Character Education as A Form of Strengthening School Culture in SDIT Imam Syafi’i Kebumen

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Abstract

This article is intended to describe the implementation of character education in order to strengthen the school culture at SDIT Imam Syafi’i Kebumen. Field data is collected through interviews, observations and then analyzed in qualitative. The findings are (a) character education at SDIT Imam Syafi’i in the conversation of the meaning of tarbiyah, ta’did and ta’lim consisting of responsibility, discipline and religious characters; (b) the most prominent character in SDIT Imam Syafi’i is the simplicity with a simple method that is exemplary; and (c) forms of educational activities as a strengthening of school culture, namely routine, spontaneous and conditioning activities.

Keywords: character education, school culture

A. Introduction

Character education is an issue that is still being discussed by education practitioners today (Fajarini, 2014; Hasibuan, Syah, & Marzuki, 2018; Indrawan, 2016; Jalil, 2016; Kurniawan, 2015; Tri Sukitman & Mulyadi, 2014). At least the urgency regarding character education can be traced to our increasingly complex educational problems because of the disruption era. Character education is the only main foundation in transmitting Indonesian character values so that the nation’s generation is not eroded by counterproductive values with valuable national values. It means that character education should lead to the strengthening of culture and it is connected to our history as a nation.

Specifically, the purpose of character education is to create students more virtuous in every activity they do, so that the concerns and fears about the loss of national dignity do not have sufficient arguments. Character education becomes the first treatment and even early prevention of the rise of cases that contribute to moral crises such as corruption, hoaxes, juvenile delinquency, and many others.
The fact shows that the moral crisis that occurred is a warning to the world of education. One example of such a moral crisis is the rise of human trafficking cases such as the sale and purchase of women of high school age to become sex workers. From the Sindonews website, data on human trafficking victims in Indonesia reaches one million per year (Zubaedah, 2015). Another example of a moral crisis in this country is the case of pedophilia. 70-year-old Bruno Gallo (an Australian citizen) as a pedophilia suspect killed 25 children in Mataram NTB which occurred on 3 March 2017. On 9 March 2017, in Jabodetabek, Wawan 25 years and AA Januar 24 years killed 13 children. The 29-year-old suspect F killed 16 children on March 15, 2017, in Karanganyar, Central Java, and many other similar cases ("Republika," 2017b). The most recent case of drugs is the capture of two drug dealers and drug users by the Solo Police on February 2, 2017, in the Serengan Solo District ("Republika," 2017a). Another example, a mass intoxication case carried out by a number of students in Yogyakarta in the context of welcoming Christmas and the new year 2016, caused dozens of students to die, as well as dozens of others who were unconscious for days ("Republika," 2015). This fact regarding moral decay has been alluded to in many scientific articles (Iskarim, 2016; Komariah, 2011; Ningrum, 2015; Prasetyo & Umuri, 2013) so it can be concluded that moral decadence is a strong reason why character education needs to be applied.

Character education is designed so that students can recognize and apply character values in the school environment. These character values can be derived from various sources, especially sources of values that come from religious teachings. The application of religious values as a basis for character education is very relevant to school culture in Indonesia. This is relevant because almost all schools, especially private schools, were established based on affiliation with religious organizations with their respective characteristics such as Muhammadiyah schools, Ma'arif NU schools, integrated Islamic schools and so on. This reality certainly has an impact on the selection of more priority character values that lead to the moral formation of students who have akhlakul karimah.

In practice, various strategies for implementing character education have been pursued by various schools, both spontaneous and planned. School culture is a good facility to make students able to implement character education in a real way. School culture can be interpreted as a set of values that underlies the actions of the community both internal and external environment of the school which can be in the form of traditions, symbols or other positive habits. School culture reflects the characteristics of a school and greatly influences the educational process it runs. In addition, the implementation of character education through strengthening school culture is becoming one way so that students can effectively possess a high awareness of the values of the characters and be able to implement them automatically, even though it takes a long time to shape them.

One of the schools that applies character education through strengthening school culture is Imam Syafi’i SDIT which is located in Penegar Alley, Karangduwur Village, Petanahan District, Kebumen Regency. SDIT Imam Syafi’i as a manhaj salaf affiliated school has the jargon of “purification of Islamic teachings” by
understanding the Qur'an and Hadith both literally and textually, and also focusing on purifying monotheism by only worshiping Allah SWT according to the guidance of the Salaf al-shalih. Imam Syafi’i SDIT is interesting to be investigated because of its differences in religious practices such as clothes for boys, they must wear isbal pants and robes in matters of worship for example; The congregational prayer is compulsory for boys, there is no praise after the call to prayer, and they must close ranks by sticking the feet on the congregation next to them, and they have finished, they need to read wirid in sirr. For girls, they must wear robes and headscarves that cover their entire bodies, but they do not require wearing a veil. The male and female classes are separated from the first grade to avoid sexual relationships. For Monday, the ceremony is held without saluting the flag, because the flag has been hoisted before the ceremony begins, every Sunday they also do gymnastics activities that are carried out without using music.

