

Understanding Character Education and Experiential Learning Process in 21st Century Education in Indonesia

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Abstract

This paper presents understanding character education and experiential learning process in 21st century education in Indonesia, a reflection and a number of future thoughts regarding Indonesian education. Education is not only a way to prepare for life, but education is life itself. Education should be the breath of every human being, society, especially the future generations of any nation, especially the Indonesian nation. Education is a life that introduces children that as humans they have the freedom to think and seek all kinds of knowledge in order to survive and share their lives with other human beings. Research on education in Indonesia and several mainstream media writings, both national and international, seem to agree that education in Indonesia at this time has not provided room for freedom of thought. Education in Indonesia is also not connected to the realities of life's challenges and the pace of world change in the future, including the challenges of the 21st century.

Keywords: education, character education, learning process, experiential learning process, 21st century education

1. Introduction

Talking about the function of education becomes very important for people who have just been born by their mothers. If a newborn baby is left by his parents, of course his life will not last long, or the parents take care of their children but do not provide education to live as a human. For example, if a newborn baby is cared for by his parents by feeding enough to live, but his parents never guide an aging baby to train him to walk, parents let their child try to walk alone, you can imagine how many years this new child can walk. To make matters

worse, if the parents are busy working and for example, the 7-8 month old baby is left with the dog at home every day, the maid doesn't pay much attention to this baby, so of course this child will be like a dog. The reader may have heard or read the story of two children named Amala and Kamala (aged 2 and 8 years old) who live in a wolf's nest and are cared for by wolves, in India in October 1920. The lives of these two children acted behavior like a wolf that is: walking crawling, sleeping during the day, not sleeping at night, often roaring, eating raw meat, avoiding places exposed to sunlight, and can not hold with fingers [1]. To be able to behave like a normal human takes decades, because in the story it is said that, Kamala who was 8 years old at the time of discovery, survived to 9 years means that her life span was only 17 years. At the age of seventeen at the end of his life Kamala could only speak on a par with a normal six-year-old human child.

Therefore, the function of education has been very important for humans from the beginning. Education in the sense of educating is to provide assistance to children so that these young children grow normally as other human beings [2]. Educating in general is to provide guidance, assistance, assistance to students to empower their potential to develop, and continue to develop through school education, and continue to develop through further education so that they can live independently, and can actualize themselves in real life as normal humans .

Based on the explanation above, the function of education is to help students to live independently as normal humans. Specifically in the narrow or micro sense, the function of education is to provide conscious assistance for the occurrence of physical and spiritual development in student. Physical development is to know the physical, to be healthy physically must be disciplined in consuming food and drink, regular exercise, and so forth. The spiritual development is to start by knowing himself, taught to know himself and God. Furthermore, the broad or macro education function is closely related to: (1) personal self-development in a macro manner, namely love for friends and peers, loving family, loving the environment, and getting to know the creator of the universe: (2) the development of art and culture or diverse national cultures; and (3) developing himself as a good citizen, and as a citizen must be determined to defend his nation and country. The function of education in this macro will run smoothly when in the education process there needs to be an emphasis of education on harmonious interaction, because actually the core of education is the issue of interaction, therefore harmonious interaction is very important to be taught and then applied in real life [3]. Thus, the educator, namely the community, family and teacher, must set good

examples in real life, so that students imitate or emulate their parents, their leaders, who live in harmony.

The function of education according in the Internet and Literature Review states that the real educational function carried out by educational institutions, as follows:

1. Prepare community members to make a living.
2. Developing individual talents for personal satisfaction and for the benefit of the community.
3. Preserve culture.
4. Embed the skills necessary for participation in democracy.
5. Reducing parental control, through education at school, parents delegate their duties and authority in educating children to school.
6. Providing facilities for defiance, schools have the potential to instill the value of defiance in the community. This is reflected by differences in views between schools and the community about things, for example sex education and open attitudes.
7. Maintaining the social class system, through school education is expected to be able to socialize to their students to accept differences in prestige, and the status that exists in society. Schools are also expected to be channels of student mobility to higher social status or at least in accordance with the status of their parents.
8. Extend adolescence, with school education can also slow down one's adulthood because students are still economically dependent on their parents.

