Research article

Students’ communication patterns of islamic boarding schools: the case of Students in Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta

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ABSTRACT

Islamic schools with the concept of boarding school are increasing every year in Indonesia. These schools offer academic education that is integrated with Islamic learning and Islamic character to students. Of course, this integration must be carried out systematically and planned by the school as an education provider through good communication between schools and students. Therefore, this study aim to describe the students’ communication pattern during the implementation of character education in the Islamic Boarding School of Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta. Detailed data in this study were obtained directly by conducting two Focus Group Discussions (FGD) on different days and attended by twenty one students from various levels. In addition, the researcher also conducted direct interviews with two teachers separately. This separate interview was conducted to triangulate the validity of the data obtained from the FGD results. The results indicated that (1) the implementation of character education in Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta is initiated from the ustadz (teacher) by giving model to the students directly. It is considered as an important aspect since the prophet Muhammad SAW delivered the Islamic religious values through behaviors and models; and (2) the second strength of Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta in character education is two-way communication that promoting feelings of sympathy and empathy among students. The close friendship characterizing among the students of Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta is a very important factor to generate mutual trust and sense of belonging among the students.

1. Introduction

Character education is considered as the main concern for every school when implementing their education system. Even, in England and America, character education has encouraged political activity, because the government and educators see that character education can be used to overcome existing social problems (Jerome and Kisby, 2019: 2). The design of character education which is integrated into the national curriculum has been carried out by the British government since 1966 (Revell and Arthur, 2007: 80). Whereas in America, the development of character education was carried out in the mid-1990s through the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) schools (Jerome and Kisby, 2019: 2). In Indonesia, character education has begun to be developed through the governmental program called cultural education and the characteristic of the nation. This national movement becomes the main reason behind the growing concern on implementing character education at schools. As what is stated in the National Plan, the first mission is the realization of national character—i.e., competitiveness, good behavior and Pancasila-based morals (Law No. 17/2007). Moreover, Sardiman (2017) states that it reflects the characteristics of Indonesian society which is diverse and tolerant.

Although character education was only launched by the government in 2010, actually Islamic schools have long integrated character education into their education system, one of which is through an education system based on Islamic boarding schools. Islamic boarding school-based education combines the physical, intellectual and mental education. In addition, they believe in three important elements of a good education system—i.e. 1) the synergy among the school, community and family, 2) a structured curriculum from kindergarten level up to university and 3) mastery of science. These three elements are necessary to produce excellent students who are good at science, technology, and moral (Hastasari et al., 2016).

Being one of the oldest boarding school-based schools that was founded directly by the Indonesian National Hero – Kyai Haji Ahmad
Dahlan – since 1918, Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta has become a da'wah (activities that are calling, inviting and calling people to believe and obey Allah in accordance with the Qur'an and the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad SAW) cadre school or community leader who integrates character education into the learning process (Azhar et al., 2015: 114). Students from Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta come from all regions in Indonesia and every year the number of students who register is always three times more than the existing capacity (Azhar et al., 2015: 118). This shows that even though it is based on an Islamic boarding school, Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta is the main choice for parents. Besides, the school was selected due to its distinctive system. The school implements continuous six-year study term which requires the student to register from grade one (equals to grade seven in normal schools) to grade six (equals to grade twelve in normal schools) continuously. In addition, the school is selected as one of the model schools under Muhammadiyah Foundation (Muallimin.ac.id, n.d).

However, Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta which has students from various regions faces a real problem of harmonizing the communication pattern among the students. Although in classrooms teachers are the focal point of many social exchanges, and they are the professionals whose task is to organize the (social) classroom environment (Mainhard et al., 2018), the time they met was only 8 h each day. The rest, the students interacted more with friends, both seniors and juniors, in the dormitory. Therefore, the effective students’ communication is becoming an important element for Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta. It is because the interpersonal relation built from effective communication plays an important role in building social life. For Example, when the interpersonal relationship motivates other people in the form of sympathizing, understanding information, supporting, and various forms of communication that influence self-images of the people and help them understand their hopes (Bungin, 2006).

