

# TEACHERS AS ROLE MODELS IN NURTURING STUDENTS' CHARACTER

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## Abstract

The aim of education is not merely dealing with the conveying of knowledge to students where the goal is focused on the pupils' skills. Further, it ought to yield more essential aspects of their lives—character building, such as honesty, discipline, self-esteem, responsibility, respect for self and others, and trustworthiness, which in actual affect significantly the relationship with classmates, teachers, families and environments. In this case, teachers own a noble responsibility to nurture virtues on education, and being able to establish students' attitudes. The role of teachers as models for students should be reflected through the teaching and learning process of interdisciplinary subjects. As a result, it provides them with intellectual, social, emotional, and ethical development.

Keywords: Teachers, Role Models, Students' Character

## Introduction

In today's era of globalization, there is no space among the countries. It has made them come closer through the advance of science and technology. Mass-media as one of its products has been able to expose certain cultures to others although those are incompatible such as eastern and western ones. The people of any country easily watch everything there of others like the way of talking, behaving, dressing and most of them will be imitators without maintaining their own cultures. In consequence, they let their cultures loss by adopting the new ones yet contradicting so their national character declines.

Dealing with the sophistication of the globe era, it is not also parried that the people of different countries will be one. Asian Economy Society (well known as *MEA-Masyarakat Ekonomi Asia* in Indonesia), for instance, has provided the opportunities for the Asian Countries performing their economic activities in any country. The people outside are free to distribute directly their rival products even the best services. Certainly, the society as the target of *MEA* are required to really compete either in knowledge, skill, or attitude to stand for everything of theirs. Prominently, they are not contaminated to the dismathcing cultures of the outside comers.

Referring to the nation as goal of globalization, students as the part of its society do not rarely accept the effects of the globalization. Most of them are the main target of western globalization because of their lability. The student's age is the period to find spirit so it leads them to easily adapt something new. They tend to imitate the things they like without predicting the consequences. Unfortunately, those refer to the negative ones like consuming drugs, having sex deviations, and doing riot. The whole lets the students own bad behaviours destroy their future.

As the fact, relating to the students' attitude, the writer herself as educator experienced that a lot of students show the negative ones in their characters such as lack of confidence in doing examination by browsing any answer from the internet with their smart phone as one of modern device in global era. This period also let them have modern life style like in fashion. It is easy to find them fashionable (in their own perceptions) but it does not actually characterize themselves. For instance, most of them get dressed incompatible with the values of their cultures. However, the students are expected as the youth generations to build and nurture the national character through keeping their own cultures. In short, the good character owned by the students will be the excitement filter in avoiding the negative effects of globalization.

In line with fostering the students' character, school is one of the educational settings from which the students expected to take the positive values although there are the others environments (family and society) also teach the values. But family as the first place mold the characters for the children sometime provide less moral lessons and supervisions because of many factors such as career so most of the parents let their children get the values from the schools. A lot of children spend their all day time at schools by following full day school programs. This situation as supported in Benigni (2006) states that families are leaving the core development of their children up to the schools because of technology and the advancement of education.

DeRouche et al. (2001) denote that even though other socializing agents are at work in developing the character of the child, the school is also capable of developing character, pro-social behaviours, and civic competence. Furthermore, Derouche and Williams (2001) add that:

School is a place where students have the opportunity to witness and practice civility, caring, and compassion and to develop together as a community of learners and can help develop both positive personal values and civic competences. The two major purposes of school are cognitive–academic development and character education. Together they prepare students for the world of work, for lifelong learning, and for citizenship.

The both statements above explicitly require the schools as more than cultivating the mind and the body but also fostering the character. Consequently, the schools as the value education environment have a big responsibility to mould the students' character as the main purpose of character education that is actually pioneered in Islamic education system applied by Rasullah SAW. As in Hadist means "Verily, I am sent to earth merely to enhance moral glory". This Hadist implies that Rasulullah SAW firstly established the human character in performing the education.

