The Challenges of Principals In Building Student's Character

Ahmad Lani[1*], Hezzrin Mohd Pauzi[2]

[1]Educational Management, UniSZA, Terengganu, Malaysia.
[2] FSSG, UniSZA, Terengganu, Malaysia.

Abstract: This study aims to identify the challenges faced by school principals in building student character and its solutions. This study applied a qualitative research method. The informants in this study were selected using a purposive sampling method based on research needs. There were 11 informants consisting of 2 school principals and 9 teachers. Interview was a data collection technique used in this study. To analyze the data, the researcher administrated the Atlas.ti software which tended to thematic analysis models. The results of the study illustrate that the school principal faced two types of challenges in shaping student character, namely in the form of internal and external issues. Internally, school principal encountered problem related to the school management related in term of the limited educational staff such as teachers and staff, insufficient budget and finances, and learning distances. Meanwhile, the external issue is associated with the violations of school rules and regulations that have to do with students and the parent. In this case, students did not actively engage in the school activities, both inside and outside the classroom. On the other hand, the parent was less concerned about their children's future education. To solve these problems, there is an effective solution. Regarding internal issues, the school principal recommended to strengthen school management with a number of ways, including scheduling teachers in teaching, optimizing budgeting and financing, and facilitating students who need an assistance. Meanwhile, to resolve external issues, the school principal suggest to take some actions against both students and parents. In dealing with the students, the school principal requires to conduct counseling guidance, student teaching student (STS), and smart parenting. Meanwhile, to the parents, the school principal proposes to organize an inspiring talk and smart parenting.

Keywords: School Principal; Parent; Student; Character Building; Challenge; Solution

Introduction

Building students' character is a vital necessity that should be prioritized by every nation. According to Uyuni et al. (2021), promoting students' character is the endeavor to shape them to be unmitigated human beings with the good character and behavior in terms of heart, body, mind, taste, and intention. President of Indonesia, Joko Widodo has declared that reinforcement of the students' character education is essential issue to focus on for building and equipping the students as gold generation in 2045. Discipline, tolerance, honesty, curiosity, responsibility, and others are various character values that would be constructed among the students for harmony of knowledge, feeling, and skill (Heriansyah, 2018). Jhon (2021) also assumes that character building is a planned and systematic approach that aims to educate students to be good citizens who are dedicated by responsibility, honesty, and proud attitude.

However, adding to students' character is a long project that requires all parties to involve in developing their character. As stated by Ratnasari (2019), character building is a long-term process that need large supports from the school stakeholders, particularly principal, teacher, staff, and parent in order to effectively achieve the goals of character building. In regards to this task, the principal plays an ultimate role in exposing their

character formulation at the school. Asmendri (2014) affirms that the formulation of students' character should be followed by all school communities, especially the principal that leads the school the national curriculum of Indonesia and classroom environment. Putra (2021) underlines three strengthening character education (SCE) stated by the national ministry of education in Indonesia includes nationalist (Pancasila Pillars), religiosity, and social.

Indeed, the function of the school principal in strengthening these students' characters is varied. Sanchez (2021) mentions that one of the principal's initial role in enriching the students' character is to ensure obvious instructional leadership concepts such as determining the school's vision, mission, and its objectives. Moreover, Webster (2020) explains that the principal also should design the instructional leadership planning. Furthermore, the principal need to arrange the program and its implementation both academic and non-academic activities for students (Sunaengsih, Anggarani, Amalia, Nurfatmala, & Naelin, 2019). More importantly, Hoy (2009) asserts that the principal takes an essential role to supervise and evaluate the school programs. In addition to this, Sharif (2020) notifies that the principal can consider his instructional leadership implication. Similarly, Hallinger and Murphy (1985) highlights three general roles of the principal that includes determining the school's goals, managing the school program, and creating a positive school environment.

Eventually, forming students' character is a hard task that requires a serious attention and pathway among stakeholders. In this issue, the principal and the school staffs have been dealing with various obstacles and challenges. Ningsih (2019) states that building the students' character is challenging for the principal and the school parties. Jhon (2021) describes that some challenges faced by the principal in promoting students' character building are poor knowledge and attention of the teachers in assessing the students' character and lack of parents' supports in terms of attention, participation, and supervision for their character education. In relation to this, this study purposes to further explore challenges of the principal in building students' character. In line with the entailment above, this research identifies the challenges and its solutions of the principal in building students' character.

