



# CLASSROOM AS A MEDIUM TO DEVELOP CHARACTER VALUES

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## Abstract

This study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers' classroom instructional process in disseminating good values for students. The values were evaluated in the development of religious characters, nationalist characters, productive characters and creative characters. The evaluation was done by observing visible changes of behaviours and how students have accepted the values. The survey method was used in this study to analyse the level of students' acceptance towards the implementation of Nation Character Education in the classroom and teachers' perspective on how students practise the nation character based on students' behaviours. Simple random technique was used to determine the school samples from the whole population of 36 secondary schools in Pekanbaru, Riau Indonesia. All items to test the implementation of nation character in the classroom were at the modest/satisfactory and high level. The item which recorded the highest mean score was students' readiness to adhere rules whether in or outside the school. Findings showed that students are willing to work together as a team and teachers have successfully built students' productive characters by promoting leadership skills, instructing skills and students have performed well by accomplishing the task given to them. Teachers have used various elements to develop character values among students, and the indication of positive results was shown by students better behaviours. Teachers can play a positive role by stimulating students' thinking especially by stimulating curiosity among them. Hence, inquiry technique was used by teachers to introduce religious, nationalist, productive and creative characters to their students.

**Keywords:** character education, a chain of moral values, religious characters, nationalist characters, productive characters and creative characters

## 1. Introduction

The Indonesian Ministry of Education seriously focuses on the efforts to develop character values among students. It is the Ministry's major commitment to strengthen the nation by producing young generation with great personalities. Thus, school is the main platform and an important channel to shape identities and personalities. Related to that, the Nation Character Development Blue Print was published in 2010 to provide better guidelines especially on the context of its implementation. Nation Character Education (NCE) is very important to develop the Indonesians based on the public concern and issues debated in various seminars of human quality and human capital. According to Habibie (2012), unhealthy information is a threat which lowers the power of human resources. Apart from that, information based of globalization threats disrupt the local culture and rapidly change people's way of thinking. This is due to the existence of the borderless world which brings along various unfiltered values via the wide world of internet access, resulting with a forming of a new society with new culture, new characters and new moral values. Thus, lifestyles of the young generation have changed, particularly their values and social elements. Traditional customs and social cultures

are neglected as they are more cultured by the westerners. The emerging new trend and new socio-culture is getting various attentions and discussions related to the impacts of globalization towards socio-culture and the new emerging trend of the current society. According to the Indonesian Education and Cultural Minister (Sudrajat, 2011), character education is very important to serve its purpose of producing students with intelligent minds, good behaviours/manners and moral values that would strengthen their identity.

The emergence of new values is very alarming, thus school is considered the best formal platform to rebuild and retain the nation characters. Formal environment at the schools and classrooms is the best channel for formal lessons to teach character values. This formal implementation is a very important move to inculcate and rebuild good values to filter negative elements from influencing behaviours and attitudes of the younger generation. However, it is not an easy task. It involves emotion and attitudes, which requires comprehensive approaches and strategies. In implementing it, teachers need to function as icons to be imitated or copied. As icons, teachers are responsible in disciplining, conditioning, creating conducive environment, integrating and internalising values. The best way is by using the method of knowing the good, feeling the good, and acting the good.

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Figure 1. Reasons for good actions

## 2. Developing Good Characters

It is not easy to develop personality, as it needs prominent icons and role modeling. Teachers are the best icons to be imitated and copied; hence in order to develop a holistic attitude of a perfect human being, a smart teacher has to play several roles as a *murabbi* (to disseminate knowledge), *muaddib* (to show good attitudes) and *mudarris* (to change). Good attitudes begin with one's knowledge, intention and hope to be a better person. The Character Development Theory by Lickona (1996) stated that *"Character to conceive has three interrelated parts: moral knowing, moral feeling and moral behavior."* Moralistic characters are attitudes of respecting others, caring, taking action with integrity and being religious. Thus, a good man is a man who performs good deeds for others.