It is true that schools include many personals (educators and non-educators) to help the students optimize their competences—knowledge, skill, and attitude. Dealing with imparting the values, the teachers (educational personals) play the dominant interactions and roles through everything the students can see, hear, feel, and think from. In the other words, the teachers act as the role model for their students. It means that the teachers preserve qualities the students would like to have such as discipline, honesty, politeness, and so forth. In relation to the characters infused to the students, Raymond and Broderick (2006) suggest that the top traits of character education that educators feel are most important were respect for self, others and property, honesty, and self-control. However, whatever the character internalized to students need a model (teacher) to exemplify. In line with this statement, in

Islamic education system firstly proposed by Prophet Muhammad SAW also emphasizes that educating should be as the role model. As in Surah Al ahzab: 21 below.

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

Meaning: Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the Latter day, and remembers Allah much.

The verse above leads being teacher does not only perform theoretically but also practically. Rasulullah SAW as educator surely had done it so he could produce the first good generations of his educational mission. In addition, His good role model had been proven through His excellent attitude. So, Allah praises him in Surah Al Qalam: 4,

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

Meaning: And surely thou hast sublime morals

Pearson, et al. (2000) believes that developing good character requires students to recognize the good, crave the good, and put forth the good. It implies that the teachers as role models do not only transferring the knowledge but ought to inform and perform the virtues. In brief, as role model, it's nothing can be more helpful in nurturing the students' character than the teachers' own conduct. However, the changes done by students are not totally depended on the teachers as role models if there is no the desire of the students themselves to change.

## Content

### Teacher

Dealing the term of a teacher impress us to profession concerning with the teaching of students with magnificent and high responsibility for the development and students' achievement and behaviour. Relating to the role, a teacher must provide good attitude functioning as a role model to the construction of students' good traits – so called good teacher. In general, it is difficult to describe a good teacher since every teacher possesses strength and weakness as well as different perspective of successful teaching with others.

Teaching is not an easy job, but it is a necessary one, and can be very rewarding when we see our students' progress and know that we have helped to make it happen. It is true that some lessons and students can be difficult and stressful at times, but it is also worth remembering that at its best teaching can also be extremely enjoyable.

In relation to the description of good teacher, Harmer (1998), based on the interview results of secondary school students, concludes that a good teacher are: (1) they should make their lesson interesting so you don't fall asleep in them. (2) Teacher must love her job. If she really enjoys her job, that will make the lessons more interesting. (3) I like the teacher who has his own personality and does not hide it from the students so that he is not only a teacher but a person as well – and it comes through the lessons. (4) I like a teacher who has lots of knowledge, not only his subject. And (5) a teacher is an entertainment and I mean that in positive sense, not in negative sense. Although, he adds, the character and personality of the teacher is a crucial factor in teaching and learning in the classroom, but constructing the relationship between the teacher and the students is more essential than the teacher himself. This is born out on the following views: (1) it is important that you can talk to the teacher when you have problem and you don't get along with the subjects. (2) A good teacher is ...

somebody who has an affinity with the students they are teaching. (3) A good teacher should try and draw out the quiet ones and control the more talkative ones. (4) He should be able to correct people without offending them. (5) A good teacher is ... someone who helps rather than shouts. And (6) a good teacher is ... someone who knows our names.

The propositions above can be inferred that a good teacher is the one who is exemplary in personality and behavior, and own the ability to establish good connection with students. Additionally, other factors a teacher should govern to serve the classroom activities good are the ability to use language correctly. The teacher should be proficient to interact with his students. When the teacher gives instruction with the students, for instance, the questions must be as simple as possible and logical. This is intended to make the students more profound with the notion of the questions. Besides, a good teacher should be flexible. Flexibility means the competence on doing adaptation to the condition of classroom (unexpected events) occurring during the learning process. The teacher must know how to react quickly and exploit the unexpected happens and fit it to the students' needs.

Whilst, Thoifuri (2008) proposes social and personal character of the teacher can be realized in the form as follow: (a) a teacher should be brainy and insightful, (b) a teacher should keep on improving his/her knowledge, (c) a teacher should be convinced of the validity and merit of the lesson conveyed, (d) a teacher should be objective to resolve the problem, (e) a teacher should have good dedication, motivation and loyalty, (f) a teacher should be responsible for the quality and moral personality, (g) a teacher must be able to improve the students' behaviours, (h) a teacher must keep him/her away from rewards and praises, (i) a teacher should gain a lots initiatives according to the development of technology.

