MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT
(MOJEM)

INVESTIGATION OF THE ROLE OF PRINCIPAL'S TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR STRENGTHENING STUDENT CHARACTER IN INDONESIA

Yulius Rustan Effendi, Ibrahim Bafadal, I Nyoman Degeng Sudana & Imron Arifin

Corresponding Author:
Educational Management Department,
State University of Malang, Indonesia

E-mail:
fenalm.21@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Character education reinforcement in secondary school is one of the educational programs aimed to expect the tendency of moral perversion because of moral decadence. Various forms of moral deviations result in students being alienated from normal life. This article aims to discuss character values reinforcement and the principal's transformational leadership strategy to shape student characters in a descriptive-critical way. The aims of this study are school strategies in optimizing to carry out character education reinforcement. This research uses a qualitative method with a case study design. Data analysis used a modified analytic analysis method. Meanwhile, the data validity measurement was based on the level of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The results emphasize the importance of shaping student character as an anticipatory step to decrease moral distortions among high school students and the effectiveness of the principal's transformational leadership role in optimizing implementing character education strengthening programs in schools.

Keywords: **Principal, Transformational Leadership, Strengthening Student Character, Senior High School**

INTRODUCTION

The discussion about the phenomenon of humanity is always associated with carrying out education. Education is a process of humanizing humans to form people who have character. Humans' self-actualization requires human values. Separately, human values' actualization is obtained through the stages of educational awareness (Yaumi, 2014). Education is the necessary foundation for building human values through a process of change, from hominization in the form of reflective awareness of self-potential to humanization in the form of knowledge of actual activities. At the level of humanization, education aims to free people from sub-human conditions to the human condition.

On the other hand, education in Indonesia is not yet ready to compete. It affects the ownership of competencies to emulate people's work. Thus, they face difficulties in competing with foreign workers. Besides, foreign culture's presence weakens the existence of local culture, so that Indonesian people experience a culture shock. This condition needs to be considered, as mentioned by Kasali (2017) that progress needs to be understood as a medium for increasing equality and not condemned for increasing inequality. In this context, education in the global era is postulated as the process of maturing quality of life, values, and norms that is true from generation to generation in the face of highly competitive competition (Lovvorn & Chen, 2011).

If traced in the mindset of futurists, this era has been named a century of enlightenment of knowledge (Cook, Smith, Lan, & Carpenter 2016). Knowledge is the main force that places humans in paradigmatic competition. Therefore, it takes revitalization and education transformation in Indonesia to form strong, resilient, and competitive characters for students (Koesoema, 2011).

Based on the Ministry of Education (MoE) (2017), the implementation of character education in schools is considered necessary because of the growing social phenomenon, namely the increase in delinquency of middle school (high school) youth in the community. Those delinquencies cover fights between students, drug use, promiscuity, fading values of honesty (cheating, stealing), the already faded ethical values and good manners in communication, violence, and anarchism perpetrated by peer Groups. Besides, work ethic is increasingly worthless, and people tend to not respecting themselves (free sex, suicide, extortion).

Empirical facts of moral deviance provide an assessment that schools, parents, and communities have failed to prepare the future of Indonesia's young generation. There are three causes of character education not being implemented optimally. First, the limitations of teachers integrating character values in learning. Second, the syllabus and lesson plan does not reflect national guidelines. Lastly, education is oriented towards cognitive aspects and does not pay attention to attitude or behavior issues.

Besides, character education in schools is only related to the introduction of norms or values and has not been internalized in practical action. In other words, character education has not yet taken root in student behavior. Responding to this reality, schools need to proactively change the new paradigm of educational goals, namely shaping the character of students through the acculturation of values. This expectation is outlined in Law No. 20 of 2003, Article 3, that "national education functions to develop capabilities, shape the character and dignity of the nation, people who believe in God Almighty, have good character, healthy, knowledgeable, intelligent, creative, independent, democratic and responsible.

Besides, it is necessary to implement Government Regulation (GR) Number 17 of 2010, Article 12, Paragraph 3, which explains that "the implementation of Elementary Education, including Junior High Schools, and Senior High Schools aims to develop potential human beings, such as, (a) having faith and devotion to Allah, (b) having good character and noble personality, (b) knowledgeable, intelligent, critical, creative and innovative, (c) healthy, independent and confident, (d) tolerant, socially sensitive, democratic and responsible.

In this case, the purpose of education at every level, including senior high school (SMA), is focused on student character formation. Students must have character, as a form of school responsibility, to restore the school's image in the face of moral degradation. Therefore, it is necessary and urgent to restructure the design of character education models at the school level. Consequently, schools take these steps since the school is a place to grow and develop the values of the spirituality of student faith. Students' personal spiritual integrity is reflected in three relational dimensional, namely interpersonal relations with God as homo religious (Hegel 1807/1979), social relations with others as homosocial, and personal relationships with the natural environment (homo natural). These three spiritual-relational dimensions are integrated into the principle of the personal human character as transformative and adaptive beings (homo concerns). The value of religiosity is implemented through redesigning religion-based learning, conditioning the school environment, habituation and exemplary attitudes of peace, love, tolerance, tolerance of the situation, fighting for justice for the vulnerable people, doing charity, and visiting orphans (MoE, 2016).

In addition, school is a means of empowerment for student character. The role of school, in this case, is educating, teaching, training, and instilling the value of honesty, love, truth, loyalty, moral consistency, not corruption, fairness, and compassion with others (Lickona, 2012). Therefore, the teacher's role as a professional educator is to design character learning in co-curricular, extracurricular, and regular curricular activities. Also, a teacher's presence as an excellent person with good and right behavior can be imitated as a model of character habituation for students in the school.

Besides, the school is a conducive environment for practicing patriotism/nationalism (respect for unity without a narrow primordial attitude, maintaining integrity to create an Indonesian country that is more tolerant, independent, disciplined, ethical thinking, upholds moral values, promotes loyalty, responsibility, and mutual care). At this level, the role of all school components, such as teachers, staff, government, and society, is to create a school culture that is peaceful, harmonious, and law-abiding.

