

*Original Research Article*

# A character hermitage: a locus of development model for strengthening character management, best practices at Semarang State University – Indonesia

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Abstract

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This study aims to describe the form of character building, which was implemented at this time around, to develop a model of compound character design practice as the locus of an ideal reinforcement of character building, and the feasibility of a *character hermitage* as the locus of character building strengthening. The research approach uses research & development. Techniques of data collection by interview, observation, and documentation. The validity of data was done by using triangulation which includes primary sources and secondary data collection tools. Data analysis was performed with an interactive model through data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The results suggest that the portrait of the character development is currently done by integrating character through different subjects. Character model offered has very high effective not only by expert but also by limited trial is to establish a *character hermitage* with its compound device serving as the locus of character building strengthening

**Keywords:** Character building, *Character hermitage*, Locus of strengthening model

## INTRODUCTION

Pancasila (five principles) were set as an ideal basis for the development of Indonesia which were independent, sovereign, just, and prosperous. The ideology which was implied in Pancasila included goals and objectives of the Republic of Indonesia. Pancasila ideology was a whole view, goal as well as beliefs and values of Indonesia that should be ideally realized in the sustainability of Indonesia as a nation and a country in order to achieve social justice for all Indonesian citizens. Consequently, Pancasila have become a basic reference for generating intellectual efforts in characterizing Indonesian citizen lives.

However, in the following decades, the position of Pancasila becoming the national ideology and the main reference of *nation and character building* has become overcast. Characters of Pancasila have been losing its

true spirit let alone supported by the development of technology and information which was vulgar, borderless, and uncontrollable (LPPKB, 2007). Those phenomena may disturb the realization of defense and resistance of the Republic of Indonesia. Consequently, character education which was highly desirable may aim to (1) develop potentials based on good intention, intellect, and attitude, (2) mend the bad attitudes, and improve the good attitudes, (3) filter the culture which was did not suit the values of Pancasila (Handoyo, 2012).

Indonesia have done efforts to achieve the national goals, particularly in educational level. Those efforts included character building such as revising curriculum, labeling lesson subjects, holding a scientific forum like seminar, workshop, training, discussion, and so on. The goal of making changes and holding this scientific forum

was to enable the stake-holders to find out educational approaches which could be useful in nurturing young generations based on Indonesian identity. Changes and efforts done were matched to the international condition and advancement by firmly upholding Indonesian culture.

Some experts have asserted various theories about character education. According to Hersh et al. (1980), among the theories which were being developed, there were six theories that were widely used; those were: rational development approach, consideration approach, value clarification approach, moral cognitive development approach, and social behavior approach. Unlike those classification, Elias (1989) classified various theories into three types, those were: cognitive approach, affective approach, and behavioral approach. This classification, according to Rest (1992), was based on three elements that were normally used as bases on psychological review, those were: behavior, cognitive, and affection. Whereas, Superka et al. (1976), Zakaria (2000), and Rachman (2001, 2002) put forward five theories of value approach; those were inculcation approach, cognitive moral development approach, value analysis approach, value clarification approach, and action learning approach.

The implementation of character education at schools could be conducted by using educational model which was holistic, integrated, and comprehensive (Wibowo, 2013; Zuchdi, 2010; Zuchdi, 2013). Holistic educational model included three aspects; those were knowing the good, feeling the good, and acting the good. Knowing the good was a transfer of good knowledge (cognitive). After knowing the good, we had to grow feeling and loving the good, that was how to feel and love the good as a device to stimulate people to always do the good, and grow an awareness to do the good because of their attachment on feeling and loving the good. After they got used to doing the good, they had to get accustomed to acting the good in their everyday lives.

Lickona et al. (1992) put forward 11 principles to realize an effective character education at schools; those were (1) developing the core ethics and the complementary working values, (2) defining characters comprehensively including thinking, feeling, and behavior, (3) employing approaches comprehensively, purposively, and proactively in developing characters, (4) creating an attentive school community, (5) giving students opportunities to do moral deeds, (6) creating academic curriculum that was meaningful and challenging as well as respecting all students, developing characters, and helping students to succeed, (7) attempting to improve students' motivation, (8) involving school staffs as a moral and learning community which shared responsibility in character education in order to obey the same core values in guiding the students' education, (9) nurturing togetherness in moral leadership and a long-term support for the initiative character educators, (10) involving family and members of society

as partners in an attempt of strengthening characters, and (11) evaluating school characters, function of school staff as character educators, and how far the students could manifest the good characters.

