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Implementation of Teaching and Learning (PdP) of Moral Education in Preschool

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Abstract

Appreciation of the pure values of preschool students can be applied through the introduction of scientific disciplines, especially in Teaching and Learning (PdP) of Moral Education. For some country, the goal of Moral Education is focused on the shaping of virtuous people in three domains, namely (i) moral reasoning, (ii) moral emotions and (iii) moral behaviour toward non-Muslim students by implementing the National Preschool Curriculum Standard (KSPK) based on 14 universal values by preschool teachers. This paper is to study the implementation of teaching and learning by them as one of the reason to build citizen in the community with good moral behavior and reduce the immoral culture among individual. However, based on the review of the previous ideas, there are various issues related to the implementation of Moral Education at the preschool level. The study reviews by an analysis systematic method uses one databases from Google Scholar and the Google search engine. The search finding is to identify issues and suggestions to improve the teaching practice of Moral Education. As a result, there are five issues involved to the implementation of Moral Education include the aspect of teacher pedagogical skills dan parental involvement. Each section is discussed in detail to get an overview of the issues that occur both in the country and abroad. In addition, this paper also provides some suggestions such as narrative and habituation method in teaching sessions to improve the teaching practice of Moral Education to be more effective. Further research on this topic is expected to enlighten people involved such as the ministry, schools and the community about the importance of implementing Moral Education for preschool students.

Keywords: Implementation, Moral Education, Preschool, Issues, Suggestions for Improvement

Introduction

Moral Education is one of the subjects included in the implementation of teaching and learning (PdP) of subjects based on the education curriculum in Malaysia. The implementation of the PdP began as early as 1983 with the introduction of the subject at the primary school level (Ministry of Education, 2019). Transformation in Moral Education has taken place where its implementation is not solely related to religious education but also focuses on the role of morality in education in general (Chazan, 2022). Transformation has occurred due to its dynamic, continuous and constant nature based on the needs of individuals, communities and countries occasionally (Faezah et al., 2017).

The focus of Moral Education is to exhibit the importance of presenting PdP in the classroom to develop the knowledge and experience of preschool students for future life through the application of moral values according to their own style (Shahida, 2021). Based on these efforts, Moral Education PdP is expected to produce an individual with an appreciation of pure values, noble character, strong national identity, unity and patriotic enthusiasm towards contributing productively to oneself, family, society and country (Zihani et al., 2018). Therefore, the implementation continues at the preschool level. The preschool students are children aged between four and six years. At this level, preschool students follow Moral Education PdP based on the latest curriculum which is the National Preschool Curriculum Standard (KSPK).

The goal of KSPK is to develop the potential of preschool students holistically in physical, spiritual, intellectual, emotional and social aspects. This potential is nurtured through conducive, fun, creative and meaningful learning environment and activities that further stimulate self-concept, positive attitude and high confidence as well as prepare students to follow the subsequent learning (Ministry of Education, 2017). Meanwhile, Moral Education provides learning of 14 universal values. By learning these values, it is expected that teachers will highly committed to achieve these goals.

Basically, the goal of Moral Education focuses on the shaping of virtuous people based on three domains, namely (i) moral reasoning, (ii) moral emotions and (iii) moral behavior. Moral reasoning is the mental ability to identify good and wrong behaviors. Moral emotions are awareness of moral feelings to behave well and have moral motivation and intention to act based on empathy towards oneself and others. Meanwhile, moral behavior is a moral action that is related to the other two domains and is performed with a sense of responsibility and willingness (Ministry of Education, 2017; Rukiyati et al., 2020). Based on the preschool curriculum, Moral Education is included in the Pillar of Spirituality, Attitude and Values. This pillar emphasizes the aspects of appreciating religious practices, beliefs, attitudes and values. The discipline of Moral Education is learned by non-Muslim students who are Christians, Buddhists, Hindus and other religions in preschools of National Primary Schools (SK), National-Type Primary Schools (SJK) or private preschools based on the time allocation of 120 minutes each week.

The Importance and Implementation of Moral Education PdP

Moral Education is considered important and is the basis of education that needs to be instilled from a young age. Preschool students have a pure nature. Therefore, the application of good behavior should be instilled from a young age to shape them as good persons (Rukiyati et al., 2020). The pure nature of preschool students is important for the shaping of a noble character. In this regard, Moral Education is essential as their character should be formed gradually through the character formation process. Therefore, learning at preschool level is a crucial period for shaping good attitudes and character in oneself (Munawwarah & Astuti, 2019).