Soedarsono (2009) defined characters as a set of moral values and norms owned by the society, which work as guidelines in the dimension of thinking, attitudes, behaviors and actions. The values shape a solid character of an individual by embedding one's personal values with values of his or her social environment. Those characters determine and reflect the nation's identity and cultural heritage which are treasured or preserved as the vital part of life.

Students need formal sessions to acquire moral knowledge (moral knowing), to appreciate good values (moral feeling) and to perform good moral (moral habits). The reality of life today is different than the hopes of having generations with great moral and good characters. This happens because education is normally implemented to shape humans to act mechanically rather than humanistically with religious values as the foundation of life principle.

Nation characters are basically values of a nation which rooted from the philosophy of life or the way of life, involving: (1) religious values, (2) socio-cultural values of customs, attitudes, habits, routines, outstanding personalities and (3) normative values (adhere to social rules) which are collectively agreed by everyone and stated as the goals of national education. According to al-Na'imy (1994), people are different due to their surroundings. Those who are at a supportive environment, have the tendency to become good people and vice versa.

According to Lickona (2004) *"character refers to good values of life based on religious values, intelligent and mental health"*. The Nation

Character Development Blue Print (2010) has considered Lickona's view that good

attitude is built from knowing about moral, a sense of feeling towards moral values and then to act accordingly.

## 3. Purposes And Research Objectives

This study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers' instructional process in the classroom as the best medium to inculcate good values. The values are evaluated on the development of religious characters, nationalist characters, productive characters and creative characters. The effectiveness was measured based on the level of students' acceptance, changes of behaviours and values practised by the students. The objectives of the study are as the following:

- i. To determine the level of students' acceptance on the implementation of Nation Character Education (NCE) based on their perspective towards teaching and learning experienced in the classrooms.
- ii. To determine the level of nation character practised by students in the aspects of religious, nationalist, productive and creative characters.

## 4. Literature Review

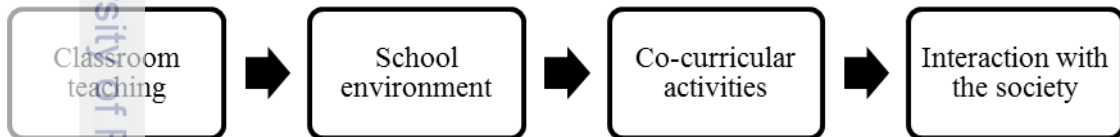
Kalijernih (2007) had discussed the concept of character education in detail. The concept involves the efforts taken to encourage the society to realize how human is created. Hence, people should lean toward goodness, to protect their dignity and to have great pride in upholding good and correct values. Naturally, people tend to choose the good over the bad ones. In relation to that, the Nation Character Development Blue Print (2010) hopes that acculturation of moral values would be embedded in one's personality when the values are sincerely accepted and practised. Simply knowing about the moral values is not enough, but they need to be practised as life attitudes.

Character education is divided into three main functions: (1) to develop students' potentials, for them to have good mind, to be kind and to have good attitudes pillared on the pancasila's principles of life, (2) to improve students' characters from the influence of negative elements, for them to become great Indonesian people by improving the roles of family, school and the society, (3) to retain the values of Indonesian cultural heritage while accepting and internalising other positive characters found in cultures of other countries in the world. The formula to deliver character education is in line with the concepts of characters proposed by Lickona. They are knowing, feeling, needing and



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practicing or taking action of the good moral values. Kerr (1999), listed five methods of character education to be inculcated at the learning institutions: to teach, to model, to priorities, to practice and to reflect. The Character Development Blue Print has stated four important dimensions of social environments as the platform to inculcate

