

TEACHER'S ROLE MODEL AS STRATEGY OF CHARACTER FORMATION IN YOUNG CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

Early childhood is important phase which need to become attention of parents, teachers, and another adults. As known that in this period children are in golden years, the period of positive character formation. In this period, children are in imitation period, so parents and teachers in school need to become figures who can become role model. Today, with technology advance, children are exposed to various media which feature the figures without filter. Young children begin to encounter violence acts and another negative characters. This phenomena concern character formation in children in the future. Entering preschool period, young children are confronted to teachers, so in this period young children can find role model they can imitate so young children can be helped to form positive character as asset for subsequent development.

Keywords: role model, character, young children

I. INTRODUCTION

Childhood is the important phase in character formation in accord with children's characteristic, in which they are programmed to imitate. Whatever they see, they hear and they observe from environment are the beginning step in learning including in character formation.

Teachers and parents are confronted with big challenge when working with young generation in generation Z group. Children nowadays have many learning experiences including from various media and technology. Various information can be acquired immediately in short time. Therefore, parents or family cannot work alone in seeing the advance of era and technology. Family need the role of school, particularly teachers to transfer positive value and character to children.

Today, many adult behavior and personality are displayed which are not good to be watched by young children, but this happen, and some children watch it without filter. Besides at home, young children begin to enter early education environment, namely in Kinder Garden or Early Childhood Education, and they are guided and taken

care by professional teachers. Therefore, teachers should become role model, become exemplary whose attitude and behavior can be imitated. The following will discuss what strategy which can be done by teachers in developing children character through teacher's role model for young children.

II. DISCUSSION

1. Characteristic of Young Children

According to Susanto, (2015:45) that "the characteristic of young children are they like to imitate. The young children's world is the world of play, young children still develop, young children are creative and still innocent."

According to Erikson in Hels& Turner (1994) which was cited by Susanto (2015:44-45) that the characteristic of young children in early childhood is the phase of imitative. In this phase, children should be encouraged to develop their initiative, children have strong adventurous attitude in which they will much notice, talk about and ask about various things which he see and hear, so teachers are expected can show model behavior.

Young children are in kinder garden education environment. Through early education environment, children acquire various intellectual, social and emotional stimulation in accord with age level. Education in early childhood not only prepare children to enter education in Elementary School but can help to give foundation toward attitude, knowledge, skill and creativity they need in self-adjusting with environment and for subsequent growth and development.

2. The Essence of Teachers' Role Model

Young children need to have role model who can be identified from adult individual. Arthur, J (2001) conducted the research toward 5000 students in England, and the study result revealed that teachers' role is involved in students' character formation. Teachers showed that their character very support children's character formation.

According to Chou, Mei-Ju, Yang, Chen-Hsin, Huang, Pin-Chen (2014), the factor which influence character education is integrated into parent relation. Character is thought as dimension which most emphasize parent-child relation. Character education can deepen parent and children bounding, and give significant influence in preschool period.

In accord with John Locke, John Stuart Mill, and Herbert Spencer who said that character education is educational aim and care toward family in (Chou, Mei-Ju, Yang, Chen-Hsin, Huang, Pin-Chen, 2014). For preschool children, parents are expected to create environment in which children can learn and enforce good values and characters.

Parent become figure for children at home. Meanwhile in school children make teachers to become role model or identification figure, in which teachers' attitude and acts become exemplary for children.

Educators in formal environment are called as professional educator who receive task and assignment from parents to educate

their children. In accord with Roqib and Nurfuadi (2009:10) who stated that there are several factors of parents' task and duty delegation in educating their children to teachers, among others are: lack of time available for parents, lack of science and technology.

According to Arthur, J (2011), one of the most certain way to help children in turning their moral reasoning into positive moral behavior is by teaching with example. Teaching respect to children by respecting them is one way to teach with example.

Teachers should have behavior and attitude which can be transferred to their students. According to Roqib and Nurfuadi (2009: 158-163) among others are: honest, discipline, fair, patient, and perseverance, rational and logical, open, has sense of humor, low profile, creative, friendly, charismatic, and like science and technology. With those attitude and behavior, teacher can be made to become role model for their students.

According to Sukmadinata (2010) in educational or instructional situation, there is interaction between student and teacher or between teacher and student. This interaction involve two personalities namely teacher's personality as adult and student's personality as immature and developing child.

Teacher is also guide who not only educate but all his personality, attitude and behavior become example for student because teacher personality is one unity among his personality and his role as teacher, educator and guide which cannot be separated, so teacher is called as role model for his students.

According to Ksatria&LaGasse in (Chou, Mei-Ju, Yang, Chen-Hsin, Huang, Pin-Chen, 2014), the form of character developed in young children among others are honesty, affection, loyalty, respect, trust, and responsibility. Students' character formation is not detached from teacher as individual who educate.

