RESEARCH INNOVATION: IMPLEMENTATION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION TO IMPROVE THE MENTALITY OF THE YOUNG GENERATION

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Introduction

The development and journey of human life cannot be separated from character education. At all levels of education, the types and levels of character material are always presented. Awareness that the success of one's life is largely determined by the character possessed, encouraging the government and society to raise and re-ground character education, as stated in the 2010-2025 National Character Development Master Design (Government of the Republic of Indonesia, 2010).

Character is not developed instantly, it needs effort, process, and habituation. The sooner a person is corrected about the things that need to be addressed in him, the greater the opportunity to change/improve his character.

Character education has started since kindergarten. Without realizing it, children are told to line up neatly before entering class, store books in lockers, store drawing equipment in the places provided, knocking on the door before entering class, asking the teacher's permission when going to the toilet, not stealing from friends, coming on time, raising your hand when you want to ask a question, not interrupting the conversation of the teacher or friends, and many other things.

Unfortunately, the right things that have been taught since kindergarten and were continued during primary and secondary schools have not become an inherent part of the behavior of the younger generation. The assessment given by the community to the young generation today shows a shift in values in everyday life and the life of the nation and state. There is moral degradation/moral decline. Character education is needed as a powerful remedy for moral decline (Beachum and McCray, 2002).

In the midst of advances in technology and information as well as the onslaught of globalization, information from all countries is at hand. In a matter of seconds any information can be seen, milling about, yet difficult to contain. Strong character is a necessity to avoid becoming a victim of advances in information technology. Smart literacy is a must in order to have a filter in sorting and selecting information. In practice, it turns out that efforts to establish a state are relatively faster than efforts to build a nation and build character (Muchlas Samani, 2019:1). This statement is not an exaggeration. The Indonesian nation, which has been independent for 76 years, is still faced with various problems of national character. Several negative views on the character of the younger generation have become a common concern and concern for efforts to improve mentality. The current young generation lacks fighting power, does not respect parents, likes instant culture, cheats on exams, practices plagiarism, gets angry easily, uses harsh words, gets emotional quickly and so on are labels attached to young people.

A person's character needs to be continuously corrected and improved towards a better character. One of the things that the founding fathers conveyed when proclaiming the independence of the Republic of Indonesia was to build character (Muchlas Samani, 2019:1). Various events that occurred such as bullying that led to physical violence, psychological violence, demeaning the image of teachers by challenging the teacher to a fight is a reflection of the character crisis. Therefore, all parties need to care and take part following their respective fields and expertise to rebuild the nation's character. Building character starts from the family environment, the living environment, and the work environment including the school environment, campus environment and city environment then the state environment (Hendarman, 2019:13). Through the family a child learns and trains character. Various studies show that harmonious families, providing time for dinner together, show that their children have the ability to control emotions, are more confident, more obedient and also more enthusiastic in carrying out their duties (Rizal Badudu, 2019:17).

Discussion

1. The Role of Character Education in Building Mentality

The young generation is the next generation of the nation. A dynamic generation is always changing with the development and changing times. The Millennial generation will soon pass to be replaced by the Alpha generation. Generations that from an early age have known and even used technological advances in various life activities. Gadgets, smartphones are always in their hands.

Especially during the pandemic, the teaching and learning process is carried out online and one of the media is gadgets. Parents who at first did not give their children to hold the gadget, finally for the purpose of learning the parents relented. The use of gadgets for children requires parental assistance and supervision. This assistance is to direct them to use them properly because in general children have not been able to sort out appropriate and useful content. Can't tell which one is good and which one is fake news. For high school students and college students are already more able to choose and sort out what is good and what is not good for them.

The benefits of character education in life are unquestionable. Education experts, parents, teachers, and even students answered in agreement. However, the conception that character education is very important has not been seen in everyday life. Queuing culture has not been entrenched. Congestion on the highway is getting worse because the queuing culture has not been carried out. Everyone wants to hurry, cutting lines, and finally stuck in a traffic jam, no room to move. Traffic lights are heeded only if there is a guard from the authorities, otherwise, they will be breached. If the officer is not there, then ignoring a red light is an event that almost always happens (Muchlas Samani, 2019:2).