Based on a pre-research interview with one of the Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta teachers, it was revealed that students living in the boarding school have more opportunities to build interpersonal relationship with their peers and teachers who supervise them. It is during this process of building the interpersonal relationship that the friendship emerges. Therefore, teachers’ religious characters could adhere strongly on the students’ mind with the process of friendship. Nevertheless, experiences of communicating with the non-academic environment could also be the main factor that shapes the students’ Islamic characters such as nobility and honesty. It is because culture can be seen as behavior, values, and attitudes in the environment and the way of an individual life to make adjustments to the environment. The school environment also refers to a system of values, beliefs, and norms which are commonly accepted and implemented with full awareness that natural behavior is shaped by the environment (Awang2012; Sobri et al., 2017).

2. Research questions

The following research question describes how the communication patterns that exist between students and also the cultivation of character education in the Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta:

- How is the character education system implemented in Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta?
- Is there a difference in character cultivation at school and in the dormitory?
- Have there been any fundamental changes in character education instilled in students since the establishment of Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta until now?
- What are the daily activities related to character that must be done by students while in the dormitory?
- How do students usually bond with each other in the dormitory?
- Are students able to interact and communicate intensely at school or in the dormitory?

The questions asked are related to the habituation carried out by students every day, because according to Aristotle in (Broadie and Rowe, 2002) a person will have a good character only by doing what is called "habituation". According to Aristotle, good habits will also not be possible to naturally arise in oneself without consistent training (Jerome and Kisby, 2019).

3. Literature review

3.1. Character education

The family life on Japan is one of the top models of character education in Asia. Considering the implementation of character education existing in Japan, family has a significant role in the process of instilling character education in children (Junaidi and Syukur, 2017). In the context of Indonesia, Setiawan (2010) says that in the household and family environment, parents are responsible to develop and to instill good values such as care, honesty, fairness, and responsibility. In addition, respect for self and others as well as the supporting performance values such as diligence, high work ethic, and persistence as good character basics need to be developed. Parents have to speak softly but firmly, encourage children to socialize, and introduce new things to them. These simple steps will help children to grow up to be a good person (Setiawan, 2010). In line with those statements, school must continue the efforts in the process of instilling character education. Hamid states that school (education) is one of the strategic places to build characters other than family and society (Hamid, 2017). Lickona (1999) says that character education can be defined is the deliberate effort to cultivate virtue. Virtues are objectively good human qualities, good for the development and well-being of the individual and good for the whole human community.

For schools based on Islamic boarding schools such as Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, of course, schools and dormitories are the main places for character education. This is because most of the students' time is used to interact with friends and teachers. If the interaction between friends and teachers produces a good habit then, as Aristotle said, it will affect a person's personal character and vice versa. This is because according to Aristotle, character does not result from passive habituation but from individual actions and reflections (Jerome and Kisby, 2019). Therefore, character is something that qualifies a person. Character becomes an identity that overcomes the ever-changing contingent experience. It is because good character is the inward motivation to do what is right, according to the highest standard of behaviour in every situation (Revell and Arthur, 2007; Rohman et al., 2014).

There are four basic traits in character education according to Foerster (1869–1966). First, interior regularity in which every action is measured based on the hierarchy of values. Values become the normative guidelines of every action. Second, coherence that gives courage and makes one firm on principles, not easily swayed or frightened in facing new situations of risk. Coherence is the foundation that builds trust in one another. The absence of coherence undermines one’s credibility. Third, autonomy in which one internalizes the rules from outside until it becomes his personal values. It can be seen through judgments on personal decisions without being influenced or urged by others. The fourth values are perseverance and loyalty. Perseverance is a person’s endurance to pursue what is considered important. Whilst, loyalty is the basis of respect for the set commitments. These characters are what determine the kind of a person in all his actions (Koesoeema, 2010).

