

# The Influence of K-13 Implementation and Teachers' Understanding on Students' Character

A Survey of Senior High School Students and Teachers in Aceh

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**Abstract**— Emphasis on character education in Indonesia has been intensively promoted since the introduction of Curriculum 2013, but studies on the effect of its implementation have been rare. This paper reports the findings of a survey conducted at 3 of 23 cities and districts in the Aceh Province. It looks at the influence of the Implementation of Kurikulum 2013 (Curriculum 2013, hence K-13) prescribed by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia, focusing on its implementation, teachers' understanding of it, and their influence on students' character. The study surveyed six senior high schools in Aceh, two from each of the three cities and districts using three sets of 5-point Likert Scale Questionnaires considering curriculum implementation, teachers' understanding, and students' character in their items. Multiple linear regression Analysis was performed using SPSS to find out the influence of the first two factors on the third. The results of the analyses show that the implementation of K-13 and teachers' understanding partially and simultaneously influence the character of students at senior high schools in the Province of Aceh.

**Keywords**— *K-13 implementation; teachers' understanding; students character*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Character education is usually used as a general term to refer to the teaching of children or students at schools. It helps students grow and develop as moral, civic, good, ethical, well-behaved, non-bullying, healthy, critical, successful, traditional, compliant or socially acceptable beings. These values have been indicated by the United Nations for Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as closely related to society, spirituality, and culture [1]. Therefore, different countries have different formulation regarding how character values are being approached and pursued. Apparent differences are for example shown in how it is approached by England and Indonesia in their curriculum. England formulates their character education in five foundations [2] as laid out by its Secretary of Education [3], while Indonesia has four layers of micro contexts of how values and characters are prescribed to develop [4].

Moral and ethical values are said to strongly link with beliefs and attitudes which then guide human behavior.

Morality and ethics determine human behavior which is reflected in practical activities and theoretical, systematic and rational reflection of what is ideal [5].

In England, the practical activities revolve around five foundations as emphasized by its Secretary of Education, Damian Hinds. These include sports, creativity, performing, volunteering and membership, and the world of work.

### A. Curriculum, Character Education and Teachers

In general, the curriculum is understood as 'plans for learning.' Conceptually speaking, it can actually be divided into narrow and broad definitions [6]. The previous definition can be categorized as the narrow definition of the curriculum [7]. This definition was used in many countries in the West as the formal education gained its growth and central government power was strengthened in the 19<sup>th</sup> century [8]. This narrow definition also seems to be adopted by the Indonesian Ministry of Education. It reflects the description of curriculum in Law No 20 of 2003, "curriculum is a set of plan and regulation coherent with goals, content, and materials used as guides in organizing teaching and learning processes to achieve the educational goals" [9]. This definition was then referred in any regulation issued thereafter. This narrow definition reflects a central power and singularity in the perspective on curriculum which is considered traditional. That being said, the law governing the national education system does however explain broader authorities and more defined nature of the curriculum. This is stated in the same law, Law No 20 of 2003, in Article 38 points 1 and 2. Point 1 indicates that the basic frameworks and structure of the elementary and secondary schools are determined by the government and in point 2 it is noted that the primary and secondary school curriculum is developed with its relevance to each educational unit. As widely known by now, curriculum 2013 is called the character curriculum, meaning that the emphasis is given to building and developing the character of the students, in addition to their mastery of content knowledge.

### B. Characters in Indonesian K-13

In Indonesia, 18 values are being perceived and idealized for the citizens and school or formal education is one of the

significant instruments through which the values are socialized. The 18 values are illustrated in the following figure.



Fig. 1. The 18-character values

The values illustrated in the above figure were issued for the first time by the Center for Curriculum of Research and Development Agency of the Ministry for National Education in 2011. The way chart is laid out, it positions a religious value at the top of the chart. This reflects the primary value of the country which is based on a religious foundation. This religious foundation can be seen in the first of the five principles *Pancasila*, the foundation of the country. As in the curriculum, the values of religiosity are placed in the beginning of core competencies appearing in lesson plans in each theme and topic being discussed. Then, the other 17 values follow starting from honesty, tolerant, through to reasonable. These values which are encouraged to make the Indonesian students and people become better beings are not exclusively pursued in Indonesia. Most of the values are also upheld in, for example, the USA's education curriculum, except for the religious-based values which are not explicitly stated due to the importance of the state and religion separation valued in the US and other more secular countries. According to *Character Count USA*, there are ten values being pursued in the US, *trustworthiness, respect, caring, fairness, responsibility, citizenship, honesty, courage, diligence, and integrity* [Character Count]. These are no difference from what is upheld in Indonesia. The only problem seems to be the difference in resources for the implementation of these character values.

