

INSERTING LOCAL CULTURES IN BUILDING GOOD CHARACTERS: HOW ARE BOTH CULTURE AND CHARACTER IMPLEMENTED IN A HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT?

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Abstract

A character building has become the main plan of Kindergarten, Elementary, Junior High, and Senior High Schools. Besides, it is also the main focus in a higher education context such as a college, institute, or university. The character building, in a higher education, has been successfully done by inserting good local cultures as one of influencing factors that affect such character building. The local cultures, including moral values and wisdoms, become predictors of how good characters are formally built. This participatory-observation research studies how such local cultures are implemented in building good characters in a college. The results of this study show that there are at least five ways of inserting such local cultures into the character building, namely: 1) integrating moral values and wisdoms into a lecture preparation (e.g syllabus or teaching materials); 2) being accustomed to implementing local cultures in pre-lecturing, whilst-lecturing, and post-lecturing activities; 3) integrating such cultures into teaching methods or techniques (e.g think pair share); 4) adjusting such cultures with classroom atmosphere; and 5) combining both culture and character concepts with scientific thoughts.

Keywords: *Local cultures, Character Building, Teaching activities, Teaching methods, Scientific thoughts*

A. INTRODUCTION

Character building (ChB) plays a highly essential role in human life. A good character building can prevent people from being abnormal, rude, arrogant, and the like. Building a good character will be greater if it starts from a child's earlier year (Kindergarten) up to a higher education level. The purpose of doing this is not a mere rhetorics. Indonesian government has decided that character education or character building is the main plan of Undang-Undang RI Tahun 2003 on Sistem Pendidikan Nasional (National Educational System) which states:

Pendidikan nasional berfungsi mengembangkan dan membentuk watak serta peradaban bangsa yang bermartabat dalam rangka mencerdaskan kehidupan bangsa, bertujuan untuk berkembangnya potensi peserta didik agar menjadi manusia yang beriman dan bertakwa kepada Tuhan Yang Maha Esa, berakhlak mulia, sehat, berilmu, cakap, kreatif, mandiri, dan menjadi warga negara yang demokratis serta bertanggung jawab. (UU No 20 Thn 2003)

The verse above clearly states that character building is one of the goal of National Education System. ChB has eighteen values namely, religious, honest, tolerant, discipline, hard work, creative, self-doing, democratic, curious, nationalistic, patriotic, respect on achievement, friendly/ communicative, peaceful, more reading, environment care, social care, and responsible (Pengembangan dan Pendidikan Budaya dan Karakter Bangsa: Pedoman Sekolah, 2009: 9-10). Such values are expected to be achieved by each school in order to enhance their students' and teachers' good behaviors like what the government states in some rules. Each person in any academic institution will have good characters as well.

Characters can be defined as a typical way of thinking and acting of each individual in order to live and to work together with the others either in the family, society, and country (Samani & Haryanto, 2011). Another expert, Koesoema (2007) states that characters are a dynamic condition of individual anthropological structures which do not stop for determining their lives, and continue to be integrated in order to determine their thoughts forever.

Character building in a higher education context is supposed to develop the quality of educational output which reflect on the achievement of character and moral values of the students deeply, in a balanced way, and based on the standard of graduation competency. By referring to character building, either students or lecturers are expected to develop and utilize their knowledge, analyze and internalize character and moral values in order to bring to the real life (Hasanah, 2013).

Based on the manual 'Pedoman Pelaksanaan Pendidikan Karakter' (2011), there are values that should be reminded, as follows:

1. Religious: a condition, attitude, or action for which people obey the rules of their religion, being tolerant to the prayers of their religion, and live peacefully with other believers.

2. Honesty: an attitude which is based on the truth, avoiding bad action, and ensuring themselves that they are trustable either on their words, promise, or even work.
3. Tolerance: an attitude and action that respect on people`s ideas, opinion, suggestion, advice, or work which are different from theirs.
4. Discipline: an attitude in which people obey the rules that have been stated.
5. Hard work: using time and space in doing and finishing things wisely and appropriately.
6. Creative: think of how to create a new product.
7. Self-work: do any work or things themselves.
8. Democratic: an attitude in which people consider that other people`s rights and must are equal.
9. Curiosity: an attitude in which people always try to find out what they are learning or have learnt deeply and comprehensively.
10. Patriotism: an attitude in which people consider that their country is more important than everything.
11. Nationalism: an attitude in which people believe that they love their country and respect on the physical, social, cultural, and economic condition of their country.
12. Achievement: an attitude that motivate them to create a valuable things in life and respect on other people`s work.
13. Communicative: an attitude in which people show their happiness and enthusiasm to talk and work with the others.
14. Peace: attitude in which people are peaceful and make other people become happy to be with them.
15. Reading: a habit in which people waste their time to read.
16. Social care: an attitude in which people give their help to the others.
17. Environment care: an attitude in which people prevent any damage to their environment.
18. Responsibility: an attitude in which people do their duty based on a command.

