



## The Implementation of Character Education In The SPK (Joint-Educational Unit) Kindergarten

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### Abstract

Education has crucial roles for early childhood children to prepare them with a strong basic foundation for further education. It is important to develop human resources that are not only eligible academically. The Bina Bangsa Kindergarten adopts a curriculum from other countries. It also includes the character education curriculum. As a Joint Educational Unit, the school has different approaches. It accommodates not only domestic learners and teachers but from many countries and cultures. This qualitative research collected the data comprehensively and accurately. The subjects were the principal, home teachers, and parents. The findings were from various methods, such as interviews, documentation study, and interviews. They showed that the character education implementation had been structured into lessons and integrated into all school activities. The findings also showed that the learning activities and cooperation with the learners' parents were already excellent by applying a multicultural approach. The character education was already excellent by the supervision of both the principal and the parents. Various social and religious activities supported character education. They involved cooperation from the parents to practice the character values at home.

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## INTRODUCTION

According to the Ministerial Regulation of Education and Culture Ministry, Number 31, the Year 2014, Art 1, Clause 6 about the Joint-Educational Unit, the education unit should cooperate with a foreign educational institution. This school applies the foreign curriculum. The character education at the school was a multicultural approach. It allows the school members to accept it because they have various cultural backgrounds and countries. Character education should be emphasized so that children will have a strong principle. Thus, they can be thinkers with morals, ethics, and criticism in their relationships with other people and the changing global community (Lee, 2013). Character education is an attempt to create the next generation who have a superior character. Character education will be more meaningful if carried out since early childhood. This is because early childhood education is the foundation of the character formation of children (Kurniasih, 2014). Character education is the foundation of all cooperation, learning, compassion, community, etc (Sara Dimerman, 2009). Thus, character education is crucial and must be prepared effectively.

Effective character education should apply a comprehensive approach to teach the core values for all school life phases (Lickona, Schaps & Lewis, 2007). Schools across the world increasingly understand the need to help their pupils to cultivate virtues at a young age. Attainment and grades form only a part of this bigger perspective on education (Walker et al., 2015). The character education internalization process could be done by habituating the learners, telling stories, singing, playing, or other centralized methods (Mei-Ju et al., 2014). Its implementation should be started from the curriculum then developing the curriculum into a lesson plan and activities. They are promoted integrated and structured developing the lessons. Effective character education requires intentional, proactive, and comprehensive approaches to encourage the core values into all school life aspects (Lickona, 1996). Character

education requires learning stages, teaching instruments, methods, etc (Sumaryanto et al., 2020).

## METHOD

This qualitative research aimed to describe the implementation of the foreign curriculum adaptation for character education. The researcher researched the Joint-Educational Unit, Bina Bangsa Kindergarten, Semarang, in the academic year 2020-2021. The researcher took the subjects from the school principal, 8 teachers, and 6 parents. This research observed and interviewed the subjects to get clear data about applied character education. The researcher also interviewed the principal, teachers, and parents. Then, the researcher promoted a documentary study to see and observe the curriculum, the performance scheme, lesson plan, and learner development assessment report. Therefore, the researcher should get valid data by triangulating and maintaining consistency. This research analyzed the data by reducing, presenting, verifying, and concluding the data.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings and discussion are descriptions or portray of the character education promotion at the joint-educational unit, Bina Bangsa kindergarten, Semarang. The character education implementation was done separately by applying character education materials and integrated-character into all lessons and activities for children. The frame consisted of POEIMA: perseverance, open-mindedness, empathy, integrity, marvelous, and adventure. The school had excellent character education management to reach the objectives. As a JEU, the school established cooperation with the foreign Educational Institution. The curriculum was an integration of the national and foreign curriculum, included the character education curriculum. The curriculum provider had prepared all themes, learning methods, story-based learning materials, and the prepared

lesson plan. However, it required excellent management accurately and appropriately.

The learning promotion in the school was started by recruiting the teachers. The novice teachers had to join an inductive period for 10 days to prepare them and to provide school orientation. After the induction stage, they could promote their tasks appropriately. Before the new academic year, the teachers obtained task divisions. The school assigned the teacher senior to accompany the novice teachers. The school also monitored and facilitated the novice teachers when they encountered difficulties. Before assigning them to teach in the class, the teachers should create an excellent lesson plan. The teachers could execute the lesson plan because the character lesson plans, teaching direction, and learning materials were ready. Thus, it made the novice teachers feel easy to prepare for the learning. The interview with the teachers showed some inaccurate matters for the children's ages. For example, the videos were not interesting and clear that made them bored. The teachers should also develop a lesson plan and supporting materials to attract the learners.

