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Character and Values of Junior High School Students in the Coastal Area, Indonesia

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to describe the character and values of students in coastal areas. This research method is ethnographic. The research subjects were junior high school students whose parents work as fishermen in coastal areas. The results showed that character education carried out in schools, homes, and community environments has made students in coastal area friendly, hard-working, caring towards their parents, independent, and disciplined. Values and character are not formed instantly but through a long process with environmental conditions in the coastal areas that are so challenging.

Key words: character education, junior high school students, coastal areas

Introduction

Character education is very important for every student (child). The purpose of character education is to overcome student behavior (Gable et al., 2013), improve skills (Helterbran & Strahler, 2013), promote a good attitude (Napitupulu, 2019), and encourage the growth of social competence (Ugurlu, 2014), so that character education implemented in school, home, and the community environment aims to shape the good behavior, skills, attitudes, and social competencies of children. According to Par (2017), the value of goodness is a key objective of character

education. The strength of the character of children in coastal areas is different from children who live in rural / mountainous areas (agrarian), and cities (urban). The difference is due to the environmental conditions of the area occupied. The results of Jennings, Mitchell, & Hannah (2014), Handayani & Brodjonegoro (2015), and Freeks (2015) concluded that the environment greatly influences character formation.

Indonesia is the largest archipelagic country in the world. More than two-thirds of its territory consists of the sea and it has the second longest coastline in the world, and the fifth largest population in the world, around 60% of whom live in coastal areas (Brotosusilo et al., 2016). Children who live in coastal areas have not fully met the requirements for growth and development, because they are already familiar with adult activities and are treated like adults (Jamieson et al., 2009).

Research results show that the characteristics of Indonesian coastal communities are kinship, cooperation, and that mutual trust between families is well established (Cahaya, 2015; Wekke & Cahaya, 2015). People have *fatalism* beliefs (respect for God, humans, nature, and life) (Judge, 2019). Local wisdom in the coastal area is a guideline for the behavior of people who live in coastal areas. In local wisdom noble values apply, so that values are the guidelines for the lives of children who live on the coast.

Research Problem

The problem in this research is that there has been no investigation of the character and values of junior high school students living in coastal areas. The implementation of character education in the school, home, and community environment has shaped the strength of students' unique or distinctive character.

Research Focus

There have been many studies on the character of adolescents in various countries such as Hendrix, Leudetke, Barlow (2004) measuring aspects of behavior related to adolescent character development. Research conducted by Urgesi, et al., (2012), Cloninger, et al., (2012), Brink, et al., (2014), Yoleri (2018) measured the character of school-age children. Research conducted by Shoshani & Ilanit (2012), Harzer & Ruch (2014), Dziobek, et al., (2016), Calderon & Carnicer (2016) measured 24 adolescent character strengths. But none of these studies have focused on the character of students who live in coastal areas. Based on the explanation above, this research tries to focus on the character and values that are formed and developed in junior high school students in coastal areas.

Methodology of Research

General Background of Research

This type of research is qualitative with ethnographic methods, so that this research produces data in the form of words written or spoken by people and behaviors that can be observed.

Subjects of Research

The subjects in this research were junior high school students in the coastal regions of Southeast Sulawesi Province, Indonesia, while the informant sources were 22 people consisting of 5 (five) principals, 3 (three) teachers, 5 (five) fishermen, 2 (two) religious and cultural figures, 2 (two) housewives, and 5 (five) junior high school students.

Instrument and Procedures

The main instrument in data collection is the researchers themselves. Researchers are actively involved in the lives of coastal communities. The techniques used during data collection are observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were made to observe student activities. Interviews were conducted with parties who knew of the character and values that were formed and developed in students. The documentation collected images of student activities in coastal areas.

Data Analysis

The steps of data analysis follow the procedure suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), namely data collection, data reduction, display of the data, and forming of conclusions.

Research Results

Based on the results of the analysis, middle school students in the dominant coastal areas are religious, friendly, hard working, care for parents, independent, and disciplined. Religious values are the attitudes or behaviors of students in coastal areas, who are obedient in implementing the teachings of the religion they profess. Results obtained from 5 school principals, 3 teachers, 5 fishermen, 2 religious and cultural figures, 2 housewives, and 5 junior high school students confirmed the same conclusions about the characteristics of religious values, which are presented in Table (1).

Table 1. Characteristics of religious values

Outstanding character trait	Characteristics	Confirmation results from
Religious	Students; Believe in a forbidden place (<i>pemali</i>) at sea	Fishermen, Religious and Cultural figures, Housewives, and Students
	Believe in rituals held at sea	
	Believe in God's power	
	Carry out congregational prayers	Principal, Teacher, Housewife and Students
	Routinely follow the recitation (TPA)	
	Pray before or after an activity	
	Greet or answer greetings	
	Do not like to hurt friends / other people	
	Are polite and polite to others	

Students in coastal areas also show a sense of pleasure in helping, associating, and cooperating with others. This was confirmed by results obtained from 5 school principals, 3 teachers, 5 fishermen, 2 religious and cultural figures, and 5 junior high school students who agreed on the characteristics of a friendly character, which are presented in Table (2).

Table 2. Characteristics of a friendly character

Outstanding character trait	Characteristics	Confirmation results from
Friendly (make friends)	Students; Work together to complete a job / task	Principal, Teacher, and Students
	Associate with other people / colleagues	
	Help friends who are in need of help	
	Consider friends as siblings	Fishermen, Religious and Cultural figures, and Students
	Establish togetherness with others	

The value of hard work was seen in the behavior of students who showed earnest effort in completing a job as well as possible. This was confirmed by results obtained from 5 school principals, 3 teachers, 5 fishermen, 2 housewives, and 5 junior high school students who came to the same conclusions about the characteristics of the value of hard work which are presented in Table (3).