Principal's Role in Building Students' Character

Principal plays a crucial role in constructing students' character. Asmendri (2014) classifies that the roles of the principal into several parts that includes a leader, an educator, and a manager. Ribuwati (2019) opines that the principal as a leader should be able to provide an adequate resources of the community and environment to achieve goals, particularly in building students' character education inspired by Pancasila (national goals). Meanwhile, Ratnasari (2019) views that the principal as an educator should be able to add, advance, and improve four types of character values at least, in terms of mental, moral, physical, and artistic. Moreover, Marmoah (2019) notifies that the principal takes a role as a manager who coordinates and regulates the instructional program collaborated with the school parties in promoting educational program, including in the character building development.

On the other hands, Pohan (2021) assumes that in promoting students' character the principal needs to accomplish five functions that included in designing the concepts, determining the planning, managing the program and its implementation, addressing the supervision and evaluation, and considering the implication of the instructional leadership (IL). Ilham (2021) clarifies that in designing the concept of IL the principal need to conduct four duties that includes, (1) determining school's vision, mission, and its objectives, (2) implementing the national curriculum and extracurricular, (3) ensuring a qualified learning for students, and (4) building students' achievement and their character. Meanwhile, Dwi (2020) also mentions that the tasks of the principal in determining the planning of IL are (1) maintaining monthly and yearly learning method, (2) designing project-based learning, (3) coordinating instructional program, (4) providing guidelines for staffs and teachers, (5) standardizing grading and marking criteria, (6) managing minimum score for graduation pass.

Furthermore, Efendi (2022) considers that the other principal's role in building their character is to regulate the program and its implementation which focuses on their skill and character education such as training, workshop, competition, robotic creativity, exhibition, scouting movement, religious activity, *tahfiz (memorizing)*, and honesty stall. Besides, Sudarni (2021) affirms that the principal need to supervise the school employees (teachers and staffs) and the programs. In this task, according to Warman (2021), the principal and teacher collaboratively conduct five duties in terms of taking notes of the learning process, promoting smart parenting, establishing triple collaboration with the school community (teachers, homeroom teacher, and parent), designing quality assessment, and providing award and coaching program. In addition, the principal need to consider the implication of IL towards the students' character building. Putra (2021) asserts that the IL implication on students' character building should emphasizes on Pancasila pillars, in terms of nationality, religiosity, and social.

Principal's Challenge in Building Students' Character

Enhancing students' character is a complex and long duty that affects several challenges and obstacles encountered by the principal and other stakeholders. Generally, as stated by Jhon (2021), the prominent challenge of the principal in escalating students' character is the involvement and support from several parties that include in the government, teachers, staffs, and parents. Ningsih (2019) illustrates that one of the principal's challenge currently is the incompetence of teachers in constructing and assessing the character education which indicates minor outputs to the students' character building. Bayar (2016) adds that another challenge of the principal in promoting students' character is lack of supports from parents who do not actively engage in supporting and controlling the students' character education development beyond the classroom, particularly their careless on the students' progress at home.

Meanwhile, according to Wise (2015), the challenge of the principal in constructing students' character comprises of two fundamental issues in terms of internal and external challenges. Rahman (2020) mentions that the internal challenge faced by the principal in enhancing students' character is associated with the school management. Wieczorek (2018) explains that the school management problem includes limited employees (teachers and staffs), budgeting and financing, and distance of learning. On the other sides, Medford (2022) considers that the external challenge of the forming students' character is that the students neglects school's rules and regulations. Alegado (2018) assumes that this issue is associated with students and parents. Moreover, Desfandi (2016) entails that the problem made by the students is the absenteeism of them in the classroom and other school activities, and the challenge caused by the parents is their careless towards their children's education.

Method

This study employed a qualitative research method to conduct the research. Mohajan (2018) entails that qualitative research is one of appropriate methods in the research that stresses on a social action whereby people interpret and make sense of their experiences to understand the social reality. In regards to this, the qualitative research is a good method to accomplish these objectives of the study which facilitates the researcher to identify the challenges and the solutions of the principal in building students' character. Thomas (2022) states that purposive sampling is the most frequently used in qualitative research which is a technique of gathering samples through selecting required participants from the population. In this study,

the researcher carried out interviews to assemble the data of the study from the participants. Furthermore, the study applied Atlas.ti software which emphasizes the thematic analysis as method of the data analysis. The result of analysis is displayed through several figures that described the research findings.

Result and Discussion

Principal's Internal Challenge and Its Solution

Based on the result of interview, it is found that the challenge of the principal in shaping the students' character is related to the internal issue in term of the management of the school. Sunaengsih (2019) states that the school management is one of vital determiner of the quality of its education which becomes a challenging responsibility for the school principal to build it effectively. Dos (2015) also justifies that the principal's challenge of the school management is organizational issues who requires a power from all parties. Moreover, Joseph (2018) describes that the issues of the school management met by principal are usually associated with school's control, teachers, community interferences, infrastructures, and many other problems. Meanwhile, Alegado (2018) believes that teachers' role, budgeting, and learning supports are frequent challenges of the principal in enhancing the students' character.