### **Character Education**

Character refers to a much broader constellation of attitudes, behaviors, motivations, and skills. It is more than simply avoiding involvement in socially undesirable behaviors. Character includes attitudes such as the desire to do one's best and being concerned about the welfare of others; intellectual capacities such as critical thinking and moral reasoning; behaviors such as being honest and responsible, and standing up for moral principles in the face of injustice; interpersonal and emotional skills that enable us to interact effectively with others in a variety of circumstances; and the commitment to contribute to one's community and society. Stated simply, character is the realization of one's positive development as a person - intellectually, socially, emotionally, and ethically. To be a person of good character is to be the best person that one can be. It is important to strongly emphasize the social aspect of character. Having good character does not simply mean being competent as an individual. Good character also includes being committed to making positive contributions to one's community, and to promoting a democratic way of life based upon justice, equality, and respect for all people. Good character also does not mean always conforming to the status quo, but requires "breaking the rules" on occasion if demanded by conscience.

In education, character deals with the scope of developing the ethical and moral young people-students to be quality humans as either an individual or social a social man. Henzy, et al (2006) denotes that character education is the deliberate effort to help people understand, care about, and acts upon core ethical values. An intentional and comprehensive character education initiative provides a lens through which every aspect of school becomes an opportunity for character development. It promotes character development through the exploration of ethical issues across the curriculum, develops a positive and moral climate by

engaging the participation of students, teachers and staff, parents, and communities, and teaches how to solve conflicts fairly, creating safer schools that are freer of intimidation, fear, and violence, and are more conducive to learning.

Character education so conceived helps students to develop important human qualities such as justice, diligence, compassion, respect, and courage, and to understand why it is important to live by them. Quality character education creates an integrated culture of character that supports and challenges students and adults to strive for excellence. Character education provides effective solutions to ethical and academic issues that are of growing concern. Educators have successfully used character education to transform their schools, improve school culture, increase achievement for all learners, develop global citizens, restore civility, prevent anti-social and unhealthy behaviors, and improve job satisfaction and retention among teachers. Because students spend so much time at school, our schools offer a critically important opportunity to ensure that all students get the support and help they need to reach their full potential. Schools with high-quality character education are places where students, teachers, and parents want to be. They are places where young people do their best work because they feel safe, appreciated, supported, and challenged by their peers and the adults around them (Character.com, 2014).

In addition to the effectiveness of the character education, the Character Education Partnership (CEP) has identified 11 (eleven) broad principles as defining a comprehensive approach to character education: (1) promote core ethical values as the basis of good character. (2) Define character comprehensively to include thinking, feeling, and behavior. (3) Use a comprehensive, intentional, proactive, and effective approach. (4) Create a caring school community. (5) Provide students with opportunities to engage in moral action. (6) Provide a meaningful and challenging curriculum that helps all students to succeed. (7) Foster students' intrinsic motivation to learn and to be good people. (8) Engage school staff as professionals in a learning and moral community. (9) Foster shared moral leadership and long-term support for character education. (10) Engage families and community members as partners in character education. And (11) evaluate the character of the school, its staff, and its students to inform the character education effort.

### **Teacher as Role Model on Student's Character**

“The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.” William Arthur Ward

*Guru biasa-biasa saja hanya bisa menceritakan. Guru yang baik mampu menjelaskan. Guru yang unggul mampu menunjukkan. sementara guru yang hebat bisa memberikan inspirasi.*

