Implementation of Character Education Strengthening in Public Vocational High School

Abstract

Character education is best understood as part of a moral education which deals with the development of positive so called virtue. For this reason, this study analyzes the implementation of character education strengthening (CES) at Public Vocational High School (SMK Negeri) 1 Bojonggede through 3 basic approaches, namely: class, school and community. This study used a qualitative method with a case study approach and used a purposive technique with the help of key people, who pioneered the formulation and development of character education policies in schools since the school was founded, in determining the participants, where 3 participants are appointed. While the data collection method used is interviews, observation and other supporting documents. Then the instrument used is a semi-structured questions. The results showed that the implementation of character education that has been running at SMK Negeri 1 Bojonggede is good in its management. Its integration with the curriculum and other supporting tools is key in running this program. This occurs because the Character Education Strengthening (CES) system at SMK Negeri 1 Bojonggede has been well established and can be portrayed in several school programs, indicated by the existence of planning, compilation, supervision, and completeness of evaluation.

Keywords: character education strengthening, moral education, virtue
A. Introduction

Character education is best understood as part of a moral education, which deals with the development of positive character which is commonly called 'virtue'. The two key terms here, ‘character’ and ‘virtue’, contain complexities that will be explored in time, but we can count on everyday understanding for the moment (Arthur, Kristjánsson, Harrison, Sanderse, & Wright, 2017).

Indeed, the need for character education today is not only felt in Indonesia. Other parts of the world also feel the need to develop and strengthen character education (or what is commonly called moral education) in their respective countries. Cheng (2019) and Yue & Xu (2019) try to explore theoretical methods and approaches to moral education in China, O'Flaherty, Liddy, & McCormack (2017) examine the implementation of moral education in the Republic of Ireland, Nakayama (2019) examines education morals in Japan. Character education itself has always been an interesting study, so there is no suitable model for character education in schools.

This shows that character education is very serious to be developed. The purpose of character education itself is explained by Katilmis, Ekşi, & Öztürk (2011), which is none other than to reduce student behavior problems and also increase academic involvement in schools. Therefore, CES is believed to be able to accelerate and streamline the implementation of character in schools. However, that does not mean that there are no difficulties and obstacles at all.

In addition to school, character education should also be carried out within the family environment. However, not a few parents are reluctant and even tend to give confidence in schools in educating their children through character education. Presidential Regulation (Perpres) number 87 of 2017 concerning CES and Ministerial Regulation (Permen) of Education and Culture number 20 of 2018 concerning CES in formal education units states that to optimize the strengthening of character education, the government needs to carry out a partnership function between schools, family and community. Novitasari, Wijayanti, & Arthurina (2019) revealed that the implementation of character education is none other than to instill the values that shape the character of the nation through massive and effective formal institutions.

In line with these regulations, schools are charged with being able to mobilize and carry out character development because character education is a necessity that makes students smart, polite and character (Rohendi, 2016). Therefore, schools must have a role in delivering and building character education to students.

Ministerial Regulation (Permen) number 20 of 2018 also instructs schools to implement character education into the school body itself. Providing material in class, implementing extracurricular activities and community life in the school environment is a place to run it. However, in its conceptualization, the school needs to work with stakeholders, namely the school committee and the community around the school because Hasan & Firdaos (2017) also stated that the community is also one of the bases for strengthening character education in schools.

Educational participants who are the subject and target of character education do not necessarily have the same understanding as the school. The approach from above (the principal) will easily control and direct a school mission through vertical instructions or orders. However, this cannot be separated from the character and capabilities of the principal himself. While the approach from below tends to listen more and provide input, ideas and views as a member in shaping the mission of the school. So that school members, such as students, need to be invited to conceptualize what character education is like and how it is implemented.