The output of the interview obtained that limited employee in term of teachers and staffs is a fundamental challenge of the principal in the school management. Ginanjar (2021) states that the school community that includes teachers and staffs is the most important subject in the school who gives a contribution and administrates the effective organization of the school. In fact, Ja'ashan (2020) justifies that there are still decreased numbers of teacher who can teach and contribute to the schools. Furthermore, Isaac (1975) adds that rare teachers who can perform a qualified competence of teaching and learning that can affect to the school performance, including in the students' character formulation. Priestley (2015) also opines that some schools are seen with looking for teachers and staffs for additional numbers of the employees to support and advance their school management in achieving the goals and objectives.

On the other hands, it is retained that budgeting and financing are crucial challenges encountered by the principal in the school management. Anyanwu (2022) asserts that budgeting and financing are a hard responsibility of the principal. In this case, the issue of budgeting and financing is always related to the amount of the budgets and its management. Phyliters (2018) conveys that one of common issues of school funding is poor financial supports provided by the principal to

promote the instructional program. Mosala (2022) also assumes that another problem of the school funding is the financial management. It is stated that in the interview, the principal need to manage the budgeting and financing effectively which can facilitate the school activities. Maisaroh (2019) states that the financial management needs to be improved by the principal and his parties to promote the school activities.

However, strengthening school's management and control is the most effective strategy to solve these three component issues of the principal's challenges. Mulawarman (2022) opines that building a good school management can contribute to a good school performance. Asmoni (2018) coheres that strengthening the school's management and control can decrease several problems that can happen and enrich the quality of education, especially in developing students' character. Adu-oppong (2014) delivers that scheduling teachers in teaching is one of steps in strengthening the school's management and control. Particularly, in the limited employee issue, the principal should be able to manage effective and efficient timetables for teachers' teaching durations as its solution. Ugwulashi (2011) affirms that building effective and efficient time management for teachers in teaching is a necessary task for the organizational effectiveness in achieving the school's goals and objectives.

Besides, optimizing the budgeting and employment is an essential pathway in strengthening the school's management and control to overcome the issue of budgeting and financing. As suggested by Setia (2020), optimizing the budgeting and employment can ease smooth process of the school programs and develop the students' performance. Rasmussen (2003) also clarifies that optimizing the budgeting and employment is one step in strengthening effective school's management and control which emphasizes on solving the issue of school's budgeting and financing. Moreover, Wolanin (2021) considers that maximizing the budgeting and employment is a selected technique to overcome the problems in the school's funding both the amount of finance and its management. Farhan (2023) also believes that budgeting and financing are two frequent obstacles faced by the principal and the school community which is should be solved through optimizing them, particularly in its management.

Additionally, facilitating students who need assistance is an important phase to take in strengthening the school's management and control. Kurth (2015) providing a necessary services to the students who meet with some difficulties is compulsory task of the principal to support students' performance. Wong (2015) also explains that facilitating students' problems is an effective solution to decrease the principal's challenge in the school management and promote the success of

students' learning. Furthermore, Subagia (2020) agrees that giving assistance to the students is a necessary role of the principal to build an effective school management for valuable students' characters. Hamamorad (2016) justifies that in strengthening the school's management and control, the principal and other stakeholders need to involve in the process to provide assistance, aid, and facilities required by the students.

Principal's External Challenge and Its Solution

The principal also deals with the external challenge in constructing the students' character. The interview analysis result indicated that the external challenge faced by the principal was that the students neglected school's roles and regulations. Ikhrom (2023) agrees that another challenge of the principal in promoting students' character is the students that neglect the rules and the regulations of the school. This issue of neglecting the school's rules and regulations is associated with the students as well as the parents. In this case, the students rarely engaged in the classroom and other school activities. As stated by AKKUŞ (2022), the students rarely participate in the learning in-and-out the class. Meanwhile, at the same case, the parents perform poor care on their children's education. Đurišić (2017) describes that neglecting the school's rules and regulations means the absenteeism of the students in the school activities and the parents do not care on their children's education.

In regards to this, the principal can conduct three beneficial programs as the solution to remove this problem. As suggested by Ngwokabuenui (2015), in solving the students' issue that neglects the school's rules and regulations, the principal need to carry out three important methods in terms of counselling guidance, student teach student (STS), and smart parenting. Tuchili (2016) describes that counselling guidance is an effective method to untangle the students that neglects the school's rules and regulations, including in their inactiveness in the classroom and other school activities. Huda (2020) coheres that the counselling guidance helps in understanding the students' personal problem and provide an alternative solution. On the other sides, according to Wanders (2020), students teach students (STS) is an important phase to overcome this issue of the students whereby students come to another and work collaboratively in fulfill their duties. Furthermore, Rosi (2022) adds that smart parenting is also essential pathway to overcome this problem wherein the parents care and guide their children in the learning.

