

THE NARRATIVE APPROACH TO PROMOTE PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' MORAL REASONING: A CASE STUDY IN UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA (UPM)

BY

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## ABSTRACT

This study explored the experience of pre-service teachers in a coursework that was instructed using the Narrative Approach in Universiti Putra Malaysia. In doing so, the study intended to examine the perceptions of the pre-service teachers about learning in a Narrative Approach classroom as well as to understand on how their experiences of using the Narrative Approach promote their moral reasoning, in addition to discuss the challenges they encounter during the lessons. This study is a case study of six pre-service teachers in their sixth semester of the Teacher Education Programme in UPM. This study employed purposive sampling method in selecting the informants. The main data collection technique was semi-structured interview with the six pre-service teachers and triangulation with the researcher's class observation and semi-structured interview with the LHE 3313's (Moral Issues and Conflicts) instructor and pre-service teachers' reflection essays. The data were transcribed, analysed and the emerging themes were categorised and discussed. The findings revealed that the pre-service teachers generally had mix perceptions including pleasant and unpleasant experiences towards learning using the Narrative Approach. The findings also disclosed that the ways narrative approach facilitates moral reasoning were through themes such as indoctrination avoidance, resources of understanding and diversity sensitivity. Their challenges regarding this approach were also highlighted, and themes such as affective issues, classroom environment that is not conducive, peers' distractions, weakness in language proficiency, has been revealed. These finding led to the conceptualization of a model on the main Dimensions in Learning Using Narrative Approach for Pre-service Teachers which can be a valuable guide to understanding the pre-service teachers in order to provide more conducive and successful learning and teaching environment for them to promote their moral reasoning. This study has crucial implications for Moral Education instructors and curriculum developer in creating a more effective and successful teaching approach of the courses especially for pre-service teachers. Moreover, it would also provide input for the UPM policy makers especially in reviewing existing policies or formulating new policies so that the predicament of the pre-service teachers is addressed as well.

## خلاصة البحث

تناولت هذه الدراسة تجربة مُعلمي ما قبل الخدمة أثناء تدريس مادة بالاستعانة بالأسلوب السردى في التدريس، في جامعة بؤترا بماليزيا (يو بي أم - UPM). وقد هدفت الدراسة إلى فحص تصورات مُعلمي ما قبل الخدمة في فصل دراسي تقوم فيه عملية التعلم على الأسلوب السردى، كما هدفت إلى فهم كيف ساهمت خبراتهم في استخدام النهج السردى في التدريس في تعزيز استدلالاتهم العقلية، بالإضافة إلى مناقشة التحديات التي يواجهونها خلال عملية التدريس. تنتمي هذه الدراسة إلى ما يسمى في مناهج البحث الكيفي بدراسة الحالة، حيث تحتوي على دراسة حالة لستة معلمين فيما قبل الخدمة أثناء تدريسهم في الفصل الدراسي السادس في برنامج إعداد المعلمين في جامعة بؤترا بماليزيا (يو بي أم - UPM). استخدمت هذه الدراسة أسلوب العينة القصدية في اختيار أفراد العينة، كانت المقابلة شبه المنظمة الأداة الرئيسة لجمع البيانات من المعلمين الستة المتدربين، بجانب أسلوب التثليث في جمع البيانات، الذي شمل كلاً من ملاحظات الباحث الصفية، مع البيانات الناتجة من مقابلة شبه منظمة مع مدرس مادة (LHE3313 - القضايا المعنوية والصراعات)، وكذلك مقالات تجارب معلمي ما قبل الخدمة. تم تدوين البيانات وتحليلها ومن ثم تصنيف الخصائص الناشئة ومناقشتها. وقد كشفت النتائج أن مُعلمي ما قبل الخدمة لديهم عمومًا مزيج من التصورات والتجارب منها السار وغير السار تجاه عملية التعلم باستخدام النهج السردى. أوضحت نتائج الدراسة كذلك أن الطرق التي سلكها أسلوب النهج السردى في عملية التعلم والتي عززت عملية الاستدلال العقلي تمت من خلال عدة خصائص ناشئة، مثل تجنب أسلوب التلقين، وموارد التفاهم، وحساسية التنوع. تم تسليط الضوء كذلك على التحديات التي واجهوها فيما يتعلق بهذا النهج. ومن الخصائص الناشئة الأخرى التي أفرزتها الدراسة، القضايا المزاجية، وبيئة الفصل الدراسي المفتقرة إلى التواصل، والإلهاء الذي يسببه الأقران، وتدني الكفاءة اللغوية. ، وقد أدت نتائج الدراسة إلى وضع تصور لنموذج حول الأبعاد الرئيسة في عملية التعلم باستخدام النهج السردى لمعلمي ما قبل الخدمة، ذلك النموذج الذي يمكن أن يكون مرشدًا فعالاً لفهم معلمي ما قبل الخدمة، من أجل العمل على توفير بيئة تعليم وتعلم أكثر نجاحًا لهم، وكذلك من أجل تعزيز عملية استدلالهم العقلي. إن لهذه الدراسة آثارًا حاسمة بالنسبة لمعلمي التربية الأخلاقية وكذلك لمطوري المناهج الدراسية من أجل صياغة منهج تدريس أكثر فعالية لمعلمي ما قبل الخدمة. علاوة على ذلك، فإنه سيوفر أيضًا مدخلات لصانعي سياسات جامعة بؤترا بماليزيا (يو بي أم - UPM) وخاصة في مراجعة السياسات الحالية، أو صياغة سياسات جديدة بحيث تتم معالجة معضلة معلمي ما قبل الخدمة أيضًا.

