

Implementing Character Education: Elementary Teachers' Perceptions, Practices, and Challenges in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study is about the implementation of character education as applied as a sample for elementary schools in Indonesia. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore elementary teachers' perspectives on character education as implemented in these schools, based on their teaching experience. Data of the study were collected from semi-structured interviews with 10 elementary teachers in 10 different provinces in Indonesian public and private elementary schools. The questions addressed in the study were elementary teachers' perspectives based on (a) descriptions of students' behavior and the reason why this certain behavior occurred during their time at school from the point of view of the teachers; (b) the essentials of character education that have been applied in the elementary school settings; and (c) the implementation of character education in schools, including the explanation of teaching approaches being applying to character education. The results of the study revealed that students' unpleasant behavior differed and caused by a variety of reasons. The study concluded with a set of suggestions for the development of character education in Indonesia.

Keywords: Character education, teachers' perspectives, elementary schools.

1. Introduction

Education, as the essential ingredient of life, should be accessible to people all around the world, embraces all aspects of life and help develop people's character. Berkowitz and Schwartz (2014) state that developing an education plan for good character needs participation from all stakeholders. Schools, besides family backgrounds and social environments, also play a crucial role in building a student's character. Character education must involve all parties such as school governors, headmasters, teachers, school staff, and parents in order to be effective within the school. In order to be successful, it must be integrated into the curriculum and the school culture and supported by the whole school community. Furthermore, as Doughty (2014) mentions that there are two roles of a good school which is to educate students academically, and the second role is to help children grow. On the other hand, schools have the purposes not to grade or score students, but also to form them becoming a wholly developed person.

Character education should be implemented from the very beginning of the education process. Berkowitz (2014) states 'the main constituent of character becomes optimal

and fully operative during the childhood', this can be a significant period for the beginning of the transition to becoming a teenager than an adult. Burhanudin (2015) states that Indonesia is one of many countries that stressed the importance of character education, especially for children.

Teachers, as one of a key element in implementing character education, are often as a target to blame, when students showed bad behavior or characters because many people still believe that how students behave is mostly influenced by what students experience in schools. Teachers, as people who are in the front line, take the responsibilities for this, meanwhile, teaching and learning processes are not the only factor which determines the development of students character but other factors such as the curriculum, the school's values and regulations, which all support the development of character education at school.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Structure

The description of the character and human personality was first attempted in the ancient Greek civilization and originally referred to a mark impressed upon a coin. Oxford

dictionary defined character as ‘the qualities of an individual’s moral, the strength, and originality in a person’s nature’. Battistich (2008) defines it as manners or attitudes which someone has in his/her life including all traits showing in his/her day to day life’. It is about the concern for other’s welfare and truthful and conscientious behavior, as well as by having social and emotional skills that can make an individual be able to associate eloquently with other people in many types of and be responsible to help the society.

2.2. Character Education

In her research, Pala (2011) defines that the nature of character includes but is not limited to ‘courage, consideration, honesty, commitment, understanding, politeness, self-awareness’. It is also, ‘an appreciation of school personnel, school safety considerations, and active citizenship’. Someone’s character is seen by the traits and behavior that specify the person’s manner when encountering both failure and triumph, as well as chance. Specifically, Fertman and Van Linden (1999) explain character education as the direction in integrity, confidence, collaboration, honor, commitment, expectation and fidelity. The basic premise of these definitions is to describe particularly that character education related to the traits of the students’ behavior especially at the school.

2.3. Character Education in Elementary Schools

Berkowitz (2014) clarified that for effective character education the basic concept to be considered is how people treat the child, as children’s development is influenced by what they observe. Consequently it is pointless to expect children to be respectful and responsible if the adults in their lives do not act respectfully and responsibly.’ That is why character education should be taught essentially at school. Teachers have an important responsibility to be a role model for the child at school. Children need schools that promote student autonomy and influence. They need the opportunity to build skills such as perspective-taking, critical thinking, and conflict resolution, necessary for being a person of character. They also need opportunities to do well (Berkowitz, 2014).

