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CULTIVATING CHARACTER EDUCATION FOR PROSPECTIVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS THROUGH ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES COURSES

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Abstract

The role of elementary school teachers is not only to transfer knowledge, but also to contribute to the formation of students' character. One of the pillars of the success of character education is the realization of ideal elementary school teacher candidates. The cultivation of character education can be done in various ways, one of which is through the learning of elementary social studies courses. So it is hoped that the learning from the elementary social studies course will help students in shaping the character that prospective elementary school teachers must have. This research uses descriptive qualitative research. Qualitative descriptive research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior from data sources. This research was conducted at the Balitar Islamic University campus for PGSD students. The research stages include: observation, interviews, documentation. The current condition of the Indonesian nation and state encourages the government to prioritize character education in national development to realize the vision of national development, which is to create a society with noble character, morality, ethics, culture, and civility based on the Pancasila philosophy. Character values must be instilled by elementary school teachers since they follow the education of prospective elementary school teachers so that they can transmit these values to their students in the future. Character education for prospective elementary school teachers is carried out using an integrated approach in all subjects

Keywords: *Elementary School Teachers, Elementary Social Studies, Character Education*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Elementary School Teacher Education Study Program (hereinafter referred to as PGSD) provides basic provisions for students, namely prospective elementary school teachers so that they are able to apply their knowledge in school and daily life (Ministry of National Education, 2010). The educational process on campus is still much concerned with the cognitive aspect. But more than that, the affective and psychomotor aspects are also studies that need to be owned by prospective elementary school teachers(Rozaq, 2015; Safitri, 2020). As an ideal prospective educator, of course, he must teach how to have good ethics or good manners that must be carried out by prospective elementary school teachers from an early age (Turmuzi, 2011).

In fact, there are not a few prospective elementary school teachers who do not understand that they will someday be an example to be imitated by their students (Rahmadhani Siregar et al., 2022). Whether it's from behavior, speech, how to dress, and other things that are considered important to form good character for students (Marzuki, 2015). Not just anyone can become an elementary school teacher, they must master all

subjects (class teachers), have noble character, have good character, are polite, and have skills. The role of elementary school teachers is not only to transfer knowledge, but also to contribute to the formation of students' character (Koesuma, 2010). One of the pillars of the success of character education is the realization of ideal elementary school teacher candidates.

As technology and information evolve, we must be prudent in how we use and implement things (Pidarta, 1997). Moreover, the duration of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is unknown, so learning is frequently conducted online rather than face-to-face. Therefore, it will be the responsibility of educators, particularly lecturers, to be more proactive in reviewing the development of students (prospective elementary school teachers), so that academic development and behavior are in harmony.

Daniel Goleman in (Hanum, 2013) explains in his book Emotional Intelligence that 80% of emotional and social intelligence are required for success in life, while intellectual intelligence is only 20%. Therefore, character education is required to construct a better and more civilized life, as opposed to one characterized by savage and vigilante behavior and living in a lawless wilderness.

Many pillars of character must be instilled in aspiring elementary school teachers, including: True Faith, Right Worship, Sturdy Attitude, Independence, Physical Strength, Struggle against lust, Organized in an organization, Good at keeping time, and Beneficial to others (Suparno, 2015).

Social studies courses at the elementary school level can be used to cultivate character education. These courses focus primarily on social life, social conflicts, and how to instruct elementary students in social studies material. Consequently, it is hoped that the elementary social studies course will assist students in developing the qualities elementary school teachers-to-be should possess.

Developing the moral character of students (particularly aspiring elementary school teachers) is not a simple or quick task. In order to make a series of moral decisions that must be followed by real action, this requires persistent effort and in-depth reflection. To form one's character or character, it takes a certain amount of time for it to become a habit. Although character education is not as simple as turning the palm of the hand, the nation's children should be taught it from a young age.

Based on the description above, this study aims to analyze character education for prospective elementary school teachers through elementary social studies courses.

2. THEORETICAL BASIS

2.1. Character building

The definition of character education can be derived from each individual word. Education is the transmission of human habits, abilities, and knowledge from one generation to the next. In contrast, character is an accumulation of individual characteristics, traits, and personality that contribute to a person's everyday beliefs and behaviors (Khan, 2010).

Without leaving from their respective meanings, character education can be understood as a planned effort to develop an individual's character in order for them to become useful members of society in the future, both for themselves and for others.

