



The Implementation of Character Education Values to Prevent Radicalism at the Indonesia-Malaysia Border

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the implementation of character education values as a means for preventing radicalism along the Indonesia-Malaysia border (specifically focusing on students at SMAN 1 or Public Senior High School 1, Jagoi Babang District, Bengkayang Regency). The study employed a descriptive study. The research focused on character education values as a means to prevent or suppress radicalism among the people of Jagoi Babang District, who were susceptible to ideas that contradicted the national ideology. The main targets of this effort were the students, who often played a role in provoking radical behavior. The study findings indicate that students were aware of their citizenship status due to their exposure to schooling. However, the availability of items from surrounding countries frequently encouraged students to consume a greater quantity of Malaysian products. Empirical evidence demonstrated that students had an innate comprehension of radicalism, despite the researcher merely hinting at the concept. Before being probed with more detailed inquiries during the interview, students were capable of offering comprehensive insights. The majority of students had exhibited their comprehension of the influence of radicalism. According to the research, schools in Jagoi Babang were not offering enough extracurricular, co-curricular, and in-school activities to keep students from becoming radicalized. This was true both inside the schools and in border communities. Nevertheless, students had prior knowledge regarding radicalism and its risks.

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INTRODUCTION

Pluralism and diversity, whether originating externally or within the nation, are considered blessings from God. People can show their gratitude by embracing mutual respect and embodying virtues of tolerance in their daily lives. The goal of promoting mutual respect is best achieved by instilling these values from a young age and practicing them consistently. A crucial strategy for instilling positive character qualities in the younger generation is through education, especially given their susceptibility to influences that may contradict nationalistic principles. There are ongoing efforts to prevent the infiltration of radicalism into both formal and informal educational settings. The current era of modernization is also bringing about various changes in this regard. (Wiyono & Ramadhan, 2021).

Educational institutions play a crucial role in addressing the infiltration of radicalism in remote border areas that are not closely monitored by the government. This necessitates the implementation of a targeted and efficient plan, which includes the promotion of character education. Hence, the state's endeavor to safeguard the community, particularly the individuals residing in the Indonesia-Malaysia border region, involves the implementation of character education values. Academics play a crucial role in combating the ideology of radicalism, and they must continue to do research and make coordinated efforts in this context. The research carried out in the Indonesia-Malaysia border area seeks to ascertain the application of character education principles by studying the pupils of SMAN 1 (Public Senior High School 1) Jagoi Babang in Bengkayang Regency. In line with this idea, Susanti (2020) did research focusing on efforts to prevent radicalism and terrorism among adolescents using lecture sessions, question-and-answer sessions, and guided discussions. The research findings emphasized that these methods effectively enhanced the knowledge and awareness of school residents. This positive impact was observed not only among students but was also evident in the awareness of the student council program and the supportive role of counseling teachers in fostering student characters, which are based on Pancasila (an official philosophical foundation of the Indonesian state that promotes national unity, diversity, and ethical governance).

Tanasa, Yahii, & Damhuri (2019) describe several efforts to instill character education in students to prevent radicalism. These efforts include planning, implementing following the established plan, supervising, and evaluating. Hence educational institutions are designed not solely to transmit knowledge but also to instill the reinforcement of character education. The education provided by schools goes beyond imparting knowledge but also contributes to the development of students' character (Ramadhan et al., 2022). Character development necessitates a systematic and ongoing process that encompasses elements of cognition (knowledge), emotion, affection, and behavior (action) (Syafe'i, 2017).

Education plays a crucial role in the overall development of students, aiming to transform negative behaviors and attitudes into positive ones, redirect destructive impulses toward constructive actions, and cultivate desirable character traits. Simultaneously, it seeks to nurture and preserve the positive aspects of their existing character. When considering end-of-life matters, educational initiatives should address various aspects, including social, economic, cultural, and health-related activities. This comprehensive approach ensures that students are equipped with a well-rounded understanding and preparation for the various facets of life (Ramadan & Imran, 2021).

Character education in schools serves as a crucial tool in preventing various ideas that deviate from the Pancasila ideology. Among these deviant notions, radical

understanding poses a significant threat, particularly among adolescents (Moreira, 2023; Roby & Muhid, 2022). Radicalism, defined as seeking change through violent and revolutionary means, is particularly prone to development during the adolescent phase. To counteract this, prevention measures within educational institutions involve socialization, careful selection of teaching materials, and instilling national character values. This proactive approach is essential because teenagers, being in a transitional phase, are susceptible targets for provocateurs. Adolescents, not quite children but not fully mature, require special attention. They are easily influenced by issues circulated as tools for propaganda by radical groups, especially through social media. Recognizing that the millennial generation and teenagers are the primary targets of radical spreaders, it becomes imperative to implement preventive measures within the educational system.