The author's experience when leaving for campus using city transportation (public transportation) is unforgettable. At that time the author sat beside the driver. When arriving at a red light/stop, the city transportation was forced to stop because the motorbike in front of the city transportation stopped. The city transportation driver was angry and shouted at the motorcyclist why he stopped, the road was quiet so just go ahead. Motorcyclists do not want to go forward but move their motorbikes aside so as not to block city transportation that wants to continue to pass even though the red light is still on. Witnessing this scene there is a sense of pride, it turns out that the young motorcyclist has the character of obeying traffic rules. Meanwhile, middle-aged city transportation drivers do not obey traffic rules. This shows that increasing age is not necessarily accompanied by character growth.

Learning character education is not grandiose, not rhetoric but how to apply all the good things that have been learned. Starting from the little things around us. By keeping the environment clean, disposing of garbage in its place, utilizing vacant land for reforestation, or planting medicinal plants and vegetables. In addition to giving a beautiful impression, the results can be used and even distributed to neighbors, sharing with those in need. Character education is important but often neglected. The following table shows neglected characters development:

Table 1 Neglected Characters Development

	House	School	Public
Wisdom of old age	Increased spiritual approach	?	Many are apathetic
Adulthood strengthening	?	!	Low trust society
Youth development	?	!	Not respecting each other
Early childhood formation	Many are left to the maid	!	Rare exemplary

(Source: Soedarsono in Muchlas Samani, 2019)

Through the table above, a situation can be drawn that awareness of the importance of character education has not been accompanied by the implementation. Early childhood is a golden period, the time when children can absorb all the information. Information and good things that are taught and exemplified will settle deeply in the child. It is important to remember that a child learns not only from what he hears but from what he sees. The integrity of the adults around him (parents, teachers, grandfathers, grandmothers, or caregivers) also influences the character of the child. Children this age tend to imitate what he sees. Family is the first place for children to learn. Children see how the relationship between parents and siblings. The words, attitudes, responses of parents and other family members are patterns that stick in his mind and that is what is considered the best. Young children always want to imitate all the behavior and actions of their parents, as well as their words (Yulia Singgih D. Gunarsa, 2017:29). Teenagers lose their figure. Busy parents don't seem to have time to talk and chat with their teenagers. Teenagers spend more time playing games or playing with peers.

In addition, there is a gap between parents and educators in dealing with children. Teachers and lecturers are prepared to "educate" and even get certified as one of the government's efforts to

prepare educators to not only transfer knowledge but also become role models. Transfer of knowledge is only one of the roles of educators. Other roles become patterns in attitude and speech. Wise educators will maintain harmony from the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Various seminars and workshops conducted by educational institutions provide opportunities for educators to improve their abilities as professionals. Educational staffs receive training in order to increase their knowledge and abilities in accordance with the development and changing times. Especially at this time, the world of education will conduct hybrid learning in anticipation of the pandemic that is still hitting. Parenting patterns of parents towards children are generally based on experiences in their childhood. There is no school for parents yet. Parents have to learn on their own. However, for parents who care about their child's development and the phases of their child's development, they can read from the writings of psychologists or attend various seminars which have recently been increasingly being held. The fact is that not many parents take the opportunity to learn more about their children. That is why the understanding and experience of teachers/lecturers and parents are not always commensurate because teachers are prepared with stages and levels of education as teachers (Tatang Muttaqin, 2021:30).

Time-consuming administrative tasks also affect the relationship between educators and students. Academic/cognitive success is overrated so that important things as part of soft skills/character are ignored. Good academic grades get praise/appreciation. It is still rare for schools or colleges to give appreciation to students who are diligent, disciplined, active in organizations, have many friends, and are enthusiastic. The National Workshop on Character Education in 2010 which was attended by experts, observers, and practitioners required the importance of attention from all elements of the nation. It is necessary to make a grand design that is equipped with guidelines for each educational unit. Center for Curriculum Research and Development Agency of the Ministry of National Education in 2011 stating that character education is principally intended to form a nation that is strong, noble, competitive, has a patriotic spirit, works together and is oriented towards science and technology with full awareness, and is inspired by faith and piety to God Almighty. The role of the family in the character's building is very large. The increasing use of illegal drugs among the younger generation is one indication of the lack of attention and affection in the family. Character education is a powerful medicine for moral decline (Mucklas Samani, 2019: 12).