The process of character formation can be appreciated by preschool students as an aid and support to themselves to function as an individual with good moral behavior in society. Moral values are difficult to instill as they cannot be obtained through the process of informing or explaining, but values need to be experienced directly with relevant feelings (Baig & Funer, 2022). Furthermore, the importance of Moral Education in the aspect of human social role can be explained based on the process of good character formation. Based on a high moral understanding, an individual can perceive their respective roles in a society.

Subsequently, individuals will be able to live with high moral values so that it affects their decision-making process daily (Durmus, 2019). In addition, immoral culture in society can be successfully prevented. Among the immoral cultures that are often performed by an individual, especially teenagers, are truancy, mischievous and aggressive behavior, rioters, fights, widespread drug use, rape, murder, and other immoral acts.

As a result, Piaget proposed an implementation process based on three levels of moral development as described in the Theory of Moral Development. The implementation of PdP Preschool Moral Education is conducted in the first stage of the theory, where children aged four to seven have less social interaction with others. On the other hand, children are still in the process of mastering other basic skills, such as physical skills, alone or with peers (Stutts et al., 2011). In addition, this stage is also known as the 'pre-moral' stage. The implications of this theory in the education field have led to several recommendations to develop teaching strategies that assist in providing an environment that supports learning, various social interactions and teaching through peers as well as assist in identifying errors and inconsistent manners of thinking. Therefore, these children are required to be involved in educational programs and spend several hours of school period with various interaction activities with peers and teachers. During this time, the process of character formation with pure values can be applied either directly in the Moral Education teaching slot or indirectly where the teaching of Moral Education is inserted in other pillars and times.

Furthermore, Tofteland (2018) also emphasized the importance of a preschool student's daily routine during school hours. Routine activities are important to deliver 14 universal values in the discipline of Moral Education. Among the daily routine activities are mealtime routine, activity time, and playtime. Based on the duration of the activity, it is the crucial opportunity for them to learn pure values with guidance from the teacher. After that, preschoolers can adapt it in real world experience. Therefore, this concept paper discusses the issue of the implementation of Moral Education PdP on preschool teachers in the context of this country and abroad as well as suggestions for improvement in the Moral Education PdP.

Moral Education Teaching Implementation Issues

Preschool teachers are the main catalyst in the implementation of Moral Education PdP in preschool. Durmus (2019) stated that the moral actions of preschool students are influenced by the actions of teachers, which will have an impact and lead to permanent changes in their thinking and actions. Nevertheless, the implementation of Moral Education PdP by teachers encounters various issues and challenges. The issues are elaborated including teacher mastery in pedagogical skills, parent involvement, lack of teacher training, lack of teacher social competence and lack of resources.

First Issue: Preschool Teacher Mastery in Pedagogical Skills

The main issue in the implementation of Moral Education PdP is regarding the lack of preschool teachers mastery in pedagogical skills. A solid mastery of pedagogical knowledge needs to include mastery of classroom management skills, content, good questioning skills and knowledge in making assessments in PdP (Mil, 2018). Teachers play an important role in using various methods in class activities, reflecting values accurately and creating a positive educational environment (Emin & Perihan, 2021). Nevertheless, preschool teachers still have issues in formulating teaching methods ideal with the physical and mental development characteristics of preschool students. Moreover, they have also ignored the diversity of Moral

Education student development levels in conducting activities in class and often use the approach through preaching in the implementation of Moral Education PdP. This clearly shows that the implementation of PdP uses inappropriate methods for the teaching and understanding of preschool students (Jingyi et al., 2021). Meanwhile, similar issues have been reported by other researchers. According to Guzelyurt (2020), preschool teachers lack knowledge in organizing and managing classrooms. Mastery in that aspect is contained in the pedagogical skills. Based on the findings of the study, there were teachers who have yet to master the skills efficiently represented by two teachers in the study sample. Both of them responded that they were not good at classroom management skills. Thus, it is clear that this shortcoming has created issues and challenges for teachers in implementing Moral Education PdP.

