The Implementation of Character Education Model Based on Empowerment Theatre for Primary School Students

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Abstract
This study aimed at constructing character education model implemented in primary school. The research method was qualitative with five samples in total, comprising primary schools in Malang city/regency and one school as a pilot model. The pilot model was instructed by theatre coach teacher, parents, and school society. The result showed that hindrances were found during the implementation of character education in school, such a human resource problem, lack of facility, and less support from family. The implementation of character education in primary school has not yet attracted many parties and its evaluation form has not been developed sustainably. Reconstruction result and the implementation of character education based on empowerment theatre were likely to give new experience to students to develop better self characters. Observation and evaluation of student characters done by parents, teachers, schools, and communities might be used as the basis for policy making related to character education in schools, especially in primary school level.
Keywords: *reconstruction, character education model, primary school students, empowerment theatre*

1. Introduction

Character development is an effort to embody a mandate of *Pancasila* (Five Principles of Indonesia) and the 1945 Constitution *preambule* of which background is based on reality of a growing national problem today, such as the shifting of ethical values in the life of the nation (*Pusat Kurikulum dan Perbukuan, 2011*). In order to support the realization of character development ideals and solve the problems of the nation nowadays, the Government determines character development as one of the priority programs of national development. This spirit is implicitly affirmed in the National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN) year 2005-2015, in which the character education is placed as the cornerstone to realize the vision of national development, namely "establishing noble, moral, ethical, and cultural nation based on the philosophy of *Pancasila* " (*Pusat Kurikulum dan Perbukuan, 2011*).

Character is every human effort to learn to overcome and fix weaknesses, as well as bring a new positive habit. Children will grow into strong character persons when being grown in an environment with character education (Kesuma, 2011). The process of character education should be seen as a conscious and deliberate effort, not only by chance. In other words, character education is a genuine effort to understand, establish, and nurture ethical values, both for themselves and for all citizens or nation as a whole (Taufik, 2002). To achieve this, there are several ways/steps that can be done by the public or anyone who has a concern for character education.

Currently, character education has been implemented in schools. Results of the study of character education in school samples showed that the implementation of character education in schools was still adapted to the conditions of the intended particular schools. These sample schools implemented character education through habituation and some extracurricular activities. In addition, the school did not have guidelines for the implementation of character education that fits the needs of the school. There were several obstacles in the implementation of character education in schools, such as human resource constraint, facilities, and the lack of support from the family. The implementation of character education in sample schools did not involve many parties and the evaluation has not been conducted on an ongoing basis. Accordingly, implementation guidelines should be tailored which are relevant to primary student characteristics who are keen on playing.

Each school implements character education based on the character education books available in the market. If seen from the contents, these books discuss character education in general, also provide principles and examples. Therefore, it can be said that the character education books used by schools are not yet operational and have not yet been adjusted to the conditions and circumstances of the schools. For example, MLM Primary School Malang uses ISMUBA materials and *Panduan Hidup Warga Muhammadiyah* (Muhammadiyah life guides) as guidelines for the implementation of character education, while BM Primary School Malang applies several character education books as guidelines; one of which is the book *Dimensi-Dimensi Pendidikan Karakter, Wawasan Strategi dan Langkah Praktis* (Dimensions of Character Education, Strategy Insights, and Practical Measures) written by Saptono, M.Pd., published in 2011 by *Esensi*. These books are used as a guide for material

preparation, model design, teaching materials, and assessment. Finally, all materials, themes, and characters that will be invested in students are dependent upon school policy assigned through dissemination and internal meetings.

Observing from students' report cards of the pilot school, there was character assessment listed in the evaluation reports. With the inclusion of this character assessment, it was expected that parents knew the characters of their children when they were in schools which was successfully portrayed by the teacher. There were several ways to evaluate students' character in primary schools, one of which was the implementation of rewards in the form of a small charter and "Good" sticker sticking on each student's work, which were then monitored and reported to parents via report cards. There were also schools that involved parents in the assessment of students' character but this character assessment was not to affect the increase in grade or graduation. Based on research that has been done, there were also schools that exemplified a character assessment as one of the determinative points to assess graduation and grade increase in class. From the five observed schools, three implemented character education as an integrated aspect in the learning process. Whereas the other two schools had provided specific schedule to implement character education in addition to the implementation of the integrated character education in the learning process.

