The Students' Character Strengthening by Using *SMART*-Based in Welcoming the 21st Century's Learning

Octa Pratama Putra

octasystemofadown@gmail.com

Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

Prof Dr. Endry Boeriswati

Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

Dr. Ratna Dewanti

Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

Both seeing and recognizing the crisis of moral values and character of students at the present time, absolutely, it becomes very important thing toward the educator. For instance, this happens to students entirely or partly at a certain school. In the future, it is expected to be a hope of the nation in leading the country. This research belongs to literature study. It means, it reviews of several sources of electronic books, electronic journals, and other references in supporting this article. Based on the results of the literature study, it can be concluded that character education needs to be strengthening by using SMART-based. SMART stand for: Setting-goal, Mannerly, Active, Respectful, and Thankful. So, the 21st century skills-based learning models used in the learning process as an effort to build the character of the student, of course, it is aligned to the needs and goals of learning. Then, the learning objectives can be done optimally. Thus, one of the goals of national education is the development of students' character.

Keywords: characters' strengthening education, 21st century's learning, and SMART

Introduction

In having the class or the academical situation, it does not only allot the educational aspects toward the students only; but also, it is to generate the students' characterization in it. Broadly meaning, educational character means a character education that includes a large range of concepts; they are: as positive school culture, moral education, caring school communities, social-emotional learning, positive youth development, civic education, and service learning (Singh, 2019), (Kress and Elias, 2019) and (Berger, 2019).

On the other way, there must be proportional to be conducting with; they are both students' educational aspect and educational characterization aspect. It is said so, because Indonesian's National Education System of the law number 20 in 2003 has already declared it officially to the entire school. In short, it is called as *PPK* (Character Education Strengthening) (A.M and Nugrahani, 2019) and (Sulistyarini, Utami and Hasmika, 2019)

So far, it is imparted that, the educational system keeps focusing more on the developing aspects of the knowledge (cognitive aspect). Also, it tends to be forsaken of efforts to develop attitudes, morals, and character. Then, the aforementioned case tells that, the character crisis shows a lot of weaknesses or mistakes in the education system (Hermino and Arifin, 2020). The condition is affirmed by (Anwar, 2019), who states that, the educational context actually misses several crucial dimensions in education. They are called as: sports (kinesthetic), taste (art), and ethics (spiritual).

Prior to the previous statements, absolutely, the main principles of good character should be having: respect, truth, justice, and responsibility (Anderson and Valero, 2020). It is planned as like; what happens with future students obviously related to the level of character that is embedded within themselves through education (Šušić, 2020). The above sentence conducts that, the school committee need to consider an important role in the development of students' character. Thence, character education traces along the course of life.

The character is defined as the realization of positive personality development of a person, either intellectually, socially, emotionally, or ethically (Leesen and Lenning, 2021). Then, a good character is the most-coveted goal. In specific meaning, the character -as the part of education- contains three main elements; they are: knowing the good, doing the good and loving the good. Character education not only teaches children to be able to distinguish right and wrong, but also, it teaches good practice to make good children (Muhajir, 2021).

In Indonesia and the side of etymology's aspect, it is known as *Budi Pekerti*. It means, *Budi* talks about thinking or thought, as for *Pekerti* means behave (Wardani, Suarjana and Renda, 2020) and (Effendi *et al.*, 2020). It can be shortly understood as an action which is guided by the mind. Then, an action which is coming from the mind; or mind-controlled actions. Thus, the purpose of behaving *Budi Pekerti*, it means to develop both attitudes and behavior of students; include the noble character.

The Essence of Students' Characterization

The sector of education is absolutely alongside with the matter of students' characterization. It is said so, because there are still a lot of lacks. This becomes a challenge as educators. Students' characterization has a wonderful goal of a true education system. Thus, it is related to the characterization of education which refers to the effort and step in instilling the character as the Indonesian nation. (Yama, 2015)

Concerning about the students' characterization, surely, it is not only from the students offhand, but also their parents have a role as well. The parents' daily behaviour, attitude and so on underlie toward their inheritance, here is becoming toward the students' characterization (Heath, Smith and Young, 2017). As the exemplified here, it is based on the parental guidance as the fundamental point. Parents must be having a role model in leading, instructing, and sharing positive things to the children (Freeks, 2015).

