

**The Implementation of Character
Building through Living Values
Education in the English
Language Course Program at
Mahima Institute Indonesia, Bali.**

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Abstrak

Pendidikan merupakan aspek penting untuk mendapatkan kesuksesan di dunia yang kompetitif ini. Mirisnya, dunia pendidikan dikejutkan oleh berbagai kejadian negatif yang terjadi di sekolah umum di seluruh dunia, seperti kekerasan fisik, kekerasan senjata, penyalahgunaan narkoba, dan intimidasi psikologis. Salah satu solusi dari permasalahan tersebut adalah dengan memberikan pendidikan karakter dengan menerapkan Living Values Education (LVE) di sekolah. Di Mahima Institute Indonesia, sebuah Kursus Bahasa Inggris di Bali, LVE diterapkan untuk menanamkan nilai-nilai kehidupan dalam karakter siswa. Ada dua belas nilai yang diajarkan kepada siswa yaitu kedamaian, cinta kasih, rasa hormat, tanggung jawab, toleransi, kejujuran, kerendahan hati, kebahagiaan, kerja sama, kesederhanaan, kebebasan dan persatuan. Nilai-nilai ini tertanam dalam banyak kegiatan di kelas melalui lagu, permainan, proyek, dan kegiatan lainnya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan penelitian kualitatif. Sedangkan metode penelitiannya adalah studi kasus. Teknik pengumpulan data berupa wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Teknik analisis data dilakukan melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, dan verifikasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa LVE memberikan kesempatan kepada siswa untuk lebih mendalami nilai dan mengapa nilai itu penting. LVE juga menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang positif di kelas dan mengajarkan siswa bagaimana saling menghormati, peduli satu sama lain sambil bersenang-senang di kelas. Oleh karena itu, para siswa tidak hanya belajar secara akademik, tetapi juga karakter.

Kata kunci: karakter, pendidikan karakter, *living values education*

Abstract

Education is an essential aspect to get success in this competitive world. Sadly, the education world was shocked by numerous negative incidents happening in public schools around the globe, such as physical violence, gun violence, drug abuse and psychological bullying. One of the solutions to this problem is to give character education by implementing Living Values Education (LVE) in schools. In Mahima Institute Indonesia, an English Language Course in Bali, LVE is applied to embed living values in students' character. There are twelve values taught to students, namely peace, love, respect, responsibility, tolerance, honesty, humility, happiness, cooperation, simplicity, freedom and unity. These values are embedded in many activities in classroom through songs, games, projects and other activities. This study utilized qualitative research approach. Meanwhile, the research method is a case study. The data collection techniques were in the form of interviews, observation, and documentation.

The data analysis techniques were carried out through data reduction, data presentation, and verification. The results of the study show that LVE provide opportunities to students to explore more about values and why it is important. LVE also creates a positive learning environment in classroom and teach the students how to be respectful, care for each other while having fun in classroom. Therefore, the students learn not only academically, but also characters.

Keywords: character, character education, living values education

Introduction

In this competitive world, education is recognized as one of many important aspects contributing one's success. Education paves and shapes many ways to go ahead in the future, and gives many opportunities to all mankind to get better life. Due to this reason, schools, universities and other educational providers have been flocked by many students understanding that education will bring major accomplishment to their life. The importance of education gives many impacts; one of the impacts is that many countries develop programs to educate their citizen. In fact, In Indonesia, the mandatory education program has been renewed. Initially, the government established a compulsory education program for 9 years. Recently, the Indonesian government updated the mandatory education program from previously only 9 years to 12 years. If we add up the compulsory education programs with a person's age, then a student is required to attend school until the age of 18. In this lengthy period of time, it is seen important to create a safe space and environment in schools and other educational providers so that the students can learn well.