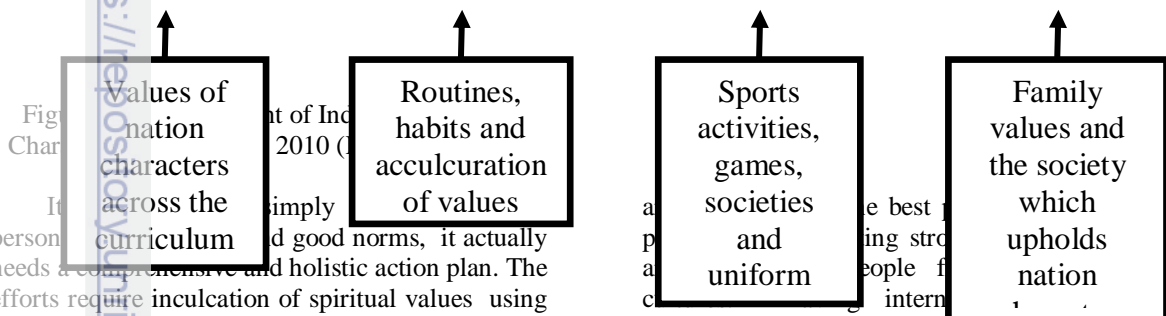


good values. The dimensions are classroom climate, school culture, co-curriculum and social interaction with the society.

bringing new way of thinking such as the hedonism culture.

Teenagers are over exposed to new uncontrolled information, hence they created a new way of thinking, decision making and lifestyles. Their time is spent with the social media such as

chatting and browsing unhealthy internet websites. As a result, their mind and values are corrupted beyond the Indonesian norms. Hence, classrooms



It simply and good norms, it actually needs a comprehensive and holistic action plan. The efforts require inculcation of spiritual values using various religious elements such as prayers, greetings, mass praying (performing *solat*), reciting the Holy Quran and *hadith*. In addition, nationalist values can be inculcated through patriotic songs, profiles review of the outstanding nationalists, analysing poetries and reviewing historical documents. Productive values would increase students' self-confidence to communicate and to complete assignments. Whereas, creative values are stimulated by trainings and performing task which improve students' ability to think creatively and also to become more innovative.

## 5. Problem Statement

This study was conducted due to several issues related to globalisation threats in Indonesia. The threats come with various foreign influences on the lifestyles of the Indonesians especially the young generation.

Abundance of information is easily accessible from ICT, Internet and social media. They have changed the lifestyle of the teenagers, especially their way of thinking and life trend. It is so alarming when the unfiltered information is easily available to threaten national culture, identity and social norms of the Indonesian people. The threats are gradually but surely destroy the status quo by

and the best people from the best countries and uniform. The best people from the best countries and uniform. The best people from the best countries and uniform.

Nation character education focuses on several aspects to educate students to be honest and responsible, in their speech, action and thinking. Students are also taught to have positive attitudes such as tolerance, diligence, creative, independence, democratic and patriotic. In addition, the purpose of the education is to build positive thinking, especially on the country's independency by putting the country as their first priority besides family. It is hoped that Indonesians will be proud of their own language and the socio-culture of their own people.

Most students are now practising odd behaviours which are against the customs and traditional law, moral and social practice. Traditional culture and positive practices are neglected, and new negative language is commonly used by the younger generation. This scenario shows the crippling of nation character among the Indonesians today.

## 6. Methodology

This is a survey to determine the level of students' acceptance on how Nation Character Education is implemented by teachers in the classroom. A questionnaire was used to collect





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data from students and to get teachers' perspective on the practice of Nation Character Education to shape students' behaviours. Simple random sampling was used to determine the school samples from the whole population of 36 secondary schools in Pekanbaru, Riau, Indonesia.

Simple random method was used by pooling 22 schools as the research samples and then used to determine students as the following: 14 form three students, 12 form two and also another 12 form one students. The survey method is suitable to analyse relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables as described in the research conceptual framework. The collected data was analysed to evaluate students' acceptance towards the implementation of nation character values by teachers in the classroom. The evaluation was also done on students' practice of religious characters, productive characters, nationalist characters and creative characters.

A pilot study was conducted to assess the questionnaire particularly the time frame provided to response to the questions, the ambiguity of the questions, and correlation between the items score with the total score to determine the validity of the questionnaire.

