve teacher professionalism continuously (continuous development) through various means, such as bringing in experts or being given special training in improving the quality of teachers. The teacher also in the implementation of learning in the classroom always shows attitudes, behaviors, and actions according to the norms that apply in school and society consistently. The link between this research and the journal written by Ahmad Suriansyah and Aslamiah is that both use the school as an effective partnership between schools and parents and the community towards education services in partner schools. This trust is the result of the reality that can be seen by customers in the quality of the education service process and the quality of the product.

## III. MATERIAL & METHODOLOGY

The research method is a scientific way to get data with a specific purpose and purpose, Sugiyono [8]. The method used in this research is a descriptive method. The descriptive method by Nasution is focusing on the existing problem-solving in the present or actual problems. The data collected begins with compiling, explaining, and then analyzing. Therefore, this method is also called the analysis method. This method can provide an overview of the relationship between the implementation of the archival system and the effectiveness of decision making. Facilitate researchers in processing data that is homogeneous or the same. Besides being able to collect data, this method can also help compile data, interpret data and conclude data [9].

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Character education was just the latest experiment of the wrong conception of what was like to educate someone. Modern education had become a product of two forces: first, the educationist's utilitarian conceptions that education was a transfer of skills and information; and, secondly, the modern state technocrats who had use schools as a place to educate modern citizens. Usually, both forces worked hand in hand in delivering and controlling education. Both groups considered education as a treatment given towards students that should have a meeting point of agreeable results. For example, it could the ability to read and manipulate various symbols so that students could contribute to the economic system provided by the state [10].

### A. What Character Education Is

Character was a set of personal traits or dispositions that produced certain moral emotions, informed motivation and guided behavior heading towards good direction. Character education included all explicit and implicit educational activities that help young people developed personal strengths which is called virtue. The implementation of attitude and character formation was completed by habituation, touch of heart (feeling and awareness), and discipline, Arsyad. Sulhan stated that the steps of character building were as follows; (1) incorporating the concept of character in the learning process by adding value goodness; using a method that makes students have good reason to do good; (2) making

slogans that were able to foster good habits to motivate feelings; (3) continuous monitoring of discipline, such as when entering class, students' eating habits in the school canteen, students' talking habits and also involving parents in assessing their children.

Character education was more than a subject. It had a place inside culture and family function, classrooms, schools and other institutions. Character education was about helping learners to understand what ethically important thing within a particular situation was and how to act for the right reasons in such a way that they became more autonomous in practice. Students needed to decide wisely what kind of people they wanted to be friends with. They could choose between alternatives that had already exist or if they wanted to find something new. In this process, the goal was the development of common sense or practical wisdom; the capacity to choose intelligently between alternative parts. This capacity aimed to find out how to take appropriate actions in difficult situations to make an ethical growing option.

*B. What Character Education is Not*

The goal of all correct character education was to equip students with intellectual practices in making wise choices for a denigrated community framework. If being 'paternalistic' meant character education was contrary to the wishes of students and their parents on the other hand the empirical research showed the opposite. Generally, the children character growth cannot be delayed at schooling period; the moment when they reached the age to decide wisely things on their own. The formation of character education would always occur at school. Reasonable questions came up about what character education strategy that did not exist yet; how the education occurred; was it intentional or planned or organized or assumed; was it conducted unconsciously; was it reactive; or was it happened randomly. The emphasis lied on character and virtue which was not individualistic - all about "driving away the children". The goal of character education was not only to make individuals better but also to create social and institutional conditions. This social condition required all members of society to contribute in ways that collectively provided everyone with the opportunity to live well. The possibility of developing individual characters. Furthermore, the other needs, such as adequate nutrition and large health conditions would be succeeded in reciprocal conditions and on the same occasion.

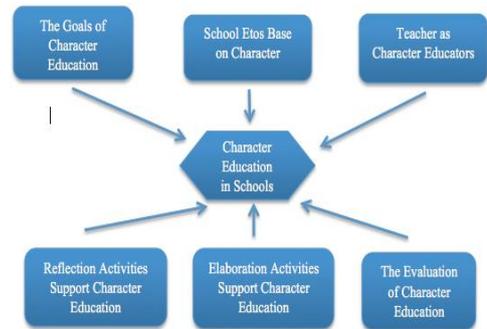
*C. The Psychology of Moral Development*

The development of character and how to improve it through education should begin with a background of moral development theory. The neo-Aristotelian viewed the psychology of moral development where the current framework was reasonable and there were several virtues. This path was explained, as simple as possible in the diagram of 'The Neo-Aristotelian Moral Development Model'. The model underlined the importance of family care in the early days of character education, although it did not exclude the adjustments of negative moral traits formed in early childhood. Depending on the nature of the education that moral students had already received, they could develop smoothly through the paths of virtue. These

paths were chosen by self-taught and wisely which in turn gave them intrinsic motivation for acts of benevolence. Or they may need to take a detour through a good path through practical habituation, which gave them the self-regulation needed to be at least extrinsically motivated to act well.

