

The Importance of Character Education in Higher Education (University) in Building the Quality Students

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Abstract

The character education in university should be done as a continuation of the previous educational institutions, because the character education has not been successful optimally in both senior and junior high schools before university. The character education in universities is conducted through: Tridharma Universities, Curriculum improvement, the competency improvement, performance and character of lecturer, and the integration of character values in campus culture. The character values that can be developed in a college is a character value that relates to: God, self, family, community, country and environment. Therefore, the character education in higher education needs to be developed in order to form the qualified graduates.

Keywords : Character, Higher Education, Quality Student

1. Introduction

The higher education or university as one of the education centres, has a heavy burden in the formation of the student characters. The character education in higher education is a continuation of the character education in schools. Although the character education has been implemented since kindergarten, elementary school (SD/MI) and junior-senior (SMP/MTs–SMA/SMK/MA), but the graduate of the educational institution is not necessarily have good character. Even the graduate of boarding school was necessarily have as expected. Evidently, there are many behaviours that are not characterized when they become students, such as student clashes, free sex, drinking, even radicalism and terrorism also tarnished the campus environment. The desire to graduate easily and quickly, the value of an unfair, sale and purchase the diplomas, plagiarism and others are still often occurring in the campus environment. It shows that the character education in educational institutions before universities has not succeeded (Walid, 2012; Oetomo et al., 2019).

Therefore, the universities need to have a pattern of character formation of students in accordance with the vision, mission and the characteristics of the higher education. The character education in higher education needs to be designed intact, its mean that when the students enter a new territory as freshmen in faculty, in the study program, until graduation as alumni must all be designed completely (Budimansyah et al., 2010).

Universities form academic people who can learn by themselves or learn independently by doing self improvement and seeking and defending scientific truth. The existence of character education applied in higher education, students are expected to design a vision of the future for themselves, the environment and family and

form a creative and innovative civil society. The education provided by this college leads to the struggle of students to bring reality closer to ideal conditions. Personality values are developed in universities in preparation for entering the world of work. The things that the world demands are integrity, initiative, motivation, teamwork, leadership ethics, willingness to learn, commitment, listening, tough, flexible, oral communication, honesty, logical argument and others. It is necessary to develop students' personalities intensively and sustainably to improve the competitiveness of graduates in the community.

2. Discussion

2.1. The Definition of Character Education

According to Hermawan Kertajaya quoted by Jamal Makmur, character is a characteristic possessed by an object or individual. That characteristic is original and entrenched to the personality of the object and the individual, and is the engine that drives how one acts, behaves, says and responds to something (Asmani, 2011).

Thomas Lickona defines that character as “A reliable inner disposition to respond to situations in a morally good way.” Later, Lickona added, “Character so conceived has three interrelated parts: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior.” (Lickona, 2009). Good character, in Lickona’s view, includes moral knowing, then raises the commitment (intention) to the good (moral feeling), and finally really do the good (moral behavior). In other words, the character refers to a set of knowledge (cognitive), attitudes and motivations, as well as behaviors and skills.

The character education is the process of giving guidance to learners to be fully human character in the dimension of heart, mind, body, taste and desire. The character education can also be interpreted as a value education, moral education, character education which aims to develop the ability of learners to give good decisions, to maintain what is good and to realize the goodness in everyday life with a vengeance. The character education is also interpreted as a planned effort to make the learners recognize, care and internalize the values so that the learners behave as a Kamil man(Asmani, 2011) as showed in table 1

Table 1. Implementation of Character Education

Integration in Subjects	Develop syllabus and RPP on existing competencies in accordance with the values to be applied
Integration in Local Content	Determined by the Unit Pendidikan / Region □ Competency developed by the Education Unit / Region
Self Development Activities	Cultivation and Habituation Conditioning Routine activities Spontaneity activities Nudity Programmable activities Counseling Guidance Providing services for students who are experiencing problems.

2.2. The Implementation of the Character Education in Higher Education

The important aspects in character education in a college are Tridarma College, improving the curriculum, improving the competence, performance and character of lecturers, and the integration of the change values in campus culture (Kurniawan, 2013). Tridarma College namely education and teaching, education and development and community service (Wibowo, 2013). The content curriculum in universities should be the efforts which directed and integrated to build a mental attitude of students who have a character and capable to build his own nation’s civilization. Lecturer as a controller of learning can do by giving exemplary values of the academic character in the form of attitude and behavior, discipline in upholding norms, critical, creative in acting, rational in thinking, honest in speech, responsible in carrying the obligation and anti-plagiarism attitude in completing the work scientific (Ito, 2017).The integration of character values in campus culture requires the exemplary lecturers, especially the professors in academic cultures. The teachers/lecturers factors play a very big role in the formation of student character (Jianto, 2012).

Many writers describe the implementation of character education in universities. Ida farida explains, the core activities in universities is the college tridharma, so that the all educational activities, research, and community service performed in a character. To strengthen those activities, the college should create a kind of character

education center and cultural development to support the vision, mission and the goals of the higher education, both in the short, medium and long term (Farida, 2012).

