



The Role of the Basic Education Division of the Bengkulu City Education and Culture Office in Character Building for Students (Case Study at SMPN 14 Bengkulu City)

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Abstract. The research titled “The Role of the Basic Education Division of the Bengkulu City Office of Education and Culture in Student Character Development (A Case Study at SMP Negeri 14 Bengkulu City)” aims to explain the implementation of character development through organizational functions, communication patterns, motivation and social influence, leadership, and organizational culture. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using Katz and Kahn’s (1978) theory, which views organizations as open social systems. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation involving the Basic Education Division of the Bengkulu City Office of Education and Culture as well as SMP Negeri 14 Bengkulu City. The findings show that the Office of Education plays a strategic role in providing guidance, supervision, and policy support to schools. The school acts as the primary implementer in instilling character values through habituation activities such as communal prayer, morning literacy, environmental cleanliness, and religious programs. Communication between the office and the school is effectively established through both formal and informal channels, allowing coordination to run smoothly. Work motivation grows from a shared spirit and a sense of responsibility toward improving educational quality. The leadership style applied is participatory, open to new ideas, and emphasizes role modeling. The organizational culture that emerges reflects values of discipline, responsibility, cooperation, religiosity, and social concern as the foundation for character education. The research findings indicate that character development at SMP Negeri 14 Bengkulu City is effectively implemented due to the alignment between policy formulation and field implementation. The synergy between the Office of Education and the school forms an adaptive, participatory, and character-oriented working system that strengthens students’ values, discipline, and sense of responsibility.

Keywords: *Role, Communication, Motivation, Leadership, Culture.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental right of every citizen, as stipulated in Article 31 paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution, which affirms that every citizen has the right to receive an education. This right is realized through the implementation of national education, as regulated in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. This law emphasizes that education aims not only to enhance the nation's intelligence but also to shape the nation's character and civilization with dignity. Therefore, education plays a strategic role in developing human resources who are not only academically intelligent but also possess strong character in accordance with the nation's moral, social, and cultural values.

In the context of implementing education in the regions, the government, through regional apparatuses, particularly the Education and Culture Office, is responsible for organizing, fostering, supervising, and ensuring that the quality of education meets national standards. In Bengkulu City, the Education and Culture Office plays a crucial role in ensuring that primary and secondary education meets national goals. One of its key units is the Basic Education Division, which oversees the development of primary and junior high schools, including the development of student character across all educational units.

Basic education is the primary foundation for developing students' personalities. At this level, students not only receive academic instruction such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, but also receive guidance in basic values such as discipline, responsibility, honesty, cooperation, and social ethics. However, in practice, the process of developing students faces various challenges, such as a lack of discipline, low awareness of school rules, and inappropriate student behavior.

One school facing these challenges is SMP Negeri 14 Bengkulu City, which is under the auspices of the Basic Education Division of the Bengkulu City Education and Culture Office. Based on data from one semester, several cases of disciplinary violations were recorded, including 11 unexcused absences, 16 trancies, and six student fights. This situation illustrates the need for intensive and systematic character development.

On the other hand, SMP Negeri 14 Bengkulu City has achieved a number of achievements and has implemented various habit-building programs, such as morning prayer, literacy, Friday Cleanup activities, and strengthening extracurricular activities. However, the effectiveness of this development is highly dependent on the support, supervision, and policies of the Education Office, particularly the Basic Education Sector. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the agency's role in developing schools, supporting development programs, and overseeing their implementation.

Technical regulations also strengthen student development through Ministerial Regulation No. 39 of 2008 concerning Student Development and Ministerial Regulation No. 23 of 2015 concerning Character Development. These regulations emphasize that student development must be carried out comprehensively, encompassing academic, social, moral, spiritual, life skills, and discipline aspects through habituation activities, role models, and school culture. The Basic Education Sector is responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of these regulations in its schools.

However, the implementation of education policies does not always run smoothly. Several challenges such as limited facilities, low student motivation, varying teacher abilities, and minimal coordination of school reporting present obstacles. Therefore, the role of the Basic Education Sector is crucial as a policy director, mentor, facilitator, and supervisor. This organization must communicate effectively, provide motivation, build an organizational culture that supports character development, and demonstrate responsive and participatory leadership.