## **APPROVAL PAGE**

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## DECLARATION

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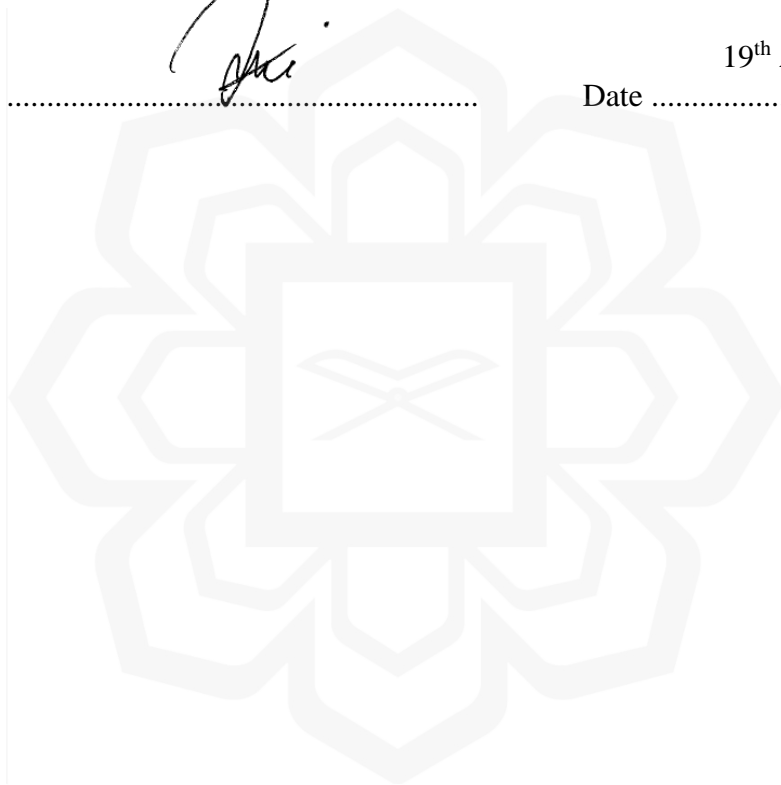
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*This dissertation is dedicated to  
my beloved husband, parents, children, siblings, and friends  
Thank you so much everyone.*



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DU	Discourse Unit
R	Researcher
I	Interviewee



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MORAL EDUCATION

It is a fact that morality is important, though for divergent purposes, and the need for moral education has been documented by all societies through history around the world. As stressed by John Wilson (1967), “Moral education in various forms and under various titles, has been a matter of perennial concern”. Furthermore, there has never been any disagreement regarding the view that the school, should provide Moral Education (Rahman, 1983). It means that, the vital function of education is to convey morality and spread moral values as well.