As suggested by Sukmadinata, Nana Syaodih (2010), that in addition knowledge and skill, teacher should possess some

attitudes in order to become professional teacher, among others are: flexible, open, independent, sensitive, persevere, realistic, optimist, enthusiast, expressive, and able to cooperate. Those professional attitudes need to be internalized in teachers in order that they become role model for their students.

3. The Strategy of Character Formation in Young Children

Young children are in imitative phase, so attitude needs to be formed since early childhood. According to Priyatna, Andri (2011: 111), character is belief in a system which is absolutely right and wrong which is combined with desire to do what is right regardless cost and benefit of that action. The character formation in children need to be done, because children should know what is right and wrong, what is good and bad.

There are several ways or strategies in forming the character of young children according to experts, one of them is Indrijati (2017:97) who said that there are several things which need to be given to children to form their character, among others are:

- a. Form children to be able to express their feeling comfortably without limitation.
- b. Form children's self-esteem, which means that children feel comfortable with themselves.
- c. Form children to be able to understand other's feeling.
- d. Allow children to be free in expressing sense of humor, so children feel happy.
- e. Facilitate children to be able to communicate and express their imagination fluently.

Furthermore, another strategy in character formation for children according to Waluyo (2012: 127-1128) among others are:

- 1) Create the condition which full of affection, willing to accept children as who they are, and respect the potential they have, give stimulation

for whole aspects of children's development.

- 2) Emphasize religious values which uphold love and sacrifice.
- 3) Give behavior example in helping and caring about others.
- 4) Use habituation method by asking children to do daily activity.

According to Sani and Kadri (2016: 23), the strategy of character development require several ways or strategies, among others are: 1) show good exemplary in behaving, 2) habituate children to do good habit such as respect their parent, being honest, never give up, sportive, give attention, help others and empathic, 3) discuss and ask children to think about good action, 4) storytelling and take the lesson from that story.

Another strategy also suggested by Sani and Kadri (2016: 128-175) in character formation, namely: 1) good communication, which is marked by building communication with good language, avoid giving negative label to children, give praise for children effort, give opportunity to children to speak up, spend time to communicate with children, 2) Show exemplary, 3) educate with habituation.

There are various teaching and approaches for parent and teacher to guide children in knowing character education, and Althof& Berkowitz in (Cho, Mei-Ju, Yang, Chen-Hsin, Huang, Pin-Chen, 2014) proposed that the newer approach is aimed to combine thinking and feeling of children as suggested in their action to express, to learn and to respect. Teacher and parent should be able to respect children's attitude and behavior. Because parents who respect children will become inspiration for children to be able to respect others.

Mehmet U, Yigittir U, Ercan O (2014) express that teachers' belief in the competence of character education centered on teachers' awareness to develop themselves in understanding the character by attending seminar and reading the books about character education.

According to Waluyo which is cited by Wibowo (2012:127-128) that there are some strategies to implement character internalization in children, namely: 1) create the condition which full of affection, accept children as who they are, and respect children potential, 2) ask children to feel what others feel, 3) give example of behavior in helping and caring about human fellows, 4) use habituation method namely ask children to do daily activity so it become habituation, 5) tell about exemplary story.

In the same vein, Sani and Kadri (2016) add some methods which can be applied in developing children character, namely: 1) Show good exemplary in behaving and guide children to behave in accord with exemplary, 2) Habituate children to do good action, for example respect parent, being honest, never give up, sportive, give attention, help others and emphatic, 3) discuss and ask children to think good acts then force them to do good acts, 4) storytelling and take lesson from a story.

Furthermore, Sani&Kadri (2016: 23-26) detail the actions which can be applied by parent or teacher in the effort to develop children' character, among others are: 1) understand children behavior, 2) ignore children' inappropriate behavior, divert their attention from unfavorable acts, 4) apply exemplary in accord with desired character, 5) give reward if children show good behavior, 6) make agreement if children show bad behavior, 7) give praise to motivate children, 8) prevent negative behavior, 9) ask children to do something which can motivate them, 10) challenge children to do good action, 11) give warning or verbal and non verbal sign and with grumbling, 12) determine the rule clearly and in specific.

Before teachers can develop children character, teachers should enrich themselves with character values which will be developed to students in order to help them to develop positive character.

III. CONCLUSION

Childhood is imitation phase, children need a figure who can be made to become role model or identification figure in order to develop to become individual who has character. Young generation is generation who continue the development of nation in the future, so young generation not only equipped with intellectual and academic capacity but they need to be enriched by affective capacity in the form of character value and soft skill as asset in subsequent development phase. Parents and teachers need to develop and apply various strategies to develop young children's character, one of them is through exemplary and role model.

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