To shape student character through habituation activities in an integrated and continuous manner, besides teachers, employees, parents, and the community, the principal's presence as a leader, is also the key to achieve the success of school programs. The principal's contribution as the key to success has not yet appeared in his role in motivating, coordinating, encouraging, and influencing all school components in strengthening character education activities. The principal's role is not yet optimal as character learning designers, such as; determine the core values of school characters, designing tools, models, and assessments of character learning. The principal is also inflexible to build good working partnerships, such as; creating pleasant working conditions, building self-confidence, avoid bad speaking habits, anger, and vice versa. The principal is also unable to motivate teachers to work more effectively; avoids blaming the teacher, but correcting the teacher's mistakes; creates a work atmosphere that makes the teacher feel comfortable, so that all elements in the school are willing, without coercion, to participate optimally. Fourth, the principal has not yet created optimal work partnerships between the schools, the government, and the community to evaluate joint school programs.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research develops a case study on the principal's leadership role based on the transformational leadership style. Regarding research ethics, this research used pseudonyms to protect the identity of schools and informants. This case study uses the following three questionss:

1. What is an assessment of the implementation of character education reinforcement programs in Indonesia?
2. What is the principal's strategy in carrying out the leadership role to optimize the application of character education reinforcement in schools?

Character Education in the Global Era

Globalization is the process of uniting the world's whole existence through ways of thinking, communicating, and acting without space and time restrictions, bringing changes in various fields of life (Cook et al., 2016). Changes in education are postulated as a process of maturation of quality of life, which is measured not only by intelligence but also from the appreciation of actual values and norms from one generation to the next.

The globalization of education in the context of character education is a process of raising student self-awareness (Hendra, 2014).; Li, 2013). In Freire's view, conscientization is an educational concept that emphasizes student awareness in assessing the reality of themselves and the environment critically and creatively. Critical and creative in Freire's (1987) theory, rooted in ontological, epistemological, and axiological connotations. Ontological, epistemological, and axiological implications in the context of education represent humans who exist in the world and live together with the world so that education becomes a dialogic-emancipatory space that gives value to the quality of life of students. Freire's theory places character education as a conscious effort to shape students' spiritual potential, personality, intelligence, skills, and self-control (Menzies & Baron, 2014).

According to the MoE (2017), self-control is an essential point for students to dare to say "no" to drugs, alcohol, sex, gangs, and other bad behavior. Therefore, to overcome the decline in students' moral values, the Ministry of Education emphasizes the importance of curriculum of character-building programs in educational institutions in Indonesia, especially the value of honesty and respect for oneself, as a solution to stop impairment, to help students to live as good citizens. The same concept has been programmed by the Indonesian Ministry of Education through practical, comprehensive, and sustainable actions at the school level. Providing character education in schools is essential for students in South Africa and in Indonesia to anticipate the negative impacts of progress. It causes by competition in the era of growth that could have led to millennial human figures as wolves for other humans, which Thomas Hobbes (Leahy, 2001) called "homo homini lupus / Humans became wolves to other humans."

To anticipate the threat of dehumanization due to competition in the global era, according to Foester (Lewis & Ponzio, 2016), students need to be prepared with character education to give awareness about the hierarchy of values to evaluate each student's actions. In an era of progress, human limitations can cause ambiguity and division within oneself. Through character education, students are trained to think critically and wisely to turn chaos into values' regularity. Further, students need to have the frequency of facts and ideas that challenge self-limitations that result in oneself that does not have substantial personal autonomy. As a result, anxiety, fear, and lack of confidence arise. Because of that, it is necessary to develop systematic and exemplary practical moral values for "life." Other than that, students also need to have independence. Autonomy refers to the independence of identity. Personal essence formed through character education becomes an autonomous person in making decisions. Lastly, they also need the certainty of principle and commitment to decisions, which is a form of engagement in the behavior, whereas commitment is respect for the resolution chosen.

Principal's Transformational Leadership Strengthens Student Character

Initially, the concept of transformational leadership was conceived of as a process whereby leaders strategically transform an organization to develop achievement and motivation for its followers (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership and change are closely related because a leader's ability can positively transform his followers' attitudes, norms, institutions, behaviors, and actions (Bottomley, Burgess, & Fox, 2014). In this regard, transformational leadership is often viewed as well suited to education as it empowers followers and provides hope, optimism, and energy, and produces a shared vision productively (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016). Additionally, transformational leaders provide shared beliefs and values to create comprehensive change and innovation in work ethics and expand each follower's capacity.

Thus, a leader is said to have applied a transformational leadership model if he or she can transform energy resources. McKinney, Labat, & Labat (2015) explain that transformational leadership is perceived to be sensitive to organization building, developing a shared vision, distributing leadership, and building school culture necessary to current restructuring efforts in schools. The presence of transformational leaders in organizations is significant to deal with change that occurs not because of the leaders' actions towards others, but the actions of the leaders together with others (Groves & LaRocca, 2011). This leader supports the relationship and dialogue between himself and followers in several aspects such as; followers find meaning and vision in the workplace, persuasive communication, participation and autonomy, fair treatment, constructive feedback, the development of personal and organizational goals, and a role model (Moolenaar, Daly & Sleegers, 2010).

In reality, the role of principals in Indonesia is ineffective. This situation results in an unequal education system to threaten the existence, sustainability, competitiveness, and advancement of the quality of education (MoE, 2017). This fact gives a negative stigma on the role of the principal. That negative stigma does not need to be responsive because the stigma may indeed reflect the truth of the substance of the principal's position. The best response is to revise the conventional approach to a transformative practice, to realize success and progress in the quality of education. The efforts made are initiated a democratic education system, equality of human dignity and social justice and, a lifelong learning system (Aloni, 2011).).