Katz and Kahn's (1978) organizational theory serves as the foundation for understanding the role of government institutions in the education system. According to this theory, organizations are open social systems that influence individual behavior through communication, motivation, leadership, and organizational culture. Therefore, in the context of student development, the Basic Education Division plays a crucial role in creating a conducive policy and development environment for schools. Collaboration between the agency and schools will impact the quality of character development received by students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research is grounded in organizational theory and student development, with the primary model used being Katz and Kahn's Organizational Role Theory (1978). This theory

views organizations as open social systems characterized by patterns of roles, communication, leadership, and organizational culture that influence individual behavior. In the educational context, the Basic Education Department functions as a subsystem within the regional government tasked with influencing, directing, and controlling educational units through policies, supervision, and character development.

According to Katz and Kahn, organizational roles have five essential components relevant to this research. First, organizational roles describe the behavioral expectations of a work unit in achieving specific goals. The Basic Education Department has a normative responsibility for establishing character development policies, providing strategic direction, and ensuring their implementation in schools.

Second, organizational communication serves as a crucial mechanism for conveying instructions, coordination, and reporting. Effective communication between the Education Department and schools enables character development programs to be consistent, focused, and responsive to student concerns.

Third, motivation and social influence relate to how organizations provide encouragement, rewards, and moral support to schools so that character development can be implemented optimally. This encouragement can take the form of training, mentoring, or strengthening collaboration between schools.

Fourth, organizational leadership plays a role in directing, coordinating, and making decisions regarding the implementation of character development. Participatory and responsive leadership from the Basic Education Sector will facilitate schools in understanding development priorities and implementing programs consistently.

Fifth, organizational culture influences work habits, values, and commitment to educational goals. An organizational culture that emphasizes professionalism, discipline, cooperation, and public service will encourage more effective character development in students.

In addition to organizational theory, this research is also supported by the concept of character development in students as outlined in Minister of National Education Regulation No. 39 of 2008 and Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 23 of 2015. Character development is viewed as a systematic effort to instill religious values, discipline, responsibility, tolerance, and social ethics through learning activities, habituation, role models, and school culture. This process involves teachers, principals, parents, and local governments as coordinating parties.

By integrating Katz and Kahn's organizational role theory and the concept of character development, the theoretical basis of this research emphasizes that the success of student character development is greatly influenced by the quality of the role of the Basic Education Sector as a mentor, supervisor, facilitator, and director of basic education policy.

METHODS

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is conducted through the following steps:

1. Data reduction, which involves selecting and focusing information relevant to the research focus.
2. Data presentation, in the form of a narrative description that shows patterns, relationships, and findings in the field.
3. Conclusion drawing, carried out in stages based on the data patterns found until valid conclusions are reached.

RESULTS

The study, "The Role of the Basic Education Division of the Bengkulu City Education and Culture Office in Character Building for Students at SMP Negeri 14 Bengkulu City," found that the Basic Education Division plays a strategic, multidimensional, and sustainable role in supporting the implementation of character education in schools. The following research findings are based on the five dimensions of Katz and Kahn's theory: organizational role, communication, motivation and social influence, leadership, and organizational culture.

Organizational Role of the Basic Education Division

The study shows that the Basic Education Division acts as the primary policy director, mentor, and controller in the implementation of character building for students. This role goes beyond administrative functions and includes instilling moral values, quality control, and facilitating the implementation of school programs. Denny Apriansyah, Head of the Basic Education Division, emphasized that character building must become a habit, not just a ceremonial event. He stated that every school is required to implement habit-building activities such as group prayer, morning literacy, and mutual cooperation.

Field data shows that SMPN 14 has implemented these habit-building activities consistently. Religious activities, literacy activities, Clean Fridays, and moral development are routinely conducted at the school as an implementation of the department's directives.

The department also plays a role in providing and updating Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for student development, which serve as guidelines for schools in implementing structured student activities.

