



## **SERENADA (SEKOLAH RELIGIUS NASIONALIS BERBUDAYA): AN CHARACTER EDUCATION OF BLITAR KEREN CITY**

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### **Abstract**

This research aims to examine human resource development programs in Blitar City in the field of education. SERENADA (Sekolah Religius Nasionalis Berbudaya) program is an innovative character education strengthening program implemented by Blitar City. This program aims to form students with good morals and KEREN character that includes aspects of diversity, religion, and nationalism. The implementation of SERENADA relies on strategies and collaboration between three main pillars: family, school, and community. The program focuses not only on academic activities, but also on character education integrated in intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. This research uses a qualitative approach with literature study and interview data collection techniques. The results showed that SERENADA program has the potential to improve students' religious, nationalist, and cultured characters. However, it is necessary to conduct periodic evaluations to ensure the effectiveness of the program.

**Keywords:** Blitar City; Character Education; SERENADA

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the 21st century, the demands of world development are increasingly complex, both in the fields of technology, economics, social, and culture. This century is part of the globalization era, which means that humans experience fundamental changes that are different from the life of the previous century (Wijaya et al., 2016). In this context, the 21st century expects the presence of superior individuals or human resources as a result of professional management by an institution so as to produce superior achievements as well. The management of human resources will certainly help humans in facing new challenges. New challenges demand a breakthrough thinking process if what is desired is a quality output that can compete with the results of work in a completely open world (Tilaar, 1998 in Wijaya et al, 2016). In other words, an innovative paradigm is needed in facing these new challenges.

The region, as one of the managers of human resources, must have a strong vision and mission to guide a sustainable development process and face the challenges that exist. Based on Law Number 25 of 2005, regional development planning is an integral part of the national planning system with the aim of ensuring linkages and consistency between planning, budgeting, implementation, and control and supervision. In line with Blitar City, which is a city rich in history, culture, and national pride, the vision and mission of the government are made in facing the dynamics of this era. With the determination to create a society with positive character and contribute on a national scale, Blitar City formulated an inspiring vision to create a KEREN, superior, prosperous and dignified society. As a concrete manifestation of this vision and

mission, the "SERENADA" (Cultured Nationalist Religious School) program was born as one of the character education innovations that aims to answer the challenges of the times by forming students with good morals and KEREN character, which includes aspects of diversity, religion, and nationalism. Moreover, education is one of the main pillars in the development of a society as part of the vision and mission of a region.

Nowadays, the concept of strengthening character education is receiving significant attention. The Ministry of Education and Culture (2016) prioritizes strengthening character education due to various problems that threaten the integrity and future of the nation. These include rampant acts of intolerance and violence in the name of religion that threaten the diversity and integrity of the Republic of Indonesia, the emergence of separatist movements, violent behavior in the educational environment and in society, sexual crimes, student brawls, promiscuity and the tendency of young people to drugs. Therefore, strengthening character education is aimed at instilling the values of national character building massively and effectively through the implementation of the main values of the National Movement for Mental Revolution (religious, nationalist, independent, mutual cooperation and integrity) (Kemdikbud, 2016). These values will be the main focus in the learning process, habituation, and cultural development. Thus, the character education program aims to change the behavior, mindset, and actions of all Indonesian citizens towards a better and more integrity. Thus, education is increasingly important in the era of globalization that presents various dynamics and challenges in maintaining cultural values, religion, and nationalism.

## **METHOD**

This study is based on a research process using a qualitative approach. Sugiyono (2015) calls the qualitative approach naturalistic research because the research is conducted under scientific conditions. The application of a qualitative approach in research will lead to a more thorough study of a phenomenon. Therefore, in studying this topic, the data collection techniques used are literature studies and interviews.

Data from the literature study technique was obtained through internet searches of articles or written information from the portal of the Blitar City government office. In addition, the data was strengthened and harmonized with the results of interviews with the Blitar City Education Office. The data were then analyzed using the descriptive analysis method. This descriptive analysis is done by presenting the facts followed by analysis, not just explaining, but also providing adequate understanding and explanation.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Analysis of Blitar City's Vision and Mission**

Blitar City is one of the regions in East Java Province. In formal legality, Blitar city was established on April 1, 1906 (Blitar City Government, ). Blitar City is also one of the areas that is closely related to the history of the struggle for Indonesian independence. Blitar City is the place where the Proclamator, the first President of the Republic of Indonesia, Ir. Soekarno, is buried. In addition, this area also traces the rebellion of the Defenders of the Fatherland (PETA).