Character education could be conducted through three approaches. Firstly, it could be conducted through a national policy that was passed to the educational unit level. Secondly, it could be conducted by observing the best practices of character education. Thirdly, it could be conducted through a revitalization of extracurricular activities such as student scout, canteen of honesty, the School Health Unit, the Student Red Cross, science and sport olimpiades, school go green, anti-corruption education, traffic-obedience education. Besides, there were four steps to hold a character education. The first step was planting which was done by introducing bad and good concrete examples, explaining positive and negative consequences, monitoring done by parents, teachers, and society, fixing the bad in a good way. The second step was growing. It was done by recalling the results of planting, guiding, and monitoring. The third step was developing. It was done by doing concrete activities, giving trust through discussion, role-play, stimulation, telling stories of exemplary role-model, utilizing medias (video, film) appropriately and effectively (Sheldon, 2004; Iswinarti, 2010). In relation to video learning, Widiati et al. (2013) asserted that learning material such as video was very relevant in helping the students achieve cognitive, affective, and psychomotoric competences. The fourth step was strengthening. This step was done by giving students opportunities for self-actualization by doing real action which was done together with friends or society, encouraging the students to actively participate and to be responsible in their attitudes, actions, and utterances.

The implementation of character education could be realized in (1) lesson subjects by developing syllabi and lesson plans, (2) lesson subjects of local culture which matched competences developed by the school and local government, (3) self-development activities by getting used to something such as routine activities, spontaneous activities, role-model activities, and programmed activities, (4) extracurricular activities such as Student Scout, Student Red Cross, canteen of honesty, School Health Unit; Student Scientific Activities; sports, arts; Student Organization, and (5) guidance and counseling by giving services for the students dealing with problems.

One thing which could be done in character building was to form a place that could be a tool for discussing, reviewing, and applying models of nation development and character building. In that place, the targets with full awareness could deeply understand, fully internalize character values. The place could be a hall, laboratorium, gallery, and so on. In this study, the researcher was developing a place called A Character Hermitage. A hermitage was a place where young people boardas hermits to strive for knowledge and skills about everything. Boarding as hermits could mean staying at

home or places provided by the teacher for quite a long time with an aim of learning from the teacher (PnPSI, 2011).

A hermitage had three characteristics. First, a hermitage in general was a complex consisting of some simple buildings, one of those buildings is a place for the teacher to stay. There were certain number of young people learning the hermitage. Second, the hermitage was located far away from the crowd, usually in a mountain or a forest. The choice of location was meant to get conducive situation for the purpose of teaching and learning. The young people staying and learning in the hermitage were working for the hermitage, in the past in Javanese language, they were called "*cantrik*". Third, the hermitage taught the students certain knowledge and skills in particular way, such as knowledge and skills about dancing, music, vocal, religion, and defense system.

The hermitage had approximately 5 functions; those were as: 1) the center of information, education, presentation, and promotion of everything involving the purposes of the hermitage, 2) the center various activities that were related to an attempt of preserving, developing, spreading, and improving images and values that the hermitage was trying to develop, 3) a tool to strengthen the unity of society according to the goals of the hermitage, 4) a tool to strengthen relationship within the hermitage society, and 5) a tool to promote ethic codes and the hermitage pledge.

The culmination of education was character. It was inline with the statement of Dewantoro (1973) who avered that "...education was an effort to improve the growth of good attitudes (inner strength, characters), intellect, and children's body. These components could not be separated, so that, we could improve the perfection of our children's lives...". This goal would be achieved if our education was managed well. Therefore, the functions of educational management such as planning, organizing, implementing, and monitoring (Terry, 1970) should be applied in building a character hermitage.