In this regard, Quin, Deris, Bischoff, & Johnson (2015); Tschannen-Moran & Gareis (2015) explain that the transformational leadership role of the principal aims to provide an ideal influence so that followers run an organization that is relevant to the interests of followers in addition to the interests of the overall organizational progress. Therefore, leaders work in a democratic and participatory manner. It aims to motivate and inspire followers by showing empathy and optimism, involving members in implementing character education strengthening programs that include; personal development activities, character learning activities, activities in the school environment, and the community. Besides, it aims to stimulate intellectuality through harmonious interaction between leaders and members and encourage followers to explore creative ways of solving inequality problems in the education system. Furthermore, it aims to concern individuals to understand and respect individual differences (equality), stimulating followers by delegating responsibilities, communicating individually to understand the various needs, skills, and ambitions of followers (Litz & Scott, 2017).

METHODS

This research used a qualitative analytic descriptive research design. The data was collected in written or oral form, arranged in sentences based on interviews with informants (Miles, Huberman, Michael & Saldaña, 2014). This descriptive qualitative research aims to describe the school strategy, specifically the principal transformational leadership role in optimizing the implementation of character education strengthening programs. This research provides useful input in the implementation of national character education programs because it involves school principals to determine the success of school programs.

The researchers investigate and describe the transformational leadership strategies of school principals in optimizing character education strengthening activities. This research was carried out in five locations, State Senior High School 1, Christian State Senior High School, Private Catholic Senior High School, Private Islamic Senior High School, and Islamic State Senior High School. These five schools are in Manggarai, West Flores, East Indonesia. These schools were selected because they have the same school cultural environment, namely the culture of Manggarai, West Flores, East Indonesia, a very tolerant climate of living together, and effectively implemented character education strengthening programs for students. In addition, this research was conducted in five schools in Malang, East Java, Central Indonesia, namely State Senior High School 1, Christian State Senior High School, Private Catholic Senior High School, Private Islamic Senior High School, and Islamic State Senior High School. These five schools were chosen because their environment is very tolerant, teachers and students live in a Javanese cultural background, and the character education strengthening program is implemented optimally.

The informants were selected through purposive sampling. The selected informants know the principal's strategy in optimizing character strengthening activities in schools thoroughly. Besides, it used the snowball sampling technique to collect information from one informant to other informants continuously. The process was ended when the data collected, has been saturated. Participants in this study involved five principals and three senior teachers in each school located in Malang, East Java, Central Indonesia, and five principals and three senior teachers in each school located in East Nusa Tenggara, East Indonesia. The reason for selecting five school principals and three senior teachers from each location was to get information about implementing a character education reinforcement program in Java that had advanced in education and Indonesia's eastern region, which still have Limited implementation. The ten school principals were also chosen because they have successfully implemented a program to strengthen character education in schools. The selection of three senior teachers in each school was aimed to get additional information related to the principal's actions in carrying out his role. This research develops a case study on the principal's leadership role based on the transformational leadership style. Regarding research ethics, it was using pseudonyms for research sites to protect schools and participants' identities.

Interviews were conducted with the school principal to obtain information about his assessment related to problems in implementing character education reinforcement programs in Indonesia. Besides, during the interview, they were asked about their strategy as a leader in optimizing the implementation of character education reinforcement programs. Furthermore, the researchers requested information from the principal associated with the senior teachers who need to be interviewed to attain more accurate information about the role of school leadership. Data collection at five schools in Malang City, East Java, Indonesia, was attained in six months. At the same time, five schools in the East Nusa Tenggara region, Eastern Indonesia, the data were collected in six months. After obtaining field data in written and oral form, researchers analyzed data (Creswell, 2014).

Through involvement in a continuous interview session, the researchers analyzed the meaning of all data collected (Miles et al., 2014). From the initial interpretation, the researchers received a slightly different response to the informant's plan; therefore, the researchers re-processed the data following the informant's plan (Yin, 2018). Data validity in this research used credibility criteria. The purpose of data credibility is to prove the data's suitability with the facts in the study. Transferability was done through detailed research reports that refer to the focus of the research. Meanwhile, the dependency was completed to check or evaluate the accuracy of researchers in always conceptualizing data. On the other hand, confirmability was finished through testing to assess research results, mainly related to the description of research findings and discussion of research results (Altheide & Johnson, 2000).

RESULTS

Principal's Strategy in Implementing the Character Education Reinforcement Programs

Based on data collection from key informants, several findings related to the principal's strategy in optimizing the character education strengthening program's implementation are obtained. Furthermore, the school principal's transformational leadership role to overcome the obstacles in implementing the strengthening of character education is discussed below.

The strategies carried out by principals A are explained below.

> Early understanding of universal moral values, determine the values of characters in school, include character education in the core curriculum, instill the values of local wisdom, the behavior of the teacher is placed as a role model, create a school environment that is characterized, all the teachers and parents involved to assess student character (Participant-A, January 2020).

In addition, the strategic steps of the principal of school B in overcoming the obstacles to implementing character strengthening are discussed below.

> The teachers and I did the socialization of the character strengthening program to parents and students. It involves parents and the community paying attention to student behavior at home and in the community. We also carry out a joint evaluation to assess the success of the character strengthening program (Participant-B, January 2020)

An additional strategy was conveyed by the principal of C school.

> We create intense communication with all components involved in planning and implementing the character strengthening program. I also involve parents in providing material for moral development in schools (Participant-C, January 2020).

The principals, senior teachers from the schools (A1, B1, C1) outline the following principal's strategic steps.

> It is true that the school principal has involved all stakeholders in thinking together with the necessary measures to implement character education. The principal also encourages teachers to be actively involved in designing character learning. In addition, it publishes a practical handbook on the implementation and assessment of character education. Furthermore, involving parents and the community shapes student character (Participants-A1, B1, C1, February 2020).

Based on the transcripts of interviews with school principals and senior teachers, some strategic actions of transformational leadership by principals have been practiced. It is summarized in table 1 below.

