Character Education in the First Grade of Elementary School Textbook with the Theme “Pengalamanku”

Isah Cahyani, Vismaia S. Damaanti, Yeti Mulyati
Indonesia University of Education, Department of Indonesia Language Education and Literature, Jalan Setiabudi no. 229
Bandung, West Java, Indonesia

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Abstract: This study aims to analyse the character values contained in the students’ textbooks in The 2013 Curriculum 2013 for grade 1 of Elementary School semester 1 with the theme “Pengalamanku”. This research is a content analysis with a qualitative approach. The object as well as the data sources of this research was The 2013 Curriculum textbook for grade 1 of Elementary School semester 1 with the theme “Pengalamanku” which consisted of four sub-themes namely childhood experiences, experiences with friends, experiences in school, and memorable experiences. The results showed that most of the values of character education were dispersed across each sub-theme, although some character values were not evenly distributed across all sub-themes. The findings indicated the characters found in the textbook: religious character, nationalism, integrity, independence and mutual cooperation. The character of mutual cooperation dominated the findings for about 40% from the whole characters identified. The findings suggested teachers and educators to provide students with adequate learning exposure containing character education as a provision for sending students to enter and compete in the era of industrial revolution 4.0.

1 INTRODUCTION

Globalization represents a number of demands and changes in every single system and life behaviour. This condition may lead to cultural and character changes, which has something to do with glocalization (Swyngedouw, 2004). One of the changes is the reality of ‘loosing’ the Indonesian people individual characters which influence the national identity.

Balitbang (2010:7) asserts that cultural and character problems of our nation have now become an incisive attention of our society. To that end, it is crucial to propose any efforts to accomplish the building of well-characterized youth. Reviewing the current condition of Indonesians, crisis of morality occurs in almost all levels of society with its variety of type. It indicates that the goals of national education have not been achieved. The practice of education, up until now, has not been acknowledged yet to build well-characterized generation. In line with this, Judiani (2010) declares that education in Indonesia still concerns on cognitive or academic aspects, soft skills or non-academic matters are still put aside. The Law Number 20 Year 2003 about the System of National Education mentions that the national education is mainly based on Pancasila and The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. It is further declared that national education plays a role to develop abilities, build characters and civilization in educating the nation’s life. Character education in Indonesia has become a program with its particular goals and aimed roles. Kemdiknas (2011: 7) in Panduan Pelaksanaan Pendidikan Karakter (Character Education Implementation Guidance) mentions that character education intends to develop values to build the nation character namely Pancasila, involving: 1) developing learner potential to be kind-hearted, think well, and behave; 2) building the Pancasila-characterized nation; 3) promoting citizen potential to be confident, proud of the nation and country, and love to mankind. Character education has functions to: 1) build multicultural nation life; 2) foster intelligent, noble civilization and able to contribute to mankind development; develop basic potential to be kind-hearted, think well, and behave and provide good examples; 3) build the citizen characters of peaceful living, creative, independent, and able to live in harmony with other nations.
As one of the efforts to build and develop character values, the existence of textbooks as a learning aid in material delivery to students is significant. Textbooks have substantial roles in learning process. Character value must be contained into textbooks both used by teachers and students. Character education relates to attitude competence. Setyawan and Mustadi (2015: 108) acknowledge that character education is supposed to be conducted in early childhood. Such an education is regarded as a habituation leading student to behave well and act in accordance with internalized values within themselves. However, up until now, character values contained in textbooks have not been mapped accordingly.

2 METHODS

The present research employed qualitative research with content analysis, a research technique used to draw a conclusion which can be researched based on facts by taking its context into consideration (Krippendorff, 1991: 283-285). This analysis is interpreted as a method to study a text content. Texts may be realized in words, symbols, ideas, books and others that can be analyzed and communicated (Ekomadyo, 2006: 2), as well as a method enabling researchers to get the message, content and values relating to attitude competence. Krippendorff (1991: 2).

