

A Character Education Model in Vocational School as the Provision for Entering Work Realm

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Abstract— Character education is something that schools particularly vocational schools should conduct to prepare students to enter work realm. Although the vocational school graduates' opportunity to pursue higher education level is widely opened, many students prefer joining the workforce right after graduating from vocational schools. Graduates' good character is nurtured through a long process and developed over times through a sustainable teaching, for example, learning and practices. In vocational schools, instilling character values can be done by integrating character education into practical learning because more time is allocated for practice (66.7%) than for theoretical learning (33.3%). With such portion, the interaction between teacher/instructor and students occurs more in practical learning. For this reason, instilling good character values would be more effective when conducted in practical learning. The objective of study was to guide the vocational schools to emphasize on the importance of character education to help students prepare for work realm. Development process should be conducted systematically and sustainably and covers a variety of traits such as honesty, discipline, hard work, creativity, and responsibility.

Keywords—character education, good character

I. INTRODUCTION

Etymologically, the word character is derived from a Greek word *charassein* meaning “to engrave” (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999: 5). The word “to engrave” can be interpreted as to carve, to paint, to chisel, or to scratch with (Echols & Shadily, 1995: 214). Character is identical with personality or moral. Personality is a feature, characteristic, or typical nature of an individual originating from the shapes received from environment, for example, family during childhood and congenital ones.

Terminologically, the meaning of character is suggested by Thomas Lickona who defines character as “a reliable inner disposition to respond to situations in a morally good way.” Furthermore, Lickona adds, “character so conceived has three interrelated parts: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior” (Lickona, 1991: 51). Moreover, Frye (2002: 2) defines

character education as, “a national movement creating schools that foster ethical, responsible, and caring young people by modeling and teaching good character through an emphasis on universal values that we all share”.

The employers of graduates want the prospect workers having not only adequate competency in the field but also good character. It is, of course, not easy because fostering good character should be done not only by school but also by involving parents and society.

Vocational school graduates have ample opportunities to enter work realm as they have competency according to their respective field. On the other hand, the requirements to enter work realm currently pertains not only knowledge and skill but also graduates' character, behavior and attitude, and familiarity with job characteristic or skill and work ethics. Therefore, vocational school prepares not only smart and skillful workers but also those with strong character. The table below shows the need for workers graduating from vocational schools.

TABLE I: THE DEMAND FOR WORKERS GRADUATING FROM ATMI POLYTECHNIC OF SURAKARTA

2014		2015		2016	
Number of graduates	Demand for workers	Number of graduates	Demand for workers	Number Of graduates	Demand for workers
175	795	176	931	176	811

Table 1 shows that the demand for workers graduating from vocational school is so substantial that vocational school should develop themselves with the advantage they have in competency and character development.

II. METHOD

A. Participants

This research was taken place at ATMI Polytechnic of Surakarta. The sample consisted of 50 out of 200 students as the population, taken using the

simple random sampling technique (Sugiyono, 2015: 120).

B. Procedure

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research method. Descriptive research was the one expressed in the form of words, charts, figures, and photographs (Sugiyono, 2014: 6).

C. Data Collecion

Data was collected in the following methods 1) Observation. Sutrisno Hadi (in Sugiyono, 2014: 196) states that observation is a complex process, an activity of revealing the process composed of many biological and psychological processes. Observation was conducted on many factors related to the problem studied. Observation referred to the activity in vocational schools and document relevant to the problem studied or data needed. Observation activity was conducted both formally and informally to take many actual situations and conditions as event and activity occurs. Observation was conducted to find out the process of character education implementation in vocational schools. 2) Interview. Suharsimi Arikunto (2013: 198) states that interview is used by the author to assess an individual's condition, for example to search for data on variables about students' background, parents, education, attention, and attitude towards something. In this research, interview was used to obtain information about the implementation of character education during conducting practical learning. Interview was conducted with instructor, graduate employee division, and final-year students in vocational schools. 3) Documentation. Documentation method is a method of searching for variables in the form of recording, book, newspaper, magazine and etc (Suharsimi Arikunto, 2013: 18). Documentation is an evidence of research activity. Documentation can be used as an evidence to confirm the data obtained.

Data validation in this research was carried out using triangulation method. Triangulation is a technique for validating data by utilizing other things. The truth of data is an important requirement in the research. Sugiyono defines triangulation as "technique of collecting data combining the preexisting data collection technique and source (Sugiyono, 2014: 327).

Triangulation variable employed in this research were technique and source triangulations. It was conducted because data collection in this research employed interview, documentation and observation conducted on the sources, Guidance and Counseling teachers and other students. Source triangulation was conducted by rechecking the data obtained through the two sources to draw a conclusion about the result of action.