Schools increasingly promote various community service activities. Peer discussion, student self-governance, and charity are examples of such opportunities. There are many children who do not obtain a good example in their development process. Many children are growing up in conditions that do not provide the moral or ethical framework required to develop good character. Almost every state specifies the responsibility of schools in developing moral or democratic values in students, as well as academic knowledge. In addition to the responsibility, and possibly more important, the obligation of public education is to develop, as well as good individuals, good citizens, who understand their rights and responsibilities in society. In light of all these reasons, the explanation of

character education should be more precise and detailed by examining the implementation of it in real life at school.

2.4. Character Education in Indonesian Schools

Education is one of the main aspects of concern in Indonesia. Indonesia’s National Education review at the beginning of 2010 illustrated the strong need of society for the necessity of cultural and character education. The government has identified an imperative need to create a better generation for the future, as formulated in the national education goals. History shows that the Indonesian government was very active in schools’ curriculum review since Independence Day in 1945. The development of the Indonesian curriculum can be seen as in the following figure;



Fig. 1. The Development of Indonesia National Curriculum (Human Resource Development Agency for Education and Culture Education and Quality Assurance, 2013).

The picture above shows that schools’ curriculum emphasizes the development of competence, year by year. However, the changing of the curriculum has not made any significant improvement at school. Changes happened in 2013 in order to support the paradigm of learning in schools through the integration of attitude, knowledge and skills. This change was motivated by understanding that learning in schools has paid less attention to the balance between attitudes, knowledge and skills, (Rahman, 2013). It was concluded that this curriculum would focus not only on the academic skills of the students but more importantly focus on the behavior and attitudes of the students, which could support the building of character education at school.

The 2013 curriculum emphasizes personal experience through observation (Listening, Viewing, Reading,), associations, asking, inferring and communicating. In terms of attitudes, it is not taught verbally, but through example and role models. This curriculum is more concerned with the learning of attitudes at the primary level. As in the previous curriculum, generally, the focus of all curricula is knowledge, skills, and attitudes. However, the 2013 curriculum review divides the quantity of each aspect into 4 levels of education as can be seen in this following figure;

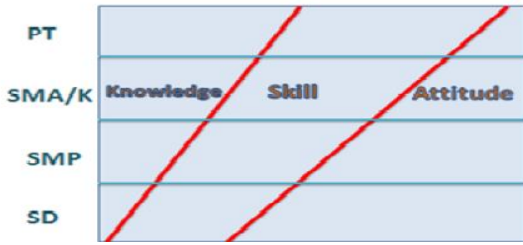


Fig. 2. The proportion of attitudes, knowledge, and skills (Human Resource Development Agency for Education and Culture Education and Quality Assurance, 2013).

Based on the picture above, attitude is the biggest aspect of the elementary level (SD) level rather than knowledge and skill. At junior high school (SMP), attitude is still the biggest aspect to be learned, even it is not as big as the elementary one. At the level of Senior high school (SMA/K), the three aspects are almost in equal place of the curriculum. At the highest level (PT or University), knowledge is developed more whilst the emphasis on attitude is the smallest. This concept shows that character building should be learned and developed from the early age of the students in order to get ready for higher education level with the good character they have developed since the elementary level. On the other hand, students in higher education are considered mature enough to apply their knowledge together with their good character in social life. The curriculum has provided a good way to build the students’ character at school.

3. Research Methodology and Data Collection

This research focused on elementary teachers’ perspectives based on (a) their descriptions of students’ behavior and the reason why this certain behavior occurred during their time at school from the point of view of the teachers; (b) the essentials of character education that have been applied in the elementary school settings; and (c) the implementation of character education in schools, including the explanation of teaching approaches being applying to character education.