3.2. Communication patterns

Communication pattern according to Hastasari et al. (2018) is a process designed to represent a reality of interconnectedness and sustainability of the elements covered, in order to facilitate systematic and logical thinking. Communication pattern is divided into three forms. The first is one-way communication pattern. One-way communication pattern is the process of delivering messages from communicator to
communicant either using or without media, with no provided feedback from the communicant who acts as a listener only. On Schramm's communication model, experiences field between the communicator and the communicant is very important to ensure that the communicant can receive the message appropriately (Schramm, 1954). Therefore, each teacher who wants to instil character education using this model must really pay attention to the experiences field of each student. For example, when conveying recommendations not to smoke to students, the teacher should make observations on students who smoke and don't smoke and look at their daily habits. This is done so that when giving advice, the teacher can use an approach that is in accordance with the habits of the students, so that the message conveyed can be well-received by students.

The next form is two-way communication pattern. Two-way communication pattern is when the communicator and communicant interchange their functions in communicating. In the first stage, the communicator becomes the communicant and in the next stage he/she interchanges their functions. However, essentially the initiator of the conversation is the main communicator; he/she has a certain purpose through the communication process. The communication process is dialogical, and the feedback is provided directly (Luhmann, 1992). This two-way communication is usually used by students to communicate with each other. This two-way communication is a medium for students to exchange principles and personal opinions about things that happen around them.

The last is multi-way communication pattern. Multi-way communication pattern is the process of communication occurring in a group where the communicators and communicants will exchange ideas in a dialogical way. Blumer classified three components which become the basic of this model. Firstly, a man does something based on the meaning which is sent by another person to social environment (verbal symbol, non-verbal symbol and physical symbol). Secondly, the meaning related to the social interaction which is done by the individual related to his social environment. Thirdly, the meaning is created and changed through the interpretation process which is done by the individual related to his social environment.

As previously stated, the cultivation of character education is inseparable from effective communication, both teacher and student communication or communication between students. Therefore, this study is expected to reveal which communication patterns are more dominant in character building in Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta students.

3.3. Close relationship on interpersonal communication

Aw (2011) states that one type of communications of which frequency is relatively high is interpersonal communication. Because of this high frequency, it is not surprising that many people consider interpersonal communication as very important. Littlejohn (1999) defines interpersonal communication as communication among individuals. Hardjana (2003) says that interpersonal communication is a face-to-face interaction between two or several people, in which the communicator is able to convey the message directly and the communicant can receive and respond to the message as well.

Sometimes, interpersonal communication is associated with close relationship. According to Prisbell (1990), close relationship is characterized as a high degree of friendliness and affection, trust, self-disclosure, and responsibility, and is formulated through symbols and rituals. Verderber, Verderber, and Sellnow (2013) proposes four characteristics of communication in a close relationship (Budiyatna and Gunem, 2011). The first characteristic is friendliness and affection which explain that friends may express their fondness by spending time together, both in pleasure and in enjoyment of sharing experiences. In the case of this study, friendliness and affection are expected to be found in the form of caring one another. The second characteristic is trust. Research by Boon (1994) mentions four important issues that underline the trust building in a friendship: the quality of being reliable, readiness to help, being problem-solving partner, and trust. Trust building in the context of this study would be relevant to the act of listening. The third characteristic is self-disclosure. Friendship requires relatively high self-disclosure. Through sharing the feelings and processes of self-disclosure that are very personal, people can understand each other. Self-disclosure can be also indicated when the students express academic-related matters to their friends. The last is responsibility. Friendship requires a strong sense of responsibility. For example, someone might cancel an appointment with others in order to provide more time and energy to prioritized friendship. In addition, friendship should have a very strong bond. Sometimes, students move to another part of a city or to another city; however their friendship is unaffected. Although both can only meet once or twice a year, they still find their friendship strong because they share ideas and feelings freely and experience something fun.

