

## CHARACTER EDUCATION AND THE APPRECIATION OF NATION'S HISTORY (The Abandoned Education Dialectics)

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### Abstract

The term of character education tends to deal with global context and school's roles. People's character today is believed to be the result of global tendency, and one of institutions responsible for the betterness of this is education institutions (schools) through character education. Character is a whole anthropological structure of an individual determine the destiny and the ability to integrate with life changes. This fact demands critical thinking in taking action based on the appreciation on history. The building of critical thinking in character education at school seems to be theoretic, methodologic, and exclusive. This action is still debated especially about the definition, method, and approach for the teaching and learning, and this becomes the teacher's responsibility.

The term of character education and the appreciation on history in this context does not merely put the nation's history as the only strategic basis of character education by ignoring the other strategic basis such as religy, social, and culture. Individual character is determined also by the ability of searching the oneself as a part of the present and others in the past. The result of the thinking process produces critical awareness of the choices for future. The thinking process is a reflection of individual and societal action in the past in the historical perspective and responsibly appreciated as a reference of action today. The character education nowadays is shown by the ignorance of history, so it can be said as the action without thinking, or thinking differently from the action.

Keywords: character, historical appreciation

### Introduction

The term of character education in this context deals with three things: the knowledge of, the feel of, and the behavior of moral, the knowledge about good things, good will, and doing good things (Lickona, 1992). Understanding this does not only deal with education in micro scale such as school, teacher, and teaching-learning system but also with education in macro scale like policy, planning, and education programs because historical appreciation implying the character formation is personal and communal identity. Historical appreciation is meant as the process of thinking, feeling, and acting to appreciate history and take it as reference to think, feel, and act today and in the future. Appreciation is not merely only related to understanding through remembering the past but also related to *verstehen* competence on the value of events, characters, actions, thoughts, and words in the past as a process saving and interpreting the past in relation to problems today (Lewis, 1987; Kuntowijoyo, 2008; dan Azra, 2002). Mainly, education today in form of thought and act (education practices) must be inspired by the process of *verstehen* of the national history in the past. Heroic value, willing to sacrifice, communal needs first, democratization, multiculturalism, appreciation toward process, self-existence and idealism of the nation founder must be the basis of the education dialectics in order to create characterized education. A questioned to be answered through this paper is in what cases is education dialectics neglected today as the result of lacking the historical appreciation that block the process of character education? To answer this

question, this paper is organized into: a) history as the basis of character; b) historical value and education practice; and c) conclusion. Hopefully, these sections may give syllogism structure explaining the relation among all propositions offered through this paper.

### History as the Basis of Character

A discussion about national history strategically becomes a reference in developing character education (*Pemerintah RI*, 2010). Cohen (1947) states that history functions to shape the life value and to rise the personal, communal, and national identity. History as the basis of character education today is responsible of shaping the vision and new perspective about the past relevant to today needs and hope for future. History is not only knowing the past, importantly learning moral. Obviously, history as the basis of character in character education does not put history as reality of events, characters, actions, thoughts, and words in the past containing reality (virtuality) because eventually history of a nation is not always joyful or priding for the generation. The young generations' *verstehen* power is needed here so each can make a choice to or not agree and to refer to the history.

History as the basis of characters in character education is the result of academic process and turns to be a communal property outside the academic society (high history to low history in Azra's term, 2002). It means that history as the basis of character must be learnt to get virtual value on events, characters, actions, thoughts, and words in the past as reference value today and hope for

future. History as reference of communal value shaping the individual virtual character is no longer understood as knowledge as a result of learning process. Virtual character pours into the whole educational activities outside the teaching-learning system in micro education context. History in a historical view (total history) totally becomes the whole properties of history importantly to be known by all today generations to build the spirit of appreciation as reference of thinking, feeling, and acting individually and mutually today and in the future. Not following the undeveloped and referring to the superiority of the past in the anthropological history inspires the culture formation at present. Suppression, discrimination, and ignorance among the historical generations are a lesson learnt not to reoccur. Cooperation, friendliness, pleasantness in social history are an excellent illustration to be nurtured in this complex dynamics.