An analysis-based research typically has empirical and explanatory orientation, describes real indications, and intends to predict (Krippendorff, 1991: 19). Such analysis can be carried out in two ways: a) quantitatively, characterized by number domination reporting in form of tables or diagram of data obtained, and b) qualitatively, conducted in the analysis of semiotic, framing or discourse analysis (Bharata, 2011: 97).

3 FINDINGS

3.1 Religious Character Value

There were two events (3.1%) indicating religious character value, found only in subtheme 4. They took place in the following parts: Siti expressed her gratitude (p.158), and Lani and Dayu helped Siti and Siti was grateful for it (p.175). These two events similarly portrayed the act of being grateful to God’s blessings. They represented the indicator of attitude and behaviour on obeying the religious tenet. However, the indicator of worshipping was not present in all subthemes.

3.2 Nationalist character value

The nationalist value was only found in subtheme 1. One event (2.1%) was discovered. It talked about childhood memory of some kids in kindergarten. One part depicted Siti’s story about an eagle picture hung on the wall in her classroom. She liked it and it was the symbol of Pancasila principles (p.7-9). She loved her country symbol. The story line signified the action indicator namely admiring an eagle and analyzing each principle. In evaluating the learning, the indicator said an effort to re-state Pancasila.

3.3 Integrity character value

Integrity character value was found in all subthemes. 14 events (16.7%) took place delineating the character.

In subtheme 1, 3 events (3.6%) were identified. The indicator of attitude and action consisted of the following events: 1) loving and praising each other (Dayu and friends listened to music, danced in turn, sang together, and praised each other); 2) helping others (Siti loved giving her mom an assistance, p. 30); and 3) sharing savings (Siti donated her saving for a mosque construction, p.33-34).

Subtheme 2 showed 6 events (7.1%) portraying integrity character. They depicted the following indicators: 1) playing together with particular rules (when playing around together, some particular rules should be obeyed, p.52-53; Siti, Lani, and Beni played beam, p.92-99); 2) doing exercise together (Siti and Dayu worked on rehearsal movement together, p.59); 3) playing fairly (playing hide and seek should be in honest and sportive way, p.73; Siti, Lani and Beni preferred being fair to their friends, p.101); and 4) obeying teacher’s commands (Siti and friends together with the teacher imitated the tree movement, p.77-81).

Integrity character in subtheme 3 were represented by 3 moments (3.6%). They illustrated the following indicators: 1) similarity (face similarity among family members, p.105-106); 2) playing together (playing engklek or Sundanese traditional game, p.110); and 3) gathering together (Beni and friends sang together, p. 84-90).

Subtheme 4 characterized 2 moments (2.4%) of integrity character. The indicators were as follows: 1) selecting foods (Dayu selected vegetables, p.147-150); and 2) playing with balls (Edo and Beni played with balls and each of them put 13 and 10 balls).
Independence character value

Independence character was reflected by 20 events (30%). The character was discovered in the 4 subthemes.

Subtheme 1 showed 4 events (6.3%) signalling independence. The indicators consisted of two: 1) not relying on other people to finish the tasks (Beni showed gymnastics, p.12; Udin tried to hang on a tree, p.25; Udin, Beni, Edo, Siti did exercise by themselves, p. 28); and 2) the ability of calculating (counting cakes, p. 16-18).

Subtheme 2 revealed 5 contents (7.9%) of independence character. The character was visible when Udin and Edo tried by themselves the movement of coconut tree (p.47), Siti and Dayu practiced calculating (p.60-68), Beni and friends did sports together (p.80-83), sang together (p.84-90), Siti, Lani, and Beni played beam (p.92-99).

In subtheme 3, 3 events (4.7%) containing independence were invented. The events happened when Edo tried to practice balancing movement (p.125); Siti arranged the numbers (p.132-134), and Udin and Beni calculated the rambutans (p.138-143).

The indication of independence character in subtheme 4 was displayed on 7 moments (11.1%). The character appeared in the following moments: Dayu selected vegetables (p.147-150), Udin was assigned to clean the garbage (151), Udin made a handicraft (p.152-156), Siti could practice balancing movement (p.158); Siti practiced doing balancing movement (p.172-173); Udin, Siti, Lani, and Edo solved problems (p.164-168), Siti wrote a poem for her mom (p.175-178).