In this study, the close relationship that is established is more focused on the closeness between Muallim Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta students with each other. Like how close they are when interacting at school or in the dormitory. How they overcome the differences that exist when communicating with each other.

4. Research methodology

4.1. Data and methods

To obtain in-depth data regarding student communication patterns in the implementation of character education in Muallim Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, this study was designed qualitatively with descriptive type. While the main data in this study were obtained through Focus Group Discussions (FGD) which were conducted twice. The participants in the FGD were 21 Muallim Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta students. In addition, this study also conducted separate interviews with two teachers to find out the implementation of character education in Muallim Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, with the following distribution (Table 1).

The selection of each participant was based on their understanding of life around the Islamic boarding school. However, in particular, researchers have asked in detail the criteria for FGD participants from the school, namely: five students who have good academic achievements, eight students who have good non-academic achievements, six students who have committed violations more than twice and two students who have received punishments that are high. Before the interview begins, we gave them a brief briefing related to the question that we would ask, in which important information about achievements and or violations they had received or committed, and gave them the same opportunities to answer all questions alternately. To this case, the participants agreed without giving any conditions. Meanwhile, the identity of the teacher who became the informant in the interview was a teacher in the field of student affairs and also a teacher who at the same time had a dual role as a Public Relations Officer of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta. Therefore, the types of questions we ask are questions related to character building in schools and dormitories, the character education system implemented in Muallim Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, and the possibility of fundamental changes in character education instilled in students since the establishment of Muallim Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta until now.

| Table 1. FGD participant identity distribution. |
|-----------------------------------------------|
| Fourth grade Students (Juniors and/Seniors)   | P1 – P7 |
| Fifth grade Students (Juniors and/Seniors)    | Q1 – Q7 |
| Sixth grade Students (Seniors)                | R1 – R7 |
| Teacher                                      | Two teachers |
| Total                                        | Twenty three participants |
| Source: processed by researchers (2021).       | X1 and X2 |
In the first FGD which was held in the third week of July 2017, the questions were more directed at how close the students were to each other at school and in the dormitory. Furthermore, the second FGD which was held in the first week of August 2017 was more directed at how to implement character education in Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta. On the same day, the researcher also conducted separate interviews with two teachers who had worked at the school for 15 years. Each FGD lasted for approximately 2 h, and each participant was given the opportunity to express his opinion.

4.2. Data analysis

This research uses Miles and Huberman's data analysis model. There are three stages in the data analysis of this model, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles et al., 2014).

4.2.1. Data reduction

It is defined as the process of selecting, focusing on simplifying, abstracting, and transforming rough data that emerges from written notes in the field. The data reduction in this study was carried out shortly after the FGD was completed, the researchers reduced the answers from the students of Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta to fit the formulation of the problem in this study.

4.2.2. Data presentation

It can be said that this stage of data presentation is a liaison between interviews with research informants and drawing conclusions. If the results of the data analysis are correct, the results issued are also good.

4.2.3. Drawing conclusions

The last stage is drawing conclusions. Usually pre-research conclusions are also verified directly during research. The verification may be as brief as a rethink running through the analyser's (researcher) mind as he writes, a review of field notes, or it may be thorough and laborious with reviewing and brainstorming among colleagues to develop intersubjective agreements or as well as extensive efforts to place a copy of a finding in another data set.

4.3. Ethical research

Before holding the FGD, the researcher sent a letter requesting the willingness of students and teachers to become research informants. The researcher also explained that later all data obtained through FGDs and interviews would be published and used for academic purposes. Their names will also be listed according to their real names, and the school will give permission. In addition, the school is also willing to help and select informants who meet the criteria. Prior to the FGD, the researcher had sent a sample of questions to be discussed during the FGD. The implementation of character education in Madrasah Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta is closely related to an introduction of akhlq (values). The akhlq introduction becomes a very fundamental aspect in the learning process and education, such as discipline. To promote self-discipline, the school has established a systemic regulation of the problem in this study.