In another Literature Review it is said that the function of education is as follows: (1) transmission (transfer) of culture; (2) choosing and teaching social roles; (3) guaranteeing social integration; (4) schools teach personality patterns, and the last is (5) schools become a source of social innovation.

2. Educational Components

In implementing education, educational components are needed so that education runs smoothly. Students as young people who want to learn will get satisfying lessons when the educational components or factors that are required must be fulfilled. The treatment of learning or teaching and learning, it appears when there are teachers who teach and students learn. Learning is a process that takes place within students to change their behavior, namely: behavior in thinking, behaving, and acting. Teaching is an effort to create a comfortable learning environment system that enables the creation of an optimal learning process [4]. The

learning environment system in question consists of several components or factors of education. The components or factors of education referred to, as follows:

1. Teaching Objectives

Teaching objectives are the guidelines or references needed to choose a learning strategy (teaching and learning). Teaching goals oriented to the formation of attitudes certainly will not be achieved if the learning strategy is oriented towards the cognitive dimension. In the practice of education generally in the community, family, and school, many educational goals or teaching objectives are desired by educators or teachers so that teaching objectives can be achieved by students. There are various teaching objectives, for example general goals, special goals, interim goals, intermediary goals, incidental goals.

2. Teacher

Teacher has the important component, because the teacher who creates a comfortable learning atmosphere for students on the move, namely learning. Teachers must know themselves first to get to know their students. That is, the teacher must know that he is honest, fair, merciful, polite, will judge students fairly, treat their students as human beings, in short the teacher has good character through words and actions. The character of a teacher becomes important because the teacher must be an example for his students. The teacher as a model for students, in fact the teacher is a live film that is watched and discussed every day by the students. Thus, the teacher becomes very important to educate students or students towards the golden generation that is a demographic bonus.

3. Students

In the implementation of learning activities the participants come from different backgrounds, for example: socio-cultural environment, economic level, parental education level, and intelligence level. The higher the diversity of the community, the higher the differences found in the class. Students are young people who need to be treated as humans by their teacher.

4. Learning Materials

The subject matter can be formal material and informal material. Formal material is the subject matter or content contained in the official textbooks, namely in the form of textbooks prepared at school by the government. Informal material is learning material sourced from the school environment concerned. These informal teaching materials are needed so that the learning process is more relevant and actual. This factor is an input that needs to be considered in developing a learning strategy.

5. Teaching Methods

In learning activities educational interactions are needed, and for more effective interaction in achieving goals, appropriate teaching methods are needed. Method is a way in which its function is a tool to achieve goals. So, the teaching method is necessary because the accuracy of the method will influence the form of learning strategies.

6. Teaching Media

Media including educational facilities are available because it is very influential in selecting learning strategies. The success of teaching does not depend on the sophisticated / modern media used, but depends on the accuracy and effectiveness of the media used by the teacher.

7. Administrative and Financial Factors

Administrative and financial factors cannot be ignored because they are important in the smooth running of activities, especially learning activities. Included in this component, there are the lesson schedule, the condition of the building and the study room, and this becomes important in choosing a learning strategy. Educational activities or learning activities will not take place properly, if the building where the implementation of education endangers students, there is no learning room, and there is financial shortages.

3. Indonesian Education in Reflection

Indonesia is a country that is predicted to become the 7th best economy in the world by 2030. In that year, it is predicted that around 113 million skilled workers with high competence will be needed. At that time, Indonesia will have a productive age population of 71% of its total population. This means that if the Indonesian nation is able to manage its young generation from now on as leaders and innovators, Indonesia will be able to realize this prediction, but if we fail to design it, the productive age generation will only become 'consumers' for other countries or become 'consumers' for other countries or become workers' in their own country [5].