Understanding intolerance leading to radicalism has extended even to remote areas. To counteract this, the government plays a crucial role in disseminating information and taking robust action as a preventive measure to ensure no breaches of national commitments and acts of radicalism occur. Establishing a school culture that actively contributes to the formation of positive character traits is an ongoing process that involves everyone in the educational system. Character education, with its focus on developing the nation's character values, particularly Pancasila (Kurniawan, 2021), is instrumental in this effort. Individuals deemed radical are those seeking to dismantle the existing situation, advocating for rapid and fundamental changes in laws and government methods (Sirry, 2020; Wong, Khiatani, & Chui, 2019). Recognizing and addressing these issues at the grassroots level is essential to foster a more tolerant and harmonious society.

Within the context, radicalism finds fertile ground within the school environment, gradually embedding doctrines and making students susceptible targets due to their search for identity and eagerness for new experiences. Exposure to extreme mentors can quickly lead students towards intolerance, bullying, and conflicts. Preventing radicalism, especially in remote areas, should be a key focus for the government, given that border regions often receive insufficient attention. Educational institutions, serving as the core for shaping the national character of the younger generation, play a pivotal role in this endeavor. The character formed should be rooted in the values of Pancasila, which, when understood, can be easily developed (Fitriyani, 2018). Education holds a crucial role in addressing various radicalism phenomena, including providing teaching materials that sharpen tolerance values. Teachers, as role models of character education, play a vital role in countering radicalism. The threat of radicalism among the millennial generation is influenced by factors such as media and technology, education, and social values. Addressing community behaviors that exhibit ethnic, religious, and cultural sentiments is essential to prevent these sentiments from becoming a serious threat to national unity (Ramadan et al., 2018).

The surge in teenage violence, attributed to the overuse and negative impact of social media, as well as being susceptible to radical influences and a tendency to imitate, serves as a reminder for educational institutions to prioritize the Pancasila character growth program. In a 2019 study focusing on radicalism through character education at SMAN 3 (Public Senior High School) Depok, Saihu & Marsiti (2019) highlight the significance of homeroom and subject teachers in instilling character values, and the incorporation of different character values into daily exams. These values encompass qualities such as kindness, respect, practicing religious virtues by starting each learning session with prayer, showing patriotism by singing the national anthem, and promoting

cleanliness and environmental care through a designated cleaning schedule (Carter, 2018). These proactive actions help prevent the infiltration of radical influences in the school environment. Building upon this research, this current study is more unique compared to others in its scope as it examines character education from multiple perspectives—school, students, and the social environment. It aims to gain insights into the implementation of character education at SMAN 1 Jagoi Babang, with the specific goal of preventing radicalism in the Indonesia-Malaysia border area in the Bengkayang district.

Given the vulnerability of the Indonesia-Malaysia border to radicalism due to its long-distance surveillance, the border region in the Jagoi Babang District requires consistent reinforcement, guidance, and education prioritizing the formation of nationalist character among the millennial generation. This research, conducted as a case study at SMAN 1 Jagoi Babang, aims to identify character education values that serve as preventive measures against radicalism, particularly in an area easily influenced by ideas contrary to national ideology. This research site is selected based on its geographical location and the perceived threat of radicalism in the region, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of character education in an Indonesia-Malaysia border context.

METHODS

The method used is the descriptive qualitative (Sugiyono, 2018). Employing the nature of descriptive qualitative study, the research collected the data through observation, interviews, and documentation. This method is deemed relevant due to the research objectives, which seek in-depth explanations and observations related to humanism and human behavior.

This study took place on Yamaker Sei Take Street, Jagoi Babang District, Bengkayang Regency, West Kalimantan, specifically in SMAN 1 Jagoi Babang. This place was selected due to its strategic position as a border area, as well as the fact that the school was the only senior high school in the area making it the primary educational institution for most teenagers in the Jagoi Babang area. The study targeted adolescents aged 15 and above, as this age group plays a critical role in shaping identity. It is important to comprehend the school's initiatives to anticipate any potential radicalism among the Jagoi Babang teenagers. The emphasis on this aspect is important when examining research inquiries regarding the practical application of character education values.