All of these values are expected to be realized in the macro and micro contexts of character building defined in the curriculum by the ministry. The micro and macro are presented in the following figures.



Fig. 2. The macro context of student character buiding

Figure 2 shows that the Indonesian values of characters are contributed by theoretical foundations which include educational theories, theories of psychology, and socio-cultural values. The character values also take into account the legal foundations of the state, and these include religious values, the State Constitutions 1945, and Law No 20 f 2003 regarding th National Education System. Consideration was also the Graduate Competency Standards prescribed in the Ministry Regulation No 21 of 2016 [10]. In the actualization, these character values are implemented through a process of enculturation and empowerment which comprises intervention and habituation. This implementation is supported through the instruments of policies, guidelines, resources, environment, infrastructure, collaboration, and commitment of stakeholders. The outcome expected from the process is a set of behaviours that are guided by the upheld character values.

A more detailed implementation scheme is also given to implant these character values into students, especially on how a school can operationalize the implementation. This operationalization is referred to as the micro context of character building. The character values that are listed in Figure 1 above are implanted through 4 stages: learning activities, school culture, extracurricular activities, and home and community daily activities.

The framework is based on one of the legal foundations for the implementation of character education in Indonesia which is Law No 20 of 2003 regarding the National Education System. In Article 3 of the law it is stated

“National education is aimed at developing capabilities and shaping the nation's character and civilization with dignity in the effort of educating the nation, developing the potential of students to become human beings who believe in and fear God Almighty, noble, healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, creative, and independent to become democratic and responsible citizens.”

C. The importance of character education

Most people perceived that character education as a reaction to the detrimental nature of young people's moral. While not denying the urgency to fix the problem, character education should not only be reactionary but something to strive for better beings, build a better nation, people, and more importantly, better humanity [11].

The narrative of the importance of character education has always focused on two directions. First is looking back and the other is looking ahead. The first reflects on the behaviour problems of the students. Second predicts the need for students in facing the ever-changing world, both at school and in real life. In Indonesia any discussion of the importance of character education usually portrays setbacks in the education system, especially the behaviour and competency problems of students. Among others include teachers' poor competence, students' low mastery of STEM subjects, low literacy habits, violence committed by students, and a number of other problems. Sometimes more seriously and specifically elaborated violence committed by students was also part of the narrative. Zubaedi, for example, stresses the importance of character building by relating it to the moral decadence among teenagers and young people. This violence includes free sex, the increasing rate of violence among children and teenagers, acting violently against friends, theft, cheating in exams, drug abuse, pornography, rape, and vandalism. These according to Zubaedi have become social problems which have not been properly addressed. High hope is being put on the implementation of K-13.

This reflection on current behaviour problems in the background is also the case in the United States. For example, a school administrator used the reflection of past year problems to emphasize the importance of character education. As reported, she received an increasing number in incident reports and behaviour visits to her office. The issues with students' behaviour include a lack of sportsmanship and collaboration, emotional meltdowns, disrespectful peer arguments, and bullying from 'ring leaders' among students. [Dodds effect] in both Indonesian and the US cases, it shows that the importance or the rationale of the introduction and implementation of character education is a reaction to the existing situation concerning with students' achievement and behavior.

The importance of character education is also portrayed as a look-ahead perspective, meaning that there is a need for anticipation and preparation of students to be able to deal with problems in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In Indonesian K-13, this is one of the significant emphasis made by the Ministry of Education and Culture. In a specific regulation, Permendikbud No 20 of 2016, the ministry laid out the criteria regarding the competence and qualification of school graduates which covers the aspects of attitude and behaviour knowledge, and skills. Special attention is given to 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. The guide classifies these skills into four categories: learning ability and innovation, digital literacy, life skills, and moral characters. Learning ability and innovation revolve around critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, communication and collaboration. Digital literacy includes graduates' demonstration of information literacy, media literacy, technological literacy. Meanwhile, life skills that are required of the graduates are flexibility and adaptability, initiative and independence, intersocio-cultural interaction, productivity and accountability, and leadership and responsibility. As for the moral characters, they are as presented in Figure 1 above.

