REVISITING CHARACTER EDUCATION FROM ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE: A QUEST FOR CHARACTER-BASED EDUCATION IN INDONESIA

Eka

Kulliyyah of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia
Email: boedak88@gmail.com

Abstract: Since it was launched in 2010, Character Education is becoming a mesmerizing framework which is assumed to bring about the changes in Indonesian national education. Especially, National Education Framework for Character Education 2010 is agreed to be a guide for national education success in building nation character of the youngsters. However, such a dual-system of education, general and Islamic education, that is embraced in the current national education system emanates various Character Education both its interpretation and implementation. The discussion in this paper highlights that from various definitions and interpretations. Character education practices deal with definite values rather than relative values. Islam world has many sources of values and ethics and thus Muslim educators and teachers are suggested to base the values inculcation to students on those Islamic sources of values and ethics. Various challenges to society's life from diverse ideologies make character education practices as necessary to conduct in order to counter those ideologies.

Keywords: Character education, Islamic perspective, Islamic education, National Education.

Introduction

IN THE HISTORY of Indonesian education, the national curriculum has experienced several revisions since 1990s up to 2013. The revisions are logical consequences of the change of the political system, social, cultural, economic, and global

challenges. The entire national curriculum is designed based on the same basis, the Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, the difference however, is in the emphasis on its goals and implementation approaches. The new orientation of the educational goals of the 2013 national curriculum is in emphasizing students' character development. This is congruent with the *Rencana Aksi Nasional Pendidikan Karakter 2010* (National Action Plan for Character Education 2010) which defines character education as values education, norms education, moral education, and traits education which develop students' competencies to decide between right and wrong, maintaining the goodness and virtues in their daily life wholeheartedly.[1]

It is stated in the document of the 2010 National Action Plan for Character Education that character development orientation is to respond to the failures of educational practices that result in social problems faced in recent years. Horizontal, vertical and primordial conflicts of society, separatist movements, corruption, collusion, and nepotism are noted as the impact of the failures of developing students' character. Bad behavior, such as cheating, plagiarism, vandalism, bullying, students-gang, harassment, and even murders, bloom almost in the life of students everywhere.[2]

Educating students' character is essential and has been acknowledged as the major function of education. Lots of researches are conducted to study the relationship between character development and academic performance of the students. Chartier[3] asserts that positive relationship between character education with student's academic achievement (41% of variance in GPA) and school attendance (5% of variance in

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[1]Direktorat Jenderal PendidikanTinggi & Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional Direktorat Ketenagaan, *Kerangka Acuan Pendidikan Karakter Tahun Anggaran 2010* (2010), 10-1.

[2]See ibid., 2-3.

[3]See Duna Izfanna, "Developing Muslim Students' Character: A Case Study on the Implementation of Character Eeducation at Pondok Pesantren Darunnajah, Indonesia" (Dissertation, International Islamic Unversity Malaysia, 2014), 5.

GPA), positive personal development and decrease anti-social behaviour.

"Character education in Indonesia has been interpreted to various approaches ranging from establishing subject or special programs to integrating character education in all subjects at school".[4] Practically, according to Ratna Megawangi, character education mostly focuses on teaching of character and moral as a subject, such as *Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan* (civic education) and *Pendidikan Agama* (religious teaching).[5] In 2010, Indonesian Ministry of Education in a national symposium for education delivered educational paradigms for new curriculum that emphasize on character education from pre-primary school to higher education.[6]

In addition, National Education Law of Indonesia No. 20, 2003 chapter 2, article 3, gives a clear statement of educational aims:

> National education is aimed at enriching the ability and developing personality as well as National civilization in educating the intellectual life of the nation and to develop the best potential of the students to be a man who is devout and God fearing, has good character, healthy, knowledgeable, stable personality, creative, independent, and has a deep of sense of responsibility and democracy as a good citizen of Indonesia.[7]

However, it seems that educational institutions' efforts are not sharply oriented to reach the aims of national education as outlined in the Framework for Character Education 2010, which result in the failures of developing students' character. Succinctly, the National Education Framework for Character Education 2010 mentions that the current educational practices have failed to develop students' character which results in social problems faced in recent years.

Following the National Education Framework for Character Education 2010, character education is not defined as a single

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[4]Ibid., 4.

[5]See ibid., 6.

[6]Sodikin, "No Title."

[7]Direktorat Ketenagaan, "Kerangka Acuan Pendidikan Karakter Tahun Anggaran 2010," 4.

subject but it is integrated into all subjects, self-development programs, and school culture.[8] Specifically, according to the document, the character configurations based on the framework can be in terms of; a) spiritual and emotional development, b) intellectual development, c) physical and kinaesthetic development, and d) affective and creativity development.

Apart from that, regarding the dual system of education embraced in the Indonesian educational system, there is a vivid claim that Islamic-based schooling institutions are more reliable in preserving students' characters. As As'admaintains that there are differences between alumni of *Pesantren,* one of Islamic-based schooling institutions, and non-*Pesantren* in terms of their morality.[9] He claims that the alumni of *Pesantren* are considerably possessing moral highness than non-*Pesantren* alumni, especially compared to public school graduates. A case study in *Darunnajah Pondok Pesantren* by Duna Izfana shows that the respondents taking part in the study affirm confidently that character education implementation in that institution works effectively.

In this paper, the author seeks to present the discussions on related literatures to enrich the perspectives towards Character Education as the new platform underlining 2013 curriculum. Additionally, the discussion is expected to bridge the polarities between general and Islamic educational institutions' views on Character Education since from its conceptual basis to its implementation. Employing critical discourse analysis in reading related literatures, therefore, the author primarily seeks to answer the questions: What is character education? How Islam sees character development as importance? Does today's education really need of character education?

Defining Character Education

From the semiotic perspective, the word 'character' has various mental images to represent for its different usage and context. While the word character is used for any letters or symbols in digital computational terms, in the literary works, the

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[8]See ibid., 11.