Character education has a basic function to develop one's potential so that he can live his life by being good (Adisusilo, 2012). Within the scope of formal education, character education in schools serves to shape the character of students to become individuals who have noble character, are moral, tough, well behaved, and tolerant (Fitri, 2012). Cited Zubaedi (2015) in the book "*Desain Pendidikan Karakter*" which mentions three functions of character education in schools. The three functions are: the function of forming and developing potential (So that students are able to develop their potential to think well, have a good conscience, behave well, and be virtuous), a function for strengthening and improvement (Improving and strengthening the role of individuals, families, units). education, society, and government to carry out their responsibilities and participate in developing the potential of groups, institutions, or society in general), filter function (Character education is used so that people can choose and sort their own national culture, can filter out other national cultures that are not in accordance with values of the nation's own virtuous character and culture).

The Ministry of Education and Culture has prioritized the development of Strengthening Character Education based on the character education values. Religious, nationalist, integrity, independence, and cooperation are the five primary characteristics that determine the value of character education.

2.2. Primary school teachers

An elementary teacher is a teacher assigned to teach in an elementary school or equivalent. You will instruct a variety of subjects as a classroom instructor, including Indonesian, Pancasila and Citizenship Education, Mathematics, and even all subjects. There are, however, schools with specialized teachers for subjects such as Religion, Sports, and English.

Teachers are educators who serve as figures, role models, for students and their environment. Therefore, teachers must possess certain personal quality standards, such as responsibility, autonomy, and discipline. Teachers must also be able to make decisions on their own, particularly in a variety of learning and competency formation-related matters, and act in accordance with the conditions of their students and the surrounding environment. Teachers must be able to act and make decisions quickly, on time, and on target, particularly when it comes to learning and student problems, without waiting for orders from superiors or school principals (Mulyasa, 2009).

Tasks include educating teachers as a profession, teaching and training. The task of teachers in the field of humanity in schools must be able to make themselves as second parents. He must be able to attract sympathy so that he becomes an idol for his students, the duties and roles of the teacher are not limited in society, even the teacher is essentially a strategic component that chooses an important role in the form of advancing the nation's life (Usman, 2007).

Further Tanlain (1989) mentions in several points that a teacher is responsible, among others: obeying norms and obeying human values, accepting the task of educating not as a burden, but happily and wholeheartedly, being aware of what is being done and the consequences of all those actions, learning and teaching giving appreciation to others, including students, being wise and careful and careful, and as a religious person doing all of the above based on taqwa to God Almighty.

In this manner, the role of the teacher will shape the characteristics of students and graduates who are loyal, morally upright, capable of independence, and beneficial to religion, country, and nation. In conclusion, the teacher must be responsible for all attitudes, and sacrificing teaching duties is inappropriate.

2.3. Social science

The Social Sciences or Social Sciences are a collection of academic disciplines that examine aspects of human behavior and the social environment. Social Studies consists solely of social-environment-related science. This field of study focuses on the social behavior of individuals. Because different aspects of human behavior exist in society. These include economic, mental, cultural, and social relationship considerations.

Social studies education contributes to the development of social science, which is fundamentally social relations. As a result of the theoretical application of social science studies in the real world. This is the primary reason why social studies curriculum at the elementary and middle school levels integrates multiple social sciences. The integration of various social sciences has, of course, been tailored to the needs and stages of development of the students themselves.

Moreover, it is hoped that through social studies education, students will not only be able to master social studies theories but also be able to apply them to real-world situations. Plus, one must be able to live a real life in society as a mature and wise social person.

Sapriya & Nurdin (2006) states that social studies is a science that combines a number of selected concepts from branches of social science and other sciences. Then it is processed based on educational and didactic principles to be used as teaching programs at the school level.

After understanding the meaning of IPS both literally and according to experts, it is also important for us to know the purpose of spending. In addition to stating the definition of IPS, Supardi also stated the objectives of the material as follows:

1) Providing knowledge, in order to make students as good citizens. And aware as a creature created by God and understand their rights and obligations as citizens of the nation. This material is also democratic and national pride and responsibility.
2) Develop critical thinking and inquiry skills. Aims to be able to understand, identify and analyze. Accompanied also have social skills to participate in solving social problems.
3) Practicing independent learning, in addition to practicing to build togetherness. This can be achieved through more creative and innovative learning programs.
4) Develop intelligence, habits and social skills.
5) It is hoped that it can train students to live up to the values of a good and commendable life. Including morals, honesty, justice and a series of others. So that students in learning can have noble character.
6) Develop awareness and concern for the community and the environment

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. Types of Research

This study employs qualitative descriptive research. Qualitative descriptive research is a research method that generates descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from individuals and observable behavior from data sources (Moleong, 2013). Descriptive qualitative approach is research that aims to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the research subject, such as behavior, perception, action, and others, holistically and by way of description in the form of words and language, in a natural context, and by employing a variety of scientific methods.