For the purposes of this research, a qualitative case study methodology has been chosen. A case study is ‘a specific instance that is frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle’ (Cohen, 2007). The participants of this study were ten teachers from elementary schools in ten different provinces in Indonesia. The selected teachers were those who have taught exclusively at the elementary level (ranging from year 1– 6).

Table 1. Participants

Participants, Province	Gender	Teaching Experience
Interviewee 1, Aceh	Male	4
Interviewee 2, West Sumatra	Male	4
Interviewee 3, North Sumatra	Female	6
Interviewee 4, Riau	Female	6

Interviewee 5, DKI Jakarta	Female	5
Interviewee 6, West Java	Female	4
Interviewee 7, East Java	Female	5
Interviewee 8, Bali	Male	5
Interviewee 9, West Kalimantan	Male	6
Interviewee 10, Papua	Male	6

Using an interview technique is an effective means of generating the necessary data. Cohen (2007) considers that most qualitative research will convey the perspective of the interviewees. In this research, each of the teachers was interviewed individually for approximately 40 - 50 minutes. In order to get accurate and detailed responses from the participants, the interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder. The list of the questions presented to the interviewees was as follows:

- Please describe the bad habits/behaviors which are most commonly displayed in students during their time at school.
- In your opinion as a teacher, why do students demonstrate bad habits/behavior and which factors stimulate them in doing so?
- Is there any correlation with their social background?
- It is believed that character can be formed by repeating a habit, either good or bad. In your perspective as a teacher, what is character?
- In terms of education, should character education be applied at school? Why?
- How is character education applied at your school? (Either in the context of the whole curriculum over all subjects or, alternatively, in the context of specific subjects).
- What is the challenge/difficulty in applying character education at school?
- Do you have any suggestions on how to develop good character in the students of the future?
- Any other comments?
- Is there anything that you think I should have asked you about character education?

For the purposes of the analysis of the research data, thematic analysis is used in order to analyze and identify the data within the themes and subthemes. This research examined teachers’ perspectives of students’ bad behavioral traits at school, including their suggestions and advice on how to improve character. The next part will consider findings from the research, particularly within the context of previous research carried out on character education.

4. Findings

4.1. Students’ Bad Behaviors or Characters

In all cases, participants have been teaching for a minimum of four years. Indeed, seven participants from the sample group have been teaching for over five years. Apart

from those pursuing further studies, all participants were still in active service. The interviews revealed several common significant problems related to character education.

There are a few themes emerged from this study, which include undisciplined behavior, bullying, bad languages or words, and dominant students and low-level distractive behavior.

4.1.1. *Undisciplined behavior*

The most common expression of this – not necessarily confined to students, rather society as a whole – is littering. Unfortunately, this is particularly the case in Indonesia. An explanation for this may be that facilities are not in place to support Indonesian society to maintain a clean environment. For instance, many public areas do not yet have the availability of litter bins which inevitably exacerbates this problem of littering. However, all respondents agreed that the lack of availability of facilities should not be the reason that people litter. In their opinion, the fundamental issue which must be considered is the character of the people responsible, and their lack of awareness. The teachers believed that character is formed by bad habits and the more the habit is practiced, the stronger the bad character formed as a result. Furthermore, in the context of school, teacher or interviewee 3 expressed her opinion that littering is more common in public schools rather than in private schools. This teacher was strategic in his approach to littering during his teaching periods. Before the end of each class, she would request that students check their desks and the area surrounding their desks to ensure that if there was any rubbish, this was disposed of by the student. This approach had the objective of making students more aware of the environment in which they live and encouraged them to be disciplined. Significantly, this method increased the students' awareness of a clean environment in the classroom and outside the classroom which they used to put the rubbish in the bin.

The case of littering in public schools are more common than private schools was also supported by teacher or interviewee 4. His experience teaching in public school for two years and another four years in private school showed that private schools provided with more facilities such as trash bins in each class, office, and corridor. The private school where he is currently teaching is also providing a well-supported atmosphere to make, students aware of the importance of a clean environment, through posters, school regulations by giving rewards and punishments.