Table 1

Strategic Actions for School Principal Transformational Leadership in Character Strengthening Activities in Schools

Action Strategy of Principals	Description
Intellectuals	• A school leader who develops ideas to invite teachers to formulate school main character values based on universal moral values, school cultural character values, and local wisdom values that are integrated into the school's core curriculum • A school leader who provides knowledge to teachers in designing character learning in the classroom
Reformers	• A school leader who is changing the school environment as a place for character development • A reformative school leader involving the participation of teachers and parents to provide a joint assessment of a student character
Revolutionaries	• A school leader who can open up communication by creating conducive, humans, and non-discriminatory communication with all school components (teachers, parents, and the community) to plan, implement and evaluate joint programs • A school leader who dares to involve parents in providing moral development materials to students at school
Charismatic (Hero)	A principal who dares to turn obstacles into opportunities in optimizing the implementation of character strengthening programs through several actions: a. conduct socialization together (teachers and parents) of the character strengthening program b. Involving parents in controlling students' moral behavior at home and in society

	c. conduct a joint evaluation to assess the success of the character strengthening program

Integrating Character Education Reinforcement Programs in the School Curriculum

The targets achieved include increasing teacher competency so that the implementation of strengthening of character education runs optimally and improving teacher competence in forming character achieved through learning. The teacher's behavior as an example is in line with the internalization of the values aimed to be formed. In addition, it is integrating the strengthening of character education in the curriculum. This activity involves several parties, as illustrate in Figure 1.
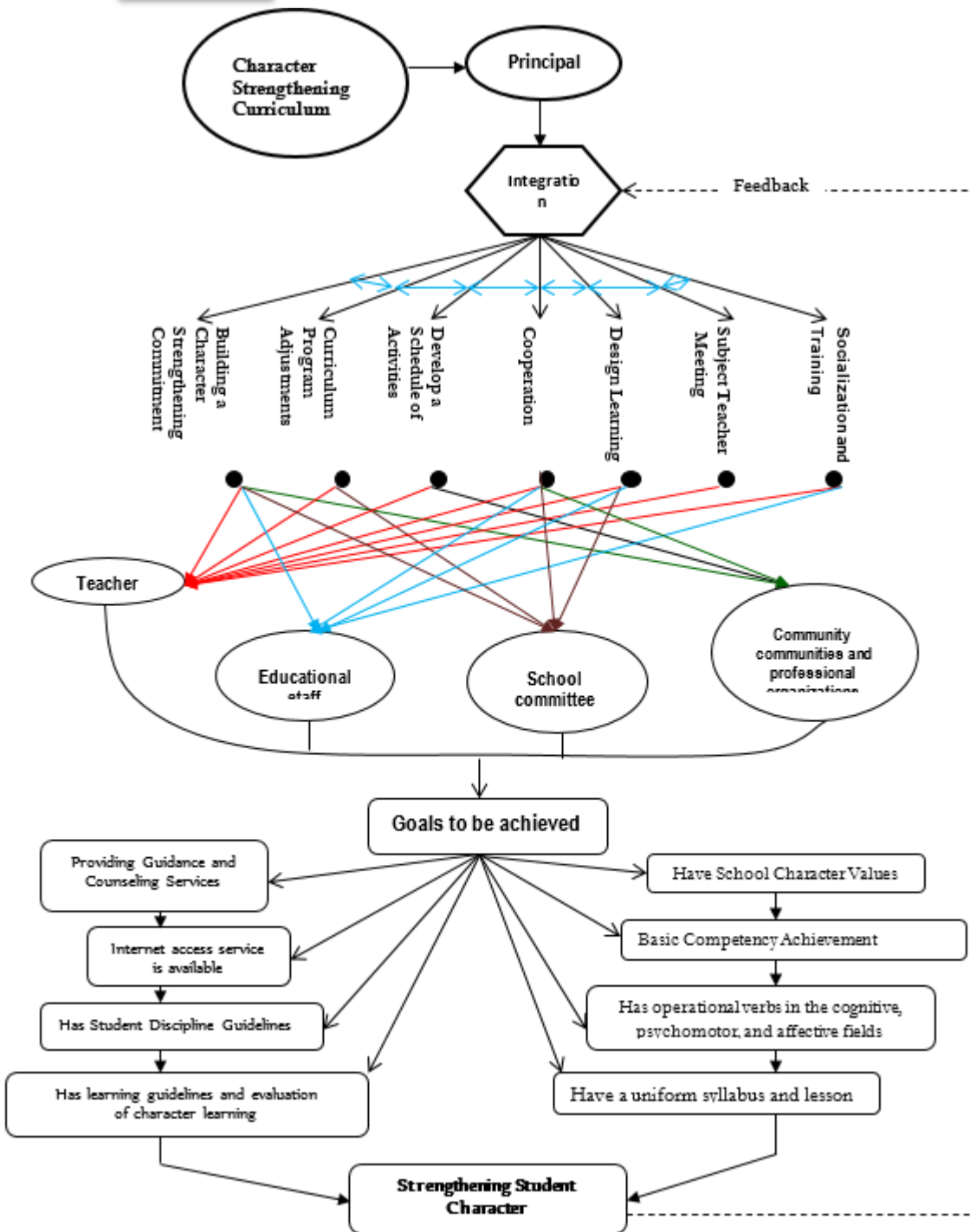
Figure 1. Principal's Strategy in Integrating Character Strengthening Programs in the Curriculum

According to figure 1, the principal's strategy in integrating the character strengthening program is explained as follows.

Principal

The strategies undertaken by the principal are: (1) conducting socialization and training for teachers through verb selection exercises in preparing indicators implemented in teaching; (2) intensifying the Teacher Subject Meeting (STD) activities in developing learning tools, (Syllabus, Lesson Plans (LP), preparation of questions, evaluations and follow-up plans); (3) developing guidelines for student behavior involving all components of the school; (4) arranging a schedule of daily or weekly activities to optimize character strengthening activities; (5) adjusting curriculum programs, especially morning and afternoon activities programs and stated in school curriculum documents; (6) arranging a schedule for implementing Strengthening Character Education (SCE) activities and adapt it to the school academic calendar; and (7) making commitments with all parties to support and implement Strengthening Character Education (SCE) in accordance with the planned implementation strategy, both in the curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities.