Abdullah Hamid explained that the implementation of character education in universities is integrated in learning, management of department and study program, and also on the student activities (Hamid et al., 2013).

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI) develops the character building through three models or approaches:

- Improving the quality of civic education through the innovation of project-based citizen learning.
- Guidance-based counseling and guidance services both through the courses and out of the lectures, and
- Through the Thematic Work Lecture (KKN) as a compulsory curricular program (Budimansyah et al., 2010).

Sunan Kalijogo State Islamic University develops the character education by using the social capital strengthening the model for students. This model is very effectively applied in UIN Sunan Kalijogo to build the character of godliness and responsibility but less effective to build the character of honesty (Sumarni et al., 2015; Dwiningwarni et al., 2019).

Although the character education at higher education is not included in the curriculum structure, but its implementation effort substantively is a hobby in the context of academic culture and in the organization of education and learning. The implementation form is done through the process of learning in the lecture, the process of academic administrative services, and through the extra-curricular followed by the students (Wathoni, 2016).

2.3. The Character Building Values which is Developed in Higher Education

Muchlas Samani explains, the attitudes and manners contain of five ranges:

- The attitudes and behavior in relation to God;
- The attitudes and behavior in relation to oneself;
- The attitudes and behavior in relation to family;
- The attitude and behavior in relation to society and nation; and
- The attitudes and behaviors in relation to nature (Samani, 2016).

Jamal Makmur explains, based on the study of various religious values, social norms, regulation or law, academic ethics and human rights principles, has identified the group items of values into five main values, which are:

- The value of character of its relationship with the Almighty;
- The character value of the relationship with oneself;
- The character value of his relationship with his fellow human beings;
- The character's value of his relationship with the environment; and
- The character's value of his relationship to the nationality (Asmani, 2011).

From the above explanation, the author describes that the values of character formers can be grouped into:

- The character value of the relationship with oneself;
- The character value of the relationship with the family;
- The character value of relationship with fellow human beings;
- The character values related to the environment/ nature around;
- The character values related to the nationality/ state; and
- The character value of his relationship with the God Almighty.

In the implementation guidance of character education of Kemendiknas, there are 18 values of character formation that comes from the religion, Pancasila, culture and national education objectives, which are: Religious, Honest, Tolerance, Discipline, Hard Work, Creative, Independent, democratic, Curiosity, Enthusiastic Spirit, Love the Homeland, Appreciate Restation, Friendly/Communicative, Peaceful Love, Love to Read, Care for the Environment, Social Care, and Responsibility (Kurikulum, 2009).

The moral values developed in Malaysia are sixteen values which are called pure values, namely: Kindly, Self-reliance, High Tall (Courtesy), Respect, Compassion, Justice, Freedom, Courage, Physical and Mental Success, Honesty, Handicraft, Cooperation, Simplicity, Be Thankful, Rationale, The Spirit of Community (Sumintono et al., n.d.).

The colleges can choose the character values which correspond to their vision and mission as the core character value that is worth developing. As Ramdhani explains, the character values applied in Higher Education or university are choosing the core values developed in the character education implementation, especially in each department/course. The core values which is chosen are: Honest, Intelligent, Caring, and Resilient (Ramdhani, 2017). The implementation of character education in higher education in supporting the movement of mental revolution through the character values of worship obedience, honesty in both academic and non-academic, discipline, responsibility, respect, care and cooperation (Williams, 2010).

Related to character education, each educational unit can effectively allocate available time in order to apply cultural values planting using active learning methods. This can be done since the teacher begins the learning, during the process, the provision of independent and structured tasks both done individually and in groups, as well as assessment of learning processes and results. The strategies carried out by different schools, in some schools, generally, from the beginning come to school, children are used to greeting each other, greeting each other when meeting their neighbors and teachers. For kindergarten and elementary school level, in general some teachers welcome students with greetings, smiles and greetings. In some schools, daily study hours are 30 minutes early, and they are used to perform routine activities such as prayer together, kultum, or other relevant activities. In order to habituation, in various schools also carried out the implementation of worship by utilizing rest time. There are also schools that increase the time in the afternoon after lesson hours to perform extracurricular activities or other relevant activities chosen by the school. Some schools carry out all the extracurricular activities on Saturdays from morning until noon.

3. Conclusions

From the above description, it can be concluded as follows:

- The character education in college is something that cannot be ignored, because it affects to the quality of graduates.
- The character education in universities can be done through Tridharma, curriculum improvement, competency improvement, performance and character of lecturers, and the integration of character values in campus culture.
- The character education that can be developed in college as character value that is related to God, the character value that is related to oneself, the character value that is related to the family, the character value that is related to the society, the character value that is related to the state and the character value that is related to the environment.

Therefore, the character education should be done continuously (running for life), both from the basic level, medium and college in order to produce the quality output.

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