The initial data obtained by the author through interviews and observations mentioned above raises questions about how the implementation of character education through strengthening school culture conducted at Imam Syafi’i SDIT. This question becomes the main starting point in this paper. The aim is to find a conception of the practice of implementing character education in Imam Syafi’i SDIT through strengthening school culture.

B. Research methodology
This article uses qualitative methods through observation, interviews, and documentation as data collection techniques to determine the application of character education in SDIT Imam Shafi’i. The data were analyzed both descriptively and analytically using school culture theory compiled from various sources. The author uses this method so that the description of research results can be systematized based on the theory used.

C. Results and Discussions
1. Character Education in SDIT Imam Shafi’i
The term character education began to be popular since the 1900s with Thomas Lickona who is considered to be its supporting character, especially when he wrote a book called The Return of Character Education and then followed by, Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility. Through these books, he made the Western world aware of the importance of character education. According to Lickona, character education contains three main elements namely; knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good (Diens, 2010; Lickona, 1991). Character education not only teaches what is right and wrong to children, but also character education is the cultivation of good habits so that students understand, be able to feel, and want to do good (Mulyasa, 2013). This character education carries the same mission as moral education.
Character education is a system of instilling the character values given to students so that they can implement it in their lives such as in the family, school, community, moreover, it can make a positive contribution to their environment.

Whereas school culture is the dominant values supported by schools or philosophies that guide school policies towards all elements and components of schools including educational stakeholders, such as standard operating procedures in schools and basic assumptions or beliefs held by school personnel (Wahana, 2015). More specifically, school culture is a collective possession and the result of a school's history that is a product of the interaction of various forces that enter the school (Maryamah, 2016).

Thus, character education and school culture are two mutually reinforcing concepts. Character education that focuses on a value-planting system aimed at students will strengthen the school culture that covers a wider area. It means that character education can be done by strengthening school culture because it is more mature so that the integration of character education in school culture is more effective.

The practice of character education through strengthening school culture at SDIT Imam Syafi'i can be classified in terms of tarbiyah, ta'dib and ta'lim. The implementation of character education at SDIT Imam Syafi'i with the term of tarbiyah is found in their effort to train students' responsibilities and discipline, for example in ceremonial activities, extracurricular activities, obeying school rules, doing homework and others. The following are the character values of students which are in line with the meaningful educational pattern of tarbiyah at SDIT Imam Syafi'i, namely: the value of faith, the value of piety, religious value, honesty value, tolerance value, discipline value, hard work value, creative value, the value of independence, democratic values, the value of curiosity and others.

Character education with the term ta'dib at SDIT Imam Syafi'i is carried out with the creation of student culture. The purpose of culture is that all students are required to arrive at school before learning activities begin, students are accustomed to obeying school rules, maintaining order, maintaining school cleanliness and students must not carry prohibited items. In addition, ta'dib is also implemented in upholding religious culture such as praying before and after lessons, reciting juz amma every day, establishing daily prayers, behaving politely to friends and older people and saying greetings and smiles when meeting friends both at school and outside the school environment.

Character education that is in line with the meaning of ta'lim at SDIT Imam Syafi'i is a whole series of education that includes the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of students. Therefore, all branches of science, both general and religious, are included in the education category which is in line with the meaning of ta'lim and ta'dib. Religious knowledge referred to here are tauhid, sirah nabawiyah, tahfizh, and other religious sciences. While the general knowledge are Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Mathematics, Bahasa Indonesian and others. In addition, efforts to obey the rules, discipline, follow
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Extra-curricular activities and sports are included in the domain of *ta'lim* and *ta'dib*.