The targets achieved include developing the values of school characters that are described in representative indicators. To establish the formulation of character values in the indicators of achievement of Basic Competency (BC), operational verbs that are following cognitive, psychomotor, and affective aspects in the context of the Education Unit Level Curriculum (EULC) used. To build the formulation of character values in the indicators of achievement of Basic Competence (BC), operational verbs are used following aspects of attitude (spiritual and social), knowledge, and skills in the context of the 2013 Curriculum (C'13). To build syllabus uniformity, Learning Implementation Plan (LIP), and using learning methods, evaluation, and follow-up plans. To create a standard uniform of the central values of the characters and the main steps in learning. To have a document of student discipline guidelines, with various reward and punishment provisions that are always evaluated and changed according to changes in the findings of violations committed by students. To providing internet access services and other reading sources and counseling guidance teachers.

Teacher (educator)

Strategies undertook by the principal involving teachers create a school culture that supports the program of strengthening character Education implementation. They provide exemplary to the whole school community as a manifestation of the implementation of the application of character education reinforcement. Also, they develop a Learning Implementation Plan (LIP), an assessment that integrates the primary values of character education reinforcement. They use learning methods that produce critical, creative, communicative, and collaborative thinking skills and provide examples to the entire school community as an embodiment of the implementation of a program to strengthen character education. Besides, they support the establishment of good relations between educators, students, and the entire school community in the classroom and outside the classroom and building a learning environment that appreciates and respects the uniqueness of the individual. They optimize the function of Teacher Working Groups (TWG) and Subject Teachers' Meetings (STM) to develop learning based on the strengthening of character education. The teachers develop curricular activities based on character education reinforcement and implementing extracurricular programs based on character education reinforcement. They optimize the role of guidance and counseling in the implementation of character education strengthening programs and carrying out monitoring and evaluation of the performance of character education strengthening programs.

Educational Staff

Strategies undertook by principals involving employees are providing role models to the entire school community as an embodiment of implementing a program to strengthen character education. Educational staff also inlvove in establishing good relations between education staff, educators, students, and the entire school community within the education unit environment. Finally, they support the implementation of extracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities based on the strengthening of character education.

School Committee

Strategies undertook by the principal that involve the school committee provide exemplary to the whole school community as a manifestation of the implementation of the character education reinforcement program. They help to support the implementation of character education programs through mutually beneficial cooperation. They also support the implementation of extracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities based on character education reinforcement and the implementation of the five-day school policy. Simultaneously, they also and evaluating the implementation of character education strengthening programs.

Community Communities and Professional Organizations

Strategies undertook by the principal that involves the community and professional organizations provide exemplary to the whole school community as a manifestation of the implementation of the program of strengthening character education. They provide support to education units in the implementation of character education strengthening programs. They become partners and volunteers of education units in the implementation of educational strengthening programs following their respective competencies and professions and implement monitoring and evaluation of program implementation character education reinforcement.

DISCUSSION

Implementation of Character Education Reinforcement in Indonesia

A philosophical statement that has educational value delivered by Saneca (Hartoko, 1989), a philosopher who lived in the 3rd century BC, that "*non scholae sed vitae discimus*", learning not for school but life. This philosophical statement asserts that education is a fundamental action, which touches the basis of life, to change and determine human life. Human life is valuable if it has a good character. Good character is not only influenced by education but created by a school. Character education forms the praxis of life that is valuable and becomes a fundamental force to compete in the global era (Musana, 2011).

Character education in Indonesia has not been maximally implemented. Koesoema (2015); MoE (2017) explains that the concept of character education at the senior high school level in Indonesia is not yet operational-practical. Problems were found to weaken parents' role in teaching morality to children, anti-social behavior in classrooms and playgrounds, disobedience to rules, and violence among students. Tracing studies are needed to explore and find alternative solutions that are more operational so that character education reinforcement programs are easily implemented at the school level. This is in line with findings of previous studies conducted by the Ministry of Education, where schools need to prepare grand design character education clearly and empirically. Thus, there is an ease in understanding the concept and is not ambiguous in developing practical guidelines for carrying out activities and instructions for assessing.

In connection with the practical implementation of character education, Zamroni (2011) asserts that character education can not be taught; rather it is intertwined in whole curriculum material, extracurricular, regular academic activities along with the availability of a learning environment (school and home) that can integrate the entire core of character values. This condition is not yet apparent in Senior High Schools in Indonesia. Constraints are found, according to Budimansyah (2010); MoE (2016) such as the schools do not yet have an organizational structure and character education norms. Consequently, the implementation of character education is not monitored. The school does not make a report on the implementation of character education. Schools do not yet have a quality education quality assurance system. They also do not have rules for planning, implementing, and evaluating character education activities. The schools have not determined the school's main characters' values as school banding, while the teachers have not included character values in the subject matter. Teachers are less competent in designing learning tools in extracurricular and regular academic activities that have character

content. The teachers are not yet qualified in integrating character values in learning activities. Besides, the teachers have not set an example in behavior. Lastly, parents do not guide the students' character at home.

To overcome the obstacles in implementing the strengthening of character education, and based on the explanation of the principals and senior teachers, it is certain that the principals have overcome the problems of implementing character education. The strategic steps of the principals in overcoming the obstacles that occur, according to the framework developed by Valentine and Prater (2011); Styron and Styron (2011), is that schools must understand universal moral values well. Schools need to set standards for their central character values (benchmarking). Student character assessment is carried out by all teachers. The results of the evaluation are announced to all parties in a coordinated manner. Assessments are carried out every time, in and outside the classroom, through observation and behavioral records.

