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## Comparative Analysis of Character Education in Elementary Schools Between Indonesia and Japan

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### Abstract

*The purpose of this study is to analyze the comparative application of character education between Indonesia and Japan, and also to meet the final semester exam of logic and scientific reasoning courses. The research method used is to use a qualitative research method using a literature approach or better known as library research. The source of data for this research comes from research, literature, or government policies on character education in Indonesia and Japan. The results of this study explain that the foundation of character education in Indonesia is State Ideology, Customs and culture, religious values, government rules and policies. Likewise in Japan, the foundation of character education is in the form of cultural values, state ideology, and government policy rules. Approaches to character education in Indonesia, including the approach of instilling values, the approach of clarifying values, the approach of learning to do, example, and habituation, are usually taught in schools. While in Japan, among others, the approach is more likely to be habituated, for Japanese society, character education in children is not taught but habituated. Character problems in Indonesia and Japan are not too different, which is only about juvenile delinquency, free sex, bullying, and seniority. This writing is presented using the literature review method.*

*Keyword: Character Education, Culture, Religion, Elementary School*

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### INTRODUCTION

Education is not only limited to teaching to increase children's intelligence, but is also related to increasing character formation in children. Character education is very important to be taught to children from an early age. Character education is very important to be instilled in children from an early age so that it can be a strong foundation to face technological developments and the development of the times. (Ariandy, 2019). Along with the development of technology, the world has become narrow and there are a lot of various kinds of information and shows that are very easy to access for children, especially children in elementary schools who have begun to be given gadgets by their parents. Various kinds of violence, crime, and even videos or content that are inappropriate for children to watch are easily accessed through gadgets. (Salsabila et al., 2020). Of course, this has a very negative impact on the lives of the next generation of the Indonesian nation. One of the tangible evidences is the rampant crimes committed by children, such as theft, sexual violence, brawls, and so on. Sadly, such news is presented almost every day in the print and electronic media that we have. (Unayah, 2015). Thus, the inculcation of moral values by parents and teachers is a "mandatory" thing to do so that the next generation of the nation maintains their morals and morals. As stated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education (Permendikbud) Number 58 of 2009, there are 5 aspects that must be developed in children, namely, religious and moral values, language, cognitive, physical-motor and social-emotional.

The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) said that from 2011 to the end of 2018, there were 11,116 children entangled in criminal cases. These crimes include motorcycle gangs, theft, street crimes, and murder. KPAI Commissioner Putu Elvina stated that in 2011 there were 695 criminal acts involving children, while in 2018 it increased to 1,434. It was also explained that there were children who entered the Special Children's Correctional Institution (LKPA) as many as 23.9 percent for theft cases, 17.8 percent for drug cases, 13.2 percent for immoral cases and so on. KPAI also explained that there were 1,885 cases that had been handled during the first semester of 2018 which were dominated by cases in the form of drugs, theft, and immorality. (Hidayat, 2019). In the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003, it is explained that national education functions to develop and shape the character of a dignified national civilization in order to realize the nation's ideals, namely educating the nation's life and participating in national development. Thus, it is hoped that the potential and abilities of students can make children as human beings who have faith, noble character, noble ethics, creativity, knowledge, independence, and become democratic and responsible citizens. All educational unit institutions in Indonesia have an important role in realizing the national education function. All levels of education, including elementary schools, have a very important role in realizing the national education goals. Education not only aims to improve children's cognitive intelligence, but also to increase children's emotional intelligence so that children have noble and moral character. This is in line with what Martin Luther King expressed, which is "it is important to remember, that intelligence alone is not enough. Intelligence and character are the true goals of education. (Suryana, 2019). Parents and schools play a very important role in the process of teaching character values to children.

This is confirmed by Thomas Lickona's statement which states that there are several reasons why schools must be committed to teaching character values to children, namely: 1) The younger generation is more often / easily destructive to themselves and others, and it is very difficult to be invited to contribute to the welfare of fellow humans. 2) A country or society needs value education to survive and develop, it must begin by teaching character values to children from an early age. 3) The role of schools as educators of children's character is becoming increasingly important, because there are millions of children out there who lack character education from their parents and also education of religious values that should be fostered through worship, are not present in the lives of these children. 4) A democratic country, where this country pays great attention to the moral education of its citizens because democracy is the government of the people, by the people and for the people, if a society in a country lacks moral values and character education, then the country will undoubtedly be destroyed. 5) The absence of value-free education, 6) Moral questions are big questions that must be faced by humans, both individuals and citizens. (Lickona, 2014).

