

An Evaluation of Moral Education's Capabilities in Enriching Student's Moral Behaviour

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the capability of Moral Education in enriching student's moral behaviour in Melaka secondary school through four research questions, 1) What are the policy, aims and objectives of Moral Education developed by the Ministry of Education in secondary schools?, 2) What are the scope and quality of support, resources, and training in the implementation of Moral Education?, 3) To what extent have the curriculum performance and monitoring, and instructional practices been employed in the implementation of Moral Education?, and 4) To what extent have the actual outcomes of Moral Education been achieved in secondary schools? Qualitative research design is applied in this research with the participation of two moral teachers and five upper secondary students. The data collection techniques apply in this research included document analysis and semi-structured interviews. The data collected are analyzed manually. This research discovered that the Moral Education is effective in enhancing students' moral behavior. The syllabus of Moral Education is suitable for secondary school students. The curriculum should be continued with some improvement.

Keywords: moral education, curriculum evaluation, Stufflebeam CIPP model

1. Introduction

Moral Education was introduced as a core subject in 1983 in all primary schools. It is a compulsory subject for all non-Muslim students while Muslim students will take Islamic Education. There are 7 themes and 36 noble values that the students will learn in the upper secondary school. But the level of courtesy, politeness, patience, humility, tolerance, and respect among the students are still disappointed low [7]. Many students are not even prepared to say 'thank you' when they presented with rewards in a recognition ceremony after learning Moral Education for 11 years since Standard One in primary school. The negative behaviour syndrome as reflected in problems like road bullying, breaking traffic rules, littering and being disrespectful to the elderly had proven that the students are still far away to achieve the objective of Moral Education in Malaysia. People parks in a disabled parking slot and near fire hydrants, littering in public places, vandalizing public property, jumping the queue and not giving up seats to the elderly, disabled and pregnant women [6].

According to the senior vice chairman of Malaysia Crime Prevention Foundation, Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye [13]. there are a total of 2784 criminal cases involved teenagers are being reported from January until June of 2017. The criminal case is such as molestation, robbery, and stealing. Besides, 193 cases showed that teenagers age 13-18 involves serious drug abuse cases. These statistics only showed the number of cases that caught by the police [13]. These are the most common issues that are being discussed in the Moral Education textbook and students are being taught. But why these kinds of negative behavior still exist? In Malaysia secondary schools, non-Muslim students learned the 36 noble values in Moral Education, but are they practicing them in everyday life? Or they just memorizing the 36 noble values for the sake of passing the subject. In [6], [18] found out that the Moral Education is too exam-oriented. The students are frustrated with the set of moral values, each of these values is defined neatly with specific keywords and terms in the syllabus. The questions being asked in Moral Education can only test on how the

students memorizing the moral values. They are trained like robots, memories of the keywords to score in the SPM examination. Besides sitting for the examination, the students must prepare a Moral Project as a compulsory component of Moral Education evaluation for SPM.

This project encourages students to apply moral values in activities such as community service and volunteer activities. But the implementation of the project is considering fail as the focus is still more on reports and grading. The students just posed and take picture evidence as they are cleaning the environment. They do not involve any of the cleaning activities. Some of the teachers even forced the weaker students to copy the project reports for the grading purpose [1]. It is vital for the authority to provide sufficient and adequate information and foundation with regards to important elements in implementing a program [16]. Many parents found out that Moral Education is unnecessary and should not be included in the SPM examination [18]. The subject is not relevant to the real world. There is also political slant in Moral Education. The answer provided by the students during the examination must regurgitate with the syllabus, other answers will not be accepted no matter how rational or logical the arguments provided are. The moral education needs a review, memorizing a list of moral values and brainwashing are pointless [17]. The former Minister of Education, Tan Sri Dato (Dr) Muhyiddin Muhammad Yassin do agree that the Moral Education need for review. He realized that the memorizing of moral values is not suitable and some contents of Moral Education will need to inspect. The title and the content of the subject also required improvement [14]. It's time for Malaysians to address these issues and ask ourselves to what extent we have been courteous and practice the noble values. The moral education syllabus should be reinforced to emphasize the importance of learning and practicing the 36 noble values. The noble values should put into practice in our daily life [7]. The subject should able to teach students about morals, ethics, religion and philosophy that can help them holistically. Moral Education should not an examination subject but one that imbibes principles and values for life [18].