There are three aspects of the character assessment standards, namely behavior, crafts, and neatness. Schools need to develop character education holistically through physical development (sport), intellectual (though the thought), aesthetics (though the feeling), ethical and spiritual (heart processing). Schools need to include strengthening character education programs in the school's core curriculum to implement character education optimally. Schools should include various stakeholders to agree on the main character's values following the school's specification, including financing, strategy for implementing character education. Schools should be focusing and responsive to local wisdom in diversity to have contextual value and characterize student identity. They should develop lifelong skills, such as; critical thinking, social sensitivity, cultural competencies, foreign language competence, search, and discovery of learning models. Schools should advance based on the principles of justice, non-discrimination, non-sectarianism, respect for diversity (inclusive), and respect for human dignity. They should evolve following the development of student personality, both biological, psychological, and social development so that the level of compatibility and acceptance is high. Schools should progress according to and implement measurable principles; thus, their process and results can be observed and known objectively. Therefore, schools need to develop guidelines for character assessment, develop programs that are performed, and ensure resource availability. Evaluation and follow-up are required to change student behavior. If there are student violations, the school needs to involve parents in handling joint problems.

Besides those, schools also need to involve the officer on duty daily to control student behavior and strengthen the habituation and example of all school community members. Simultaneously, the teacher, as a character model, should show disciplined practice to students; teachers who love, respect, treat students morally will be heard and valued by their students. Also, schools need to design simple learning so that it is easy to understand and practice and master translating the theories of learning about developing concrete and practical behavior. Teachers also need to run classroom management that is creative, innovative, and competitive, built based on students' situations and environmental conditions. Therefore, the school environment needs to avoid various forms of injustice, cheating, lying, and discriminatory treatment. Lastly, schools' regulations must be flexible, considering students' uniqueness, support tolerance with respect for differences.

Principal's Transformational Leadership Strategy Strengthens Student Character

Argumentatively, a school as a formal organization is a place of the collaboration of a group of people (principals, teachers, staff, students, school committees, and communities) to achieve the desired goals (McKinney et al., 2015). The various types of organizations, including schools, require leaders to carry out leadership roles. Strategies are needed in carrying out leadership roles. The purpose of transformational leadership is significant in optimizing programs to strengthen character education (Mittal & Dhar, 2015).

The presence of a leader is significant to achieve a change in an organization (Colbert, Nicholson, & Kurucz, 2018). The effectiveness of the role of a school principal is influenced by the conditions of the school environment, so it requires adaptable leader behavior. In the context of the principal's transformational role, openly positions the role of which is under the conditions in the school environment (Mittal & Dhar, 2015).). Transformative principals

strongly prioritize collective interests, implement governance in a transparent, accountable, relational, horizontal, and dialogical manner; run joint decisions, model others' behavior, and offer professional work development from subordinates (Bottomley et al., 2014). Therefore, in the context of educational organizations, Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) explain that the application of transformational leadership models has a positive effect of supporting strengthening the character of teachers and students.

The transformative value of character strengthening supports the behavior of leaders who work professionally for the betterment and change of education by the shared vision and mission (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990). Second is intellectual stimulation, which supports the behavior of leaders who provide stimulation of knowledge to followers so that followers can be innovative in learning activities (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). Third, offering individual support. The transformative value is the behavior of leaders who reward subordinates' contributions, have empathy and respect for teachers and students' needs (Quin et al., 2015). Fourth, a professional practice emphasizes the transformative value that supports leaders' behavior to work openly, transparently, accountably, and participative (Podsakoff et al., 1990). Fifth, high-performance expectations are also used. The transformative value in character education supports the behavior of leaders for encouraging the professionalism of the teacher's work. (Mittal & Dhar, 2015). Sixth, the development of structures for participation. The transformative value in supporting character education is the behavior of leaders who involve parents and the community in supporting school programs (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

This hope supports the ideas of Lickona (2012); Maunah (2016); Effendi, Bafadal, Sudana, and Arifin (2020), namely, (1) take action based on awareness of what is right and essential. (2) Establish a common goal for the betterment of the school. (3) Optimize the performance of which has a value of character. (4) Encourage followers to work following moral and ethical standards. (5) Implement collaborative learning by empowering the entire school community. (6) Redefine the vision and mission of the school, renewing commitment, and restructuring the school system. (7) Change behavior as a moral agent. (8) Commit to a code of ethics as a shared ethical standard. (9) Consider the good achieved through faith and highest satisfaction values changes. (10) Help followers maintain a positive school culture. (11) Establish the competency of followers to solve problems effectively.

Based on the MoE (2016), the principal's transformational leadership strategy in implementing the strengthening of character education in Indonesia was found in several strategic steps as follows. First, they provide opportunities to subordinates to participate in the process of change in the body of the school organization through several strategies, namely, involving all school components, school committees, and the community in formulating the vision and mission of the school; and including all stakeholders in selecting and determining the values of the main characters of the school. This step is in line with the recommendation of the Character Education Partnership (2010), in which the principals need to have a meeting with stakeholders to affirm the core values and articulate goals associated with the character. Besides, that strategy also covers all stakeholders' involvement in developing a clear organizational structure and division of tasks and carry out program socialization in an integrated and synergistic manner between the education office, school supervisors, school principals, teachers, staff, school committees, and stakeholders. Besides, together with teachers, staff, school committees, and stakeholders, they develop guidelines for character education. This strategy is emphasized by the Character Education Partnership (2010), that school needs plan to strengthen character education taught in the classroom, in the school environment, and in the community. Meanwhile, the government needs to motivate the school to determine the target achievement of student character formation through limited socialization and training. Lastly, schools need to make an evaluation report on the implementation of the program.

The targets achieved include having a vision and mission of the school with character content and creating a formulation of the school's character values by the achievement of the school's vision and mission. This goal is consistent with the target expected by Liu (2017); Effendi et al. (2020), that the school community promotes core ethical values and performance as the basis for the formation of good character. The school has an official character education organizational structure with a clear division of tasks. Organizing education answers the

demands of the world of work. They should also have a school branding related to the implementation of a program to strengthen character education and integrate three educational programs (character education, 2013 curriculum, and full-day school / five-day school) in one curricular, co-curricular, intracuricular, and extracurricular packages. They should implement a character education reinforcement program sourced from Core Competencies (CC) and elaborated in Basic Competencies (BC) in curriculum content standards. This goal is consistent with Salam (2017), affirming that schools use a comprehensive, deliberate, and proactive approach to character development. They have to have clear work guidelines in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating activities as well as follow-up programs.