Shahadur et al (2019) conducted a study in Bangladesh and found that some teachers did not apply interactive teaching methods well. The method included the application of innovative game activities and the display of charts or teaching materials during class. In addition, there were also some teachers who could not teach morals in real situations, particularly in a classroom setting. Consequently, preschool students were disinterested in learning and practicing moral and ethical values as there was no encouragement from teachers to improve student achievement. The same phenomenon has also occurred in Malaysia. Suppiah et al (2017) reported that 83.3% of teachers did not master the knowledge of teaching Moral Education. The problem arose as teachers were less exposed to the precise Moral Education teaching pedagogy, especially for new teachers. As a result, the diversity of teaching methods and strategies in the classroom in increasing the interest, motivation and achievement of preschool students became less effective. Teachers should fully master the knowledge of pedagogy in providing knowledge of moral values to preschool students.

Finally, Gui et al (2020) explained the challenges of teachers who are less skilled in the aspects of teaching methods and assessments. A few teachers in Malaysia use less interesting teaching methods and evaluate moral knowledge of students based on tests only. Observation of moral behavior of students is less conducted. For example, teachers emphasize on students in achieving higher subject marks in Moral Education compared to mastery of morals and high moral values. Therefore, the teaching of moral concepts and theories becomes less effective and less meaningful to students as the goal of learning Moral Education is only to obtain good results in tests and not to develop good student morals.

Second Issue: Lack of Parental Involvement

Wohabie et al (2021) stated that the teaching of Moral Education is a collective responsibility of family, peers, media teachers and society in general. It is not a responsibility specifically to certain individuals only. In the implementation of Moral Education PdP, the involvement of parents is an important aspect in the education of preschool students. Parents are defined as individuals who are responsible for the welfare of children and are actively involved in their education either in contributing energy, expertise and other resources that can strengthen the growth and development of children (Ministry of Education, 2016). Parents also play a constructive role in shaping a noble personality using a parenting style that is compatible with the family life practiced (Sneha & Shalini, 2018). Nevertheless, Guzelyurt (2020) raised an issue of lack of parental involvement in the implementation of Moral Education PdP. Based on interviews with preschool teachers in Turkey, the issue was considered one of the challenges in the implementation of Moral Education. From the study sample, it was found that some parents in the country have neglected their responsibility

towards their children as there was no continuity of values and morals teaching at home. Consequently, the teaching was ineffective. During revision in the subsequent learning session, preschool students could not express the learning outcomes well as if the lesson that was tested had not been learned in the previous PdP.

Similarly, Baig and Funer (2022) perceived that most of the parents in Pakistan are from low to middle income groups and affected by poverty factor. This is their greatest concern as they need to maintain their livelihood. As a result, parents care less and unable to contribute to their children's education. In addition, most of the parents are uneducated or poorly educated. Therefore, their perception of the importance of school and the educational process of their children is less encouraging. In fact, most parents have the perception that with their children's admission to school, the task of educating children is solely the school's responsibility. As a result, the involvement of parents in the implementation of Moral Education PdP is reduced. The opinion is also supported by Mngarah (2017) based on the results of his study which explained that there is a problem among parents to shoulder the responsibility of teaching moral values and shaping the children's personality. The findings of the study found that a few parents still have a negative perception by blaming the teacher for failing to shape good behavior and pure morals in their children. The parents perceived that the responsibility is borne by the teacher at school and not their responsibility at home. Nevertheless, the teaching of morals and values is a collective responsibility of family, peers, teachers, media and society in general and not merely an individual responsibility.

Finally, a researcher from Turkey reported the findings of his study that some parents who were interviewed expressed their lack of involvement in teaching morals to their children. They had no knowledge, skills and experience in educating young children as parents with first child. In addition, the monitoring of adults in the use of multimedia resources such as television, laptops and the exploration of negative internet resources, such as YouTube, as well as visual and print media resources at home is not periodic and neglected causing moral teaching to become inefficient (Tekin, 2014).

Third Issue: Lack of Teacher Training

The efficient implementation of Moral Education PdP is carried out by teachers with various experiences and extensive teaching training. The implementation is not only focused on mastering the skills of preschool teachers, but also involves teacher training in relevant programs. However, there are issues that arise among novice teachers. Research findings by Durmus (2019) found that there are some novice teachers who have undergone teacher training but are not confident and still hesitate to make a decision. For examples, giving extra time to Moral Education PdP or focusing on the mastery and success of each student in the academic field. This indicates that novice teachers still lack of teaching training in real situations. As a result, immoral behavior at school, such as truancy and bullying incidents, still occur and have not decreased.