One way to build good characters is by promoting the values to each person involved in any institution, particularly to a school or college. However, such expectation does not always meet its goals. Several general, but classical problems usually emerge as teaching and learning process has begun. The problems do not only emerge in a school, but also in a college such as Islamic State College of Kerinci (STAIN) Kerinci.

Based on the observation and interview with students and lecturers at STAIN Kerinci, it was found that there were problems appeared in or outside the classrooms which were related to character buildings. The problems were faced by both the students and lecturers at the college. Firstly, many students became unaware of ethics. They did not respect their lecturers as expected such as using good, polite remarks, paying attention to lecturer`s explanation, accepting scores from a lecturer, and avoiding any plagiarism or cheating. Furthermore, they made a bad, somewhat free interaction each other. A man student did not realize that it was forbidden to go out together with a girl student, and vise versa. It seemed that good values in their society have been left behind.

Good values are parts of people`s daily norms. The more the people believe in the good values or local wisdom, the better their attitude will be. The values are made by cultures which are owned and undertaken by local people. This is called "local cultures (LC)."

The word local culture comes from its basic term 'culture.' Culture, according to Koentjoroningrat in Supriyadi (2003), is all ideas, attitudes, and works made and owned by people in a society. Taylor (1985: 332) states that culture consists of knowledge, belief, moral, law, habit created by people as parts of a society. Furthermore, Kluckhohnin Adler (1997:14) divides culture into some elements namely, religious system, social system, knowledge system, economic system, technological system, language, and art. Another expert, Spencer-Oatey (2008:3) defines that 'Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member`s behaviour and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people`s behaviour.'

The definitions above imply that culture is created by people as member of society and consists of all kinds of attitude, belief, work, language, art, law, policies, values, technology, and the like. Since it is owned by the people, it determines how a group of people act and interact each other and with other people that do not belong to their culture. This seems unique because local culture or local wisdom as a part of a culture is specific and has various elements like the word 'culture.'

Local culture (LC) or local wisdom (LW) is said to be identical in a way that both are created by a group of people in a society and have a function to keep and maintain the people to stay natural, obey the rules, and make good interaction towards other people. Wales in Poespwardojo (1989) defines local culture or local genius as, "the sum of the cultural characteristics which the vast majority of people have in common as a result of their experience in early life." This means that the people who created the local culture believed that the group of people undertook what they believed and were good for them. Such cultures are still knowledgeable up to know.

Wagiran (2010) states:

A local wisdom (LW) is the knowledge that discovered or acquired by local people through the accumulation of experiences in trials and integrated with the understanding of surrounding nature and culture. Local wisdom is dynamic by function of created local wisdom and connected to the global situation.

It is the a group of people's work which produces thoughts and knowledge for the goodness of the people in the area. People creates LW in order to determine whether their people run their lives based on the local rules. LW is flexible, knowledgeable, up-to-date, and inspiring.

The moral values and local wisdoms in Kerinci consist of the elements to which good characters belong to. They are religious, cooperative, helping the others, advising the others, humble, hard work, respecting the others, and so on. Kerinci also has local cultures or wisdoms that bring about good characters such as group work. Group work makes the students possess characteristics of cooperation, togetherness, leadership, responsibility, care, understanding, and tolerance (Sukarno, 2012). Basically the local culture is based on the Islamic rules which are parts of Al-Qur'an. This means that the cultures reflect Islamic religion. This is, of course, in line with one of the elements of good characters, 'religious.'

This paper intends to describe the ways of how both cultures and characters are implemented in order to build good characters for the students. In addition, this paper will also give more practical examples in which the students and lecturers interact in relation with the character building.

B. LOCAL CULTURE (LC) AND LOCAL WISDOM (LW) IN A LECTURE PREPARATION

LC and LW can be put into a deep consideration of a lecture preparation. This preparation may consist of syllabus and material designs. Such design is adjusted with the LC and LW which are applicable in the society like the people in Kerinci. In a college like STAIN Kerinci, syllabus and materials are arranged and designed by the a lecturer. This means that has more chances to insert moral values and local wisdom into his/her syllabus or material design.

Based on the observation in the several classroom and interviews with several lecturers teaching various subjects, there are some steps that they undertake in order to insert local wisdom and culture into syllabus and material design. First, a lecturer has make sure that the syllabus and materials are interrelated. The syllabus and materials should have more references either from the library or the internet. The purpose of this is to find out similarities and differences of the each source. Second, they have to find materials which contain moral values and local wisdom. This can be done by selecting character-based materials and ignoring any negative ones. Then, they can insert moral values and local wisdom into the syllabus and add the materials which have moral values and local wisdom. Such values and wisdom may be added into competency standard or lecture goal by stating 'character building' in the syllabus.

