



Revitalization of Strengthening Character Education Limited Face to Face Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract. The paper aims to describe revitalization of strengthening character education limited face to face learning during the covid-19 pandemic. It was conducted at SMA Maarif NU Pandaan, Pasuruan Regency, East Java with qualitative approach and descriptive research type. The research subjects were Principal, Deputy principal of curriculum, teacher of religion education, and teacher of Pancasila and Civic Education. Data was extracted using a structured interview, observation, and documentation. Findings showed that the revitalization of strengthening character education in limited face-to-face learning during the COVID-19 pandemic partially changed the structure systems, especially those which implementations are limited by space and time. However, this does not reduce the enthusiasm of the school community in demonstrating character education in schools and does not discourage schools from achieving the goals of national education itself. This can be proven by the involvement of all school members to succeed in strengthening character education even though it is hindered by the current conditions.

Keywords: Revitalization · Face to Face Learning · Character Education

1 Introduction

Since the end of 2019, the covid-19 pandemic has led to polemics. Moreover, it has changed and affected activities all cross the world, for instance in Indonesia. The official website of the covid-19 task for announced the cases of covid-19 in Indonesia began to decline at 4.232.099 people as of October 2021. The decline in covid-19 is an important sign because today, the Indonesia Government is intensifying vaccination for all citizen by taking into account the conditions and situations so that the covid-19 cases can gradually be controlled.

Vaccination carried out by The Indonesian Government are not only aimed at reducing the number of covid-19 cases but also to help Indonesian Citizens to be able to carry out daily life activities without fear of contracting the covid-19. Currently, global vaccine actions promoted by The Government Indonesian are aim att all levels of society in each region. As of July 2021, the number of targets for the first phase of covid-19 vaccination will be 104.308.702 people, while the second phase will be given to 60.442.073 people.

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Based on the report, The Indonesian Government hopes to minimize the increase in covid-19 cases due to community activities in public areas.

Daily activities start to return the new normal condition, which means there are still some restrictions on community activities in public such as large-scale social restriction (PSBB) and Enforcement of restrictions on community activities (PPKM). Restrictions are applied to all activities like at market, school, office, and etc. One of the restrictions on activities in educational institution is the limitation learning process. It can be seen by the existence of distance learning (PJJ) between teachers and students or well-known as online learning system (daring). So, it must be connected to the internet as a communication tool.

Distance learning, commonly referred to as online learning, is instruction that takes place via the internet and provides connectivity, flexibility, and access to a variety of learning experiences [1]. Furthermore, it requires mobile devices such as smartphones, Android phones, laptops, PCs, tablets, and iPhones that can be used to access information at any time and from any location [3].

Systematic changes in distance learning have begun to change again considering the number of vaccinations that have touched all level societies, including students, teachers, traders, and other general public. The learning systematics, which was online, recently, have been replaced with a mixed system or known as blended learning, namely collaboration between limited face-to-face learning with distance learning. The collaboration is based on school policies that are guided by the conditions of the Covid-19 cases in each region according to their level, so that, learning can be equally conducive.

There are several changes to the school structure related to blending learning, such as revitalizing the curriculum through simplification of the curriculum and revitalizing the strengthening of character education, which is one of the changes highlighted. According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), revitalization is a process or way to revive. In this study, the revitalization in question is revitalization to renew the strengthening of character education by making adjustments to the limited face-to-face learning rules.

Character formation of students is the essential goal of national education. This statement is in accordance with the contents of the 2003 National Education System Law number 20 functions develop the capability, character, and civilization of the nation for enhancing its intellectual capacity, and is aimed at developing learners potentials so that they become persons imbued with human values who are faithful and pious to one and only God, who possess morals and noble character; who are healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, independent; and as citizens, are democratic and responsible [2].

Philosophically, character education is seen as a concept that unites a variety of fundamental moral principles, such as empathy, truthfulness, justice, accountability, and respect for others and oneself, to form an individual of good character. Furthermore, this definition began to be associated with the position of character education in a country. Character education is defined as a structured and systematic approach in terms of self-esteem, responsibility, honesty and others with the aim of being a good citizen [5].

This approach is deliberately carried out to persuade the behavior of students through periodic and repeated adaptations as a school-based process to develop themselves which hopefully can be used as a special curriculum that will teach students about good character qualities. Strengthening character education is considered effective in its school

application if it is able to collaborate on several elements which will be explained [4] as follows.