From interview with the principal, it was confirmed that the school has implemented character education by habituation. For example, students had to shake and kiss the teacher's hand when they met; students had to dispose waste or trash in proper place, and so forth. However, the process of character assessment in the sample schools was still diverse and unorganized. For example, there were schools that implemented 18 policy characters to students. Not all the eighteenth characters were observed. At least for one week, teachers delivered materials, simulations, as well as assessment. In the following week, the assessed theme and characters were changed. This phenomenon showed that although the schools have applied habituation, the assessment system was not yet sustainable.

Related to the implementation of character education, the school principal stated that incomplete facilities available in school affected the implementation of character education. For example, due to lack of the LCD, the character education was hampered, because the LCD was used by turn. In addition to facility, character education was constrained by the attitude of parents who were less concerned about the character of the students at home. This attitude caused less effective character education implementation, leading to less optimal outcomes of character education.

The reality on field proved that proper character education program should be launched and implemented at the school by the support from various parties, because basically the character education will achieve optimal results if it is supported by families, schools, and communities. Planting character or the character formation of students does require awareness and willpower of the students, families, communities, and schools to jointly build their character into virtuous student (Koesoema, 2009).

On this basis, we need to realize that character education is not just to teach what is right and what is wrong. Strengthening character habituation needs to be done so that students fully understand what is right and wrong. Consequently, schools should have implementation guidelines to make the education more organized and planned. The evaluation should be conducted in an ongoing basis; and it should involve many parties. In addition, schools should also choose a character education model tailored to the student's age and condition of the student.

To actualize the character formation in primary school students, there are a few things to do; one of which is the reconstruction of character education model. The implementation of character education model should not be limited to only learning in the classroom, but it can also be implemented outside the classroom, such as through extracurricular activities. In accordance with the characteristics of primary school students who still fond of playing and their little experience in life pursue (Hamzah, 1985), the character models through theater of empowerment is a fun character learning model as well as an alternative character education model for primary school students. This model is considered essential to implement, because primary school students can practice developing talent, interests, cooperation, awareness, as well as leadership and responsibility exercises. The form of empowerment theater requires students to be able to work together with the communities to organize a show. With this form of empowerment theater, students could be more sensitive to the surrounding environment, because basically empowerment theater is theater that involves the communities in its implementation (Yusuf, 2011). Accordingly, the application of this model might produce students with strong characters to face global competition.

2. Research Method

This study applied qualitative method. The object of this research was MIM Primary School students who participated in theater extracurricular for the purpose of model testing. The team set MIM Malang as a test site (for model testing), with some considerations. First, MIM Primary School Malang has had theater extracurricular activity so that the pilot model test would be easier to conduct. Secondly, MIM is a mainly targeted primary school under the supervisory of University of Muhammadiyah Malang and it also has Islamic nuance. The team

wanted to see how this Islamic school implemented character education.

Data analysis technique used by researchers was in accordance to the technique proposed by Bogdan and Biklen (Emzir 2010, p.88-110). The steps were as follows: first, the team decided the type of study to be implemented. In this case, the research team has been conducting research in the first year that all the five schools selected as samples did not have the manual or guideline book for the implementation of character education which should be specifically tailored based on school capabilities and commitment (including the adjustment to school facilities). One sample school already had character education SOP integrated with the guidelines for school rules. While other schools have already implemented character education with reference to character education books available on the market. Observing that fact, the team has decided to reconstruct a model of character education through empowerment theater that could later be applied in primary school. The team tested the model on a limited basis that was only in MIM primary school Malang with some considerations that have been previously disclosed. Character education model based on theater empowerment was expected to be one of the alternatives of character education in Malang. In addition, this model was also projected to shape students' characters as a whole, because in the process, it involved the students, families, schools, and communities.

Secondly, the research team developed the analytical questions so that the research could be done in depth. These analytical questions were exercised in order to find additional information related to character education in primary school. By this step, the team then arranged empowerment theater-based character education model.

Thirdly, advanced data collection was administered after the initial observation. At this stage, the team tested the model. Fourth, the team made field notes. In this case the team of researchers made field notes related to the implementation of the model, how the theatre coach teacher strengthened the characters of students, and how students' characters could be developed through the activities. In addition to making field notes, the team also made an observation sheet for students' characters that must be filled by the coach (to observe characters when theatre training occurred), parents (to observe the characters at home), and school society (to note down students' characters while in school).

Fifth, the next step was evaluating and re-testing the designed model. Model evaluation was conducted by a team of researchers in collaboration with theatre coach teacher. The model evaluation aimed to enhance both theatre coach and students' manual book. Once the handbook is perfect, the book has to be used as guidelines for the implementation of character education model based on empowerment theater.