## 7. Findings And Discussion

### 7.1 The implementation of nation character in the classroom

Teachers are the main agent to implement the Nation Character Education. Their role is to inculcate 15 items of good values for students, as the following:

- i. Reciting a prayer before starting the lesson
- ii. Inculcate religious values in the lesson
- iii. Using moral issues to stimulate the lesson
- iv. Applying the spirit of loving the nation/country
- v. Applying cooperative learning to improve interaction
- vi. Guiding students to adhere to the rules and regulations
- vii. Promoting rational thinking and open mindedness
- viii. Promoting the sense of responsibility in students' life
- ix. Applying inquiry technique to encourage students to think
- x. Motivating students to learn confidently
- xi. Complimenting students as an incentive
- xii. Applying humour in the lesson to help students for better understanding of the values
- xiii. Using various teaching aids to integrate values
- xiv. Reprimanding/giving constructive comments to help students realize their mistakes
- xv. Showing examples and models to inculcate values

Findings of this research showed the level of students' acceptance towards the implementation of nation character values in the class is at the high level. Students also provided positive responses except to item no 7 which is *developing students' thinking to be more rational and open minded*. However, the implementation was vague and this confused the students resulting with the low level of acceptance.

Every item of Nation Character Education implemented in the classroom is at the satisfactory and high levels. The item which has the highest mean score is students' readiness to adhere to the rules in and out of the school. This shows that teaching students about rules and the importance of adhering to law and regulations are important elements. This is in line with the education goal which is to produce individuals who have leadership quality and self-discipline.

Students were also not fully exposed to the aspects of creative and critical thinking. Their level related to those aspects is still at the satisfactory or modest level, especially issues related to the society. Due to that, they have very limited ideas to debate, to discuss, and also to provide ideas, point of views or opinions. Activities such as forums are the best kick start or the momentum to encourage students to participate actively and communicate well. However it was not taken advantage fully by students to develop their own character. Hence, teachers need to be patient and diligence to transform and shift the paradigm in order to shape students' character. Among the activities can be used in the classroom are intellectual discourses, religious talks, patriotic public speaking sessions and forums on issues related to moral and human capital development.

In overall, it was found that teachers have successfully implemented Nation Character Education across the curriculum within a very limited of time through continuous activities and ideas. The use of various stimulations, ICT and audio visual aids truly helped the teachers in increasing students' awareness to change and improve their personalities to be better persons who appreciate universal values of the society. The steps and approaches implemented by teachers in a relax, non-threatening manner made it easy for students to accept and change themselves, as what is expected by the context of Nation Character Education.

### 7.2 The level of students' acceptance towards Nation Character Education

The implementation of Nation Character Education in the class was successfully done because students participated actively by giving fresh ideas about positive values, ample break time was given for students to refresh from serious academic discussion to practical activities. Students



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accepted the practice and education positively due to the relax and semi-formal condition provided by teachers in the class. For instance, students were required to stand up and greet the teacher, after that a student would be called to say a prayer and briefly talked about any relevant issue related to characters and values development. This brief slot was conducted in a semi-formal situation has effectively changed and developed students' values.

Muhammad Sattar Rasul *et al.* (2013) agreed that a semi-formal situation and practical activities are the best way to let the students copy and practice the values modeled by the teacher himself. The opportunity provided by teacher for the students to inquire and ask questions encouraged the element of curiosity among students, which then received positive response from the students. Students were found to be more active especially in giving answers, presenting in front of the class, sharing ideas and performing activities. An example of such activities was when a teacher asked his students to sing the National anthem *Indonesia Raya* for the purpose of helping the students to express their love for the country. Other than performing the national anthem, students were asked to write and talk about the nationalists and the nation's heroes creatively using multimedia and other materials such as posters and photos.

of the character development. The elements involve are cooperation, sharing of ideas and reaching mutual understanding to achieve the same goals. Findings of this study showed that students are ready to cooperate and work together as a team. Hence, students' productive characters were successfully developed by teachers' approach through leadership, instructions and task accomplishment. Students also showed their own personal creativity by completing assignments as planned and instructed by the teacher. Thus, even though the implementation slot was brief but it was able to develop values and accepted well by the students.

Values and students characters were developed by teachers across the curriculum, this helped students to understand clearly especially through various methods, activities and tasks given by different teachers. Hence, this also ensures continuous effectiveness of the way the characters are developed at every stage. This study focused only on a teacher treating a treatment class/group, but a positive reaction and changes of students' behaviors were clearly observed.