In this paper, the author intends to describe a comparative analysis of character education in two different countries, namely Indonesia and Japan. Japan is known as a country that has excellent moral, ethical and character values, Japan has the enforcement of moral values to understand each other, as well as Indonesia which is known to have a character of cultural values that are rich in hospitality. Research on this matter has been carried out by other researchers, but it clearly has differences with this research, among the relevant studies include a Comparison of Core Ethical Values in Indonesia and Japan based on State Philosophy and Historical Perspective (Omay, Aan, et al, 2021), a comparison of the Indonesian and Japanese education systems (Montanese, Firman, 2021), a comparison of character education in three countries, namely Indonesia, Singapore and Japan (Syamsurrijal, 2018), Comparison of Core Ethical Values of Indonesia and Japan Based on State Philosophy (Komarudin, et al, 2021), Comparison of Education Systems in Indonesia and Japan (Sari, Septi, 2017), Learning Basic Education with Japan (Irawati, Maulidiyah, 2022), Comparison of Character Education for Elementary Schools between Indonesia and Japan (Alfarisy,

2021), Model of Character Education in Japanese Society (Budi, 2014), Cross-Country Character Education (Afandi, 2016), Comparison Study Character Building in Primary School Indonesia and Japan (Hinta et al., 2020), from all the studies mentioned above, it seems that the focus lies in the discussion of the approaches and problems experienced by the State related to the implementation of character education. So far, research tends to discuss the advantages of the implementation of character education in the two countries, but it is very rare to mention what are the problems or weaknesses of the implementation of character education. The purpose of this research is to analyze three things, specifically aiming at three things, namely to analyze the comparison of character education between Indonesia and Japan from three things, namely the foundation, approach and problems experienced. Of course, this research will contribute to education managers, teachers or parents in providing character education to students or their children, especially those related to character.

## **METHODS**

This study uses a qualitative research method based on library research, the data source in this study comes from literature in the form of Indonesian government policies related to character education such as Presidential Decree No. 87 of 2017 concerning the strengthening of character education, Permendikbud No. 20 of 2018 concerning the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture concerning the Strengthening of Character Education in Formal Education Units. In addition to government policies, other sources of literature such as books, research results, and also journal articles. Data analysis uses descriptive methods, namely research that seeks to describe and interpret what exists, growing opinions, ongoing processes, consequences or effects that occur or trends that develop. Data interpretation is indeed a strength in library research, the interpretation is obtained from comparisons with the libraries obtained.

## **RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

### ***Result***

As explained in the introduction, there are three objectives of this research, namely the foundation of character education, the approach to character education, and the problems of character education in Indonesia and Japan. The foundation of character education in Indonesia and Japan, the foundation referred to in this discussion is the basis for the formation of character education in the two countries. This foundation is also the foundation for the development of character education in the country. Indonesia and Japan are countries that have so many differences, including the foundation of character education. There are several things that are the foundation of character education in Indonesia, namely culture, national ideology, and religion. Culture is indeed the main foundation of character education in Indonesia, the value of cultural heritage that has been passed down from generation to generation is the foundation for thinking, acting, and making decisions. It is undeniable that there are many character values that originate from the culture that is rooted in Indonesia. The culture of mutual cooperation, for example, which then became the spirit of the progress of the nation and state, and culture became one of the main values of character education called for by the Ministry of Education and Culture. In the section "considering" Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2017, it is stated that Indonesia as a cultured nation is a country that upholds noble morals, noble values, wisdom, and ethics.

Then it was also mentioned that strengthening character education is carried out through strengthening religious values, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, national spirit, love of the homeland, respect for achievements, communicative, love of peace, love of reading, care for the environment, social care, and responsibility. Culture is also the foundation for the formation of the nation's

ideology, and the nation's ideology is also the foundation for the formation of character education in Indonesia. Character education is inseparable from the ideology of the Indonesian nation, namely Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. Even the five precepts contained in Pancasila are the noble basis for the formation of the nation's personality. The five precepts are not just ideologies that become sacred sentences without taking the form of actions but sentences that each item reflects the personality of the nation. Therefore, every citizen must understand what is contained in it and then implement it in daily life. (Juliani & Bastian, 2021). In addition to ideology, another foundation is religious values. As is known, Indonesia is known as a divine country, so the values of religious teachings that are embraced are also the basis for character formation. It is undeniable that the character values that exist in the national education system are widely adopted from religious teachings. In fact, it is inevitable that it does not contradict the character values carried by the Ministry of Education and Culture with the values of religious teachings. Not so different from the foundation of character education in Japan, the foundation of character education in Japan also begins with the existing culture. Even until now, Japan is known as a country that is still strong in maintaining its cultural traditions in the midst of this modern era. The culture is not only attached to traditional activities, but in daily life Japanese people still maintain their customs, such as wearing traditional clothes in daily life, namely Kimono and Makan using chopsticks. From the many traditions that explain that Japan makes culture the basis for thinking, acting, and making decisions, so it is not surprising that the application of character education in Japan is also based on existing cultural values. The Japanese adhere to the philosophy that human beings can change their circumstances and nature through the efforts of others or their own efforts.