Sixth, during the research process, the team explored the literature to probe some existing theories. Seventh, after the second test, the team wrote a research report as a form of research accountability. Researchers also disseminated the findings in various scientific forums and created a manuscript for journal publication.

## 3.	Results and Discussion

Character education model based on empowerment theater is a model of successful character education designed by the research team. This model is suitable with the characters of the students/children who still love to play and mimic what is seen and heard. Furthermore, the benefits of this model are the involvement of various stakeholders or parties in monitoring the development of the students' characters, ranging from the involvement of teachers, parents, to the school communities. The involvement of those various elements is what makes the character education in schools run well and produce students with strong characters (Sukmadinata, 2009).

Model application began with a video broadcasting about stage performance, then examining activity to observe how to act, express, and set intonation. Video viewing was not performed on each training session, because the actual video playback was intended for students to act in total and insert positive messages to them. During the theater rehearsal session, students were invited to train their physical movement, gesture as well as their vocal. Besides, students were also encouraged to practice the expression, set the tone, and search for and play suitable music to accompany certain scene (Waluyo, 2003). After conducting intensive training, students were asked to prepare stage performance for sixth grade students' farewell event. In the farewell ceremony, the students who participated in the theater would perform. Surely, this event involved the active participatory of students, parents/guardians, and school communities. Parents' community voluntarily prepared stage needs, starting from costumes to logistic for togetherness. As a result, there was a new experience felt by the students. Students felt valued and they were satisfied as they were actively involved in stage preparation. Students became more familiar with the school communities, more sensitive, and able to socialize with the school communities. In addition, the relationship among students, parents, and the school communities tended to be better and it was expected to continue so that they could hand in hand shape stronger students' characters.

The implementation of character education model certainly cannot be separated from the system of assessment or student's character monitoring. Observation sheets for student's character had been prepared in order to monitor the development. This observation sheet had to be completed by parents, theatre coach, and societies (in this case the school communities). Monitoring phase conducted by those various parties was

expected to vividly describe as well as evaluate students' characters at the same time. The result of the observation sheet then was reported by the school to parents. Therefore, parents would be well informed of their children's characters when they were at school and then they could make a comparison when the children were at home. The observation sheet analysis of students' character could also be treated as the foundation to take on school policy in accordance to better student character education.

Theatre coach and MIM Primary school Malang have positively welcomed this character education model based on empowerment theatre, since this model involved many parties which never occurred before. To conclude, it could be said that this was a new model as an alternative for better character education for primary school.

The result of the character education model implementation at MIM Primary school Malang showed that students' characters were influenced by environment. Decent environment would lead to good character shaping and vice versa. By then, conducive environment was necessary to build good character. Therefore, cooperation between schools, families, and societies should be empowered. The unity of these three elements would lead to optimum character building.

In addition to the cooperation of various elements, character education should also be adjusted to students' age. Character education for children should correspond to the psychological development of children. For example, children tend to be closer to the world of play, and thus a model that suits the character education of children should be related to game world, without any patronizing impression.

After the implementation of character education model based on theater of empowerment, there were some characters developed on the students who participated in the theater. They were religious character, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard working trait, creativity, being independent, being democratic, curiosity, the spirit of nationalism, patriotism, achievement appreciation, friendliness/communication, peace loving, reading loving, environmental care, social care, and responsibility.

Apart from the character of the students that showed up and became stronger, the results of this study also indicated that the role of families, school, and communities in the implementation of the model was certainly needed. In terms of playing/practicing theater at school, the coach's role is indispensable. He/she would train students' skills in theatre as well as include the value of the character in every training session. In this process, the support of parents played a significant role, both for material and spiritual supports. Furthermore, parents were also asked to observe and input characters in students when they were at home.

In theater performance, the role of the public was significantly needed. They were asked to be involved in the production process up to the stage performance. People were also asked to observe as well to provide a good example for students. Accordingly, unity between the communities, schools, and parents could be achieved. Moreover, in this process, there should be a sense of responsibility built up among all parties to instill students' characters in order to create future generations with stronger characters.

Conclusion

Some conclusions that might be drawn from the above discussion were:
1. The reconstruction of character education model based on empowerment theatre has achieved a new model paradigm that was implemented in primary schools through theatrical activities.
2. Students' positive attitudes or characters have been developed and habituated. However, there were some characters that needed further development, so that later, the characters of the students could be at the level of habituation (students have strong characters). Several characters that required further development were the character of discipline, independence, patriotism, environmental care and reading motivation.
3. Cooperation among the involved parties or stakeholders in order to support this character education program in Indonesia was and is urgently required.

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