There have been many government efforts in managing Indonesia's young generation through education. To prepare a quality and competitive generation, Indonesia has a vision for National Education, namely: The realization of the education system as a strong and authoritative social institution to empower all Indonesian society to develop into qualified human beings so that they are able and proactive in responding the challenges of the ever-changing times.

As a form of national commitment, the 1945 Constitution has also mandated that a fund other than teacher salaries and official education fund is allocated which is a minimum of 20% of the total State Budget (APBN) for the education sector, and at least 20% of the

total Regional Budget (APBD). This aims to catch up the Indonesia's education both in terms of accessibility and quality.

In addition, there are several records of changes in the process of improvement that have been achieved by Indonesia during the independent period from 1945 to 2014. The increasing of primary and secondary education institutions, the increasing of accessibility of primary and secondary education, the increasing of enrollment rate of primary education from 75 % in 1975 to 95% in 2007, and the decreasing of illiteracy rate from 95% in 1945 to 8% in 2011.

Emergency education is a reflective and evaluative effort by the Indonesian state regarding the problems of Indonesian education and the opportunities it faces. Some of the important points raised in the emergency education presentation were that in terms of school infrastructure, 75% of schools in Indonesia did not meet the minimum education service standards. From the academic side, critical thinking and problem solving as measured by reading ability (literacy), mathematics (math) and natural science (science) in the 2013 PISA mapping, Indonesia ranked 64th out of 65 countries. This was also supported by the low reading interest of 0.001 among Indonesian school age children (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org>). The results of the science literacy assessment from TIMSS also noted that Indonesia was ranked 40 out of 42 countries.

It is not only an academics, from a behavioral perspective, it is noted that violence in schools, both physical, verbal, and sexual violence, is experienced by some children in Indonesia. In the social case of society, corruptions, societal disorders and low ethical behaviors in Indonesian society today are considered as contributions from Indonesian education which still focuses on the realm of cognition [6]. Even though education is expected not to only be smart in terms of cognition, but also to refine the heart and improve human character and behavior.

When the word 'emergency' is chosen as the public language, the assumption is that the goal is a very fast and accurate effort to answer all the complex problems of Indonesian education. Some of the efforts that have been made by the government so far are related to curriculum changes and increasing teacher competence. The change is intended to prepare Indonesian children to have 21st century competencies by developing four main abilities, namely critical thinking, communication, creativity and collaboration. The government assumed that the previous curriculum (School-Based Curriculum (KTSP)) was unable to facilitate the four competencies required for the 21st century [7]. By a thematic approach, this

curriculum is expected to reduce the student's learning burden who have so far identified too much material to be studied.

The main problem in education is not the curriculum, but rather the low competence of teachers. They argued that the curriculum actually still provides room for four competencies as long as the teacher's ability to develop creative and innovative learning methods is developed [8]. Although some studies stated that certification is quite effective for teaching development, social competence with teachers and students, several education experts considered that certification is not sufficient in teacher development. Moreover, several teachers in a focused discussion reminded that in addition to the certification system, teachers also need capacity building and teacher professional development so that the teacher's skill always improves [9]. Unfortunately, up to now, the teachers feel that capacity building through professional development programs implemented by the government has not been felt by teachers. There are several things that make the training less effective, namely: First, teacher training is carried out in a short time (3 days), while the material presented is a lot. Second, the material is considered less applicable in the field. The teachers felt that the training material had too many theories and did not provide opportunities to practice its application in the field, so that sometimes after the training was completed and returned to school, the teachers were still confused about implementing it. Third, it needs an assistance for teachers after training, to help implement it in schools. The teachers thought that it would be very beneficial if the government provides some assistances for teachers and schools in implementing it in the field, especially if there is a new material. The teacher argued that school supervisors can function as mentors / assistants, not just supervising.