According to Greenland and Robinson (1980), in the middle of 1960s, there is an increase of awareness in the role of school for the moral rearing for youngsters. This indicated that attention toward moral education is so deep as if moral development of students is a newly discovered aims of education on that time. Furthermore, according to Ward, (1984), the commitment to moral education is almost universal. He elucidated that, in most countries of the world there is general agreement on the need to teach children respect for truth, honesty, justice and patriotism...these shared objectives reflect an international concern for the task of promoting moral growth or more explicitly and directly, teaching moral values. (Ward, 1984, p. 26).

In addition, one of the factors increase the need for a comprehensive moral education according McGregor (1977), “is the general conclusion that moral education is not being successfully carried out”. According to him, the younger generation on that time are less moral than they used to be, and the school is to be

blamed for this situation. Then according to Pugh (1980), the reason why school failed to fulfil the duty to carried out its function regarding moral education was, the teaching of moral values has become much more difficult. Pugh (1980) asserts that yet there is nostalgic desire for old values, however in this modern world, schools cannot only depend on traditional values, which may conflict with each other in educating children in morals. Besides, when there has been a decline in religious belief, as been explained by Downey and Kelly (1978), faced by an increasing reluctance on the part of many pupils to accept what Religious Education has offered them, especially in the way of moral teaching, schools have been forced to consider other ways in which their responsibility for the moral education of their pupils might be fulfilled. (Downey and Kelly, 1978, p.11).

It can be said that traditional values, rules, customs, beliefs and such like, cannot propose a fitting guideline to individuals who are called upon to make judgements of moral situations or ‘to face moral dilemmas fraught with ambivalence’ (Greenland and Robinson, 1980). Due to massive development in science and technology, plus with rapid social, economic and political variation, individuals are facing various issues which have impact on morality and raised lot of questions for instances, euthanasia, mercy killing, abortion, sexuality, national security, the defence of nature and environment and racism. In other words, it is illusory for the school to accept that traditional values in society could be solely depend in answering all these issues.

The main background for the interest toward moral education could be from various factors such as to improve the moral condition of the society and to overcome the struggles of offering moral education in this intricate world to the young generation. However, as world evolved, together with the extensive interpretations of

definition of morality and the development of moral theory, therefore the nature of moral education was still being argued. For instances, some people argue that the aim of moral education is to achieve individual autonomy, while other group of people stressed on social unity and national identity as the main purpose of moral education. Another group of people may raise up the ‘international’ dimension as the aim of moral education. As a conclusion, the above different perspectives regarding what should be highlighted as the main purposes of moral education, reproaches towards approach to moral education, can be assume as added value elements to the revitalization of interest in moral education; in other words, the involved group or people will in charge for establishing a programme of moral education that to resolve their own claims.

Moral education related to the purpose of education. According to Martin Luther King (1948), “Intelligence plus character (including moral reasoning) is the goal of real education”. In addition, moral reasoning is the central for teacher’s education programme due to teachers’ duty as moral models for students as they are predicted to behave ethically in the classroom (Chang, 1994). There are also several researchers that similarly stress teachers as moral models (Abebe & Davis, 2006–2007; Cooper, 2004; Derryberry, Snyder, Wilson, & Barger, 2006). Hence, moral reasoning competence is indisputably one of the most crucial goals in teacher education programmes, which is not only important for pre-service teachers in Moral Education teacher’s programme but also for all pre-service teachers in general.