In the case of Indonesian schools, a further prevailing undisciplined behavioral aspect was arriving late to class, whether at the beginning of the class in the morning or in the next lesson period after a break. Teacher 10 commented that "sometimes, the students come late to the classroom in the morning and in between the changing time of the lesson", which results in distractions during lesson time. In his opinion, one of the motivating factors is because students stay up late at night - playing video games or watching the television - and do not have enough time to sleep so it is hard for them to get up early in the morning. Additionally, one of

the teachers described that students who like to disturb their friends during lesson time or simply just to chat and fool around were also distracting to the class environment. Other Indonesian students habitually doodle/draw on their books during the study, which inevitably disturbs concentration. Consequently, the teacher may conclude that these students are simply not interested in the lesson being taught at that time.

4.1.2. *Bullying, swearing, cursing or bad languages*

The most worrying character trait expressed by students was bullying. Research shows that the incidence of bullying has significantly increased year on year. It is mostly determined by family background and it typically happens more at private schools since students who go to private schools spend a lot of money on tuition fees and come from a high-income family. In teacher 4's opinion, "I think bullying is one of the bad things and mostly happens in the private school sector." Their family's background tends to make them proud of who they are with a high standard of living.

Furthermore, students in Indonesia typically swear and use bad language in their everyday language. There are some reasons why students like to do it. According to teacher 8, "one day they play with their friends and they [got] something new for instance the bad words, they will try to say that words over and over again to attract people's attention and they like to do it." In his point of view, children who do this get less attention from their parents.

According to teacher 5, "Bullying among girls [happens] in years 4, 5, and 6 and excluding other girls and friendships group." This more often happens among girls rather than boys since girls are more likely to form groups. In addition, teacher 8 and 9, found that social media sometimes influenced children and teens in this area. She said, "I think the bad thing is bullying under social media, phones, and sort of things and I think the internet has been a great influence. They sometimes live their life about whether they get enough likes on Facebook or Instagram. Bad comments, bad languages, cursing words, are often known by students as well from the internet or social media."

In addition, teacher 7 explained that cursing and swearing also occurred regularly in her school. However, she explained that "Children are not doing that meaningfully, but because it is a part of their vernacular language, street language." Since children naturally imitate the people around them, street language used by people are easy to pick up, and it is one of the teacher's tasks to keep reminding the students not to use such bad language - even if students will do it repeatedly, as teacher 6 experienced, "But then, when I would correct pupils for that, they would apologize. And they might forget again, and I would remind them. And they would then again apologize."

4.1.3. *Dominant Students*

The interviews revealed that the next biggest behavioral issue was the dominant characters in the classroom. Nine from ten interviewed teachers explained that domineering

students are evident in both and private schools. Based on the explanation from teacher 1, this behavior impacts the class environment. He reported that “due to most of them are dominant, so they prefer to say their own opinion rather than listen to the others.” This also happens sometimes when the teacher is explaining the lesson and some students are still talking with their friends. This dominant trait results in some students becoming the center of attention by others. These dominant students, interestingly, are the same students who usually do the bullying or cursing and using bad language.

According to teacher 3, she said, “Due to their parents always shouting at them or even speaking with a loud voice, then the behavior is carried out to school, so sometimes in the school, they like shouting and talking in a loud voice.” In any case, teacher 5 agreed with other teachers that family is one of the factors influencing the children’s development.

4.1.4. Low-Level Distractive Behavior

Teacher 5 described that “in the classroom, there would be low-level sort of distractive behavior, such as moving around, clicking pens, the pupils suddenly deciding they want to get something from their bag, etc. So it will be more minor and I think [it just] happened at the start of the year, then after a month they will get used to the rules of the class [and] it tends to minimize a little bit. I think the teachers should have the rule and guidance to educate the students and that it is one of the reasons why the whole school’s behavior policy is really important for the teachers too.” Obviously, the bad habit may influence others. Teacher 5 gave an example of students who sometimes create a high atmosphere in the classroom or school and can influence other students to do the same. The interviews revealed that the second biggest behavioral issue was the dominant characters in the classroom.

