Student Management Model through Character Building: An Effort to Improve the Quality of Education in Vocational High School

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Article History: Received on 22 May 2023, Revised on 20 June 2023, Published on 6 July 2023

Abstract: Student management is an important aspect in improving the quality of education. This applies to all types of schools, including vocational high schools. This study aims to reveal the student management model implemented by schools and its contribution to improving the quality of education. The research method used is qualitative. The object of the research was conducted at Palembang 2 State Vocational High School. Informants in this study were vice principals for student affairs, curriculum, quality management, student organization coaches, heads of counseling, teachers, and students. Data collection techniques using observation, documentation and interviews. Data were analyzed by means of data reduction, data presentation and conclusions (data triangulation). The results of the study show that the focus of student management is on student development, from being accepted to graduating. There are three models of student management that are carried out, namely: 1) Student management based on coaching 2); flexible management; and 3) Balanced achievement strategy. The characteristic of student management at this school is that student management does not intend to control student behavior, but is directed at how to increase student awareness to control their behavior by using strategies in student development namely “forced, forced, and accustomed”.

Keywords: Character Building, Quality of Education, Student Management, Vocational High School.

A. Introduction

The real condition of implementing student management in schools in general is that there are still many obstacles, weaknesses, and deficiencies in several factors (Daniel, 2022; Nurwahidah et al., 2020; Wahed, 2018). Among these problems is that there are still schools that accept students more than the specified capacity. Even though the technical guidelines for admitting new students in 2022 stipulate that 1 study group has a maximum of 36 students. Thus, if schools ignore these rules, it is normal if there are still large numbers of classes that exceed the standard capacity of study groups (Burhanuddin et al., 2023; Ramedlon et al., 2023).

Another problem is that schools generally focus more on students’ academic achievement issues than on student behavior and self-control issues. This creates an
imbalance between academic achievement and self-control. Currently, many students easily interact with social conditions that are contrary to moral values, as a result of the negative impact of globalization (Balakrishnan & Gan, 2016; Kaya & Bicen, 2016; Vogel et al., 2015). Furthermore, these negative impacts include the increasing prevalence of various deviations from the norms of religious and social life which are manifested in the form of student delinquency at school such as disrespect for teachers and lack of discipline in regulations and so on (Bou-Hamad, 2020; Stockdale & Coyne, 2020; Wang et al., 2018).

Negative character or student delinquency has a significant effect on student learning interest and motivation (Meliala et al., 2021). Negative character or student delinquency also has a significant effect on student learning outcomes or achievement (Suhartanto & Badrus, 2018; Syafrianti & Sari, 2020). In fact, a study shows that juvenile delinquency has a positive and significant influence on student learning outcomes (Gultom & Karyaningsih, 2015). Student delinquency at this level varies quite a lot, including truancy, smoking, dating, keeping pornographic pictures or recordings, and leaving the house without permission.

Based on the facts above, it is necessary to optimize student management in schools in order to support the achievement of educational goals. As an organization, schools have functions, one of which is as a place to carry out management, carry out school administration and provide guidance for students. Education in schools does not only focus on cognitive aspects, but also aspects that make up a complete personality are competencies that students must have, students have social skills, empathy for others, have good trust, tolerance for friendship, patience, sincerity, and creative, where all of that can be obtained if the management of education can maximize the function of student management.

So far, there have been several studies related to student management. First, research on student management in an effort to improve students’ academic and non-academic achievements (Khasanah & Prasetyo, 2023). Second, research regarding the implementation of management information systems in schools (Solechan, 2021). Third, research on student management in efforts to improve school quality (Gusti & Karnati, 2021). Fourth, research on School-based Management Implementation Problems (Mustiningsih, 2015). Fifth, research on student management (Ariska, 2015).