[9]See Aliy H. As'ad, *Terjemah Ta'limul Muta'allim: Bimbingan Bagi Penuntut Ilmu Pengetahuan*, Revised 20 ed. (Kudus: Menara Kudus, 2007), x.

term character is used either for persons, animals, or things as the subjects in the story. From those two fields, it is noticeable that at its general concept and mental image, the word character is used to signify the things for their different qualities and or their functions. The function of "a" letter in "calm", as for instance, represents the vowel sound that is produced when mouth opens widely. A letter "A" in a grading system functions as to signify a high quality of an achievement or a product. A boy or a tiny snail as a character in a short story represents an individual with certain qualities and his or its functions in the story. If so, it is safe to say that the word character is closely related to qualities and functions of something.

However, experts define 'character' in quite various ways. Etymologically, according to Kevin and Bohlin,[10] and O'Sullivan, [11] the English word *character* comes from the Greek word *charassein,* which means "to engrave" or to give a distinctive mark or sign. It is interesting to note that the phrase "distinctive mark" has a strong point. In a specific manner, "related to a person, character is used to refer to the distinguishing marks or traits grafted on an individual's temperament".[12] In other words, character is a set of distinguishing marks to ascertain the qualities and or functions of an individual especially regarding the human behaviour and traits.

In educational settings, affixed term "character education" brings significant and prominent changes into the perspectives and the movements in education. It is currently an international issue in education for more than two decades. Several names are associated with character education pioneers such as Lickona (1992), Lockwood (1993), Covey (1997), Ryan (1999), and Cooley (2008). Character education prominently responds the educational enterprises that fail to preserve youngsters' character

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[10]Kevin Ryan and Karen E. Bohlin, *Building Character in Schools: Practical Ways to Bring Moral Instruction to Life*, First ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999).

[11]Alex Agboola and Kaun Chen Tsai, "Bring Character Education into Classroom," *European Journal of Educational Research* 1, no. 2 (2012): 164.

[12]Izfanna, "Developing Muslim," 26.

development at schools. The most significant responses are related to pedagogy and curriculum theories respectively. This is somewhat like to rethink how the most common current "curriculum which focuses on the improvement of basic skills test scores"[13] should be redesigned to provide students with ideal portions of character development. In addition, the school's function as a social institution needs to be relooked in order to provide significant roles desired by the society, especially regarding the young's character and behavior.

Character education is also frequently equated with religious education, moral education, and civic and citizenship education. Among those little bit confusing terms to the extent which term is the most important in developing students' character, they primarily emphasize similar domains namely affective domains of learning that can influence students' behavior. Looking into the sources of each term, religious education grounds its source of the values on the divine revelation and virtues stipulated in the holy books revealed to prophets as well as the recorded prophetic ways of life. Regardless secular views on character development, religious education promotes the values that human behaviors as always being in relation to the rewards and the punishments from God. Someone who acts morally and virtuously well will get reward from God. Conversely, someone who does bad things will get punishment from Him. In line with this, therefore, Ryan and Lickona maintain that most religious "…precepts are often a major guiding moral decision".[14] Furthermore, they assert that:

> Religion, defined as a stance bearing on ultimacy (What makes life worth living? What is our ultimate purpose and destiny?), is rooted in our human nature, and the working out of religious understanding provides a foundation and support structure for moral development.[15]

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[13]Kim L. Creasy, "Is There a Place for Character Education?," (2008): n.p.

[14]Kevin Ryan and Thomas Lickona, "Character Development: The Challenge and the Model," ed. Kevin Ryan and Thomas Lickona (Washington D. C: RVP, 1992), 7.

[15]Ibid., 14.

In addition, Thomas C. Hennessy assets in his writing *The Role of Religion in Character Development* that:

> …religious perspectives on human behaviour offer a much deeper foundation….because they deal with the deeper aspects of our nature, our quest for the transcendental, for the will of God, for salvation, and for a future life. Furthermore, religious perspectives provide a deeper view of the person since the person is viewed in relationship to God, and human behaviour is seen as being judged ultimately not just by humans but by the Maker of all. …[16]

It is obvious that the above views see character development from the religious perspective. Regardless Hennessy's religious background, those views are universally accepted to be the shared perspective to see that the religion significantly plays important role in the human character development.

Moral education on the other hand, grounds its values on the common consensuses and experiences that people as a community agreed upon in a spatial and timeline border. This agreement is holding the conventions and values to serve the people as a community. Attached to this ground is moral reasoning—Lickona calls "a natural moral law" or Covey names as "principles",[17] that are excerpted from the experiences and amalgamated with human reasoning capacity. For this, she maintains that "many theologians and moral philosophers have long held: that there is a natural moral law inscribed on the fleshy tablets of human heart. We can discern this moral law through reason and experience."[18] Additionally, Covey proposes the nature of causal consequences related to the natural moral law, stating that:

> These principles, *i.e. honesty, respect, hard work, love, and moderation in all things as they are mentioned*, or natural moral laws are wired into us. We can, of course, use our God-given free will to go against these moral laws, but we can't escape the negative consequences of doing so. [19]

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[16]Thomas C. Hennessy, "The Role of Religion in Characer Development," ed. Kevin Ryan and Thomas Lickona (Washington D. C: RVP, 1992), 220.

[17]See Thomas Lickona, *What is Effective Character Education?* (2001), 1-2.

[18]Ibid., 1.

[19]Ibid., 2. Italics are as what Covey meant.

Another term equated with character education is civic and citizenship education which provides the youngsters with the values that guide them how to live as the citizen and how to give contributions to the nation and the country. The national philosophy upheld by a nation should generate the civic virtues and citizenship consciousness. Pride of being a part of nation and country, nationalistic, and patriotic are such values that are mostly grounded on the national philosophy. Civic and citizenship education will also provide personal vision towards the country's grand development which is in turn it guides the generation to orchestrate their self-potentials under the "central mission" of the country—i.e. "nurturing a democratic culture and a civil society".[20]

By the above notions, character education should incorporate among religious education, moral education, and also civic and citizenship education exercises. This is perhaps the general view of relationship among those terms. In its turn, character education should be able to develop the qualities of youngsters in order to make them function well to serve the self in obedience to the ultimate source of life i.e. Allah the Almighty, the communities, and the nation. It is because, either as a program or as a movement in educational settings, character education is attached to what Cooley said in Agboola & Tsai that "the common belief of character education …from psychological and philosophical perspective that virtues can be taught and learned through the proper pedagogy".[21]

Apart from that, concerning character education, Kevin Ryan and Thomas Lickona, assert that human character involves the interplay of three components namely knowing, affect, and action.[22] Translated into moral development, those three components sequence the process of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral acting. Hence, according to Izfana,

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[20]Robert Tatman, Stacey Edmonson, and John R. Slate, "Character Education: A Critical Analysis," *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation* 4, no. 1 (2009).