To conduct this study, interviews were carried out with four 10th-grade students from SMAN 1 Jagoi Babang, situated in the Indonesia-Malaysia border area. The participants, or informants, included SA (16), a grade 10 student; SYA (15) also in grade 10; WA (15) in grade 10; and KI (16), another grade 10 student. The selection of these four students as informants was based on the saturation of data, aligning with the perspective that qualitative research, according to Martha & Kresno (2016) qualitative research does not require a minimum sample size, and a small number of informants can suffice, depending on the saturation of information. The purposive sampling technique was employed to select informants, considering their willingness to participate, their initial knowledge about radicalism, and the relatively young age of students at SMAN 1 Jagoi Babang.

Data for this study were gathered through observation, interviews, and a review of relevant literature focusing on character education values to prevent radicalism at the Indonesia-Malaysia border. Primary data was primarily acquired through direct

observation and interviews, while secondary data was utilized to support the data analysis process. The researcher accessed literature related to character education values and their role in preventing radicalism at the border. The collected data were then synthesized and conclusions drawn, ensuring credibility and relevance to the study on students at SMAN 1 Jagoi Babang. The findings were then presented in a descriptive format.

To enhance the research context, preliminary information was integrated with existing knowledge about character education and radicalism in the Indonesia-Malaysia border region. This approach provided the researchers with initial insights that guided and focused the data collection process, aligning with the research questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Student's Understanding of Radicalism

SMAN 1 Jagoi Babang is a school situated in the Indonesia-Malaysia border region, making it a target for adherents of radical ideologies. It becomes crucial to instill a sense of defending the country among students to counteract the influence of radicalism. While physical attacks are a concern, the most dangerous aspect of terrorism lies in psychological attacks through ideological influence.

Radicalization, defined as a personal process where individuals adopt extreme political, social, or religious ideals justifying violence for their goals, is a significant aspect of radicalism (Muchith, 2016). In the Indonesian context, radicalism is perceived as a social movement posing a serious threat to the unity of the country. It not only originates externally but infiltrates from within through brainwashing by intolerant or radical groups. Education emerges as one of the most effective ways to prevent radicalism. It serves as a primary means to fend off radical influences (Muhayati, 2021). Dealing with radicalism in Indonesian society, particularly among the younger generation, requires the involvement of various stakeholders. Character education values play a vital role in preventing the infiltration of radicalism. This involves fostering obedient attitudes and behaviors in practicing one's religion, promoting tolerance for other religious practices, emphasizing honesty, instilling a national spirit, and cultivating a deep love for the homeland. These values contribute to building resilience against radical ideologies and maintaining the integrity of the nation.

As this study aims to explore the implementation of character education values in preventing radicalism within an Indonesia-Malaysia border area, with a focus on SMAN 1 Jagoi Babang, the investigation explores the perceptions and responses of the participants towards the issue of radicalism's impact on the younger generation. According to the gathered information from the participants, the prevailing sentiment among students was that radicalism was perceived as a negative attitude, often associated with violence. Students in border areas expressed a sense of fear when confronted with the possibility of radical ideologies in their surroundings. In response to this, efforts to anticipate and counteract radicalism primarily revolved around prioritizing education, aligning with Pancasila principles, and maintaining a composed and cautious demeanor when faced with suspicions.

Furthermore, despite the increasing availability of Malaysian goods in the border region, students at SMA Negeri 1 Jagoi Babang demonstrate a strong sense of patriotism by placing a high priority on the value of Indonesian products, the value of education, and mutual respect. These insights offer significant perspectives on the manifestation of character education values in the context of border region student radicalism prevention.

Student Actions Against Radicalism

The students at SMAN 1 Jagoi Babang exhibit their sense of national spirit as Indonesian citizens through a commitment to diligent study and mutual respect, both within the school environment and outside of it (Muhayati, 2021). In light of the increasing reach of radicalism towards children, it becomes crucial to implement quality education that aligns with Pancasila ideology, effectively shielding the nation's generation from the influence of radical ideologies. The students' love for their motherland is demonstrated by a preference for Indonesian products, despite the challenges of balancing choices due to their location in the border area (Ratih & Najicha, 2021). This sense of nationalism and love for the motherland is considered foundational for preserving the unity of Indonesia and the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Moreover, the students at SMAN 1 Jagoi Babang emphasize the importance of respecting differences and promoting a culture that rejects discrimination and embraces diversity in ethnicity, religion, and beliefs. This mutual tolerance is not limited to the school environment but extends to the broader social context within the community.