- a. The quality of implementation of character education
- b. Implementation of multicultural and comprehensive character education
- c. Student-school bonding
- d. School principal as the key to effective character education implementation
- e. Committed that character education is the key to good education in schools
- f. Character education is used as a primary prevention effort
- g. Character education is used as the basis for developing the ability of employees in schools
- h. Students' skills are formed directly by character education
- i. The involvement of parents in the process of implementing character education
- j. Character education is used as students' reflection on social issues

In the implementation of the content of national education goals, the Government of Indonesia through the Ministry of Education and Culture launched a program that contains strengthening character education or known as PPK. Five values, namely religious, nationalist, independent, mutual cooperation, and integrity, serve as the foundation for character education. The school culture incorporates the strengthening character education programs that have been implemented in educational institutions. One of the schools that integrates strengthening character education through school culture is SMA Maarif NU Pandaan which is the largest high school in Pasuruan Regency, East Java.

However, in reality, strengthening character education's implementation is different from before. The learning process which was originally able to achieve three things: cognitive, psychomotor and affective aspects, in its implementation was limited by time considering the learning process in the classroom was still limited. This resulted in a follow-up from the principal and his staff to revitalize the strengthening of character education which is integrated through school culture so that it is right on target even with different conditions. Based on this, this study intends to describe the revitalization of strengthening character education through school culture in limited face-to-face learning during covid-19 pandemic.

2 Method

The study used descriptive type in qualitative research approach. The research location was conducted at SMA Maarif NU Pandaan which is located in Pasuruan Regency, East Java. The subjects as resource persons were the Principle, Deputy Principal in the field of curriculum, teachers in the field of slamic religious education and teachers in the field of Pancasila and civic Education. Data was extracted using structured interviews compiled in the interview guide, observation, and documentation. Moreover, data was evaluated using the steps of data gathering, data reduction, data display, and finally, drawing conclusions and levers.

3 Results

Based on the acquisition of data through semi-structured interviews, the researchers then analyzed the data summarized in the results of the study as follows.

Strengthening Character Education at SMA Maarif NU Pandaan

Based on interviews that have been conducted with the principal as the highest authority holder of SMA Maarif NU Pandaan, the strengthening of character education was discovered to be a part of the school's culture and program. The principal explain that strengthening of character education was integrated in the school culture known as the 5S, namely smile, greet, handshake, polite and courteous. The smile culture is related to spreading a smile when meeting school residents as an initial form of greeting. While the culture of greeting is an attitude addressed by school residents when they meet each other. This greeting culture is a continuation of the smile culture. Furthermore, handshake culture is an attitude shown by school residents as a form of action from greetings. While the culture of politeness and courtesy is related to implementing good character and maintaining behavior in the school environment.

Interviews were also conducted with the Deputy Principal in the field of curriculum and also teachers in the field of Pancasila and Civic Education and Islamic Education through structured interview. Researchers obtained data that strengthening character education is also integrated in school programs. The school programs that have a function as a form of character development for students include: (1) religious character strengthening programs through dhuhur prayers together program and religious celebrations like Muhammad saw celebration, Isra' mi'raj celebration and etc. (2) character strengthening programs through extracurricular activities and LPK (3) Gerakan Literasi Sekolah program (4) humanitarian program activities related to providing compensation to orphans, giving the results of sacrifices on Eid al-Adha and giving donations to school residents in need.

The program for strengthening religious character has been carried out continuously since the beginning of the school, such as praying together at the beginning of each lesson which is guided by administrative staff. The strengthening of religious character can also be seen in the congregational dhuhur prayer which is held during the second break at 12.00–12.30 PM in Jami' Pandaan Mosque. Students are guided and directed by the teacher to attend congregational prayers. The other side, eligiousing eligious character education such as at once a month the school holds a prayer together which is held on Monday in the last month.

Meanwhile, the strengthening of religious character carried out on the Islamic celebration can be seen in the implementation of activities that fully involve students to actively participate in the event. For example, celebrating the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad dan Isra' Mi'raj Celebration, schools involve students to be presenters as well as committee members in events that are held so that students' character of responsibility appears indirectly.