All the bad habits mentioned above are proof that children can form bad habits, as well as good ones, at school. Since school is the place where children learn many things, both for their daily life and their future, we need to pay attention to the school’s development in order to create an environment conducive to study. As well as a place to gain academic knowledge, school is also a place where students’ attitude and character is formed. In this matter, teachers had their personal opinions of the character education applied in schools as the next findings explain.

4.2. Motivating Factors of Students’ Bad Behavior

To sum up, all the interviewees considered that both internal and external factors are responsible for students’ bad habits and behavior. The internal factor is the student’s personality and the external factors can be the family background or social factors such as the environment. Both teachers 2 and 5 agreed that there is a correlation between students’ behavior and social culture. They believed there are various causes of undisciplined behavior. Teacher 2 ascertained that parents are one of the social factors that influence the behavior of the children because parents and family are the first environments experienced by children.

Their basic character will be formed from that stage. Teacher 5 also raised the point that social factors, including family income and social class, may affect the students’ behavior. She said “They seem tough to the people beside them and classmates. Just in the way they used their language and things like that. But I think it’s like a cultural thing which the teacher should understand as well.” This indicated that those family backgrounds may trigger the students to become more aggressive.

Overall, both teachers agreed that family is the basic determinant of children before they go outside the house and have their lives at school and other places. However, teacher 1 explained that before coming to the social factor which mostly family as the foundation, the individual is the basic factor affecting the student’s character. He said, “Actually, the individual is the first factor caused the character or behavior. Indeed, the children’s manner is like that and they mostly come from the wealthy family and they have high intellectual intelligence so their tendency to be more active and talkative in the classroom.” Hence, the children’s personality as the internal factor supported by the condition of the family as the external factor formed the children’s behavior and character. In addition, teacher 4 explained her teaching experience which she related to the social factors influencing the students’ character.

In the final analysis, based on the interviews with all the participants, it was clear that character education is an essential aspect to be considered in the students’ life-learning experience. Not only the students but also the teachers and all the stakeholders of the school must support the implementation of character education. Ten teachers in ten provinces in Indonesia agreed that the way in which character education is implemented should be determined by its purpose within the curriculum, the behavioral challenges presented and the level of development in the country overall. Character education is central to the Indonesian curriculum, which means character education is expected to be a focus of research in the field of education.

5. Discussion

The main purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings of this research in greater depth and critically to examine the results for their practical implications. Additionally, the finding discovered based on the title of the research will be clearly explained at the end of the analysis.

5.1. The correlation between students’ behavior and character education

There is no doubt that character education must be learned by everyone throughout their lifetime. There is a lot of research about whether character education which brings about a good character should be taught and learned. A students’ life is indeed one of the good times to learn to have a good character. The ways to help students to develop their intelligence and their self-control, as well as to enable them to choose the right path for their life is by focusing on

character study. This can also help them to achieve their academic aims. The time children and adolescents spend at school certainly teach them how to read and write, and to get to know the social and natural sciences. However, embedding character education into the school's curriculum will encourage them to think about treating others differently (Larson, 2009). Therefore, students' behavior is the main factor which supports the program of character education. Based on the results of the research, it was found that behavior is interwoven with the character of the students, either good or bad since all the teachers from both countries agreed that students' characters can be shaped by repeated behavior performed by the students.