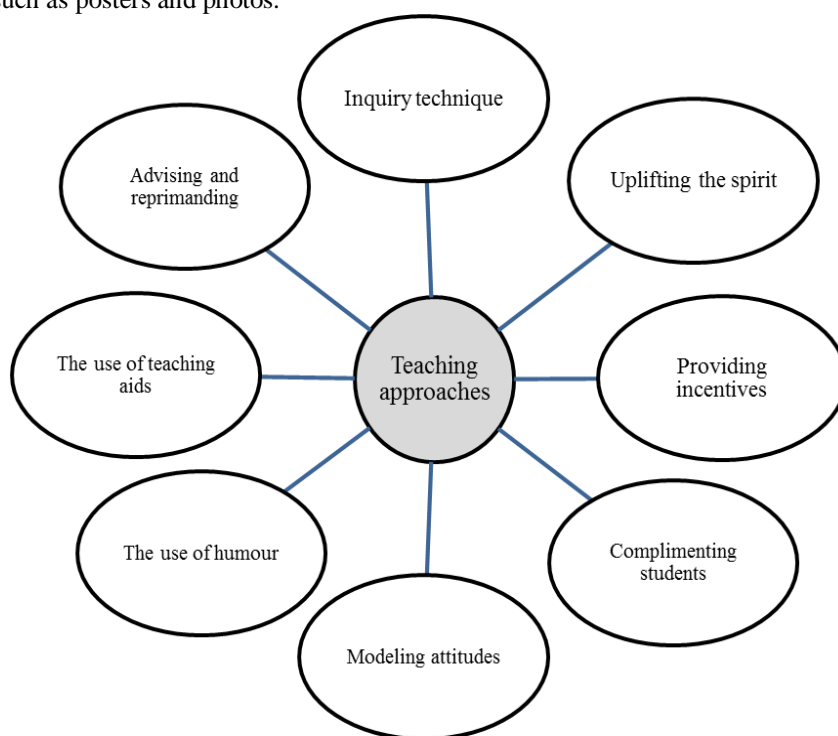


Figure 3 Teaching Approaches to inculcate values of nation characters

Through these activities, students were taught and trained to be creative and to develop their productive character.

According to Mohd Uzi Dollah (2007), cooperative learning is a good way to encourage friendship teamwork as well as soft skills among students. In this context of study, soft skill is part

Multiple elements were used by teachers to develop character values among students. The implementation was found effective when students showed better behaviours and performed well, as



expected by the elements of nation characters. According to Kalijernih (2007), modeling is an important aspect of learning in order to develop values and to shape certain characters. This study has found that the development of characters and positive responses from students were due to the teacher's personal positive attributes.

### 7.3 The use of Inquiry technique to develop character

Students' curiosity could be aroused through inquiry technique to introduce students to religious, nationalist, productive and creative characters. Teachers can bring forward various issues for discussion and ask students some questions for them to indirectly think of good values. Question and answer session is an easy way to let students understand certain issues and indirectly teacher is arousing students' curiosity. Therefore, teachers have used inquiry technique to introduce religious, nationalist, productive and creative characters in the classroom, which is a very good technique not only to encourage students to think positively but it provides an opportunity for the teachers themselves to explain clearly of any issue asked by students.

According to Syahrudaman Kamarudin (2010), inquiry technique provides students with an opportunity to ask and resolve whatever problems related to religion, the nation, the society and new ideas. In other words, it opens for active communication, at the same time develops self-confidence and helps students to understand problematic issues clearly. This is actually a good method to successfully implement character education.

### 7.4 Teacher as a motivator

There are other ways for teachers to boost students' spirit towards loving the country and respecting the national flag. Discussions and brainstorming are good techniques to explain motives and reasons to be good citizens. Teachers can make full use of their own personal experiences by sharing ideas and stories with students to create awareness on the issues happening to the country and the society. Encouragement and motivation would help to boost the spirit and love for the country, due to that, teachers can also conduct learning activities such as public speaking, patriotic poetries recital, and motivational songs to create awareness and to spread the spirit of love. In this context of study, teachers instructed students to sing patriotic songs, and such, a fun element was used to create awareness and increase confidence level.