*D. Affecting Factors Character Education Coaching*

Below is an application of self-elaboration and reflection activities in schools to support the success of character education. It is more advanced and quickly absorbed in its application.



*E. The Goals of Character Education*

It's uncommon for schools in outlining the goals of education by trying to strengthen the character of their students and commit to their mission. Each school needs to describe the type of people that it wanted to help, to be developed. Furthermore, schools would describe the underlying philosophy of its approach for the development of their students. The philosophies and approaches must involve clear ethical expectations of learners and teachers, and the teachers' modeling guide for learners' development of individual virtues. Schools must provide opportunities for students to not only think and do, but also to understand what it was meant to be mature and to be an effective person. They must help to prepare students for the test of life, not just a life test.

*F. School Ethos Based on Character*

Clear research evidence stated schools that were driven by character values have high expectations and demonstrate academic, professional and social success. They were committed and determined to develop students' character through articulation, demonstration and commitment of ethical virtues and to build a meaningful culture of personal relationships. Because the school ethos was an expression of everyone's collective character, it was important for every member of the school community to have a basic understanding of what character was. Therefore, students and teachers needed to learn not only the names and meanings of the virtues of characters, but the appearance of school thoughts, attitudes and actions. Character education must be strengthened everywhere: playing fields, classrooms, corridors, interactions between teachers and students, posters, religion, school principals' messages and communication, extracurricular activities, and in students- parents relationship. The process of being educated in virtue was not just about getting ideas. It was about how to have and live in a community at school or to

stay together with family. Thus, it could be considered as one of the main places by which students developed in virtue. The school community played an important role in maintaining good character. Teachers should also understand that the experience that students have, and their self-determination were the basis for the development of good character and commitment for learning. (the Jubilee Centre 'for Character and Values'.

There were at least four fundamental reasons why schools needed to seriously make themselves as the best place for character education, namely; (1) because many families (traditional and non-traditional) did not apply character education; (2) schools were not only aimed at forming intelligent children, but also children who owned good character; (3) the child intelligence which was based on goodness, would be seen as meaningful; and (4) the responsibility of a teacher was not only to form students so that they had strong character, but they also expected to have other big responsibilities related to their moral and academic.

#### *G. Teacher as Character Educators*

Character education was built on what had happened in school, and most teachers saw character building as a core part of their role. The character considerations of students were deemed to become the core of learning and education. The virtues gained through the experience of students were initially under the guidance of parents and teachers who functioned as role models and moral copies. To be a good teacher, someone needed to be or become a certain person: someone with good character who also showed commitment to the value of what they taught. Teacher's character and integrity were more basic than their personality or style in the classroom, but it did not mean that it was less important than mastering teaching content and techniques. Teaching subjects with integrity involved more than helping learners acquiring specific knowledge and skills. Good teaching was supported by ethos and language that allowed public discussion about good character to absorb all teaching and learning. Although a clear picture emerged from the inevitability of character education, teachers often complained that they suffered from moral ambivalence and had lack of confidence in professional positions as both, role models and character educators. Repeated empirical studies show that teachers find it difficult to find ways to overcome ethical problems in class. Although many teachers owned strong interest in moral issues, they were not always trained to think critically and to be able to convey their moral views to their students in a sophisticated way. Unfortunately, the surge in interest in character education had failed so far, to have an impact on teacher training education. The lack of a teacher education program with a coherent approach for character education was most likely the result of too narrow concentration on class achievement.

What was the role of the teacher as a character educator?

- 1) Fostering students' character as their professional responsibilities and priorities;
- 2) Becoming role models; providing good character examples and strengthening values for students;

- 3) Improving the guidelines for the curriculum to find out problems related to the character and ethics;
- 4) Making guidelines to enable students to learn about "being, thinking and doing";
- 5) Making a commitment to organize and carry out extracurricular activities for students.