It is never too late. Character education is not only for students and college students. Everyone needs to continue to develop themselves. Humans are learning creatures. Lifelong learning. The only time to leave to the Creator will stop the learning process. Students are part of the younger generation who will replace various leadership positions and will open up job vacancies. Fast-paced changes also affect various orders of human life. Nowadays, people can do all their activities from home using gadgets, previously it was considered impossible. But this condition could shift the position of humans as social beings, who have attention, care, are willing to share, help each other to become people who don't care, are ignorant, selfish, and full of self-interest. Building mentality in the family is done with enthusiasm. Parents provide time for their families, listen to complaints and stories of family members, give praise for every good thing that is done and vice versa if there are actions or words spoken by family members that are inappropriate or disrespectful.

2. Shaping Character Builds the Future of the Nation

The adage that one loses character loses everything is still relevant. Because character is capital. The character can make people survive in all situations of life. Character leads someone to be tough, superior, caring, ready to help, sincere, and ready to work in a team. Owned character does not just happen. The character needs to be unearthed and discovered. Every parent has hope that their children will become successful people. Success in the broadest sense. Not only the academic side but also the social side and faith. There are many smart people. Easy to find. On the other hand, good characters are getting rarer. The tendency to be indifferent, it doesn't matter what matters to me, the important thing is that we keep our distance from each other even though we live as neighbors. Students have a limited number of friends. Friendship is no longer a need to support, help, and strengthen each other. They are immersed in the virtual world, engrossed in their respective gadgets. Even though they are close, they feel far away. On YouTube, a video circulated of three children playing games together in front of their house. While they were playing, a young man came who took a gadget from one of the children. The child who became the victim cried and shouted, "Return my cellphone!". But the two friends just looked away for a moment and resumed playing the game. This is real around us, empathy for friends is lost somewhere. That is why character education is always needed, which can always have a positive influence on the environment where we are. People around you can feel sincerity, kindness, be fair/impartial, communicate in a good way, be generous, and always be willing to evaluate themselves. Some people think that he is fine, there is nothing wrong with him. This condition is less favorable, needs the presence of other people to remind.

The millennial generation, which is a generation that has superior potential compared to the previous generation, whose birth span was between 1980-2000, has several specific characteristics such as the interest in reading conventionally is decreasing and even tends to decline. In general, they have social media accounts as a form of existence. They are more interested in themselves. Next is Generation Z, namely those born in 1995-2010. This generation has a mastery of more sophisticated technology. Then the one born after 2010 is called the Alfa generation. Various sources state that the younger generation's ethos and character are not very visible. The following will present some of the events that the author observed and experienced. In one meeting a student arrived 10 minutes late from the scheduled time. The student knocked on the door and entered, then took a seat in one of the available chairs. He came calmly, there was no rush, or guilt that he was late. As the leader of the meeting, the lecturer does not want to embarrass the student concerned. After the meeting is over, the lecturer then invited the student who come late to talk and ask what happened. The student replied it was only ten minutes late and whether it should be discussed. This snippet shows that there are people who have not realized that what he is doing is something that is not right. It shows undisciplined, uncommitted, and not sincere attitude. The meeting schedule was agreed upon in the previous meeting and noted, and a meeting invitation had been send via WhatsApp Group. The student does not show any shame or regret for being late by showing an attitude of regret or saying sorry I am late.

Another event occurs when it's time to submit an assignment. Assignments are given two weeks in advance. Instructions were given on how to complete the assignment, the deadline for submission, and the template used. Some students do not submit them on time and reasoned that other lecturers also give more assignments. The question is why others can submit assignments on time while some can't. This question when realized and addressed to oneself can motivate enthusiasm, be diligence, not lazy, or procrastinate. The realization that everyone has 24 hours is very helpful. Self-introspection in managing time. On another note, some students submit assignments on time but far from expectations. Assignments collected in the form of articles are done in a hurry. This can be seen from the typo that was mistyped, the placement of punctuation marks, sentences that did not connect and some parts were copied and pasted and did not follow the template that had been submitted.