Parenting's guidance is very significantly influential toward the character of children. Good parenting in the family will be directing a strong basis in the development of emotions, behaviour, character, moral and social values, and the formation of children's character (Berkowitz and Bier, 2005) and (Brooks, Lamb and Brant, 2019). Thus; Indonesian belongs to the Eastern culture. It globally means, a nationality that lives in the repertoire of traditional cultural values and loves peace. These values are in the form of several aspects; they are; loving life, peace-loving, orderly, honest, and polite in speech and behaviour, and many positive behaviours.

The direction of parents' well manner is needed in instilling and strengthening the children's character (Dvořáková, Roeser and Greenberg, 2018). This is also adapted to the cultural aspect which is based on the values of *Pancasila* as the life guide of the Indonesian. Thence, family education is a strong foundation that should be giving and sharing to children.

Somewhat, the environmental nearby tries to erode and influence children's' interactions in their daily lives (Goreti and Kristiantari, 2018) and (Castro and Villafuerte, 2019)

Especially the children as the students of nowadays; they live in this century; the 21st century which looks different of the characterization. The 21st century means a demand of having the 6C's skills. It is undeniable that 6C skills, they are: character, citizenship, critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication; that will gain up students about the self-qualification.

The Essence of 21st century

Globalization era forces everybody to survive in this complex and competitive sector. As being this era, certainly it has 'the inappropriateness' to the students, children or youth generation. For instances, many students are graduating from reputable schools, inbound or outbound schools, free-tuition (scholarship) and many more are said to have still lack some basic and applied skills such as communications, mannerly behave, work ethic, leadership and so on (Howlett and Waemusa, 2019) and (Davitishvili, 2019).

Here in nowadays the 21st century, a change always plays a vital role for adopting newer and better set of teaching strategies. Not only a strategy for teaching, but also a principle which will again put teachers into the test of tides in terms of their teaching attributes and skills. A good teacher is more than just an educator and more than just a learning session. The characteristics that make a teacher to be said 'proper' are complex and extensive.

Teachers should be having a visioner ahead, for instances, they are able to predict the future's need. The fact said that, there must be skill in this 21st century. Then, it is defined as skills developed during teaching and learning process at certain educational place in order to provide students with soft skills and hard skills (Marlatt, 2018). The definition of soft skills then is defined as the ability of generating communication skills, IT Skills, numeracy skills, learning how to learn skills, problem-solving skills, and working with others in completing task and work.

Regarding to the preceding paragraph, each component of soft skill can be said as the communication skill. It is defined as the ability to express and exchange ideas through oral and written communication as well as presenting information through audio and visual. As for the IT Skill, it is the ability of installing, applying digital application to support learning

and working; such as using Microsoft office and its features, internet, website, email, messenger, online conference, others necessary tool (Erdoğan, 2019), Then, numeracy skills refer to the ability of using simple statistics or calculation with number, understanding and creating graphs for presentation (Bedir, 2019).

Learning skills are defined as the ability of applying varied learning methods and techniques to achieve the goal of learning including, doing self-evaluation for the aim of improvement (Thipatdee, Chaichana and Kamsanor, 2019). Next, it is problem solving skills. It is the ability to identify and solve problems appropriately in learning activities and make sure the same problems not happen again (Shafie, Majid and Ismail, 2019). The last, working with others refer to the ability to get in touch, get along, interact and work with other people both on a one-to-one basis and in a team.

The Essence of Setting-goal

Broadly defined, the setting-goal is the process of establishing obvious and usable targets, or objectives, for learning. For further information, setting-goal proposes that there are two general goal orientations students can adopt: first is a task-focused orientation with an intrinsic focus on learning and improving. In short, it is about to improve the achievement academically (Gross, 2019) .

The other thing, it is an ability-focused orientation with the opposite, that is the extrinsic point. It focuses on the side of rewards. For instances: Students try to be getting good grades and doing better than other students. Finally, he or she will get a reward as what he or she has done recently (Li *et al.*, 2019).

Then with a setting-goal, students are oriented toward developing new skills as well. Students try to understand their work, improving their level of competence, or achieving a sense of mastery based on self-referenced standards. This goal construct is congruent with 'the motivation to learn,' whereby individuals are focused on mastering and understanding content and demonstrating a willingness to engage in the process of learning.

The setting-goal focuses on students' attention towards certain behaviors and information and away from distractions. It is told that, the incremental goals are far more effective than large goals. If a student is able to break down a big goal, like solving a big problem, innovating or achieving a higher grade, into small bite-sized pieces they are more

likely to be successful. If they are able to incorporate the feedback they receive on each occasion, the bright opportunity eventually led to big achievements.