Organizational Communication between the Department and Schools

The study found that communication between the Elementary Education Division and SMP Negeri 14 is active, open, and responsive. Communication is conducted through:

- a) Circulars and official instructions,
- b) Regular meetings,
- c) Direct supervision of the school,
- d) Utilization of a WhatsApp coordination group since 2025.

The use of digital media expedites activity reporting and problem-solving. The school confirmed that communication is two-way and participatory, significantly supporting the smooth implementation of character development on the ground.

Motivation and Social Influence

Work motivation at both the department and school levels stems from a sense of shared responsibility for improving the quality of education. Department employees perceive character development as a tangible contribution to human resource development in Bengkulu City, while teachers feel they play a crucial role in shaping students' daily behavior. The department encourages school motivation through:

- a) Providing training for OSIS (Osis) advisors,
- b) Strengthening extracurricular activities,
- c) Character development modules and Pancasila-based activity guidelines,
- d) Supporting FLS2N (National Student Council) activities, O2SN (National Student Council), and school cleanliness competitions. Through these activities, students not only learn to compete but also learn to work together, appreciate the process, manage their emotions, and foster self-confidence.

Leadership in Character Development

Leadership is a crucial aspect of effective character development. Research shows that the leadership style in the Elementary Education Sector is participatory, collaborative, and based on example.

The Head of the Elementary Education Sector emphasized that he allows staff to express their aspirations in the program formulation process, while remaining firm in implementing decisions. This approach creates a balance between employee engagement and organizational discipline.

At the school level, the principal of SMPN 14 implements leadership that emphasizes teacher role models. Teachers are positioned as behavioral models for students, particularly in terms of discipline, religiosity, and manners. Teachers also play a significant role in implementing daily habits, monitoring student behavior, and handling minor violations through persuasive and educational approaches.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is a crucial force in shaping student character. The Education Office instills the values of professionalism, public service, administrative responsibility, and openness. Meanwhile, SMPN 14 fosters a culture of religiosity, discipline, cooperation, and mutual assistance.

The combination of these two cultures creates a stable and productive social system, allowing character development to occur not only formally but also through the social environment and daily interactions.

A strong organizational culture also serves as a social control mechanism, ensuring that teachers and students comply with rules without constant supervision. Shared values such as courtesy, responsibility, and cleanliness ensure students understand the behavioral expectations they must adhere to.

School Conditions and Character Development Challenges

The study found that SMPN 14 has 636 students and 50 teachers. Although the school holds A accreditation, challenges remain in character development, such as:

- a) Unexcused absences: 11 cases per semester,
- b) Truancy: 16 cases per semester,
- c) Fights: 6 cases.

Other challenges include limited facilities such as student activity rooms, character education materials, and cleaning supplies. However, the school strives to maximize existing facilities by utilizing classrooms for moral discussions and the field for scouting activities and leadership training.

The Education Office assists through supervision twice per semester and technical assistance to ensure the program runs according to guidelines.

Synergy Between the Office and the School

All research findings demonstrate strong synergy between the Education Office and SMPN 14. The Office ensures that policies and development programs are implemented according to their objectives, while the school is the primary implementer of development through habituation, role models, and extracurricular activities.

This synergy creates an adaptive and participatory relationship, enabling character building to take place not only in the classroom but throughout the school's social environment.

DISCUSSION

This research discussion integrates field findings with Katz and Kahn's organizational theory and regulations on student character development. The discussion focuses on five aspects: (1) organizational roles, (2) organizational communication, (3) motivation and social influence, (4) leadership, and (5) organizational culture, all of which shape the role of the Basic Education Division of the Bengkulu City Education and Culture Office in developing student character at SMP Negeri 14 Bengkulu City.

The Organizational Role of the Basic Education Division in Character Development

Conceptually, Katz and Kahn assert that the role of the organization encompasses behavioral expectations attached to specific positions within a social system. In this context, the Basic Education Division performs a strategic function as a policy director, mentor, and quality controller of character education. This finding is supported by an interview with the Head of the Basic Education Division, who stated that character development must be an integral part of school activities, not merely a symbolic activity.