However, Baihaqi (2018) reminds that there are at least three obstacles in the implementation of character education. First, character education in the family. The second is the environment where students are. This environment will dominate in shaping character. So far there have been many cases that show that no matter how good the family is in shaping the character of its children, the environment will be able to change the results of the character education it has built. Third, curriculum and educators. The educational curriculum, which often changes so far, is considered not optimal in shaping the character of students. In line with this, educators also focus more on the cognitive aspects. So that the attitude aspect is often ignored.

Research conducted by Abbas & Marhamah (2021) shows that if students have a strong desire to strengthen character education activities at Private Vocational High Schools in West Bandung, they are responsive to social activities in society, even though not all students can carry them out. This shows the desire of students to be involved in strengthening character education in their schools, even though not all teachers are able to become good role models. However, the same results can be seen from a study conducted by Setiawan & Qomariyah
(2016) where the implementation of strengthening character education in Public Vocational High School (SMK Negeri) 5 Malang, which is running well, has the constraints of a lack of professionalism and motivation for teaching staff, the negative impact of globalization and a lack of role. from parents of students and the community. The role of teachers has not been maximized because many teachers only prioritize academic factors, by setting aside character education itself (Zulkarnain, 2019). Therefore, this study will analyze the application of strengthening character education at SMK Negeri 1 Bojonggede through 3 basic approaches, namely: class, school and community. Where in each of these approaches, the school involves the teacher in every action the school will take.

B. Literature Review

1. Character

Character is also known as character, the inner human nature that affects all thoughts and behavior. According to Sibaweh (2019) character is a behavior that is inherent in a person which cannot be generally equated with what is formed by society. So evil and lazy are characters that are formed by themselves. Including well and diligently. Therefore, the character value needs to be instilled from childhood.

The American Psychological Association (APA) itself, which is the main reference in psychological science, describes character as the totality of a person’s personality traits and attributes, especially one’s moral, social and religious attitudes. Moral traits can be obtained from the virtues adopted by a culture (Machura, 2018), social characteristics can emerge as a form of response to their social environment (Setiawan & Suadirman, 2018), while religious characteristics are derived from the beliefs they adhere to (Arifianto, Mutawali & Subekti, 2020).

Stolorow et al. (2002, in Stolorow, 2012) explain again that in the realm of psychology, characters are associated with the constellation or configuration of behavior traits. So the character should be understood from the perspective of his role in the organization or the emotional experience that is his main focus.

Researchers synthesize that character is behavior, which is obtained from the moral, social and religion of the individual. Generally, this character appears as behavior, which is an attribute of the individual.

2. Character Education

Fitri (2012) explains character education can be integrated in learning in every subject. Learning materials related to norms or values in each subject need to be developed, made explicit, linked to the context of everyday life. Therefore, learning character values should not only be given at the cognitive level but touch on internalization and real practice in the daily lives of students at school and in society.

Character education is important to form the quality of a generation. Character education is one of the tools to guide someone to become a good person so that they can filter out bad influences, such as acting criminally, committing immorality and also not being like a student. Character education that must be carried out in the scope of school education was initiated by the Ministry of National Education in 2010 and ratified again in 2017.

Ministry of National Education (2010) defines character education as everything that teachers do, which can influence the character of students. Teachers help shape the character of students. This includes modeling how teachers behave, how teachers speak or deliver material, how teachers tolerate, and various other related things. Based on the grand design developed by the Ministry of National Education, psychologically and socially and culturally the formation of character in the individual is a function of all the potential of the human individual (cognitive, affective, conative, and psychomotor) in the context of socio-cultural interaction (in family, school, and society) lasts a lifetime. 18 characters need to be carried out by students, including (Presidential Decree (Perpres) no. 87 of 2017 and Ministerial Regulation (Permen) no 20 of 2018): religious, honest, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creative, independent, democratic, curiosity, national spirit, love the country, appreciate achievement, friendship, love peace, love to read, care for the environment, care about social, and responsibility.