5. Research finding

5.1. Character education in Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta

The implementation of character education in Madrasah Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta is closely related to an introduction of akhlq (values). The akhlq introduction becomes a very fundamental aspect in the learning process and education, such as discipline. To promote self-discipline, the school has established a systemic regulation that all students must obey. The rules start from getting up, performing Subuh prayers congregation, listening to 7-min sermons, reading Qur’an, and preparing to join the learning process. This is in accordance with the statement of X1, a teacher at Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta:

“... Time for getting up in the morning has been set, starting at 4 a.m., students must be ready to perform a congregational prayer. Then, students must not leave the mosque until the short Islamic lecture conducted right after the dawn prayer ends at half past six in the morning. After that, students are given time to take a shower and breakfast until half past seven in the morning. Then, students must be ready for learning. After 7 o'clock, the school gate will be closed, so there will be no late students going from the dormitory to the schools. That is practiced every day, so that discipline is truly instilled”.

In the learning process, the values of character education that are focusing on the students are: respect, honesty (especially during the test), leadership, and obedience in performing the prayer on time. The introduction of the character education values to the students is also balanced with good models performed by ustadz (Islamic boarding school teachers). For instance, ustadz do not smoke, perform prayers on time, and show discipline by coming in time to the class. As expressed by X1 as follows:

“Because our vision and mission in Muallimins is being a Muallim (educators) Zuma (leader) Ulama (religious scholars), the inculcation of character to the students must be relevant which include responsibility, honesty, on time worship and leadership. Responsibility, for example, the students actively drive the community members to perform religious activities in the mosque. Honestly, the students do not cheat when doing the exam and perform self-honesty by worshipping on time. Finally, having a leadership character, the students must have the courage to preach by delivering Islamic teaching and becoming an imam (a leader during the prayer).

The vision and mission have been made since the school was founded until now. This means that there is no fundamental change in character education instilled in Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta students since its establishment until now. Whereas, related to the scope of learning materials, Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta orients on two aspects, namely intellectual and religious aspects (characters). These two aspects cannot be separated because they are related to the school's vision to produce graduates with balanced academic and religious knowledge. From this explanation, it can be concluded that character building in schools and dormitories is not distinguished and is actually interrelated. At school, when participating in the learning process, students are taught basic academic material according to their level so that they can become intellectual individuals but still apply the character of respect, honesty (especially during exams), leadership, and obedience in carrying out their duties. However, many students decide to quit and move to another school because they feel that education at Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta is very difficult.

“... certainly do not survive for six years in sending their children to this Islamic boarding school. Therefore, when the students are in grade 3, they usually move to another school because they think the religious knowledge for their children is considered enough. However, in Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, if a six-year study is not completed, the students will not be able to get a Muallimin certificate; the students will only get a national certificate upon graduation...” (X2).

Moreover, Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta adopts national curriculum into their Islamic-teachings-based syllabus. However, the subjects taught in the school cover more religious aspects. This is relevant to their vision of the school: i.e. graduating ulama candidates (Islamic Scholars), leaders, and teachers. Thus, Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta graduates will be beneficial for their society and religion. As described by X2,

“...school vision will be good if it is well-achieved. The graduates may become ulama, leaders, and teachers. Therefore, the character education we promote concerns on three activities the santrineed to do, such as: getting up in the morning, delivering kultum (seven-minute sermons), and
delivering longer sermons when they are in the 6th grade of elementary school. Meanwhile, the santri’s leadership is built when they lead prayers as an imam (priest) and join organizations…"