Apart from the issue of curriculum and teacher quality, another thing that is considered more important than overhauling the curriculum is the National Examination (UAN) which has been implemented for about 10 years. The National Examination (UAN) which is used as a standardized student graduation in Indonesia is considered to have a big influence on Indonesian education because it makes education like a "factory" that issues a standard product in the form of a graduation standard score that overrides the six year learning process. National Examination (UAN) which measures the graduation through certain subjects (Mathematics, Language, Science) is also considered to disrupt other competencies such as children's personal and social development. Although the current government through the Ministry of Education and Culture has changed the purpose of the National Examination (UAN) not as a passing standard, but mapping the quality of Indonesian schools, academics and also teachers still think that as long as there is the term

National Examination (UAN), it is feared that schools and teachers will always focus on competing to become best and as if they do not have enough space to carry out learning and educational experiments to develop all children's competencies [10]. Moreover, This also mentioned the issue that standardization in any form does not fit the Indonesian context. The first reason is when the quality of infrastructure and teacher competence are not the same between schools and regions, it is not feasible then the government wants the same results. Second, when Indonesia consists of various cultures and ethnicities with diverse values, the learning content and teaching methods should be adapted to the context and cannot be uniformed. The National Examination (UAN) is one of the most controversial state policies in the education sector. The high National Examination (UAN) value illustrates the high quality of national education is a fatal mistake. According to Suwignyo, the National Examination is only one indication of the quality of national education in addition to the quality of infrastructure, teacher competence, curriculum compliance, and student needs, as well as the fulfillment of learning standards through appropriate learning evaluation.

The chaos that has occurred in the Indonesian education system is related to the absence of a sustainable, clear, and measurable design of Indonesian education based on a research. In line with the vision of Indonesian education, the importance of Indonesia in preparing Indonesia's young generation with high competitiveness for rapid global change. For these needs, the government needs to be serious in designing its education system from early childhood education to tertiary education [11]. Unfortunately, Indonesian education has so far not had a compass because it has no clear direction and it is considered inconsistent between its vision, curriculum, and assessment, because Indonesia does not have a comprehensive, long-term design that is appropriate and consistent with educational goals. It is feared that the absence of educational designs will always lead to no direction in Indonesian education. In fact, this unclear direction certainly contributes to the "status quo" of Indonesian education which is currently in an emergency [12]. This status quo will result in low human qualities that will be achieved by Indonesia in the future, especially in 2030, when they are expected to become innovators as well as leaders.

Therefore, based on a portrait of Indonesian education and projections of this country's future, the urgency of an Indonesian education design based on comprehensive multidisciplinary research is an issue that is still rarely touched upon even though it is important to cover the initiation of policies regarding vision and mission, future objectives, curriculum design and assessment, the design of the professional development of teachers, and school principals and the public participation model [13].

4. Educational Character

Bullying is accepted in many schools throughout the states; it is extremely damaging to the minority of students, mentally, emotionally, physically, and academically. It needs full-day school program that students can make more progress in terms of learning which will certainly have a positive impact for them. Education has meaning way, process or educate. Education in general is any effort planned to influence others either individual, groups, or communities so that they do what the educational offender hopes [14]. Education is the changing process of attitude or personal behavior to be mature human beings through instructional processes. The Indonesia Law Number 20 of 2003, Article 1 explains the education is purposely planned to make instructional atmosphere and process actively develop students' potential whose spiritual power of religion, self control, personality, noble character, intelligence, as he needs, society needs, and national needs [15]. Based on the opinions above the education means a continuous process on building the character of students better to develop physically and mentally, which is free and conscious to the god, as manifested in the intellectual, emotional and humanity of human nature.

Characters can be termed as psychological traits, character, and morals owned by someone who will distinguish the person with others. Character is also innate of the heart, soul, character, personality, nature, character, personality, temperament, and character. The character is human personality such ethical or moral, and personal honesty [16]. Based on the opinion of the experts above, it can be concluded that the character is the quality of a particular individual to express behavior in a consistent action in various situations, the character is formed because the pattern of actions are structured and done repeatedly so that in the formation of children's character can run well.