[21]Agboola and Tsai, "Bring Character," 164.

[22]See Ryan and Lickona, "Character Development," 220.

"…character education is a process of knowing the good, loving the good, and acting the good involving cognitive (mind), emotional (heart), and physical (hand) aspects of a person".[23]

Lickona, defines character education as the deliberate effort to teach virtue. He maintains that virtues represent the objective moral standards that transcend time, culture, and individual choice, and hence virtues, unlike values, do not change.[24]

Furthermore, the U.S Department of Education defines character education as:

…a learning process that enables students and adults in a school community to understand, care about and act on core ethical values such as respect, justice, civic virtue and citizenship, and responsibility for self and others.…[25]

In addition to contemporary character education, Alan L. Lockwood, defines character education as "…any school-directed program designed to shape directly and systematically the behavior of young people by teaching explicitly the nonrelativistic values believed to directly bring about good behavior".[26] This is, as he assumes that the contemporary definition of character education that should encompasses the central goals in promoting positive behavior. Those central goals are; the good behavior that is derived from the proper values; the proper values and acts that can develop good character; the affirmation that reject ethical relativism point of view; and the instructional practices that promote good character.[27]

Based on the above views, the author lays the definition of character education as the schools' deliberate and continuous efforts to develop student's character through pedagogical strategies to inculcate definite values that source from religion, moral conventions, or national philosophy to students with the

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[23]Izfanna, "Developing Muslim," 30.

[24]See Thomas Lickona, *The Teacher's Role In Character Education*, vol. 179 (1997), 64-5.

[25]Merle J. Schwartz, "Introduction to Character Education and Effective Principles," ed. Merle J. Schwartz (New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies Inc., 2008), 2.

[26]Alan L. Lockwood, *The Case for Character Education: a Development Approach* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2009), 12.

[27]Ibid., 12-5.

support of every aspect of school life. Specifically, based on the Indonesian National Framework for Character Education 2010, character education is defined as values education, norms education, moral education, and traits education which develop students' competencies to decide between right and wrong, and maintain the goodness and virtues in their daily life wholeheartedly.

The Importance of Character Development in Islam

Embracing a religion is not merely about binding spirituality to an unimagined superpower or Supreme Being that is believed to be present outside of the human body and expressing it through religious rituals. But, it is also about the strong merits of belief in God and worships that can affect human behavior, and about inculcating values and building their character. Islam as a religion does upholds the good deeds and nobility of Muslims' character which is believed to be influenced by the belief in God and the obligatory duties such as being conscious of and remembering Allah, reciting the Quran, praying, fasting, paying *zakat* and assisting others, taking the prophet as a role model, and so on. This is in line with the general mission of Prophet which is to elevate human's character—related to the qualities and functions as the vicegerent of Allah, from the lower to the highest state: from the uncivilized (*jāhiliyyah*) to the civilized one (*madaniyyah*).

The term character in Islam is equal to the Arabic word *akhlāq*[28] which has the same root as the word *al-Khāliq*, means The Creator, i.e. Allah the Almighty. Assuming the word character is also closely related to the word qualities and function, Muslims' character should also reflect the character of Allah. "..[Allah's] attributes are in fact the highest values that man should aspire to emulate. These ultimate values are connoted by the ninety-nine different beautiful names (*al-Asmā'*

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[28]See "Character Education in Islamic Perspective," *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research* 2, no. 2 (2013): 187; Adibah Abdul Rahim, "Understanding Islamic Ethics and Its Significance on the Character Building," *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity* 3, no. 6 (2013): 508, http://dx.doi.org/10.7763/IJSSH.2013.V3.293.

al-Ḥusnà) of Allah".[29] Therefore, man's qualities and functions as a creature (*makhlūq*) that hold obligatory duties to God, mankind, and nature should always be main focus of any character development practices.

As all Muslims believe, the only person that possessed the highest character is Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). It is narrated in the Holy Quran chapter 68, verse number 4, "And you (Muhammad) are on an exalted standard of character".[30] For that, Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) is the best role models (*Uswah ḥasanah*) to refer in discussing character development. Amongst his perfect personality, Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) is entitled as *al-Amīn,* the trustworthy one. One to this, Prophet Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) companions, followers, and the generations after generations of scholars keep preserving the values through narrating and reporting the Prophet Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) words and ways of life. Thousands of *hadīth* narrate how Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) is caring to other people regardless of their belief, how he is just in treating and respecting people, firm and brave against people who are doing wrong, and so on and so forth. Those narrations of prophetic noble character are found in many Islamic books and literatures spread in Muslim societies. Besides that, Islamic education which is also learnt to engrave the prophetic noble character to Muslim children in certain ways is much more different from modern education. On that view, Islam sees the noble character or *akhlāq al-karīmah* as very important for Muslims to develop.

Bringing the importance of character development in Islam into educational settings requires thorough and comprehensive understanding of how character should be developed in Islamic ways. Hence there should be the resources to mine and the framework to follow in developing character. As character in Islamic perspective is also used interchangeably with Islamic ethics. According to Adibah Abdul Rahim, the five sources of

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[29]M. Kamal Hassan, "Values Education Framework Based on Islamic Concept and Precepts," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 3 (1989): 74.

[30]See Adibah Abdul Rahim, "General Overview on the Study of Islamic Ethics," ed. Fatimah Abdullah (Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press, 2014), 3.