Inserting moral values and local wisdom into a lecture preparation such as syllabus and material designs can enhance character buildings. This seems to be the beginning of promoting moral values and local wisdom in order that good characters can be built either inside or outside the classroom. Using one or some elements of good characters in both syllabus and materials does not only imply that future teaching and learning process will be moral-based, but also become more character-based. A syllabus determines what to teach and to learn in the future of teaching process. Teaching and learning materials entail the syllabus as complementary sources that will ensure that the syllabus is truly utilized in the classroom.

C. IMPLEMENTING MORAL VALUES AND LOCAL CULTURES DURING TEACHING STEPS

To begin, a lecturer should have a syllabus and materials that entail. Both syllabus and materials are reviewed in a teaching process. Steps of teaching and learning process consist of pre-teaching, whilst-teaching, and post-teaching activities. Pre-teaching step consists of activities namely, checking students' names, brainstorming a topic, introducing a topic or materials, checking students' tasks, giving materials to the students, preparing exact time for the next step. This step determines what and how the next step will be.

Another step of teaching process is whilst-teaching step. This step is comprised with several activities which are determined by the first step, pre-teaching step. These activities are considered as main activities in teaching and learning process. They are explaining a topic to teach, dividing the students into groups, using methods or techniques of teaching, bringing the topic into discussion, asking for students' ideas towards the topic, and making a summary. This step determines what will come next in post-teaching step.

The last step of is post-teaching activities. These activities consist of determining the summary of a topic, reviewing the topic, giving a feedback, and closing the lecture. The activities follow the first and the second steps.

Good character building can be achieved by inserting moral values and local wisdom into each of these steps. The way of inserting such values and cultures is by adding some activities to each step. The following is some moral values and cultures to add into each step:

1. For the first step, the lecturer may begin their teaching by saying 'salam' when they enter the classroom. Before explaining a topic, it is a kind idea that they say praise be to the God and the prophet. Motivation is a good idea to encourage the students. A small discussion during the pre-teaching step should always be made as if the classroom is a society in which people live and interact each other.
2. For the second step, the lecturer should always maintain moral values such as cooperative, interactive, religious, and hard work. Such values and cultures are highly important for each student since they are to interact well either inside or outside the classroom. They have to teach good, fluent interaction and communication to the students. In addition, they also have to provide examples of the teaching lesson by moral values or local wisdom.
3. For the third step, the lecturer should always give motivation or advice to the students before the lesson is closed. Besides, they should also ask the students to be cooperative, to work hard, to maintain good relation, to be polite to their others.

D. INTEGRATING LOCAL CULTURES INTO TEACHING METHODS OR TECHNIQUES

There are various teaching methods and techniques in teaching process. They are grammar translation method, suggestopedia, direct method, audio-lingual method, communicative language teaching, cooperative learning, task-based language teaching, contextual teaching and learning, discussion, lecturing, picture technique, and so on (Banks, 1990). The methods and techniques can be used for teaching many subjects such language, religion, social subjects, and even maths. Such methods and techniques may have good relation with good characters.

The moral values and local wisdoms that can be inserted into such methods and techniques are honesty, cooperative, respecting other people, faithful, humble, helping the others. Inserting moral values and local cultures into teaching methods or techniques is a particular way of enhancing character building to the students at the college. Teaching and learning process cannot be separated from methods and techniques. A lecturer can use various methods and techniques which contain moral values and local cultures in enhancing character building. The lecturer can use various methods and techniques for different meeting and topics. The more they are used, the better such character building is developed.

E. COMBINING MORAL VALUES AND LOCAL WISDOM WITH SCIENTIFIC THOUGHTS

One of the most important aspect of inserting moral values and local wisdom is to combine such values and local wisdom with scientific thoughts. Scientific thoughts are important for the students because it can let them become honest and a hard worker. The thoughts can also prevent them from cheating and imitating other people's works or ideas. The students whose thoughts are scientific will be diligent and always maintain good characters which are the main point in a college.

In order to combine moral values and local wisdom with scientific thoughts, the lecturer needs to begin from themselves. They have to be natural and avoid cheating or plagiarism. They also have to teach the students to be honest, to work hard, to be religious, and to respect other people's ideas and works. Another way to do this is by informing and asking the students to work by themselves and learn how to respect what other people have created.

F. CONCLUSION

Moral values and local cultures or wisdoms are very important in creating character building in a higher education context. They are really helpful in developing the quality of either students' or lecturers' characters. The cultures and wisdoms can be inserted through syllabus and materials, teaching and learning process, teaching methods and techniques, classroom atmosphere, and scientific thoughts. Both elements are interrelated in a way that moral values and local wisdom may affect good character buildings.

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