2. Values and Methods of Character Education in Strengthening School Culture at SDIT Imam Syafi’i.

The values of character education are very likely to be patented in the form of school culture. This value can be found in activities carried out in schools either consciously or spontaneously. While the character education method is the method used to transform the character values to be applied. In his analysis, the researcher found the value of simplicity at SDIT Imam Syafi’i was more prominent than the other values. While the method used is the exemplary method.

a. Value of Simplicity

Simplicity is a character value that is highly emphasized at SDIT Imam Syafi’i. Simplicity is a value that must be inherent in every school stakeholder. Many attempts were made to instill this value in students, including *halaqah* eating. In *halaqah* eating students are asked to bring their own food from home so that students are accustomed to living in a simple way and not wasteful. Besides that, when the halaqah takes place, students sit on the front floor of each class (observation, 11/08/2017). Interview with Nurhakim:

As a headmaster here I always warn all teachers, employees, and students to live modestly, for example, I tell all teachers and students not to wear jewelry excessively, all teachers and students are encouraged to wear simple clothes, students and teachers should bring food and drink from home, students and teachers may not buy snacks from outside the school environment. In our school, there are no merchants who sell around the school, because children are not allowed to buy snacks outside of school, this makes merchants who sell around the school finally disband (Interview, 6/11/2017).

Based on observation:

Researchers witnessed the lunch activities that went very simply, students took food from their bags and then gathered in front of the class to enjoy lunch together, the teacher accompanied the lunch activities together. After that, it was continued by conducting *duhur* prayer in congregation, male students pray in *mushalla*, while female students pray in the class that has been provided for female prayer (observation, 6/11/2017).

The simplicity applied in SDIT Imam Syafi’i is an effort that is continuously trained since childhood. Students are encouraged not to buy snacks at school. Although snacks are *halal*, there are many reasons why snacks are not a good habit, usually, snacks are cooked in an unhygienic way. Even if the sellers try to cook as clean as possible, but usually the cooking oil has been used many times which causes damage and health problems.
b. Role Models Method

In instilling character education, the application of role models is a more effective and efficient than teaching. This cannot be separated from the tendency of every student who likes to imitate others, both parents, friends, and teachers at school. The act of imitation is part of the psychological development phase of every child. In the imitation process, children not only imitate good things but also bad actions. Islam emphasizes the importance of role models as part of the education process as well as efforts to shape the individual’s personality. It is the reason why al-Qur'an places the Prophet Muhammad as uswatun hasanah, or a good role model. It is mentioned in the Qur'an Surat al-Ahzab: 21:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولي اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ (Q.S. Al-Ahzab: 21).

There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone ....” (Q.S. Al-Ahzab: 21).

From the start, the role model was seen as the most decisive factor for the success of the character education process in which the teacher was the main focus in it. Teacher consistency in instilling character education is not only done through learning in the classroom, but also through examples and real behaviors outside the classroom. Although not all of them, teachers who have characters tend to color the personality of their students. As the results of the interview with Anifiyah:

In my opinion, the role model is the most effective method in moral education or character of children, more than that, a role model requires a consistent attitude, both in actions or noble character. As a teacher, I gave an example to go to school at 6:45, I gave an example for dressing neatly and covering the genital areas, I gave an example of not using excessive jewelry. I do it all to give real examples of good actions because the teacher is not just as a teacher, but as an educator and role model for students (interview, 10/23/2017).

Interview with Ahmad Subakir

I always give examples to students to arrive on time, so if there are children who are late in my class, I ask, "Why are you late? Don't be late again tomorrow, yeah, you can miss the lesson (interview, 6/11/2017).

The role model activities carried out at SDIT Imam Syafi'i include disciplinary training activities, both in terms of attendance, clothing, equipment, and carrying out discipline. In addition, the instilling of Islamic morals is also carried out through several instruments such as supporting books, self-clean culture and clean culture in the school environment through competitions between classes, community service, and mosque cleanliness. All are activities that are highly emphasized at SDIT Imam
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Syafi’i. This role model activity is carried out at all times where the teacher must be an example to the students. According to Ahmad Subakir:

To support the discipline of school students, we make school rules and form a School Disciplinary Team (TDPS) whose job is to oversee student discipline, such as checking the attendance of students, reprimanding or advising students who commit violations, giving sanctions to students who violate the code both verbal and physical sanctions (interview, 6/11/2017).

Observation results on December 10, 2017, the authors participated in the midday prayer activities. Almost all the teachers took part in the dzuhur prayer in congregation at the mushala school together with SDIT Imam Syafi’i Kebumen students, then it was continued with the afternoon tarbiyah. After the afternoon tarbiyah, students carried out halaqah eating (observation, 10/12/2017).