Every region, including Blitar City, certainly has a vision and mission as part of an advanced development planning process. Based on Blitar City Regional Regulation number 4 of 2021, Blitar City under the leadership of Mayor Santoso has a vision, namely "Kota Blitar KEREN, Unggul, Makmur dan Bermartabat". As a guideline for the stages of achievement, Blitar City has the following mission.

- 1) Realizing a life system that is religious, nationalist, gender equal and has a personality in culture
- 2) Realizing human resources that are KEREN, competitive, physically and mentally healthy, intelligent and have character
- 3) Realizing economic independence oriented towards creative economy, tourism and digital-based trade
- 4) Realizing environmentally sound and equitable money spatial planning
- 5) Realizing good and clean governance based on information technology.

This is of course also part of the implementation of regional autonomy so that Blitar city has the flexibility for the region to develop activities in all fields.

The choice of the word "KEREN" in the vision and mission of Blitar city, raises its own distinctiveness and also the intended definition. Based on an explanation from the designer of the vision and mission, it is stated that "KEREN" contains two meanings. The first is an acronym for diversity, religious and nationalist. Diversity, religion and nationalism are also clearly mentioned in mission number 1 of Blitar City. So that between the vision and mission, they are closely related. Second, "KEREN" is also defined as a young generation that has the potential to be familiar with technology in the present (Riady E, 2022). Thus, it is expected that Blitar City will realize KEREN humans in appearance and performance.

In an effort to realize a KEREN human being, Blitar city has increased development in various priority areas, especially education. As a local government unit tasked with assisting the mayor in carrying out affairs in the field of education, the Education Office (Dispendik) has an important role in developing innovations and programming a policy. Referring to Blitar City Regional Regulation number 4 of 2021 concerning the Blitar City RPJMD for 2021-2026, the vision and mission of the Dispendik are derivatives of the second mission of the Blitar City government. Referring to the mission, the Blitar City Dispendik has a vision of Blitar City KEREN, superior, prosperous, dignified. The mission to achieve this goal is to realize human resources with KEREN character (diversity, religious, nationalist) that are healthy and competitive. Thus, the Blitar City Dispendik will try to carry out tasks related to policies in the field of education in line with the objectives of the Blitar City government.

### **SERENADA Program (Sekolah Religius Nasionalis Berbudaya)**

Strengthening character education through a religious, nationalist and cultured school program has been included in the formal legality of Blitar Mayor Regulation (Perwali) number 35 of 2022. This innovation in the field of education was initiated by the Blitar City Dispendik with a branding program called SERENADA. The SERENADA activities or activities have actually been carried out by the education

unit in previous years. However, the launch of the new SERENADA program was held on May 17, 2022.

Based on Blitar Perwali number 35 of 2022, it is explained that the religious, nationalist and cultured education unit program, hereinafter abbreviated as the SERENADA program, is an education unit that excels in strengthening student character education. The SERENADA program is a guideline in the implementation of education units that refer to three characters, namely religious, nationalist and cultured. These three characters are also in line with P5 (Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project), which is part of the independent curriculum innovation that is currently in effect. Therefore, the SERENADA program does not cause curriculum redesign or create a new curriculum. SERENADA program is inserted in the existing curriculum or mixed in P5. The implementation planning of the SERENADA program will be included in the KOSP (Education Unit Operational Curriculum) which will be approved by the Head of the Blitar City Dispendik before the new school year begins.

The SERENADA program is applied to 3 levels of education including early childhood education, primary education and junior high school and equivalency education. In accordance with Law number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government, it is stated that the Regional Government is authorized to determine the local content curriculum for basic education, early childhood education, and non-formal education. So that these 3 levels become the authority of education management in Blitar city.