On the other perspective, it is through learning these self-management skills, students are able to exert control over their learning and thus promote academic achievement. In the present study, the focus is on examining how students use goal setting as motivational tool in the process of self-regulated learning process.

The Essence of Mannerly

The context of a language cannot be separated from human being. Language has a role a communication tool. In education, it is not only language skill or language proficiency needed, but also mannerly or well-mannered speech of teachers in the interaction when teaching learning process has the essential part also.

Mannerly as the context is often reflected in students' familiar vocabulary with *'please'*, *'sorry'* and *'thank you'*. Then, mannerly students would always have an abundance of good friends and easy making of friends at any social situation because they genuinely care about the people they meet.

On the other hand, mannerly is the closest meaning with context of politeness. In general, it is the use of the right word or phrase in the proper context; which is determined by the rules that are prevalent. (Stearns and Clay, 2020) states that, mannerly is determined by the relationship between behavior and suitability convention; it is not by specific linguistic forms.

Learning a foreign language involves not only knowing how to speak and write, but also how to behave linguistically and properly (Oliver, Gistered and Liberty, 2018). Students who have the insight of mannerly is said to be important in classroom teaching of a foreign language. Moreover, that show the capable to have an instrumental role in the social interaction. The way of mannerly behave used by teacher and students in the class is able to play an important role in learning and teaching process.

The Essence of Active-Learning

Active learning has many definitions in terms of various point of views when looked up the literature of the education field. In the definition, the active learning is a teaching method that involves and encourages the learners as active contributor in the learning

environment. In this context, the learners are a part of learning, and the teacher enables this learning environment. Students creates their own knowledge structure, so learners' point of view to learning and knowledge are crucial, and students show up and takes the responsibility of their own learning nature (Demirci and Akcaalan, 2020).

What crucial in active learning is focusing on developing the abilities of students rather than just pouring or providing knowledge into learners' head. By another perspective, it is strengthened that, active learning has been stated as the seeking new information, organizing it in a way that is meaningful, and having the chance to explain to others (Yusuk, 2020).

The active learning can be said, it is any event triggering learners to get involved in learning approaches holding them with the lesson material and encouraging critical thinking while they participate in activities beyond the lesson. Active learning is described as any activity related to a course that all learners in a learning environment are required to perform more than just watching, listening and jotting down.

The Essence of Respectful

Respectful is likely one of the most powerful and complicated concepts involved in governing human's relations to others and themselves. Respect has been looked at as an attitude or a behavior, as a moral quality, and as an indicator for justness, while for other perception; it is confused with acceptance, tolerance, or even fear (Murshidi, 2020).

In schools, it has several kinds of respect; they are: respect for the teacher, respect from the teacher, and the teaching of respect itself. They also seem to be important factors for learning. They state that, students are more willing to comply with authorities when they feel respected, and their reactions to authority, as suggested by the researchers, may influence their engagement in class.

Similarly, (Arsenault *et al.*, 2019) show that the connection between both teacher behavior and student engagement are related and mutually influence each other. Respect, thus, is an important factor for students' compliance with teachers, paying attention to what teachers have to say, and being motivated to learn or study. Thence, if horizontal respect indeed has an impact on students' engagement in classrooms, it can be assumed that, it may also positively influence their grades as stronger engagement in class should result in an enhanced performance.

The Essence of Thankful

Thankful as the context is the closest meaning with the gratitude. Here, the definition of being thankful is said to be becoming grateful; an appreciation of and inclination to return the kindness. It short, it is also giving of thanks. Such expression usually refers to either *gratitude to someone* or *gratitude for someone or something*. Gratitude pervades the action of a person in the sense that, in order for it to be true the thanksgiving.

The topic of thankful is meant as a sense of thankfulness and joy in response to receiving a gift, whether the gift be a tangible benefit from a specific other, or a moment of peaceful bliss evoked by natural beauty (O'Mara, Eyers and Auld, 2020). Findings in the literature indicate that gratitude increases self-esteem.

In education, being thankful is told be the increasing positive affect and improved of working relationships. It is able to enhance teacher-student relationships, students and teacher well-being as well as teacher parent relationships. On the other hand, it increases students' academic performance.

The implication of students is also referred to be creating the positive vibes of having so much to be thankful for. For example: going to school early, enjoying school, finding a school enjoyable, feeling good at school, and believing in the learning process. In the experiment, the thankful situations, resulted in positive feeling. In the foreign language learning process, being thankful could likely have positive outcomes, such as good grades and good attendance.