The main objective of Moral Education is to build an individual who are responsible and contribute toward the country and community. A moral student should equip with moral thinking, moral feeling and moral behavior [12]. However, the increasing number of students involving in criminal cases and negative behaviour of students had showed the limitation of Moral Education in developing a moral individual. In response to this problem, this research proposed to explore the implementation of Moral Education in improving student's moral behaviour in secondary schools.

2. Research Design

This study applied qualitative research, interview and content analysis were used as the methods of receiving data. A national-type secondary school is selected as the population of the study that implement the same syllabus and sit for standard examinations announced by the Ministry of Education. The national-type secondary school consists of the higher number of non-Muslim students who learn Moral Education in the school. This is more reliable and reaches the maximum exposure for the researchers to contact the correct and accurate participants. Among 62 national-type secondary schools in Peninsular Malaysia, there are 11 national-type secondary schools in the rural area and 51 in the urban area. A national-type secondary school was selected purposely as the school to investigate the research objective. This national-type secondary school is located at the border between Malacca and Negeri Sembilan with approximate 1000 students. It is the only rural National-type secondary school in Malacca. Based on the SPM performance in 2018, this secondary school was the top school among secondary schools in Alor Gajah [15]. Four research objective of the study are (1) to understand the policy, aims and objectives of Moral Education implemented in secondary schools, (2) to understand the scope and quality of support, resources and training in the implementation of Moral Education, (3) to explore the curriculum performance and monitoring, and instructional practices employed in the implementation of Moral Education, and (4) to explore the actual outcomes of Moral Education been achieved in secondary schools to enhance students' moral behaviour.

The target population of this study are all the Form Four and Form Five secondary students who are learning Moral Education in the national-type secondary school of Malaysia. According to the statistic from the Department of Statistics Malaysia in November 2018, there are 785,000 students enrolled in upper secondary school [3]. Based on the ethnic composition, the percentage of non-Muslim in Malaysia is 32.7%. Hence the estimated number of the target population for this research is 256,695 students [2]. However, in [5] stated that the actual population is rarely available. Therefore, the accessible population is referring to the population in which the researcher is rarely available. During the qualitative phase, the accessible population is referring to the total number of non-Muslim students available in the national-type secondary school that randomly selected.

In this study, five students who learn Moral Education are purposely been selected to become the sample and provide information for the research. Two Moral Education teachers from each school are been purposely chosen to become the sample and provide additional information on the research question. The involvement of the teachers in this study is known as methodological triangulation. Multiple data sources are used to study the same phenomenon and this will help to validate the finding [5].

3. Results and Discussion

Analysis was grouped into 5 themes: background of the participants, the context of Moral Education, the input of Moral Education, the process of Moral Education and the product of Moral Education. Based on the agreement between participants and the researcher, the discussion of the findings used nicknames to protect the privacy of the participants. The findings collected were analyzed in this chapter to make it easier for readers to understand the key points of the discussion. There are two Moral Education teachers and five students that participated in this research. MET 1 is an experienced head of the Moral Education committee in the school. She started teaching Moral Education since 2006. She is teaching Moral Education and Physical Education in the secondary school. MET 2 is the discipline teacher in the school. She studied major in Malay Literature and minor in Moral Education. With 20 years of teaching experience, Moral Education had become her major in teaching. Currently, she teaches Moral Education for Form Two, Form Three, Form Four and Form Five. MES 1 is 17 years old. She is the head of the prefect in the school. She studies at 5 Science 1. She holds a position as president of the Chinese Language Society, secretary of Scout, vice president of Table Tennis Club. MES 2 is 17 years old and study in 5 Science 1. He is the committee member of Scout and vice president of Leo Club. MES 3 comes from 5 Science 1, 17 years old as well. She is a prefect and secretary of the red club. MES 4 is Form 4 and studies in Account Principle class. She is the head of the prefect for 2020. MES 5 is 16 years old, at 4 Science 1 class. He is the head of the prefect for 2020. He holds the position as Vice President of St John Ambulance, Vice President of Green Club and Vice President for Interact Club.