More importantly, in neglecting the school's rules and regulations, the issue of the parent involvement can be solved by two crucial solutions that should be conducted by the principal, including in inspiring talk

and smart parenting. According to Niu (2016), inspiring talk refers to the endeavor of the principal to motivate parents for performing deep care of their children's future life. Mata (2018) also illustrates that inspiring talk is the role of the principal to awaken the parents' responsibility in caring and guiding their children for better education and behavior. On the other hands, Zamroni (2020) suggests that smart parenting is also a good alternative in overcoming the students' issue. Rosi (2022) justifies that smart parenting involves the parents to think of their children's education advancement through controlling and guiding their students for learning as well as giving directions for their personal problems. The principal's challenge and its solution in building the students' character can be displayed as follows.
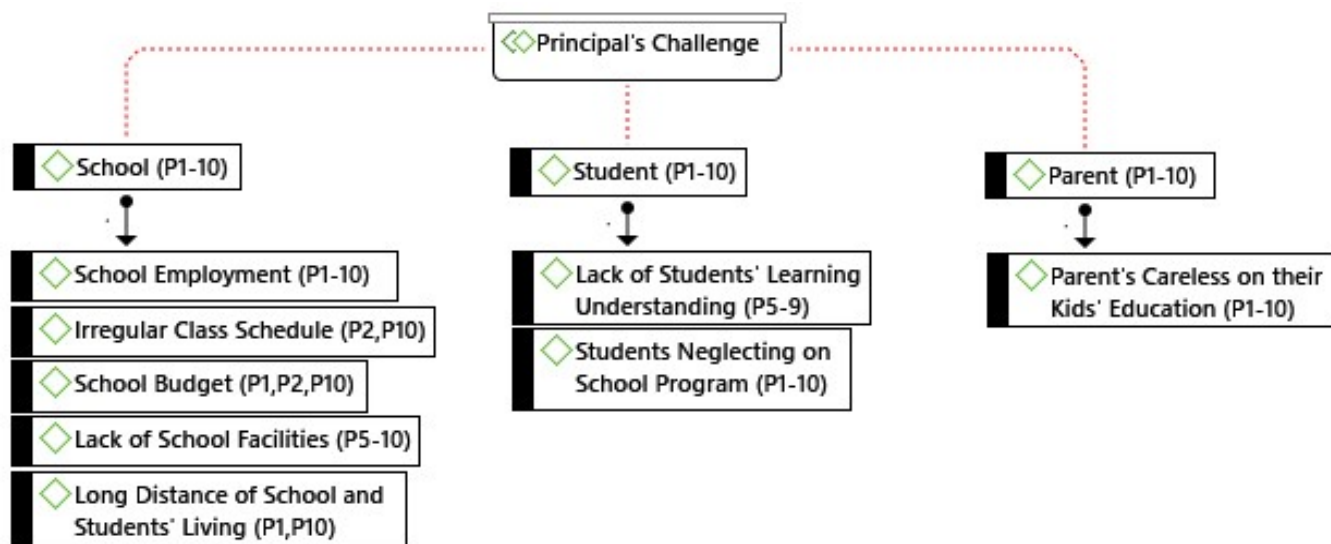

Figure 1. The Principal's Challenges.

Conclusion

The principal faces two main challenges in shaping the students' character, in terms of internal and external issues. Internally, the principal meets the school's management issue in building the students' character. In this part, the school's management is associated with three cases, including in limited employees (teachers and staffs), budgeting and financing, and distance of learning. Conversely, the external challenge encountered by the principal in constructing the students' character is that the students neglect the school's rules and regulations. In this term, neglecting the school's rules and regulations, the principal is facing with two subjects that includes students and parents. It is found that the students rarely engage in the classroom and other school programs. Meanwhile, the parents put poor care and attention towards their children's education.

However, these two kinds of challenges can be solved by several pathways. To overcome the issues of the school management as the principal's internal challenge, the principal should conduct three essential actions in terms of scheduling teachers in teaching such as employ more teachers based on the school need and their competences, optimizing the budget through stakeholder's collaboration, and providing assistance for students who facing problems in learning. On the other hand, the solution of the students who neglecting the school's rules and regulations as the principal's external challenge, the principal should be able to manage the effective programs. In regards to the issue of the students, the principal needs to strengthen a counselling guidance, student teach student (STS), and smart parenting. Meanwhile, in relation to the issue of the parent, the principal should organize an inspiring talk and smart parenting program in order to polish the parent mindset of the important of children's education.

Author Contributions
All authors have real contributions in completing this manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest
The author declares no conflict of interest

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