3.4 Mutual cooperation character value

24 events (40%) occurring represented mutual cooperation character in the learning material. Their occurrence were spotted in all subthemes.

Subtheme 1 noticed 6 events (10%) of mutual cooperation character. They were typified by these indicators: 1) action of showing cooperation (they learned together, worked together in doing sport: helping each other, supporting hands to train power, p.10-11; Udin was playing with the friends, p.26-27); 2) pleasant feeling to help people (Edo helped Udin, p.22); Siti and Dayu helped each other, p.35); and 3) share (celebrating birthday in an orphanage and creating toys, p.15 and 19; Edo was keen on sharing, p.20).

Mutual cooperation in subtheme 2 was observed in 4 moments (6.7%). The moments reflected two indicators: 1) forgiving each other (Udin and Edo forgave each other, p.50; forgiving each other made better friends, p.55-58 and 71); and 2) working together (Beni, Udin, and Siti played housing toy together, p.69; Beni and friends did sports together (p.80-83), and sang together, p.84-90).

Subtheme 3 caught 6 moments (10%) of mutual cooperation. Only one single indicator noted in this part namely working together. It was sketched in the following events: the kids made cakes together (p.107-108); the teacher made a frame for the picture together with the kids (p.127); Lani and Edo ate together with the friend (p.136-137); Udin and Beni calculated the rambutans (p.138-143); and the kids had different hobbies but they played together (p.115-116).

Subtheme 4 exhibited the most moments among all subthemes (8 moments or 13.3%). There were two indicators highlighted: 1) having activity together (Udin, his brother, dad and mom sang together, p.145-146; Lani, dad and mom worked together to clean the house, p.151; Udin, Siti, Lani, and Edo solved problems, p.164-168; Edo was sick, his dad and mom worked together to take care of him, p.169; all family members worked together, p.187-188; Siti, her dad and mom enjoyed the ambiance, p.179); and 2) helping others (Lani and Dayu helped Siti and Siti was grateful for it, p.175; and Udin was assigned to help his family cleaning the garbage, p.151).

In brief, the explanation could be summarized and compared to the core competence and basic competence’s demand below.

1. Religious character value was represented by 2 indicators or 3.1%, ideally it should be 33%.
2. Nationalist character value comprised of 1 indicator or 1.2%, ideally it should be 33%.
3. Integrity character value involved 14 indicators or 16.7%, ideally it should be 50%.
4. Independence character value included 19 indicators or 30%, ideally it should be 33%.
5. Mutual cooperation character value covered 24 indicators or 40%, ideally it should be 25%.

4 DISCUSSIONS

The findings generally infer that the textbook entitled “Pengalamanku” contains a number of character values supporting the character education although the portions are not considered fairly distributed. In other words, the textbook used does

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not represent the demand of the curriculum due to the less number of character representation.

Religious character exposed in subtheme 1 comprise of two indicators in which they only represent 3.1% of the total percentage meanwhile the core competence demands for 33%. The difference looks totally significant. The indicator traced only highlights the students’ gratitude expression towards God’s blessings as a form of obeying religious tenet. Such an action is called worship obedience as listed by Zuchdi (2015). Unluckily, the act of worshiping indicator was not detected in all subthemes. Meanwhile, Kemdiknas (2010: 9-10) has noted that religious character is either implying obeyed attitudes and actions in performing religion tenets that students adhere to, or indicating tolerance attitude towards other religions and harmony living with people from different religions. Notwithstanding, through this research, such an attitude is not found, so that it diminishes the implementation of religious character per se.

