

# Social Intelligence As A Mean of Empowering Character Education For Students

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**Abstract.** The background of this research is that the behavior of teenagers, including students, lacks concern for good behavior. The character of students tends to be less concerned about the educational environment. This research described social intelligence as the character education empowerment for students. This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive research type. Several types of methods were used to collect research data, observation, interviews, literature study and documentation for second semester class A students. The results of this research social intelligence is an important aspect to realize character education for the students because education must develop the students' personalities in the real life. Students as the national generation have important roles and responsibilities. Social norms have important roles to realize harmonic social relationships, realizing tranquility, and keeping alert in realizing qualified character students. Social intelligence in students is important to enrich their knowledge and insight. Thus, the students must have sensitivity and awareness of character education empowerment on students.

**Keywords:** social intelligence, character education empowerment

## INTRODUCTION

The globalization era influences the educational field. Higher education as the formal education institute has important roles and responsibilities. Thus, higher education must promote innovations and improve quality based on the era's development. In this globalization era, globalization brings influences all life aspects, including the students' life in the family, school, and community. Globalization positively and negatively influences life. One of the influences is the national social problem. The social problem is observable in the student's daily life, such as individualism, selfishness, ineffective communication, lack of empathy, lack of responsibility, low discipline, and low cooperation and interaction in real social life called social autism or social insulation (Ginanjari, 2016:119).

Higher education as a formal institution has the roles and responsibilities to prepare the graduates for work. This preparation is important to follow the era development. Thus, higher education must teach academic skills, social values, and non-academic behaviors based on the social dynamics in communities. On the other hand, the graduates expect to have excellent characters, values, and national personalities of Indonesia.

Thus, higher education requires understanding and empowerment of noble values in the community to realize excellent characteristics of personalities. Higher education requires a comprehensive understanding of the behavioral intelligence of students on campus, in the community, and in carrying out their tasks in the

community or formal institution.

The students of mathematics education are prepared to be classroom teacher candidates. Thus, they must have vital roles and responsibilities in the daily life of all school learners. Thus, higher education must prepare the students with various skills along with academic aspect skills. From the graduate study data result, the students of Primary School Education of Teacher and Training Faculty of Universitas Muria Kudus had excellent academic achievements. Most graduates had a cumulative GPA higher than 3.7. Although they had high GPAs, some students had ignorant attitudes and behaviors toward their surroundings. Some students had a lower social environment society and lower social personalities. These matters become the most important concept in determining the graduates with excellent personalities.

The study program had put efforts to realize excellent graduates based on the shared ideals and hopes from the vision and mission of the program study. One of the efforts was to instill character values with the support of social and intellectual intelligence.

The social intelligence is a real action as the initial stage to reach life success in a community and a working field. The facts show that most students still had lower emotional skills and behavioral management. Thus, both the students and other people would be at disadvantage (Goleman, 2009). Thus, social intelligence review

as the effort to empower character education for the students of the Primary School Education study program of Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Universitas Muria Kudus is important.

## METHOD

This qualitative approach research used a descriptive research type. The researchers focused on the social intelligence as the meant to empower the character education for students in the Primary School Education study program of Universitas Muria Kudus. The research approach used in this research is a qualitative approach. Moleong (2007:6), states that qualitative research is a means of understanding phenomena about what research subjects experience holistically by means of descriptions in the form of spoken language in a natural context by utilizing various scientific methods. The research method used is descriptive. It is hoped that descriptive research will be able to obtain information regarding strengthening character education in class A semester 2 of 2024 in the PGSD study program at Muria Kudus University. Data collection was carried out through observation and literature study. Data analysis includes data collection, data production, data presentation and drawing conclusions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The challenges to improving students' characteristics during the COVID-19 pandemic were high because the primary school teacher candidates must establish their learners to be excellent citizens with excellent characteristics and professional competencies. The teacher candidates must prepare these matters during the online-learning mechanism. The efforts to prepare primary school teachers with excellent characters and attitudes encounter many challenges due to the negative and positive impacts of information and technology development. In this case, the teachers' candidates must behave excellently so that their learners will not be influenced by negative matters, harmful actions against morality, and poor personalities.

The current problems require immediate solutions as the efforts to realize students with excellent, characterized, and careful personalities toward the individual, environmental, and social problems. Thus, students must have a social intelligence. The social intelligence was firstly proposed by William Gardner (1990). Then, Karl Albrecht via his social book about social theory

(2006), and Daniel Goleman (2007) refined the social intelligence theory. Gardner explains that a social intelligence refers to individual sensitivity to understanding and interacting with other people. Thus, the individual can socialize with the surrounding environment.

An individual with a social intelligence could establish friendships, develop organizational skills, lead, handle conflict, gain sympathy, and promote any action without relying on instructions and relying on other people. This individual acts based on expectation. Social intelligence could develop the individual skill to support their jobs among individuals. Individuals with social intelligences have communication skills within the context of understanding each other, paying attention to differences, and carefully observing the other individual characteristics (Gardner, 2003).

The promoted efforts to empower character education from the social intelligence aspect deal with the learning process. Goleman (2004:24) explains four primary skills to develop an individual social intelligence. They are organizing a group, discussing problems, creating a relationship, and analyzing the social aspect.