On this basis, the teaching at Muallim Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta is divided into two activities, namely Madrasa (school) and Dormitory activities. Learning activities in the classroom are guided by the teachers. Teachers at Muallim Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta are also required to have good teaching skills. As a communicator, the teacher has a very important role in the process of delivering teaching materials to students. There are several criteria that must be met by the teacher to be a good communicator, according to X2. The first is authority, a teacher must have a strong authority as an educator in front of his students. This authority is demonstrated in various ways by each teacher:

"…. That authority will appear in the minds of students if we protect and give them sincere love and respect. In addition, we as teachers must also set a good example for students, students will appreciate teachers who set an example through direct action, for example in the case of a ban on smoking for students. The same prohibition is also applied by teachers, and so far no teacher in our school has smoked, both inside the school."

Next is the closeness/familiarity between teachers and students. The closeness/familiarity with students is also used by teachers to solve students' problems, as expressed by X1 below:

"… When there are students who want to withdraw from school, teachers and parents work together to provide empathy so that the students concerned no longer have the desire to leave school. The homeroom teacher plays a very important role here to take a personal approach to find out what problems are being faced by the students concerned".

X1 added:

"…I also open a service to consult related to learning, because sometimes there are some students who don’t understand in class, are embarrassed to ask questions and finally ask questions outside of learning hours”.

It is different with X2 who gives a smile as a nonverbal message which means that he accepts the opinions of students and often plays instrumental songs in class to keep the class condition calm when his learning method is reading.

Meanwhile, activities in the dormitory are guided by a Pamong (teacher), Musyrif (student mentor) and sister-level assistant. Pamong is a teacher who is fully responsible for one dormitory. The number of dormitories at Muallim Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta is six dormitories where each dormitory consists of six classes. This is explained by X2:

"… Each dormitory has one Pamong (teacher) who is assisted by a musyrif (student mentor)- a university student. Meanwhile, one dormitory consists of six classes, meaning that each teacher is assisted by six musyrifs. They collaborate to foster the discipline of students in the dormitory. To facilitate the encouragement and supervision of student discipline, each musyrif is assisted by sixth-grade students who are selected to be a mentor for students of grade one to five”.

In relation to the explanation above, X1 adds that:

"… We are also helped by peers in mentoring the students in the dormitory, one of which is performing the problem solving program. We do this to minimize minor violations committed by students, for example borrowing money to buy cigarettes or to play games outside of the school. If not, we will not be able to handle 1,200 students in the dormitory. We hope that peers can give advice using the language which can be accepted by their fellow students, so it could achieve the desired target.”

Based on the explanation above, the coaching and mentoring of students in the dormitory employs a hierarchy system by involving Pamong, Musyrif, seniors, and peers.

5.2. Communication patterns among Students in Muallim Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta

Another strength, besides direct examples from teachers in implementing character education at Muallim Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, also arises from the close relationship that exists between students as long as they interact in the dormitory. Positive interactions between students indirectly have a positive impact on individual character. This happens from habits that are done together. For example, when reading the Qur’an together, performing worship on time, speaking politely, and also respecting each other.

Students in Muallim Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta perform interpersonal communication in the form of one-way, two-way, and multi-way communication. The one-way communication occurs between senior and juniors in the event such as giving motivation and reminding each other of performing good deeds. Such good deeds include advice on discipline issues such as smoking, skipping prayers in congregation, and performing the prayers on time. This is relevant with the statement of Q2 below:

"… The prayer is more controlled. At home, I pray but not on time. In the dormitory, the ustads always reminds me. For example, in the morning, the ustads always wakes me up to pray, so the five times prayer are always performed on time. There are many friends too in the dormitory; therefore we learn how to socialize. Moreover, many friends come from outside of Jogia (the majority of Central Java), so I do a lot of socialisation …"

The same thing is also explained by Q3:

“I feel more comfortable living with peers because, when they remind me to better maintain the cleanliness of the room, they convey with the tone and message that I can receive. For example, if you do not keep clean, your skin will be mouldy you know.”