Table 3. Characteristics of the value hard work

Outstanding character trait	Characteristics	Confirmation results from
Hard work	Students; Study hard	Principal, Teacher, Housewife, and Students
	Dive looking for sea cucumbers	Fishermen, Housewives, and Students
	Bind seaweed	
	Install traps in the sea	
	Find or take <i>bia</i>	
Sell fish around the village		

The value of caring for parents was seen in the attitude and actions of students, who always wanted to provide assistance and care for both parents. Confirmation of these results was obtained from 5 fishermen, 2 housewives, and 5 junior high school students who came to the same conclusions about the characteristics of the values of care for parents, which are presented in Table (4).

Table 4. Characteristics of the value care for parents

Outstanding character trait	Characteristics	Confirmation results from
Caring towards parents	Student; Help parents clean fishing nets	Fishermen, Housewives, and Students
	Help parents dry sea shells	
	Help parents repair (sew) broken nets	
	Help parents to dry seaweed	
	Help parents reduce the fish catch from the boat	
	Help parents catch fish at night off the coast when sea water recedes (<i>meti</i>) using spears, arrows, and nets.	
	Help care for parents	Housewives and Students
	Help parents clean the house	
	Help parents find firewood	

The values of independence was observed in the attitudes and behavior of students who were not easily dependent on others to obtain or complete work. Confirmation was obtained from 2 housewives, and 5 junior high school students

who came to the same conclusions about the characteristics of the independent character values, presented in table (5).

Table 5. Characteristics of the value of independence

Outstanding character trait	Characteristics	Confirmation results from
Independence	Students; Go to school or come home from school without being escorted or picked up by parents / relatives	Housewives and Students
	Wash their own clothes	
	Create or prepare a fishing line	
	Look for pocket money themselves	
	Wake up at dawn without being woken up by parents / relatives	
	Do assignments / homework at home without the help of parents / relatives	

The value of discipline was seen in the actions of students who showed orderly behavior and adhered to various rules and regulations. These results were confirmed by 5 school principals, 3 teachers, 2 religious and cultural figures, 2 housewives, and 5 junior high school students who came to the same conclusions about the characteristics of the value of discipline, which are presented in Table (6).

Table 6. Characteristics of the value of discipline

Outstanding character trait	Characteristics	Confirmation results from
Discipline	Students; Do not come to school late	Principal, Teacher, and Students
	Follow the morning school <i>apel</i>	
	Wear complete school uniforms	
	Follow the flag ceremony at school	
	Throw garbage in its place	
	Come to the mosque before prayer time starts	Religious and cultural figures, Students
	Follow the recitation on time	
	Wake up early to perform the morning prayer.	Housewives and Students
	Plan school on time to help both parents	
	Research at night	
Sleep fast at night or do not stay up late		

Discussion

The implementation of character education in the coastal areas has formed junior high school students on the coast that are religious, friendly, hard-working, who care for their parents, are independent, and disciplined. Character and values are not formed instantly but through a long process. In addition, they are influenced by the environmental conditions that are so challenging. One of the religious characteristics of the students is that they routinely follow Koran recitation activities (TPA). When wanting students to behave well, it is necessary to create a good environment and establish religious rules (Kartowagiran & Maddini, 2015). The friendly values shown by students are their willingness to get along with other people / colleagues and to work together to complete a job / task. Engagement with peers and good relationships that are formed have a positive impact on the development of the adolescent identity (Klimstra et al., 2013).

The characteristics of the hard work are shown in selling fish caught by fishermen in the village / village / hamlet environment. Fishing communities tend to depend on fishing as their cultural identity (Basavakumar, et al., 2011). The habit of working hard becomes part of the students' contribution to the world of work. In the *Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD Survey* (BIAC, 2015), it is revealed that in this complex world, employers are increasingly aware of the importance of quality of character at work. Students showed this quality in helping parents clean fishing nets or dry seaweed, when they went to school without their parents / relatives, when they looked for spending money alone, and when they went to school in a complete school uniform. This shows that the value of independence is inherent in junior high school students in coastal areas. These characteristics are long-lasting behavior patterns that can be generalized into personality characteristics (Diggs & Akos, 2016).

Having the quality of a good character will make middle school students in coastal areas able to face the development of the 21st Century. There are at least three skill categories needed, namely literacy, competence, and quality of character (World Economic Forum, 2015). In addition, being aware of the character and values of junior high school students in coastal areas is expected to help teachers who teach in coastal areas implement classroom assessment for learning well for student success. Diggs & Akos (2016) state that being always optimistic in academic work has a positive influence on learning.

Conclusions

Junior high school students who live in coastal areas have an identity that characterizes them as a maritime community. Geographical conditions that are always full of challenges and risks make students have special character values. In addition, character education that has been carried out for a long time in schools, homes, and community environments has made students in coastal areas religious, friendly, hard-working, caring towards their parents, independent, and disciplined. Character education should be adjusted to the daily lives of students (local wisdom) in facing the challenges of life problems. Local wisdom in the coastal area refers to behavior that becomes a way of life. Planting character values is the responsibility of all residents on the coast. The values that have been attached to students will help teachers in implementing classroom assessment for successful learning. Students who have good quality values and character will contribute to the success of students in the academic field. In addition, this can be a strength in dealing with the challenges of life in the 21st Century.

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