However, lately, the education world was shocked by numerous negative incidents happening in public schools around the globe. It was even more devastating that many incidents in public schools involve violence and atrocities among young students. A UNESCO report in 2019 confirms that almost one in three students (32%) has been bullied by their peers at school at least once in the last month and a similar proportion is affected by physical violence, according to the

publication. Not only that, schools nowadays also deal with gun violence, drug abuse and psychological bullying. These quickly become major issues in education world, because schools, as one of educational providers for the youth, are not providing a safe environment for the students both physically and emotionally. Many students feel unsafe coming to schools, understanding that they might receive negative treatment from their peers. This concerns many education practitioners, particularly on what to teach to these students so that the schools' environment can run in harmony.

Tirtarahardja & Sulo (2005) explain, education is very complex because it can be reviewed from many aspects. Other than intellectuality, one of the aspect that should be brought into attention is human's character. In fact, education should cover not only knowledge and skill, but also attitude as one of characters that should be owned by the students when gaining education in schools. According to Battistich (2005), character is defined as the realization of one's positive development as a person—intellectually, socially, emotionally, and ethically. To be a person of good character, one should possess a good quality of attitudes, skills, motivation, and behaviors. This includes the act of doing the best as well as concerning other's welfare, good behavior, such as being honest and responsible, etc. In other words, education should not only include academic materials, but also character building among students. In Indonesia, character education has been drawn into attention since the characters of Indonesia's youth have declined into crisis, such as brawling between schools, gang violence, teen pregnancy, or

bullying. These behavior, according to many educational experts, are due to the failure of Indonesia's education system in building a strong character which reflects moral and social behavior. The failure of Indonesia's education system is debatable until now, realizing that character education should be emerged in the formal curriculum. Character education, if done early and well, provides path to a successful life outcomes. When students are given character education, this will involve a character development to deal effectively with life and to avoid becoming involved in negative behavior. As character is closely related with moral quality, it becomes important to bring moral values into attention through the dimension of right-wrong and good-bad behavior. Therefore, character education promotes solutions to ethical and academic problems of the students. By the application of character education, educators transform not only the school environment, but also increase achievement for all learners. Besides, character education is a good solution to prevent antisocial and unhealthy behavior so that the students can perform good behavior when they interact with larger society.

As evidence, Thompson (2002) conducted a research entitled "The Effects of Character Education on Student Behavior", which suggested that character education programs have a positive effect on student behavior. Seven out of ten students included in the study had been referred to the office for disciplinary reasons over the last three years. All seven showed a decrease in the number of referrals during the study. The result of this study proves that character education has a positive effect to overcome students' behavior problems. Therefore, character building among students is needed to be inserted in schools to reduce negative behaviors. The next question is: how do we insert characters in the education system?

One of many proposed programs is through Living Values Education (LVE) as a solution to human's needs of living harmoniously in society. This educational approach is not to teach, but to enliven the values. Because of that, this approach is important to stimulate students to live human values. One of the fundamental processes in the LVE approach, every educator is invited to reflect and explore his personal values, so that they can become the foundation for creating a values-based learning atmosphere. LVE promotes development planning by recognizing shared values. As an approach to learning, LVE is not a separate subject or curriculum. LVE is an educational approach that facilitates the formation of good attitudes and behavior and becomes a habit.

Living Values Education (LVE) is a universal values education program that provides a variety of experiential activities and practical methods for teachers and facilitators to assist children in exploring and developing universal values (Tillman & Hsu, 2004). LVE activities provide exercise to students to enliven values which feature fun methods, such as playing games, and singing songs that aim to instill character values. After attending the class, students are expected to be able to apply these values in everyday life, both at school, home and in the community.

There are twelve universal values developed in LVE, namely: peace, love, respect, responsibility, tolerance, honesty, humility, happiness, cooperation, simplicity, freedom, unity (Tillman & Hsu, 2004). These universal values were formulated by applying local values through fun activities. These values are flexible. Each country can add the values that exist in their countries according to existing local wisdoms. In other words, integrating the twelve universal values and the local wisdom is very effective to flourish good characters in every student.

These values, if they were to be learned theoretically, will not be effective to children since children learn best from doing. To be able to actualize these values, the educators must apply meaningful and contextual activities to promote the twelve values and the local wisdom as well. There are some activities that can be implemented in class such as reflection, imagining, practicing being silent, artistic expression, self-development activities, social skills (Tillman & Hsu, 2004). In addition, teachers and parents can also use other activities that are considered capable of making children feel the experience of actualizing character values in real life.