They do not believe that man has been predestined in certain circumstances that cannot be changed or changed. With this philosophy, the Japanese people prioritize education, including character education. Character education in Japan is known as *doutoku-kyoiku*. *Doutoku-kyoiku* is derived from the word (*doutoku*) which means moral, and the word (*kyoiku*) which means education. *Doutokukyoku* is a moral learning provided through schools, starting from elementary to high school levels. Through this *doutoku-kyoku*, the character of the Japanese nation was created which we know as a distinctive nation with the character of discipline, tenacity, honesty, hard work, high tolerance, and so on. The second cornerstone of character education in Japan is the nation's ideology. As is known, Japan adheres to the constitutional monarchy system of government or the imperial constitution. Therefore, this ideology is also a characteristic of the life of Japanese people who highly value their superiors or leaders. The emperor's decision is considered to be the highest decision that is the basis for all actions, which of course is also the basis for a person to take action. Various Approaches to Indonesian and Japanese Character Education (Zeim El Mubarak) explained that there are several approaches to character education that are commonly used in Indonesia, namely:

1. Value Cultivation Approach. The cultivation approach is an approach that emphasizes the inculcation of social values in students. The purpose of the value instillation approach is to instill certain desired values. According to this approach, values are seen as standards or rules of behavior that come from society and culture. Assessing is considered an identification and socialization process in which a person, sometimes unconsciously, takes standards or norms from other people, groups, or societies and incorporates them into their own value system. In this view, the task of value education is to instill values so that people must position themselves efficiently according to the roles determined by society. Furthermore, this value instillation approach is often considered a negative approach. However, this approach is often used by many circles, including religious people. As an example of this approach, Superka suggests that a teacher, for

- example, might react very deeply and violently to a student who has just uttered racial slurs to another student in the class.
2. Value analysis approach. The value analysis approach emphasizes the development of students' ability to think logically, by analyzing problems related to social values. When compared to the cognitive development approach, one difference between the two is that the value analysis approach emphasizes more on discussing problems that contain social values. The cognitive development approach emphasizes on the moral dilemma of the individual. In contrast to the moral development approach, value analysis concentrates primarily on issues of social value rather than personal moral dilemmas. Therefore, the analytical approach provides an understanding of the aspects of moral values that can be applied in social life. There are two main goals of moral education according to this approach. First, it helps students to use logical thinking skills and scientific findings in analyzing social problems, which are related to certain moral values. Second, it helps students to use rational and analytical thinking processes in formulating the concept of relationships about their values. logical rules and procedures.
  3. Value Clarification Approach .  
The value clarification approach emphasizes efforts to assist students in assessing their own feelings and actions, as well as increasing their awareness of their own values by thinking rationally and also using emotional awareness together. There are three objectives of value education according to this approach, namely: First, helping students to realize and identify their own values and people's values. Other. Second, helping students to be able to communicate openly and honestly with others, related to values that can be actualized in their own lives. Third, to help students, to be able to jointly use rational thinking skills and emotional awareness, to understand their own feelings, values, and behavior patterns. The clarification approach is a more complex approach compared to other value education approaches that sometimes use a variety of methods. These methods include small group discussions and large group discussions, individual and group work, listening to songs and artwork, games and simulations, as well as personal journals and interviews. It is designed to stimulate students to reflect on their thoughts, feelings, actions, and values. However, as an approach in the educational process, the value clarification approach has advantages and disadvantages.
  4. Learning Approach. The learning approach is action that emphasizes giving opportunities for students to perform good moral actions individually or collectively in a group. There are two main objectives of moral education based on this approach. First, it provides opportunities for students to take moral action, both individually and collectively, based on their own values. Second, it encourages students to see themselves as individual beings and social beings in association with others, who do not have complete freedom, but as citizens of society, who take part in the democratic process. The teaching methods used in the value analysis and value clarification approaches are also used in this approach. However, as an approach in the educational process, the to-do learning approach has advantages and disadvantages. (Al-Mubarak, 2017).

Unlike in Japan, according to Mulyadi, character education tends to use *Doutoku-kyoiku*, which is moral learning provided through schools, starting from elementary to high school levels. *Doutoku-kyoiku* is integrated into the curriculum so that it is not integrated into every subject. The difference is that in Indonesia, moral education is taught not only in theory, but also implemented in daily life. In addition, the content of moral education or *doutoku-kyoiku* is divided into four aspects in detail (Mulyadi, 2014), as follows:

1. Regarding self, which means self-respect, includes: moderation (self-work), diligence (working hard independently), courage (spelling something correctly with courage), sincerity (working with sincerity), freedom and order (the value of freedom and discipline), love for truth (loving and seeking the truth).