However, the majority of student management research focuses on student administration issues within their scope. No one has examined in depth the aspects of behavior control/student development in the context of improving the quality of education. Controlling student behavior in schools is generally considered to be the sole responsibility of religious teachers, even though this is an area of responsibility for student management. Therefore, this study aims to answer the student management model in the aspect of building student character and its contribution to the quality of school education.
B. Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach which aims to explore and analyze the facts on the ground (Grossoehme, 2014; Moen & Middelthon, 2015; Norman et al., 2021). This research concerns the student management model through fostering student character and its contribution to improving the quality of education. This research was conducted at State Vocational High School 2 Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia. Information is obtained by two techniques, namely 1). Purposive sampling as the primary source, namely the vice principal of student affairs, 2). Snow Ball sampling as a source of support, namely teachers, vice principals in the field of Public Relations, vice principals in the field of Quality Management, heads of Administration, Heads of Discipline Counseling Guidance Units, extra-curricular coaches, spiritual mentors, Heads of Administration, and students participating in the research.

Researchers collected data by way of first in-depth interviews with informants. Second, the researcher made direct observations on student activities and activities during school breaks, school attendance activities, and extracurricular activities. Third, researchers documented school work programs, school activity reports, student academic and non-academic achievements, student counseling guidance documents, and student work programs (Goodell et al., 2016; Rosenthal, 2016). To test the validity of the data, researchers conducted repeated interviews and intensive observations in the field, and confirmed interview data, observation data, and research documents (Willig, 2008).

Next, the researcher analyzed the data obtained using the data triangulation model (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018; Miles et al., 2014) by summarizing reports, recording, and classifying the data; analyze and provide in-depth interpretation of data; present data in narrative form; and draw conclusions from each research data related to the student management model through fostering student character and its contribution to improving the quality of education at State Vocational High School 2 Palembang.

C. Results and Discussion

The student management model through student character development at State Vocational High School 2 Palembang is carried out so that students can control their behavior. The quality orientation is carried out in a balanced manner between academic and non-academic qualities which are seen as important by the school in improving the quality of education (Interview with Principal, 2021). Therefore, in terms of student management as an effort to improve the quality of education, the school also focuses on building student character, not only on administrative aspects and coaching on aspects of cognitive competence (Interview with Deputy Head of School in the field of quality management, 2021).

Student management through student character development is carried out in three models, namely, first, students’ management based on coaching technique, which is a student management activity based on student coaching. This model is to
manage students with character building processes such as telling, practicing, and familiarizing positive behaviours in all activities at school. This student management model is characterized by a dimension that focuses on character building which involves aspects of knowledge, feelings, and actions and their implementation is carried out in a systematic and sustainable manner with the results shown through attitudes and behaviour that are in accordance with religious, legal, cultural norms, and customs in society.

Second, flexible management, a flexible attitude in management, especially in making decisions and policies according to the needs, abilities and demands of the school and stakeholders without deviating from the applicable laws and regulations. In a sense, the teachers are flexible, full of patience, and not rigid in fostering students. The teachers do not use a violence and punishment approach, but rather a persuasive approach by means of positive advice and wise language that touches the positive thoughts and feelings of students.

Third, Balance achievement strategy. The strategy used to achieve educational goals in a balanced way does not only focus on improving academic quality in a quantitative manner but also on improving non-academic quality in a qualitative manner. In this case, student management through character building is carried out in various activities, both academic and non-academic that prioritize process and quality.

The three models of student development are implemented in two activities: first, academic activities are carried out through setting effective study hours, flag ceremonies, outbound, and Introduction to the School Environment. Second, non-academic activities carried out through extra-curricular programs and school culture. Student management is empirically proven to contribute to the quality of education, both academic quality and non-academic quality. The three coaching models above are always integrated through these activities.

Based on the results, the implementation of student management with these three models makes a significant contribution in improving the quality of education, not only in terms of academic quality but also non-academic quality. If in general many schools focus more on the issue of academic achievement than on non-academic achievements, in practice Palembang 2 State Vocational School pays attention to both in a balanced way, so that the two qualities appear to be increasing equally.