The purpose of the study was to describe the forms of character building that were recently held, to develop a character hermitage design model as a locus of practices for strengthening ideal character building, and to test the appropriateness of a character hermitage as a locus for strengthening ideal character building.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The present study employed research and development (R&D) which was modified from Bog and Gall (1983) and Rachman (2011), that was later simplified into three main steps; those were pre-study, development (model and instruments), and validation (model and instruments). The locus of the study was

carried out in Semarang State University, Indonesia. The unit of analysis was derived from students majoring in Politics and Citizenship Faculty of Social Sciences, Semarang State University, Indonesia.

R&D approaches were approaches to conduct research, development, and testing on a product. Producing certain products needed a research that was conducted based on need analysis. Besides, research and development were meant to test the compatibility of the product, so that, the product could be useful and helpful for the users. The product in the study was A Character Hermitage as a locus of character building including the instruments in the hermitage. Those instruments were (1) a guidance of character building, (2) a textbook of character building, and (3) interactive flash programs of character building consisting of menus: Home, Characters, Video, Games, Books, and Articles.

In pre-study, the research was carried out in studying literature, gathering data from the field, creating description, and analyzing data that produced a factual model of character building. Particularly, pre-study should go through several steps; those were (1) collecting information (literature review, observing museums, galleries, or halls about the management procedures of those places), (2) designing plans (identifying and defining skills, formulating objectives, selecting facilities, and management procedures of the hermitage). In the developing step, there were several developing steps being conducted to find out hypothetical character building in the character hermitage. Those steps were (1) theoretical consultation to analyze strengths and weaknesses of factual models of character building which were recently conducted, (2) making expert and practitioner judgement, (3) holding a group discussion focusing on lecturers, teachers, and students, ended by model reflection and revision.

According to the development model, there would be conducted a validation on model and instruments to find out compatible model and instruments as the final model. The steps carried out to discover the final model was a limited experiment to the students majoring in Politics and Citizenship, Faculty of Social Science, Semarang State University. The limited experiment was meant to test the compatibility of character building model on the locus of a character hermitage perceived from simplicity, practicality, and the hermitage supports for strengthening character building. Besides, the limited experiment on the provided learning instruments in the hermitage was to test the appropriateness of content component, presentation component, and language component.

Data gathering techniques included interview, observation, documentation, and questionnaires. Data triangulation techniques including sources and instruments of data collection were employed to support the data validity. In particular, data were analyzed by using descriptive analysis and qualitative verification analysis (Bungin, ed. 2010). Further, data were analyzed

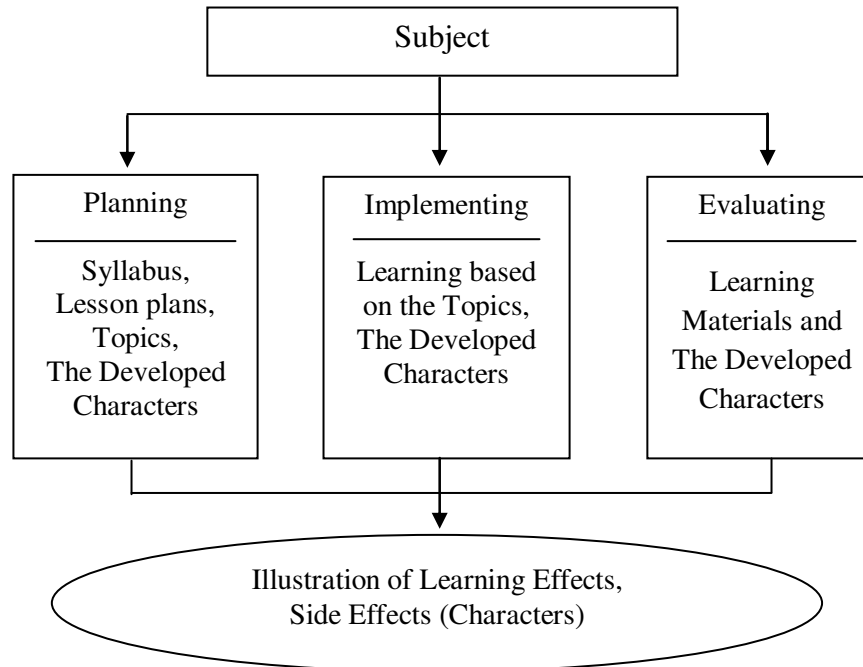


Figure 1. Steps of Character Building

interactively through the steps of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