History as the basis of character deals with events, characters, actions, thoughts, and words in the past. Suppression incident and ignorance of human identity through colonialism should emerge the today generation's sympathy and empathy to others in the social and anthropological process as was done by the national heroes. The clarity of idealism and national identity struggled by the heroes of independence should be a concrete basis for the today generations to conduct their responsible. Willingness to sacrifice body and soul as was done by the founder of Indonesian independence must be taken into account as model for today generations in holding the social and humanity responsible in their freedom. Independent thoughts and acting by appreciating other human being become individual and communal awareness today so each does not underestimate each other. Creative thoughts and actions for future as was owned by the founder should be inspiration of creative thinking and acting for personal and communal beneficence today. Words, slogan, and symbol raising the spirit of nationalism, love of mother land, patriotism to be continuity of history in the past, at present, and in the future. Words like *Indonesia Raya, Sekali Merdeka, Tetap Merdeka, Bagimu Negeri Aku Berbakti dan Mengabdikan*, and the like should trigger spirit to be good to oneself and others today and in the future. This is the gist of history as the basis of character in character education.

### **Historical Value and Education Practice**

The presence of value from history creating appreciation is the result of intellectual and methodological process because there is no eventually history occur the same way at different period of time. Relatively, historical value is reality shaped through historical exclamation (Popper, 1959). Every generation of history has right, and indeed it is a rational need to direct aims and plans at present and the future through the exclamation of historical events in the past which deal with person, thoughts, events, and actions. In other

words, the process of valuing and interpreting history needs acuteness of logic and methodological accurateness to create interpretive history as periodical intellectual process (Dewey, 1959). Referring to Popper and Dewey, understanding history is experiencing the educational process through teaching-learning process. Historical understanding to get historical value is the stages of historical process academically (high history), as proposed by Azra. It is clear that learning history is not only knowing the physical history but also understanding the details rationally and methodologically. History as historical academic is intellectual process in education which is limited to observation, identification, limiting, and rationalizing history. This understanding puts history as entity limited to abstract academics and becomes the individual domain of researchers and historians.

The noble purpose of history is continuity of academical history (high history) and non academical history (low history). Researchers and historians should make the historical value as a result of academical process be the communal possession as a whole in taking the historical responsible at their time as historical beings. One of the responsible is fostering the historical value as an academic product (micro education) in the whole educational practice in macro scale. In the level of cogitation of education, policymakers, planners, and education managers always think and expel patriotic commitment (empire era), self-reliance (colonial era/VOC), equality (ethical politic era), freedom and nationalism (hassle for freedom era), and national unity (beginning of independence era) as inheritance of historical value in our educational practice (Jalal et al, 2001). The question is 'how is the historical value in our educational policy, planning, and management today?' Our amending reference is Education National Standard (*Standar Nasional Pendidikan*).

Our curriculum structure and content, reasoning for global competence and competition, no longer puts history subject as an important matter significantly as part of *Geisteswissenschaften* (knowledge about human being), but place forward the *Naturwissenschaften* (knowledge about the outer world of human) (Dilthey, 1961). Moreover, history is made as a part other *Geisteswissenschaften* by a unified reason. It can be imagined from this kind of educational practice that the process of understanding history as academical history is not the priority of our educational policy, planning, and management. Thus, the rationally and methodologically understanding of history is disturbed and it diminishes the appreciation historical value, also disturbs the practice of historical value in the context of non academical history context (real world). Patriotic commitment, self-reliance, equality, freedom, nationalism, and national unity as the initial thought becomes only thought in the policy formation, planning, and educational management which are not implemented.

The same thing happen to education national standard about the passing grade. Passing grade is not use as a reference of education working standard, but as reference of nationally graduation through National Examination (*Ujian Akhir Nasional/UAN*). In fact, the passing grade through UAN results the management of education in some levels does not appreciate the self-reliance, honesty, and the continuity process as it is and the historical value itself. This statement is not to weaken the passing grade and UAN. The problem lies on UAN as standard reference of graduation in educational unit (school). In the level of cogitation, policy, and planning, the existence of passing grade is good, yet it is not followed up by an adequate supervision.

