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THE ROLE OF WRITING SKILL AS AN ALTERNATIVE MEDIA OF CHARACTER FORMATION

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Abstract: Recently, character education has become the cynosure both in society and educational institutions. In addition, discussions about character have been studied widely in scientific meeting forums. However, life problems that are often present in today's society are very complex. These problems happen due to the low and lack of character education in families, communities, and educational institutions. Therefore, to solve this problem, writing skills are present as an alternative media for character building. Honing writing skills by making habituation and maximizing its implementation function will impact the formation of being honest, responsible, confident, polite, hard-working, creative, innovative, critical, and analytical characters. This study aims to identify the role of writing skills as an alternative media for character formation. This research is library research using a qualitative method approach. The finding shows that honing writing skills can be an alternative tool for character building by internalizing certain traits and values reflected in thoughts, emotions, and behavior.

Keywords: *Character formation, writing skill, alternative media*

INTRODUCTION

At this time, character education is the cynosure both in society and educational institutions. Character education is also widely studied in scientific meeting forums. Life problems that are often present in today's society are very complex. They happen due to a lack of character education in families,

communities, and educational institutions (Hanum, 2018; Ritonga, 2018). Therefore, many researchers conducted the study of character issues. In recent decades, Indonesian society and the world have experienced a decline in character. It needs a solution and an intense discussion on how the character that used to be a great thing now doesn't seem to be much of a concern.

Character building is an important thing to note. It is the key to build a strong, moral, ethical, tolerant, and dignified nation. To build an excellent character, the thing to do is to realize positive character development in intellectual, emotional, social, ethical, and behavioral terms. Character education is carried out to positively impact students' moral and mental development with the aim that they are ready to deal with future challenges. Under the Law of the Republic of Indonesia number 20 of 2003, national education functions are to develop capabilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in the context of the nation's intellectual life.

Writing activities can be one of the alternative media approaches in the process of character building. Writing is one of the skills which can be used as a means of communication. By writing, we can share experiences or thoughts. When we write, we don't just learn to come up with ideas. However, we are also required to put ideas that have been formed through systematic thinking into well-organized writing. Because of that reason, it is considered an activity that is difficult, complicated, and complex. Writing is not a skill that we are born with. Therefore, to have writing skills, a habituation process is needed.

Indirectly, honing writing skills can build positive character in ourselves. In writing, we are required to use language skills to express ideas in written form systematically. In addition, writing activity trains us to be confident in expressing our thoughts and being honest and responsible for the ideas we put forward. The writing process trains writers to be creative, conscientious, and careful to present an idea in interesting writing based on the data. Therefore, the more often someone hones writing skills, indirectly a positive character is formed. Accordingly, this study aims to identify writing skills as an alternative media for character formation.

In terms of education, character is defined by behavior that refers to values and morals, for example how well a person behaves. In another sense, someone who can be seen from personal qualities under the wishes and expectations of society will be considered as having good character and showing personality qualities. These qualities or personalities are usually seen in respect, honesty, discipline, and responsibility in daily life (Ritonga, 2018).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Character and Its Formation

Character is one of the elements that build human behavior (Farikah, 2019). The word character comes from the Greek language *charassein*, which means "to engrave". The word can be translated as a verb meaning carving, sculpting, or painting (Marzuki, 2012). According to Imam Ghazali, character is not only about deeds, abilities, or knowledge. According to him, a character results from forming habits that give birth to actions (Suryadarma & Haq, 2015). In line with the previous concept, according to Quraish Syihab, the character is the result of experience and learning that encourages the ability to become a tool for realizing it in thought and behavior (Mawangir, 2018). In essence, the character in humans is not something that is obtained from birth. Character is formed through a learning process, so that character-building certainly requires habituation (Akhir, 2018).