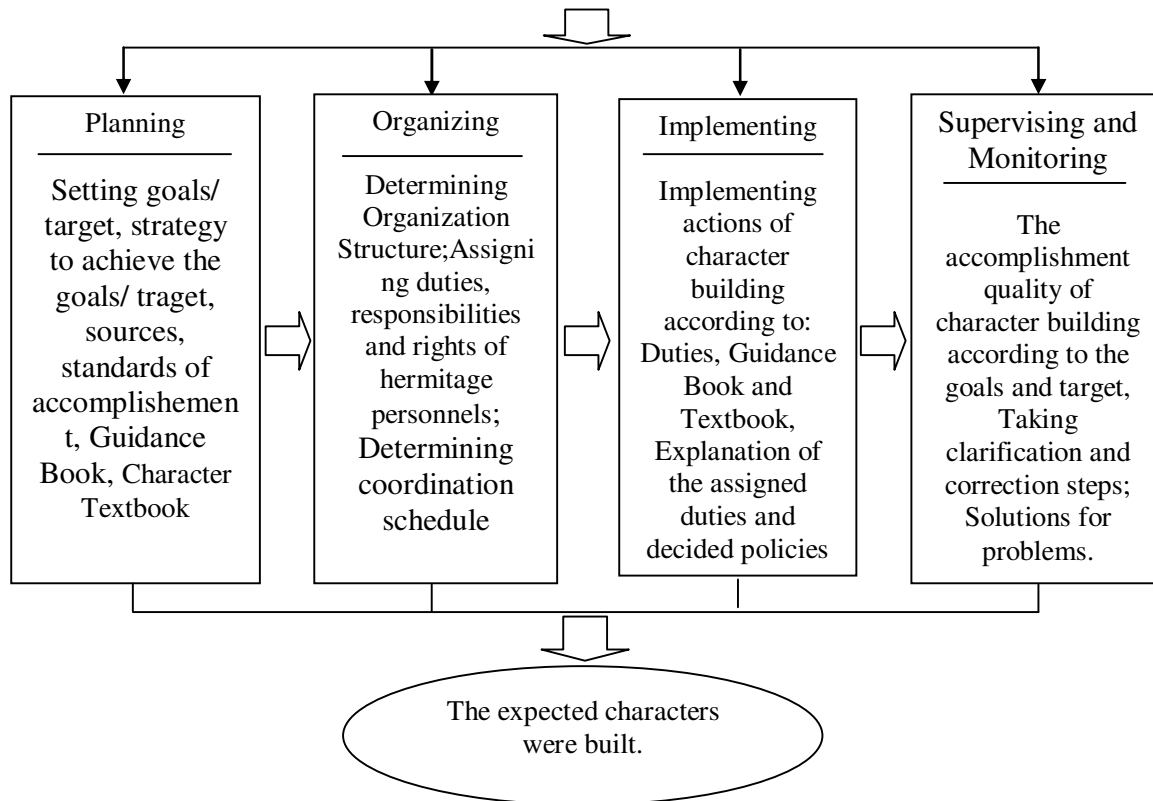
### Results

In general, the portrayal of character building was conducted by integrating characters on the subjects. It was held through the steps of planning, implementing, and evaluating. Planning was made by referring on the syllabus which was made by schools or lecturers. Then, according to the syllabus, lesson plans were constructed. Components in the syllabus include: identity (class, semester, subject, competence standard); basic competence, characters being developed, learning materials, learning activities, indicators of achieving competences, assessment (assessment techniques, its instruments, and examples of instruments), time, and source of study. Components in Lesson Plans were: identity (class, semester, subject, time allocation), competence standard, basic competence, learning goals, learning materials, learning activities (introduction, main activities, and closing), source of study, and assessment. The process of learning was carried out through several steps (1) introduction was to deliver a description of the lesson, and giving motivation, (2) main activity was the process of teaching and learning that referred to Lesson Plans, and (3) closing was to end the lesson. The step of

evaluation consisted of activities such as concluding lesson and doing test. The test given were formative test in oral and written modes. If the standard of competence was not yet given, there would be summative test conducted accordingly. These steps were conducted according to the diagram of the management for strengthening characters as shown on the following Figure 1.