What about the official standard? Because policy and planning in curriculum substance is dominated on the *Naturwissenschaften*, the management of the educational manpower (teacher of history subject matter) is ignored. Teachers on *Geisteswissenschaften* besides history are demanded to teach history. They are not to blame if their understanding about history academically is limited. This kind of curriculum policy and planning also causes the limited recruitment of history teacher because the responsible of history teacher can be taken over by other teacher in *Geisteswissenschaften*. This kind of policy, planning, and management is not only on the process of developing history educational manpower in a higher educational compartment (LPTK), but also influential to the interest of the learners to learn history in the view of academical history. Indirectly, this kind of educational practice creates the spirit of impartiality in education.

The management of the process of education according to Education National Standard also needs to be researched from the appreciation of historical value point of view. The changing of state structure context from centralization into decentralization agreed with UU No. 30/2004 about the Regional Autonomy overlooked the historical aspects in nationalism by the aim of putting forward the national interest before the group and communal interest. With less comprehensive understanding (TPE, 2005), meritocratism consideration was not taken into account in deciding the educational responsible in many educational working unit. The selection of education technical executors in region is interfered by the local rulers' local politics. This kind of educational practice obviously affects the effectivity of educational movement as historical process in conducting and taking responsible of independence. It is the same as the infrastructure and capitals standard which is not fulfilled yet in some parts of this country. It is understood that the Indonesia geographical condition is the reason of the uneven spread of educational infrastructure and capitals agree with the education national standard. That is why the assessment agree with the education national standard is not evenly applied in different field or area. Certainly, this kind of management disapprove the historical values in case of equality and

impartiality. For this reason, the education milestone with 'equality access' concept is not that appropriate, and it is better to take the 'access to be equal' concept. It is not impossible for one standard is achieved by educational community with different various willingness to hold process.

The educational funding also experiences today historical problem which ignores the past historical value. The Regional Autonomy with its attributes results regional disparity in many aspects which then influence the level of disparity of educational organizer disparity in the autonomous region. It will be much easier and more flexible for area rich with natural resources and regional native income (*Pendapatan Asli Daerah/PAD*) to manage the educational fund estimation, but less wealthy area find it difficult to work it the same way. This condition disapprove the commitment of nationalism and unity as the tenet of nation's history, and it is apprehensive to be the trigger of nationalism and unity to fade away.

The management of education is still interfered by the inequality toward community's education (private education). This condition seems to ignore the principle of education as agreed in *UU Sistem Pendidikan Nasional* (National Education System) (Pemerintah RI, 2003). In the historical view, this condition disapprove the order of history yearning impartiality and equality in education as a reaction toward the policy of colonial ethical politic. Most of the government's great educational capitals/facilities are accessed by the state educational institutions. In many debility cases of strategic analysis, the society's education with its uniqueness of the local policy is slowly weakened by state educational institutions. This kind of educational practice disapprove the moral order of history about self-reliance of thought, feeling, and action.

The educational valuation is also still debated dealing with the tendency of cognitive and quantitative valuation which is equal with affective-psychomotoric and qualitative. Educational valuation practice has already created today generation with cognitive-quantitative logical way of thinking rather than affective-psychomotoric and qualitative. This shows that our education process disapprove different various human nature. The individual differences fade away because of cognitive tendency. This kind of educational reduction practice has weakened the democratic values ordered by history in the past.

The previous description and example is not meant to jerk or push away the existence of National Education Standard (*Standar Pendidikan Nasional*) as the product of educational thoughts in form of educational planning policy, but it is to give inscription about the ignorance and the inappropriateness between the educational thoughts and some reality educational practice today. This fact—to the writer—is a form of a stumpy appreciation toward the past historical value at present. The educational thought based on nation historical values which is reduced through

educational practices as shown in the previous example causes the educational practices become abandoned or ignored dialectics.

### Conclusion

History is a number of continuum values in the history of the historical value owner, which is human as historical creature in historical process. Being a value, history is gained through academical process (high history) and transformed in non academical world (low history). This process lasts following the history of human in creating new history. The present thoughts, feelings, and actions should be the process of appreciating the history conception academically in non-academic world, including historical value and its implementation in educational field. If the thoughts of history and its value are the reference of educational practice, it is meant educational dialectics appreciating historical value in shaping the nation's character.

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