Islamic ethics are the Quran and *sunnah*, *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), Islamic philosophy, Islamic theology, and Islamic mysticism. Those five sources of Islamic ethics have different functions from one to another. As for instance, Ibid. classifies Quran and *sunnah* as the scriptural morality that contain fundamental sources of the nature of right and wrong, divine justice and power, and freedom and responsibility. Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) stipulates the *sharī'ah* rules that provide the principles of making a decision and taking an action according to the level of obligation and *ḥalāl* or *ḥarām*. Additionally, Islamic theology as the source of Islamic ethics provides the different views among theological streams on perceiving the human's will and God's will.[31]

In addition, Islam puts greater emphasis on character development of its believers. Believing modern secular education as not suitable for character development of Muslim learners, Muslim scholars termed Islamic education. Islamic education gives importance to the three dimensions of education namely;

> …*tarbiyyah* the process of education that gives emphasis on physical and intellectual development of an individual; *ta'dīb* – the process of education that gives emphasis on nurturing good human beings with noble codes of conduct/ethics approved by Islam, so that he may conduct and position himself in society with justice; and *ta'līm* – the process of education that is based on teaching and learning.…[32]

The three-dimensional development above is congruent to the recommendation of the First World Conference on Muslim Education 1977 which stipulates that Islamic Education aims at balanced growth of the total personality of man through the training of man's spirit, intellect, the rational self, feelings and bodily senses.[33] Furthermore, those three-dimensional developments are seen as always being transcendent to the

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[31]Rahim, "Understanding Islamic," 508-10.

[32]Firdaous Yasin Raudlotul, Shah Fatah Mohd, and Jani, "Islamic Education: The Philosophy, Aim, and Main Features," *International Journal of Education and Research* 1, no. 10 (2013): 3.

[33]Syed Muhammad al-Naquib Al-Attas, *Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education* (Jeddah: King Abdul Aziz University, 1978).

nature of man as the vicegerent of Allah on earth. Hence, it strengthens the importance of character development in Islam since "…education in Islam is not merely of acquiring intellectual knowledge but it is a means of molding the nature and character of individuals so that they can collectively represent Islamic values, behave as *khalīfah Allāh fī al-arḍ* (vicegerent of Allah on earth)…"[34]

By the above notions, character education from Islamic perspective should make Islamic values inculcation more deliberative. Prominently, plenty of values resources that Islam world has, i.e. Quran and *sunnah*, *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), Islamic philosophy, Islamic theology, and Islamic mysticism, should firmly strengthen the student's character which is guided and shaped by those Islamic sources of values. Thus, the values which come from non-Islamic perspectives such as "core ethical values" i.e. respect, justice, civic virtue and citizenship proposed by U.S Department of Education.[35] "Greek cardinal virtues" i.e. wisdom, justice, self-mastery, and courage proposed by Ryan and Bohlin[36] should be in consistent with the values from Islamic sources.

Afterward, the sources for character development from Islamic world view should color the concepts and implementations of character education practices not only in Islamic based school but also in general schools where they are administered in Muslim communities. Specifically speaking, character education promoted in the current Indonesian national curriculum should encompass three terms glaring in Islamic education, namely *ta'līm, tarbiyyah,* and *ta'dīb.*

Regarding those three terms which are used among Muslim scholars in addressing Islamic education, Abu Muhammad Iqbal[37] summarizes Muslim scholars' opinions on those terms. In general, *ta'līm* is termed as the process of knowledge

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[34]Raudlotul, Mohd, and Jani, "Islamic Education," 3.

[35]Schwartz, "Introduction to Character," 1-23.

[36]See Ryan and Bohlin, *Building Character,* 85.

[37]See Abu Muhammad Iqbal Iqbal, *Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam: Gagasan-Gagasan Besar Para Ilmuwan Muslim* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2015), 293-6.

transferring, cultivating of comprehension, responsibility, and trusts for the purpose of self-purification in order the students be able to receive the *hikmah* (lessons). *Tarbiyyah*, on the other hand, is termed as a gradual process of refinement, maintenance, and improvement towards perfection. Meanwhile, *ta'dīb* is understood as the process of "…instilling and inculcation of *adab* in man…".[38] Precisely, according to Al-Attas, if Muslim scholars and educators manage to understand the concept of *ta'dīb* correctly, it is the most suitable term for Islamic education because *ta'dīb* has covered the concept of *ta'līm* and *tarbiyyah* at once.

In regard to character education implementation in the Indonesian national curriculum, especially for Muslim educators, character education should be a framework to follow with the Islamic mind-set. As for instance, the eighteen values identified by the ministry of education and culture, to some extent, are too general in terms of each values description[39]. Religious value, for example, is described as an obedient attitude and behavior in applying religious teachings, tolerant towards the practices of other religions and beliefs, and in harmony with people having different religions. Infusing Islamic perspective to this value is recommended. Thus, it needs a standardized methodology of integrating Islamic perspective into character education implementation. In fact, the process of integration of Islamic perspective into all subjects in explicit way is not easy. But, efforts to do so are appreciable.

The prominent claim of the success efforts in youth's character building is addressed to the Islamic-based school institution, especially Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). Confidently, Islamic-boarding school system advocates stand in a strong fence to promote the foundations and values for character education practices. Ethical foundations based on al-Zarnūjī's *Ta'līm al-Muta'llim* and Islamic spiritual character values are proposed by Mulyadhi and Miftachul.[40] Interestingly, the

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[38]Syed M. Naquib Al Attas in ibid., 296.

[39]Listed and provided in another section forward.

[40]See Miftachul Huda and Mulyadhi Kartanegara, *Ethical Foundation of Character Education in Indonesia : Reflections on Integration between Ahmad Dahlan*

ethical foundations and values discussed in their works contribute grounded concepts of the values on Islamic perspective. *Wara'* (keeping away bad deed), as for instance, is one of al-Zarnūjī's ethical foundations which is defined as 'the nature containing prudence exceptional and lack of courage to approach something that is forbidden, as well as things that are hesitant (*shubhāt*)[41]. This foundation deepen the value of disciplined, one of the eighteen values, which is described as orderly and conform actions to all the rules and regulations.

At this point, resourceful Islamic concepts about character indicate the different implementation of character development among general schools and Islamic-based school institutions. Additionally, the different emphasis on between dynamic thinking and spiritual capacity[42] of students among the models of school institutions brings the difference to the values inculcation and the practices of character development as well. Consequently, the different emphasis may bring different product of education.