3.2. Research Sites

This research will be conducted on the campus of Universitas Islam Balitar Jl. Majapahit No. 2-4 Sananwetan, Sananwetan District, Blitar City, East Java.

3.3. Population and Sample

The population in this study were students of Elementary School Teacher Education (hereinafter referred to as PGSD) semester IV. The population of the fourth semester PGSD students is 24 people. This study uses the entire population as a sample because the number of samples is less than 100, so this research is called population research.

3.4. Data and Data Sources

The source of data in a study is the subject from which the data is obtained. If in collecting data the researcher uses observation techniques, then the source of the data can be objects, motion, or the process of something. If the researcher uses interviews in collecting data, then the source of the data is called the informant. If the researcher uses documentation, then the document or record is the source of the data.

Sources of Data Information or informants from this data are the parties included in the PGSD study program, namely the Head of the PGSD Study Program, PGSD lecturers, and PGSD students. Researchers collected data through interviews with all related parties, documentation and observation.

According to Lofland, cited by (Moleong, 2021), qualitative research data sources are words or actions, the rest are additional data, such as documents, and others. In this regard, in this section, the types of data are divided into words and actions, written data sources, and photographs.

3.5. Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

In data collection, researchers collect data empirically. From the data, it is intended to understand the variety of activities that have been developed into a pattern of research findings, the pattern of findings is then verified by testing its veracity starting with specific new data. The data collection technique used in this research is the method of observation, interviews, and documentation. The analysis technique comes by using a qualitative descriptive method, which is done by organizing and systematically examining all the data obtained. Descriptive research is research that uses an event, symptom, event, which is happening at the present time, meaning that descriptive research is taking problems or focusing on actual problems as they were at the time the research was carried out.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

With the current state of globalization, it is simple to accept information from outside sources. Especially for advanced students, so that they can access information from around the globe. If not chosen carefully, it will produce negative results. As a small illustration, clothing used to be transported to campus. It is common for international students to wear tight jeans and short shirts to campus. In Indonesia, however, this is undesirable, particularly for students in the faculty of education. Because a prospective educator must set a positive example for future students. For students, appearance, behavior, insight, and abilities will serve as models. If educators lack moral character, what about their students? Who will serve as their role models?

Character education is an alternative to instilling the noble values of the Indonesian nation. Yes, in some universities, particularly those with a faculty of education, character education is now a required course. The inclusion of character education courses is intended to shape the next generation's character and personality. Be kind to oneself, others, and the environment. In character education, numerous topics are covered, including the respect chapter, which covers respecting oneself, others, and the environment. Additionally, patriotic attitude, discipline, and concern are studied. Character education is not only intended for future teachers, but also for students in general programs, who must comprehend and apply it. Taking into account how noble the values, attitudes, and behaviors it teaches are.

The character education that should be implemented in the PGSD Study Program is incorporated into the instruction of the Elementary Social Studies course. Therefore, lecturers must refer to official sources of character education issued by the Ministry of National Education in order to incorporate character education into their lessons. Consequently, students acquire not only science and technology as hard skills, but also soft skills that are manifest in their behavior, which reflects the values of a noble character.

The lecturer divides the PGSD students (prospective elementary school teachers) into groups during the learning process. The lecturer guides students and their groups as they complete assignments and present the results of their group work. From working in groups, particularly in elementary social studies classes, students will learn: to be good listeners, to collaborate on shared assignments, to give and receive constructive feedback, to respect differences in opinion, to support opinions with evidence, and to appreciate diverse points of view (gender, culture, etc.).