The management model for strengthening characters on a character hermitage was conducted through the following steps.

Planning step was to set goals and targets, formulate strategy to achieve goals and targets, determine sources needed, set the standards of accomplishing goals and targets. The products produced in planning step were (1) a Guidance Book of Character Building. The guidance book explained: Background information of the urgency of a hermitage; definition, behavior, function, and areas of reviewing a character hermitage; instruments for strengthening characters; steps of character building; dimensions of characters (behavior, knowledge, skills); monitoring and evaluation; as well as closing. (2) A Textbook of Character Building. Character values were integrated in the textbooks; those characters were: religious, honesty, responsibility, discipline, democracy, intellect (logical, critical, creative, innovative), caring, helpful, and nationalism (Kemendiknas, 2010; Puskur, 2010; Mustari, 2011). In each character value there integrated materials for strengthening dimension of behavior, dimension of knowledge, and dimension of skill. In behavioural dimension, there were learning materials



**Figure 2.** Steps of Character Building Model

about self-reflection in interacting and the evaluation of self-reflection. In the dimension of knowledge, there were learning materials about factual, conceptual, and productive comprehension as well as comprehension test. In the dimension of skill, there were thinking skills and productive actions as well as evaluation of thinking skill and further actions.

In organizing step, there were several conducted activities such as allocating personnels, formulating and assigning duties, determining procedures needed; determining organization structure which assigned rights and responsibilities; activities of developing and placing personnel.

The implementing step was to implement the process of fostering characters according to the Guidance Book and the Textbook. Giving motivation to the personnels of the hermitage in order to be able to work effectively and efficiently in achieving the goals, assigning routine duties and giving routine explanation about duties, explaining policies determined by the hermitage.

The evaluation step was to supervise and monitor the accomplishment and the achievement of goals and target according to the determined indicator, taking clarification and correction steps towards the deviation which could possibly discovered, and doing a variety of alternative solutions on various problems related to the achievement of goals and target of strengthening characters. Further,

these supervision and monitoring were conducted to see the shift of foci on the activity administration, personal changes, and changes of environmental condition, as well as changes on the students' culture. Administration focus included the appropriateness of implementing and planning steps; the implementation appropriateness and the interaction pattern between teacher and students as well as the achieved results. Personal focus included changes on students' or the hermitage facility users' understanding, attitudes, and behavior. Changes on environmental condition included academic situation at school or campus. Besides, changes on the students' culture included behavior which supported the application of characters within general students' interaction. Evaluation, on the form of knowledge test to measure character knowing, behavior scale test to measure character feeling, and behaviour test to measure character action.

The research products based on the final development model which was offered included A Textbook of Character Building. The appropriateness of the Textbook was tested in a limited way to the students majoring in Politics and Citizenship, Faculty of Social Sciences, Semarang State University. The results of the experiment were categorized very good in the dimension of reaction, good in dimension of learning, good in the dimension of behavior, and good in the dimension of result. Besides,

the results of experiment were categorized good on the aspect of model compatibility, good on the aspect of model practicality, very communicative on the aspect of communicating, and very informative on the aspect of informing. It was shown on the diagram of character building model on the following Figure 2.