3.1. Philosophies and Policy of Education Malaysia

Referring to the Education Act 1996 [4] knowledge is a key determinant of the goals of the nation and the saviour of nations. The purpose of education is to enable Malaysians to acquire the knowledge, skills, and values that are needed in a competitive and globalized world, as a result of the rapid development of science, technology, and information. Education plays a vital role in the achievement of the nation's vision for the achievement of fully developed countries and in terms of economic, social, and spiritual, moral and ethical progress, towards the creation of a united, democratic, liberal and dynamic society (CON/PP/EA/PEM).

Moral Education is aligned with the Rukun Negara, Malaysia's founding philosophy. After the serious race riot, 13 May Incident, the government believed that unity among races in Malaysia is very important. Therefore, Rukun Negara proposed to create harmony and unity among the various races in Malaysia (CON/PP/RN/PEM) & (CON/PP/RN/PEM).

The selection of Moral Education content is done to realize the spirit and desire contained in the Rukun Negara, Vision 2020 and the National Philosophy of Education (CON/PP/NPE) [12].

3.2. Aims and Objectives of Moral Education

Moral Education is a program designed to educate students to be moral or ethical by highlighting the developmental aspects of moral thinking, moral feeling, and moral behaviour. Moral education in secondary schools focuses on nurturing the spiritual strength and purity of students via the gratitude and habit of the values of the Malaysian community in the various religions, traditions, and customs of the nation. This enables students to develop a life guide that enables them to become morally responsible. This enables them to be individuals who are morally and informally responsible for all their decisions and actions (CON/AO/FCS). A number of key values have been identified as guides in the growth of the physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and social (CON/AO/PRI). The values are: (1) taking responsibility for oneself, family and others, (2) hold fast to the teachings of religion, (3) caring for the environment, (4) maintaining peace and harmony of life, (5) passionate patriotic, (6) respect for human rights, and (5) practicing democracy in life (CON/AO/PRI) [8]-[11].

The Moral Education Curriculum intentions is to create individuals who are virtuous, responsible, and who can contribute concerning the harmony and stability of the country and the worldwide community (CON/AO/AIM). The objective of Moral Education is to allow students to: (1) comprehend and appreciate the values needed to be of good character, (2) recognize and accept the vital of harmony between humans and the environment and strive towards maintaining it, (3) enhance comprehension and collaboration to maintain peace and harmony in a democratic Malaysia, (4) expand mature reasoning based on moral and spiritual standard in decision making and problem solving, and (5) have a commitment to practice ethical and altruistic morals in line with the values of the Malaysian public (CON/AO/OBJ) [8]-[11].

3.3. Syllabus of Moral Education

The syllabus of Moral Education was designed by experts in Moral Education with the guidance of the Education Act 1996, Rukun Negara and the National Philosophy of Education. Education is an ongoing process to develop an individual who compatible in a global world with skills, knowledge, and values. Education should always change to align with the development of global needs, technology, and information. One of the main purposes of Moral Education is to promote unity and harmony among Malaysians. This is synced with the philosophy of Malaysia, Rukun Negara which emphasis achieving unity society with the five principles: Belief in God, Loyalty to King and Country, The Supremacy of the Constitution, The Rule of Law, and Courtesy and Morality. These five principles are applied in the syllabus of Moral Education with 7 areas and 36 moral values. Whereas the National Philosophy of Education pays attention to design Malaysian citizens who are well-informed and competent, who own high moral values, and who are accountable and capable of attaining a high level of personal well-being. This showed the significance of Moral Education in Malaysia [8]-[11].