Rojina (2021) conducted a study on preschool teachers. Based on the study, it was found that the existence of the issue of lack of teacher training has occurred among preschool teachers in Bangladesh. More than 70% of teachers have supported changes in the early childhood education curriculum with the provision of teaching training in higher institutions. This was identified from the data collection. It was explained that only a few study respondents underwent teaching training at higher institutions, while the rest did not undergo any appropriate courses or training. This deficiency has caused hesitation in the implementation of PdP. It results in the implementation of pedagogy and methods that are

less appropriate by teachers in teaching, such as a teacher-centered approach and learning through worksheets and homework only. In Pakistan, this issue is also discussed. According to Baig and Funer (2022), lack of teacher training in early childhood education has been a historical problem. Until now, the problem is still ongoing due to limited government investment. Therefore, the teachers selected in this field are the least qualified and least trained teachers. Furthermore, findings from the national education census have identified only 3860 teachers working in early childhood education out of a total of 1.35 million teachers. Moreover, half of the teachers working in the department were identified as not having professional qualifications appropriate to the position.

Finally, the issue of lack of teacher training has also occurred in Ethiopia. Birhan et al (2021) revealed that some of the study respondents, namely pre-school teachers, primary school teachers and parents, reported that the government paid less attention to Moral Education in the country's education system as it was implemented by those who were not knowledgeable and professional in the field of Moral Education. In addition, the implementation of Moral Education in the country also has its own weaknesses, for example the subject is not made into a separate subject at the grassroots level. Consequently, the channeling of moral values among students will be affected. Indirectly, it causes Ethiopian citizens to be irresponsible, cruel, selfish, and lack of knowledge in humane values and morality.

Fourth Issue: Lack of Teacher Social Competence

Teacher social competence is one of the aspects of teacher professional development. It is defined as the teacher's ability to understand his role as a member of society. Among those abilities are the ability to communicate with the community well and highlight the differences in the special characteristics of teachers compared to non-teachers. In addition, the ability of social competence is the teacher's ability to create the value of togetherness with students during the PdP process. This skill needs to be mastered by the teacher so that the relationship between the community and the school will be built. Therefore, all problems related to students' immoral behavior can be solved smoothly assisted by all parties in society (Mil, 2018).

Jingyi et al (2021) identified a lack of social competence among preschool teachers. They have problems in creating interaction and communication with the outside community, especially family members of preschool students. Therefore, any teacher feedback on student development cannot be fully explained to family members. The lack of ability to interact with others is due to the teacher's introverted nature. The opinion is supported by Gui et al (2020) who explained that some teachers still experience difficulty in talking or communicating with parents when preschool students are not behaving well or there are some conflicts at school. In addition, the social interaction of preschool students is less effectively observed in the school community due to deficiencies in that aspect. In this regard, the teacher's role as a bridge of communication between students and their parents cannot be fostered among teachers.

Furthermore, the findings of Sigurdardottir et al (2019) also identified the lack of language mastery by teachers to interact with preschool students. Some of the teachers are less knowledgeable in using language for the purpose of teaching. The lack of language mastery by teachers has caused confusion and made students unsure of the conditions allowed in the classroom environment, especially for implicit value education learning. As a result, the shortcoming hinder the value of togetherness and positive social relationships. In

fact, good language mastery can create interaction between teachers and preschool students through the teacher's instructions and explanations. Each clear explanation is intended to make good practice more applicable and understandable to students.

This situation also occurred in Malaysia when threatened by the Covid-19 pandemic which has caused all countries to close all sectors including the education sector. As a result of the current phenomenon, the ministry has introduced an online learning method which was the Teaching and Learning at Home (PdPR) method where students attended classes online. This situation has given challenges and made it difficult for teachers to interact with students. Teachers are less efficient in using information technology tools and online applications, such as computers in Kahoot!, Youtube, Google Meet and other online tools and applications, which causes social interaction with students to be limited especially in Moral Education learning. In this case, teachers can only explain about moral values but cannot show moral actions in real situations (Hairul et al., 2021). Moreover, any criticism and advice during class is difficult to convey in the PdPR session. Finally, students can only explore the learning of pure values on the internet through their own efforts without examples of good behavior from the teachers.