This balance is evidenced by the increased academic and non-academic quality of the school. First in terms of academic quality: a) The percentage of graduates reaches 100%, obtaining satisfactory National Exam results, even in 2021 one of its students will get the highest National Examination score at the vocational school level in South Sumatra, b) Quite a large number of graduates are absorbed into employment, according to data as much as 69.2% to various industries, both BUMN, BUMD, private, civil servants and the National Police from various eight skill packages consisting of Mechatronics, light vehicle engineering, motorcycle engineering, machining engineering, computer network engineering, building drawing engineering, geomatics engineering, electrical power utilization installation
engineering. This means that more than half of vocational schools 2 Palembang graduates are accepted into the business world and the industrial world. If this is related to the goals of vocational schools, namely preparing students to become graduates who are ready to work, then there is relevance between the goals of the school and the results c) The high achievement of students, especially in extracurricular fields.

Second, non-academic qualities: a) Discipline. the majority of students obey the school rules both in class and outside the classroom, so that the cases of violations that occur are very low, meaning that the level of school discipline is high. This is supported by the commitment of all school components, especially teachers, to play a role in setting an example for students, b) Religious attitude. Students have habits that are integrated into the school culture such as reading the Koran (tadarus before starting lessons in the morning), praying in congregation both Duha and Friday prayers, tolerance for the implementation of other religious teachings, good manners, and giving greetings (kissing hands) when meet teacher.

Referring to the facts at school, the purpose of student management at State Vocational High School 2 Palembang is to regulate various activities in the field of student affairs so that learning activities at school can run in an orderly, orderly manner and can achieve school education goals. If you pay attention to these goals, both directly and indirectly academic quality becomes a companion for non-academic quality. So, student management efforts can improve the academic and non-academic quality of students simultaneously. Schools can be effective if there is a strong relationship between what is formulated to be done and the results achieved by the school, otherwise schools are not effective if the relationship is low (Apendi, 2018; Kanada & Febriyanti, 2022; Mahmudah & Putra, 2021; Musnaeni et al., 2022; Nasri, 2019).

In its implementation, student development must receive serious attention from the school community, especially by the principal as a decision maker and top management in educational institutions and teachers (Kulsum & Muhid, 2022; Majid, 2019; Samsudin, 2018). This theory is very relevant to the fact that State Vocational High School 2 Palembang intensively implements student management through character building. Moreover, in terms of quantity, it has a large number of students, even the largest of all vocational schools in South Sumatra. Meanwhile, in terms of gender, State Vocational High School 2 Palembang has a much larger percentage of male students (90%) than female students (10%).

Various research results state that women tend to have a higher level of discipline and quality of personal character than male students (Dewi et al., 2020; Safitri & Safrudin, 2020). Psychologically, girls have a more mature emotional level than boys (Nurfazrina et al., 2020; Salianto et al., 2022). Women experience a brain maturation process or mature faster, even 10 years faster than men (Ducharme et al., 2016; Jannah, 2015; Koolschijn & Crone, 2013). With a faster maturity process, female students are less likely to commit acts that break the rules, so they have a higher level of discipline than male students. This means that students at State Vocational High
School 2 Palembang have great potential for violations to occur. On this basis, State Vocational High School 2 Palembang, through its student management unit and the role of school counselling, pays more attention to student development in a planned, orderly and monitored manner by implementing a “forced and accustomed” strategy.

Another advantage of the student management work program at this school lies in extracurricular activities, where in many events the school often wins competitions at the local, provincial, national and international levels. This shows that extracurricular activities are the main media in conducting student development. In management, student coaching is integrated into extracurricular activities. The extracurricular program has the essence of fostering character values in the form of hard work, discipline, creativity, respect for achievement, communicative, peaceloving, and responsibility (Amilda et al., 2023; Waldi, 2018). Therefore, the process of extracurricular activities is the main strength or source in cultivating character values (Irmawanty et al., 2018; Mislia et al., 2016; Pusitasari et al., 2022). This effort can be carried out by schools through student management to improve the quality of education, especially on the non-academic quality of students.