At the conceptual level, the attitude and behaviour expected of the graduates include social and spiritual elements; spiritual being believing and fearing the one God, and social being well-

charactered, honest, caring responsible, life-long learning, physically and psychologically healthy. In terms of knowledge, the curriculum requires graduates to master conceptual and factual knowledge and procedural and metacognitive knowledge. Factual knowledge includes remembering terms, names of objects people, numbers, years, and other names and terminology related to each subject. Conceptual knowledge refers to understanding categories, classification, the relation between categories, the law of cause and effect, definitions and theories. procedural knowledge is concerning with understanding of specific procedures and processes in any given subjects such as algorithm, techniques, methods, and criterias to determine the accurate application of a procedure. Metacognitif knowledge refers to the understanding of learning how to learn, strategic knowledge, that is knowing which is and which is not important knowledge, contextual knowledge, and knowledge about self (self-knowledge).

In terms of life skills, the curriculum prescribes two kinds of skills, thinking skills and doing skills. Both subsequently will reflect in six character-values: creative, productive, critical, independent, collaborative or teamwork skill, and communicative. As earlier mentioned, these skills are to be acquired through their integration into each subject in which scientific methods are encouraged so that these values can be gradually habituated [permendikbud].

In the curriculum and teaching and learning process, all of the values are allocated in the following breakdown of *Kompetensi Inti* and *Kompetensi Dasar* 'Core Competencies and Basic Competencies' (abbreviated as KI-1 to KI-4 and KD-1 to KD-4). KI-1 is designed for spiritual competence, KI-2 for social competence, KI-3 refers to knowledge competence and KI-4 is for learning process through with the KI-3, KI-2 and KI-1 can be observed. The learning paradigm encompasses direct and indirect learning model, and indirect learning model refers to KI-1 and KI-2. These two competences have no specific learning materials as it is integrated into cognitive and psychomotor domains. This formulation is aimed at reducing or eliminating verbalism in learning. Basic Competence which is abbreviated with KD is the reference for teachers to develop achievement indicators. KD in KI-1 and KI-2 is the accumulation of KD in KI-3 and KI-4. KD in KI-3 is linear with KD in KI-4 and the number of KD in KI-3 is equally sized with the number of KD in KI-4. To map, KD3.1 for example is associated with KD4.1, KD3.2 is associated with KD4.3, and so forth. The learning materials in KD3.1 is taught in KD4.1 and for this reason the number of KD in KI-3 should be equal with the number of KD in KI-4. However, in certain cases, KD in KI-3 is not always linear with KDs in KI-4 as the learning steps in KDs of KI-4 cover some KDs in KI-3. It means that a KD in KI-4 can cover some KDs in KI-3 [in Djuwairiah Ahmad].

Curriculum 2013 of Indonesia has frequently been associated with character curriculum for its emphasis on development of students' character. While arguments for the implementation of K-13 are already offered and made available [see e.g. 5], they are mostly based on conviction and prediction relying only on the intuitive judgment. This research offers to provide evidence that the implementation of K-13 and teachers' understanding of the curriculum both partially and

jointly influence the characters of the students. This is to remove or at least reduce the doubt for the Curriculum 13 as unrealistic, pessimistic, and preoccupied with the notion that any upgrade of the curriculum especially with a new name is political, which is manifested in the pessimistic rhetoric common in Indonesia *ganti menteri, ganti kurikulum* ‘a different minister with a different curriculum name.’ The same pessimism is sometimes also voiced in more developed countries like the USA. Such question as “Is character education valuable or just a trendy fad?” is also asked in America [12]. People tend to overlook the ideals that the curriculum bears. This research wanted to point out whether these preexisting and commonly-held views among some are myths or realities by examining the influence of the implementation of K-13 and teachers’ understanding of the curriculum on the students’ character using a quantitative approach.