It can be seen that the bonding exists between individuals is very good. We can see this from the attention given by each student to his friends around him, ranging from attention to health, discipline and cleanliness. This attention may not be given if each student does not have a strong bond.

Meanwhile the two-way communication pattern occurs when the santris conduct discussions about assignments inside or outside the class. This shows that a good bond between students can also have a positive influence on their learning atmosphere. The last pattern of interpersonal communication is multi-way communication. The topic of such a communication differs from grade to grade. For example, grade six students talk about their universities of choice after completing the study. On the other hand, the grade five students discuss how to improve learning motivation both intellectual and spiritual aspects. The following is the statement of R7:

"… I often discuss with friends about the university where we are going to study after we graduate. We want to be like our Musyrif when we were in the first level. Now, our Musyrif has continued their study to Dubai. He is a great person. He often instills good values. So, we still admire him until now …"

Different from R7, P1 often discusses about the achievement in the classroom with his friends as stated below:

"… the relationship is more controlled. Usually students compete to get a good ranking in other schools, but in this school students tend to collaborate to do good, for example by studying together. In addition, we can be closer to the ustads since usually one class is mentored by one ustads”.

From this statement, it can be seen that although communication is established in large groups, each student can still feel the extraordinary effect. For example, students are inspired and motivated by the story of musyrif who succeeded in continuing his studies in Dubai or from
students’ expressions that they feel they can still interact closely with the ustadz even in the classroom.

According to the students of Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, friendship is a very important factor in conducting interpersonal communication. They often call each other by their father names or strange names. The participating student states that it is an evidence of friendship in interaction (R2). The friendship promotes trust and sense of belonging of each student. Therefore, when there is one student or two students violating the rules, their friends will undoubtedly give advice to each other. As expressed by P3,

“It was some time ago, a friend asked me to lend him some money. What is that for? I asked. He said it was for food. “Tell me the truth.” I said. He replied “It is for cigarette”. “If I give you the money, I hurt a friend of mine.”

The same thing was experienced by Q1 who received reprimand from his friend when he was about to take a negative action:

“... My friend once noticed me watching a porn video in an internet cafe. I was afraid to be reported, but apparently he did not report it, he instead gave me advice that was very imprinted in my memory. He said, if you watch the video again, remember that on the day of vengeance, not only me who testifies to your actions but your eyes and all your senses will do so”

R5 also stated that he stopped dating because he thought of his friend suggestion as follows:

“... So the story begins when I had a female friend, then for some reasons she was like putting down my heart and chasing me. I was reprimanded by my own friend because of that. He said why are you dating, you commit a sin and it is useless. Then, I think why I am dating, I spend money to date. After that, I decided to stop dating ...”

From the discussion above, we can draw the argument that interacting and communicating intensely can be done anywhere by students, whether in dormitories or at school and in daily or structured activities. The difference is only in the topic of conversation, when at school they talk more about academic-related things (although it is possible they also talk about more personal topics), and when in the dormitory the topics they often talk about are topics related to religion. Interacting and communicating intensely here means that they can talk about anything to their friends in any situation, even they really regarded the advice given by their friends and did not consider it to be something that bothers them. In another words, it can be said that interactions and communication among the students becomes the primary factor for their effective interpersonal communication since this contributes to strengthening their character building. In this way this research proposes students communication pattern in character building as a discussion on the topic of interpersonal communication.

6. Discussion

Hamid states that school is one of the strategic places for character building aside from students’ family and society (Hamid, 2017). Moreover, Islamic boarding school is one of the education institutions which are closely related to character education value building. Therefore, Islamic boarding school, such as Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta has become the priority for parents in selecting a school under the issue of the chaotic morals nowadays. The character building is initiated from the ustadz (teacher) by giving model to the students directly. It is considered as an important aspect since the prophet Muhammad SAW delivered the Islamic religious values through behaviors and models. Therefore, the purpose of the value modelling is the emphasis of character education which is taught to the students. This is in line with what was expressed by Aristotle that in order to instill character in individuals, there needs to be habituation because the good character that exists in individuals is not the result of passive habituation but rather action and reflection (Jerome and Kishy, 2019).