The essence of a character is the behavior that a person seen or shown in his daily life and is more positive or negative. In *tarbiyah* (education), it leads to positive things that want to be instilled in a learner. Students have a character that is expected by many parties (Ainiyah & Wibawa, 2013; Utama, 2011). The formation referred to here is education, the process of making someone into something. As Sudirman stated in Nurgiantoro, character education is also a form of character building. Education efforts and character-building cannot be separated from education and teaching morals or values to students. Furthermore, character education is a long process of instilling character, noble values, customs, a noble character rooted in religious teachings to develop students' personalities to become pious and dignified human beings who have a character with values, noble nation, and religion (Sri, 2012; Nurgiyantoro, 2010).

Alternative Media

In education, various methods and media are used by educators to do character education. And as an alternative media is writing comes to instill character in students. Thus, alternative media is a form that is not the same or has a form of media mostly in terms of production, content, and others. Many experts try to build a theory related to alternative media. Critical theory-based. One of them explains that alternative media is participatory media, which is

financially non-commercial (Maryani & Adiprasetyo, 2018). Therefore, writing as an alternative medium in character building is essential. It is intended so that students can choose various media to shape their character and educators to provide various alternatives in character building. Especially in this millennial era, writing in various media is not something strange. We can post our writing on WhatsApp media, Facebook, Instagram, and various other media.

Writing skills

Writing skill is a person's ability to express his thoughts or ideas expressly, correctly, and well. And, an indicator of a person's ability to write is someone who can express his ideas and thoughts evidently and clearly so that others can understand the purpose of his writing (Kurniawan, 2014; Nurhastuti, 2019)

Writing is an activity to express thoughts (Akhir, 2018). Thought, in this case, can be interpreted as feelings, experiences, opinions, knowledge, or desires that are poured into written form (Munawarah & Zulkifli, 2020). Writing skills are also described as an ability to describe or express thoughts from the simplest aspect, writing words, to the most complex aspect, namely composing (Munawarah & Zulkifli, 2020). Writing skills are not something that is inherited or acquired from birth. Therefore, one way to hone writing skills is to train yourself to get used to writing.

METHOD

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is a type of research where the findings do not go through statistical procedures (Corbin & Strauss, 2009). In addition, descriptive qualitative research is a method used to find the latest theories and knowledge at a particular time (Mukhtar, 2009). The type of research used in this research is library research. Literature research is research conducted by collecting data relevant to the object of research (Sari & Asmendri, 2020). The literature review is carried out to describe the problem, which focuses on a critical and in-depth study of the relevant literature data.

The primary data in this study are books, articles, and the results of previous studies relevant to the object of research. The data in this study were obtained through the process of editing, organizing, and finding. The data that

has been obtained is then analyzed by reading and studying it in-depth. Furthermore, the researchers recorded the study results in a note table in the form of bibliography and note cards.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Character is not something that is acquired through heredity. Character is formed through a long and continuous process. A character can be formed when there is support or encouragement. The process of character building is carried out by internalizing certain traits and values to be reflected in thoughts, emotions, and behavior (Muassomah et al., 2020). The process is influenced by the development of the ability to understand moral values to behave in the right way to do things right in various social situations.

Quoting from Charles Reade's thought that if we sow thoughts, we will reap an action. If we plant action, we will reap habits. If we sow habits, we will reap a character. If we sow a character, we will reap a good fortune. The process of character building can run well if it integrates several elements, namely soft skills, hard skills, integration of intelligence quotient, emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, cognitive, psychomotor, and affective integration (Akhir, 2018). Integration of these various elements can be realized in writing activities. Therefore, writing skills are present as an alternative medium of character building. Writing activities are considered effective for building character. Honing writing skills well makes it a tool for character building to shape, develop and strengthen key ethical values.

Writing is an activity used as a medium of communication, sharing experiences, and exchanging ideas. Writing is not an ability that we are born with. Therefore, writing skills can be possessed through the habituation process (Akhir, 2018). Writing can be said to be a complex activity. In writing, we are required to pour ideas or thoughts that have been systematically organized into written form by using qualified language skills. Therefore, getting used to honing writing skills from an early age will have a significant impact, almost as big as the impact caused by the environment and people around (Kurniadi et al., 2017).