The best way to encourage and develop passive students is through active interaction. Passive students can be coaxed by motivational speech, compliments and clear explanation of certain motives, characters and values. This type of approaches would hasten students' acceptance,

hence positive impressions would easily be built. Results of a study by Saifuddin (1997), agreed that it is important for teachers to play a significant role as a motivator and guiding students about motives of certain actions.

### 7.5 Humour in class and a method to develop students' characters

Sometimes it would be easier to develop characters and disseminate values among students by using a sense of humour, jokes and satires. A humorous situation would resolve tense to allow character education to be effectively implemented in a relax and flexible environment. According to Khairul Anuar Abdul Rahman (2012), an effective teacher would consider the element of humour as one of the learning and teaching aspects in the process of providing education in a fun and conducive manner. According to Abdul Shukor Shaari (2008), effective communication would influence students' behaviours and great personality.

### 7.6 Incentives and compliments

According to educational psychologists, incentives and compliments are important elements to stimulate positive changes of behaviours. This is due to the fact that people need acknowledgement and appreciation (Woolfolk, 2000). This study has proven the same fact. A teacher who frequently provides students with incentives and compliments has effectively developed a new positive character in students' life. Incentives can be in a form of attention, being a good listener in handling students' problems, giving gifts and merits whenever students performed good behaviours.

Learning refers to permanent changes of behaviours and mental process due to experiences and trainings when one is interacting with his environment. Hence, reinforcement and incentives are important and effective elements to shape behaviours of an individual (Ormrod, 2008). In the context of developing students' religious characters, it is actually not a simple job as different students have different perspectives. However, the various perspectives can become a united one when teachers show one universal perspective through polite attitude and behaviour in developing students' personality. The task would be even easier when it is complimented with reinforcement and incentives. Motivational and complimenting words which are given at the exact moment when the student is performing good character is a direct encouragement for students to double up their efforts to be better.

### 7.7 Modeling attitudes

Developing and shaping characters need modeling and examples. Students would always look up to adults as their iconic models. Hence,





No	Items	Mean	Standard deviation	Interpretation
1	Religious	3.30	0.325	Modest
2	Nationalist	3.81	0.358	High
3	Productive	3.16	0.420	Modest
4	Creative	3.33	0.362	Modest
	Nation Characters	3.42	0.324	High

learning through observation is another effective way to inculcate values of good attitudes among students. For instance, to train students about cleanliness, teachers' clean appearance is the best way to influence students to accept and develop their own values of cleanliness.

Imam al-Ghazali stressed on social learning as mingle with good religious people as one of the three methods for one to develop his good attitudes and strong character (Khairul Anuar Abdul Rahman, 2012). This is important because people naturally easy to copy others, whether those with good or bad attitudes. So, when one befriends with good people, he will naturally learn about good things and be a good person himself. According to al-Na'imy (1994), people are different due to their surroundings. One who happens to be in a good education and environment would have the tendency to move on the right path, so he will be among good people, and vice versa.

One of the reasons students would easily accept Nation Character Education is due to teachers' tendency to become a good role model and showing a good example of attitudes such as teaching students the right way to say a prayer, teaching students about life with discipline, teaching about punctuality and cleanliness.

## 7.8 Students' positive and

The goal of education is for

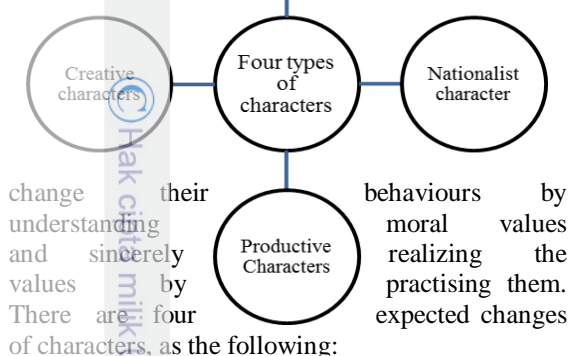


Figure 1.4 Four Types of Characters

Table1.1 The level of characters practiced by students

Generally, the findings showed that nationalist characters are highly practiced by students (mean = 3.81 and sd = 0.358), followed by creative characters (mean = 3.33 and sd = 0.362), religious characters (mean = 3.30 and sd = 0.325) and productive characters (mean = 3.16 and sd = 0.420). The overall level of practise is at the high level. This can be translated that nationalist characters received better acceptance when compared with the other types of characters. This also means that teachers have successfully introduced and developed awareness among students on the struggles of the independent heroes and students do appreciate the struggles.