Character education aims to improve the quality of implementation and the results of education in schools, which leads to the achievement of character building or noble character of students as a whole, integrated and balanced. This must also be adjusted to graduate competency standards, where students are expected to be up to improve and use their knowledge independently, learn and internalize and personalize character values and noble character that are manifested in daily behavior. In Indonesia, education that teaches about character is not a new thing in the education system. Character education has been an important
part of national educational missions although with different emphases and terms (Ismail, 2012, in Samrin, 2016). Currently, the discourse on the urgency of character education has returned to strength and has become a focus of attention in response to various problems of the nation, especially issues of moral decadence, such as corruption, violence, fights between students, ethnic clashes, and free sex behavior. This phenomenon, according to Tilaar, is one of the excesses of the condition of a society that is currently in a period of social transformation facing the era of globalization (Tilaar, 1999, in Samrin, 2016).

3. **Strengthening Character Education (CES)**

The Strengthening Character Education Program (CES) is to strengthen the character of students through harmonizing thoughts, feelings, heart sports, and sports through school, family and community collaboration. This aims to instill the values of character education in students massively and effectively (Khotimah, 2019).

CES is listed in Presidential Decree (Perpres) No. 87 of 2017, which is divided into 3 scopes: Class-based Character Education, School-based Character Education and Community-based Character Education. This is very important to do in formal schools in accelerating the implementation of character education, which has five interrelated main values. The main values are: religion, independence, nationalism, cooperation, and integrity.

C. Panoyo, Riyanto & Handayaningrum (2019) suggest CES must be integrated into the curriculum and learning process, as well as the development of students through members and all school components with community involvement and enforcement of school rules and regulations, which is carried out continuously to become a habit. **Methodology**

1. **Research Design**

This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. A case study is a form of analyzing and describing a unit intensively and in-depth without any boundaries between space and time. So the researcher determines a case, analyzes it, assesses and assesses it so that the researcher will get an understanding of the situation and the meaning of the unit (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017).

2. **Participants/Respondents/Population and Sample**

Researchers employed a purposive technique assisted by a key person in determining the participants. He is a person who understands the ins and outs of schools because of their roles and seniority, where he pioneered the formulation and development of character education policies in schools since the school was founded 15 years ago. The purpose of using this technique is none other than to study and understand the main problems to be studied. So that the participants are obtained as shown in table 1.

| No | Initials | Gender | Title               |
|----|----------|--------|---------------------|
| 1  | PA       | Male   | School Principal   |
| 2  | BE       | Female | Civic Teacher      |
| 3  | BA       | Female | Civic Teacher      |

3. **Technique of Data Collection**

Data collection methods used in this study include interviews, observation and other supporting documents. An interview can be described as a meeting between two people who exchange information and ideas through question and answer, which in the end has meaning in it by constructing symbols, gestures and words (Sugiyono, 2016). In this study, the interview used was semi-structured. Meanwhile, observation is a human's daily activity using the five senses as the main aid in addition to the five senses such as ears, smell, mouth, and skin (Bungin, 2013). Therefore, observation is a person's ability to use observation through the work of the five senses of the eye and is assisted by the other five senses. Namely, data collection techniques are carried out by asking directly about the problem understudy to the authorities in the organization.

4. **Instruments**

This qualitative research adopts a human instrument, which functions to determine the focus of research, select informants as data sources, assess data quality, analyze data, interpret data and make conclusions on its findings (Sugiyono, 2016). So that this qualitative research instrument is the researcher himself. Because researchers directly act as instruments, researchers must have readiness when conducting research, starting from the beginning of the research process to the end of the study. Researchers must reduce the understanding of the
theory into a question. The answers to questions asked of the respondents, the researcher again has to reduce them to get answers to questions. Either explicitly or implicitly, these answers are the key to qualitative research. Finally, the researcher’s interpretation is needed to be able to conclude the description of the respondents’ answers, which are also the results of the study.

5. Technique of Data Analysis

In qualitative research, it is not easy to validate data. This is because the data obtained comes from various sources of information. So according to Vazquez, Hernández, & Polo (2014) there needs to be a panel of experts or parties who do know the real conditions of an organization, which will then be asked the validated questions to the resource persons. Furthermore, the analysis of the responses will be carried out by tracing the initial interview questions which is then followed by tracing the second interview questions which leads to the problem. So this study has used a open-ended questionnaire that has been validated by the panel.