Philosophical Underpinning of Character Education

Why does the term "character education" exist while the term character itself is an inherent part of education, "…it is the plate on which the quality education rests"?[43] When those two terms are combined, it seems that the character development has been expelled from education, and hence they do need to be put together as a special term and a supplemental add-on for today education. Even more, the term "integrated character

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and Al-Zarnuji, *Persidangan Antarbangsa Tokoh Ulama Melayu Nusantara (PAnTUM)* (2015), 404-20; Miftachul Huda and Mulyadhi Kartanegara, "Islamic Spiritual Character Values of Al-Zarnuji's Ta'lim Al-Muta'allim," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 6, no. 4 (2015): 229-35.

[41]Huda and Kartanegara, "Ethical Foundation of Character Education in Indonesia : Reflections on Integration between Ahmad Dahlan and Al-Zarnuji," 234.

[42]See ibid., 417. The comparison between dynamic thinking and spiritual capacity orientation is addressed to two Muslim scholars' (Al-Zarnuji and Ahmad Dahlan) concepts of character development.

[43]Merle J. Schwartz, "Preface," ed. Merle J. Schwartz (New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies Inc., 2008), vii.

education"[44] implicitly tells us that even character education itself has been barred from the classrooms, so the educators and the teachers use the integrated character education as an approach to make students' character development really works.

Reading the literatures on character education issues, it is often pathetically found that the reality of today's youth life is steadily getting worst. Student harassments, acts of bullying, free-sex, and students murders are such examples of serious problems that challenges today's education. A lot of research has been done to study juvenile delinquencies in relations to social factors such as family structure, socio-economic stratum of society, moral education caretaker, and financial hardship of family[45]; poverty, drugs abuse, level of education, parenting model, and technology-based games[46] Mostly, journal articles present the decline of morality in today society, especially teenagers. Then, it is found an agreement that social institutions—"the family, the Church, and the schools"[47], are in charge of overcoming morals problem faced by society. Researches on character education implementations related to their strategies, effectiveness,[48] importance, and significant successes[49] are also reported. Some are presenting the historical drives of character education that can be traced back to the

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[44]Timothy Rusnak, "Integrating Character in the Life of the School," ed. Timothy Rusnak (USA: Corwin Press Inc., 1998). She uses "integrated character education" as the term used in her book.

[45]Ilongo Fritz Ngale, "Family Structure and Juvenile Delinquency: Correctional Centre Betamba, Centre Privince of Cameroon," *Internet Journal of Criminology* (2009), http://www.internetjournalofcriminology.com/ngale_family_structure_and_juvenile_delinquency.pdf.

[46]John Onyango Omboto et al., "Factors Influencing Youth Crime and Juvenile Delinquency," *International Journal of Research In Social Sciences* 1, no. 2 (2013), http://ijsk.org/uploads/3/1/1/7/3117743/sociology_2.pdf.

[47]Ryan and Lickona, "Character Development," 7.

[48]See Lockwood, *The Case*, 5-8. pp. 5-8; Rusnak, "Integrating Character," 40-3; Ryan and Lickona, "Character Development," 10-2.

[49]Agboola and Tsai, "Bring Character," 165; Creasy, "Is There a Place," 4-6; Hennessy, "The Role," 224-5; Kelli Larson, *Understanding the Importance of Character Education* (The Graduate School, University of Wiconsin-Stout, 2009), 10-7; Lickona, "What is Effective Character Education?," 2-3.

ancient Greek era, while others are presenting the contemporary development of character education including its movements and specific programs both for the students and the teachers which result in effective character development. Beyond those presentations, the sense of optimism and positive engagement to character education confirm that character education is the most possible solution to overcome the moral crises which challenge today's society.

However, laid under those enterprises there are the philosophical quests to character education as the ground. At the beginning of this section, the question "why does the term 'character education' exist…?" is a sort of philosophical inquiry. The notion that of today, the educational system does need a framework for character education implies that the current educational system fails to produce holistic educated persons, that is the aims and objectives of education are in partial accomplishments. If so, this notion drives us to the next question "what is the educated person like that educational institutions seek to produce?" For that, T.W. Moore characterized the educated person as:

> …one whose intellectual abilities had been developed, who is sensitive to matters of moral and aesthetic concern, who could appreciate the nature and force of mathematical and scientific thinking, who could view the world along historical and geographical perspectives and who, moreover, had a regard for the importance of truth, accuracy, and elegance in thinking.[50]

At a glance, Moore's depiction above seems to be convincing, but it does not adequately satisfying, especially for Muslim or perhaps any other believers. How the educated person should behave towards the ultimate reality: the divine reality that most great religions tell about? Moore's educated-man characterisation is still at the surface, only touches the worldly matters. Meanwhile, human's spiritual capacity which is beyond the worldly matters is left untouched.

At this point, the next question to raise regarding character education is "does character education also deals with spirituality

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[50]T. W. Moore, *Philosophy of Education: An Introduction* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1982), 25.

and its development?" Zahra AL Zeera offers her "back door into spirituality" by proposing the following notion for the wholeness and the holiness in education:

> Spirituality is one of the most profound ways of intuitive knowing. It is silent yet powerful way of knowing. Facts and numbers cannot prove intuition, unlike reasoning and rationality. It is either felt internally or it is not. …Spirituality cannot be proven by facts or reason. Only recently in some academic circles has intuition been accepted as an alternative way of knowing.[51]

Further, she distinguishes the spirituality from religiosity. To her, "religiosity can be a public matter, but not spirituality".[52] When religiosity appears as religious rituals, they manifest a deeper level of inner realization. The deeper level of knowing and the realization are then what she calls spiritual. On this view, character education that promotes religiosity in a certain way such as encouraging children to pray or to perform other religious rituals will also be possible to develop their spiritual capacity.