The orientation of the quality of education at SMK Negeri 2 Palembang is carried out in a balanced manner, namely both (academic and non-academic are both priority scales as an effort to improve the quality of education. The strategy used is to focus on student development (character) through extracurricular activities and school culture. Efforts this is necessary because basically humans like positive, wise, persuasive, and fair/comparable treatment (Lisman & Septianingsi, 2022). On the other hand, the view of educational philosophy explains that education aims to prepare individuals with character, balance, organic unity, harmony, and dynamic in order to achieve the goals of human life (Istiawati, 2016; Rohman & Muhid, 2022).

In addition, empirically the student management at State Vocational High School 2 Palembang which focuses on fostering students has been shown to be able to achieve educational quality which equally increases academic and non-academic achievements. This is an advantage of State Vocational High School 2 Palembang. This fact proves that improving the quality of education is not only through efforts to transfer teacher knowledge and understanding through the learning process in the classroom, but requires an intense coaching strategy to guide, direct, foster and shape students to have positive character, namely through character building (Halawa & Mulyanti, 2023; Mulati, 2016; Nuryani et al., 2022). Effective character development will produce students who have positive personalities, attitudes and behaviour (Hidayat & Bujuri, 2020). Effective character development as an effort of school student management will bring students to experience changes in their behaviour and have an impact on increasing the achievement of learning outcomes and can make learning objectives quickly achieved (Wicaksono, 2020; Yandi et al., 2023).

From the description above, it can be simply understood that to improve comprehensive learning outcomes what needs to be done is to focus on increasing non-academic achievements so the results will be directly proportional to academic achievement (Fujiyama et al., 2021; Inriyani et al., 2017). This is the stressing point of
the problem in this study. In addition, through character building, students have attitudes and behaviours that are in accordance with religious norms or ethics and those in society will make students not only have understanding and knowledge about how they should behave, but also show good behaviour for themselves and their communities (Jamaluddin et al., 2021; Putro et al., 2019). Effective character building will make students have the competencies and skills stated in the curriculum. This becomes an indication and measure of increasing the achievement of learning outcomes.

The explanation above can be understood that the achievement of non-academic quality cannot be separated from the teacher’s role in internalizing character education. This is very rational considering that the implementer of the curriculum is the teacher who is a printer for outstanding students. In many studies it has been found that teachers have a high percentage compared to other factors in realizing educational success (Henriksen, 2016; Safariningsih, 2022). One indicator of the success or effectiveness of a school is the quality of the achievement of student learning outcomes, and these student learning outcomes will greatly depend on the extent to which the teacher’s success in helping students to achieve their learning outcomes. Therefore, the teacher has a very decisive role for the success of education in schools. If learning outcomes include the cognitive, effective and psychomotor domains, these three domains in the Islamic concept are often expressed in terms of amaliyah science, scientific charity and the soul of faith.

D. Conclusion

This research proves that to improve the quality of education it is not only managing students in administrative aspects and cognitive competence, but there are other aspects, namely student management through student character development. This management is also proven to be able to contribute to improving the quality of education in vocational high schools. Like State Vocational High School 2 Palembang which implements student management through building student character in improving the quality of education through 3 models, namely students management based on coaching technic, flexible management, and Balanced achievement strategy which is applied in every school activity, both academic and non-academic activities.

The contribution of student management through building student character in improving the quality of education is proven by the occurrence of a balanced increase in quality in the academic and non-academic fields. In terms of academic quality, the percentage of graduates reaches 100%, obtaining satisfactory National Examination results, even in 2021 one of its students will receive the highest National Examination score at the vocational school level in South Sumatra; Quite a large number of graduates are absorbed into employment, according to data as much as 69.2%; and high student achievement, especially in extracurricular fields. Second, on the aspect of non-academic quality, the attitude of discipline and religious practice of the majority of students is quite good.
E. Acknowledgement

Thank for the respondents, principal of State Vocational High School 2 Palembang, Rector of Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang and the team JMKSP (Jurnal Manajemen, Kepemimpinan, and Supervisi Pendidikan).

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