Teachers knew that good teaching attention was far more needed than helping children and young people gaining knowledge and skills. This concerned on good character building. When teachers introduced honesty, justice, kindness, forgiveness, self-discipline, respect, politeness, responsibility, or determination, they fostered values that formed the basis of good personality traits. Furthermore, when a teacher encouraged students to achieve goodness, to behave well or to work hard, they were involved in character education and qualified character education produced academic benefits for students. A good teacher helped students reach a range of values and virtues that would help them become good people in school and life. In addition, the teacher was also responsible for developing good character aspects by trying to cultivate good habits such as punctuality, doing work with good standards or attending school diligently.

#### *H. Elaboration Activities Support Character Education in Schools*

Teacher could integrate several character values in learning in school during elaboration activities. The elaboration could be illustrated as follows: (1) familiarizing students to read and write diverse things through certain meaningful tasks (the value of the character instilled were love of knowledge, creativity and logical thinking); (2) facilitating students through assignments, discussions, etc. to initiate the creation of new ideas both spoken or written (the value of the characters instilled were creativity, confident, critical thinking, mutual respect and courtesy); (3) giving students the opportunity to think, analyze, solve problems, and act fearlessly (the value of the character instilled were creativity, confident and critical thinking), (4) facilitating students in cooperative and collaborative learning (the value of the character instilled were honesty, discipline, hard work and mutual respect); (6) facilitating students to make exploratory reports conducted both verbally and in writing, individually or in groups (the value invested were honesty, responsibility, confident, respectful, independent and cooperative); (8) facilitating students to exhibit tournaments, festivals, dramas, and produced products (the character values instilled were self-confidence, mutual respect, independence and cooperation); and (9) facilitating students to carry out activities that fostered pride and self-confidence (the character values instilled were self-esteem, mutual respect, independence and cooperation) [11].

There were seven components in teaching elaboration, namely the elaboration sequence for the main structure of teaching, the prerequisite sequence learning, summarizing, synthesis, analogy, activator of cognitive strategies and control of students. These components were analogous to the knowledge possessed by the participants in order to make it easier for students to receive new knowledge. Elaboration learning required students to have learning

skills aimed at the students' internal processes management, students' process of remembering and thinking during the learning process. The familiarization for students' skills were utilizing pictures, diagrams and equipment related to the subject matter.

Elaboration learning was carried out based on the following principles: presenting the content framework, elaboration in stages, the most important part was presented first, optimal elaboration coverage, gradual synthesizing presentation, presentation of synthesizing types and stages giving summary [12]. There were five steps in the elaboration learning stage, namely: (1) presenting the epitome that functioned as the most essential and / or most important part of the lesson, (2) the elaboration of the first phase, which described each section in the content framework; (3) making a summary and synthesizing between parts; (4) the second phase of elaboration, detailing the sub-sections in the first phase of elaboration with the intention of bringing students into the depth level specified in the teaching objectives; (5) summarizing and synthesizing along with a summary of the entire contents [4].

#### *I. Reflection Activities Support Character Education in Schools*

A significant process where knowledge came from experience was called reflection. One could reflect on the experience that had already happened and tried to understand a conclusion leading towards insight and learning from the inside and the idea of testing of new appearing experience. Reflection was very important within a confusing experience. It operated under high ambiguity and problem-solving requiring conditions. Students who did not conduct a reflection would tend to make the same mistakes in the future and therefore could hinder the progress in their respective fields. Students who made reflections, showed it through their reflective writing. Reflective writing was a metacognitive process, "thinking about your mind" where students were able to appreciate a deeper underlying problem rather than accepting a superficial interpretation of the problem, which could be presented in a professional context [13]. Reflection is widely assumed to be professional practice and the process of supporting learners through experience. Effective reflection requires students to learn through experience by requiring a high level of introspection and open self-analysis.

Reflection was more precisely the way to think about what students had learned in order to help students describing their own personal meaning. In reflection, students examined an event, activity, and experience and thought about what students had learned, how they felt, and how students used the new knowledge. Reflections could be written in a journal. It could also occur through discussion, or was a creative activity such as writing poetry, making artwork and so on. The realization of reflection could be applied, for example at the end of learning when the teacher provided little time for students to make reflection. This could be in the form of: (a) a statement of what students were gaining today; (b) notes or short notes in students' books; (c) students' impressions and suggestions for teachers and today's learning; (d) light

discussion; and (e) products. Reflections on learning included developing the ability to think critically and logically, knowing the strengths and weaknesses of yourself, and respecting the opinions of others [14].