## DISCUSSION

The portrayal of character building that held by now, like shown in picture 1, is integrated in the subject courses. The courses integrating or combining such particular character are commonly in the citizenship education course, social science education course and religion education course. The way to decide the character developed which then integrated to the course is by considering the indicators from each discussion point being taught. After that, those developed characters are involved in syllabus. But, in the implementation, the integration among character value has not suitable yet with the integrative learning intended by Fogarti (1991) and Solihatin (2012). Fogarti offers ten models of combination that can be used in order to integrate the learning character. Those models are (1) *fragmented*, (2) *connected*, (3) *nested*, (4) *sequenced*, (5) *shared*, (6) *webbed*, (7) *threaded*, (8) *integrated*, (9) *immersed*, (10) *networked*. Integrated learning is the components, substation (material and nonmaterial), procedure, and designed process, consciously done to make a learning situation. Therefore, integrated learning has fusion functionally and structurally among the components and sustention, among all desired study occasion. The assumption of organizing integrated learning is every act of plan, managing, learning control, should be integrated. Integrated learning starts from the closest surrounding up to comprehension limit of student. In order to reach both of that, educator should have insight, knowledge, skills, and required commitment. Meanwhile, the principals in creating integrated learning process cover: (1) material substation which combined in the planning of integrated learning, raised from the key concepts in the course studies materials (2) the relationship between key concepts has a link to the function and meaning, if it is combined to the certain context (phenomena, problem and theme) it is still has its original meaning, beside it is still has meaning developed in discussion context.

In the planning, especially when deciding the character that would be improved, there are difficulties faced by the teachers and there is desire to expand the characters shown in syllabus. Consequently, less accurate and less focus occur on the developing those characters. This case probably happened on the scoring technique and scoring form. This is the weaknesses faced by teachers when they try to combine the characters on the learning process.

The sense of weaknesses is getting strong in the execution step when the characters that exist on syllabus are not accommodated. This is caused by the lack of learning time. The teachers often focus on the topic discussion accommodating the integration of character. Besides that, it feels more when they will have evaluation. The teacher should evaluate the effect of learning and additional effect from the developing character. In addition, the implication that demanded by the students in the learning process, by combining characters is the teachers should be able to improve the academic creativity, make it easy and give motivation to the student to recognize, accept, receive the material, understand the correlation between knowledge and concept, the value and action on the core competition. The implication for the teaching material, the teachers are demanded to be more diligent and creative to find and collect the sources that needed in the learning process. The teaching material can be found from social surrounding, nature, or mass media. The implication as facility is the teacher should be sharper on selecting the effective media in order to use on the several related lesson.

Based on the problems, learning process that combined the character to the lesson, there is a strength that should be maintained and weakness that should be fixed. The strength is there is correlation between teaching material that delivered with the building character so that it does not need additional time and it is more practical. On the other hand, the weakness is the character that would be built usually get lack of attention because the teacher focuses on the material, therefore it needs more teacher and additional time. That is why the result of character building is not good as the expectation.

On the other side, character education is on of learning that can be expanding contextually. This program focuses on the several issues such as in order to support the concern and the attention to the social phenomena. Character education is the program that designed with the purpose to give the perfect knowledge to the student and the people in general. This program can be given on the theory activity and practice with the step of understanding concepts, giving example, practice, task, and feedback.

Refers to the strength and weakness that commonly occur on the adult character education and it refers to the offers the model of character education, it means the availability of character hermitage can reduce the weakness on the effort of building character that is one of education needed nowadays. The character building that improved on the character hermitage is the supporting way to reduce the weakness character building. In addition, if the character building is designed as the lesson itself. This last is difficult to be implemented on formal education at schol because the lack of system and supporting way.

Furthermore, by having character hermitage, the teachers should be able to exploit its function. In the implementation step, it can be done by sharing leaning activities into two activities. The first activity is delivering topic discussion from the related lesson on the designing class. The second activity is improving the character in character hermitage.

The improving of character building model on character hermitage that offered is shown on picture 2. The establishment character hermitage and all of comprehensiveness in padepokan, is arranged based on the management functions that stated by Terry (1970). The establishment should be managed by implementing the management function.

Management should give attention to the. The function of management refers to the activities that have designed and it has the dependency relationship each other, it is held by the people, institution or its parts that delegated to execute those activities (Hersey and Blanchard, 1982)

The devices that available on the character hermitage major citizenship and political is the guidance book of character building, teaching book of character building, interactive video, comic book, evaluation instrument, and interpreting picture book. The content of teaching book is all character that should be built, they are religious character, honesty character, responsibility character, discipline character, democracy, logical thinking, concern and care, help desire and nationalist. The systematic source on each character is the dimension of *character feeling*, dimension of *character knowing*, and dimension of *character action*. The content of teaching book is designed based on that systemic related to the 2013 Curriculum. The 2013 Curriculum emphasis that in the learning activity there would be developing attitude, knowledge and skills in the combination and of variety suppressions (Permendikbud, 2013).