D. Data Analysis

Technique of analyzing data is the process of analyzing data obtained. Sugiyono (2015: 333) says that processes of searching for and organizing systematically the data obtained from the results of interview, field note, and documentation were

conducted by means of organizing data into units, synthesizing, arranging the pattern, sorting the important one and selecting the one to be studied, and drawing conclusion thereby understandable to the self or others. Data analysis used in this study was descriptive qualitative data analysis.

III. RESULT

Indicator	Character Education in practical learning
Honesty	Students indicate their presence using their own card
	Students tell the actual fact about their mastery of practical materials
	Students ask for further explanation when something is less clear
	Score obtained reflects the students' ability
	Students report the error of practical material on working process to instructor
	Students attempt to learn the material before the learning begins
	Students will say when the instructor's explanation is incorrect
	Students will reprimand their friends for dishonesty
	Students always report the time when practical material begins and finishes to the instructor
Discipline	The students' presence level is at least 100%
	Students have never been late
	Students always use work safety tools before conducting practical learning
	Students operate the tool/machine according to Manual Book and Instructor's instruction
	Students complete the practical assignment timely according to the specified standard
	Students put the tool tidily on its place
	Students wear supporting tool according to the standard specified.
Hard Work	Students always attempt to complete practical material with perfect result
	Students always attempt to solve the problem in practical learning
	Students complete the practical assignment very enthusiastically
	Students increase reference in order to learn the material more easily
	Students make small notes for new things they have done
	Students ask the instructor for the material they have not understood yet
	Students study the tool/machine employed for practice
	Students attempt to complete every practical material more quickly than the specified time
	Students discuss the practical material to be done with the instructor
Creativity	Students attempt to find the most practical working process
	Students try new method beyond the instructor's instruction bravely
	Students make small notes when the instructor

	gives explanation
	Students search for others source when instructor's explanation is inadequate
	Students enter into practical room 5 minutes before the lesson begins
	Students try to repair damaged tool/machine bravely
	Students always notes important things explained by instructor
	Students ask questions when they have not understood yet the material/process explained.
Responsibility	Students complete all practical assignment according to the specification
	Students report practical assignment not qualifying the specification
	Students replace practical time when they are absent
	Students replace the tool/machine damaged due to negligence by increasing practical time
	Students examine the tool/machine readiness before practicing
	Students report the time when practice begins and finishes
	Students will report the tool/machine unfeasible to use to the instructor
	Students tidy the tool/machine used
	Students help friends tidy the tool/machine when their assignment has been completed

IV. DISCUSSION

Character education in vocational schools particularly in practical learning has been conducted as planned. The implementation of character education in this practical learning shows the actual condition when the students join workforce. The data obtained vary according to various data collection techniques. The data becomes the parameter of the research results. Originally, character education in this vocational school is not easy because its situation and condition should be actually adjusted with the work realm with demand for high standard.

The elements of character applied and habituated in practical education process become something considered as usual (prevalent) even its implementation no longer becomes burden but becomes a necessity implemented joyfully and sincerely.

Practical activity becomes something joyful because in terms of honesty, students tell the truth confidently in academic or personal contexts. Honesty is no longer something limited by tolerance but it has been a part of daily life. In the terms of discipline, students realize that discipline is implemented not only in terms of time but also in using tool/machine as it is related to occupational safety rules. Time discipline is also very important as it is related to the relation with their peers; it can be seen from the standardized time to complete the work that should be met. In terms of hard work, students feel a healthy and fair competition circumstances because the students who can work hard will get optimum result. In terms of creativity, students determine their priorities and express ideas and not dependent on the existing sources only but also searching for other sources and even bravely try to

explore something new despite limitation and instructor's direction. In terms of responsibility, students understand that what they have done has consequence that should be accounted for and interrelated to each other, for example when students are not present in practical learning because of something, their practical time decreases and they should replace the lost practical time on another time (day).

Characters such as enthusiasm as well as openness in communication and expressing ideas are the prototype and introduced to the students as the provision to enter work realm with high demand in terms of low production cost that in turn will be enjoyed by consumer that can buy it with affordable price but still prioritizing the quality of product produced and delivery time according to the customers' request.

Overall, this finding contributes to character education development, particularly in practical learning in vocational schools. Vocational school would conduct its task thoroughly if it provides its students with skills as well as characters required by the work realm.

V. CONCLUSION

The results of observation, interview, and documentation suggest that:

- character education in vocational schools is an important factor to be integrated into practical learning as the students' provision to enter into work realm.
- further research should develop the relationship between instructor and students in character education.
- school should cooperate with the prospective graduate employers in developing character education to establish 'link and match' not only in terms of competency but also character.
- character education in vocational school will particularly equip the students in entering into work realm with high-standard education process.
- to produce graduates with good character corresponding to the demand, instructor should also improve themselves in terms of character development.

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