Based on observations, the authors found that every time they wanted to go home at the last hour, students listened to the evening tarbiyah. Evening tarbiyah is teaching on the religious implementation which is delivered by teachers who teach in the last hour (observation, 12/10/2017). As a result of observations on Monday morning ceremonies, all teachers were required to take part in the ceremonies held every Monday at 07.00 until 07.30 in the main hall of SDIT Imam Shyafi’i Kebumen (observation, 12/10/2017).

During the dzuhur prayer in congregation, boys pray in the school mushalla, while for girls pray with ustadzah in the classroom. The congregational prayers at the mushala run in an orderly manner, there are no students joking, but based on the author’s observation, there are still some teachers and students who are left behind (masbuk) in carrying out congregational prayers.

Morning ceremony activities proceed solemnly. In his remarks, the builder of the ceremony conveyed the importance of the position of intention in a charity, because all charities depend on its intentions. Including in pursuing knowledge, our intention is to seek the ridla of Allah SWT, not to seek worldly interests. But there are still some students and teachers who are late even do not attend the morning ceremony activities.

3. Forms of Strengthening School Culture Activities at SDIT Imam Syafi’i

School culture plays an important role in building a noble character among students and all school residents. For this reason, character education can be carried out well if the culture supports this effort. So educational institutions that have the duties and responsibilities to carry out character education need to build a conducive school environment as well as creating what is called the cultivation of noble characters.

In addition to civilizing noble characters, it is important to create a school culture to shape the character of students. School culture as a grand design of character education needs to be built on a variety of virtues where the policy
will only have meaning when it is based on prevailing cultural values (Ministry of National Education, 2011). The character of students, in general, is formed from the values, beliefs, and habits that apply in society. In the character education guidebook explained (Ministry of National Education, 2011), the character of students can be formed through a conducive school culture, namely by creating a school climate that is able to provide a good experience for the growth and development of life skills of students.

School culture can be classified in various forms of school activities which tend to be consistently valued, both routine and spontaneous. As a form of strengthening the school culture, routine or spontaneous activities carried out at SDIT Imam Syafi’i are supported by conditioning activities so that the school culture can run well.

a. Routine activities

Routine activities are activities carried out by students continuously and consistently at all times. Some examples included in routine activities include Monday ceremony, physical hygiene checks, class picket, congregational prayer, queuing when entering class, praying before starting and ending lessons, and greeting when meeting teachers, and friends (interviews, 10/04/2017).

This activity is a typical activity in the Integrated Islamic School. The activity was carried out as an effort to instill a positive character in students in accordance with religious values. This activity is also a process of forming morals and planting as well as implementing Islamic teachings. Routine activities carried out at school aim to get students accustomed to doing a good deed consistently (interview, 10/04/2017). An interview with Atikah explained:

Before I start teaching, I usually prepare comfortable and attractive classroom conditions for students and the room is neatly arranged. I also attach words of wisdom, motivation or quotes to support students’ learning activities. I hope that this can have a positive influence on students so that it can motivate them to always learn, encourage creativity, perseverance, conscientiousness, curiosity, honesty, and hard work (interview, 04/10/2017).

These activities have led SDIT Imam Syafi’i to become a school with excellent programs in the religious field, such as; Al-Qur’an Read subject (BTAQ). This shows that SDIT Imam Syafi’i is a school that has a superior program in the religious field to be applied in everyday life. With this excellent program, students are expected to grow into a person who has a good and strong character in accordance with Islamic teachings. The implementation of the religious flagship program is then integrated into local content subjects taught to students ranging from first grade up to sixth grade (interview, 10/04/2017). Interview with Nurhakim:

... Every semester break, I hold routine activities in the form of religious material competition at SDIT, the aim is to instill religious
understanding in depth in accordance with the teachings of the *Salaf Al-shalihi* in students (interview, 04/10/2017).

Other routine activities held at SDIT Imam Syafi'i are Monday morning ceremonies, routine *ta'lim* activities - both *ta'lim* for students as well as parents or guardians, this was stated by Nurhakim in an interview session with the author:

Every Monday morning, SDIT Imam Syafi'i also holds regular ceremonies, but the ceremony is not honoring the flag because the flag has been hoisted, the ceremony also does not sing the national anthem of Indonesia Raya (interview, 10/04/2017).

Our school also conducts regular *ta'lim* activities that are attended by students, guardians, and the community around the school. We carry out this activity as a form of physical education, *tarbiyah ruhiyah*, as an effort to cleanse the soul, soften the heart, and *tafakur* to create strong connection to Allah SWT (interview, 04/10/2017).