There are several characters that can be formed from elementary social studies courses by studying groups, including:

1) Discipline: each group member has a commitment to carry out activities in an orderly manner and comply with mutual agreements, that gathering to discuss the material to be presented every day after coming home from college, carried out by all group members
2) Creative: papers and power points made using various multimedia facilities with interesting compositions of writing, colors and images so that the presentation of the material is different from the usual

3) Independent: each member of the group behaves and behaves not easily depending on others in completing the tasks for which they are responsible. Each of them prepares lecture materials, writes papers, makes power points as much as possible with their own strengths
4) Democratic: starting from preparing material to presenting each group member thinking, acting and acting in harmony with the rights and obligations of himself and others
5) Curiosity: group learning provides opportunities and encourages each group member to develop his curiosity that what the lecturer gives is only a small part of what he wants to learn. Therefore, he seeks and explores other sources, so that the teaching materials presented by his group are adequate for presentation
6) The spirit of nationality: the group shows that each member of the group is different from one another. Uniting the vision and mission of each member of the group to get the best results is the spirit of national unity, which is *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*
7) Love for the homeland: group members think, behave and act by showing loyalty, concern, and high appreciation for the language, physical, social, cultural, economic, and political environment of their nation.
8) Social care: during group discussions there may be group members who have difficulty and deadlock in answering questions from other groups, group members who are able to help explain or guide their friends give an idea of what should be explained.
9) Responsibilities: everyone has their own burden in the preparation and implementation of group discussions. Therefore, group discussion activities can directly train each group member to have a responsibility so that group activities can run smoothly.

In developing the student character values mentioned above, the lecturer has a strategic position as the main actor. Lecturers as educators and "teachers" are figures who can be admired and imitated or become idols for students. Lecturers can be a source of inspiration and motivation for their students. The attitude and behavior of a lecturer is very imprinted on the students, so that the speech, character and personality of the lecturer become a mirror of the students. Thus, lecturers have a big responsibility in producing a generation of character, culture, and morals. These human tasks are transformation, identification, and self-understanding, which must be carried out together in an organic, harmonious, and dynamic unit.

Listening to Turmuzi's opinion (2011), there are several strategies that can provide opportunities and opportunities for lecturers to play their role optimally in terms of developing student character education on campus, namely as follows.

1) *Optimizing the role of lecturers in the learning process*. Lecturers should not place themselves as actors who are seen and heard by students, but lecturers should act as directors who direct, guide, facilitate the learning process, so that students can do and find their own learning outcomes.
2) *Integration of character education materials into courses*. Lecturers are required to care, be willing and able to relate the concepts of character education to the learning materials in the courses they teach. In connection with this, every lecturer is required to continue to add scientific knowledge related to character education, which can be integrated in the learning process.

3) *Optimizing self- habituation activities with an insight into the development of character and noble character*. The lecturers through the habituation program prioritize or emphasize contextual development of character and noble character development activities, activities that lead to the development of affective and psychomotor abilities.
4) *Creating a conducive campus environment for the growth and development of student character*. The environment is proven to play an important role in the formation of the human person (students), both the physical environment and the spiritual environment. For this reason, campuses and lecturers need to prepare facilities and carry out various types of activities that support student character education development activities.
5) *Collaborating with parents of students and the community in the development of character education*. The form of cooperation that can be done is to place students' parents – generally rarely done by universities, in contrast to Primary and Secondary Education – and the community as facilitators and resource persons in character education development activities carried out on campus.
6) *Be a role model for students*. Student acceptance of the learning materials provided by a lecturer, more or less depends on the student's personal acceptance of a lecturer's personality. This is a very human thing, where someone will always try to imitate, imitate what they like from the model/figure. Moments like this are actually an opportunity for a lecturer, either directly or indirectly to instill character values in students' personalities. In the learning process, the integration of character values can not only be integrated into the substance or course material, but also in the process.

Based on the description above, we get an overview of the role of lecturers in the development of student character education on campus who are located as catalysts or role models, inspiration, motivators, dynamists, and evaluators. In acting as a catalyst, the example of a lecturer is an absolute factor in the development of effective student character education, because of his position as a figure or idol who is nurtured and imitated by students. The role as an inspiration means that a lecturer must be able to inspire students to move forward to develop their potential. The role as a motivator, implies that every lecturer must be able to awaken the spirit, work ethic and extraordinary potential in students. Role as a dynamist, means that every lecturer has the ability to encourage students towards achieving goals with full wisdom, patience, agility, intelligence and upholding spirituality. While the role of the lecturer as an evaluator, it means that every lecturer is required to be able and always evaluate the attitude or behavior of the self, and the learning methods used in the development of student character education, so that the level of effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity of the program can be known.

5. CONCLUSION

Character education for prospective elementary school teachers can be done through elementary social studies courses, where the learning carried out by lecturers and students contains character values that lead to the achievement of student competencies as a whole, including hard skills and soft skills.

Character education with an integrative approach must be designed and implemented by every PGSD lecturer so that basic education can make a significant contribution to national development, namely the realization of Indonesian people who have good morals, people who have morals, and good ethics, as well as people who speak and behave well.

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