Nationalist character value is only represented by one moment (1.2%). Same as religious character value, it ought to be 33% as stated in the core and basic competence. Again, this shows too much difference. Whereas, there is no doubt about the urgency of introducing and implementing nationalist character. Smith (2003) and Rahmawati (2013) acknowledge that this character corresponds to emplacing a nation in the centre of attention and endeavouring to elevate the existence. Introducing and implementing nationalist character is claimed as an urge deliberation considering the recent facts happening in Indonesia. The recent facts speak about the demolishment of the national identity. External factors, such as Western culture invade Indonesia and it is absorbed hastily by every level of society. Behaviour and performance, language style, mindset, and fashion are all affected by Western culture. Such elements had been proved by Sairin (2011) to be affected by modernization and westernization. He specifically mentioned that many Indonesians are obsessed by typical Westerns with their superior image.

Additionally, globalization era brings out new paradigms that global society is not national or local, so that slowly but sure it obscures nationalism values built perennially, even the reality causes conflicts among people occasionally. Naisbit in Mardapi (2005: 13; Yasa, 2012) mentions that globalization era will emerge a global image with global culture directly facing towards local culture. Information and communication reformation as a backwash of technology and science advancement has decompressed regional borders, so that for particular people, immediate and comprehensive action to maintain the national identity is required (Schement, 2002; Jannees, 2001; Yasa, 2012). For Indonesians, such a condition should be responded in an immediate and considerate way, regarding the variety of geographical and social-culture characteristics. Even without the impact of globalization, Indonesia has frequently been facing “different understanding” on its plurality, which at the end, this difference threatens the united country existence (Schement, 2002; Yasa, 2012). It is a mandatory for a multicultural country like Indonesia to be anticipating and responsive towards culture heterogeneity wisely (Yasa, 2012). Considering the findings of the study, there is no doubt that the value of nationalistic should be enhanced by the exposure of character education building as early as possible.

Integrity character representation is composed by 14 moments (16.7%). This does not meet the demand of core and basic competence which suggest 50% for the integrity character. The book does not even comply with a half of the requirement. Whereas, integrity character is needed to build student character for a long term condition. Further, this character is expected to equip students with honesty and strong morality, the two points highlighted by Jahja (2005) and Ramdani (2017) from Oxford Dictionary (2000) as the principle of integrity. This character will direct an individual to conduct good doings in accordance with right and norms existing in society. For more than 50 years, a number of research have tried to construct this character.

Concerning more on integrity, Peterson and Seligman (2004) assumed integrity as a behaviour consistent with professed values, which is different with moral, and can be an alternative to determine an individual quality in interacting with people in society. Kohlberg (1976, in Ramdani, 2017) revealed that his theory explaining moral understanding is guided by logical development, cannot provide an answer to why moral understanding does not guarantee a person to perform moral-based behaviour. Subsequently, only a person himself can define the problems, which then leads the concept of integrity to be more developing in any fields of an individual life. Another opinion is proposed by Yukl and Van Fleet by conducting several experiments in connection with an individual’s integrity. The result suggested that a person’s behaviour is consistent with espoused values and that the person is honest and trustworthy (Mauler, 2006). This research caught other
researchers’ attention towards integrity. However, Miller and Schlenker (2007) in (Mauler, 2006, Ramdani, 2017), found out some integrity issues; 1) integrity is connected to pivotal principles in an individual self-concept; 2) it emerges an individual behaviour consistent with their principles; 3) it is much stronger as a united character.

The explanations on those mentioned dimensions catalyse progress in the development of integrity measurement instrument. Some new findings conveyed by Peterson and Seligman in their book “Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification”, one of them is different connotation among integrity, authenticity, and honesty. Integrity refers to moral obedience and self-unity, authenticity mostly talks about emotional sincerity and psychological depth, while honesty focuses on factual and interpersonal belief (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Ramdani, 2017). Another research spotlights how integrity becomes a power for an individual to maximize his/her choice made and make it as an authentic behaviour form.

This directs to personality style to be more responsible and selective to choose appropriate behaviour to conduct. In addition to that, integrity may lead an individual to acknowledge strengths and weaknesses, which will directly influence the future mind-set. The awareness will improve self-confidence to be the strength in making veracious decision (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The concept links to the construct of optimism, escorting an individual to positive self-control. Optimism has similarity with other constructs in terms of future orientation such as hope and future-mindedness, as a result of quality of individual integrity character.