The monitoring process during the preparing stage involved the principal. He observed the developed plan by the teachers based on the prepared lesson plan guideline. Then, the principal would express his agreement or disagreement toward the plans so that the learning would be much better and effective. The results were then documented and analyzed to get the core values of the schools. These values were integrated and instilled for the learners via all lesson plans.

The character education implementations were carried out in various methods. One of them was by creating a specific lesson about character development and religion lesson (faith-building). The character inculcation was integrated. Thus, the roles of the teachers were to take examples from the situation during the learning. Then, the teachers should connect and instill the values into the lesson plan. However, these characters were also available for all character values to be instilled with other characters. Once a month, the school promoted

a character education lesson. It was elaborated with four stages of lesson plans. Thus, each week there was one stage. In the first week, the teacher would teach about "Say it". It had a purpose to make the learners able to express the learned value. In the second week, the learners would be taught about "Know It". It had a purpose to be aware of what character the learners learned. This activity allowed learners to be aware of the character values. Thus, they were expected to be able to "See It" in daily life and to correlate the values in their learning. In the fourth week, they learned about "Be It." It meant they had to perform the character values they learned. The school also used videos or stories to promote character learning. The activities also involved question-answer sessions, listening to music, and popular audiovisuals. The audiovisuals were such as posters put on the walls or homes. These actions had the purpose to make them remember. The teachers also made interesting activities and tasks for the learners to learn and understand.

Culture, Education and Religion are three interrelated things. All three are closely related to the level of values that are very important for humans in various aspects of their lives (Sastranegara, 2019). It contained some characteristics, such as translatable into teaching-approach program elements. The characteristics should be able to describe the orders. It meant religious and character developments. The religious value inculcation required strategies. They should allow learners to understand what they learned and how they correlated to the surrounding environment. They should facilitate learners to find reasons why they had to perform the religious behaviors and have excellent characters. It showed that the religious character education was done by applying various interesting activities and audiovisuals, motions, songs, and arts about character education and religious value inculcation. They were promoted in a meeting per week in which the teachers also accompanied them. The activity was named Chapel for all learners and teachers. In a real lesson, the faith builder was done based on the school's vision, mission, and principle. The

school had Christian religious characteristics. Therefore, the materials were adjusted with Christian teachings in simple forms based on the age and the cognitive levels of the learners via the Bible stories, religious songs, and memorizing the verses. The character cannot be separated from the culture and even the culture is the foundation of character development. Indonesia has an extraordinary diversity of cultures and or local wisdom and has been rooted in the community as a guide and guidance for long life. The diversity of local wisdom in the form of cultural arts, regional languages, manners (social ethics), philosophy of life and so on, has become a strength and potential in building the character of the Indonesian people (Sumartia, Unde, Wibisana & Nugraha, 2019). Culture can be interpreted as the collective identity of a nation. The Joint-Educational Unit, Bina Bangsa Kindergarten applied the foreign curriculum. It accommodated not only the foreign nationals but also the Indonesian children. Some teachers in the school were also foreigners.

Thus, a multicultural approach could support cultural-based character education. However, it still prioritizes the Indonesian culture as the principle to promote character education. The habituation activity is also promoted every day by praying before having meals, greeting, being polite, and respecting other people. The characters are important to be realized into habitual action. It is also expected that these would be excellent characters for them. Besides the habitual activities, many excellent activities inside of the school or outside of the school were carried out to instill excellent characters. They were such as charity concerts, donations, book donations to the closest school, and so on.

The plan and the action could not run smoothly without supervision. The supervision was done by the principal. The principal supervised the classes or each learning activity. This supervision was done to find out the hindrances during the learning process and to find effective innovation or new ideas. The principal supervision was done twice in a

semester and continued by discussions or principal directions based on the findings of the supervisions.

The parents could, directly and indirectly, supervise the learning promotion. It was done by criticizing or providing suggestions. The evidence of the teachers' responsibilities toward the parents was creating the learners' development report regularly. It was in the form of FAR (Fortnightly Achievement Report) distributed for the parents twice a week. The report consisted of the development assessment from various physical, motoric, cognitive, language, behavioral, and socio-emotional aspects. The report also provided descriptions of how the learners behaved during the learning. Then, at the end of each semester, the teachers provided a semester report with the assessments of developmental aspects. The teachers also discussed with the parents via PTC (Parent-Teacher Conference) so cooperation between the teachers and parents could be maximum to develop the learners' characters.

