

# The Profile of Kindergarten Students' Kindness

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**Keywords:** Kindness Profile, Kindergarten Students.

**Abstract:** This study was aimed at describing the profile of kindergarten students' kindness. To this end, a descriptive qualitative method was employed. The study was carried out by observing 286 samples selected out of 1,069 students in Sukasari, Bandung. The result revealed that more than half of students displayed well-developed kindness, some displayed developing kindness, and few of them showed under-developed kindness. Altruistic love was the most frequently displayed dimension of kindness; for example, when they played together. The result indicates that basically schools are committed to students' character development and that as social beings humans need each other. However, the designed strategy/program must be systematically and holistically implemented in school, and peer participation in group activities can help students develop their kindness.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Issues associated with characters have been major concerns of government and society in general. Corruption, sex crimes, vandalism, and divisive political situation have been subjects of discussion among society and mass media. This condition is exacerbated with the proliferation of bullying, persecution, student brawls, and other crime phenomena that occur in schools. This is very ironic considering the fact that the aforesaid wrongdoings are in contradiction with the religious and cultural values embraced by Indonesians. At the same time, this condition also implies that character reinforcement is urgently required (Kosim, 2011). The aforesaid facts also indicate that character crisis takes place in various settings including at schools as put by Sapriya (2007), "we have a crisis of character at the root of all the troubles everywhere and the crisis has come about the result of education without refinement of character."

The reinforcement of character education should begin at an early age (Chrisiana, 2005). This period is considered a golden period in the human development stage and is expected to be the basis for character formation. Early character development will have a long-lasting impact on the moral formation of the children. Experts have suggested that the failure in an individual early character development will lead to the development of

troubled personality in the future (Megawangi, 2004). The success of a child's early character development will determine his future development (Bilmes, 2004).

Character development is a foundation for human resource development, so government, educational institutions, teachers, and society in general must share the same understanding about it (Suyitno, 2012). This will become the foundation for holistic Indonesian citizen development. A nation's character development can only be done through the development of individual character development. However, the character development of an individual as a social being can only be done in a social environment and a cultural context where he lives; in this case, through a process of education (Kemendiknas, 2010).

Character development can be done through a creation of conducive, loving, and caring environment (Suyitno, 2012). This will become the basic character upon which positive social relationship can be established.

Character associated with the establishment of social relationship can be observed in kindness. Otake, et al. (2006) suggest that kindness will provide happiness to the one who does it. Happy people will be grateful to do more kindness.

Peterson and Seligman (2004) argue that kindness is part of humanity. Humanity deals with interpersonal skills that involve a desire to befriend

others. Humanity has three elements: (a) love, which is a tribute to a very close relationship by sharing and caring with each other and mutual interdependence, (b) kindness, which is generosity toward others, and (c) social intelligence, which is a care and awareness of what others need.

Kindness at early childhood can be measured in terms of the following aspects: (1) generosity, (2) nurturance, (3) care, (4) compassion, (5) altruistic love, and (6) niceness. One can be said to be kind if he can respect and selflessly help others (Peterson and Seligman, 2004).

He views: (1) that others are as important as he is, (2) that all human beings are equal, (3) that it is important to be friendly and generous, (4) that giving is more important than receiving, (5) that doing others good is the best way of life, (6) that he will be forever grateful, (7) that he is not the center of world's attention but part of human beings in general, (8) that unfortunate and suffering people need us, (9) that needy people must be paid attention to, and (10) that it is very important to help others, regardless of who they are (Peterson and Seligman, 2004).

What follows is the description of kindness dimensions:

- a. Generosity: Muller and Scribner (2001) state that generosity is the ability to offer the best of us and what we have for the benefit of others. It is also an invaluable humanity attribute. Generosity is also associated with a desire to give. A study has revealed that helping others can generate positive psychological feel for the one who offers the help. This feel is sometimes called an emphatic joy.
- b. Nurturance: It is the ability to provide emotional and physical care to others.
- c. Care: According to Post (2002), caring is the ability to provide emotional support to others who need.
- d. Compassion: a strong feeling of sympathy and sadness for the suffering or bad luck of others and a wish to help them.
- e. Altruistic love: According to Post (2002), altruism is derived Latin *alteri*, meaning "other people." An altruist would do things which bring advantages to other people, even if it results in disadvantage for himself. Altruistic love is more complex and is an interesting expression of human altruism. Love is an invaluable feeling that one can show it through voice intonation, facial

expression, touching, and a desire to always be together.

- f. Niceness: the quality of respecting others or a courteous manner that respects accepted social norms.

To date, studies on kindness have rarely been carried out. Similarly, no study has profiled the kindness of kindergarten students. Thus, this study is of a great importance to be carried out.

## 2 METHODS

Aiming at describing the profile of kindergarten students' kindness, a descriptive method was deemed appropriate to carry out this study. The descriptive study is one that attempts to describe a phenomenon and event in the present moment. According to Knupfer and McLellan (1996), a descriptive study can be conducted using quantitative and qualitative approach. A descriptive study involves data collection, data organization, data tabulation, data presentation, and data discussion (Glass and Hopkins, 1984; Knupfer and McLellan, 1996). The data were analyzed by presenting the percentage distribution, which is one of descriptive study report forms (Knupfer and McLellan, 1996). The data were collected through a structured observation on 1069 kindergarten students in Sukasari, Bandung. Since the population was quite big, the researchers took 20-25% of them as the sample. For a large population, the sample may be 10-15% or 20-25%. The total number of the samples in this study was 286 students.

## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result revealed that 54.90% of the sample displayed well-developed kindness, 40.91% displayed developing kindness, and 4.20% showed underdeveloped kindness. Table 1 present the comprehensive distribution.