Honing writing skills by making habituation and maximizing its implementation function will significantly impact character building. Some of the characters formed include the following:

1. Honesty

Honesty is a character that shows the relationship between knowledge, words, and actions that will give birth to the nature of trust in the perpetrator (Sulastrri & Simarmata, 2019). Writing activities require us to be honest in pouring ideas and thoughts into written form. The writing results can be judged as quality if the data used as the basis for thinking and the originality of the ideas expressed can be proven true. Thus, honing writing skills to produce quality written work can be a facilitator for the formation of an honest character in oneself.

2. Responsibility

Responsibility is a character that is evidence that the perpetrator has carried out his duties and obligations and bears all possibilities of the resulting impact (Akhir, 2018). When the process of pouring ideas and thoughts into a piece of writing is in progress, it teaches, directs, and fosters habits of thought patterns and behavior to make decisions in the form of written works that can be fully accounted for.

3. Confidence

Self-confidence is an attitude formed from belief in oneself to achieve goals through a practical approach (Ramdhani, 2017). Writing teaches us to build self-confidence. The character of self-confidence in honing writing skills is reflected in the belief in the pattern of thought that is owned so that it gives birth to the courage to express thoughts through writing.

4. Politeness

Politeness is a rule of social behavior born from mutual determination and agreement in a society (Mislikhah, 2020). One of the indicators of politeness is seen in communication procedures. Writing is one of the means of communication. However, communicating is not just about conveying ideas or thoughts. The choice of language style used in communication shows a person's character and personality. Therefore, communication using language by paying attention to the norms and cultural elements that apply in society is vital to note so that the communication process can run smoothly then the ideas and thoughts are appropriately conveyed. Thus, honing writing skills as a medium of communication indirectly fosters a polite character in oneself.

5. Hard work

Hard work is a behavior that encourages a person to have a strong motivation and desire to be realized in the form of a serious effort to get the desired results (Fitriani et al., 2021). The process of honing writing skills requires us to have an attitude of working hard. Writing activities shape us to

work hard and present our thoughts in written form with a good and polite language structure. In addition, writing skills also teach us to work hard to hone language skills and increase creativity to produce good and quality writing.

6. Creative and innovative

Creativity is a character where actors can find new or better results than before (Jannah et al., 2019). Writing skills cannot be possessed without creativity. Being creative in finding new ideas or thoughts is one of the keys to creating quality works. Producing quality works also requires writing styles and delivering constantly updated messages so that they are interesting and not monotonous.

7. Critical and analytical

Being critical is a form of a person's mindset to consider and articulate an opinion or thought (Lubis, 2017). Critical thinking starts from finding a thought and then examining it deeper to understand and filter information so that it gives rise to new judgments or responses.

Forming a good character, ethics, and broad insight cannot be separated. In producing quality writing, critical thinking skills are needed to see the discussion of an object from various perspectives. Analyzing an object of discussion from various perspectives will give the actors have a broad understanding. It will be easy to find the reality to give birth to critical thinking. Critical thinking that is owned will produce new forms of creativity in solving or responding to a problem.

CONCLUSION

The results showed that the character formation process occurs by internalizing certain traits and values reflected in thoughts, emotions, and behavior. The process of character building can be done well by integrating several elements: soft skills, hard skills, intelligence quotient integration, emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, cognitive integration, psychomotor and affective. The integration of these several elements is realized in writing activities. Therefore, writing skills are present as an alternative media of character building.

Honing writing skills by doing habituation and maximizing the implementation of its function will have a significant impact on character building. The characters formed in the process include honest, responsible, confident, polite, hard-working, creative, innovative, critical, and analytical. In

conclusion, the more often a person hones writing skills, indirectly a positive character is formed.

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