A copy-paste/cheat task is an expression of a violation. The problem returns to the character of the student. Lecturers with character will carry out their duties with dedication and responsibility. If you just get knowledge, students can get it from various sources without having to attend lectures. Through the sensitivity of the lecturer at the time of teaching, he can observe every event that occurs in the classroom. The following is a story about lectures conducted during the day. Lectures start at 13.00, usually, this hour is called critical hour. After lunch, after the lecture, there will be many who are sleepy, especially if the delivery is not interesting, monotonous, only lectures, there are no variations in teaching methods. The assumption that the class was monotonous that afternoon did not happen because the class was opened after students were invited to sing one of the national anthems. The lecturer repeats the previous week's material and then continues with a short video screening about the material to be discussed. Next, the lecturer allows students to ask questions, give responses about the video or the lecturer's explanation. In general, students are enthusiastic about attending lectures. From the beginning of the class, the lecturer saw a student repeatedly without yawning and not paying attention to the lecture. Several times he saw his head lowered, his eyes closed, and then startled himself when his head slid slowly to the edge of the table. The lecturer observes and intends to have a chat after the lecture hours are over. It is unfortunate when students are physically present in the classroom but their hearts, souls, and minds are floating (soul excursion). After the class was over, the lecturer tried to chat and asked, what happened, why are you sleepy and not concentrating, are you sick. This student looked at the lecturer for a moment and then raised his hand and shook his head. The lecturer asked again, in a sympathetic way, would you like to tell a story, maybe there is something I can help you with. With a slightly reluctant attitude but the student began to open his mouth, his body trembled slightly, and said in a hoarse voice, I couldn't sleep all night. My parents fight, they shouted at each other, cursed at each other, and even threw things. It's been disentangled, but still. This is not the first time this has happened but it has happened many times, embarrassed by the neighbors, and sometimes it occurred to me to run away, go far from home. This condition is not easy. The house that should be heaven is not comfortable. When sleeping at night, unable to sleep because of the noisy atmosphere, parents who can't contain themselves and manage their emotions, are childish while screaming in the middle of the night. This is also a record. Lecturers who immediately reprimand or judge that students who are sleepy while attending lectures are lazy, become inappropriate. The character of the lecturer who patiently waits until the lecture is finished and cares by giving attention and opportunities for students to share stories is an oasis for students. There are still people who care, want to listen. The attitude of lecturers who are empathetic, willing to listen can prevent students from being entangled in drugs or other unhealthy relationships. The expression that students are adults, can manage and take care of themselves and deal with all their problems, is not appropriate. Students still need guidance and support.

3. Implementation of Character Education

A person's physical growth and development are easy to see, directly observable. Character growth is not that easy, it takes longer to find someone who has good character or not. In several countries in Asia such as Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea, and Hong Kong enthusiastically carry out character education and serve as an integral part of the education curriculum. Character education cannot stand alone. Character education is present in all courses given. Lectures are not only about teaching materials. Lecturers need to prepare a moral message from each teaching material given. The message given is accompanied by the example of the lecturers. If the lecturer says that every human being has a responsibility according to his profession, then that responsibility is also real in the lecturer. The form can be in the form of conformity of the material with the syllabus, student assignments are assessed, and given the correct answer information. Be patient when hearing students ask questions. Do not interrupt the conversation, as if the lecturer already knows the question asked, even though the lecturer may misunderstand the meaning of the question asked. Critical students can say, "Sorry my question is not finished, can I continue?". The student looking for safety will stop the question. The other students watched. Even if they do not complain, in their hearts it is very possible to give an assessment, that the lecturer does not allow students to solve the question, the lecturer is arrogant, feels the most knowledgeable, and does not inspire.