### Organizing a Group

In this COVID-19 pandemic, an organization is important to make the students able to access information and direction about various problems including the current-IT-based learning and other problems indirectly and directly. Lecturers and students must cooperate to promote IT-based learning, such as the online learning process. In this COVID-19 pandemic, students and lecturers had to study from their houses via online learning. They organized the courses and the materials with online learning. This online learning also had some shortcomings. Thus, lecturers had to promote contextual learning. The contextual learning of the current dynamics was important to improve the students' participation, attention, eagerness, and activities properly.

Bakti & Putra, (2012: 43) recommend educators integrate the social intelligence elements while teaching the materials and interacting socially with the learners, for example via discussion, learning group, and many more. The character education empowerment in this 21<sup>st</sup> century during the pandemic is directed at online and offline learning. In online learning, character education empowerment could be realized via blended-learning WA Gropu, and other applications to facilitate the students'

understanding. The media should also facilitate the students to organize and coordinate with their groups.

### **Discussing Problems**

A learning process does not only deal with reading, memorizing, and asking-answering. A learning process should introduce the students to the social environment. Thus, they can solve problems in the future (Mizan, 2016: 100).

Character education empowerment in this COVID-19 encountered many problem dynamics from the community, family, and national life. The learning must provide social problems, such as COVID-19 problems to be reviewed and solved. The students must also understand the COVID-19 problems and take what actions to do. The discussion activities would, directly and indirectly, make the students capable of solving the surrounding problems.

### **Creating Relationship**

Both lecturers and students must establish or create a relationship to carry out their tasks and manage the encountered problems during online learning. The activities could develop a relationship, and interactions, provide benefits for online learning and promote intensive communication. Thus, they could support each other. Most students could operate the technology devices because they were familiar with the technology since they were children. Some students seemed to be addicted to technology devices, such as a smartphone.

### **Analyzing the Social Aspect**

In the learning process, the lecturers could invite the students to analyze the social aspects, for example, the social problems from the community or social problems prepared in the materials. Analyzing the social aspect could improve the students' sensitivity and social intelligence.

The four notions of Goleman are important to improve the students' skills and their social intelligences. Social intelligence as the media to empower social character has important roles for the students, their families, the communities, and the nation. Character education empowerment with contextual reviews on social-problem-related materials facilitated the students to experience the real conditions and social life dynamics.

Based on some explanations, in this COVID-19 pandemic, the social intelligence as character education empowerment for the students was important to improve their character education.

One of the efforts is to prepare the understanding and skills of social intelligence because the pandemic significantly influenced education. Thus, the behavior and personality of the students were also influenced. All components must cooperate to manage the negative impacts of COVID-19 on the students. The government and community must cooperate and attempt various efforts. The government must create policies and regulations. The students, as citizens, must obey the applied regulation by the government.

The social intelligence is important to realize the national characters. Social intelligence has similarities with value or character education to realize excellent and good citizens, including the students. With character education, the students would be aware of the social and environmental problems. They would also have a higher nationality feeling.

Social intelligence has an important role to realize character education empowerment in the students and the graduates of the Primary School Study Program of Teacher Training and Education Faculty, Universitas Muria Kudus. In this COVID-19 pandemic, higher education must have roles and responsibilities to improve the students' awareness of character values. The same matter goes for the students. They must be aware of the social, domestic, and national conditions. In Social Science study, the younger generation must be aware of social values so that they could be excellent and democratic citizens of Indonesia. (Marhayani, 2017: 69) found that learning objectives during the pandemic aimed to develop the learners' sensitivity toward social problems, improve their mental attitudes from any deviation, and improve their problem-management skills for daily life purposes.

In the promotion stage of character education in Universitas Negeri Semarang, the education was instilled in a character education course for all study programs. The course was the Pancasila course with the integration of Pancasila month and observational evaluation by the developer team of Universitas Negeri Semarang (Sutiyono, 2018). The character education empowerment strategy in character education institutions included the empowerment of three domains. They were attitude, cognition, and behaviors. The three-domain education was integrated with various activities with some features, such as spontaneity, reflectiveness, interpretation of the imagination, and character education instruments. The instruments were such as textbooks of character education institutions, excellent figures in the

drawing figures, comics, and learning media

Character education in UNNES had been promoted excellently. The character education institution became the promotion media of the study program quality of the university. In the Primary School Education Study Program of Universitas Muria Kudus, character education was systematically promoted into the program of the university. Thus, all study programs developed the main program given by the University. The students of the Primary School study program could understand the social intelligence so they could empower their character and personalities.

## CONCLUSION

Character education emphasizes the students' soft skills during learning. This emphasis is important even during the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 pandemic demanded the students study at home and be more sensitive in the surrounding area. Social intelligence could improve the students' characters even in the online learning process at home. Both lecturers and students must interact in the learning. The students, as the teachers' candidates, will eventually establish their personalities. As the teachers' candidates, the students should take positive matters and improve their attitudes to be excellent. Character education empowerment emphasizes the social problems. Thus, the students could improve their skills in promoting various social activities and improve their social skills or social intelligences.

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