Fifth Issue: Lack of Resources

Learning resources are an important aspect in the implementation of the PdP process with the aim of stimulating students to learn as preschool students better understand teaching aided with concrete or real materials. At the preschool level, students have not yet been able to build knowledge through an abstract teaching process (Farhanah & Aliza, 2021). The fact is the implementation of Moral Education PdP has deficiencies in the content of learning resources. A study by Emin and Perihan (2021) explained that there were issues and challenges in the implementation of Moral Education PdP in Turkey in the aspect of lack of learning resources. Preschool students have limited learning resources in learning Moral Education. Existing teaching resources were only from uninteractive sources for students to learn. As a result, the implementation of PdP can not optimally shape students into virtuous people.

A study from Malaysia in the field of Moral Education by Suppiah et al (2017) also explained the lack of use of teaching aids in PdP. The lack of use of BBM is caused by the time, energy and money constraints faced by teachers. In the end, teachers decide to use traditional approach, limited reference materials and exercise books as well as textbooks as BBM in PdP. As a result, teacher readiness and motivation in conducting PdP decreased. Moreover, it indirectly causes students to be disinterested and not focus during Moral Education PdP. On the other hand, the same issue has occurred in Pakistan. The country has experienced a lack of material resources for the effective operation of early childhood education centers. The centers in the public sector still need comprehensive physical resource support, namely classrooms, educational resources and materials, drinking water supply, pick-up and drop-off services, audio or visual aids, playgrounds and bathrooms, which are essential for quality early childhood education and are indispensable. Therefore, this issue provides an explanation that the lack of resources is an obstacle for the implementation of Moral Education PdP planned at the preschool level.

Furthermore, the lack of physical resources for the implementation of Moral Education teaching also occurred in Bangladesh. The findings of Shahadur et al (2019) stated that a study participant gave feedback that there was a lack of electricity supply in schools causing difficulties in the implementation of pedagogy by teachers through the use of ICT. As a result,

teaching using multimedia resources and digital content cannot be implemented, while the teaching pedagogy of Moral Education based on ICT is a new concept in Bangladesh. In addition, it was found that teachers did not implement PdP activities with innovative patterns and did not display any charts or teaching materials as teaching aids for Moral Education PdP in the classroom. As a result, children are not interested in knowing and practicing moral values as no knowledge is gained and there is no additional value for their achievement in the classroom.

In conclusion, the description of the five issues in the implementation of Moral Education PdP in preschool is mostly in the context of foreign countries. The issues and challenges of its implementation in the Malaysian context are different and relevant research is less conducted at the preschool level. Therefore, studies on the issues and challenges regarding the implementation of Moral Education PdP in Malaysia is suggested. In addition, suggestions for improvement are expected to overcome issues that arise either domestically or abroad. The next paragraph discusses several suggestions for improving the implementation of Moral Education PdP at the preschool level.

Implementation Recommendations

Transformation in the implementation of Moral Education can be executed via several suggestions and cooperation from all parties. Several suggestions for improvement related to the implementation of Moral Education PdP in preschools are stated in order.

The first suggestion is based on previous research to overcome the issue of lack of pedagogical skills among teachers. Husni et al (2017) suggested the implementation of narrative methods in teaching sessions. Nowadays, various opinions have been expressed by academics regarding the methods, one of which is focused on the importance of narrative in daily life. Therefore, the narrative method is considered essential as it helps to explain various ideas and concepts including moral teaching without forcing people to perform but attract people to perform. According to the researchers, the exploration of the idea of using a high level of imagination in this method turned out to have a positive impact on others in describing the complexity of morals, helping to solve problems, and enabling a better understanding of moral actions. Therefore, preschool teachers are advised to use the narrative method in the form of storytelling in the implementation of Moral Education PdP as well as use imagination in the delivery of each narrative plot regarding the moral values to be taught.