This character strengthening program through extracurricular activities and LPK is an important program implemented at SMA Maarif Nu Pandaan. This program aims to develop students' skills through their interests and talents. In this program there are 13 extracurricular activities including National Flag Hoisting Troop, youth red cross,

scouts, hadrah art, music, dance, musabaqah tilawatil quran, choir, journalism, public speaking, volleyball, basketball and football. As for the work skills institute (LPK) which aims to prepare students for the world of work, there are 10 skills, namely catering, fashion, make-up, photographer, English, accounting, network communication techniques, multimedia, automotive and electrical engineering.

Furthermore, a character strengthening program through at Gerakan Literasi Sekolah (GLS), so that students have a high interest in reading and have broad insights. The school literacy movement has been developed since 2017 because students lack interest in literacy. This program is integrated into reading activity fifteen minutes before the lesson begins. After that, students collect books containing a reading list to the teacher who teaches in the first hour to be signed.

The last character strengthening program is related to humanitarian programs. The purpose of the humanitarian program is to help each other. This program aims to help school residents in need. These programs include providing remission of tuition fee for underprivileged students, providing compensation to orphans in the Islamic New Year, providing assistance to school residents in need.

Revitalization of Strengthening Character Education During the Covid-19 Pandemic

The unfinished covid-19 pandemic has resulted several frictions, particularly in the implementation of strengthening character education at SMA Maarif NU Pandaan. According to the description above, the strengthening of character education in limited face-to-face learning has several weaknesses. Thus, revitalization is carried out. For example, related to the implementation of one of the 5S cultures: greetings. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the greeting culture was shown by shaking hands between school members when they met. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the greeting culture is inversely proportional to the implementation of the covid-19 protocol which is summarized in 3M, namely washing hands, wearing masks, and maintaining distance. One of the Covid-19 health protocols is to maintain a distance so that the greeting culture that originally shook hands is now just a greeting without having to shake hands.

The revitalization of strengthening character education which is integrated into school programs has also been carried out. For example, in religious-based activities as a form of strengthening religious character. Currently, the congregational dhuhur prayer program is abolished considering that learning activities can only be carried out within four hours. In addition, activities to commemorate religious holidays which were originally carried out in crowds and take place in schools are now being carried out virtually through social media such as Youtube, Instagram and so forth. This is a form of implementing the COVID-19 health protocol, that is maintaining a distance between school residents so that there are no crowds that cause new clusters.

The revitalization of strengthening character education which is integrated in extracurricular activities and LPK during the COVID-19 pandemic has also been carried out. For example, related to the implementation schedule which was originally two hours to one hour. If it really requires practical activities, it will be carried out face-to-face. However, if the implementation is in the form of theoretical then it is carried out in virtual form. Furthermore, the revitalization of the activities of the school literacy movement. To make time becomes effective, school literacy, which is usually held at the beginning

of learning, is currently being carried out at home by continuing to report these activities through the google form. Revitalization is also carried out in humanitarian activities such as providing compensation and assistance to people in need. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the provision of assistance involved many people in it. However, at this time, it is minimized that only a few people are involved.

4 Discussion

Based on the research result that have been presented, the researcher will be relate to the concept of character education. Character education has five basic values namely religious, independent, nationalist, mutual cooperation and integrity. At SMA Maarif NU Pandaan, character education was integrated in the school culture and the school program.

Based on this description, the revitalization carried out on strengthening character education in schools adheres to five characters, namely religious, nationalist, independent, mutual cooperation and integrity. It is proven that even with the limitations, SMA Maarif Nu Pandaan still applies these five values. Strengthening character education is considered effective at SMA Maarif NU Pandaan on implementation during the year. The student had been winner in every competition at the district and national levels. This proves that student can be implemented character education even though the current pandemic condition.

The other side, students have good character and quality. The revitalization of strengthening character education carried out by schools during this pandemic is carried out effectively and efficiently so that later it will produce quality characters. It cannot be separated from school policies that are made based on suggestions from parents and students, suggestions and opinions from school residents and others.

5 Conclusion

The revitalization of strengthening character education in limited face-to-face learning during the COVID-19 pandemic partially changed the structure systems, especially those which implementations are limited by space and time. However, this does not reduce the enthusiasm of the school community in demonstrating character education in schools and does not discourage schools from achieving the goals of national education itself. This can be proven by the involvement of all school members to succeed in strengthening character education even though it is hindered by the current conditions.

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