Overall, students' bad behavior, based on ten teachers' interviews from ten different provinces are almost the same. Undisciplined students, dominant students, and low-level distraction behavior happened in the schools as a phenomenon, while the children spent their time learning. Surprisingly, the information about the issue of bullying in Indonesia based on the interviews is hugely different from the current reality. Teachers from Indonesia did not say much about bullying. It is perhaps because bullying did not happen in their schools during their teaching time. Unfortunately, based on the report from UNICEF Indonesia (2016), the rate of bullying in Indonesia is one of the highest in the world. The statistics state that bullying happens to 55% of boys and to 45% of girls. Most of the students from year 7 to 9 years old felt that bullying happened to them at least once. 8.2 % of the students bullied were kicked, pushed, disturbed or even locked inside a room by others. The fact that children's behavior is the core of this problem should be a big concern within education.

Basically, to understand children's behavior required people to understand firstly the children's needs (GreatSchools.org, 2015). They identified some basic needs that children require during their childhood. They are freedom, fun, belonging, and power. Those needs actually exist in children's minds and have to be controlled by their elders. Therefore, the family is one supportive aspect to control them and encourage the development of character education. If the family does not pay attention to it, their children's character is unlikely to be well-developed. Bulach's research (2002) supports the fact that insufficient moral lessons taught by the parents at home will cause a pattern of children's bad behavior and consequently, schools needed to introduce character education training to the teachers and parents.

All teachers suggested that the family, especially the parents, should support the curriculum of character education at school. But even so, does everybody understand clearly and deeply about character education itself, since the parents, teachers, and the stakeholders should support its implementation? Assorted understandings appeared during the interview with all the teachers. Commonly, they had the same comprehension that character is the moral values and attitudes reflected in someone's behavior, as well as their point of view to others. Lickona (2003) states that character is mostly about the core ethical values of a person and the

school has to be committed to the development of these values.

In contrast, Tomaselli and Golden (1996) have a different idea regarding the values of character education. They argued that values and virtues that sound proper to be applied in class have no applicability in the real world. Thus, they applied a program named Achievement Based Character Development (ABCD) with the basic purpose of the program is to comprehend students' learning styles as well as the teachers' teaching style. In the end, the program indeed helped the students to learn much relevant information about themselves. Also, the teachers and parents understood their students' and children's learning behavior. However, it still needs evidence to prove the effectiveness of the program for the purpose of character education.

The finding shows that effective implementation of character education needs to relate to the factors which caused students' bad behavior. One of the factors is students might feel bored with the lesson, friends, and teacher in the classroom. Christensen (2016) supports this idea of boredom. She explained that some children act up in the classroom if they are not challenged by the lesson and others are struggling to keep up academically. Next, social culture is also one of the factors which influenced the bad behavior of the students. Most teachers said that the parents' background, friends, and living environment influenced the students' behavior. Children who feel loved and appreciated at home will show less bad behavior. In her research, Lovett (2008) describes that US class rules are not the same in each school. However, all the students are informed by the same basic academic values. Students from other cultures who do not comprehend and work by the same values might not understand the purpose of the class rules and they could have different behavior from the others. Considering this, it is clearly seen that the list of bad behavior explained in the results is the starting point of the character formation of the student's personality. Therefore, the issue of character education and its implementation in schools should be considered.

5.2. Teachers' perspectives on the essential of character education to be applied in schools

For most of history, education has been firstly about character and secondly about academic achievement (William, 2000). Then, he illustrates a reason that character education is comprehensive and combines the aspects of children's growth which include the affective, cognitive and behavioral aspects of learning. In this case, the perspective on the essential nature of character education as applied in schools will be the best starting point to examine the future of character education. Improving students' character is the main purpose of education in Indonesia.

In Indonesia, character education is one of the national education goals. Article I National Education Act of 2003 states that among the objectives of national education is one of developing the potential of learners, to have intelligence, personality, and noble character

According to the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (2011, cited in USAID, 2013), there are 18 values that must be inserted in the educational process in Indonesia. They are religion, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democratic, curiosity, the spirit of nationalism, patriotism, respect for achievements, friendship/communication, the love of peace, the love of reading, a caring environment, a social conscience, and responsibility. Therefore, all the teachers have the same perspectives regarding this. This supported the perspective of one of the teachers who see character education as more of a religious activity through some of the rules created by the school governors, such as daily worship in the morning. In addition, most of the teachers in Indonesia stated that civic education contains a lot of valuable lessons and citizenship is the biggest part of what is discussed in the subject.