Character education, however, is not something newly-invented. "Character education is as old as education itself".[53] As it is believed, education, at any definition is as the only social activity that can contribute seminal changes to society. Through the education cultures are preserved, values and character are nurtured, virtues are taught and learnt, information are transmitted, skills are trained, paradigms are shifted, ideologies are implanted, and so on and so forth. Unfortunately, there were certain forces that seem to simplify, if not to say distort, the function of education. Education does experience its function simplification to only transmitting the information and knowledge, training skills, and perhaps transforming "undesired" ideology. This is not surprising, because "education is a field which is particularly vulnerable to changing ideologies, but it is far too important to be a battleground between

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[51]Zahra Al Zeera, *Wholeness and Holiness in Education: An Islamic Perspective* (U.K: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2001), 11-2.

[52]Ibid., 13.

[53]Thomas Lickona, "The Return of Character Education," *Educational Leadership* 51, no. 3 (1993): 6.

competing paradigms".[54] In regard to character education, Tatman, Edmonson and Slate note three strong ideological forces that had weakened schools' effort on character education namely personalism, pluralism, and secularism.[55]

As it is widely known, those three forces have disappointed not only western, but also the Muslim world. To the western world, personalism leads societies to "emphasize individual rights and freedom over responsibility, …delegitimize moral authority, erode belief in objective moral norms, turn people inward toward self-fulfillment, *and* weakened social commitments".[56] As a result, teachers in school lost their authority to instruct students to hold certain values and did not function as moral educators and role models anymore. Pluralism is also deteriorating moral and values education by stressing "the question as to whose values would be taught in public schools".[57] It is because pluralism suggests the society that no one single source of values that is better than other sources. Besides that, secularization has deprived the public schools from teaching and instructing their students to pray at school. More than that, the Churches as the part of social institutions had lost their religious authorities and narrowed their functions to be as just the organizations that provide religious services for sacred ceremonies such as in marriage and funeral.

Scarcely, secularization has also lead educational systems into inevitable dualism that seems to be difficult to reintegrate in most Muslim countries and has uprooted the very basic conservative-traditional paradigms of Muslim education in which Muslim identity is preserved. Being aware of that secularization is leading Muslim education to the wrong direction, Muslim scholars had ignited to recast the aims of education in Muslim world through Mecca Conference on Muslim Education since 1977.

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[54]Jeremy Henzell Thomas, "Forward," in *Wholeness and Holiness in Education: An Islamic Perspective* (UK: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2001), xiii.

[55]Tatman, Edmonson, and Slate, "Character Education," n.p.

[56]Lickona, "The Return," n.p.

[57]Tatman, Edmonson, and Slate, "Character Education," n.p.

Viewing secularization as the orientation of modern education, Islamic education is being revived against the modern education. Reviving Islamic education is believed to be the influential agenda to encounter secular-modern education. Under the umbrella of Islamization of knowledge, Muslim education system is reformed from the very basic principles and philosophies. The Mecca conference held in 1977:

> ...agreed on the redefined aims of education which affirmed that education should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality of Man through the training Man's spirit, intellect, the rational self, feelings and bodily senses. Education should therefore cater for the growth of man in all his aspects: spiritual, intellectual imaginative, physical, scientific, linguistic, both individually and collectively, and motivate all these aspects towards goodness and the attainment of perfection.[58]

This re-casted aim of education has succinctly become the features of Muslim education that prominently implemented in the international Islamic universities established also under the recommendation of the Muslim world-conferences. The Islamic views and Islamic philosophical underpinning of character development, to some extent, are also taken into account as the important sources for character development.

Apart from that, defining character education as "…the deliberate effort to teach virtue"[59] is considered challenging for both Muslim and western modern education. The disappointment of western modern world to the modern education is leading their educators to the search for a model of holistic vision of education. The debates are arising on defining the values and virtues to teach in schools. Some agree to promote religious education as to teach the students with the explicit moralities and virtues, such as Lickona, *What Is Effective Character Education?* who proposes four Cardinal virtues of Christian tradition,[60] Ryan and Bohlin proposes Greek cardinal

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[58]Ghulam Nabi Saqeb, "The Islamisation of Education Since the Conference: Achievements, Failures, and Tasks Ahead," *Muslim Educational Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (2000): 40.

[59]Lickona, "The Teacher's Role In Character Education," 65.

[60]See Lickona, "What is Effective Character Education?," n.p.

virtues: wisdom, justice, self-mastery, and courage[61]; while others argue that religious education is not more than indoctrination of dogmatic religious teaching that prohibits the students from thinking openly and independently. Syed Ali Ashraf reported that the revival and deep interest in religions as the sources of moral truth and moral values appeared in England in 1993 when the National Curriculum Council was unable to frame the curricula that fulfill the aims regarding spiritual and moral development.[62] In addition he also reported that a seminar organized by Islamic Academy of Cambridge in 1990 was held to discuss "…the confusion regarding the values and to formulate a common policy based on the religious approach to life—a policy acceptable to all, a policy for common schools."[63] Still in the context of British education, David Carr presented the contemporary discussions of religious education regarding the relative merits of common and faith schooling which is mostly generating more heat than light.[64] In great and deep details, he examined how the philosophy and history, which is in this case are the secular-modern ones, were skewed to the concern of values and moral judgments and the empirical facts, and therefore they made inappropriate for educational treatment.

Regarding values education, long before Thomas Lickona, *The Return of Character Education*, the term Values Clarification existed. It is "an approach to values education that was firstly established in 1966 by Raths, Harmin, and Simon"[65]. According to Lockwood the difference between character education and Values Clarification is, the former suggests the educators to define the values to teach and inculcate them into students in explicit and deliberate manners, while the latter suggests to bring

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[61]See Ryan and Bohlin, *Building Character,* 85.

[62]Syed Ali Ashraf, "Editorial: Family, Values and Education," *Muslim Educational Quarterly* 14, no. 1 (1996): 3.

[63]Ibid.

[64]David Carr, "Religious Education, Religious Literacy and Common Scooling: a Philosophy and History of Skewed Reflection," *Journal of Philosophy of Educaton* 41, no. 4 (2007): 669-73.

[65]Lockwood, *The Case,* 6.

the students to the discussion of values in order to engage the students in making their own decision on which values to clarify and to embrace and act upon those values. However, as Lockwood maintains, Values Clarification with its ethical relativism ideas had failed to lead the students in discussing the values because Values Clarification was unable to distinguish which domains of life that demand weighty moral consideration and which are relatively trivial. Hence, the character education advocates stand at more persistent effort to promote character education as the search for holistic vision of education.