Based on the findings, the school committed character education explicitly by mentioning and defending the common norms. The school also distributed it to all school community members. The school defined the characters into observable behaviors in school life; modeled the values, learned and discussed the values, used the values for an inter-human relationship at school; celebrated the value manifestations at the school and community; and emphasized the values by asking all school members to take responsibilities toward the consistent standards of the main values (Lickona, 1996). Based on the vision and mission, the school curriculum had characters as the important pillars at school. They were realized into a character education program that was organized to reach the POEIMA characters. It was in line with Bush (2008) that education management should be objective-centered orientation. The education plan, especially the character education, became the initial point of the character education at the school. The realization was already excellent. The plan was started with preparing the teachers. They were

the key to character education promotion. Because every year there would be a retired teacher or mutated teacher, there was a need of recruiting new teachers. Therefore, the new teachers obtained specific attention by joining the teacher-induction program. The program provided a meaningful school orientation. It was also stated by Ufartiene (2014) that Planning is described as one of the organizations' management functions and actually the core function of organization management. It was one of the methods of the learning process about awareness and organizational member behaviors. The teacher-induction activity plan also strengthened the statement that the new teachers required more classroom management training, support, and administrative counseling from the teacher seniors (Ingersoll & Strong, 2012). The teacher induction program answered the problems about the lack of knowledge and understanding about the school. The program consisted of orientation activity, workplace training, solution development and practice in the learning or counseling, and counseling for the novice teachers at the working place (Permendiknas number 27, 2010). It was expected that after joining the training induction activity for 10 days, the teachers could work properly. They were expected to plan and carry out the learning excellently. However, the induction activity for ten days should have been followed up with a monitoring program from the teacher seniors toward the novice teachers. Monitoring was individual counseling given for the novice teachers. The teachers that monitored the novice teachers were usually the expert and veteran teachers at the school.

The monitoring and counseling aimed to gain the efficacy of teachers. Teacher efficacy has proved to be powerfully related to many meaningful educational outcomes such as teachers' persistence, enthusiasm, commitment and instructional behavior, as well as student outcomes such as achievement, motivation, and self-efficacy beliefs (Moran & Hoy, 2001). The monitoring program accommodated the novice teachers to exchange the experience and knowledge from the teacher seniors. It was

about the environment and the culture of the school. It was important because both the school's culture and environment were still new for them. Thus, the monitoring activity could be the solution to deal with it. This finding was consistent with Davis and Hidgon (2008). They concluded that the novice-teacher induction contributed toward the teaching effectiveness.

After the teacher obtained the school education program socialization via this teacher-induction activity, the teacher conference and internal workshop were expected to allow the teachers to perform the best from them. The task distribution was done at the beginning of the new academic year. The teacher employment was based on the Government Regulation, Number 9, the Year 2005 about National Education, Chapter IV, Art 28, Item 1. It tells that educators should meet the academic qualification and competence as the parts of learning. They must be physically and religiously healthy and have the skills to realize the national education objectives. There were two teachers in one class only for the novice teachers. The novice teachers, in this case, were accompanied by the senior teachers. It aimed to promote the monitoring program so that the teacher seniors could guide the novice teachers to accomplish their tasks. It was in line with a study that showed a counseling or guiding activity promoted by a mentor could support and facilitate to development of the mental professionally. (Cooper, n.d.2014).

The curriculum was provided by a third party to determine the character education program. The curriculum was character education with audio-visual media and a curriculum based on a complete story with guidelines for the teachers and parents. They also obtained the learning plan. The character themes taught by the teachers were different for each week. The teachers instilled the values by integrating them into the lessons during the day. On the other hand, dealing with the character education lesson, the teachers had a specific slot in the lesson schedule for each week.