To guide this study, the following research questions and hypothesis were formulated. Based on the research questions hypotheses of the research are:

- Q1 Does teachers’ understanding of K-13 influence the students’ character?
- Q2 Does the implementation of K-13 at school influence students’ character?
- Q3 Do teachers’ understanding of K-13 and its implementation simultaneously influence students’ character?

**II. METHODS**

The sampling technique used is two-stage cluster sampling. Two-stage cluster sampling is a sampling technique using more than one type of probability sampling. In this study, two stages of random sampling cluster sampling techniques were used. The first stage of cluster random sampling, namely with the randomization of 23 districts / cities in Aceh Province as clusters. Randomization was done by selecting three districts/cities: The City of Lhokseumawe, Central Aceh District, and South Aceh District. In the next stage, randomization was done for the second random sampling cluster by selecting SMA Negeri, as a cluster for each of the three districts/cities that have been previously drawn.

Three sets of questionnaires using 5-point scale were prepared in order to find out responses from students and teachers regarding behaviors understanding and perception regarding their understanding of the curriculum and their knowledge of curriculum implementation. Students were specifically asked questions revolving elements of character.

The purpose of this study is to examine the correlation between factors involved in shaping students’ character at school. The factors being considered include teachers’ understanding of Curriculum 2013 (K-13) and the implementation K-13 at schools. Quantitative approach is used in this study.

Quantitative approach has been in use since the 19<sup>th</sup> century and it was associated with post positivist worldview [13]. These include the true experiments and the less rigorous experiments called quasi-experiments and correlation studies,

and specific single-subject experiments. More recently, according to Cresswell, quantitative strategies involved complex experiments with many variables and treatments (e.g. factorial designs and repeated measure designs). They also included elaborate structural equation models that incorporated causal paths and the identification of the collective strength of multiple variables. Two strategies at least can be utilized to pursue quantitative research, experiments and surveys.

The present study used a survey to look at the correlation between the factors mentioned earlier. Regarding surveys, Cresswell continued to explain that surveys can include cross-sectional and longitudinal studies using questionnaires or structured interviews for data collection. The intent of conducting survey is usually to be able to come up with results that are generalizable from sample to the population [14].

Three sets of questionnaires were prepared as instruments of data collection. All questionnaire sets were designed using the 5-point scale. The first set was given to students where they were asked questions related to their experience and character development. The second and third sets were given to teachers asking about their understanding of Curriculum 2013 in one set and their perception of curriculum implementation in the other.

Before the questionnaires were distributed, they were tested for their validity and reliability which is reported in the following section.

**A. Test Validity and Reliability**

For the purposes of validity and reliability, testing is carried out at SMA Negeri 1 Lhoksukon, North Aceh starting from the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

After the questionnaire was tested for validity and reliability, the results are obtained, some invalid questionnaire items were found and they were discarded.

Testing the validity of the data in this study was carried out statistically, using the Pearson product-moment coefficient of correlation test with the help of SPSS 18, where all statements have a correlation value above a critical value of 10%, which is above 0.1226 (See valid Table Correlation Critical Value r Product-Moment for n = 179 in the SPSS output attachment), so the statements are significant and have construct validity. All the questionnaires circulated, have been declared valid.

TABLE I. RELIABILITY TEST

No.	Variables	Variable items	Alpha Values	Remarks
1	Teachers’ understanding (X1)	14	0,858	Reliable
2	K-13 Implementation (X2)	15	0,910	Reliable
3	Students’ character	15	0,925	Reliable

The result of the reliability test shows that after modification, the instrument was found to be reliable.

**III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The response to questionnaires from students and teachers were analyzed using Equation Regression Model. The equation of the regression model of the response variable Character of Educators (Y) with the independent variables Teacher Understanding (X<sub>1</sub>) and Implementation of Curriculum 2013 (X<sub>2</sub>) is as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2$$

$$\hat{Y} = 0.066 + 0.170X_1 + 0.832X_2$$

That is, when all variables are free Understanding (X<sub>1</sub>) and 2013 Curriculum Implementation (X<sub>2</sub>) is zero (0), the Character of Students will be worth 0.066. So that every increase in one unit of Teacher Understanding variables (X<sub>1</sub>), the Character of Students (Y) will increase by 0.170 assuming the variable Implementation of Curriculum 2013 (X<sub>2</sub>) remains. Then, for every increase of one unit of the 2013 Curriculum Implementation variable (X<sub>2</sub>), the Character of Students (Y) will decrease by 0.832 assuming the Teacher Understanding variable (X<sub>1</sub>) remains.