The second strength of Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta in character building is promoting feelings of sympathy and empathy among students. The education system also encourages students to involve sympathy and empathy in their interpersonal communication with their peers. Verderber, Verderber, and Sellnow (2013) proposes four characteristics of communication in a close relationship (Budyatna and Ganiem, 2011). Those characteristics are friendliness and affection, trust, self-disclosure, and responsibility. In term of friendliness and affection, the six grade students guides the younger students in various organizational activities. Meanwhile, affection is represented in the way students reminding each other to perform good deeds, for example, reminding a friend to clean up his room, not to smoke, and to perform sholat (prayer) on time. Verderber states that close friends always hope to be together because they enjoy spending time together, talking, and sharing experiences (Verderber et al., 2013).

According to Verderber et al. (2013) the second characteristic is trust. Trust in this study refers to the act of listening. Students attending Madrasah Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta have mentors in the dormitory called muṣyrif (dormitory supervisor). Each muṣyrif supervises 30 to 35 students. Muṣyrif has a very important role in controlling the discipline of the students in dormitory. Furthermore, muṣyrif also serves as a brother for the students and the students often share their school activities including their problems in learning process.

The third characteristic is self-disclosure. Intimacy requires relatively high self-disclosure. By sharing very personal feelings through self-disclosure, people get to know and understand each other (Verderber et al., 2013). Life in the dormitory makes the students of Madrasah Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta have a very close friendship. The close friendship develops into a sense of ‘belonging’ and students are open to each other, such as when one of the students intents to borrow money to buy cigarettes, another student immediately warns that the action violates the rules and may endanger health. This concern among the students will not happen if they do not have close friendships. Verderber states that increasing the level of self-disclosure will increase investment in a relationship (Verderber et al., 2013).

The last characteristic is responsibility. Verderber states that intimate relationship, in this context is close friendship, has a very strong bond (Verderber et al., 2013). The students still have strong bond even after they graduate, because Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta will gather the graduates in a forum called IKMAM (Alumni Forum of Muallimin Muhammadiyah).

Furthermore, in the perspective of communication, harmonious interpersonal communication between students both in the context of one-way, two-way and multi-way communication carried out by students will also have a good impact on relationships and closeness that exists. Which in the end from this closeness can grow and transmit a good personality character. This is in line with the expression of Rogers and Kinaid (1981) which states that communication is a process in which two or more people form or exchange information with each other, which in turn will arrive at a deep mutual understanding. Where this mutual understanding can take the form of mutual trust and sense of belonging among the students.

7. Conclusions

Based on the results and discussion, this research can be concluded into two points. Firstly, it is found that the implementation of character education in Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta is carried out through habituation that is exemplified directly by teachers or ustadz. The teachers here directly provide examples in the application of moral development. The moral development consists of discipline, respect, honesty, leadership, and on time sholat (prayers) performance. The implementation of character education in Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta starts from the ustadz or teacher who becomes role models for the students. Setting examples by the teachers are intended to strengthen the values of character education that are taught to the students.
Secondly, the interpersonal communication patterns performed by santri in Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta are one-way, two-way and multi-way communications. The close friendship characterizing the interpersonal communication among the students of Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta is a very important factor to generate mutual trust and sense of belonging among the students. It is argued that the interpersonal communication aspects discussed in this research focused on character building. For future studies on this topic, this research suggests that the aspects of interpersonal communication can include other things such as mental health (Mainhard et al., 2018) and skill development (Sobri et al., 2017).

Additional information

No additional information is available for this paper.

References

Aw, S., 2011. Komunikasi Interpersonal. Graha Ilmu.