The Blitar city Dispendik also outlined the objectives of the SERENADA program. The objectives of SERENADA are explained as follows (Dispendik, 2022)

- 1) Provide guidance and care for students
- 2) Train students in the habituation of an orderly lifestyle, independent, caring and sensitive to the surrounding environment
- 3) Making the education unit a means of forming positive attitudes and behaviors from students
- 4) Establishing a harmonious and synergistic relationship between educators and parents in realizing educational ideals.

Therefore, SERENADA program has the potential in conducting character education in education units.

SERENADA program as an education unit that excels in strengthening students' character education should have good management and development. The implementation of the SERENADA program is carried out by referring to several provisions listed in Blitar Perwali number 35 of 2022 as follows.

- 1) The implementation of the SERENADA program in education units is formed from values derived from religion, Pancasila and culture which are manifested in the implementation of learning, integrated in intracurricular, co-curricular and extracurricular activities.
- 2) Oriented to the development of the potential of learners as a whole and integrated
- 3) Exemplary in the implementation of SERENADA program in each educational environment
- 4) Taking place through habituation and all the time in everyday life.

The technical guidelines can be implemented gradually and tiered by education units.



Moreover, the activities of the program also involve habituation through 3 (three) pillars. The Tri Center of Education partnership in question is family, school and community (Perwali Blitar number 35 of 2022). Thus there will be a cooperative relationship between the three pillars responsible for the implementation of student education.

The implementation of the SERENADA program in education units certainly requires a strategy in its implementation. The Blitar city dispendik has come up with a strategy for implementing the SERENADA program by the education unit which is stated in Blitar Perwali number 35 of 2022, among others.

- 1) Developing a school action plan in developing the SERENADA program
- 2) Conducting socialization to all school members, and
- 3) Developing SERENADA program through school activities.

The habituation that has been carried out in education units in Blitar City includes:

- 1) On the 17th effective day of each month, students wear national/heroic clothing.
- 2) On the 21st effective day of each month, students wear traditional batik, while all employees wear Sukarno Look clothes, based on the Mayor's policy.
- 3) Declaration of a Javanese language day
- 4) Wearing identity clothes according to each religion and religious activities every Friday.

As a form of evaluation of the SERENADA program, the Blitar City Dispendik held the SERENADA Ter-KEREN Award. This award is given to education units that excel in implementing the SERENADA program. The assessment is conducted by a team consisting of supervisors and inspectors, with instruments that have the following contents.

- a) Preparation for SERENADA program implementation
- b) SERENADA program implementation activities
- c) Participation in competitions and art performances about SERENADA program
- d) Supporting equipment for SERENADA program implementation
- e) Building condition of education unit where SERENADA program is implemented
- f) Behavior development of school community that reflects the character of SERENADA program.

Therefore, the SERENADA program which is carried out as a whole will support the formation of religious, nationalist and cultured characters as an embodiment of the human resources of Blitar city with KEREN character.

### **Religious, Nationalist, and Cultured Character Education in Forming Human Resources KEREN**

Character education has a central role in shaping a young generation that has moral integrity, a spirit of nationalism, and an appreciation for cultural diversity. In this increasingly connected and complex world, character is not only about academic knowledge, but also about ethics, morals, and life attitudes. The SERENADA program teaches learners about the values of diversity, strengthens religious bonds, and encourages a strong spirit of nationalism.

First, the religious aspect in Indonesian has the same meaning as "religious" described in the Big Indonesian Dictionary, which is religious or religious in nature,



or related to religion. The definition of religious is often interpreted as the same word as "religion." According to Frazer in Fathurrohman (2016), religion is a belief system that continues to undergo changes and developments according to one's level of understanding. Clifford Geertz in Riady, A. S (2021), states that religion is not only a spiritual matter, but also involves a close relationship between religion as a source of value and religion as a source of knowledge. In addition, religion also functions as a value system that directs human behavior.

Religion as one of the character values developed in schools has been explained by Gunawan (2014) as a character value related to the relationship between individuals and God Almighty. This character value includes a person's thoughts, words, and actions that are always based on divine values and/or religious teachings. This religious character becomes very important for students in the face of changing times and moral decline. Indicators of religious character from Kemdikbud include peace-loving attitudes, tolerance, respect for religious differences, cooperation, firm stance, self-confidence, non-violence / not imposing will, sincerity, loving the environment, protecting the small and marginalized.

