

# Becoming a Teacher with Character

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**Abstract**-Today's youth character has driven further away from the values / norms adopted by the Indonesian people. In this case, teacher as the driving force of education has a very heavy duty to reclaim good characters for students. The role and function of the teacher is not only teaching but also educating. Teaching as a profession has a meaning that teacher should be able to be imitated or be used as an example in form of reasoning, action and ethics. The declining character of younger generation is also triggered by the absence of examples that can be used as idols and role models of implementing good character, therefore reexamination is required whether the teacher has already become an example or role model for students. This article discusses the importance of being a teacher with character that will lead teacher to be a role model for students. The method used is descriptive research method, which describes the problem to obtain answers. The results show that character education is shaped even more when teachers work hand in hand with students and other members of the school community to make it happen and bring it to real life. Supporting factors such as family, celebrities, officials, and community leaders should also set a good example for young people.

**Keywords:** *teacher, character, students*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's diversity unites through universal principles and character. This universal character is inherited from the ancestors of the Indonesian people themselves. The examples of universal characters are including as follows: loving, honest, tolerant and do not judgmental each other. After 73 years of Indonesia independence, this nation still has serious problems especially related to the character of its young generation. We see that almost every day TV news printed media illustrating how terribly acute the character problem related to this nation's generation is. According to the Director of Youth and BKKBN Reproductive Rights Protection, M. Masril Muadz, he says that pre-marital sex among teenagers shows a figure of 63%. Teenage drug victims take 3.9% of samples taken in 33 provinces [1]. Moral damage is also seen from the practices of corruption, immoral crime, and criminal acts of government officials that are increasingly extensive. Furthermore, celebrities and artists who are the idols of teenagers show a lot of bad characters. It ranges from bullying of fellow coworkers at soap operas scenes that often features violence, promiscuity and glamorous life.

Education has a very important role in improving the character of the younger generation. Article I of the 2003 National Education System Law states that among the goals of national education is to develop students' potential by having an intelligence, personality and noble character. This means that education works not only forming intelligent Indonesian people, but it must also have a personality or character which is in accordance

with religious norms or laws. It can be inferred that it has no differences from the purpose of education stated by Ki Hajar Dewantara, namely to develop morals, develop knowledge and skills concurrently. In teaching character, education needs to be done by conducting a careful planning which are consisted of stakeholders: character experts (moral) such as religious leaders, non-formal leaders (community leaders), principals, teachers and parents [2]. The success of character education will make students become good citizens and have both personal competence and social competence.

Teachers as the driving force of education have a hard task in instilling good character in students. It is due to teachers' existence as professions whose actions are DIGUGU and DITIRU by students. The declining of young generation's good character is also triggered by the absence of examples that could be used as idols and role models of good character. How can we charge students to have good character, while many teachers and adults do not have these characters? This article will describe these problems, namely how to become a teacher and an adult who has good character.

## II. RELATED WORKS / LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies relevant to this research include:

1. Journal of "Peran Guru Dalam Dunia Pendidikan" by the Rukaiah Proklamasi Hasibuan which is published on proceedings of the Annual National Seminar of Faculty of Social Sciences, Medan State University in 2017[3]. This study describes three main tasks of the teacher, namely professional assignments, humane tasks and social tasks (Civic Mission). If the discussion is cultural related, then the first task relates to hearing logic and aesthetics, while the second and third assignments relate to ethics. These three tasks if it is related to students, have a meaning that the teacher must provide values containing past, present and future knowledge, choices of life values and communication practices. The similar point of is Rukaiah's paper and this study is that both are discussing about ethics and morals of students who are not characterized due to the lack of maximum teacher's role and function. Furthermore, Rukaiah also discusses about teachers' task who do not only teach but also educate students. What makes a difference core between Rukaiah's and this study lies in the teacher's function as a role model. If previous research only confirms teacher's role in educational world, this study discusses the importance of being a teacher with good character as a role model for students.
2. Sarifa Nursabaha "Menjadi Guru yang Berkarakter Dan Profesional Melalui Peran Kepala Sekolah Dalam Membina Mental Di SMA Pesantren Putri Al-Manawwarah Panyili" in the An-Nisa' journal Volume VIII Number 1 June 2015[4]. This study describes the

role of school principal to foster the forming of characterized teachers. The results of the study show that school principal's role has several functions in fostering teachers to become character educators. Those functions are namely as the function educator function manager function, administrator function, supervisor function, leader function, innovator function, motivator function and functions as a role figure and mediator. Together, Sarifa's study and this research emphasize that teachers should have good character to become role models for students. The difference between Sarifa's and author's research lies on the school principal function to foster teachers to have good and professional character as educators.