The teachers' creativity in modifying the lesson plan strongly determined the character

education effectiveness for the learners. The developments should be interesting, joyful, and acceptable for the learners. Students will gain their best when their teacher tries to understand and be aware of their needs, feels, interest and capabilities and also teacher has to create a good atmosphere with nice talk and gladness and show warmness and positivity (Yuniarni, 2012). It supported the promotion of outdoor activities from the school, such as charity concerts, book donations, field learning, and field trip. All activities had been socialized toward the parents. It included the schedules of the activities. The school orientation for parents and the activity socialization had been promoted but they were limited in terms of the time and the meetings. Thus, in terms of character education, it was only explained globally and not in detail. The problems could be solved by promoting communication between the teachers and the parents. The communication should cover what to do at home and continue what had been learned at school. It was important because character education was integrated into each aspect carried out by the children or in the situation around the environment. All the parents have an important role in building this character for their children. Children as good imitators will do what they see so that the parent in this case needs to be a good role model to the children (Sunarni et al., 2018).

The school should communicate with the parents about the objectives and the activities of the school. Parents should participate in a discussion of character development and how the learners' families could carry it. All parents had to get the information and skills to react. Parents should agree with the core values and how the school proposed to teach the learners (Lickona, 1996). Thus, we identified parent involvement as a crucial characteristic of effective character education programs. (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006). It is believed that parents' participations were important for the effective character education program. It was important to understand what things were successful in promoting the learners' character development. What had been done in the school showed

excellent cooperation with the parents. However, it was important to promote further personal character education socialization. It would make learners understand and had more intensive communication. Thus, it could make the character education run properly. The school had the central role to develop the learners' characters. However, the most significant influence on the learners' development was from the families especially the parents. It was whether they could see the social, moral, behavioral, and academic developments (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007).

### **The character education promotion**

The character education promotion at the school was already excellent. It applied various methods that were integrated into all lessons, activities, or structured lessons, such as character education or character building, and faith builder presented into various stories and interesting activities by singing, watching videos, creating artworks, and practicing the values in daily life. The observed problems were cultural diversity. The principal, some teachers, and some learners were foreign nationals. Thus, it made them have different cultures and habits that would require cultural understanding and tolerance from the other parties. The prioritized values of the school and the character education concept contained excellent characters. Thus, the teaching required a multicultural approach to accommodate various races, cultures, and habits. Multicultural education is a set of beliefs and the admission and the judgment of the diversity, culture, and ethnicity importances to create a lifestyle, social experience, personal identity, and educational opportunities from individuals, groups, or countries (Banks, 2001). The multicultural approach existed in the learning process and mutual cooperation of the teachers, learners, and parents. introducing students to knowledge about diverse cultures that they may come in contact with, at some point in their lives, allows them to build more familiarity with these cultures and be better prepared to respond to peers from these cultures (Chung, 2018). Suparlan 2020 explains

that A new kind of citizenship education, called multicultural citizenship, will enable students to acquire a delicate balance of cultural, national, and global identifications and to understand the ways in which knowledge is constructed; to become knowledge producers; and to participate in civic action to create a more humane nation and the world (Banks, 2001). Any education cannot lose the multicultural dimension. It includes civics because the reality shows that life has its multidimensional nature. Thus, human is part of multidimensional creatures.

Therefore, the approach toward human and human problem solving required a multidimensional approach and multidimensional cultures (Zulkifli, 2020).

Besides promoting a multicultural approach to educating the characters, the school also applied integrated values in all lessons and school activities. It covered both the character values and the specific times to learn about the characters via stories. It provided real portrays about the characters that might be difficult to understand at an early childhood age. Religion education was also the pillar of character education realized into worshipping and learning the religious values via the stories of the Bible in the form of religious lessons. The automated character education could be a useful stage to facilitate the current efforts. However, it could not be assumed as the holistic approach replacement that integrated the character development into all school life aspects (Lickona 1996). The habituation activity instilled in the school was already excellent, such as praying, speaking politely, keeping the cleanliness, etc. Character education had a higher meaning than moral education because it did not only learn something right or false. It covered how to instill the habit of excellent matters in life. Thus, children would be aware. They would understand, care, and commit to applying the policies in their lives (Mulyasa, 2013).

Although the pandemic hindered, the character education in the school could run properly. The character education had some hindrances, such as less interaction but it could

still be carried out. It was because the learners interacted with other people and they also developed their behaviors to reach success in the future by practicing the excellent behaviors. In this emergency stage condition, a specific strategy should be devised. It was to ensure the promotion of character education, for example, creating a laboratory to educate children. It dealt with the behavior and care for other people that were negatively impacted by the pandemic. The character education in this situation could be done by telling stories of real-life or watching recording videos that contained excellent characters.