As a multiracial country, Moral Education plays a role to develop students who appreciate and practice the values of Malaysians in their life. They understand the moral values, accept and demonstrate them in their life. Students are integrated with three moral dimensions, namely moral thinking, moral feeling, and moral behaviour. There are seven principles in Moral Education: 1) Taking responsibility for oneself, family and others, 2) Hold fast to the teachings of religion, 3) Caring for the environment, 4) Maintaining peace and harmony of life, 5) Passionate patriotic, 6) Respect for human rights, and 7) Practicing democracy in life. These seven principles are elaborate in seven areas of learning: self-development, family, environment, patriotism, human rights, democracy, and peace and harmony [8]-[11].

3.4. Utilization of Resources

The primary reference of teachers and students in Moral Education is Moral Textbooks. Teachers will refer to the Standard Document of Primary School (DSKP) to understand the curriculum content of Moral Education. DSKP is the standard document that helps in fulfilling the spirit of the National Philosophy of Education and ready students in the globalization world with 21-century skills. Suggested activities and implementation of resources are discussed in the DSKP. Teachers are encouraged to apply the activities with their creativity following the student's interest. There are limited resources given by the Ministry of Education Malaysia for Moral Education. In order to get additional exercise for the students, teachers will search for online materials. Besides that, the teacher will get extra information such as past year questions from other teachers of other states. The available budget assigned to Moral Education is insufficient for teachers to prepare hand-out and exercise for students. Hence, students have to share exercise books in class. The budgets allocated for Moral Education should be increased. Apart from that, online resources and information will be good to help teachers in the teaching and learning process. Ministry of Education should put more effort in providing standard online materials for Moral Education. This will help to enhance the teaching performance in the classroom.

Training should be provided frequently to Moral Education's teachers in order to update their teaching skills and teaching contents. The courses provided by the Ministry of Education are mostly focus on answering examination questions. Teachers are giving training on marking exam papers. There are limited courses on pedagogies. Courses will be provided when there is an implementation of a new curriculum, but only a few teachers will be selected to join the courses. These selected teachers will attend the courses and share with other teachers in the schools. In-house training will be organized to deliver new ideas to the teachers who do not attend the courses. Training is very important in Moral Education as most of the Moral Education teachers are not major in teaching morals. They are unfamiliar with the syllabus and teaching method of Moral Education. Hence, courses and training must be provided to strengthen their confidence in teaching. The syllabus of Moral Education should be updated frequently to analyse the current situation of the country. The latest examples and issues should be discussed in class. As the context in the textbooks is the general and fixed topic, teachers should relate the moral values to the current issues. The examples apply should close to students' daily life. This will easier for them to relate and apply in their life. It is believed that the current syllabus is suitable and comprehensive for students.

3.5. Instructional Practices Employed

The teaching and learning process is playing a significant role in Moral Education and it should be remained with some improvements. Students nowadays are born in the digital world. It is believed that the usage of digital media in the teaching process will help in learning morals. Students feel happy when they are bringing to the computer room to access online materials. Students would like to participate in online activities such as Quizizz and Kahoot! This will enhance their interest in learning Moral Education. Frog VLE is also implemented in the school and students can answer the questions available on it. But the information and materials available are limited, so the teachers have to put some effort themselves to create their teaching materials.