Mahima Institute Indonesia as one of the educational providers is very committed to providing a safe and comfortable environment to maximize learning. Realizing that children must learn living values in order to fit well into society, the English language learning in Mahima Institute Indonesia provides the students with many fun activities, reflection and hands-on activities to elevate students' characters. This study looked further on how the character education is inserted through the implementation of LVE in Mahima Institute Indonesia.

Method

This study uses a qualitative research approach. Meanwhile, the research method is a case study. The case study research method is a research method that is focused on just one phenomenon that is chosen and wants to be understood in depth, ignoring other phenomena. Therefore, this study explores how the LVE approach is implemented in instilling character values. The participants of this research were the teachers in Mahima Institute Indonesia with data collection techniques in the form of interviews, observation, and documentation.

Interviews were conducted with teachers, students, and parents of students. The

observations were carried out during learning activities, both in class and during excursions. Documentation was carried out on various phenomena that occurred during the research carried out, involving teachers, parents and students. Documentation is also carried out in the form of collecting files that are relevant to research needs, such as curriculum documents and daily, weekly and semester learning implementation plans.

The data analysis techniques were carried out through data reduction, data presentation, and verification. Data reduction was carried out by summarizing, selecting the main things, focusing on the things that are important, and removing data that is unnecessary. Presentation of data is done by providing a brief description of the data found in the field. Verification is the process of drawing conclusions by re-checking through data triangulation (Sugiyono, 2016).

Results

When talking about character education, there are so many contributing aspects that influence character education in its application. This includes positive school culture, moral education, just communities, caring school communities, social-emotional learning, positive youth development, civic education, and service learning. All of these approaches promote the intellectual, social, emotional, and ethical development of young people and share a commitment to help young people become responsible, caring, and contributing citizens. According to Lickona (1991), character education is a real and deliberate effort to help people understand, care about, and act upon core ethical values (as cited in Utami, 2011). Meanwhile, Battistich defines character education as the deliberate use of all dimensions of school life to foster optimal character development. Education is seen as a powerful tool to transmit character quality to the youth. In Character Education

Informational Handbook and Guide II (2006), it is stated that character education is a proactive way of adapting and using existing educational materials to promote understanding and inspire the development of good character traits among all students in every part of their learning experience. A character education which is carefully planned and integrated with the educational activities provides a perspective that every aspect in school can be an opportunity to promote character development. From these definitions, it can be concluded that character education is very important to nurture human's character to prepare students to live in society.

In relation to character building, on an interview with the teachers in Mahima Institute Indonesia, they have the same opinion related to character education: character education means implanting moral values in children, such as the values of cooperation, compassion, love, tolerance, peace, honesty, justice, respect, humility, cooperation, happiness, unity, and freedom. The Living Values Education Program is seen very essential by the Mahima teachers in order to prevent negative behaviors in class which may impact to a broader scale: society. From the interview, the activities implemented in class which are integrated in the living values can be formulated as follows:

No	Values	Activities
1	Peace	Forgiving each others' faults and mistakes. After fights, the students are not left without any solution which may affect their relationship in the future. Rather, they were gathered to talk about the problems and forgive each other.
2	Love	Showing love to simple things. During class circle, the

		students say a few things they love about their friends. Some students answer: I love your hair, I love that you let me borrow your pencil, I love your smile, etc.
3	Respect	Looking up the definition of respect. Describing ways they have acted respectfully or disrespectfully in a particular week.
4	Responsibility	Throwing garbage in trash bin. Pushing the chairs after use. Erasing the whiteboard after use. Cleaning the classroom after the class is finished.
5	Tolerance	Learning about each other's culture. Making greeting cards of particular religious holidays. Bringing ethnic foods and share them to class. Using traditional costume (occasionally)
6	Honesty	Talking to students after an incident and explaining why honesty is important. Storytelling about honesty. Playing detective. Playing true/false.
7	Humility	Performing hidden acts of service, helping friends without expecting something in return, advising to not bragging
8	Happiness	Playing games, singing a song, applying smile day, smiling to other people during excursions, saying congratulations over