Method

This study uses an approach to a literature study. This literature study in this research is the process of systematically, structurally, and completely arranged of several concepts about the strengthening of character education students. It uses through various sources, such as: journals or other relevant references to the topic this research.

Several theories underlie this article which is related to student's character strengthening through the era of 21st century and *SMART*-based. So that, students are expected not be smart only, but also, they are able to be keep along in the *SMART* as the character's strengthening. It is stated previously; because it is going to be focused on the

embedded the school environment in learning and teaching activity. In addition, it is to set and prepare the children in behaving both good morals and good character.

Results And Discussion

Character is said to be something adhered into a person. So that, it becomes very important to identity of an individual. Character is usually associated with a person's attitude and morals. When a person's character is good, then he or she can be said to be having a good person, otherwise. The characterization is simply innate similar that is correlated to heart, soul, personality, behavior, and temperament.

The components of good character can be seen through three indicators; they are: including moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions. Getting more specifically, it has knowledge indicators and feeling indicator. The knowledge indicator, it has awareness, values, perspective, thinking, decision making, and personal knowledge. Then, for the feelings as the indicators, they are conscience, self-esteem, empathy, loving kindness, self-control, and humility. The action indicators include competencies, desires, and habits.

To do or to run those three applications of character components aforementioned is not an easy matter. Human beings live together, always need each other, and must be facing variant things happened ahead. Living in various differences is the reality; however, those differences are not becoming barrier or it does not even matter of living the life.

As a social human being in this life know that differences must be existing, and that difference will not ever break the unity and integrity of the Indonesian as the nation. By referring to that matter, it leads to a country that has a strong togetherness; without thinking or being with all differences. This is as the common goal; based on the life guidelines and philosophy of the Indonesian nation, it is *Pancasila*.

The world of education has an important role in building the character of students today, although in reality there are still many shortcomings. Thence, it is not an obstacle, then it should be challenge as educators. Character building has an extraordinary goal of a true education system. *Pancasila* is an example in an effort to build the nation's character, because if the point of *Pancasila* is not implemented, there will be a negative impact on the Indonesian state. Therefore, education is an effort and step in instilling the character of the Indonesians.

Currently, there is an issue; it tells that, schools and families work together in educating students' morale. In addition, school or education plays a role in building character students in collaboration with families. Parenting guidance and monitoring are very influential on the character of children. For instances: if parents are wrongdoing in educating the children, they may not necessarily be able to behave well. good parenting in family will provide a strong foundation in the development of emotions, behavior, character, moral values and social, as well as the formation of children's character.

So, students are not about to achieve the academic purpose only or said to be smart. However, the context of 'smart' is about the strengthening students' character along with the six criteria in it. As figuring out previously, students need to have the side of setting-goal, mannerly, active, respectful, and thankful in reaching and being with the learning system.

Conclusion

Character education is something that is closely related to student's morals and attitudes. It is related to a person's moral as an individual being. The value contained in it shows a positive value for something; which is good as the categorization. Also, an effort to be instilling characters' strengthening in students through education cannot be separated from the aspect of three educational environments; they are: family, school, and community.

The era of the 21st century skills is not only about developing students' attitudes or character, knowledge, and skills, but also this needs to be balanced with the ability to think critically and complexly, as well. Therefore, to achieve these goals, students are expected to be active and creative in participating in learning more. So that, students are ready to welcome and be in the 21st century by having 'proper skills' to be used properly.

The certain learning model is expected to be supporting the learning process activity. Then, particularly it refers to the topic that is going to reviewed in accordance with the learning objectives. For instances as the learning objective; it may have varied; examples: direct learning, indirect learning, blended learning and distance learning, and many more.

At last, the use of this 21st century skill-based learning model can be adapted to the needs when teaching. It is said so, because each learning model has both advantages and disadvantages; which can be integrated with other learning models and various learning tools and resources. Thus, the application of the proper learning model will be producing good learning products and in accordance with the predetermined learning objectives.

The 21st century and its vicinity cannot be avoided. Then, that is why the strengthening students' character is said to be urgent in being with the activity of learning. Students are not expected to be smart only, but it is much better to have or fulfil with the side of 'smart' within this era. To make a good balance in academic context, then setting-goal, mannerly, active, respectful, and thankful are needed to be implemented in it.

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