To sum up, the social problems that seem to peak, the educators need to relook how the curricula are designed and how the schools are administered. From the discussion above, it is clear that the failure of religious authorities to control society plunged most individuals into secular and freedom state of life with no exact values to hold. Personalism, pluralism, and secularization are considered as the ideological forces that bombarded the fundamental values which are nurtured in the educational processes. In addition, the dilemma of morals and blurred Values Clarification cause the education achieves partial accomplishments of its aims and objectives. Therefore, the term character education appears as the most possible solution to bring the education back to its railroads.

Character Education in Indonesia

Indonesian minister of education and culture in a character education seminar[66]that was held in Bandung on February 2015, affirmed that discussing about character education in Indonesia should refer to Ki Hajar Dewantara (1889-1959), the father of Indonesian modern education. The minister said that the education process must incorporate the development of both mind and heart. Therefore, the minister added as what Ki Hajar Dewantara maintains, teachers should encourage students to love coming to and being at school as the exciting place to grow and learn. Overall, the minister suggests the audiences to refer to

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[66]FM Bandung, *Seminar Nasional Pendidikan Karakter*, 2015.

Ki Hajar Dewantara in probing character education implementation.

Who is Ki Hajar Dewantara? His childhood name was R.M Soewardi Surjaningrat. He was born in second of May, 1889. His parents were the ancestors of royal family of Jogjakarta palace. His mother was a princess who inherited Kadilangu area from Sunan Kalijogo[67]. His contribution to Indonesian educational movements since the colonial era is widely known as his guardianship principles—*Tut wuri handayani,* which is used as the current educational motto attached to national education emblem. His guardianship principles in complete is *Tut wuri handayani, ing madyo mangun karso, ing ngarso sung tulodho*. Literally, it could be understood that teachers as the guardians should be inspiring at the behind, encouraging in the middle, and leading at the front. Besides that, his school named *Taman Siswa* (1932) was the model of schooling that was more like a garden park where the students could grow, learn, and get fun while developing their mind and heart potentialities.

Defining character education, Ki Hajar Dewantara puts mind and heart as the main keywords of character development. To him, character education must encompass students to *ngerti, ngrasa, lan nglakoni,* know, feel, and act.[68] More than that, he suggests that educators should grow students' character in their nature of growing. Hence, he does not recommend punishment to be the catalyst of students' behavioural changes and character development. In addition, Ki Hajar Dewantara proposes family life, formal education institution, and society to be the tri-centre of education. It is because, he insists, those tri-centre are contributing great influences to children's character growth.[69]

Unfortunately, as the minister said in the aforementioned seminar, Indonesian education today has forgotten Ki Hajar Dewantara's concepts of education that mostly emphasize character development. Hence, the effort of the new curriculum which emphasizes character education is a way to take back and

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[67]Darsiti Suratman 1985 in Haryanto, *Pendidikan Karakter Menurut Ki Hajar Dewantara* (Jogjakarta: 2013), 3-4.

[68]Ibid., 8.

[69]Ibid., 7-12.

implement Ki Hajar Dewantara's concept of education. The minister also mentioned that Finland's educational success is because they implement what Ki Hajar Dewantara ever conceptualized for Indonesian education since the colonial era. But, teachers in Indonesia do not implement it or even do not read it, said the minister.

Contemporary, character education after the framework was launched in 2010, is becoming a national movement for educating character. Moral education is no more a stand-alone subject, but it is integrated into all subjects.[70] More and more teachers and educators are also aware of it. Studies and seminars are conducted quite massively to probe character education definition, principles, and implementation in schools. As for instance, Dindin Jamaluddin proposes Islamic perspective on character education. He also asserts the criticism to character education as it "ideologically…seems to forget the part of Islam".[71] On the other hand, a study on the way of integrating character values into economics subject for high school students was done by Rizal Hadi investigate the economics teachers' confidence in implementing character education.[72] An Islamic based curriculum development model was also promoted by Siti Muhibbah to pose the model of integrating values proposed in syllabus into Islamic Religious education subject for vocational high schools.[73]

Further, there are eighteen values established by the Ministry of National Education, the previous name of Ministry of Education and Culture that should be integrated into subjects and be promoted in school life.[74] They are listed and described in table 1.

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[70]See Izfanna, "Developing Muslim," 4.

[71]Jamaluddin, "Character Education in Islamic Perspective," 189.

[72]See Rizali Hadi, "The Integration of Character Values in the Teaching of Economics: A Case of Selected High Schools in Banjarmasin," *International Education Studies* 8, no. 7 (2015): 11-20, http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ies.v8n7p11.

[73]Siti Muhibah, "Curriculum Development Model Islam Character Based Education (Studies Analysis In SMKN 2 Pandeglang Banten)," *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research* 3, no. 7 (2014): 164-9.

[74]See Hadi, "The Integration of Character," 11-20.

Table 1. Description of cultural and national character values

	Values	Description
1	Religious	An obedient attitude and behavior in applying religious teachings, tolerant towards the practices of other religions and beliefs, and in harmony with people having different religions.
2	Honest	Attitudes based on one's effort to make oneself a person who is trustworthy in speech, action, and work.
3	Tolerance	Attitudes and actions that respect religions, ethnicity, opinions, attitudes, and actions those are different from one's own.
4	Disciplined	Orderly and conforms actions to all the rules and regulations.
5	Hardworking	A tenacious behavior in overcoming difficulties and in completing learning tasks.
6	Creative	Thinking before doing something to discover new ways or results from what one has at one's disposal.
7	Independent	Attitudes and behaviors that do not depend on other people in completing assignments.
8	Democratic	A way of thinking, behaving, and acting which views one's rights and obligations as equal to those of others.
9	Curious	Attitudes and action that generally seeks to discover more about what one learns, observes, and listens.
10	Nationalistic	A way of thinking, acting, and viewing that places national interests higher than personal or communal interests.
11	Patriotic	A way of thinking and doing that reflects faithfulness, care, and respect for the national language, along with the land, social, economic, and political aspects of the community.
12	Appreciative of Achievement	Attitudes and actions of encouraging oneself to produce something useful of the society while also acknowledging what others do.
13	Friendly, communicative	Actions that demonstrate an eagerness to converse, interact, and cooperate with other people.
14	Peace loving	Attitudes, speech, and actions that cause other people to feel happy and secure due to one's presence.
15	Fond of reading	The habit to provide time for reading various

Values		Description
		materials to learn insights and other virtues for oneself.
16	Environmentally aware	Attitudes and actions that generally seeks to prevent damage in the natural environment and to make efforts to repair environmental damage that has occurred.
17	Socially concerned	Attitudes and actions that tend to assist other people who need help.
18	Responsible	Attitudes and behaviours that assume the obligation to finish assignments and tasks and to take care of oneself, the society, the environment, the country, and God.