The importance of self-reflection for the success of character education in schools turned out to have a positive impact. A significant process where knowledge came from experience was called reflection. Here, one could reflect on the experience that had already happened. Moreover, one was able trying to understand a conclusion that led towards insight and learning from the inside and tested on new experiences. Reflection was very important for confusing experiences. It operated under high ambiguity and problem-solving conditions. Students who did not make reflection tend to make the same mistakes in the future and could hinder progress in their respective fields. Students who have made reflections, would show it through reflective writing. Reflective writing was a metacognitive process, "thinking about your mind" where students were able to appreciate a deeper underlying problem, rather than accepting a superficial interpretation of the problem, which could be presented in a professional context [15].

Reflection was a reference for students' flashbacks of what they have learned and done during the learning process for the stage of getting to know each other's personalities. The right time to reflect on students was usually done at the end of learning which included discussion, question and answer, sending messages and impressions, writing a journal / short note, giving comments to each other's work, and notes on a diary. At this stage, the ability to think logically and critically would be clearly seen, besides that students were trained to know their own strengths and weaknesses, to be able to respect the opinions of others and then useful for the process of self-improvement [16]. The self-improvement here meant that students would not repeat other commendable actions or habits such as littering, cheating continuously or disobeying school rules. Those actions could be considered as a reflection to change bad attitudes. Furthermore, the role of the teacher was needed, where the teacher re-displayed the development of the assessment of students so that the formation of character and progress of learning could be realized [5].

#### *J. Critical Learning Reflection*

It was not easy to reflex on yourself by conducting a thinking process through writing, but it should be practiced into learning. This could help to summarize learning in a more meaningful way. The writing process encouraged students to reflect on what had been taught in class and then, the teacher could facilitate learning as needed. A student was said to reflect when '... he noted that there was something different about the polemic he found; he made a comparison based on the examples that he met in class; and when he also identified what the difference was, and what he had to do about it.' Reflective allowed one to get the inner meaning of something and changed uncertainty into an understandable action. In addition, reflection involved mental activities in which there were complex processing ideas usually found during the learning process. To realize the benefits of reflection, students should be

asked to reflect and write a reflective log or journal or a brief note so that they could easily see the importance of the learning activities that had been carried out [17].

#### *K. The Evaluation of Character Education*

Schools were under increasing pressure to show their effectiveness but measuring individual character or the impact of character education interventions was very difficult. It might be due the complexity of character traits; the special difficulties inherited in the results of observing virtues in practice; the unfeasibility or undesirability result that targeted on individual aggression. Furthermore, it was the character and pro-virtue, because the results could be counter-productive, philosophical, and psychological education. Although there was no simple and problematic way to measure characters, it was possible to evaluate the development of certain components of virtue. For example, different methods would be applied to evaluate the development of knowledge / understanding of virtue on the one hand, and the good emotions on the other hand.

The crucial question was what was a legitimate goal to evaluate the provisions of certain character education? There were three evaluation objectives recognized in the field of character education. First, the evaluation of how school culture and ethos contributed to character education; schools could perform self-audit or be audited against a collection of criteria about what was known for best school practices in character education. Such evaluation was depending upon teacher's professional knowledge and assessment. The picture built by the evaluation provided evidence of the strengths and weaknesses of the entire school, thus it highlighted where more effort, resources and time should be directed. The second objective was to evaluate the effectiveness of character education strategies, activities or approaches. Different methods, including pre-intervention and post-intervention surveys, observations and interviews with teachers and students could be applied with some new impact evidences or existing character education strategies. The third objective was self-recognition of the 'personal' character and the virtues carried out by the students themselves. This could be recorded regularly during the education journey of students, such as journals. Evidence obtained from colleagues, teachers, and parents would also support this process [4].

#### V. CONCLUSION

All schools have a moral responsibility to contribute to the common good. They are responsible for introducing gratitude and optimism to their students as well as kindness and generosity. There are many benefits of character education as well as many reasons for teachers to develop their skills as character educators. Here, the professional competence role of the teacher can be developed in the aspects of teaching and learning. According to findings from several references, several conclusions and recommendations are emerged. To be able to make a comprehensive change in education, schools must begin with teacher training by conducting the implementation of elaboration activities and students' self-reflection in schools in order to improve learning outcomes and improve student character optimally. Any activities and methods used in schools cannot be separated from the

important role of supporting the main characters, namely parents, environment, teachers and the community. The preparation of a good learning implementation plan will greatly support the success of the main objectives of character education in schools that will be able to create an effective and efficient learning process.

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