D. Findings and Discussion

1. Findings

Suwito (2012) suggests that the integration of character education into the Learning Implementation Plan or Rencana Program Pembelajaran (RPP) needs to be done for each subject. Meanwhile, learning materials related to values and norms need to be developed, made explicit, linked to the context of everyday life. So that learning character values are not only limited to the cognitive realm but also needs to touch internalization and real implementation in the daily lives of students in society.

Meanwhile, the learning of Civics at SMK Negeri 1 Bojonggede always refers to the RPP. The preparation of this lesson plan is always evaluated by the Deputy Head of the Curriculum, before it is approved by the School Principal. This is confirmed by the following statement of the Principal:

"Yes, indeed it has become a necessity, even though now the lesson plans are simplified by 1 or 2 sheets, but still there the teachers are required to include what character education they want to strengthen in subjects related to basic competencies to be taught." (January 14, 2021)

Mastiah, Sudiana & Darmayanti (2015) added that character education that is integrated into lesson plans can be included in the following components: 1) learning objectives, 2) learning materials, 3) learning methods, 4) learning steps, and 5) assessment. Therefore, researchers analyzed examples of lesson plans for Civics class XI at SMK Negeri 1 Bojonggede (see figure 1).
Based on Figure 1, written character education is only religious character. This is clearly stated in the introduction to point 1. "Pray or berdoa" can be described as a form of religiosity. Meanwhile, other characters (nationalism, independence, integrity, and mutual cooperation) are more implicitly seen. This is by, following what was stated by the two Civics teachers, BE and BA. Here’s the BA statement:

"However, in the RPP there must be character education. So yes I made it like this (see Figure 1). "(January 13, 2021)

Meanwhile, BE added the following:

"As requested by the Education and Culture Education Center, yes I do it. RPP is thirsty for character education, so we make it. BA and I have difficulty writing what kind of character. As much as possible we write what the characters look like, but it’s still difficult. Luckily there is an attitude journal. The journal makes it easy for me to assess students."(January 13, 2021)

Here the role of the teacher is very important in providing daily assessments of the attitudes and behavior of their students. To support the teacher’s performance, the school enforces a daily attitude journal. This attitude journal serves to record the attitudes and behavior of students in their daily lives. An explanation of this attitude journal will be described in the section Strengthening Character Education.

Strengthening Character Education
Strengthening Character Education is divided into three, including class-based character education, school-based character education, and community-based character education. The findings will be discussed according to the division of the basis.

Class-based character education
The need for supporting factors such as curriculum, educators, facilities and infrastructure for strengthening class-based character education is absolutely necessary (Efendi, 2016). This has become a consideration in carrying out character education in the classroom. What has been mandated by the CES has been built and promoted at SMK Negeri 1 Bojonggede by integrating it into subjects.
According to the principal's explanation, CES begins with integrating character education into learning. The following is the principal's statement:

"So usually the teacher makes plans long before the implementation of the lesson, now in the lesson planning, there are RPP, Syllabus, Semester Program and Annual Program. The learning was validated in addition to the curriculum representatives, it was also validated by the principal. Now there are usually the teachers who have made plans for the implementation of learning which will be integrated with the strengthening of character education learning compatible with the Ministry of Education and Culture. There are 5 core values of CES currently being developed, namely integrity, religious, nationalist, cooperation. Now that is what is being developed which is integrated into every implementation of Civics teaching and learning activities in the classroom. And besides that, there are also various programs for characterization not only in class but outside the classroom, in the school environment through various student activities in extracurricular activities and so on." (14 January 2021).