Source: *Kementrian Pendidikan Nasional, Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan Kurikulum (2010)* [Ministry of National Education, Curriculum Research and Development Council (2010)]

A standard called SKL (*Standar Kompetensi Lulusan*/Graduate Competency Standards) has also been formulated by the Ministry of National Education to achieve the target of balanced student development. Table 2 comprises the standard competencies adapted from Hadi.[75]

Table 2. Graduate Competency Standards

Attitude	− Having behaviour that reflects a good attitude − Pious, having good deeds, self-confident, and responsible for the social and natural environment. − Positioning oneself as a reflection of the nation in the international world.
Skills	− Having thinking abilities and effective and creative actions in both abstract and concrete contexts. − Having developed skills taught at school based on students' talents, interests, and abilities.
Knowledge	− Having procedural and metacognitive knowledge in science, technology, arts, culture, and humanities with a national perspective. − Having knowledge about the causes of phenomena and events along with alternative solutions, hindrances, and final solutions.

Source: *Draft dokumen KTSP dan Kurikulum 2013* [School based and 2013 curriculum drafts]

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[75]Ibid., 15.

Various strategies to inculcate the eighteen values and to achieve the Graduate Competency Standards are formulated. Besides integrating moral and character values into subjects, some co-curricular activities are also made compulsory for students such as scouts for youth, red-cross youth, local art and cultural groups, and so forth.

Furthermore, as a movement, character education is not only implemented in formal schooling. Most Islamic boarding schools called *Pondok Pesantren*, for example, is actually claimed to be effectively preserving character development of youngsters in Indonesia long before character education is formally launched by the Indonesian national education system. As'ad maintains that there are differences between alumni of *Pesantren* and non-*Pesantren* in terms of their morality.[76] He claims that the alumni of *Pesantren* are considerably possessing moral highness than non-Pesantren alumni, especially compared to public school graduates. *Pondok Pesantren* as an informal institution of education that a charismatic *kyai* (a great Muslim scholar that hold communal authority to administrate a *Pondok Pesantren* because of his knowledge and practices of religious teaching) administers, focuses on Islamic worldview and the teaching of Islamic theology that are mostly based on classic Islamic books. Character building in Pondok Pesantren becomes an inseparable process of education in which the learners called *Santri* can have *Kyai* and *Ustadh* (the teachers) as the role models who live surround them for teaching Islamic knowledge and values and giving the nobility model of life.

As for example, a case study done by Izfanna confirms that Darunnajah, Pondok Pesantren, is committed to character development of the learners. The study presents how administers (Kyai and Ustadh/dhahs) develop and implement the rules and regulations become the philosophy of character education as it is called *pancajiwa* for both teachers and students to abide in accordance with the teaching of Quran, Hadith, and the examples from Muslim scholars. The interviews conducted shows that both the teachers and students are accepting those

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[76]As'ad, *Terjemah Ta'limul,* x.

rules and internalizing them into their habit, and hence character development works accordingly. In addition, the environment and the lifestyle of *Darunnajah Pondok Pesantren* is also designed to promote good character such as through "…*santri's* daily activities, events and ceremonies, its rules and regulations, and the family positive involvement"[77]

Currently, non-government organisations are also supporting character education implementations. Several organizations, like Pendidikan Karakter (www.pendidikanka rakter.com) offer a supplemental curriculum to school for character education implementation. Teacher education and training are also offered as to gain teachers' understanding on educating students with character and to equip teachers with "tools" of creating children that have good character.

Indonesia Heritage Foundation (IHF), in addition, leads the character education implementation through founding a non-profit organization to accomplish their mission which is to build "A Nation of Good Character". They develop and implement Character Based Holistic Education (CBHE) that focuses on developing well-integrated individuals (emotionally, intellectually, socially, physically, and spiritually).[78]

Conclusion

Character education in Indonesian national education, since it was launched in 2010, has been accepted as the guiding platform to revive the awareness of character building that educational process should also seek to attain. Four character configurations stated in *Rencana Aksi Nasional Pendidikan Karakter 2010* (the National Action Plan for Character Education 2010) namely spiritual and emotional development, b) intellectual development, c) physical and kinaesthetic development, and d) affective and creativity development are the set of corner stones that should guide character education practices in Indonesian national education. The action plan also defines character education as values education, norms education, moral

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[77]Izfanna, "Developing Muslim," 199.

[78]IHF, "Tentang Kami.", accessed on February 2, 2017,http://www.ihf.or.id/en/tentang-kami/

education, and traits education which develop students' competencies to decide between right and wrong, maintaining the goodness and virtues in their daily life wholeheartedly. In addition, eighteen values identified by the General Directory of National Education are the common set of values that educational activities should promote.

For teachers and educators as the front-liners whose efforts are making character education possible, developing student's character through pedagogical strategies to inculcate definite values that source from religion, moral conventions, or national philosophy is suggested to be done as priority. Especially for Muslim teachers and educators who are giving service in both general and Islamic-based educational institutions, character education implementation is suggested to be based on Islamic perspectives and practices that are sourced to Islamic worldview. Truly, it is undeniable that Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) who brought Islam was the most noble person that mankind ever had. Therefore, Muslim educators should be very confident in promoting character-based education with Muslim's mind-set.

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