VALUES IN THE QUOTES OF ARCHIPELAGO AND THEIR RELEVANCE WITH CHARACTER BUILDING EDUCATION

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Abstract

One of the hottest issues in Indonesia is national character building. National character building was the theme of the National Education Day May 2, 2011. The aim of this paper is to present local wisdoms in the Archipelago, i.e. strong character building elements in the quotes coming from various ethnic groups in Indonesia. The paper developed was based on primary and secondary data about local wisdoms in the Archipelago consisting of Acehnese, Buginese, Balinese, Batakese, Javanese, Manadonese, Padangnese, and Sundanese. The quotes were collected using a survey and the meanings contained in the quotes were elicited by using reflexivity. The result of the research shows that there are a number of local wisdoms which are relevant with the national character building of Indonesia for the global competition. The result of the research suggests that local wisdoms existing in the Archipelago can be the resource of the national character building values. This implies that the Archipelago is rich in local genius to be integrated in the curriculum of any subjects relevant to the national building character.

Keywords: strong character, character building elements, local quotes, archipelago

BACKGROUND

The main problem experienced by Indonesian people is that of irresponsible citizen. For example, corruption which is clearly the enemy of the national development remains rampant among government officers. The country’s efforts to eradicate corruption have shown no significant progress over the past year. According to Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (CPI) of 2010, Indonesia’s score remained 2.8 out of 10 the same in 2009; this placed Indonesia in the level 111 out of 80 countries. The cleanest countries include Denmark, New Zealand, and Singapore with the score of 9.3. This is due to the fact that Indonesian government officers have weak character. In addition, most Indonesian people do not have any power to fight against this serious enemy, corruption. Din Syamsuddin asserted that according to United Nation Organization, a number of countries are included in the category of failed states, while Indonesia almost failed in a variety of issues including equitable distribution of wealth within countries, let alone the country is aggravated by corruption. Corruption is like a virus, which has infected all over Indonesia. Almost every single person in the country is corrupt, by one way or the other.

Based on this, it is important to build strong character among the youth, the future generation, in order to cut off the rampant of corruption in the near future. The importance of building character among the Indonesian youth was asserted by the President of Indonesia. In his address on the National Education Day and National Awakening Day, May 2, 2011, the President underlined the importance of forming character building in education. He reminded educators not only to teach science to their students, but also moral values. "Actually, the human character would eventually become the national character” he said. He further affirmed that all Indonesian people should implement the theme, “Character Building as Pillar of National Awakening” in their daily life. According to him, to become a superior nation, there are at least five things had to be done by the Indonesian people. Firstly, the Indonesian people must have a good morality, science, good conduct, religious, civilized and against violence. Secondly, the Indonesian people...
must be intelligent and rational with a vision of building a better future. Thirdly, the Indonesian people need to be innovative, creative, and willing to work hard to improve the situation. Fourthly, the Indonesian people need to increase their spirit and finally the Indonesian people need to become a true patriot for the people, state, and country.

The most important word that should be underlined in the President speech is the term ‘morality’ which refers to good conduct of the people, that is character. The word ‘character’ comes from a Greek word charassein which means ‘to engrave.’ In Encarta Dictionary (2009) character is defined as the set of qualities which make somebody or something distinctive, especially somebody’s qualities of mind and feeling. It is believed that character is the personal trait of individual. Cottrinnger (2007) states that good character is when your head, heart, soul and hands agree to do the right thing, in the right way, for the right reasons and the combined effort gets the right results in the midst of the most adverse of conditions.

It was stated above that character is a set of qualities, or values, that shape our thoughts, actions, reactions and feelings. Furthermore, a person with strong character show compassion, are honest and fair, display self-discipline in setting and meeting goals, make good judgments, show respect to others, show courage in standing up for beliefs, have a strong sense of responsibility, are good citizens who are concerned for their community, and maintain self-respect.