To support the CES, an attitude journal (researchers assess such as student diary reports) is provided (see figure 2). This attitude journal serves to record the attitudes and behavior of students in their daily lives. Even good and bad attitudes will be neatly recorded in the attitude journal. This is what will be used as material for teacher evaluations of their students. This is reinforced by the following statement by the Principal:

"There are many instruments, one of which is habituation, for example, when starting learning by praying or especially with Civics subjects, it is very close because almost all of the basic competencies in Civics lead to character education. Teachers are also given daily journals so they record student behavior especially those that stand out, yes, during class activities, it is a note of character development, for example, today A reported that he found a cell phone lying on his friend's desk to the Civics teacher during the learning activities, for example. So it is recorded in the teacher's daily journal, oh which means that A has a character development from his honesty, for example. The attitude and behavior journal will later be reported to the homeroom teacher and the homeroom teacher will conclude the character's development." (January 14, 2021).

So the researchers concluded that the preparation of classroom learning planning in SMK Negeri 1 Bojonggede can be said to have been running. If it can be implemented properly, it will have an impact on the enthusiasm for learning of the students themselves (Yuliana, Hawanti & Wijayanti, 2019). Even so, in the future, it is necessary to evaluate continuously the character strengthening education that is carried out in the classroom.

School-based character education

Strengthening character education within the scope of schools cannot be separated from the responsibilities and roles of school principals. As school leaders, school principals are given the mandate to organize, carry out and evaluate character education in their environment. The principal of SMK Negeri 1 Bojonggede himself admits that it is not easy to carry out character education in his school. However, because this is a mandate from the government through the ministry of education and culture, it must still be realized.

This starts with the socialization for teachers. This needs to be done so that teachers do not forget and always carry out CES. Here's the statement:

"Yes, usually at the beginning of the new academic year before, for example, July of the new school year, before that, we held a training service in the even semester, like last semester, before starting even semester teaching, we held another training service or what was an internal meeting? In the training service, we provide socialization to teachers, especially for what, in addition to integrating the strengthening of character education, we also monitor this. Now what is usually what is it, the most important thing is that in monitoring it as a teacher, it is given a character attitude journal, so every time there is a positive or negative incident it is recorded by the teacher. So we socialize it over and over again so that the teacher doesn’t forget that. Because sometimes from the many students like to forget their
names, what else if there are lots of teachers, but if there is a journal then we write it down on that day and discuss it that day we won’t forget." (January 14, 2021).

In addition, the principal also adheres to the vision and mission of the school to be carried out with a character education approach. Even norms and regulations cannot be separated to be echoed to be understood and implemented by the school community. Furthermore, extracurricular and intracurricular activities were also used as facilities for CES, which consisted of 11 groups. This was confirmed by the principal with the following statement:

"What is the term, maybe a definite correlation relationship, this extracurricular accommodates the interest of his talents but also as a chorus on his face so that they can create good character in the fields of Flag-raising Troop, scouting, Red Cross youth, so they form discipline, independence, responsibility in extracurricular activities. In intracurricular activities, is there also a student council organization. We also form good positive characters so children who are already diligent. The character is getting more and more, then apart from teaching and learning activities in the classroom as well as extracurricular activities, what are the curricular activities? our efforts to strengthen character education in students. " (January 14, 2021).

Figure 3. The Activities of the Flag-raising Troop or Paskibra

From this information, it can be illustrated that all the existing equipment in SMK Negeri 1 Bojonggede has been arranged to support CES. This is very important and needs to be maintained consistently. Suryadi (2020) explains that strengthening character education in schools can be said to be successful when students want to be active in school activities, such as extracurricular activities.