Furthermore, they should encourage followers to work together in fighting for change through several strategies, namely: (1) providing opportunities for teachers, employees to participate in socialization and training to formulate and teach characters in continuous teaching; and (2) building commitment in behaving as a form of theory internalization that is in line with the vision and mission of the school.

In addition, according to Koesoema (2015); Hermino (2016); Effendi et al. (2020), there are essences of the principal's transformational leadership role emphasizes in character education reinforcement at the senior high school level in Indonesia, namely; use the knowledge and skills to chart a new direction, respond to the challenges of present and future through building positive and inspiring school culture. It associates positive and inspirational school culture with (1) high motivation and student achievement, (2) increasing inter-teacher collaboration, and (3) changing teachers' attitudes toward their work in the future to be more positive. Those teachers' characters include as an agent of change, a charismatic person in flexible ways of thinking and acting, building the trust of teachers, staff, and students to achieve school progress; act based on a system of values morals; can deal with complicated, unclear, and uncertain situations; and seeing in the future, by always accepting new ideas, alternative ways of solving problems.

Another role is growing character values through logical, expressive, and passionate thinking. The purpose of the principal includes being a planner, resource empowerment, coordinator, supervisor, official, legal expert, gatekeeper, and analyst. In a symbolic role, the principal is considered as a historian, detective anthropologist, visionary, symbols, poet, actor, and leader. Also, Litz and Scott (2017); Effendi et al. (2020); explains that the specific values required by the principal as a leader, namely; (1) openness to participate; (2) transparency to diversity; (3) exposure to conflict; (4) openness for reflection; and (5) openness to mistakes.

The next role is an agent of change; a culture without disputes is a culture that will stagnate because change always starts with disagreement, and it takes courage from the principal to dismantle the stand that inhibits change. As managers, excellent principals know the importance of management. In a school-based management system, where teachers and administrators work together to set educational policies and agendas for schools, responsibility is no longer on the principal's shoulders but is spread between groups. They provide inclusive education to build meaningful relationships with various members of the school community. Another critical aspect of the relationship between the principal and the school community is that the principal must increase the awareness of teachers, parents, students, and school committees about the school community's reality through joint meetings, orientation activities, bulletins, newspapers, or school handbooks.

CONCLUSION

Policy directions and development prioritize in the field of education are based on strengthening character education as the goal. In line with this intention, the national education system's legal foundation emphasizes that the strengthening of character education in schools needs to be raised at the level of conscious effort to help students become autonomous, knowledgeable, and have a strong and robust personal character.

The existence of human identity's wholeness is postulated in the appearance of an autonomous, integrative, and humanistic self in personal wealth that believes in God is moral and thinks clearly. The focus point is on the implementation of character education reinforcement that needs to be realized in a real-life directly felt and practiced by students. Therefore, at the level of concepts and practices, character education's implementation becomes part of the core curriculum in schools. This is considered essential because the curriculum and learning methods are vital tools used to socialize and internalize life values that are based on norms and morality. Hence, students have a strong and resilient character in facing the challenges of increasingly competitive times.

In the context of the principal's transformational leadership strategy in implementing the character education reinforcement in high schools , it appears in several strategic steps, namely; provide opportunities for subordinates to participate in the process of change in the body of the school organization through several characters strengthening activities; give encouragement to subordinates to form teacher working groups and form traditions to support each other during the process of change through several joint activities in forming character schools; and integrate character education in the curriculum, extracurricular activities, structuring classroom management, literacy movements, creating a characterized school environment, and counseling guidance activities.

REFERENCES

Aloni, N. (2011). Humanistic Education: From Theory to Practice. In W. Veugelers (Ed.), Education and Humanism: Linking Autonomy And Humanity (pp. 35–46). *Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6091-577-2_3

Altheide, D. L. & Johnson, J. M. (2000). Criteria for Assessing the Validity of Interpretation in Qualitative Research. InNK Denzin & YvS Lincoln (Ed.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed). California: Sage.

Bass, B. M. & Steidlmeier, P. (1999). Ethics, Character, and Authentic Transformational Leadership Behavior." *Leadership Quarterly*. 10(2), 181-218, DOI:10.1016/S1048-9843(99)00016-8.

Budimansyah, D. (2010). *Character Education*. Bandung: Alphabet.

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Bottomley, K., Burgess, S., & Fox, M., III. (2014). Are the behaviors of transformational leaders impacting organizations? A study of transformational leadership. *International Management Review*, 10(1), 5–9.

Colbert, B. A., Nicholson, J., & Kurucz, E. C. (2018). Humanistic Leadership for Sustainable Transformation. Evolving Leadership for Collective Wellbeing, Emerald Insight, 33–47. https://doi.org/10.1108/S2058-880120180000007004.

Cook, L. A., Smith, W. S., Lan, W. Y. & Carpenter, D. (2016). The Development of Global Competencies and Global Mindedness Through Global Education Experiences." *International Journal of Global Education*, 5(2), 1-15.

Character Education Partnership. (2010). *Leading a National Call to Character*. Available at http://www.character.org/2010Forum. Accessed 18 February 2020.

Character Education Partnership. (2010). *Eleven principles of effective character education*. Available at http://www.character.org/principles/Character Education Partnership. Accessed 18 February 2020.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th Ed.). Boston, USA: Pearson.

Day, C., Gu, Q., & Sammons, P. (2016). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: How successful school leaders use transformational and instructional strategies to make a difference. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 52(2), 221–258.

Effendi, Y.R., Bafadal, I., Sudana, I. N. D., and Arifin, I. (2020). The Principal's Transformational Leadership Approach Based on Local Wisdom in Strengthening the Character of Students. *Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Management* (MOJEM), 8(4), 24-42.

Freire, P. (1987). *A Pedagogy for Liberation: Dialogues on Transforming Education,* The United State America: Begins & Garvey Publishers.