		others' success, breathing exercise to restore happiness
9	Cooperation	Providing project-based activities, engaging students to work in pair/group, providing problem-based activities, art project.
10	Simplicity	Appreciating small and simple things, such as flowers, fallen leaves, explaining procedures simply and concisely, wearing simple clothes and accessories to class
11	Freedom	Encouraging student to express their opinion, choosing characters freely during a play/conversation, independent drawing.
12	Unity	Making a friendship collage with friends, project work, group work, anti-bullying discussion, singing a unity song, digging deeper about a song/poem about unity

Table 1. The actualization of the living values in the classroom at Mahima Institute Indonesia

From the observation, many classes in Mahima Institute Indonesia are started with prayer and class circle. In the class circle, the students are asked to sit in circular shape, where the teacher sat in the big circle together with the students to lead the session. The teacher asks the students how they feel by asking questions such as: "How do you feel today?" "Are you happy/sad?" and the teacher asks the students why they feel happy or sad. The teacher also asks the students things they are grateful for, and encourages the students to speak in confidence. Based on the interview with the teachers, by doing the class circle, not

only it sets the classroom mood, it is also a form of embedding the living values to the students.

During the class, the teacher also emphasizes the expressions of 'thank you', 'sorry', and 'excuse me'. They even have a system of consequences, where the students are given a ticket of transgression if they behave inappropriately in class. In contrary, if they do well in class, the students will be given receipt of recognition as a positive feedback. These tickets will then be withdrawn; the names that are drawn from the collection of the transgression tickets will receive consequences such as cleaning the classroom, pushing the chair back, erasing the whiteboard or even cleaning the yard. Meanwhile, the names that were pulled out from recognition tickets will receive small gifts, such as eraser, pencil, pen, a small notebook and many more. By doing this, the students will learn that good deeds and bad actions will get consequences. Besides, this system lets the teacher to be fair in the classroom. Therefore, the students learn about being responsible for their own actions.

During school fights or tensions, the students are gathered in a small discussion about what really happens. If the students start blaming each other, the teacher, as the mediator, will ask the students to say sorry to each other for whatever reasons that might hurt each other's feelings. The session will be closed by shaking each other's hands and a promise that they will not repeat the same action. By doing this, the students will learn the values of peace and love, and the importance of keeping harmony in class. Based on the interview, this makes students rarely fight in class because they also learn about respect and consequences.

The benefits of this LVE approach are not only felt by the teachers in Mahima Institute Indonesia, but several previous studies have also shown the same thing. A study applied in RA Tiara Chandra Yogyakarta states that LVE is very effective and has a good impact on the

development of character values in students. The teachers apply several methods in embedding characters, including: exemplary actions, habituation, telling stories, and singing. Multiple values which have been internalized in students, namely: peace, honesty, respect, responsibility, cooperation, caring, love, happiness, and religion (Qadafi, 2020). This emphasizes that the implementation of Living Values Education is very significant in embedding character in students in Mahima Institute Indonesia.

Conclusion

From the results of the study, it can be concluded that Mahima Institute Indonesia apply LVE to embed living values to students in purpose of building character in students. LVE is applied through many activities, such as playing games, singing a song, applying smile day, smiling to other people during excursions, group work, problem-based activities, and many more. There are twelve values implanted in the classroom activities, they are peace, love, respect, responsibility, tolerance, honesty, humility, happiness, cooperation, simplicity, freedom and unity.

Based on the observation and interview, it can be concluded that LVE gives a broad opportunity to students to explore more about values and why it is important. From the teachers' point of view, LVE creates a positive learning environment in classroom and teach the students how to be respectful, care for each other while having fun in classroom. Therefore, the students learn not only academically, but also characters.

It is suggested that character education should be given in many classrooms in Indonesia because the benefits that it provides. In order to provide character education, LVE can be a solution for teachers to implant important living values to students to maximize school outputs.

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