The ceremonial activities carried out at Imam Syafi'i SDIT were carried out without raising the flag during the ceremony because the flag has been hoisted. SDIT Imam Syafi'i also does not sing the national anthem Indonesia Raya, because singing is something that is forbidden. This is done because it follows the teachings brought by the *ulama’ salaf*. But this also means that SDIT Imam Syafi'i is trying to use time as effectively as possible without eliminating substantive matters.

b. Spontaneous activities

Spontaneous activity is also called incidental activity which is one of the activities carried out at SDIT Imam Syafi'i. One form of spontaneous activity is collecting donations when there is a student who has a disaster or when a disaster occurs. One of the activities included in spontaneous activities is the teacher gives a direct reprimand to students who commit violations. Fellow students are also accustomed to advice and reprimanding each other when there are friends who commit dishonest deeds (interview, 05/10/2017). Results of observations and interviews with Nurhakim:

If there is a student family affected by a disaster, such as illness, death or other disasters, usually I or the school representative comes to visit. On November 6, 2017, there was a student whose grandfather passed away, the principal and representatives of teachers and students visited the funeral in Krandegan Village, Petanahan District, Kebumen (observation, 6/11/2017).

The results of observations and interviews with Tri Widiyati in male class III:

When I see students fighting, I usually call both of them. At that time there were students who fought because one of them hiding a
friend's pencil, so the teacher immediately called the two children to the office and was given advice so as not to tease each other friends themselves. The students promise not to repeat again and apologize for intentionally hiding his friend's pencil (observation, 11/08/2017).

Based on interviews with the deputy head of student affairs SDIT Imam Syafi'i revealed that when a student's family had a disaster, the school went to visit. So that teaching and learning activities in schools can still run well, the school sends representatives from the teacher who is usually the homeroom teacher of the student.

Whereas in the example case of spontaneous action from the second interview, the teacher tried to be fair. Fights caused by trivial things often occur among elementary school students. That is caused by students who have not been able to control their emotions and are easily overflowing in physical behavior. Fighting between students should not be underestimated by teachers so that it does not end fatally.

c. Conditioning activities

Conditioning activities carried out as an effort to organize the school environment for the creation of a school atmosphere that supports the implementation of character education and learning in general. Conditioning activities include physical and non-physical conditioning. Conditioning the physical environment is done such as maintaining the cleanliness of toilets, providing adequate organic and non-organic bins in each class, greening the yard and school environment, making posters containing wise words on display in the school hallway and in the classroom (Ministry of National Education, 2011). While conditioning the non-physical environment is done like overcoming every conflict between students so as not to lead to disharmony relations between students. Conditioning activities are also carried out through donations of basic food to the victims of natural disasters around the school, visiting students who are sick, providing Ramadhan books for students. Ta'lim activity is also one of the activities at SDIT Imam Syafi'i Kebumen. Ta'lim activities are held every Monday and Sunday evening with participants from guardians and communities around SDIT Imam Syafi'i Kebumen (observation, 12/11/2017). Interview with Nurhakim:

Conditioning activities in our school include maintaining the cleanliness of toilets, separating organic and non-organic waste, helping victims of natural disasters, and regular studies for students and guardians of students (interview, 12/11/2017).

In addition to the two types of conditioning above, there are also behavioral conditioning activities that are implemented at SDIT Imam Syafi'i. Behavioral conditioning activities include; smile, greetings and
midday prayers in congregation. The results of the interview with Nurhakim said:

At our school students are accustomed to the culture of smiles, and greetings. Greetings while shaking hands when students arrive at school, greet friends, security guards, sellers in the canteen, school cleaning service, greet politely guests who come to school. Familiarize students in speaking good and polite language, sit politely in class, eat while sitting in the space provided, and not eat while walking, get used to reciting kafaratul majlis and do dzuhur prayer in congregation at school (interviews, 11/12/2017).

Good customization such as smiles and greetings above is an effort so that morals can also be in harmony with manners. Morals are more towards the inner amaliyah, such as wara’, tawadhu’, and patience. A person's character cannot be directly seen but it is by visible signs. Therefore good habituation is a good instrument of moral education.

D. Conclusions

There are several things as a conclusion from the description of the writing above. First, character education in SDIT Imam Syafi'i in terms of the meaning of tarbiyah, ta'dib and ta'lim consists of the character of responsibility, discipline, and religion. Second, the most prominent character in SDIT Imam Syafi'i's is the simplicity with its main method of role model. Third, the forms of character education activities as a strengthening of school culture are routine, spontaneous and conditioning activities.

Bibliography