## 7.8.1 Religious characters practised by students

Religious characters are the main criteria to evaluate how well students have become and developed as human beings. There are five aspects of religious characters: they are religious attitudes, honesty, tolerance, obedience and integrity. In overall, the detail on how students practised these religious characters is explained in the following table:

Table 2 Religious characters practiced by students



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Tolerance is at the highest level with the implication of an increase number of students who have accepted and appreciated freedom to have any religions and diversity of religious attitudes. Students are practising the religious characters and appreciate their teachers as their models as well as showing positive changes of their own behaviours. The other three religious characters – honesty, obedience, and integrity are at the modest/satisfactory level. It was difficult to measure the other three characters as they are naturally very abstract and it is difficult to see the changes. However, honesty can still be measured through actions such as returning lost items and do not take items belong to others.

#### i. Being a religious person

Religious attitudes are enriched by practising prayers during studying, greeting others, respecting the right for freedom of religion, constant praying and continuous learning. However, students' tendency to learn and listen to religious talks is slightly lower than the other aspects. This might be due to their poor endurance to sit, focus and listen for a long period of time. Hence, the implication is religious talks or lectures are not encouraging enough.

Based on the items in the questionnaire to determine honesty among students, it was found that students showed positive responses. Students showed high level of practise on the aspects of keeping lost items that they have found and also in keeping secrets. However, students' knowledge and practise on the aspects of responsibility and fulfilling promise they have made are at the satisfactory/modest level.

Tolerance in religious practice is an important aspect especially among the multi-religions of the Indonesian people. The majority of the Indonesians are Muslims, however the religion allowed the Muslims to respect others' right and other religions' practices and customs. Students are taught to accept the differences among them and to respect others' cultures and religions. However, the level of cooperation with strangers is at the satisfactory level. Students were also confused when they were punished on certain misbehaved, but relatively proud when they adhered to religious rules even if the level is still very modest. Nevertheless, students were punctual in learning and attending classes.

Integrity or being responsible is an important and vital element in developing religious characters. This character is important to produce kind and responsible people. Integrity also refers to the responsible aspect to ensure school cleanliness. This element has been well practiced by the students and it is at a high level. The other

three aspects are students' efforts to get high marks,

No	Items	Mean	Standard deviation	Interpretation
1	Religious Attitudes	3.42	0.392	High
2	Honesty	3.38	0.446	Modest
3	Tolerance	3.50	0.217	High
4	Obedience	3.33	0.480	Modest
5	Integrity	2.87	0.446	Modest
	Religious characters	3.30	0.325	Modest

hard working to be successful and actively involved in beneficial activities. Sadly, open-mindedness and honesty are still at the low level.

#### 7.8.2 Nationalist characters practised by students

It is important to develop nationalist character in order to produce students who sincerely love their own country and respect the nation, as well as being proud to be Indonesians. There are five aspects of nationalist characters, involving the attitudes of being democratic, prioritizing the nation, love the country, diligence and love for peace and hating extremism. Among the five aspects, students highly love and prioritize the country. Students also have good attitude towards the peace value. Whereas, democratic and diligence values are still at the satisfactory level.

Even though the level of democratic attitude among students is still at the satisfactory level, teachers have successfully guided and taught students to appreciate it. Students were taught to readily accept others' opinions and points of view. Apart from that, students have changed and adapted themselves well with the school environment. Students also appreciated general opinions that provide mutual benefits.