2. Relation to others, which means relationships with others include: courtesy (understanding of manners), consideration and kindness (paying attention to the interests of others, kindness, and empathy), friendship (understanding, and helping others), thank and respect (appreciating and respecting people who have contributed to us), modesty (respecting others who have different ideas and status).
3. Relation to the nature and the sublime, which means relationship with nature includes: respect for nature (knowing and loving nature), respect for life (respecting life and living things), aesthetic sensitivity (having aesthetic sensitivity and feelings), nobility (believing in power and finding happiness as a human being).
4. Relation to group and society, which means relationship to group and society includes: public duty (keeping promises and carrying out obligations in society), justice (honest and impartial without discrimination, prejudice and justice), group participation and responsibility (desire to participate as a group, realizing its role by working together),

Regarding the practice, there are some things that may seem very trivial to do, but they are one way to instill character education in Japan, including:

1. Attach the sentence Gratitude or what in Japanese is called Arigatou Posuto Itto. This kind of patch is usually used with the intention of thanking a friend who has lent a pen or has shared what they have. Although it seems trivial, this little thing teaches children or society not to forget to thank the people who have helped us.
2. 2) The Environmental Safety Map in Japanese terms is called Chiiki Anzen Mappu. This concept teaches starting from elementary school to educate students to care about the surrounding environment. The map is the work of students who aim to remind the public who see it, for example, a safety map, pasted on a road with many bends, so that everyone who passes through the road can be careful.
3. 3) Gotong Royong Education, this type of education is similar to that in Indonesia, where it is usually in the form of a picket schedule to clean the classroom, where this schedule is pasted on the classroom wall.
4. 4) Educating to Always Have a Goal, where this is taught by making the target student written under the student's photo. These targets are in the form of simple targets, for example, the target of waking up early, not being late for school, eating before leaving and others. The target can also be in the form of a monthly target or an annual target.
5. 5) Handwritten Newspaper or known as Tegaki Shinbun, where this newspaper is made by students with an attractive design.
6. 6) Sharpening Empathy, where one form is not to give long and boring speeches to students. By habituating or teaching the above, children are taught to have a high work ethic, obey rules, discipline, and have high creativity. (Mulyadi, 2014).

## **DISCUSSION**

Basically, the educational pattern in schools in Japan is similar to that in Indonesia which has a 6-3-3-4 pattern, where the education system in this country has been regulated in Kyoiku Kibonbo or the Basic Law of Education. Elementary school in Japan is the same as in Indonesia, which takes 6 years, not only elementary school education, but also junior and senior high school education is also the same for three years each. For the tertiary (undergraduate) level, it takes four years, except for the faculty of medicine which takes six years. However, it seems that even the problem of character education actually occurred at that time, elementary and secondary school students often experienced character problems, such as juvenile delinquency, involvement with vandalism and thuggery, involvement in drug use and free sex. (Hidayah et al., 2018).

Another problem is related to the stress rate which is common in Japan. Japanese society is known to have high demands on life, so the level of stress is increasing. These

psychological disorders then have an impact on the development of a person's personality, of course the appearance of the character in daily life will also lead to a bad one. In addition, parental concern is indeed the main factor in the success of character education, but the problem is that Japan is known as a country with a high level of mobility so that parents are more busy outside the home or in offices, so that children's character education is very rarely controlled. Similar to Indonesia, urban areas do show the same problems as in Japan, urban society in Japan does have the same busyness as in Japan, so many parents completely leave their children's education to school. Of course, this condition affects the child's character education. (Junaedi & Gratitude, 2017)

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the *literature review*, it can be concluded that the foundation of character education in Indonesia is not much different from that in Japan, which is based on culture, state ideology, it's just that in Indonesia the foundation of character education which is also strong is the foundation of religion. Approaches to character education in Indonesia include the approach of instilling values, the approach of value analysis, the approach of clarifying values, and the approach of learning to do, in addition to that there is also an exemplary approach. The approach to character education in Japan tends to use *Doutoku-kyoiku*, which is moral learning provided through schools, starting from elementary to high school levels. These *doutoku-kyoiku* are integrated into the curriculum so that they are not integrated in every subject. (Nishino, 2017). The problem of character education in Indonesia and Japan is also not so different, the problem lies in the level of parental concern, a bad environment, and it's just that the difference in Japan is that the level of stress as a result of high life demands also affends

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