Community-based Character Education

Schools cannot be left alone with the surrounding community in particular and other external parties in general. Hasan & Firdaos (2017) found that the community is very enthusiastic and has the willingness to be active in the KDP program. On this basis, The openness of SMK Negeri 1 Bojonggede to parties outside the school has made every activity approved by the school committee. This is what makes SMK Negeri 1 Bojonggede easy to collaborate with the hotel industry sector, academics and NGOs. The following is the statement of the Principal:

"We have several MoUs with universities or with other educational institutions, especially in this college, we have had the MoU they provide a kind of public lecture and also something related to their expertise competence. They also had time to provide motivations when they wanted to continue to class children. XII. Now this is the form of the MoU, many of these academics are mostly more about what, more to seminars or workshops, or guest teachers for the students and there are also NGOs. Well, these NGOs are actually our partners, so what do we need to do so that there is confirmation, for example in terms of handling to students, whether it is an industrial one, for example, we impose a sanction, for example if we initiate a school for children. When, for example, there are teachers who go beyond that limit, there is a separate control from NGOs, usually like that and this is we are open, we are not necessarily right, but we look for the main problem which is whether we are wrong and for example we are wrong, we fix it later on with NGOs. Many NGOs are
concerned or concerned about the world of education, if there is anything, they will convey it to schools because they are more straightforward terms, for example, this school is like this, it becomes input for us to improve again in terms of educating children in education. This character is from an NGO. Then from other worlds too, uh, the industrial world also we are more in the industrial world because of vocational schools, yes, because we want to produce graduates who are ready to work so we have more education in collaboration with industry with various relevant industries. The competencies that are here are in the field of tourism, the field offices, accounting, multimedia fields, culinary fields, culinary fields, so we are looking for established industries. For example, hotels are 5-star hotels, what do they expect from the character education we are doing here" (14 January 2021).

The same thing also happened when SMK Negeri 1 Bojonggede collaborated with local governments through synchronizing character education programs in schools. The following is the Principal’s statement which supports this explanation:

"Yes, at the beginning of the school year we made the term of Education Unit Level Curriculum. Education Unit Level Curriculum includes the design, lesson patterns, syllabus, CES programs. Character education in Education Unit Level Curriculum, so at the beginning of the year, it must be reported in addition to the committee as well as to the education office which will be validated or signed by the education office. So, maybe it is the involvement of the education office, so this school program in general in the next year must be known first by the education office, whether it is the character education program, the learning program until the budget is validated by the education office. Then the community, we are also at the beginning of the year, at the beginning of the year there are always meetings with parents. We will socialize all year running programs related to our sons and daughters after they are signed by the education office. Then what was that besides the people" (January 14, 2021)

The success in establishing cooperation and communication with external parties shows the synergy of schools with parties outside the school to strengthen character education in schools. However, Andiarini, Arifin & Nurabadi (2018) argue that there is a need for support from various parties involved in the character education process for the implementation of strengthening character education. So that there will be a system of strengthening character education that is getting better.

2. Discussion

Overall, the implementation of CES has been carried out relative to what has been mandated by the regulations. Of course, this is the success of SMK Negeri 1 Bojonggede in developing and improving the capabilities and professionalism of the school. It is not easy to be able to make changes (related to constantly changing regulations in the world of education, especially the curriculum). However, the dynamics of the curriculum must be carried out as a form of responding to the challenges of life that the school community must face (Ritonga, 2018). The form of adaptation to the current curriculum is interpreted quite well.
By implementing CES, schools have successfully made several innovations. The use of attitude journals during the teaching and learning process is an interesting idea to describe the condition of students from time to time, as a form of classroom action. Schools have also begun to be open to receiving input from both internally (teachers, students, or school committees) in determining school activities that prioritize strengthening character education. The harmony between external parties is always maintained. Cooperation is always trying to be developed not only limited to the industrial sector but also NGOs, government agencies and academia.

E. Conclusion
As a public school that is trusted by the community, SMK Negeri 1 Bojonggede has been able to integrate the curriculum with other supporting devices as a form of embodiment of the implementation of character education, which is the main key in running this program. This occurs because the CES system at SMK Negeri 1 Bojonggede has been well established and can be portrayed in several school programs, as evidenced by the existence of planning, compilation, supervision, and completeness of evaluation. Meanwhile, the implementers of character education at SMK Negeri 1 Bojonggede seem to have understood and are up to carry out programs and activities to CES that have been running.

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