According to documented data, the Education Office has directed all junior high schools in Bengkulu City to regularly implement habits, such as group prayer, morning literacy, and environmental cleanup activities. These directives are consistently implemented at SMP Negeri 14 through daily and weekly activities that have become part of the school culture.

The organization's role is also evident in the development and provision of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for character development, which aim to ensure a unified understanding across the school in implementing student activities. These SOPs serve as normative guidelines governing the implementation of character development activities, from teacher role models and habituation activities to managing student disciplinary violations.

The supervisory role is also identified through the implementation of routine supervision of the school twice a semester. This supervision is used to monitor the implementation of character development and assess the effectiveness of school activities in fostering discipline, responsibility, and social behavior in students.

Thus, character development at SMP Negeri 14 reflects the integration between policy and implementation at the educational unit level.

Organizational Communication between the Education Office and Schools

Katz and Kahn view communication as the primary mechanism of coordination within an organization. Research findings indicate that communication between the Basic Education Division and SMP Negeri 14 is active, intensive, and responsive, through both formal and informal channels.

Formal communication is conducted through circulars, coordination meetings, field supervision, and the submission of official reports. Meanwhile, informal communication is fostered through the use of the organization's WhatsApp group, which facilitates the rapid and real-time dissemination of information. This is particularly crucial for synchronizing activity schedules, clarifying instructions, and quickly resolving disciplinary issues.

Effective communication is reflected in the alignment of development activities at the school with departmental directives. There is alignment between departmental policies and school practices, such as morning literacy sessions, group prayers, and Clean Fridays, which have become daily and weekly routines at SMP Negeri 14.

Good communication also fosters a collaborative work environment. The school not only receives instructions from the department but also actively provides input regarding facility needs, implementation obstacles, and character development achievements. With this two-way communication pattern, the coaching process becomes more adaptive to student dynamics at school.

Motivation and Social Influence in Character Building

Motivation, within the theoretical framework of Katz and Kahn, is an internal and external drive that influences individuals and organizations to achieve specific goals. In this study, motivation at the education office and school levels is reflected in a shared commitment to improving student quality.

The Education Office provides motivation through:

- 1) Training and technical guidance for teachers;
- 2) Assistance in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum;
- 3) Strengthening extracurricular activities;
- 4) Support for competitions such as the FLS2N and O2SN.

Social motivation also arises from the school's desire to provide the best environment for students. Teachers strive to create a learning environment that is humane, disciplined, and exemplary. This is crucial considering that school data indicates disciplinary challenges, such as 11 unexcused absences and 16 truancies per semester.

With shared motivation, the department and school not only resolve violations but also emphasize an educational approach through guidance from homeroom teachers, student council (OSIS) guidance, and collaboration with parents. This social motivation strengthens the positive climate within the school environment.

Leadership in Character Building

In Katz and Kahn's theory, leadership is the ability to influence members of an organization to behave in a manner consistent with goals. The research results show that leadership in the Elementary Education Sector and at SMP Negeri 14 is characterized by participatory, democratic, and role model-based behavior.

The Head of the Elementary Education Sector emphasized that character building is not solely the school's responsibility but a regional priority. The head of the sector provides space for discussion with staff while maintaining firmness in policy implementation.

At the school level, the principal of SMP Negeri 14 leads by modeling expected behavior. Teachers serve as role models for students in terms of discipline, religiosity, responsibility, and social ethics. This aligns with Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 23 of 2015, which emphasizes the importance of role models in character building.

Exemplary leadership is highly effective in the context of character development because students tend to imitate the behavior of the teachers they see every day. Therefore, the role of school leaders is crucial in creating a positive culture in the educational environment.

Organizational Culture as a Foundation for Character Development

Organizational culture is a crucial aspect of Katz and Kahn's theory because it regulates the values, norms, and behavioral patterns of organizational members. In this study, both in government agencies and schools, the culture that was formed supported the character development process. The organizational culture at the Education Agency reflects the following values:

- 1) accountability,
- 2) professionalism,
- 3) public service,
- 4) administrative responsibility.