Students who come to campus are already formed. This means that the characters are brought from home, and at earlier school. But the space and opportunity to recognize the character, correct it and then build the character is always open. The campus is the world that almost all young people dream of. Being on campus with their colleagues is seen as a part of filling the days before they graduate and work in their fields. Unfortunately, not everyone gets the chance to go to college. Economic conditions, petrified family finances are the most common reasons, so they do not continue their education at university. Lecturers should remind them that they are lucky people because they can go to college, help them to be grateful, make good use of their time, fill every lecture hour with enthusiasm, take into account every expense that has been incurred. Gratitude will also help students share their knowledge with their fellow students. Take on the role of a teacher. In a fun atmosphere, it will be easier for his colleagues to understand the material being explained. This condition is also an opportunity to prepare oneself to enter the world of work. The world of work today is based on teamwork. We need to realize that each person is like a piece of a mosaic from an unfinished painting. The painting is finished when all the pieces are brought together with all the potential that exists and then collaborated. Cooperation can be carried out if each member in the team lowers his ego, and learns to prioritize togetherness in the form of cooperation. In cooperation, the characters that are built are mutually supportive, mutually reinforcing, and complementary. It is almost difficult to find a job that is only done alone. Lecturers as educators and education staff can inspire students and vice versa. Everyone is a source of learning and a source of inspiration because of our background and diversity (Hendarman, 2019:174). Implementation of character education can be done wherever we are, not only on campus. The young generation with all the potential that exists in themselves can empower the community in the neighborhood where they live. Good character education includes good knowledge (moral knowing), feeling well (moral feeling), and good behavior (moral action). Character education must be carried out continuously so that it becomes a habit. The following is the flow of thought for the development of national character:

National Character Development Thought

Nation and State Problems

1. Disorientation and not living up to the values of Pancasila.
2. The limitations of integrated policy tools in realizing the values of Pancasila.
3. Shifting ethical values in the life of the nation and state.
4. Fading awareness of the nation's cultural values.
5. The threat of national disintegration.
6. Weakening of national independence.

REALM
SECURITY LAW
POLITICS
PEOPLE'S WELFARE
ECONOMY

National Character Development

Strategy
1. Socialization/awareness
2. Education
3. Empowerment
4. Cultivation
5. Cooperation

Strategic Environment
Global
Regional
National

National Consensus
Pancasila
UUD 45
Bhinneka Tunggal Ika
NKRI

National Character

1. Tough
2. Competitive
3. Noble
4. Moral
5. Tolerant
6. Cooperative
7. Patriotic
8. Dynamic
9. Knowledge orientation which is imbued with piety to God based on Pancasila

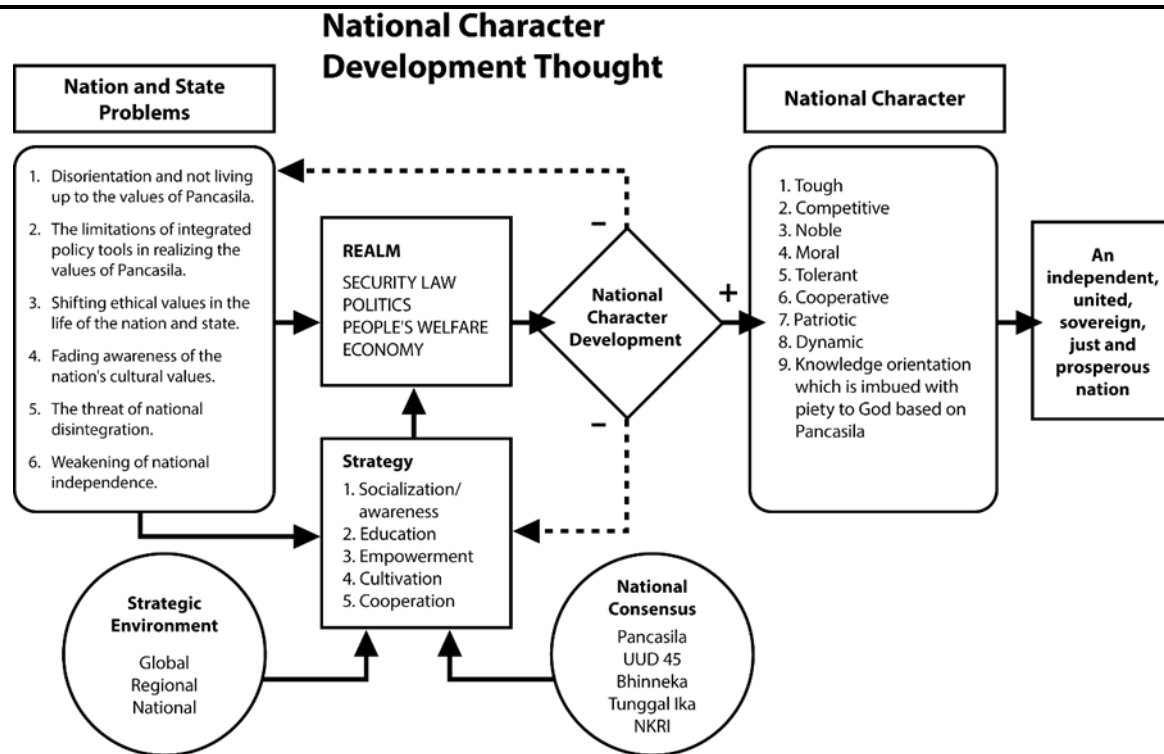**An independent, united, sovereign, just and prosperous nation**