Educational character aimed at building students' noble and smart, it tends to create more advanced human civilization. Educational character is appropriate to handle today's crisis of moral in Indonesia. Educational character as a strategy in dealing with immoral problems. The crisis appears today are promiscuity, violence, crime, theft of teenagers, cheating on exam, drug abuse, and pornography which cannot be solved completely, then it needs the educational character for the students through educational institutions, especially schools. Character is clearly of general human importance, its deliberate or explicit promotion may not be equally warranted in all educational contexts.

Characters relate to morals, attitudes, and behaviors. The good character means good knowledge and good deeds. Educational character is both a rooted and developing discipline.

Habits, traits, and virtues are three interdependent and mutually implicative concepts of educational character that are foundational to most traditional accounts of moral character.

Educational character as a tool to develop the personal potentiality, in view of a positive development linked to greater wellbeing .Educational character as an instrument to preventing negative behaviors, to preserve the cultural heritage and the moral values of a society. Educational character has been being concerned by many countries in the framework of preparing quality young people, not only as benefit of individual, but also society. Educational character can be defined the deliberate school life to strengthen character development optimally which means our strategies are intentionally from school life to help the character formation optimally. Educational character requires specific strategies that are relevant with the educational purpose achieved. The appropriate instructional strategies are exemplary, habituation, praise and punishment. Educational character teaches 18 points of values honest, religious, tolerance, hard work, discipline, creative, democratic, independent, curiosity, love of the country, spirit of nationality, friendly or communicative, appreciate achievement, love to read, social care, environmental care, and responsibility. This paper investigated how the implementation of educational character to develop the characteristics of students and how many students in good category, enough category and less category. Character education is the deliberate effort to help people understand, care about, and act upon core ethical values. When we think of the kind of character we want for our children, it is clear that we want them to be able to judge what is right, care deeply about what is right, and then do what they believe to be right, even in the face of pressure from without and temptation from within [17].Character Education is an effort to educate children to be able to make wise decisions and apply it in their daily lives, so that they can make a positive contribution to the surrounding environment. Character values that need to be instilled in children are universal values in which all religions, traditions and cultures must uphold these values. These universal values must be able to become a glue for all members of society even though they have different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. Character education is a process of transforming the values of life to grow and develop in one's personality so that it becomes one in the behavior of that person's life.

According to the Ministry of National Education, character education is carried out in order to achieve the goal of national education, namely to develop the potential of students to become people of faith and to fear God Almighty, have good morality, be healthy, have knowledge, be capable, be capable, be creative, be independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens.

The purpose of character education in a school setting are:

1. Strengthen and develop life values that are considered important and necessary so that it becomes a student ownership personality that is unique to the values developed.
2. Correcting student behavior that is incompatible with the values developed by the school.
3. Establish a harmonious connection with family and community in playing the role of shared character.

The principles of Character Education according to the Character Education Partnership, are as follows.

1. The school community promotes ethical values and core performance as a foundation of good character.
2. The school defines characters comprehensively including thoughts, feelings, and actions.
3. Schools use a comprehensive, deliberate and proactive approach to character development.
4. The school creates a caring community.
5. The school gives students the opportunity to do moral things.
6. The school offers a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all students, develops their character, and helps them achieve success.
7. The school encourages student self-motivation.
8. School staff are ethical learning communities who share responsibility for character education and adhere to the same core values that guide students.
9. The school fosters shared leadership and long-term support from character education initiatives.
10. Schools involve families and community members as partners in character building efforts.
11. The school regularly assesses climate and culture, staff functions as educator characters, and the extent to which students manifest good character.

As for the legal basis for character education, namely:

1. Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System
2. Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards
3. Government Regulation No. 17 of 2010 concerning the management of Education Organization
4. INPRESS No. 1 of 2010 concerning the strengthening of methodology and curriculum
5. Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2017 concerning Strengthening Character Education

5. Design for Change

It is not only the Indonesian nation, other nations in the world are actually experiencing the same challenges of change, namely the challenges of the 21st century. What is the difference in the 21st century? The biggest challenge is the use of digital or often called ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in Indonesian society and also the world [18]. It is undeniable, ICT technology changes very rapidly the lifestyle of modern society today. People who are ready to use ICT appropriately and positively will be able to increase the access of information while increasing the productivity of a nation. However, on the other hand, if the speed of ICT is not accompanied by a society capable of using it appropriately, then ICT will be counterproductive for a nation.