The character education monitoring and evaluation. The character education was monitored strictly. The teachers had to carry out their tasks professionally. However, without any monitoring, it could not be reached. Monitoring during the school-based training helps to predict the process and result to build up teachers professionally for a better future. It provides for a curriculum design of pedagogical disciplines on an interdisciplinary basis including modernization of forms and methods of their study and taking into account the needs of educational institutions of different levels and the necessity to build professional competencies of a student (GylmiraSaudabaevaa, 2016). The principal monitored the school by promoting regular supervision. However, the specific supervision for character education did not exist. The principal admitted it was done in an integrated manner.

Character education supervision is important as program control. It could be done by applying a multicultural approach so that it will not deviate from the core character values. Then, supervision could be an initial detector of inappropriate matters while promoting character education. This supervision was carried out internally by the principal, the teaching peers, and the parents. On the other hand, external supervision could be done by involving the community or the local educational supervisor. The observed problems were the supervision schedules. They were not consistent and had negative impacts on learning promotion. When

there were inappropriate matters, they would not be observable and not obtain appropriate solutions. Schools found the need of the related institutions, educational supervisors, principals, and teachers to overcome the problems of teachers' performances via better supervision. The principal supervised the modified lesson plan or the teachers that created the modified lesson plan to create better lesson plans. It ensured the educational quality whether it was already appropriate, understandable, and joyful for the learners. The purpose of supervision was to facilitate the teachers to develop the learning and to guide the teachers. The principal carried out the supervision twice a semester. Then, the results were discussed by the teachers to conduct an evaluation and to determine the next follow-up. According to Prihatin (2011), evaluation is a process of collecting data and analyzing the information about the effectiveness and impacts of a stage and a whole program. The supervision materials consisted of all related aspects toward the learning and its administration. However, specific supervision should deal with the character education promotion but it was not found. Character education would realize properly when supervision was done to obtain the descriptions of the results and the determined objectives. Suryosubroto, (2010) found that supervising was an activity to compare the current condition and the ideal condition.

The evaluation results could be used to make the next stage decision and to revise the existing program. Arikunto (2010) states that evaluation is an activity to collect information about something that is used to determine an appropriate alternative to make decisions. Some shortcomings of the curriculum were such as less attractive teaching materials for kindergarten-aged children. These materials would make them not creative and could not develop their character properly. Thus, the curriculum should be developed regularly by referring to the firm curriculum principles. Four reasons could be used as references to develop the curriculum. They were (1) philosophy, (2) psychology, (3) socio-culture, and (4) science and technology

(Nana Syaodih Sukmadinata 1997). The follow-up of the evaluation results could be used to revise the character education program in the future or the next academic year.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the problems and objectives of the research with data collection methods through direct observation, documentation studies and interviews then analysis of research results and discussion obtained the results of research regarding character education management in TK Bina Bangsa Semarang can be concluded as follows: Planning of character education programs has been going well. Starting from the vision, mission and goals of the school which is then inserted into character values in order to form a learner character or Learner Profile with the character of "POEIMA" by using a character curriculum framework that has been presented in full to be applied by teachers. The plan has been designed in such a way and the teacher only needs to modify it as necessary, so this is very helpful for making a good plan. All materials and learning aids have also been provided. Although the plans that have been provided may not be in accordance with the wishes or needs of teachers and students, the existing learning plans are not rigid and the teacher can change and adjust to the needs but stay on track.

Character education planning is also supported in every aspect or subject of learning so that the cultivation of character values can be carried out in every learning activity. Planning activities that support character education programs are also going well, such as habituation activities, worship activities, activities that form a cultured character and love for the homeland as well as respect for other nations are also supported in various activities such as Indonesian language learning ceremonies, flags, UN day, Kartini Day and so on. Planning starts at the beginning of each school year with induction activities and teacher conferences as the first step in preparing activity and learning plans for the next year. Some of



these plans are broken down into educational calendars, program plans per semester, work schemes and division of themes per month or learning topics per week which are then detailed into lesson plans.

Implementation is born from a plan, and as is well known, planning has gone well, so the implementation is also going well. With well-organized collaboration between school principals and teachers as well as parents, plays an important role in the successful implementation of character education in Bina Bangsa Kindergarten. Character values taught through various methods, whether inserted in each subject or activity or specifically taught in character education or religious education, are very important in instilling good character values. Various events outside of school hours are also very supportive. The result in this research can be used as a reference in further research to develop models and research discussions in accordance with the effectiveness of character education using multicultural approach in wider scope.

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