Moral character building team of Indonesia argues that one of the most important sources of values that can be integrated in the school curriculum is high values from various ethnic groups in the Indonesian Archipelago. Indeed, this research was aimed at finding out local quotes in the Archipelago containing elements of strong character. In addition, it seeks to find out their relevance with the national character building in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this study was documentation and reflexivity. Documentation was intended to document quotes containing local wisdom from various sources, ranging from primary sources to the secondary sources. Primary sources include classic manuscripts and informants consisting of intellectuals and opinion leaders of the ethnic groups. Secondary sources consisted of research reports conducted earlier obtained from the libraries including national library, university libraries, and provincial libraries. Reflexivity method is used to construct meaning of the quotes that have been documented. Each quote was read and understood and meaning was elicited with the help of informants and scholars as well as advocates of each ethnic group involved in the research (Acehnese, Buginese, Balinese, Bataknese, Javanese, Manadonese, Padang-nese, and Sundanese).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of the research shows that local quotes of the Archipelago contain important character building elements that can be the source of the character building in Indonesia. The following is the elements of strong characters reflected in the quotes starting from compassion or solidarity, honesty, self-discipline, making good judgments, showing respect to others, showing courage in standing up for beliefs, have a strong sense of responsibility, being concerned for community, and self-respect.

1. Compassion

Compassion means empathy, being concerned about other people’s feelings and needs. This trait has the root for caring about other people. It allows a person to be understanding and tolerant of different points of views and beliefs. This trait can be seen in the following Aceh’s quotes:

- a. Meunyoe kana pakat lampoh jierat jiet tapeugala(Aceh)
- b. Phui jaro. Phui jaro. (like to help others)

The quotes contain an obligation to help those who are in need. Everybody must be open to help others. This quote emphasizes that if you help others, do not expect the return. Help should be done
sincerely.

2. Honesty and fairness

Honesty simply means being truthful with ourselves and with others. It means facing up to our mistakes, even when we have to admit them to others or when they may get us into trouble. Fairness means acting in a just way and making decisions, especially important ones, on the basis of evidence rather than prejudice. It means ”playing by the rules” and standing up for the right of everyone to be treated equally and honestly. The quote explaining the benefit of being honest and fair is cited in Batak’s quote as follows:

*Tagan-tagan bulu*
*Tagan-tagan hau halak*
*Molo na denggan uhummu*
*Ho paihut-ihuton ni halak*

(Hands bamboo
Wooden hands of people
If your law is right
People will obey you)

The quote simply means if you are honest and fair in enforcing the law, people will respect you. However, if you are dishonest and unfair in enforcing the law, people will not respect.

3. Self Discipline

Self-discipline is the ability to set a realistic goal or make a plan—then stick with it. It involves keeping promises and following through on commitments. Keeping promises and commitments can be seen in the following Gorontalo’s quote.

*Dija ada langite endep.*
(Anywhere, there is no low sky)

This quote means if you are honest and fair in enforcing the law, people will respect you. However, if you are dishonest and unfair in enforcing the law, people will not respect.

4. Good judgment

It is not always easy to judge which one is right and which one is wrong, good or bad. Making good judgment involves a process of forming an opinion or evaluation by discerning and comparing. The necessity of being able to have a good judgment is cited in Bali quote as follows:

*Makita melah tawang ang sehin.*
(If you want good result, you must be able to judge which to change).

The purpose of the quote is that if one wants to be respectable, one must be able to know which one is good and which one is bad in order to have good judgement. In addition, a wise person is somebody who has wider insight and can make good decision.

5. Respecting others

Respecting others as human being is must. For Buginese, showing respect to others means respecting “you yourself”. In contrast, if you do not respect others it means you do not respect yourself.

*Narekkoto mupakalekbik-i padammu tau, alemmutu mupakalekbik.*
(If you respect others, you essentially respect yourself).

6. Courage in standing up for one’s beliefs

Courage in standing up for one’s belief means being firm in the right belief, in the agreement that we have already made. In Aceh’s quote it asserted that one may not be afraid of defending something that he or she thinks it is true. In contrast, one may not be brave to defend for something that he or she thinks it is wrong.