### III. MATERIAL & METHODOLOGY

Research method is a scientific method which is carried out to obtain data for a specific purpose (Lasa, 2009: 207). The method used in this research is a descriptive research method. It is a method that discusses several possibilities to solve actual problems by collecting data, compiling or classifying it, analyzing it, and interpreting it. The author uses descriptive research methods because this study aims to obtain answers related to the opinions, responses or perceptions of a person thus the discussion should be embodying qualitative aspect or using word description.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Definition of Character

Character was a way of thinking and behaving that characterized each individual to live and work together, both within the family, community, nation and state. When it was related to psychological characteristics, character or personality distinguished one individual from another [5]. A person's character could be seen from the attitudes and behavior that he did in everyday life. Lickona said that character was a harmonious blend of various virtues contained in religious, literary, intelligent and human views in general throughout life [6].

Meanwhile, according to Simon Philips, he said that character was a set of values to a system, which underlined the thoughts, attitudes and behaviors displayed [7]. Furthermore, Doni Koesoema assumed that character was like personality. Personality was considered as a trait, characteristic, style or type of a person originating from the upbringing that he had already received, such as family education during childhood period in addition to innate nurture [8]. On the other hand, character could also be defined as virtue values (knowing virtue, willingness to do good, and real good intentions) that were engraved in and reflected in behavior [9]. Based on the opinions of the experts above, it could be concluded that character was a behavior that existed within everyone that distinguished between himself and others. Characters could change from bad to good or vice versa. Character formation was closely related to the environment and the individual's background.

#### B. Good Character

Human character was a human being whose behavior and all things related to his life activities were fully loaded with values of goodness. Humans like this did not immune to making mistakes, but he/she always tried to fix all forms

of his/ her mistakes and continually improve themselves from time to time. Each person would have his own criteria and views, in accordance with the background of his knowledge and basis thinking [10]. It could be reasonable because there was indeed no single criterion agreed upon by everyone related to the human profile of character. The character itself must basically be adaptable to social conditions, moral values, and various typical values that existed within a area. However, the substance of its value was universal and valid for all time.

Aristotle defined good character in life by doing the right actions with respect to one's self and others. Virtuous life included self-oriented goodness (such as self-control and moderation) as well as goodness oriented towards others (such as generosity and compassion), and both types of goodness were related. We needed to control ourselves (longing and desire) to do good things for others. Goodness (virtues) consisted of several values, morals, and norms, such as honesty, courage to act, to be trustworthy, and respect for others. Characters coherently emanated from thinking process results of the heart, the sense and the intention, and in addition to body process that contained values, abilities, moral capacity and determination in facing difficulties and challenges.

Lickona in his book educating for character formulated that a good character consisted of knowing good things, wanting good things, and doing good things [11]. These three components must be reflected in the habits of ways of thinking, habits in the heart, and habits of ways of acting. This formula directed a moral life and form moral maturity. Furthermore, the process of character formation was caused by the habit of doing things which were well institutionalized in everyday life, as Cronbach viewed character as an aspect of personality formed by habits and ideas that are both inseparable. In shaping the character, the elements of beliefs, feelings and actions were interrelated elements thus to change character, it also had a meaning to reorganize the personality [12]. The principles of good learning could not be effective if they could not be integrated with self-belief systems, other people's self and the good self of society.

Furthermore, Fitri explained that there were at least several cultural values that could be used as characters, namely faithful (religious), wisdom, justice, equality, self-esteem, confidence, harmony, independence, caring, harmony, fortitude, creativity, competitive, hard work, tenacity, honor, discipline, and exemplary. In understanding what could drive a person to do good, three other aspects of character must be seen, namely competence, desire, and habit [13]. Those three elements of character were focused on the formation of individuals who had moral maturity in life. Morality led to behavior displayed by individuals in their daily lives. A person could be said to have good characters if his/her behavior was in accordance with moral rules.