In moral class, presentation is always the key activities. Students will be divided into groups and topics will be given. Students will then discuss in groups and prepare for a presentation. After the presentation, open discussion is allowed and teachers will provide feedback to them. In most of the classes, textbooks are seldom being used. Teachers will ask students to copy down the main points in their notebooks. This notebook will be their main reference when answering moral questions. Every student has their own style to adopt knowledge, different people learn differently. Teachers should spend time understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the students. Teachers should explore the suitable teaching methods for teaching in class. Some teaching activities might work for certain classes, but not necessarily applicable to all the classes. The teaching activities should apply the following students' level and absorptive capacity.

Teachers should put effort to evoke students' interest in Moral Education. When students are interested, they will have the intention to study. It's suggested that outdoor activities should be carried on in Moral Education. Outdoor activities allow students to learn knowledge outside the classroom. Learning trips to old folk homes, orphanages, the mental hospital is good for students to learn moral values. This will help students in understanding the real situation happening in society. Activities such as discipline camps and charity bazaar are also working to construct moral values of students.

Language is one of the challenges of learning Moral Education. The Malay language is the medium of language uses in teaching Moral Education. Some non-Muslim students are not familiar with the language. So they will found difficulty in learning morals. Students able to understand what teachers taught in the classroom but they will suffer when answering the questions. Some of the words used in the questions are not familiar to them. Hence, they might misunderstand the meaning of the words and answer wrongly. Other than that, some in-deep topics such as laws and acts of Malaysia are suffering the students as well. As students are not exposed to this information, they felt difficult to learn these topics. Teachers are suggested to provide more examples for students to understand these topics.

Assessment is a curriculum process in implementing a curriculum. The assessment of Moral Education can be divided into two parts: examination and project paper. During the examination, the writing and answering skills of the students are very important. They should understand the formula of answering questions to score in the examination. Other than that, students will be assessed through project papers. Students' moral behaviour can be assessed when they are doing the project papers. They will require to communicate with their family, friends, and community when doing the projects. Teachers believed that students would practice moral values when doing the project paper. In contrast, students argued that examination and project papers do not effective in assessing students' moral behaviour. During the preparation of the project paper, students can discuss with their teachers and friends. The photos that they took for the project paper are just to fulfil the criteria. It does not mean they apply the moral values in doing the activities. Besides, the examination is also not strong enough to represent students' moral behaviour. There is a schema provided to mark exam paper, the answers wrote by students are just to score in the examination. Hence, it cannot represent the moral behaviour of the students. It is believed that the assessment of Moral Education should involve parents, friends, and teachers on their moral behavior in daily life.

3.6. Relevance of Moral Education Implementation

There are advantages and disadvantages to implementing Moral Education in secondary school. Based on the discussion above, it showed the significance of implementing Moral Education. This curriculum is very important in developing a moral individual and unity society. Students who good at morals able to maintain a good relationship with their family, friends, teachers, and community. Moral Education is designed according to the foundation of the National Philosophy of Education which aims to produce an individual that balances intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical. Moral values are planted in students' minds without noticing. It provides guidance for students when they faced moral issues. It provides directions in their life. Besides, Moral Education can also enhance students' writing skills and apply them in other subjects.

However, some teachers assigned to teach Moral Education are not major in teaching morals. They are lacking skills and interest in teaching morals. They do not follow the syllabus correctly and might not able to deliver the messages of moral to students completely. Sufficient training should be provided to enhance teachers' confidence in teaching moral. Some teachers and schools are not concerned with Moral Education. They felt like Moral Education is not the major subjects and they rather teach other exam subjects during moral class. Apart from that, there is a need to review the assessment of the Moral Examination. Students believed that moral behaviour

should not be assessed through examination. Marks should be given by monitoring their moral behaviour in daily life activities.

A moral Education syllabus is believed helps in enhancing students' moral behaviour. The improvement of students' behaviour can be seen after five years of learning Moral Education in schools. Students only learn basic moral knowledge during primary schools, but they learn more in deep during secondary schools. Moral Education can help in forming the character of the students and enhancing their moral behaviour. It can be a reference for students toward moral issues.