The second suggestion for improvement is the use of the habituation method, which is a method repeatedly carried out to help students think and act according to the appropriateness of the situation based on their respective religious beliefs. According to Suryadi and Akla (2020), this method is very effective as the repetition of good behavior for preschool students will form a habit, further fostering noble character. They suggested this method to be implemented together with motivational encouragement for good behavior. Therefore, the application of pure values will be embedded in their souls until adulthood. The researchers stated that this method is very suitable for the age level of preschool students they have a pure nature. Thus, the use of habituation method by teachers can easily teach every good deed to students.

The third suggestion is the empowerment of preschool teachers in PdP. Special training and courses for preschool teachers regarding the discipline of Moral Education need to be intensified. Among the recommendations for course and training contents is to include the curriculum and pedagogy of the implementation of Moral Education PdP, including the moral

dilemma faced by teachers (Durmus, 2019). Furthermore, the contents of the course and training can help teachers deal with cases effectively when the moral values of students collide with the practice of moral values of different religions and other cases. In this regard, teachers need to be cautious in explaining and conducting discussions prudently and avoid disputes between students on various sensitive issues. In addition, the number of meetings for in-service training (LDP) must be conducted periodically. This is due to the fact that the preschool teachers are responsible for teaching Moral Education and their existence in preschool classes is not permanent.

In addition, special training and courses for preschool teachers can also be conducted to improve their professional development, such as social competence courses and so on. The courses will give positive impact and help teachers to be more confident in public. Therefore, the ability of teachers to communicate well with the community constituting teachers and non-teachers can be highlighted. Moreover, teacher professional development programs using case study methods to promote ethics and moral development among teachers can be carried out. The programs will assist teachers in conducting case analysis, improving their moral vocabulary, and critically interpreting various matters related to moral and ethical issues (Chowdhury, 2016).

The fourth suggestion for improvement is to overcome the issue of parental involvement. Therefore, training programs for parents and the community as well as joint programs with the school can be implemented which prioritize the value of togetherness and establishing positive social interaction where all parties are brought together in the same program and place. Among the examples of programs is the Program Empowering Families which aims to prevent child abuse (Emin & Perihan, 2021). In addition, character and values development activities can be carried out at school, where parents and outsiders become facilitators or individuals to be consulted. Cooperation between teachers and the community is expected to optimize student development including the development of noble characters in addition to parents playing a role at home in ensuring the continuity of teaching in preschool with direct monitoring at home (Bustan et al., 2020; Guzelyurt, 2020).

For the fifth suggestion, Durmus (2019); Guzelyurt (2020) recommended improvements to the implementation of Moral Education by providing Moral Philosophy and Social Psychology courses in teacher training programs. Improvement measures need to be implemented down to the grassroots by providing exposure to potential new teachers. Among the proposed learning content for this course is to emphasize on the issue of moral development and individual psychology, specializing in the moral development of children. Finally, the sixth suggestion is to overcome the issue of lack of resources. Baig and Funer (2022) suggested the provision of funds from the authorities with sufficient and non-transferable allocation values to be spent according to the budget. The purpose is to provide early childhood education services in a country. In addition, community-based non-governmental organizations in each country are recommended to play a role in providing quality early childhood education programs. Moreover, the attitudes of preschool teachers in terms of being innovative, creative and diligent need to be fostered to overcome the lack of learning resources. The criteria for a good learning resource is to use existing materials and resources in the classroom to ensure effective delivery of knowledge to children.

Conclusion

The concept paper is expected to provide an understanding of the issues and challenges of preschool teachers in the implementation of Moral Education PdP. Based on the discussion above, it is clear that there are various issues in its implementation. Thus, it is expected that all issues that arise are studied in the context of Malaysia. Meanwhile, suggestions for improving the Moral Education PdP can be implemented in preschools in Malaysia. Transformation in PdP is the core in developing the potential of world-class individuals based on high moral values. The implementation of Moral Education PdP at the preschool level is important in shaping people with noble characters. At this age, preschoolers have a pure nature and are likened to a white cloth and adults have a role to model it. Therefore, it is expected that all pre-school teachers as implementing members can contribute energy, creativity and be highly committed to provide effective Moral Education PdP for them.

Finally, this concept paper is also expected to enlighten the ministry, State Education Department (JPN), District Education Office (PPD), school and community levels about the importance of implementing Moral Education for preschool students. This matter should to be taken seriously as the development of the student is not only seen from the aspect of mastery in the academic field, but also teh mastery of good moral values so that the student becomes a person of noble character and benefits himself, the community and the country.

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