*Tatakot meunyo na salah, tagagah meunyo beuna.*
*Tatakot meunyo na salah, tagagah meunyo beuna.*

(Being afraid of something that is wrong, and brave for something which is right).

7. Responsibility

Responsibility is emphasized in many quotes. In Minang and Sundanese quotes, it is asserted that one must be able to handle any kind of work that belongs to his or her responsibility.

*Bamain air basah, bamain api anguih*
(Play with water wet, play with fire burnt)

A job has certainly a risk.

Ulah ninggalkeun hayam dudutaneun
(Do not delay your work until you finish it).

8. Concerned with community

Concerned with community is related to our social intercourse. This may mean being part of the community. Being part of the community is to have meaningful relations with other community members. To be part of the community does not mean living in the community, but there is a close relationship with the members of community, i.e. to be a family member, neighbor, schoolmate, friend, casual acquaintance, mosque/church member, co-worker, and significant other. Indeed, it involves active participation and a feeling of togetherness and solidarity. This means that if one member of the community has difficulty, others should have the responsibility of helping him/her. In the following is Buginese emphasizing solidarity:

\[ \text{Rĕbba sipatokkong} \\
\text{mali siparappĕ'} \\
\text{siwata' menre tĕnssirui no' } \\
\text{malilu sipakaingĕ} \\
\text{mainge'pi mupaja.} \]

(stricken enforce upright, drifting landed strand, pull up rather than pull down, to err one should advise, not stop until aware of).

The quote means that when a member of the community is affected by disaster, other member should help. In addition, when one is doing wrong thing, others have the obligation to give advice. Advice should not stop until he or she is aware of the mistakes he or she makes.

9. Self respect

Self-respect is an important aspect in life. Self-respect may hold the key to achieving the peace of mind we seek that is accepting ourselves as it is.

\[ \text{Aji keteng meal, aji dadua mudah.} \]

(The price of one kepeng is expensive, while two kepeng is cheap).

The word acceptance is the key to self-respect which suggests we have to accept our limitations. Many of us are encouraged "to change the things we can change, accept the things we cannot change. However, we have to accept something we cannot change. As Indonesian people, accepting ourselves as Indonesian and being proud of being an Indonesian is a must. So, In order to have self-respect, one should not see others as much better than us. In addition, this suggests that one should respect himself/herself and never underestimate it.

RELEVANCE WITH CHARACTER BUILDING EDUCATION

According to Gufron (2010) and Astuti (2010), there is evidence which indicates a moral crisis among students. Educational institutions fail to prepare graduates with good morality. To solve the problem, the strong character values need to be integrated in the implementation of the formal curriculum. By doing so, teachers can help students to actualize each learning domain through the competency formulation and the students can simultaneously carry out relevant moral actions.

According to the Morality Education Team, the sources of values for moral education consist of religions, The Five Principles of Indonesia, Local cultural values, and National Education Goal (The Ministry of Education of Indonesia, 2010: 7-8). Based on this, there are a number of values that can be elicited from the four sources and integrated into the curriculum of national education for character building in Indonesian schools. The values consist of religious, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hardworking, creativity, independence, democracy, concerned with community, and responsibility. These are considered strong characters.

Values that have been identified in the archipelago, describing strong characters, are still relevant with national character building education that can be integrated in the curriculum and lesson materials. This means that Indonesian culture which is the high values of ethnic groups throughout Indonesia is still relevant with the national character building in the era of globalization. Values
that are considered relevant with the modern era should be re-actualized and revitalized.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Local wisdom of the archipelago is rich in values that are still relevant with the development of globalization and the development of character building in Indonesia. These values include strong character building elements that can be used as the source for character building education from the lower level of schools to the university level. This also suggests that Indonesian Archipelago inhabited by different ethnic groups from Aceh to Irian Jaya is rich in local values in their respective culture that can be used as a way of life and become a reference in the development of the nation's character. Values that are considered relevant with the modern education should be re-actualized and revitalized. Indeed, it is the responsibility of educators to select and integrate values in the school curriculum so as to build Indonesian generation with strong characters.

REFERENCES


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