Descriptive analysis was conducted to get the mean score and standard deviation to determine the level of nationalist characters practised by students, as shown in the following table 4.46 below. The table shows every item of nationalist character, with *love for the country* is at the high and strongly high level. The item which has the highest mean score is "*I cannot tolerate anyone who insults the Indonesian people*" (mean = 4.49 and sd = 0.710). This is a great finding that students do have clear awareness about the love for the country.

Hard working or diligence and the ability to complete assignments are still at the satisfactory/modest level. Hence, teachers need to double up their efforts to increase students' motivation in completing tasks and to teach students about the importance of being responsible and taking correct action not only for their own benefits but for the nation as well.

#### 7.8.3 Productive characters practised by students





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Beginning the 21<sup>st</sup> century, productive attitudes referred to students' competitive edge or the ability to compete globally. In the context of this study, students showed high level of communicative ability, whereas the other three aspects of social sensitivity, sensitive to the environment and being productive are at the satisfactory or modest level. Students used polite and kind language to greet others, to provide points of views, to explain things and they have the ability to use appropriate intonation to describe events and emotion.

In the context of social sensitivity, it was found that the level of students' practise is still very modest in the aspects of sharing their experience with others, avoiding a tense situation and how to create a harmonious situation with others, willing to listen to others' problem and also to help others if the need arises. Hence, those attitudes need to be increased to prevent selfishness. In addition, students were also clueless and insensitive to social problems happening around them and also at a wider context.

The level of students' involvement in class activities is also very modest. Thus, students need more encouragements, compliments, motivation and reinforcement from teachers to ensure a change of behaviours. They also need continuous encouragement to increase the level of their spirit so as never to give up trying to be better.

#### 7.8.4 Creative characters practised by students

Descriptive analysis was conducted to find the mean and standard deviation in determining the level of creative characters practised by students. Creative characters are divided into four aspects : self-esteem, reading habit, creative thinking and a sense of curiosity.

Self-esteem refers to students' level of self-confidence and self-appreciation. The level of self-confidence will be increased when students are respected and treated fairly during their lesson. Self-esteem is shown by their ability to perform everyday's work on their own and then they have self-satisfaction doing it by fully utilising all of their potentials. The performance achieved would increase their own personal understanding. Students could also correctly plan their tasks by following their teachers' instruction.

This study has found that teachers have successfully increased students' curiosity level. Unfortunately, students' reading habit and their way of thinking are still at the satisfactory level. Based on a study conducted by Yahya Othman and Wan Mat Sulaiman (2011) on the level and reading interest, they found that teenagers have a very low interest in reading. Hence, this study has found similar finding even if the level of interest should be increased in line with one's maturity level. This study showed that all items are at the

satisfactory level, meaning students did not spend their leisure time with reading but wasting it doing nothing important. The only time spent for reading was limited to academic materials which then limits their general knowledge.

In the context of applying creative thinking, it was found that students' level of creative thinking is still at the satisfactory level. However, students have accepted and shown good efforts to apply thinking skills by using mind maps and visual aids to improve their understanding of certain lessons. Students are also capable to make conclusion and generalization of facts, they also have the ability to analyse information in details to debate certain issues. However, there are still weaknesses which need to be improved.

The knowledge and how it is acquired begin with the manipulation of students' curiosity about something. This curiosity would discover new knowledge, which then developed into a beneficial information for the students in order to achieve their future goals. This study has found that students have used various ways, methods and steps to complete the assignment given to them. They have the initiative to refer to multiple resources as well as consulting the teachers to solve any problems related to their tasks.

## 8. Conclusion

It is not easy to shape one's character of personality by influencing his way of thinking. The process needs ultimate patient, education and continuous practices, while in schools it has to be developed as an integrated lesson across the curriculum. In the context of this study, conclusion can be made that teachers have effectively put some efforts and the efforts have been paid off when students show positive impacts especially in the level of their acceptance towards the implementation of Nation Character Education. Teachers' efforts are deemed effective as students do show positive transformation of attitudes and daily practices especially in the aspects of religious, nationalist, productive and creative characters. Hence, teachers can manipulate students' potentials and eliminate their weaknesses by providing continuous encouragement, reinforcement, acknowledgement and motivation in order to change the youth's attitudes and daily practices.

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