

Character Education or *Adab*? (An Offer to the Problem of Education in Indonesia)

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the implementing concept of curriculum in Indonesia which is consideredable to improve the quality and education system. However, the concept has not showed positive results. On the one hand, integrated character education in the government curriculum has not been able to solve the problem of the moral degradation of the younger generation. This study is a literature review using qualitative data. The method used is content analysis by analyzing the concept of character education and the concept of *ta'dib (adab)*. As the result, it was found that there were fundamental differences between the concept of character education and the concept of *adab*. Character education aims to create good citizens (good society), while concept of *adab* aims to create good people (good individuals). In contrast to that, character education has a fundamental difference to the concept of *adab*. Furthermore, character education is derived from the Western concept that indicated secular, while the

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concept of *adab* is indigenous value from the concept of Islamic education. The concept of *adab* is considered capable of being an alternative solution for educational teaching in Indonesia because it is in accordance with the objectives of national education which is based on faith (*al-îmân*), devotion (*al-taqwa*) and noble character (*al-akhlâq al-karîmah*).

Keywords: Character, West, *Adab*, Education, Curriculum, Islam.

Abstrak

Makalah ini menganalisa penerapan konsep kurikulum di Indonesia yang dianggap mampu memperbaiki mutu dan sistem pendidikan namun sampai saat ini belum menunjukkan hasil yang positif. Di satu sisi, pendidikan karakter yang terintegrasi dalam kurikulum pemerintah belum mampu menyelesaikan problem degradasi moral generasi muda. Kajian ini merupakan kajian pustaka dengan menggunakan data kualitatif. Metode yang digunakan konten analisis dengan menganalisa konsep pendidikan karakter dan konsep pendidikan *adab* (*ta'dîb*). Hasilnya ditemukan perbedaan mendasar dari konsep pendidikan karakter dan konsep pendidikan *adab*. Pendidikan karakter bertujuan menciptakan *good citizen* (masyarakat yang baik), sementara pendidikan *adab* bertujuan menciptakan *good people* (individu yang baik). Maka pendidikan karakter mempunyai perbedaan mendasar dengan konsep pendidikan *adab*. Selanjutnya pendidikan karakter bersumber dari konsep Barat sekuler sementara pendidikan *adab* digali dari konsep pendidikan Islam. Konsep pendidikan *adab* dianggap mampu menjadi solusi alternatif pendidikan di Indonesia karena sesuai dengan tujuan Pendidikan Nasional yang didasarkan kepada keimanan, ketakwaan dan akhlak mulia.

Kata Kunci: Karakter, Barat, *Adab*, Pendidikan, Kurikulum, Islam.

Introduction

Education in Indonesia has never dimmed from splinter issues that seem to marginalize the role of religion in terminating the educational problems in schools. For example, several cases that emerged in recently day regarding to the removal of religious phrases 'prase agama' in the draft vision of the 2020-2035 Education Roadmap. Although, the Minister of Education and Culture (Mendikbud) has clarified that this very troubling issue is still a

'pre-concept'.¹ However, the rest of the policies taken are considered less supportive of the orientation and objectives of education that is producing people of faith (*keimanan*) devotion (*ketakwaan*) and noble character (*akhlak mulia*).

Several of government policies in the world of education today experience inequality. The government is considered to be less deficient in responding to educational problems, so that several alternative education and curriculum implementations are adopted in an effort to overcome these problems. Such as gender equality-based curriculum, multiculturalism-based curriculum and character education curriculum.² Some of these alternatives are certainly not pure derived from the values and principles of Indonesian society that recognized extremely religious.³ On the contrary, the principles or the concepts of curriculum and education are apparently adopted from Western concepts which tend to overlook religion as the basic foundation for the advancement of education and science.