These values encourage more structured and consistent development. The organizational culture at SMP Negeri 14, as found in the field, reflects:

- 1) religiosity (collective prayer),
- 2) discipline (morning assembly, literacy),

- 3) cooperation (Clean Friday),
- 4) social concern (religious and social activities).

This culture does not emerge instantly but is built through routine practices, teacher role models, and ongoing supervision from the agency.

This positive culture serves as the primary foundation for character development because the values instilled are not only conveyed verbally but are also realized in daily activities. Thus, character development is no longer an additional program, but an integral part of school life.

Synergy between the Education Office and Schools

One of the key findings of the research is the strong synergy between the Basic Education Division and SMP Negeri 14. This synergy arises because both share the same goal: to develop students with character. This collaboration is evident in:

- 1) alignment of policies and development practices at the school,
- 2) intensive communication,
- 3) mutually supportive leadership,
- 4) a harmonious organizational culture,
- 5) collective motivation to develop students.

This synergy is what makes character development at SMP Negeri 14 effective, despite challenges such as student discipline issues and limited learning facilities.

The discussion shows that character development for students at SMP Negeri 14 in Bengkulu City is the result of the integration of various organizational aspects. The normative, structural, and cultural functions of the Basic Education Division are implemented harmoniously through policies, habituation, supervision, effective communication, and participatory leadership. Meanwhile, schools are the primary implementers of character values through daily activities, role models, and habituation.

Therefore, the effectiveness of character development depends not only on schools but also on systemic support from the education department, the primary director of basic education.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings on the Role of the Basic Education Sector of the Bengkulu City Education and Culture Office in Developing Student Character (Case Study at SMP Negeri 14 Bengkulu City), several important conclusions can be drawn:

1. The organizational role of the Basic Education Sector of the Bengkulu City Education and Culture Office is effective as a facilitator, director, and supervisor of the implementation of character education in schools. Schools play an active role as direct implementers through positive habit-building activities such as group prayer, morning literacy, and mutual cooperation.
2. Organizational communication between the Education Office and schools is two-way, both through formal channels such as meetings and letters, and informally through digital media. This communication pattern facilitates coordination and expedites the dissemination of information regarding the implementation of character development programs.
3. Motivation and social influence within the Education Office and schools are fostered through collaboration, moral support, and solidarity among staff and teachers. Work motivation stems from a spirit of togetherness and a sense of responsibility for student progress.
4. The leadership implemented within the Education Office and SMP Negeri 14 Bengkulu City is democratic and participatory. Leaders serve as role models for their subordinates and encourage the involvement of all organizational members in decision-making and the implementation of character-based activities.

5. The organizational culture in both institutions is shaped by the values of discipline, responsibility, cooperation, religiosity, and social concern. This positive culture serves as the foundation for creating a harmonious and character-based educational environment.

The results of this study confirm that the success of character-building programs is inseparable from the alignment between structural and social aspects within educational organizations, with work effectiveness, communication patterns, motivation, leadership, and organizational culture being key determinants.

SUGGESTION

1. The Bengkulu City Education and Culture Office is expected to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation system for character development programs in schools to ensure their implementation is more measurable and sustainable. The office can also increase training, mentoring, and the sharing of good practices for teachers and principals in instilling character values in students.
2. SMP Negeri 14 Bengkulu City is recommended to continue developing innovative habit-building activities that are relevant to current developments, such as digital-based character development, value literacy, or social activities involving the surrounding community. The school also needs to increase the consistency of the implementation of the values of discipline and responsibility through supervision and role modeling by the entire school community.
3. For teachers and other educational staff, it is important to maintain work enthusiasm and motivation through collaboration and mutual support among colleagues. Teachers are also expected to be role models in their daily behavior, as effective character education begins with concrete examples, not just verbal instruction.
4. For future researchers, this research can be expanded by examining other aspects of organizational theory, such as the dynamics of situational leadership or change management in education. The research can also be expanded to other schools or different levels of education so that the results are more comprehensive and able to provide a broader picture of the implementation of character education in Bengkulu City.

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