The other point is about students' significant improvement through character education. Applying character education more in its extracurricular activities rather than in any subject. Consequently, the children's character might seem more outgoing compared to when they are in the classroom. One of the teachers from Aceh added that society also has the responsibility to the children's character. Setyawan (2014) writes about the necessity for society to support character education. Society must have the awareness to show good character in daily activities, such as changing the habit of littering into the custom of putting the rubbish in the bin especially in public areas. Likewise, in Indonesia, the role of society is necessary for improving character education which is reflected in history, which records that the progress and excellence of a nation are not determined by the wealth of natural resources but more by human resources with an upright character.

5.3. The implementation of character education in schools and the challenges

Furthermore, the essentials of character education are not only based on the perspectives and experiences informed by the teachers. More importantly, is how it is implemented in real-time at school. The interviews resulted in information on how teaching character is applied in the schools of both countries. Most of the teachers agreed that teaching character education needs a lot of preparation before it is implemented. It is necessary to arrange a strong foundation in the earlier grades to reinforce it for the later grades (Pala, 2011). For instance, there are some similarities between both countries in implementing character education in schools. One of the similarities in the activity of the students who do a little praying every morning before they start the lesson. This is certainly one of the best ways to support character education in schools. Because intrinsic character traits and beliefs will establish someone's behavior in having a relation not only with God but also with the people around them (Bulach, 2002).

Subsequently, the more developed the education, the greater the challenges appear to its further development. The

Indonesian government has worked on the curriculum setting over the years to improve education until the government created the 2013 curriculum which focuses on the students' character. On the one hand, Dahari (2013) states that the lesson plan which was arranged by the central government aims to alleviate teacher's tasks. It is expected to give more time to the teachers to keep focusing on teaching rather than spending their time making lesson plans. On the other hand, Vickytasari (2013) explains that in the 2013 curriculum, teachers act passively in planning the lessons because the syllabus and lesson plans have been drawn up by the central government. It means the teachers cannot develop their lesson plans freely. Therefore, she suggested that it requires training for teachers, both in terms of the implementation of the lesson plans as well as in the way of delivering the lesson in the classroom so that all the material can be delivered as a whole and the students know or understand the material being taught by the teacher.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study identified many things that were not recognized before, concerning the conditions of teaching character education in ten provinces in Indonesia. As written previously, the aim of this research is to gain the teachers' perspectives on the implementation of teaching character education as applied at some experience of teaching character education in Primary Schools.

The result of this research uncovered the merits and drawbacks in order to provide suggestions for the schools' stakeholders, teachers, parents, and the wider society to implement character education in schools. First, the indicator of a student's character is the student's behavior. As this research was undertaken to prove the essential nature of teaching character education, so in consequence, the only behavior to be recorded is the students' bad behavior. The bad behavior was caused by many factors both internal and external. Based on their teaching experience, character education when applied showed the students' improvement in their character through the learning process. However, the challenges that teachers faced have sometimes obstructed them from running character education in schools. Therefore, improvement is still necessary to implement it.

To conclude, teaching character education has been necessary and is applied in the educational system in each school and each province in Indonesia. The improvement has not yet been significant as there are still many things to be improved in terms of the rules for teaching character education, hence the government keeps working on it up to the present day, to keep improving the education curriculum for better education in the future.

Some recommendations have been listed especially for those who intend to do similar research on character education at some point. Firstly, more types of participants would give more perspectives on character education such as school principals, parents, and even students, so the discussion will be more extensive and complete. Secondly, it can also use other methods of research rather than just interviewing the participants. Distributing questionnaires

could be another alternative. Eventually, the discussion about character education could examine specifically certain traits such as honesty, patience, responsibility, to find out the reality of the students' character in their life at school.

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