Figure 1. National Character Development Thought
(Source: Pedoman Pelaksanaan Pendidikan Karakter, Puskurbuk, 2011)

Seeing from the diagram above, it needs to be done repeatedly so that it becomes a habit. Armed with the knowledge that has been obtained, you can become a teacher for children. Teaching that is done sincerely, intends to help as well as sharpen the memory of the lecture material that has been obtained. If then there is a reward given it is just a derivative effect. Let not everything is measured by the material. Do the best you can, fortune will follow. But more importantly, how to develop people around us with the knowledge gained. Inviting youth to be active in sports. The chosen sport is adjusted to the existing facilities. Being an instructor in one of the sports can maintain physical health, peace of mind, and benefits felt by others. The courage to involve oneself in the organization is a manifestation of self-confidence. Students can also be pioneers to other younger generations by creating YouTube content that builds togetherness and raises awareness as part of the nation's children. The activity of creating content on YouTube can compensate for various unhealthy information, information that discredits the government, information that contains 'sara' (ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group relations). In groups, students can provide training to other youths so that they also do the same. Students in the fifth semester and above can conduct surveys on a small scale, about content that is beneficial to the community. It can also be grouped into age ranges, such as content for children, youth, and parents. Especially during the pandemic period where everyone is encouraged to stay at home to reduce the spread of the Covid-19 virus, almost all of the time spent outside of school hours, lectures, work is watching various shows on YouTube. This is an opportunity for the younger generation to take part. The content can be in the form of an effective way of learning, how to manage time, how to protect and maintain the environment, choosing a learning style, how to deal with pressure, and so on. The opportunity to build relationships with students from various majors is a good collaboration in preparing content or other activities. The thoughts of several people with different knowledge produce ideas or work programs that are more optimal.

Conclusion

Character education is always important to talk about but more important to do. Character education is the responsibility of all parties. Family, neighborhood, school, campus, workplace, and even the country. Character education does not stand alone. It can be done and delivered in all activities and occasions. The delivery should be done by a person of integrity, that is, whose words and actions are in harmony. The younger generation needs examples, not words or rhetoric. The younger generation needs to see and witness that parents, educators, education staff, religious leaders are figures that can be imitated. The apathy of students and young people is formed when they see the discrepancy between speech and action. The biggest enemy in developing one's character is oneself.

The role of the younger generation in the sustainability of the nation is not in doubt. Their knowledge and insight are also grounded, but their character still requires forging to build the expected character. Lifestyle, consumptive, everything is seen from the benefits/materials obtained and advances in technology and information; will not change many things if the younger generation is equipped with character. Parents need to spend time attending various seminars and workshops, following developments and technological advances so that the communication that is built with their children can be established. The government pays great attention to character education. The results of research conducted by experts have proven that character education has a positive impact on various aspects of life. The character will help everyone including the younger generation to have an attitude of care, empathy, humility, confidence, willingness to listen, willing to cooperate, share with others. Sharing is not always material. Sharing can share knowledge, provide time for discussion, and be involved in an organization.

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