People with integrity will tend to virtually have activities aiming at long term goals and all behaviour conducted is concentrated on the goals in the future (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Ramdani, 2017). An optimist person shall have strong determination for his/her future, while the pessimist one has no belief in future (Boyle, Saklopske, & Matthews, 2015), and such behaviour depends on each person’s integrity. The above explanation portrays the importance of integrity in an individual self-development. At the end, this character will point to ethical behaviour. Further talks, the measurement instruments created to measure someone’s integrity have been found developing rapidly, such as Experienced Authenticity Measure (1997; Ramdani, 2017), Locus of Causality (1989), Personal Value Scalesdari Robinson, Shaver, &Wrightman (1991; Ramdani, 2017). Those mentioned findings and suggestions show the critical position of integrity character in building students’ character, which is recognized to be less involved in the textbook.

Independence character value is reflected by 19 indicators or 30%. Based on the core and basic competence, ideally the score should be exactly 33%. This is a delight fact that the score approximates to the demand. Independence character value is noticed in the ability of doing activities according to self-ability and creating handcrafts. It is an attitude and behaviour of not relying on other people to finish tasks. This is in agreement with Hermawan’s idea(2013: 7) about independence character.He further proposes that being independent for a student means that he/she can provide themselves with their own needs as well as be responsible for themselves. The 2013 Curriculum strongly emphasizes the independence character building. This is supported by the fact that this character is almost found in every theme discussed. In the data findings described in advanced, this character is modelled through creating a basket from soft materials and making a simple barometer.

The character is described in applicative activity in every learning session. Nevertheless, this character is not only about creating new products, but also being observed in a thinking activity. As mentioned by Zuchdi (2015: 27) that being creative and innovative are a thinking and doing process to result ways or innovations and the most up-to-date things. Together with that, the data obtained point out that students learn more independently to seek for decorative patterns they like form the internet. Furthermore, in the evaluation part, it is also named that the students are asked to test their sport ability and make their own works signalling independence character. This is in line with the opinion of Syarbini and Arbaib (2014:72) that students are demanded to take all responsibilities with their own efforts. To see the independence character in them, doing exercises and assignments, and organizing students’ activity individually can be some of the good choices.

Mutual cooperation character value covered 24 indicators or 40%. Different from the other characters listed earlier, this character exceeds the demand of core and basic competence, which only requires 25%.

Mutual cooperation is spotted by students’ singing activity, doing exercises and dancing together with the classmates, as well as helping each other. The findings imply students’ attitude to work collaboratively and socialize with their friends. The
acts of collaboration and socialization are close to Samani and Haryanto’s idea (2011: 118) about mutual cooperation, which is demystified as a willing behaviour and attitude to work together with others in accomplishing collective goals and benefaction. The collaboration and socialization performed by the students have connection to what Yani (2008) claims as social care, behaviour of people to be able to do good deeds to others, sharing, helping, or facilitating other people to conduct something easily. Much simpler, Kemdiknas (2010: 10) declares that social care is a willingness to provide assistance to others and people in need. This character is occasionally found in the textbook, for instance, in the learning material which tells how the students help their parents. Moreover, this character value becomes the learning theme. The findings illuminate that social care character is undeniably prominent and shall be intensified in The 2013 Curriculum textbook.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data analysis and discussion, the most dominant character found in the textbook of 1st grade of elementary school is mutual cooperation for around 24 or 40%. The character emerges especially in the theme of “Pengalamanku” with children daily life subtheme, such as childhood experience, together experience, experience at schools, and the most memorable experience. Those characters mostly materialize for their existence in students’ daily routine, and psychologically are in accordance with 1st graders of elementary school development. However, those character values frequently come up in several particular contexts only, are not distributed evenly compared to basic competence demands. In connection to the industrial revolution 4.0, it is a mandatory for teachers and educators to provide students with sufficient learning exposure containing education character to prepare them enter and compete in such an era.

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