*1) Correlation*

Correlation values between variables can use the Pearson Correlation method. The correlation results can be seen in the table below:

TABLE II. INTERVARIABLE CORRELATION

Variables	K13 Implementation	K13 Implementation	Students' character
Teachers' Understanding	1	0.610	0.658
K13 Implementation	0.610	1	0.810
Students' character	0.558	0.810	1

Based on the table above, the close relationship between the Teacher Understanding variable and the 2013 Curriculum Implementation variable is 0.610. The close relationship between the Teacher Understanding variable and the Student Character variable is 0.558. Then, the relationship between educational facilities and infrastructure variables with the education quality variable is 0.810.

As for the coefficient of determination (appendix 4), the Teacher Understanding variable (X<sub>1</sub>) and the 2013 Curriculum Implementation (X<sub>2</sub>) can explain the student character variable (Y) of 65.8% (0.658), and the rest is explained by other factors that are not considered by the model.

*2) Partial Test*

The partial test was used to see whether each independent variable (Teacher Understanding and 2013 Curriculum Implementation) influences the Character of Students.

The hypotheses (teachers' understanding) used in this test are as follows:

H0: Teacher's understanding does not affect the Character of Students.

H1: Teacher's understanding affects the Character of Students.

By using alpha (α) of 0.1 (10%), the value of t<sub>(0.1,180)</sub> is ± 1.653. Based on the results of the calculation, the t value of the test is 1,846. This indicates that the value of t is greater than the value of t<sub>(0.1,180)</sub> so that the null hypothesis is rejected. It can be concluded that Teacher's Understanding affects the Character of Students.

For the Implementation of 2013 Curriculum on the Character of Students, the following hypotheses were formulated.

H<sub>0</sub>: Implementation of 2013 Curriculum does not affect the Character of Students.

H<sub>1</sub>: Curriculum Implementation influences the Character of Students.

By using alpha (α) of 0.1 (10%), the value of t<sub>0.1178</sub> (0.1,178) is ± 1.653.

Based on the results of the calculation, the value of the t<sub>test</sub> was 13.606. This indicates that the value of t is greater than the value of t<sub>0.1180</sub> so that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Implementation of 2013 Curriculum influences the Character of Students.

The results of the examination of the factors in this study suggests no less the importance and urgency of K-13 implementation. The findings show that the implementation and teachers' understanding of the curriculum have positive correlation with the development of student character. This means that some schools were strong in their implementation and teachers' understanding, and therefore, showed higher values in the response of their students to the questionnaires. But many schools were still unsuccessful in their implementation of the curriculum and some schools still have to deal with low teachers' understanding of the curriculum and the idea of character building and therefore, at the schools, students score lower in their response to the questionnaire items.

Teachers have been complaining about Curriculum 2013 since the time it was introduced [15]. The complaints range from lack of resources [16] to the lack of teachers' understanding of and confusion about the curriculum despite the trainings that have been organized which can delay the success of the implementation of the curriculum. The ministry of education should continuously address these issues especially after 5 years of the curriculum introduction including some revision of the curriculum. Although pessimistic views which say that the curriculum is unrealistic are still held by a few, the curriculum promises improvement of the education including the emphasis on skills and character values. Moreover, the present study has also showed that there is correlation between the K13 implementation and teachers' understanding and students' character. The next step is supervision and monitoring of the implementation should be closely performed and teachers, of all other stakeholders, play central roles.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Children needs to develop themselves amidst the exposure to the culture and environment that potentially harm their ways of thinking and therefore, ways of doing, which can be suitable translated into character. To anticipate this, K-13 is urgently needed for their proper implementation. In order to do this, teachers who are competent with sound understanding of the curriculum are crucial in the implementation and thus, they should be enlightened more on the curriculum with special emphasis on those who are starting as they have longer time of service that is left.

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