Character education which being applied in the educational system in Indonesia recently content of some problems. As being understood, character education has its roots in value-free education applied in the West. The value-free education system according to Piritim Sorokin, has increases problems and damage in peer relationships between families, between students and causes academic abilities to decline and delinquency rates to rise.⁴ In the view of Sorokin, character education is seen as value-free. And according to research, there are strong indications that moral wrecked has an effect on low academic grades.⁵

Certainly, the concept of character education applied by the government needs to be evaluated, in order to find the concept of education that is able to become an alternative solution to the

¹ Read; Nadiem Makarim Luruskan Isu Peta Jalan Pendidikan dan Hilangnya Frasa Agama di DPR, <https://www.dw.com/id/mendikbud-luruskan-polemik-hilangnya-frasa-agama-di-dpr/a-56833427> (Accessed, 20 April 2021)

² ISLAMIA, *Menjawab Tantangan di Dunia Pendidikan*, Vol.IX, No.1, (Jakarta: 2014), 3-4

³ Because religious life is very important in forming a good human person. So that religion cannot be separated from human life. Muttaqin, et.al, "Pengaruh Agama dalam Kehidupan

Masyarakat TKI Dusun Beji, Ponorogo", dalam *Kalimah: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama dan Pemikiran Islam*, Vol 19, No 1, (2021), 114.

⁴ E. Erickson, *Character Development* dalam Michael Belok et al, *Approaches to Values in Education*, (Dubuque-Iowa: WM. C. Brown Company Publisher, 1966), 288

⁵ *Ibid.*, 312- 313

sluggishness that plagued the world of education in Indonesia. The assessment (evaluation) is not meant by adopting a concept or curriculum that comes from outside (Western). However, the concept of education must be based on the values of devotion, faith and noble character which have actually been formulated in the 1945 Constitution.

One of the educational concepts based on devotion, faith, and morals is summarized in the concept of education called *adab* or *ta'dib*. The concept of *adab* or the process of educating referred to *ta'dib* is an educational concept that is considered capable of being a counter concept for character education. The advantages concept of *adab*-based education is key concepts that not only teach kindness, responsibility, honesty, discipline, respect as taught by character education. The concept *adab* is a holistic concept that accumulates cognitive, affective and psychomotor education.⁶

The concept of *adab* which was initiated by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas is not a new concept in the world of education especially in Islamic Education. The values of *adab* have basically been practiced in similar Islamic educational institutions (Islamic boarding schools, *madrrasah*). Moreover, the concept of *adab* curriculum is not included in the national education curriculum. The concept of *adab* is considered capable of being an alternative to solve the education in Indonesia because its basic foundation is closer to the goal of national education, namely creating a generation that is able to educate the nation by relying on faith, devotion and noble character.

So, can the concept of *adab* be a solution in the midst of educational decline? What is the preeminent concept of *adab* over the character education? How is the application of the concept of *adab* in education in Indonesia? This paper tries to elaborate some of the answers relating to this question specifically, not in the context of contradicting one educational concept with another, but trying to explore the scientific analysis of concepts that can be an appropriate reference for the progress and development of the educational curriculum.

History and Educational Problems in Indonesia

If we refer to a historical perspective, here we will find the source problems of education in Indonesia, which began from the colonialism

⁶ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Nauib Al-Attas*, Trans. Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi et.al. (Bandung: Mizan, 2003), 180

period by the Dutch around 1882.⁷ Since then, the education system and learning orientation in Indonesia have experienced serious problems. As the result, the method of the education system was in the shackles and full control of the colonialists until an education system that tends to be secular and eroded religious and national values. In relation to this, in a historical study conducted by Elizabeth H. Graves as being quoted by Azyumardi Azra about the transitions that occurred in the world of education, including Islamic education in West Sumatra. After the Dutch established '*sekolah rakyat*' (volkschoolen) which were popularly known as nagari school "*sekolah nagari*" in various places in Minangkabau, at the first nagari schools mostly used the *surau* 'curriculum', afterward in its development the curriculum adopted the Dutch education system which began to instill a dichotomy in the world of education system. The presence of these nagari schools is a major blow to *surau* education, which is actually the last bastion of Islamic education.⁸

The dichotomy of education impacted of the secular system launched by the Western in the education system of the Muslims. This was spread after the independence of the Muslim countries was achieved. So the education system that applies the secular intellectual method has a major place in the national education system. Fazlur Rahman records this phenomenon in his book, which tries to unravel the history of secular education that has plagued Muslim countries. He stated;

"...since the acquisition of political independence, education in these countries has basically only been a continuation of colonial education, which was essentially shown as a successor to colonial-formed government employees who would serve the interests of the colonial government. In essence, the education that was created was not based on a strong foundation, nor was it a true form of responsibility".⁹

⁷ In the beginning of 1881 Tunisia was colonized by French. In the year of 1882 Egypt, Sudan, India and Malaysia were colonized by Inggris. In the similar year Indonesia being colonized by the Dutch, while the Middle Asia were colonized by Russian. Read Sūkrān Vahide, *Biografi Intelektual Badiuzzaman Said Nursi: Transformasi Dinasti Utsmānī Menjadi Republik Turki*, Trans by Sugeng Haryanto, Sukono, (Jakarta: Antolia, 2007), xii

⁸ Azyumardi Azra, *Pendidikan Islam: Tradisi dan Modernisasi Menuju Milenium Baru*, Cet. Iv, (Jakarta: Logos, 2002), 89

⁹ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity, Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, (Chicago: The Univ. Press, 1982), 89. More references, read Hilmy Bakar Almasaty, *Membangun Sistem Pendidikan Kaum Muslimin*, (T.K: T.P, T.Th), 27-32.

The simple translation, since political independence was obtained, education in these countries is basically just a continuation of colonial education, which in essence is shown as a successor to the colonial government employees who will serve the interests of the colonial government. In essence, education which created is not based on a solid foundation nor is it a form of right responsibility.

In line with the times, after Indonesia's independence in 1945, the government began to design a national education curriculum¹⁰ which is continuously undergoing renovation to the present day. The development and implementation of curriculum policies in Indonesia tends to be politicized by power of government. Every substitution of the government power for various reasons every time the curriculum policy will change. So the phrase "change ministers to change curriculum" became the mandatory jargon of the ruling government, instead of changing the curriculum for the advancement of education in Indonesia by introducing the world, on the other fact it turned out to bring the Indonesian people to a slump, setbacks and even barely able to compete with the international community. Based on this phenomena, according to Anzar Abdullah's observations the education curriculum in Indonesia was isolated in his own country.¹¹

The problems regarding to the curriculum should be taken into account, the government must consider this as an important problem that must be addressed immediately to be solved. If this problem continues it will automatically affect the learning and teaching in schools, teachers and students will experience problems in carrying out the curriculum which is constantly changing. Indirectly it will create new problems in the committee or educational institution. It is undeniable, the problem of education in Indonesia is the legacy of the colonialists who deliberately wanted to destroy the education and teaching system in accordance with the aims and objectives that the colonizers wanted. Lately, this problem will be such a "ghost" that continues to undermine the education system in Indonesia. Whereas,

¹⁰ National Education Curriculum early to be designed in 1947, 1952, 1964, 1968, 1975, 1984, 1994, 2004, 2006, 2013, and up to present day character education implemented. Read Alhamuddin, "Sejarah Kurikulum di Indonesia: Studi Analisis Kebijakan Pengembangan Kurikulum", in *Journal Nur El-Islam*, Vol. 1, No. 2, (October 2014), 49. Read, Juniaris Agung Wicaksono, "Perkembangan Kurikulum Pendidikan di Indonesia dalam Perspektif Kebijakan Publik", *Ngabari: Journal Studi Islam dan Sosial*, Vol.11, No. 2, (2018), 48-49

¹¹ Anzar Abdullah, "Kurikulum Pendidikan di Indonesia Sepanjang Sejarah: Suatu Tinjauan Kritis filosofis", *Journal Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan*, No. 006, (Mei, 2007), 349

the colonial heritage education system should have been evaluated, because it is not in line with the orientation and educational goals that have been formulated.¹²

Based on the analysis of educational problems that have been described above, the fundamental problem lies in the implementation of the curriculum which seems as out of interpretation of the national education system which aims to increase faith, piety and noble character in the context of the intellectual life of the nation. The National Education System and Law (Sisdiknas) No. 12/2012 concerning to the Higher Education reaffirmed the purpose of forming good people based on faith, piety and noble character. Then it was confirmed and detailed again in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture regarding Graduate Competency Standards (Permendikbud No 20 of 2016).¹³

Reflecting on the reality of the curriculum and regulations in the field of education clearly emphasizes the urgency of faith, piety and noble character. This must be kept in mind, if the ideal formulation is applied, the conditions of education in Indonesia will not overlap as it is now. Ideally, the formulation of the constitution in the 1945 regarding education should be between Islam and Indonesianism and not create a dichotomy of Islamic education and the national education system. However, the national education system tends to be indifferent to the Islamic education system, as a result the nation's intelligence is hindered by regulations, curricula and the implementation of education that is wrong in its goals and objectives.

The Concept of Character Education

The Character education as being implemented by the government is placed as the main foundation for realizing the vision of national development, which is to create a society with noble character, morality, ethics, culture, and civility based on the Pancasila philosophy. This is also an effort to support the realization of the ideals as mandated in Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution.¹⁴

¹² Read Moch Tolchah' "Fislatat Pendidikan Islam: Konstruksi Tipologi dalam Pembangunan Kurikulum", in *Tsaqafah*, Vol. II, No. 2, (November 2015), 392-395

¹³ Adian Husaini, *Pendidikan Islam: Mewujudkan Generasi Gemilang Menuju Negara Adidaya 2045*, (Depok: Yayasan Pendidikan Islam At-Taqwa, Cet. IV 2020), VI-VII

¹⁴ Read introduction by Sunaryo Kartadinata in the book *Educating for Character: mendidik untuk Membentuk Karakter*, (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, fifth edition, 2016), VII

In the application of character education, the government emphasizes values and responsibilities. It is also stated that the purpose of character education is to develop the values that shape the nation's character namely Pancasila, including; *First*, to develop the potential of students to become good-hearted and well-behaved human beings. *Second*, to build a nation with the character of Pancasila. *Third*, to develop the potential of citizens to have self-confidence, be proud of their nation and country and love others. Making Pancasila as a guide for the formation of the nation's character will cause problems that are getting dilemma, it will create new conflict with religion. Pancasila should not be used as a national guideline, just lies it as the fundamental principle of the nation, because being good people or good man it domain belongs to the realm or domain of religion. If Pancasila is used as a character or moral guideline, there will be new guidelines that replace the position of religion.¹⁵ Those things create of worried in the world of education, namely reducing or even limiting the role of religion in the national education system. Everything will look *zalîm* or not putting something on the portion or in its position.

The application of character education seems to be compulsion in the national education curriculum. The government argues that character education is able to make students who are honest, disciplined, respectful, responsible, diligent and so on. On the other hand, if it examined further these values are small part of on concept of adab *ta'dîb*. In the further case, character education that applied in the Western country yet still pros and cons. In observing this problem, it must be understood correctly that some educational leaders in the West do not fully agree about the concept of character education being applied, although there are also figures that support the concept.

Several prominent education observers in America like Thomas Lickona as a bearer and successor of character education, he mentioned the positive impact of character education, such as restoring the value of responsibility, discipline, respect for students and so on. Lickona strengthens his argument by coming up with a definition of character, he said;

“Character is an appropriate for values education: character consist of operative values, values in action. Character so conceived has three interrelated parts: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior.

¹⁵ Adian Husaini, “Pendidikan Karakter Barbasis Adab”, in *Tsaqafah*, Vol. 9, No, 2, (November, 2013), 378-379.

Good character consists of knowing good, desiring good, and doing good.¹⁶

Perhaps, for Lickona this definition is enough to refute some of the skewed assumptions about character education. Lickona even said that a good character is one that includes three things, knowing goodness, loving kindness and doing good.

However, another way to this view was argued by James D. Hunter who assumes that the positive impact is only on the short-term level, while the formation of morals and sensitivity to the goodness of character education in the long-term does not show significant substance. However, Hunter mentioned the problems caused by character education, he stated;

“Especially when character education consists of an exhortation in platitudes (say through ‘virtue of the week’ program), pledges (such as abstinence contracts) and programs of reward and punishment, the new character education programs have almost no effect at all.”¹⁷

Hunter did not mention why the character education program had no impact on students at all? For him, he already suspected that education was just something that was unable to answer the challenges of education in American society. Hunter argues that character education is just a failed program that doesn’t work and doesn’t have a positive impact which is then considered a success by education activists.

If Hunter stated character education is a failed program that is considered a success, it is different to Fritjof Copra who concludes that the emerged of the problem of character education was the result of a moral crisis in modern society (Western). The problems such as rebellions, brawls, occur because of the experts in various fields of expertise, especially education are unable to solve problems that arisen. For instance, economists are unable to understand inflation. Educators are not able to overcome the problem of juvenile delinquency. The security forces are powerless to face the wave of violence due to the increasing number of criminals and so on.¹⁸

¹⁶ Thomas Lickona, *Educating for Character: How Our School Can Teach Respect and Responsibility*, (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), 23

¹⁷ James Davison Hunter, *The Death of Character: Moral Education in Age without Good or Evil*, (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 154

¹⁸ Fritjof Copra, *Titik Balik Peradaban; Sains, Masyarakat dan Kebangkitan Kebudayaan*. (Jakarta: Bentang pustaka, 2004), 8. Read Dinar Dewi Kania, “Pendidikan ala Karakter Barat”, in *ISLAMIA, Journal Pemikiran Islam* (Jakarta: Republika, Kamis 17 Januari 2013), 23

As for J. Elliot Ross, who thinks that religious education and secular education should both be learned from the experiences of their respective education systems. This is intended so that it can be synergized together in the future, rather than having to dispute like twenty-five years ago. It can be predicted that the meaning of the word “synergize” in the future for religious and secular education is to synergize or unite in welcoming the born of character education. From Ross opinion, it can be assumed that character education has a secular content that wants to create harmony with religious education.¹⁹ How can this be realized? Religious education that has sacred and spiritual values can be sharply angled with secular education that separates humans from the confines of religion.²⁰ Admittedly, in the West this assumption can be made, but it will be problematic if it is applied in a country where the majority of the adherents to religious teachings, such as Indonesia.

Therefore, this needs pay close attentions so that the government must be able to read history, concepts, and character education curriculum that are charged with secular understanding which is contrary to the goals of National Education and the mandate of the 1945 Constitution that is forming students to become intelligent, faithful and devoted human beings to God Almighty.

The Curriculum of Character Education

The character education curriculum implemented in Indonesia indirectly takes the values that are recognized as being able to bridge the process of modernizing curriculum. Michael Watz in his journal *An Analysis of Character Education* explained how character education curriculum should be applied in educational institutions. Considering the influence of character education in the United States has been implemented since in the 20th century, including coming from social education, the religious rights movement and some modern schools that feel of trauma and tragedy of the protracted war, based on those

¹⁹ J. Elliot Ross, “The Future of Character Education”, *Journal of Religious Education: The Official Journal of Religious Education Assosiation*, (28 July 2006), 479

²⁰ This conclusion is in line with the opinion of Malik Bennabi. In his view, religion has a significant role in shaping a civilization. If so, then the presence of religion “in education is certainly very much needed. Read more; Sujiat Zubaidi, et.al. “Relasi Agama, Ilmu dan Peradaban, Perspektif Malik Bennabi”, dalam *Tsaqafah*, Vol. 16, No. 2, (November, 2020), 307.

reasons they apply for character education that has been socialized in general to be applied to the curriculum at the higher level of educational institution.²¹

Watz cited Wilson's advice about what must be taught in the character education curriculum to students in the evaluation categories such as "fairness", "responsibility", "volunteer attitude" and "group harmony". Meanwhile, things that are emphasized to educators include the components of "respect" and "honesty". According to Wilson, the important points of the curriculum, especially the content of Social and other lessons, are very meaningful and targeted by being closely bridged in the personal lives and experiences of students. This should make the curriculum strong for the formation of culture throughout the school.²² In the view of Wilson, the value category intended in the character education curriculum for students is in the form of fairness, honesty, responsibility, volunteer attitude, filial piety and group harmony. Meanwhile, for the teacher category, there are two things, namely "respecting" and "honesty".

The implementation of the character education curriculum is also still considered problematic according to Bulach, character education from a different point of view, is not immediately acceptable by the students, but can only be taught in theory. This is based on the moral teaching of a character that is contrary to the realities of life in American society. On the one hand, students are taught moral theory education to become a person of character, but on the other part the behavior of society, which is in an environment that is contrary to the moral values learned in school.²³

This needs to be a noted of our educational system that not all educational curricula are adopted from outside (Western). Apart from different social values, cultural, religious values, the curriculum system from the West itself has not been fully implemented in their own country. Moreover, if it is imported to Indonesia which is thick with religious values and different cultural and social life. At a glance, the character education curriculum does teach the values

²¹ Michael Watz, "An Analysis of Character Education", in *Journal of Inquiry & Action in Education*, Vol. 4, No. 2, (2011). 47

²² H.E. Wilson, *Education for Citizenship: Report of the Regents' Inquiry*, (New York: Maple Press), 71, 218-219

²³ Cletus R. Bulach, "Implementation a Character Education Curriculum and Assessing its Impact on Student Behavior", in *Journal of Education Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, Vol. 76. No. 2, (England and Wales: December, 2002), 82

of responsibility, kindness, respect, discipline, and so on. But in essence, what kind of goodness or responsibility is meant in character education? The standard of goodness in the West is certainly different from the standard of goodness in Indonesia as a devout follower of Islamic teachings. In the West, a girl is considered an adult when she is no longer a virgin. Or the responsible child is the one who takes his parents to a nursing home when their parents getting old.²⁴ Of course, the value of this kindness is different and has no place in a Muslim-majority country such as Indonesia.

As it being discusses, the values that try to be carried out in character education such as compassion for others, helping others, honesty, responsibility and so on may exist in every religion. However, because of the different worldviews, both conceptually and in application, they cannot be equated. In the concept of *adab*, the value of compassion, helping others, being honest and in part should not conflict with religious teachings, especially in Islam.

The Concept of Adab

Adab/ta'dib is a concept of Islamic education which was initiated by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. This concept of education is oriented to produce comprehensively civilized individuals or human beings. Civilized human being according to the concept of *ta'dib* are humans who recognize and acknowledge Allah as their Lord. Civilized man according to al-Attas is a good person that is a person who is fully aware of his responsibility to God, understands and carries out justice for himself and others in society and always tries to become a human being who has good qualities in his life.²⁵

Today, the meaning of civilized man is still interpreted narrowly as being understood by most people. For example, the general view of humans who have etiquette are people who have polite manners, good attitude, etiquette, good behavior between others or between

²⁴ This is the result of the author's discussion at Universitas Darussalam (UNIDA) Gontor with a student from America named Daniel. He said that the reality of life in America, which is secular, is very different from the life of Indonesian people who are obedient to religious teachings. He was surprised by the family who was willing to take care of their elderly parents. It's different in America, Daniel said the elderly parents in America would be sent by their children to a nursing home and live alone, sometimes never to be visited by their children again, (Discussion at 15:30, 2018).

²⁵ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Aims and Objective of Islamic Education*, (Jeddah: King Abdul Aziz, 1979), 1

students and teachers, or parents and their children. This assumption is not totally wrong, however it is only understood from a narrow perspective and is the smallest part within the concept of *adab*.²⁶

As stated in the previous explanation, that the purpose of national education is to produce a generation of believers, devotion and noble character. But in reality, these goals and orientations seem complex to be realized, considering that in the modern era like nowadays, the curriculum and educational goals are more emphasized to achieve economic/material benefits. Such as goals will ultimately only lead to worldly interests. Educational institutions are only “scientific projects” which means to seek profits and interests that have unknowingly betrayed the mandate and objectives of the constitution in national education in Indonesia.²⁷

To the best of al-Attas opinion, he emphasizes that the purpose of Islamic education is to transfer good human beings. What its mean by good human? According to al-Attas, the concept of a good human in Islam is the “inculcation of *adab*” into human beings, *adab* referred here includes spiritual and material of life that fosters the nature of goodness that he seeks. Therefore, the most important thing contained in the concept of *adab* according to al-Attas is how to instill *ta’dib* to the students and restore the orientation and goals of education, especially in Islamic education which is undergoing a process of secularization.²⁸

In principle, the concept of *adab* has been carried out and practiced by Islamic scholars. The scholars realized that the inculcation of *adab* in a person requires a long process called *ta’dib*. Therefore, the process must be supported by the implementation of a curriculum that is in accordance with the objectives and orientation of education as has been mentioned previously.

The Application Concept of Adab in Curriculum

In order to support the formation of *adab*-based education of course supporting sets of equipment device is needed namely the curriculum. The curriculum occupies a central position in the world of

²⁶ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *The Educational Philosophy and Practice*...174

²⁷ See Asmal May, “Melacak Peranan Tujuan Pendidikan dalam Perspektif Islam”, in *Tsaqafah*, Vol. II, No. 2, (November 2015), 213-219

²⁸ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Islam dan Sekularisme*, (Bandung: Pemikiran Islam dan Pembangunan Insan [PIMPIN], cet. ke 2 Bahasa Indonesia, 2011), 186-187

education regardless of the form of education. Because this educational curriculum will describe how an educational process is applied in stages so that the orientation and goals of education can be achieved.

For the application concept of *adab* in the curriculum it must reflect on the 2013 curriculum system which is centralized to religion, this is a positive breakthrough in the context of improving the goals of national education, although the application of the curriculum was postponed by the Former Minister of Education and Culture Anis Baswedan through Ministerial Regulation No. 160/2014, 11 December 2014 due to being “too religious” by the secular groups.²⁹ Some of this secular groups argue that the role of religion in the educational curriculum should not be too dominant, because Indonesia is consist of multicultural country.

In respon to this problem, the government is expected to become a reference for education policies and should not decide policies just because of unilateral intervention or only because of the unrest of a few people. Because it is believed that the critics are people who do not understand the formulation of the goals of National Education, which in the standard of religious competence is used as a basic competency. If religion is used as a basic competency in the national education curriculum system, then it is ideal and cannot be disputed, so in principle the people whos criticizes religious policies in the 2013 curriculum are uncivilized people.

In relation to the application concept of *adab*, although it seems “difficult” to be implemented in the National Education curriculum system, but in reality Islamic educational institution such as Islamic boarding schools called *madrrasah* have actually implemented the value concept of *adab* system in the curriculum that was compiled. Concept of *adab* is become the center of the main curriculum and main activity without having to underestimate other activities. The centralization concept of *adab* that applied in Islamic boarding schools is not in a narrow sense such as manners, etiquette and so on. However, *adab* here is how students are taught to recognize and acknowledge the almighty of Allah as God. Recognize God here must be with knowledge; knowledge is then transferred into right actions. Therefore, in the concept of *adab* there must be knowledge ‘*ilm*’. So the correct meaning of *adab* if translated in English it will be ‘right action’ right means

²⁹ Read, Adian Husaini, “Kurikulum Pendidikan Pemerintah Lebih Pintar dari Tuhan?”, in *Journal Pemikiran Islam ISLAMIA*, (Jakarta: Republika 18 Desember 2014), 23

correct, and action means deeds *amal* and these can not be separated'.³⁰

The curriculum system based on concept of *adab*, knowledge (*'ilm*) is used as the basis in the process of cultivating education or *ta'dib*. The knowledge of God is preceded by other sciences. Furthermore, in the concept of *ta'dib* according to al-Attas the main thing is to introduce students to the classification of knowledge in two types of '*ilm fardhu 'ain* (religious science) and *fardhu kifâyah* (knowledge that is not obligatory to be studied). *Fardhu 'ain* knowledge includes how to study the *Qur'ân*, *ṣadîts* (*sunnah*), *syarî'ah*, *theology* (*kalâm*) substances, attributes, names of God, Islamic metaphysics, Islamic metaphysics (*al-tasawwuf*), and linguistics of Arab. While the *fardhu kifâyah* knowledge that are not obligatory to be studied by Muslims include; humanities, natural sciences, applied sciences, technological sciences, comparative religion, western culture, linguistics and Islamic history.³¹

With the classification of knowledge, makes it easier for students to identify the types of knowledge that are mandatory and those that are not required to be studied. Another uniqueness of the *adab* curriculum applied by Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia is that it does not create a dichotomy (contradictory) between religious and general sciences. On the other hand, integrating the National Education curriculum with the Islamic Boarding School curriculum which essentially does not have a dichotomy between religious and general sciences. On the contrary, in the National Education curriculum there is a difference or dichotomy between religious science and general science. General knowledge is taught as a priority, while religious knowledge is not taught seriously. This is of course very unfortunate because it is from religious values that noble character and piety can be realized.

One example of an Islamic boarding school *pesantren* that tries to implement a curriculum based on values of *adab* is "Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor". This boarding school which was established in 1926 is able to compete and develop forward in educating the Indonesian future generations and even its alumni are able to take part on the national and international position. The curriculum applied at

³⁰ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Prolegomena to The Mataphysics of Islam*, (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization [ISTAC] 1995), 16-17

³¹ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam*, (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization [ISTAC], 1999), 40-42. See Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Nauib Al-Attas*, Terj. Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi dkk. (Bandung: Mizan, 2003), 274-281.

the Gontor Islamic Boarding School is an integration of the *madrasah* and Islamic boarding school curriculum. The most notable thing about the curriculum is that there is no dichotomy between religion and general science. Therefore, if there is a question regarding the Gontor curriculum, the answer is that the Gontor curriculum is 100% religious and 100% general science (*al-ulûm al-kawuniyah*).³²

In line with previous discussions, Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi explained more deeply that the education curriculum in Gontor is a balancing between the religion-based curriculum and the social sciences which were simultaneously developed. So that from the balance of the curriculum, there is no Muslim who only understands religion, on the other hand he does not understand science, and vice versa does not only understand science and is blind to religious knowledge. However, both of them complement each other in an integral understanding of both religion and science.³³

Therefore, concept of *adab* whose values are applied in the Pesantren is an important consideration and should receive a positive response to the lethargy and moral degradation of students in the world of education. As for character education which is used as the National Education curriculum it can actually be an evaluation of learning in the context of welcoming Indonesia's golden generation 2045.

Conclusion

From some of the descriptions presented in this paper, several conclusions can be summary including; *First*, the concept of character education has a fundamental difference from the concept of *adab*. Character education is historically a matter of moral crisis in the West. While concept of *adab* was taken from the essence of Islamic education which is based on religion and science. *Second*, character education according to some education practitioners in the West seems as not maximally showing meaningful substance, especially in long-term education. The concept of *adab* whose values are applied in Islamic boarding schools still persists to this day in contemporary times. *Third*, character education implemented in Indonesia is still not

³² Read *Jejak Sejarah Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor*, (Ponorogo: Published by Committee for Commemorating 90 Years of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor 1926-2016), 21

³³ Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, "Imam Zarkasyi's Modernization of Pesantren in Indonesia: A Case Study of Darussalam Gontor", *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies [QIJIS]*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2020,) 180

in line with the orientation and goals of national education namely, creating a generation and society that is faithful, pious and has a noble character. Meanwhile, concept of *adab* is seen as in line with the goals of national education considering that Indonesia is a country with a Muslim majority. Thus, reflecting on some of the conclusions above, further research is needed on education issues in Indonesia, the results of which are able to bridge the improvement of the national curriculum system. And not out of the goals and orientation of education that has been agreed in the 1945 Constitution.[]

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