#### C. Teachers with Character

In carrying out character education, schools should create situations or conditions that allowed students to witness the process, find out with the correct understanding, and experience it for themselves how those values were lived and brought into life in everyday life

[14]. Therefore, it could be concluded that students required examples or role models that could be used as role models in behaving. Teachers as the drive force of education had a central role in forming students with character. In addition to deliver material, the teacher was also required to be a true teacher (DIGUGU and DITIRU). Teachers must be able to instill morals, ethical values, aesthetics, noble character and so forth. Next, teachers should also able to give appreciation to those who excel, and to give punishment for those who violate rules, spread good values, and prevent bad values. Furthermore, applying character-based education by utilizing it in every learning and real life.

Unfortunately, school field reality spoke differently, while forbidding students from smoking, the teacher himself was smoking. Teachers were angry when students arrived late at school, but when they came late, there would be many excuses coming up to cover it. There were still teachers' characters that did not support the achievement of character education such as littering, teaching carelessly, mocking students, humiliating peers in front of students and others [14]. Such things were considered as trivial things, but in fact, it affected the students. These actions later would be imitated or if it was getting worse, it may form habits.

In practice, teachers in addition to teaching subjects also owned duties as homeroom teacher and extracurricular counselor. Even some teachers concurrently held structural positions, such as school principal and vice school principal, thus teacher's duties were more likely became very numerous. In addition, a teacher was also part of the community and family, so being a competent and professional teacher was not an easy job to do but that did not mean that we couldn't do it. Keep in mind that teacher's behavior in carrying out their tasks would be imitated by students and had an impact towards formation of students' character. There were different concepts of teachers as teacher and educator. Under the word "educator", teacher acted more as a model for character formation. The dimensions which were possessed by the teacher, such as teachers' presence, attitudes, thoughts, values were important since it may indirectly shape the character of students. Meanwhile, the word "teacher" itself, enunciated teacher to act more as a person who transferred knowledge [14].

Instilling good character within students' life was not an instant thing, it took a long period of time and process. Character education would likely present if teachers, students and members of the school community were working hand in hand to make it happen and bring it into real life. Thus, it could be concluded that teachers as character educators should equip students with positive and useful life values for now and in the future. A good teacher would bring change to students towards a better direction; from those who were less knowledgeable to become knowledgeable, changing ignorance into literacy, shifting incapability into capability, and changing something which was unusual to be a habit. Those things were achievable if teachers as model of education also possessed good character and could be imitated by students.

The example of teachers with characteristics were including: (1) having extensive religious knowledge and actively practicing it in daily life; (2) keep on improving scientific quality in a sustainable manner; (3) clean (physically and spiritually); (4) forgiving, patient and honest; (5) giving fair treatment towards learners and all educational stake holders; (6) having the character and nature of divinity (Robbaniyah) which was reflected in the mindset, speech, and behavior; (7) owning discipline, professional and proportionate attitude; (8) having quick respond towards various conditions that might affect the spirit, beliefs and mindset of students; (9) growing self-awareness as an advisor.

*D. Factors Affecting Character Coaching*

In addition to teacher factor, the following factors were also greatly influence the character development of students. Although teacher had been working very hard to be perfect in front of students, but if he/she did not receive support by the below factors, the character planting would not succeed. Those affecting factors were:

Figure 1: Factors that Influence Students' Character Building



*1. Family*

The family was the first environment for individuals to gain interaction. From these interactions, individual would obtain the basic elements and characteristics for the formation of his personality through character, values, habits and emotions which were reflected in the attitude of life and behavior. Family interaction was an educational process that affirmed the role of parents in charge of the process. Parents were the first and foremost character educators for children [15].

During childhood and adolescence period, parents or family would usually be a figure for children, therefore parents' attitudes and children tend to be similar throughout life. There were several psychological development periods that were raised by Ali bin Abi Thalib and Ibn Sina. Ali bin Abi Thalib said that, "invite children to play in the first seven years, discipline children in the second seven years and be friendly to children in the third

seven years (the moment children seek more independence)". While Ibn Sina said that, at the first seven years, parents should treat children as kings; as prisoners at the second seven years; and as partners at the seven third years [16]. It can be concluded that family was an important component in the formation of children's character. If parents provided a good example, then the child would surely imitate the treatment, because in fact children were parenting imitation product.

Sjarkawi formulated that there were nine personality types of parents in raising their children which could also affect the personality of the child, namely [17]:

- a. The moral advisers, too much emphasized on detail, analysis and morals
- b. The helper, over-emphasized the needs of children by ignoring the consequences of the child's actions
- c. The regulator, always wanted to work with children and create tasks that would help to improve the situation
- d. The leader, always tried to connect emotionally with children in every situation and seek creative solutions together
- e. The observer, always looked for a comprehensive perspective and pursued to prioritize objectivity and perspective
- f. The anxious, always did a mental question and answer and kept asking questions and doubts, also the one who always thought about bad omen until they were sure that their children really understood the situation.
- g. The comforter, always applied a more relaxed style
- h. The protectors, the one who tend to take a deeper obligation towards responsibility and protection, shout at the children but in the other hand, they were also the ones who protect children from the coming threats.
- i. The peacemaker influenced by a non-confronting personality.