Theoretically, religious character is a character that has an important role in building character maturity for children. Religious character becomes the foundation in fostering children's habits in implementing internalized values from family, school and society in everyday life. Children who grow up with an established religious character are expected to have noble character skills, so this needs to be studied as early as possible.

Second, the aspect of nationalism comes from the word "national" which means the view or teaching to love one's own nation and country, or awareness of membership in a nation that has the potential to maintain identity, integrity, prosperity, and strength together (Sumarmi, 2006 in Bakar et al., 2018). Nationalism as this view is a manifestation of awareness and passion for the country; every individual who considers himself a citizen must have a spirit of nationalism towards his country and prove it with concrete actions that show love for his country (Muljana, 2008). In addition, nationalism also encourages people to appreciate human values and tolerance.

Nationalist character values are ways of thinking, behaving, and conducting oneself that show loyalty, concern, and high appreciation for the nation's language, physical, social, cultural, economic, and political environment. This value places the interests of the nation and state above personal and group interests. Some of the nationalist sub-values include appreciation of the nation's own culture, preserving the nation's cultural wealth, readiness to sacrifice, efforts to excel and achieve, love for the country, protect the environment, obey the law, discipline, respect for cultural, ethnic and religious diversity (Kemendikbud, 2017).

Third, the cultured aspect. Humans are expected to be formed into cultured beings. The word cultured in KBBI means having a culture; having an advanced mind and intellect. When a person is called "cultured," this indicates that the individual has the ability to appreciate, live and carry out cultural values well. Cultured individuals have a high awareness of the cultural heritage of their ancestors and contribute to preserving it.



Culture is a way of life that grows and is shared by a group of people, and is passed down from one generation to the next. Another opinion says that culture comes from the Latin "cultura" which originally referred to tillage, care and development of plants, as well as refined behavior, patterns of decoration, respect, and worship. More broadly, this view leads to the uniqueness of the customs and habits of a society (Sugiyono et al., 2014). Each community group has its own uniqueness in their customs and habits, which differ from one community to another, making it difficult to understand the meaning of culture concretely.

Education is a cultural endeavor that aims to instill noble values in students, so that they become cultured citizens of society (Sugiyono et al., 2014). In this sense, education plays a role in improving and improving human life in Indonesia. Quality education is able to improve the quality of life of Indonesian people, by prioritizing the character of Indonesia as a nation that adheres to Pancasila as the basis of its state.

Religious, nationalist and cultured aspects are sought to be raised in the character of students through habituation. The habit is expected to grow and be strongly attached to each human being in order to become a positive person. In addition, each school also has its own distinctive character. Schools must brand themselves to have their own characteristics, what will be highlighted and what will be strengthened because each school has different local wisdom.

As such, SERENADA Program is a tangible manifestation of Blitar City's commitment in developing human resources with KEREN character and has a real contribution to the development of the nation. This program is a step forward in facing the challenges of the times, and through integrated character education, Blitar City creates a young generation that is religious, nationalist, and appreciates cultural values. In this way, Blitar City not only achieves its vision and mission, but also provides hope for a better future for Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

Blitar City has a vision and mission to realize a society with positive character and contribute on a national scale. The "SERENADA" (Cultured Nationalist Religious School) program is a character education innovation implemented by Blitar City to realize its vision and mission. This program aims to form students with good morals and KEREN character that includes aspects of diversity, religion, and nationalism.

The implementation of SERENADA relies on strategies and collaboration between three main pillars: family, school, and community. The program focuses not only on academic activities, but also on character education integrated in intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities.

Character education has a central role in shaping young people who have moral integrity, a spirit of nationalism, and respect for cultural diversity. Therefore, efforts to develop religious, nationalist, and cultured characters need to be continuously improved and empowered at all stages of education.

Overall, the SERENADA program shows Blitar City's commitment in developing human resources with KEREN character and contributing to the nation's progress. Through the implementation of this program, Blitar City tries to build a society that is

religious, nationalist, and appreciates various cultural values, and ensures that these values color every aspect of life.

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