Government Regulation (GR) Number 17 of 2010, *Concerning Management and Implementation of National Education,* Jakarta: Indonesian State Secretariat.

Groves, K. S. & LaRocca, M. A. (2011). An Empirical Study of Leader Ethical Values, Transformational and Transactional Leadership, and Follower Attitudes Toward Corporate Social Responsibility. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 103(4), 511–528, DOI: org/10.1007/s10551-011-0877-y

Hartoko, D. (1989). *Memanusiakan Kaum Muda* [Humanizing Young People], Yogyakarta: Gunung Mulia.

Hendra Heriansyah. (2014). The Impacts of Internationalization and Globalization on Educational Context. *Journal of Education and Learning,* 8(2), 164-170

Hegel, G. W. F. (1979) *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press (originally published 1807).

Hermino, A. (2016). Asian Economic Community In The Perspective Of Transformational Leadership In School. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 6(4), 401-416.

Kasali, R. (2017). Disruption: Tak Ada yang Tak Bisa Diubah Sebelum Dihadapi, Motivasi Saja Tidak Cukup [*Disruption: Nothing Can Be Changed Before Motivation Is Not Enough*], Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.

Koesoema, D. A (2011). *Character Education*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius.

Koesoema, D. A. (2015). *Strategi Pendidikan Karakter, Revolusi Mental di Institusi Pendidikan* [Character Education Strategy, Mental Revolution in Educational Institutions], Yogyakarta: Kanisius.

Law No. 20 of 2003, Article 3, *concerning the National Education System,* Jakarta: Indonesian State Secretariat.

Leahy, L. (2001). *Siapakah Manusia? Sintesis filosofis tentang manusia* [Who is Human? Philosophical synthesis about humans], Yogyakarta: Penerbit Kanisius.

Leithwood, K. & Jantzi, D. (2006). Transformational School Leadership for Large-Scale Reform: Effects on Students, Teachers, and Their Classroom Practices. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement.* 17 (2), 201-227. DOI: 10.1080/09243450600565829

Lewis, M. & Ponzio, V. (2016). Character Education as The Primary Purpose of Schooling for the Future. *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, 4(2), 137–146, DOI:org/10.26811/peuradeun.v4i2.92.

Li, Y. (2013). Cultivating student global competence: A pilot experimental study. *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education*, 11(1), 125-143, DOI:org/10.1111/j.1540-4609.2012.00371. x

Lickona, T. (2012). *Education for Character: Educating for Character Shaping. Translated by Juma, Abdu, Wamaungo*. Jakarta: PT Bumi Aksara.

Litz, D., & Scott S. (2017). Transformational leadership in the educational system of the United Arab Emirates. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 45(4), 566–587.

Liu, P. (2017). Comparing Chinese and Canadian transformational school leadership practices: Acultural analysis. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 45(1), 38–57.

Lovvorn, Al. S. & Chen, Jiun-Shiu. (2011). Developing a Global Mindset: The Relationship between an International Assignment and Cultural Intelligence. *International Journal of Business and Social Science.* 2(9), 275-283.

Maunah, B. (2016). Implementasi Pendidikan karakter dalam pembentukan kepribadian holistik siswa [implementation of character education students in holistic personality formation]. *Jurnal Pendidik Karakter*, 1(1), 90–101, DOI: 10.21831/jpk.v0i1.8615.

McKinney, C. L., Labat M. B., Jr., & Labat, C. A. (2015). Traits possessed by principals who transform school culture in national blue ribbon schools. *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal*, 19(1), 152–166

Menzies, J. L. & Baron, K. (2014). International Postgraduate Student Transition Experiences: The Importance of Student Societies and Friends. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International,* 51(1), 84-94, DOI:10.1080/14703297.2013.771972

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A., Michael & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (3rd ed), Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Ministry of Education and Culture. (2016). *Guidelines for Strengthening Character Education*. Jakarta: Secretariat Team for Strengthening Character Education.

Ministry of Education and Culture. (2017). *Strengthening Character Education; Training Module for Principals,* Jakarta: Secretariat Team Strengthening Character Education.

Mittal, S., & Dhar, R. L. (2015). Transformational leadership and employee creativity. *Management Decision*, 53(5), 894–910. https://doi.org/10.1108/md-07-2014-0464

Moolenaar, N. M., Daly, A. J. & Sleegers, P. J. C. (2010). Occupying the principal position: examining relationships between transformational leadership, social network position, and schools' innovative climate. *Educational Administration Quarterly,* 46(5), 623– 670.

Musana, A. (2011). Rationality and actuality of local wisdom as a base for character education. *Journal of Education and Culture*, 17 (6), 588-598.

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Moorman, R. H. & Fetter, R. (1990). Transformational leader behaviors and their effects on followers' trust in leader, satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviors. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 1(2), 107–142.

Quin, J., Deris, A., Bischoff, G., & Johnson, J. T. (2015). Comparison of transformational leadership practices: Implications for school districts and principal preparation programs. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 14(3), 71–85.

Salam, M. (2017). Peran kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam implementasi pendidikan karakter di sekolah dasar (The role of the school principal's leadership in the implementation of character education in elementary schools]. *Jurnal Gentala Pendidikan Dasar*, *2(*2), 160-176, DOI: doi.org/10.22437/gentala.v2i2.6814.

Styron, R. & Styron, J. (2011). Critical Issues Facing School Principals. *Journal of College Teaching and Learning*, 8(5), 1-10.

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Gareis, C. R. (2015). Faculty trust in the principal: An essential ingredient in high-performing schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 53(1), 66–92.

Valentine, J. & Prater, M. (2011). Instructional, Transformational, And Managerial Leadership and Student Achievement: High School Principals Make a Difference. *NASSP Bulletin,* 95(1), 5-30, DOI: org/10.1177/0192636511404062.

Yaumi, M. (2014). *Character Education: Platforms, Pillars & Implementation*. Jakarta: Predanamedia Group.

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*. 6th ed. London:Sage.

Zamroni. (2011). *Strategy and Model of Character Education Implementation in Schools.* Yogyakarta: Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta