LEARNING FROM THE SUCCESS OF CHARACTER EDUCATION MODEL IN MUHAMMADIYAH SCHOOLS: CASE STUDY SMP MUHAMMADIYAH PK KOTTABARAT SURAKARTA AND SMP BIRUL WALIDAIN MUHAMMADIYAH SRAGEN

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Abstract-*The essence of education is the inculcation and reinforcement of good characters instead of merely generating professionals. Various efforts have been made to strengthen the character of the nation. A series of regulations have been issued to promote the strengthening of national character, including Permendikbud No. 23 of 2017 on School Days and Perpres No. 87 of 2018 on Strengthening Character Education, due to the concern of the infiltration of hedonism and pragmatism. Schools become the primary institution to promote character strengthening movements. Nevertheless, the character education program in schools is deemed to be less optimal due to the implementation of partial and fragmented approaches. The success of the two Muhammadiyah schools, namely SMP Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat Surakarta and SMP Birul Walidain Muhammadiyah Sragen, in carrying out character education with a holistic approach is examined and discussed as a reference for other schools.*

Keyword: *Internalisation, Character Education, Holistic Approach*

Abstrak-*Hakikat pendidikan adalah penanaman dan peneguhan nilai-nilai kebaikan, bukan sekedar untuk melahirkan seorang profesionalisme. Berbagai upaya dilakukan untuk memperkuat karakter anak bangsa. Rangkaian peraturan dikeluarkan untuk memperkuat kembali karakter bangsa yang terus terkikis oleh gelombang hedonisme dan budaya instan, seperti Permendikbud No. 23 tahun 2017 tentang Hari Sekolah dan Perpres No. 87 tahun 2018 tentang Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter. Sekolah menjadi area utama penerapan gerakan penguatan karakter. Masalahnya adalah, sejauh ini program penguatan karakter di sekolah mengalami kegagalan karena pendekatan parsial dan terkotak-kotak atau bersendiri. Pengalaman sukses (keberhasilan)*

*dua sekolah Muhammadiyah, yaitu SMP Muhammadiyah Program
Khusus Kottabarat Surakarta dan SMP Birul Walidain Muhammadaiyah
Sragen, dalam mempraktikkan pendidikan karaker melalui pendekatan
holistik layak menjadi sekolah rujukan dan sekolah lain perlu belajar
dari kedua sekolah tersebut*

Kata Kunci: *Internalisasi, Pendidikan Karakter, Pendekatan Holistik*

A. Introduction

On February 1ˢᵗ, 2018, a teacher at SMAN 1 Torjun, Madura was beaten to death by a student who was furious because of his rebuke. Tragically, it adds a long list of violations that unveil the collapse of the Indonesian character. On a macro level, such a collapse is demonstrated by the massive corruption in Indonesia, including in Malang city, East Java and North Sumatra province, where the executive and legislative branches conspire to corrupt the public money. Not to mention the e-*KTP* mega corruption that involves Senayan political heavyweights.

The series of misconduct should not be taken lightly or easily forgotten and forgiven. Solemn contemplation and coherent attempts to break the dilapidated chain of the character of the nation are required. Hypothetically, the collapse of the Indonesian character is allegedly caused by sub-optimal character education carried out at informal schools. Meanwhile, people have great expectation for schools to mainly generate professionals and apparently neglect the importance of character building. At this point, the vortex of the failure of character education begins.

At the policy level, the significance of character education is firmly established by Presidential Regulation (*Perpres*) No. 87 of 2017 on Strengthening Character Education. Yet there has been no systematic formula that explains how to derive or reduce the character values at the operational level. The absence of this operational formulation leads each educational unit to interpret it based on their respective interests. Moreover, the absence of particular school as role model to implement the model for strengthening character education is also a problem.

It has been a general understanding of the mainstream that character education is manifested into distinctive subjects of Religious Education and Citizenship Education. As a consequence, the teachers of these two subjects are labelled as the goalkeepers who responsible for the entire implementation of character education. Meanwhile, the teachers of other subjects are inclined to feel free from such a responsibility.

Briefly, character education seems to be fragmented in a tiny box called Religious Education and Citizenship Education.

The misunderstanding of character education is ubiquitous along with the idea of strengthening character education through the establishment of school as a socio-cultural environment model. The term 'cultural' certainly has an implication in which it ostensibly necessitates the teachers of Art and Culture Education as the people in charge in the strengthening of character education in schools.

The establishment of school as a socio-cultural environment model does not necessarily include new lesson of Art and Culture Education or organize more art performances at school. It is rather interpreted as strengthening the character values reflected in the establishment of the school's cultural environment as the embodiment of 18 character values in daily life. These character values are religious, trustworthy, tolerant, disciplined, hard-working, creative, independent, democratic, curious, responsible, nationalistic, patriotic, appreciative, communicative, peaceful, bibliophilic, environmentally friendly, and sociable.

Strengthening character education cannot be implemented partially, for instance by including character education to particular subjects. Nor will it be optimal if it is merely patched on specific subjects. The successful practice of character education obliges total reform through a holistic approach that involves all components of the school and the support from stakeholders[1]. Total reform might be uneasy for old-fashioned schools that practice conventional method—which might not support the determined character values. Meanwhile, schools that employ new models with vision, enthusiasm, and open-minded teachers are more flexible to carrying out total reform.

Persyarikatan Muhammadiyah has established thousands of schools throughout Indonesia[2], and Solo Raya (ex-Surakarta Residency) is one of the prolific areas for the growth of Muhammadiyah schools. In the present study, two junior secondary schools, namely SMP

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[1]Muchlas Samawi. 2013. *Konsep dan Model Pendidikan Karakter.* (Bandung: Rosda), p. 139.

[2]At the national level, Muhammadiyah has thousands of schools and hundreds of universities dispersed throughout the provinces, districts and cities in Indonesia. In detail, the 2015 data shows that there are 1,111 schools junior high schools, 567 senior high schools and 564 vocational high schools (Report of *Majelis Dikdasmen PPM* of 2010-2015, 2015, p. 198). Out of 2.252 schools above, 586 schools are managed by the Education Council of PWM Central Java. Based on the 2016 data, the schools include 291 junior high schools, 114 senior high schools, and 181 vocational high schools (*Daftar Lembaga Pendidikan* Muhammadiyah Jawa Tengah pada Tahun 2016).

Muhammadiyah Program Khusus Kottabarat Surakarta (SMP Muhammadiyah PK) and SMP Birul Walidain Muhammadiyah Sragen (SMP BW Muhammadiyah), are discussed. Both of them are novel schools in term of age, and are built from elementary school level. Despite of its novelty, they have attained successful National Examination and other achievements. Such achievements are the outcome of conducive learning process and school environment.

Based on the background, the problems of this study are "how is the school development process of SMP Muhammadiyah PK and SMP BW Muhammadiyah to become *reach school*s (*sekolah unggulan*)? what are outstanding character values (school culture) promoted within the school environment?" Moreover, this study aims at describing the school development process of two Muhammadiyah secondary schools in gaining the capacity as *reach school*s, and describing the inculcation of character education by using holistic approach as reflected in respective school management and school culture.

B. Theoretical Framework

The pre-eminence of a school can be observed from the public interest in sending their children to school. Many parents expect their children to study at *reach school*s hence the candidates usually exceed capacity. It is different from common schools which are less popular. Based on this assumption, many schools formulate and offer various programs to attract the public interest. In general, the programs are linked to two aspects, namely a good, transparent, and democratic school governance and a school culture, which encourage school citizens, particularly students, to move forward and build themselves optimally both academic, religious, and moral/character.

Unlike the government that assesses the superiority of schools from the eight national standards with accreditation of A, the public have a propensity to prefer different methods. For many parents, *reach school*s are those having complete learning facilities, qualified teachers, many registrants, and achievements[3]. Briefly, parents are inclined to emphasize noticeable aspect of a school, including building, number of registrants, achievements, number of graduates who enter favourite higher educational levels or professional world.

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[3]Nanang Martono. 2017. *Sekolah publik vs sekolah privat dalam wacana kekuasaan, demokrasi, dan liberalisasi pendidikan.* Jakarta: YOI, p. 100.

Such perspective is reasonable since parents have no direct experience with the teaching and learning activities and school culture.

Meanwhile, students recognize the superiority of a school from its cultural building in which favourite schools are those having a fine culture, i.e., discipline and democratic interaction between teachers and students[4]. It unveils the fact that students' perspective is derived from the process of social interaction directly experienced by them. In general, students emphasize more on the procedural aspects while parents on the outcome or product.

Unlike the perspectives of both parents and students, teachers also have different outlook in recognizing *reach school*s. When parents underline the product while students on the process and cultural values, teachers focus more on the quality of the learning process. Teachers notice *reach school*s from the aspects of the learning process. The quality of the learning process is the key to understanding the quality of a school[5].

Based on the school cultural system promoted within a school, Alma Harris suggests the distinguished characteristics of *reach school*s as reflected through school improvement. Harris explicates school improvement as the focus in maintaining well-established school culture and effective daily task governance according to respective duties. In other words, they carry out improvement selectively by sorting out new, external elements based on their usefulness and encouraging educators to work cooperatively and creatively. It aims at balancing between the continuation of school culture and improvement or innovation[6]. *Reach school*s have the capacity to maintain a harmony between the noble culture in the school environment and the selective and continued development.

Efforts to become a *reach school* involve the implementation of school functions with particular supportive attributes. Mohamad Ali proposes several characteristics attached in *reach school*s, namely: (1) achievement-oriented, (2) resilient school leadership, (3) conducive school environment, (4) consensus or cohesiveness-based, (5) learning

[4]Nanang Martono. 2017. *Sekolah publik…...* p. 92.

[5]Nanang Martono. 2017. *Sekolah publik…...* p. 78

[6]Alma Haris, *School Improvement, What's in it schools?* (London & New York, RoutledgeFalmer, 2003), p. 18; Mohamad Ali, *Menyemai Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional Refleksi Modal Sosial dan Modal Budaya*, (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, 2012). p. 123-124.

or curriculum-oriented, (6) evaluation-based, and (7) involvement with the community[7].

Recently, *reach school* is linked to full day school, especially after the issuance of the Regulation of the Ministry of Education and Culture No. 23 of 2017 concerning School Day. Such school starts from morning to afternoon, from 6:45 am to 03:30 pm. This long duration is expected to facilitate students with extensive knowledge and good characters. It will indirectly affect the characters of students.[8]

Full day school is aspired to have impact on students' attitude and behaviour since good characters will be inculcated during activities in school. Students are obliged and accustomed to carry out the learning process, including worship activities, without any further instruction. As a result of solid activities from morning to afternoon, good characters are relatively simply developed in students as stated by Muhadjir Effendy:

"Full day school promotes character education. It is an option to add school hours for carrying out diverse activities. Full day school is an alternative to improve our low education system."[9]

Full day school employs assorted learning innovations instead of merely conventional method in order to create attractive activities for students. Therefore, the system of full day school implemented in school must be adjusted with the school culture to encourage students' willingness. In Islamic-based schools, full day school is seemingly effective to strengthen children's character. It is noticeable from the cultivation of religious characters that can be controlled continuously.[10]

The attributes of *reach school*s demonstrate the continued process of improvement and development carried out in such schools.   It   is

[7]Mohamad Ali, *Reinvensi Pendidikan Muhammadiyah,* Jakarta: Al-Wasath, 2010), p. 36; Per Dalin, *School Development Theories and Strategies*. (London & New York: Continuum), p. 94-98.

[8]See Lis Yulianti Syafrida Siregar, "Full Day School Sebagai Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter (Perspektif Psikologi Pendidikan Islam", *Fikrotuna*: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Manajemen Islam. Volume. 05, No. 02 Juli 2017.

[9]See http://m.detik.com/news/berita/3278860/mendikbud-full-day-school-dongkrak-pendi-dikan-kita-yang-masih-rendah.

[10]Mohamad Ali, "Pendidikan Karakter", in Harian *Solopos,* 5 April 2017.

aimed to produce competent and competitive graduates.[11] To attain this aim, there are several stages that should be done by the school.

Michael Fullan suggests four developmental stages for a school to become a *reach school*.[12] The first stage is initiation, which is the initiative to make a change. The second stage is implementation to realize the idea.[13] The third stage is continuity, which is done by maintaining the stability of school culture and environment. The fourth is the evaluation to assess the products or outcomes.[14] A school can be labelled as a *reach school* after the completion of the developmental stage from initiation to evaluation stage. Nevertheless, it is necessary to conduct interactive evaluation for each stage instead of performing it partially.

Reach school is able to instil good characters in students through the process of productive social interaction in school. Lexically, character means feature or trait, psychological quality, moral or ethical quality that distinguishes one person from another. Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia codifies 18 (eighteen) characters that should be instilled in students, namely: religious, trustworthy,

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[11]To produce qualified graduates, schools practice specific school culture, which is by increasing empowerment and professionalism in all school elements. There are four stages that can be carried out continuously to build a *reach school*. The first stage is the expected outcome/product//quality. The second stage is by designing the learning process. The third stage, an effective and efficient learning process. And the fourth stage is to produce qualified and competitive graduates. The four stages are interrelated somehow. (Sjafri Sairin, et al, *Membangun Profesionalisme Muhammadiyah*, Yogyakarta: LPTP Muhammadiyah, 2003), p. 80-81.

[12]Michael G. Fullan, *The New Meaning of Educational Change.* (London: Cassell, 1993), p. 47-90

[13]Mohamad Ali suggests renewal or reform is based on the development of ideas that are implemented in real field, thus impacting on the improvement of the education quality and the quality of schools at the same time. There are three patterns of micro approaches that can be real illustration of educational innovation, namely dissemination, adoption of school development practically and empirically. (See Mohamad Ali, "Menularkan Virus Keunggulan: Mempertimbangkan Pendekatan Diseminasi-Adopsi dalam Pengembangan Sekolah Muhammadiyah" in Jurnal *Tajdida*, Vol. 8, No. 1, June, 2010).

[14]Mohamad Ali, *Reinvensi pendidikan…..*, p. 37-39.

tolerant, disciplined, hard-working, creative, independent, democratic, curious, nationalist, patriotic, appreciative, responsible, communicative, peaceful, bibliophilic, environmentally friendly, and sociable.

Character education must be understood as the process of inculcating character values through a dialogical and interactive method by realizing the self-development of students in the social settings of their lives. This model of character education is deemed to be suitable at this time since it opens up greater opportunities in ensuring the achievement of character education.

Psychologically, the active involvement of students in interpreting characters will facilitate them to have more meaningful process in building their life orientation. In fact, characters are qualities that distinguish one person from another. Based on this understanding, the opportunity for each student to explore the same character values differently is greater.

Moreover, by using a holistic approach, character education is neither included in narrow boxes of particular subjects nor the responsibility of particular subject teachers. There is a new perspective that all subjects and teachers have to explicitly include character values in the processes of planning, implementation, and evaluation. Furthermore, the school culture and environment is a big umbrella in the character internationalization process for students.

The simplest way to initiate strengthening character education in the learning process is to provide time and space for student to share and reflect on the material they have just received at the end of each class. Such reflection is effective for students to grasp and interpret the material so that each subject will be water that refreshes the body and opens new minds.

C.   Research Methods

Research is a scientific method carried out systematically based on valid data and logical thinking framework. In accordance with the problems, this study is a qualitative one. The mechanism of qualitative study is based on subjective assessment, which is oriented to the quality of the collected data instead of on numbers.[15] Furthermore, this study is a field research in which the observation of the object is done along with in-depth interview with the resource persons and the validity of the

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[15]Ibrahim, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif Panduan Penelitian Beserta Contoh Proposal Kualitatif*, (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2015), p. 53.

collected data.[16]

Furthermore, a historical approach is also used to support a complete and coherent construction since there are interrelations between elements that form a unity. Periodization is one of the processes of time structuring with the division of several eras, epochs, or periods based on certain criteria. It entails typical characteristics of a specific period.[17]

Periodization in the context of history of school is categorized in several periods in accordance with several criteria. It will unveil several phases of development in each period. Therefore, a historical approach is required to fabricate historical awareness among policy makers, theorists and practitioners of Islamic education thus they will be able to proportionally position the traditions or earlier period of Islamic education within the present education and also future projections.[18]

In the present study, historical approach is very substantial, particularly to determine the history of the object of research. Additionally, this study discusses the processes and events that have been conducted in association with the dynamics of the education system undergone by the object.

The subject is determined to find the required information through the eligible resource persons. Research subjects are the primary source in obtaining data, namely individual who has information about matters relating to the study. The subjects of this study were school principals, school pioneers, vice-principal of curriculum department and teachers, who experience or know the dynamics of the school. Early school pioneers, principals and teachers were the primary subjects, while students are the secondary subjects who were required to respond the dynamics of the school.

To obtain the data, three techniques were employed, namely observation, in-depth interview and documentation. Observation was done through meticulous examination on a phenomenon to be observed, recorded, and systematized. It included the surveillance on social interaction among teachers, between teachers and students, and among students, as well as the learning process inside and outside the class.

[16]Nusa Putera, *Penelitian Kualitatif Proses dan Aplikasi*, (Jakarta: Indeks, 2011), p. 43-45.

[17]

[18]Mohammad Ali dan Zaenal Abidin, *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam Bernuansa Keindonesiaan*, (Surakarta: Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, 2017), p. 139.

Interview technique is direct questions and answers that involve two people or more in which they face to face physically, one can see and listen to another directly. Interview was done interactively and the answers were noted or recorded. It was conducted to explore the process of school development and school culture promoted by school leaders, teachers and students.

Documentation is a method of collecting data qualitatively by examining or analyzing documents related to study problems. This method was used to collect documents related to the dynamics of the education system as supporting data. They included teacher data, student data, infrastructure data, extracurricular activities and student achievements.

Data analysis is an activity of processing data that have been collected to be clarified, categorized, and prepared in order to generate research results. Analysis is a mid-stage of a series of research stage which function is to get a valid and reliable data.[19] Interactive data analysis was employed in the present study. It consisted of three stages, namely, data reduction, data display, and conclusion.[20]

The *first* stage is the data reduction, which is the stage of identifying units as the smallest parts of the collected data—which have meaning when associated with research problems. In this stage, initial study is done towards the collected data by testing the data. Moreover, researchers also seek for information linked to the aspects of the research to be studied.

The *second* stage is the data display, which is the activity of organizing, summarizing and linking information. The process is intended to organize and arrange the data that have been reduced previously in patterns related to the focus of the research, particularly to make it comprehensible. This process is carried out in the form of narrative descriptions, graphs, relationships between categories, flowcharts, etc.

The *third* stage is conclusion, which is the activity of drawing conclusion based on the processed data and accompanied by the data suitability. The initial conclusion is temporary hence it is possible to make revision if strong evidence is found to support the next stage of data collection.

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[19]Haris Herdiansyah, 2012 *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif untuk Ilmu-ilmu Sosial.* (Jakarta: Salemba Humanika)*,* p. 158.

[20]Ibrahim, *Metodologi,* p. 108.

D. Discussion

1. Process and Stages toward a *Reach school*

The processes of establishment and the stages of school development of SMP BW Muhammadiyah Sragen and SMP Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat are similar, yet there are some differences. Both of them are under *Persyarikatan* Muhammadiyah, but located in different areas. The points of similarity are identified from the origins and developmental stages in which the order of similarities in on the governance and school culture.

SMP Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat established in 2010 was built and funded by SD BW Muhammadiyah Kottabarat, while SMP BW Muhammadiyah Sragen established in 2013 was built and funded by SD BW Muhammadiyah Sragen. Both of those schools were born from the aspirations and the public demand due to the popularity and quality of Muhammadiyah elementary schools. Moreover, some parents are reluctant to send their children to state junior high schools due to the concern that the characters instilled during their former schools might be deteriorated in new schools. The deterioration possibly endured by students of state junior high school became a serious issue hence many parents finally discussed their aspirations to establish a junior high school that would continually maintain and develop the governance and school culture of Muhammadiyah school.

SD Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat and SD BW Muhammadiyah Sragen have a high quality in terms of academic, religiosity and character education. Academically, SD Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat is an outstanding school that ranked first for seven times in a row in the National Examination in Surakarta. Similarly, SD BW Muhammadiyah Sragen is included in the top rank of the National Examination in Sragen regency.

The achievements attained by SD Muhammadiyah PK and SD BW Muhammadiyah Sragen become a valuable asset in pioneering SMP Muhammadiyah. It boosts the confidence, strong passion and hard-working ethos of SMP Muhammadiyah to become a *reach school*. Since the beginning of their establishment, both SMP Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat and SMP BW Muhammadiyah Sragen have implemented specific system in an effort to achieve their goals. As new schools, they strive to compete with both private and state schools in Surakarta city and Sragen regency.

Regard to school governance, both schools carry out democratic and transparent system. They encourage and emphasize the participation

of teachers in policy making and in the implementation of teaching and learning activities. Teachers understand that education system must be dynamic and flexible according to the environment. Therefore, despite the planned education system, the implementation should be adjusted in accordance with the changing demands of the times and the child development.

Briefly, the establishment of SMP Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat and SMP BW Muhammadiyah Sragen is essentially triggered by the aspiration of the community and rooted from the existence of Muhammadiyah elementary school. Furthermore, the school developmental stages will be discussed based on the concept developed by Michael G. Fullan, a school development expert from Ontario University, Canada. He proposed the stages of school development into four steps, namely initiative, pioneering, development, and evaluation or institutionalization. Since the objects of the present study are new schools, only three out of four stages are discussed, namely the initiative, pioneering and development stages. These stages are used as the conceptual framework in explicating the process and stages of school development.

The initiative stage occurs when SD Muhammadiyah PK and SD BW Muhammadiyah graduated their students who mostly continued their study at state junior high schools. Dissatisfaction emerged mainly due to the fact that students who had been habituated with religious and moral characters in their former schools started to lose these characters in their new junior high school. Parents were inclined to worry about this issue and they finally proposed the discourse about the establishment of Muhammadiyah junior high school, particularly to maintain the school culture of Muhammadiyah elementary school.

The discourse continued to revolve among parents, and it was noticed by both school board and Muhammadiyah leadership that ultimately designated to develop the existing Muhammadiyah elementary school by pioneering Muhammadiyah secondary school. Crystallization of the notions from parents, school and Muhammadiyah leadership led to the necessity to immediately pioneering Muhammadiyah junior high school. The initiative stage shifted to the pioneering stage with the establishment of SMP Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat in 2010 and SMP BW Muhammadiyah Sragen in 2013.

The pioneering stage began at the early establishment of the school. In its early development, SMP BW Muhammadiyah Sragen had adequate land but limited classrooms. As a solution, gazebo was built

as a place for learning activities. The construction was aimed to prevent any dullness and foster the enthusiasm in students to exploring their curiosity about everything learned.

In addition to the construction of the gazebo, the school attempted to improve the management of the classrooms for their optimal function. To improve the learning activities and avert tediousness, the classrooms are equipped with AC and LCD projector. Such facility is in accordance with the vision of the modern schools in which they are required to provide facilities that support learning activities.

During the early development of SMP Muhammadiyah PK circa 2010, the absence of land required all learning activities were conducted in the classroom of SD Muhammadiyah PK on Muwardi 24 street, Surakarta. Likewise, the school principal and teachers were in charge of carrying out all learning and management activities of both the elementary and junior high schools. The school operation was also relied upon the financial support from the elementary school management. The pioneering process was completed in three years. In 2014, the school started to have its own land, school principal and teachers. Most of the teachers had experiences at SD Muhammadiyah PK thus they there were no serious obstacles in developing the new school governance and culture.

The development phase begins when the school has gained its reputation among the communities and the financial capacity to develop its institution independently. It has been endured by both SMP Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat and SMP BW Muhammadiyah. Learning activity becomes the focus of these schools because it is directly experienced by students. Additional supports are improved especially those related to the learning resources. It includes the library facilities and supporting books as well as reading room equipped with AC to enhance the convenience of the users. Moreover, Wi-Fi is available in many school areas to facilitate students in accessing learning resources.

Currently, both schools are able to meet the demands of students who are interested in studying in these schools. In their early development, they only accepted a limited number of students but the number is enhanced in the last three years with the provision of additional classrooms for new students. It is addressed towards improvement as an effort for school development.

Basically, new school needs new teachers because the number of students will continuously increase. Open recruitment becomes a method to select teachers, in which it was carried out in 2017 to

fulfil the need of school teachers. Teacher candidates must meet the qualifications, including the competency to utilize and optimize IT. It is done to comply with the application of IT systems in every learning activity.

Furthermore, teachers who are initially not required to master the IT are currently obliged to perform it in order to keep up with the development. To facilitate these teachers, special training is held hence they can carry out their duties and functions properly and optimally. By optimizing the duties and functions of teachers, an disproportion between the duties and salary received by them is unavoidable due to the financial condition of the school.

Essentially, the salary of teacher has not been optimal. Despite the school has no difficulties in obtaining human resources, yet it has not been able to provide salaries in accordance with regional minimum wages/UMR to all teachers. Nevertheless, several teachers have received salaries according to the UMR because they are engaged in the beginning of the school up to now. Meanwhile, new teachers relatively do not earn as much as senior teachers. Thus, the salary is adjusted to the period of being a teacher in the school.

The salary that has not been equalized affects the performance of the teachers at work. Those who have received an appropriate salary have a propensity to carry out their duties optimally, on the contrary, those who receive inappropriate salary will be less optimal. It certainly has an impact on the quality of education. It also shows that not all teachers at SMP BW Muhammadiyah and SMP Muhammadiyah PK have a commitment that is oriented towards learning achievement.

Regarding with the problem faced by the teachers, the schools have attempted to provide teacher welfare including increasing their earnings. It is made particularly due to the long duration of school hours, which is from 7:00 am to 3:30 pm in SMP BW and 6:30 am to 3:30 pm for SMP PK. Consequently, teachers have no time to develop a business hence the schools struggle to provide an appropriate salary with maximized time in school.

As an independent or self-reliance school, the schools have successfully constructed buildings for all school activities. Despite of several limitations, schools could be built with various efforts, equipped with infrastructure that might be less optimal. Until in the middle of the implementation, the schools experienced a lack of buildings for learning activities.

The lack of buildings that is caused by the increasing number

of students affects the condition of buildings owned by the schools. Initially, the problem was about the number of students who registered, but in its development, the problem shifts into the inadequate buildings for learning activities. In fact, the addition of classrooms will be able to accommodate more students with a capacity of four classes, yet due to the shortage, the school is only able to accept students for three classes.

The increase in the number of students occurs every year, which is triggered by the quality of education of the schools. This point attracts the public interest in schools. Nevertheless, the implementation of a high-quality education system is not accompanied by adequate classrooms hence the main issue of these schools relies on the incapacity to accommodate the prospective students. Subsequently, the schools attempt to increase the capacity of school buildings with various efforts. The developmental stages of SMP BW Muhammadiyah and SMP Muhammadiyah PK are presented in Table 1 and 2, respectively.

Table 1. The developmental stages of SMP BW Muhammadiyah Sragen

No	Initiative stage (2010-2013)	Pioneering stage (2013-2015)	Developmental stage (2015-2018)	Educational standard
1.	The discourse and convergence of the idea of the establishment of SMP BW Muhammadiyah.	- Limited or the lack of the number of classrooms. - The capacity of students in two classes.	- The addition of classrooms. - The capacity of students in more than two classes.	- Buildings .
2.		- *KTSP*-based curriculum.	- The implementation of the 2013 curriculum. - Innovation by conducting comparison study.	- Curriculum.
3.		- Learning activities at classroom. - The absence of LCD and projector.	- Innovation for activities outside classroom. - The employment of IT system.	- Learning activities.
4.		The absence of AC and Wi-Fi in classroom.	Facility of AC and Wi-Fi to support the convenience of learning activities.	Learning facilities.
5.		The graduates of SD Birrul Walidain Sragen.	The graduates of SD BW and also other state and private elementary schools.	Students.
6.		- The absence of IT in learning activities. - Indecisive policy. - Honorary salary.	- The qualification of mastering IT. - The memorization of at least 30 juz' of the Qur'an. - Salary based on UMR for senior teachers.	Teachers.
7.		- Financial support primarily from SD Birrul Walidain Sragen.	- Self-reliance finance. - *Infaq* or contribution from parent/ guardian.	- Finance.

Source: Data processing.

Table 2. The developmental stages of SMP Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat

No	Initiative stage (2008-2010)	Pioneering stage (2010-2014)	Developmental stage (2014-2018)	Educational standard
1.	The discourse and crystallization of the idea of the establishment of SMP Muhammadiyah PK	- Learning activities were conducted at SD Muhammadiyah PK.	- Procurement of land and building of SMP Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat.	- Building.
2.		- *KTSP*-based curriculum.	- The implementation of the 2013 curriculum. Enrichment through innovation of comparison study.	- Curriculum.
3.		- Learning activities at classroom. - The absence of LCD and projector.	- Innovation for activities outside classroom. - The employment of IT system.	- Learning activities.
4.		The absence of Wi-Fi in classroom.	Wi-Fi to support learning activities.	Facility.
5.		- The capacity of students in one class.	-The capacity of students in two classes.	Students.
6.		- The teachers taught both SD and SMP Muhammadiyah PK - The absence of IT-competency qualification. - The requirement of 30 juz' memorization had not been determined.	- Distinctive teachers. - The mastery of IT - The memorization of at least 30 juz' of the Qur'an.	Teachers.
7.		- The finance was provided by SD Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat.	- Self-reliance financing.	- Finance.

Source: Data processing.

2. Character Building with Holistic Approach

The process and stages of school development consisting of the initiative, pioneering and development stages have been explicated in previous section. Briefly, it can be observed that SMP BW Muhammadiyah and SMP Muhammadiyah PK were born through effortful process with the main capital is resolute aspiration and persistence in achieving goals toward a progress. Further issues, including materials, are determined

in the next stages according to the school development and public trust. Such orderly processes have a major influence on the development of the governance and culture of the school.

The school governance of both SMP BW Muhammadiyah Sragen and SMP Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat is carried out effectively, transparently and democratically. They have made endeavours to organize the schools appropriately. It is led by the school principal who is able to produce optimal implementation of school governance. The principal is able to provide solution for every problem experienced by the school, including the alternative to address the financial problems for school development.

The active engagement of school principal in solving the problems is not only restricted to general issues but also extraordinary ones, i.e., solution for handling children with problems and optimization of students' potential. In addressing the problems encountered by the students, the school does not necessarily succumb them the counselling teachers but sharing the responsibility to other teachers, homeroom teacher and the principal, instead. It is aimed to create a collective responsibility and promote cooperation in school governance.

In the context of learning activities, a method shifting has been performed with the aim of achieving expected learning outcomes, including students with academic competence. It is related to the instructional approaches used by the school. Currently, the IT-based method is applied for learning activities. Formerly, the IT-based learning could not be implemented due to limited human resources. In an effort to augment its competitiveness, the school uses the IT system by requiring all students to have their personal laptop in class. It is decided as the fulfilment for students' needs for optimization in learning.

The full day school system developed by SMP BW Muhammadiyah Sragen and SMP Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat promotes the strengthening of student character since the process of social interaction in schools is conducive to building good characters and habits. The implementation of this system is mainly intended to provide and inculcate character education to children. In such a system, there are planning, implementation and evaluation activities.

Despite the novelty of these two schools, a well-established learning process has been conducted. Amid several limitations, they are able to create programs to be carried out in the future. Full day school system is selected by considering several aspects. Among them is the disinclination of students to go to Islamic boarding school, while

their parents expect them to have sufficient religious education. Hence, full day school system becomes a solution to the implementation of education by balancing between general and religious knowledge.

The integration of general knowledge and Islamic values carried out by full day school is aspired to offer a distinguished nuance from other schools. Other favourite schools may have provide general knowledge, hence the implementation of full day school must require new program that is directed towards the inculcation of character in students and educators both in terms of academic and non-academic.

At the implementation stage, full day school starts from 6:30 am to 3:30 pm, in which the time is optimized to conduct learning activities and character education. The learning activities require students to use their laptops and use diverse learning resources in the school environment. IT-based learning is used for promoting the mastery of technology by students

In addition to IT-based learning, learning activities are carried out with a concept of fun learning. It is intended to prevent boredom and dullness so as they are attracted to have active participation in learning. Generally, fun learning is done outside the classroom. For instance, in *tahfidz* class, students are summoned to memorize the Qur'an outside the classroom and at the school park. With this method, students will be encouraged in memorizing.

The inculcation of Islamic values in students is supported by religious activities within the teaching and learning process. On a daily basis, an activity of the Qur'an reading is done to improve students' recitation. In addition, there are *Duha* prayer and obligatory prayers in congregation. Through these activities, the student affairs department is able to conduct continuous monitoring on students.

At the evaluation stage, the school involves parents or guardian to make an evaluation. The involvement of parents in this stage is a consequence of the full day school program that also involves parents in its implementation. Parents or guardian have a role in monitoring the activities of students outside the school, hence the improvement and development of the program necessitates the participation of all parties in the program.

Evaluation is carried out in the first week of the month. It is done once a month to discuss the shortcomings of the program implementation, particularly to seek for solutions and measures in determining the program development. The full day school system at SMP BW Muhammadiyah Sragen is mainly intended to produce

a generation with excellencies, both academic and non-academic. In accordance with the mission of the school is the provision of competitive and professional education. It is expected that the students will possess characters that support them to be professionally competitive persons.

Furthermore, SMP BW Muhammadiyah and SMP Muhammadiyah PK become role models due to their achievements and well-established, conducive school culture. Their school management and school culture have been adopted by other schools. The orientation towards school achievement becomes a major concern. Nevertheless, it is not solely about student achievement but also the achievements of becoming a *reach school*.

The slogan of SMP BW Muhammadiyah Sragen is "Modern-Islamic-High Achievement (*Modern-Islami-Berprestasi*)." It implies the orientation of the school is emphasized toward the achievements of the school far ahead. Meanwhile, the slogan of SMP Muhammadiyah PK is "full day school and transformative learning." This slogan constructs the establishment of the school culture. Since the beginning the school, it has attempted to build a conducive environment both in the implementation of academic and non-academic learning activities. The students are encouraged and accustomed to seeking for learning resources from various sources, which is supported by existing facilities as optimized by the school in such a way. Learning activity in the class is done with IT-based method by utilizing laptop.

To prevent any tediousness among students, a variety of instructional methods are also employed by the teachers. Various activities are done on the terrace, under the trees, gazebo, and in the library. The methods are devised based on modern concept initiated by the school. In addition to IT-based learning, the schools provide infrastructure to support the system. Moreover, extensive school learning is also instigated in the form of "live in society" for the students of 7th grade and "international experience" for students of 8th grade.

Conducive school environment is crucial in the implementation of learning to support the orientation towards the school achievements. Both SMP BW Muhammadiyah and SMP Muhammadiyah PK have attained success in assorted academic and non-academic fields. These achievements become the school slogan, which is to become a *reach school*.

The achievements are not merely in the academic field but also in the non-academic fields. Students have various achievements

in extracurricular activities, including robotics where the students have participated in various competitions both at the national and international levels. Particularly at the national level, the students have won several competitions while at the international level, they had ever the opportunity to rank first. The achievement in the robotics becomes the hallmark of the school.

In addition to excellence in robotics, the students of SMP BW Muhammadiyah Sragen and SMP Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat obtain several championships in writing contest, including short story and poetry at the district level. They become the winners of several speech competitions at the district level. It demonstrates that extracurricular activities at school are not useless since they are capable to develop student's potential.

Islamic culture is attached firmly in SMP BW Muhammadiyah and SMP Muhammadiyah PK. Every day, the school begins with a prayer and the Qur'an recitation. Subsequently, the students perform Dhuhr prayer and Asr prayer in congregation. Worship activity is carried out on a regular basis with the aim of fostering the Islamic teachings and training leadership in students. Moreover, each student has individual activity check sheet to monitor their attendance in worship activities.

E. Conclusion

A study has been carried out in which two main conclusions can be drawn, *first* about the school developmental stages to become a *reach school* as undergone by SMP BW Muhammadiyah Sragen and SMP Muhammadiyah PK Kottabarat and *second*, the developmental process of character education with a holistic approach as performed by these two schools.

The school development process undergone by SMP Muhammadiyah PK and SMP BW Muhammadiyah is fairly complicated. Generally, it can be divided into three stages: initiative, pioneering/ implementation, and development/institutionalization. At the initiative stage, it is revealed that the idea initially comes from the parents whose children study at SD Muhammadiyah PK and SD BW Muhammadiyah. They recognize the capacity of these schools in carrying out learning activities and character education, hence they are eager to send their children to higher educational level within the same institution. Finally, the new Muhammadiyah junior high schools are established. At the pioneering stage, these schools have to carry out learning activities with

limitations, yet they are capable to survive and thrive. The development or institutionalization stage is demonstrated by various facilities and the provision of qualified teachers.

SMP Muhammadiyah PK and SMP BW Muhammadiyah are the continuation of the elementary schools thus the school governance and school culture have been well-established in accordance with the former level. It becomes a very valuable capital since they are able to display democratic and transparent school governance which in turn influences the establishment of a decent school culture. Ultimately, it creates conducive school environment to carry out academic, spiritual, and character education. Conducive school environment is reinforced by constructive and fun instructional approaches,, both inside and outside the classroom.

Essentially, holistic approach in character building is very effective, particularly to generate graduates with intelligent, religious, and strong characters. In summary, character building in children is relatively easier if the school is able to provide conducive environment for strengthening good characters in students as supported by teachers as role model and the school culture.

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