Seeing the world as information, as oceans of data that can be explored at ever greater breadth and depth, offers us a perspective on reality that we did not have before. It is a mental outlook that may penetrate all areas of life. Today, we are a numerate society because we presume that the world is understandable with numbers and math. And we take for granted that knowledge can be transmitted across time and space because the idea of the written word is so ingrained [19]. Tomorrow, subsequent generations may have a "big-data consciousness"- the presumption that there is a quantitative component to all that we do, and that data is indispensable for society to learn from. The notion of transforming the myriad dimensions of reality into data probably seems novel to most people at present. But in the future, we will surely treat it as a given (which, pleasingly, harks back to the very origin of the term "data").

The experiential learning process is depicted in the figure 1 below:

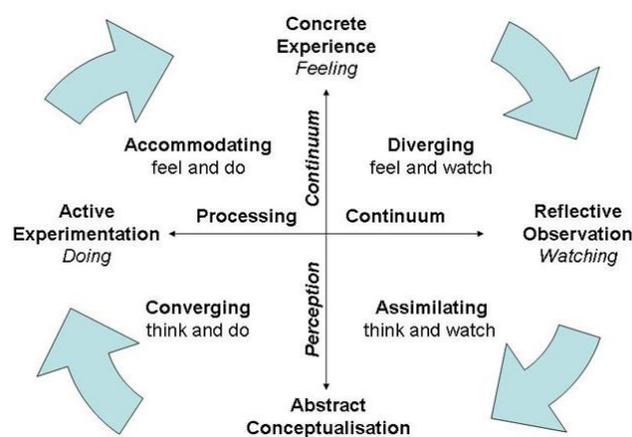


Figure 1. Experiential learning process

As a teacher who is prepared to become the facilitator of the 21st century, the ability to produce knowledge through experience is an ability that educators must have. Before the teacher facilitated students to become independent learners, teachers should ideally understand the process of becoming independent learners. This experiential learning approach is proven to be able to change the teacher's paradigm regarding the role of teachers in the classroom, as well as to improve teacher skills according to the competencies needed by Indonesian children in the future.

An integrated program shows that students' perceptions of their teachers change. Previously, students said that they were happier in school because the teacher smiled a lot and taught him using more varied methods. In accordance with the Reinforcement Affect Model, children enjoy being in school because the teacher smiled a lot and taught them with more varied methods. Students will more easily accept the lessons given. This is one of the contributions of social psychology theory in changing Indonesian education. The good professional development is able to provide opportunities to develop the competence of teachers academically with periodic scholarships, writing training, conferences and also research which is designed in policies [20]. Teachers also get the opportunity to develop teaching skills carried out by the school and government. Apart from that, personal and social development are also given attention for schools to collaborate, collaborating with other schools for teacher networking.

6. Conclusion

Apart from the teacher development system, the teacher recruitment and education system is also suspected of contributing to the low teacher competence in Indonesia. The largest portion of the Indonesian teacher education curriculum is also still concerned with knowledge of teaching methods only. Knowledge of children's psychological development at the University of Education will greatly help the task of teachers in school. This material will help prospective teachers to have a comprehensive perspective on the education which is basically a change of human behavior according to age development. The proportion of material on psychology, especially developmental psychology, as well as the insight of wellbeing for teachers and counseling teachers, school management science, and leadership as well as connectivity with the surrounding society, are very important in addition to teaching method, and one more competency that should be possessed in the future, namely competence use of technology to complement the pedagogical competences. Students are

expected to be active in the process of learning activities, actively thinking to find something, arrange concepts and give meaning to things that are learned so that they can be implemented in the form of attitudes and personality. The most important and determines the implementation of motivation and symptoms of learning is the learning intentions of students themselves. That knowledge will be meaningful when students look for it and find it themselves

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