In the study conducted by Ratih & Najicha (2021), Ghoni highlights the importance of tolerance to prevent division, strengthen friendships, and embrace differences. Students at SMA Negeri 1 Jagoi Babang, when responding to activities conducted by others, expressed an attitude of non-judgment, emphasizing the need to understand the purpose behind those activities. Regarding local culture and traditions, students mentioned the continued observance of events such as *Gawai*, *Nabo*, and *Panyugu*. However, when it comes to cultural influences from outside, especially neighboring countries, students often express a lack of knowledge or understanding. In response to individuals or groups promoting radical ideas, students advocated for eradication through avoidance, caution, and distancing themselves. When asked about depending on others for characteristics or behaviors, students emphasized mutual support among friends but acknowledged a hesitancy to interact with unfamiliar individuals. Examining personal responsibility, students outlined their commitment to interaction, personal cleanliness, and regular physical activity as ways of being responsible for themselves, society, the environment (both natural and social), and religion. According to the students, character education was actively implemented in schools. They perceived the overall character of their classmates as good, with occasional mischievous behavior. The consequences of misbehavior in the classroom involved reprimands from teachers, reinforcing the importance of maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment.

Students at SMAN 1 Jagoi Babang, when faced with activities considered unconventional, prioritize mutual respect. Their response involved seeking an understanding of the purpose behind these activities, transcending the religious life or beliefs of individuals or groups (Hafid, 2020). Recognizing the characteristics of radicalism, students perceived it as often asserting a single truth, misleading dissenting groups, and hindering the true nature of Islam's tolerance, turning *sunnah* worship into an obligation and *makruh* into a prohibition. The students appreciated and preserved local wisdom, exemplified by the continued observance of *Gawai*, *Nabo*, and *Paguyu* events in the Dayak ethnic Bengkayang community. Despite the introduction of foreign culture, the existing local wisdom remains resilient. As a result of the region being inhabited by a group supporting radicalism, students practice precaution and maintain a safe distance. They adopt a cautious initial strategy and consult with adults living in the Jagoi Babang region for advice on how to effectively cope with such circumstances.

The students at SMAN 1 Jagoi Babang demonstrated a mutual reliance on their peers, fostering a spirit of cooperation and assistance. While most students were generally approachable, forming connections with new acquaintances might take some time. To fulfill their accountability to themselves, society, the environment (comprising natural, social, and cultural elements), and religion, students emphasized the importance of both physical and non-physical qualities. This involves expanding their horizons, caring for the environment, cultivating a helpful attitude, and adapting as responsible and proficient students. The character education they received was under constant supervision by teachers, who provided guidance and support when students faced challenges. Multicultural education at the school was perceived positively by students, fostering good friendships, mutual interaction, and tolerance among individuals from different religions and ethnic backgrounds. However, when it comes to social action activities at the school, students expressed uncertainty or lack of awareness.

In the context of the Jagoi Babang border area, students emphasized the need for caution and alertness in socializing, highlighting the spread of intolerance leading to radicalism even in remote areas. They acknowledged the crucial role of socialization and guidance by the government as preventive measures against violations related to national commitments and acts of radicalism. In addition, to instill good character in students, educational institutions were advised to establish a "school culture" that familiarizes students with the positive traits to be cultivated. This culture of character formation should be consistently built and executed by all participants in the educational process at the school, recognizing the potential infiltration of radicalism into the school environment.

At SMAN 1 Jagoi Babang, the implementation of multicultural education is considered positive, fostering interaction, discussions, and tolerance among students of different religions and ethnic backgrounds. However, students viewed that social action activities within the school had not been effectively realized. In response to the potential infiltration of radicalism, students suggested the importance of vigilance in socializing, paying attention to their surroundings, and remaining alert (Aprilianto & Arif, 2019). Multicultural education serves as a response to cultural, social, and ethnic conflicts that may arise in a society with diverse backgrounds. In the context of preventing the spread of radical understanding, character education, multicultural education, and social action approaches are considered crucial efforts.

CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of character education values to prevent the infiltration of radicalism was carried out in this research on students at SMAN 1 Jagoi Babang District, Bengkayang Regency. The students, as explained earlier, have an understanding of radicalism and its potential dangers, especially for those in border communities. When faced with unusual activities, students emphasize mutual respect and seek to understand the purpose behind these actions, regardless of individual or community beliefs. In response to the presence of a radical group in their vicinity, students express caution and strive to avoid and counter it with the help of adults in the Jagoi Babang area. Teachers actively supervise the character education provided at the school, offering support and guidance to students facing challenges. The multicultural education at SMAN 1 Jagoi Babang is well-received by students, fostering positive interaction, discussions, and tolerance among individuals of various religions and ethnic backgrounds. However, students feel that social action initiatives within the school have

not been effectively implemented. Recognizing the importance of preventing radicalization, students emphasize the need to be cautious in social interactions, pay attention to their surroundings, stay alert during discussions, and adopt a tolerant attitude towards different religions and ethnicities.

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