Table 1: Profile of kindergarten students' kindness in Bandung academic year of 2013/2014.

Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Well-developed	157	54.90
Developing	117	40.91
Underdeveloped	12	4.20
Total	286	100.00

The description of kindergarten students' kindness dimensions is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Profile of kindergarten students' kindness dimensions in Bandung academic year of 2013/2014.

No	Dimension	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
1	Dimension 1 (Generosity)	Well-developed	109	38.11
		Developing	157	54.90
		Underdeveloped	20	6.99
2	Dimension 2 (Nurturance)	Well-developed	125	43.71
		Developing	146	51.05
		Underdeveloped	15	5.24
3	Dimension 3 (Care)	Well-developed	38	13.29
		Developing	201	70.28
		Underdeveloped	47	16.43
4	Dimension 4 (Compassion)	Well-developed	81	28.32
		Developing	180	62.94
		Underdeveloped	25	8.74
5	Dimension 5 (Altruistic Love)	Well-developed	221	77.27
		Developing	61	21.33
		Underdeveloped	4	1.40
6	Dimension 6 (Niceness)	Well-developed	57	19.93
		Developing	181	63.29
		Underdeveloped	48	16.78

The above description shows that basically the school is committed to character education. Zamroni (2011) says that character education deals with the development of values, good habits, and positive attitudes so as to develop mature and responsible individuals.

The success of a school in designing character education is reflected in the teachers' activities when giving advice to their students. The success of character education, according to the Republic of Indonesia Law No. 20 of 2003 on National Education System Article 3, is the development of learners' potentials so that they become persons imbued with human values who are faithful and pious to one and only God; who possess morals and noble character; who are healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, independent; and as citizens, are democratic and responsible.

However, the frequent occurrence of case related to character issues in schools suggests that schools should continue to develop a holistic character education curriculum. According Mindes (2005), holistic curriculum and teaching strategies are that children construct knowledge based upon interaction with teachers and the environment; subjects such as

reading, writing, and math are artificial adult divisions of the curriculum. That is, children acquire skills, knowledge, and dispositions through holistic learning rather than through cut-up periods devoted to a subject. Schools should not only be oriented to academic reinforcement because that will lead to development of students' poor characters (Hidayatullah, 2010). In line with this, Shield (2011) says that generally schools put an emphasis on the number of subjects rather than the quality of students' characters.

Viewed from every dimension of kindness, the data show that kindergarten students are accustomed to playing together. This implies that as social beings, humans need each other, like living together, and give priority to the community interests. Human behavior is driven by the sense of belonging to each other, significance to each other, connection to each other, and worthiness of each other. Russell's study also suggests that children engage with each other, make reasoned judgments, justify their reasons, and change stance in light of the opinion of others (Bellous, 2008).

However, many of students still need guidance. Therefore, schools need to design an appropriate strategy to develop students' character. According to Mindes (2005), teaching strategies include individual investigations in the library, in the field, and on the internet; interviews; small group collaboration; and large-group discussions. Zamroni (2011) put forward the following character education strategies: (1) objectives, goals, and targets should be concrete and well-defined; (2) character education can be more effective and efficient through cooperation between schools and parents; (3) teachers must be made aware of their important role and responsibility in the implementation and achievement of character education; (4) teachers should be aware of the importance of "hidden curriculum;" (5) the focus of teaching activities should be on students' critical and creative thinking, collaborative, and decision making skills; (6) school culture should be utilized in the development of character education; and (7) character education should be part of students' everyday life. According Megawangi (2004:149), the following 11 factors should be paid attention to in order for the success of character education at schools is to be achieved: (1) character education must embody good character values, (2) character must be thoroughly defined in terms of thinking, feeling, and action, (3) effective character education requires a comprehensive approach and must be focused on teachers as the discipline role models at

schools, (4) schools should be a model of peace and harmonious society, (5) students need opportunity to develop their character; for example, by doing social works, (6) character education must include curriculum materials, (7) character education must evoke students' intrinsic motivation, (8) school staff must actively participate in the character education, (9) character education at schools requires moral leadership, (10) schools must cooperate with parents and surrounding community, (11) character education program should be periodically evaluated.

Character development should be defined as a systematic activity; for example, by involving students in classroom rule making. Peer participation in a group will also help students develop their kindness. Peers are children at the same age or at the same maturity level (Santrock, 2002). From peers, students can receive feedbacks about their skills and their learning about the world.

#### 4 CONCLUSION

The result shows that basically the school is committed to students' character development. This commitment is implemented in everyday habit making. Students are encouraged to work and play together. Teachers encourage students to care about each other so that they can feel that they belong to a community and confirm their nature as social beings who always need each other. Another school success is reflected the way how teachers provide advice to their students. Character reinforcement is actually one of the goals of National Education System (RoL Law No. 20 of 2003). However, as future challenge for the character development is increasingly tougher, schools should continue to attempt to develop various student character development strategies, one of which is the development of holistic curriculum (Mindes, 2005).

Playing with friends shows that children have desire to share the common interest to achieve commonness. This means that they have demonstrated the altruistic love because as social beings, they will always need each other, like living together, and are concerned with common interests. However, many of students still need guidance in developing kindness to harmoniously live hand in hand with others. School board and teachers need to design an appropriate strategy by applying individual and group approach in various fields and activities to achieve the goal (Mindes, 2005).

Involving students in classroom rule making can be one of strategies to develop their kindness. Their

involvement in the classroom rule making enables them to be aware of what-to-dos and what-not-to-dos and will indirectly help them acquire certain knowledge, understanding, and skills.

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