Furthermore, Sjarkawi explained that of the nine types, only three types were in line with the formation of the child's personality, namely the regulator, observer and anxious type.

## 2. Celebrities / Artist

According to Indonesian dictionary, artists were often interpreted as an art expert or artists, such as singers, film players, painters, and drama players. An artist was always considered to be a public figure by the community. It was undeniable that many young people idolizing artists. Actors' actions and behavior were always be imitated by the community, especially by the younger generation. It may start from the model of their dress, networking, and lifestyle. Thus, an artist or celebrity should be able to provide a good example for the community, display an appropriate public consumption and do not think solely about popularity.

## 3. Government Officials and Community Leaders

Like artists/celebrities, government officials and community leaders also played an important role in strengthening the character of the younger generation. Leaders were basically people who were able to mobilize resources (especially humans) to work together to achieve goals. According to Jack Welch, leaders were people who provide inspiration with a clear vision of how things could

be done in a better way [20]. Government officials and community leaders were leaders in society who were very determined in the direction of policy and played an important role in social life. Thus, an official or community figure should be able to set a good example for his subordinates / community, such as being low profile, a good listener towards his subordinate / community aspirations, open minded and owning other positive attitudes. On the contrary, the attitude and behavior of government officials and public figures who were arrogant or "iron-handed" and possessed a closed-minded attitude would endanger the spirit of character education itself.

## 4. Colleagues

Based on Prophet Muhammad's Hadith, it was said that "a person was depending on the religion of his close friends, so you should pay attention to who was his close friend." (Narrated by Ahmad). It can be concluded that a person's behavior was very likely to be like his close friends, thus one's character was also influenced by his close friends. If you had a good behaving friend, then you may end up being good also. On the contrary, if your friend behaved badly, you were also prone to behave badly. Thus, colleagues should work also as a mirror that could be used as an example, such as being familiar, being a good listener, being attentive towards aspirations, sportive and so on. Therefore, it was better to avoid colleagues who have bad attitudes, such as selfishness, arrogance and other negative attitudes.

## 5. Mass Media

The mass media worked to convey information for audiences. The information may form, maintain or redefine a image. According to Mc.Luhan [18] mass media was an extension of our senses. By employing the mass media, we obtained information about objects, unknown places, or certain figures. The reality displayed by the media was the reality that had been selected for second hand reality [19]. Journalists were people who then displayed the reality of the symbols that they received during conducting interviews. Thus, mass media, both printed and electronic media should be aware on what was being displayed since was always related to public concern. Therefore, the news displayed must go through a rigorous selection in terms of the negative public effects. Television shows in the form of soap operas, entertainment and other events that did not educate the public should be eliminated.

## V. CONCLUSION

Education plays an important role in improving the character of the younger generation. The role and function of the teacher is not only teaching but he/she should also able to educate, and to be a real teacher (*digugu* and *ditiru*) in accordance with the rules of the profession. One way to instill character on the younger generation is to set an example or a good standard. A good teacher will bring change towards students into a better direction, from those who are less knowledgeable to become knowledgeable, changing ignorance into literacy, shifting incapability into capability, and changing something which is unusual to be a habit. Those things are achievable if teachers as model of education also possess good character and could be taken as models by students.

The following characters should be possessed by the teacher to be a good example for students: (1) having extensive religious knowledge and actively practicing it in daily life; (2) keep on improving scientific quality in a sustainable manner; (3) clean (physically and spiritually); (4) forgiving, patient and honest; (5) giving fair treatment towards learners and all educational stake holders; (6) having the character and nature of divinity (Robbaniyah) which was reflected in the mindset, speech, and behavior; (7) owning discipline, professional and proportionate attitude; (8) having quick respond towards various conditions that might affect the spirit, beliefs and mindset of students; (9) growing self-awareness as an advisor. Character planting will be more successful if the teacher together with students and members of the school community work side by side to make it happen and bring it into real life. Supporting factors such as family, celebrities, officials, and community leaders must also be good examples for the youth.

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