The wise word reflects the significance of a teacher in molding the moral values (character) of students. Instead of being able to transfer the knowledge, a teacher also creates himself/herself as a role model for his/her students. Bashir, (2014), “A role model is a person who inspires and encourages us to struggle for greatness, live to our fullest potential and see the best in ourselves. We often don't recognize our true role models until we have noticed our own personal growth and progress. A role model can be anybody: parents, a sibling, a friend but some of our most influential and life-changing role models are teachers”. This idea means a teacher must be able to give great improvement the students' personality. Teachers have long-lasting impacts on the lives of their students, and the greatest teachers inspire students towards greatness. Teachers educate us with all of their knowledge. Smart and spirited,

teachers can make our brains work like computers. Yet, our teachers can also hold our hands when we need it. A teacher possesses the academics and grace that we all love. Teachers care for us in every imaginable way. Our education is important to our teachers. Therefore our teachers struggle hard to teach every student: checking exams after school; explaining things so they are easier; and reading to us or teaching us and thus possess all qualities of being called a Role Model.

Recently, the roles of teachers become more difficult and challenging due to the bad influences of the development of technology and information as argued previously. The teachers need to provide them with the improvement of knowledge and other skills. In reference to this, Barahate (2014) claims that the role of a teacher has increased manifold. In modern times we are experiencing transition. A teacher can maintain values and nurture them. A teacher has an immense potential of bringing about a sea change in the society by demonstrating essential values of head and heart. He adds teacher can impart values in students by giving them instructions through discussion, experimentation and lectures and by the following mentioned ways: (a) teachers can maintain a case-study register to closely observe the students and note down the positive and negative traits of their personality, (b) teachers should also tell the students to maintain a spiritual diary in which they will surrender themselves to God and take an oath to follow the path shown by him, (c) by organizing cultural and sports events values like team spirit, sharing, spirit of cooperation, patience, courtesy etc can be imparted, (c) national and religious festivals must be celebrated to foster a feeling of homogeneity, (d) thought for the Day” should be employed in assemblies. Moral thoughts trigger in them moral thinking, (e) teachers should give importance to cooperative learning, (f) skits, role plays propagating moral values can be performed by students under the guidance of teacher, (g) teacher must tell the students to go to the libraries- the treasure house of knowledge. Classics available in the library are morally rich and inspiring, (h) teacher must explain the students the importance of meditation& yoga practices for realization or the attainment of oneness with God, (i) every day a teacher must spent at least 5 minutes on moral lecturing, (j) impart knowledge of foreign languages to make them know different cultures, (k) organize games, excursions, visits to places of historical importance. Club activities like nature club, literary club, wildlife prevention club, social service camps, blood donation etc, and (l) suicidal tendencies in students should be curbed. They must be prepared by the teacher to face the challenges of life fearlessly and with courage

All in all, being a role of model, a teacher does not only stress the both aspects of academic achievement and moral values on the students theoretically, but also should be represented on the performances practically as a direct model to the students. Along with this, Allah says in Ash-Shaff : 2 & 3:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ (٢) كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ (٣)

Meaning: O you who believe, why say you that which you do not? It is most hateful in the sight of Allah that you say that which you do not.

This surah claims the talks must be reflected the form of implementation. It implies that the most important agent for building the character of the student is a teacher. Swami Vivekananda says, “Character is nothing but a bundle of habits formed through repeated acts. It comes through “Samskaras” or past impressions. Character building can change the nation. As strong foundation is required for a strong building, strong character is required for nation-building.

## Conclusion

Value is a crucial aspect for shaping the morality or character of young people. Students as young generations are main target in the employment of the character, so called education character. Teachers play splendid role in forming the students' character. Therefore, teacher being a role model should possess many qualities like committed to the work, encourages and appreciates diversity, brings a wide range of skills and talents to teaching, fosters critical thinking and emphasizes teamwork among students. However, to the fact, in achieving the goal of the character education, it does not merely depend on the teachers themselves. But the biggest factor is from the students themselves, such as motivation, the effort to improve, etc. as mentioned in Surah Ar-Ra'd: 11

لَهُ مُعَقِّبَاتٌ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ  
وَإِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوءًا فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَالٍ

Meaning: For him are (angels) guarding the consequences (of his deeds), before him and behind him, who guard him by Allah's command. Surely Allah changes not the condition of a people, until they change their own condition. And when Allah intends evil to a people, there is no averting it, and besides Him they have no protector.

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