The dimension of character feeling is the steps intended in order to make the users, in this case is college student / student which has the emotional or the attitude proficiency that can be in the form reflection of attitude in having interaction related to the building character. The steps are (1) demand to the college student / student to scrutinize the text such as story, folktale or *storytelling*, it is continued by the video recording from each building character. (2) demand to the college student / student to do or play the role and activity related to the building character, (3) evaluate the attitude as the meaning of attitude reflection. The study held by paying attention to the age, children development or level of education. Considering to that variation of study, college student is expected to understand and has the awareness to strengthen the building character.

The presentation of folktale, tale or story on the character education is accordance with the experts that stated that the tale is the tradition and all time human heritages; which effective on making the people character

since they are on their cradle (Hendri, 2013; Gunawan, 2014). Character education based on the tale will never separate from the grand design of character education that is using the speaking tradition. The character education has the purpose that include in four main points that are how to manage you feel, the way of thinking, body and kinesthetic, and feeling and togetherness (Samanidan Hariyanto, 2012). The use of story tale is also related with the statement of McClelland (1978) discover of N-Ach (*Need for Achievement*) theory that stated the story tale has the important role for the nation in 25 years later. The growth in the country as the effect of influence of story tale actually can be occur in many aspect like in economic growth, culture, political, and social. The story tale can give the positive effect for kid mental growth. When that mental is growing up great, the independent attitude to keep struggling to reach success will get stronger by itself.

Furthermore, using storytelling through multimedia by involving the role as role model of moral character, based on the opinion of Sheldom (2004) the storytelling is one of appropriate method to express the moral value through the role character on the story as role model. Therefore, storytelling has the ability to deliver moral values because the children and teenager is getting information easier by using audio-visual. Hence, it is recommended to use story telling in multimedia so that it is more interesting in involving students' affection and cognition in internalizing delivering moral value.

The dimension of character knowing is the stage when the user or in this case is college student has the intellectual competence based on the building character. The steps are: (1) delivery of principals, goals, and the benefit from each building character, (2) demand to the college student / student to explain the meaning of building character, (3) demand to the college student / student to state about the similarity and differences of building character. The study is done by showing the level of age, children development or education level. Considering to this study variation, college students/students can understand the meaning of each building character.

The dimension of character action is the stage that has purpose to make the user or college student / student has thinking attitude competence and productive action related to the building character. The steps are: (1) demand to the college students / students to gather the text given related to the building character, (2) demand to the college students / students to do or play role related to building character, (3) give their opinion about positive attitude that they did and negative attitude that they did not do yesterday or last week. The study was done by paying attention on the level of age, children development or level of education. Based on that variation of study, college student / student will be able to understand and has their self-consciousness refers to the building character. On the end of presentation, the

evaluation and observation related to the building character should be done. The culmination of those three domains is the college students completely have their own character built just like their building character.

The separate activity, if it felt ineffective, could be done indirectly to the hermitage, it can be accomplished separately by making its own schedule, for example, periodically once a month adjusted with the different condition and situation. Therefore, the hermitage can reduce the weaknesses of character building which held now. Furthermore, the teachers are able to teach by using many kinds of method, scoring more detail to all aspects (attitude, knowledge and skills), and give the variety feedback.

## CONCLUSION

The portrayal of character building nowadays is by integrating all characters to the lesson especially on the lesson of citizenship and *Pancasila* education, social science education and religion education. Those building character are available on the syllabus and lesson plan.

The developed model design is by managing the character education in character hermitage. The character hermitage on Political and Citizenship department, Social Science faculty, Semarang State University is supported by character guidance book, character teaching material and interactive flash program. The Guidance Book is purposed to guide the character builder or user in using character education teaching book. The Character Teaching Book consists of building character values that contain story tale, video, games, and instrument to measure the learning effect and the additional effect of each character. The Interactive Flash program consists of home menu, character, game, book reference and article.

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