Moral Education in Malaysia incorporated to the Whole-Man model to develop individuals that strong in moral thinking, moral feeling, and moral behaviour. Students should understand, accept and demonstrate moral value in their daily life activities after learned Moral Education. Throughout the discussion above, it is believed that Moral Education is managed to develop moral thinking and moral feeling of students. However, Moral Education is weak in constructing moral action among students. Students will understand what is not right and immoral. But they will not necessarily react to the moral issues with moral action. Therefore, learning activities of Moral Education should be reconstructed in order to enhance the implementation of moral action among students.

4. Conclusion

The discussion above had proven that Moral Education are effective in enhancing students' moral behaviour. The syllabus of the Moral Education are suitable for the secondary schools students. The curriculum should be continued with some improvement. This section will discuss the suggestions for improving the curriculum and suggestions for future researchers. Future researchers are suggested to use qualitative and quantitative mixed-method to deepen the study by using a larger sample of studies. Also, the researcher can use the design of a fully qualitative study to understand the resources, teaching process and effects of Moral Education. Observation can be one of the methods for future researchers to gather different data on the teaching and learning process in moral class. This research only involved two teachers and three students. For researchers interested in conducting quantitative studies, this research may serve as a reference in instrument analysis to conduct a large-scale survey.

This research uses a sample of Chinese student studies in a daily national-type secondary school in Malacca. As a suggestion for future studies, researchers interested in exploring the effects of Moral Education can use qualitative research design by involving a sample of Chinese and Tamil students from national secondary schools. Researchers can also compare Chinese students' moral behaviour with Indian students. Besides, comparisons can also be made by examining the moral behaviour of non-Muslim students with disciplinary problems with non-Muslim students who do not have disciplinary problems. The use of different samples may enhance understanding of the reality of moral behaviour among students.

Generally, the Ministry of Education especially the Curriculum Development Centre should enhance the quality of instructional practices activities of Moral Education. This will help to improve understanding, constructing and adopting moral values in students' daily life. Ministry of Education should provide sufficient budget and resources to schools. Training and courses should be provided to strengthen teachers' confidence in teaching Moral Education.

In addition, the Ministry of Education should emphasis on practicing moral informally in the schools. Activities such as co-curriculum activities outside the school can help in developing a moral individual. From the discussion above, it believed that moral learning is not only taking place in the classroom but also outside the classroom. Hence, activities such as community service and volunteer programs should be implemented in the schools. Study trips to the orphanage, old folk home, a disability recovery center and native village will help students in forming a moral practice such as community spirit, love, and care in the community.

Schools should give their full support to the formation of a caring and equitable society that establishes and develops student moral behaviour in schools. The various forms of interaction between the school management and the students at the school also influence the students' moral behaviour. School relationships with the outside community need to be strengthened by working together to inculcate values that support the development of moral conduct. One of the most effective collaborations is to develop programs that enable students to reach out to members of the public directly. Activities such as volunteerism in the community, community welfare activities in orphanages, old folk homes, the centre of the disabled and rehabilitation centre can help in shaping students' moral behaviour.

The next proposal involves the role of the parents of the students to act as facilitators and to diversify their interactions with their children in shaping their moral behaviour. Besides, parents need to establish and develop a motive for practicing moral conduct in the family institution.

The final suggestion to the students involved in this study is that they need to stick to the concepts and principles of morality in their daily lives. They also need to respond positively to the forms of interaction they experience in daily life to practice the moral practice of daily living.

The discussion in this chapter had answered all the four research questions to understand the phenomena of the research. Implementation of Moral Education in Malaysia will not achieve its goal if all parties do not unite to realize it. This research is not intended to expose the deficiencies and faults of certain parties who are too dependent on the subject of Moral Education in the pursuit of student personality. Instead, it aims to find the best solution to produce a student with a comprehensive moral development. Moral Education is one of the mediums that can help the morale of the human being but it requires the support and cooperation of all parties to achieve its goal.

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