Currently, the present study is an effort to explore pre-service teachers’ views and experience in learning in a Moral Education course (LHE 3313 - Moral Issues and Conflicts) as a subject and it precisely examines these pre-service teachers’ perceptions towards learning a coursework in an alternative approach known as the

Narrative Approach. This study also seeks to explore on how the Narrative Approach is capable in promoting pre-service teachers' moral reasoning. Furthermore, this study attempts to discover the pre-service teachers' challenges in learning in the said coursework. Next, this chapter also discusses the background of current study including the philosophical perspective of Moral Education, Moral Education in Malaysia and training for Moral Education teachers in Malaysia. Then it moves on to the approaches in Moral Education and the overview of researchs in teaching approaches in teacher education programme, followed by statement of the problem, then a discussion of research objectives and research questions. Finally, the chapter ends with the discussion on the significance of the study, positionality, delimitations of study, and definition of terms used in this study.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

### **1.2.1 Philosophical Perspective of Moral Education**

There is a strong connection between the philosophical concept of morality and religion. According to Nowell-Smith (1956), the philosophers, in the pursuit of 'The good Life' and how a person is ought to live, rely generally on the methods laid down by religious doctrines. Therefore, it is not unusual to denote that moral education is commonly perceived as synonym with religious education. In fact, according to the report of a joint study on Moral Education in Asian Countries (1980), in most Asian countries, Moral Education has been 'an integral part of religious education' and 'very often the norms of moral behaviours are still derived from religion'. In addition, Miller and Fielding (1980) stated that in the early nineteenth century in the United States, Moral Education was a form of religious instruction.

Moral education in some countries is linked to religious education. For example, in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand, moral education is still based on religion. In Malaysia, Islam is the official religion, however, freedom of worship policy is implemented towards other religions. Article 3 of Malaysian Federal Constitution proclaims that, 'Islam is the religion of the Federation; but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation'. Therefore, in Malaysia, Islamic ethical values are taught to Muslim pupils in Islamic religious knowledge, and Moral Education are taught to non-Muslim pupils who are from various ethnics and religious backgrounds. Therefore, the moral values in Moral Education in Malaysia are based on common values which practiced and endorsed by numerous communities and religions of the country. This fact is shown in the syllabus of Moral Education in primary school, which the twelve moral values in that syllabus are based on the religions, traditions and values of multi-racial Malaysian society as well as universal moral values that are in accordance with the principles of the *Rukun Negara*.

Another foundation of moral education lies on the concept of morality as 'conformity to fixed moral codes. This accounts for the notion of moral education as the transmission of conventional moral rules for proper behaviour. However, according to Arbuthnot (1981), the transmission of moral rules in moral education may serve the students well in stable societies, but not in times of crisis. Therefore, because of the progression in scientific knowledge and technology, conformity to rules becomes a point of conflict between tradition and change. Because of this reason, many philosophers have excluded the notion of moral education based merely on the transmission of moral rules. In fact, according to Soltis and Chazan (1973),

contemporary philosophers such as Dewey, Hare, Frankena, Peters, Wilson stressed on the element of moral reasoning, understanding and autonomy in moral education.

For instance, Hare (1975) developed a conception of moral which aims at preparing students for autonomous moral decision making. Whereas for John Wilson (1972), moral education should be the centre around the 'six moral components' and 'the proper reasons to the student so that he has some chance of appropriating them for himself'. For example, Wilson asserted that the preparation of students is not only to act of feeling in certain way but to do so for certain reasons (for the right reasons). However, another element in the 'use of reason' is the education of the emotions. According to Rich (1980), the part of emotions in moral education is 'to make a moral judgement of an action, person, etc., and to judge the action by relating it to either a moral rule or moral ideal'. In addition, Wilson (1972) asserted that to produce the 'right action', a teacher should encourage his students to produce the 'right feelings' and 'emotions' and not just 'allowing students to let off steam or be creative'. Therefore, moral education is actually not merely referring to the development of reasons, however it comprises of education of emotions as students need a method of answering a lot of questions about their life; questions that are related to their judgement regarding on what they feel, their emotions rather than their actions.

Another aspect of moral education generated by contemporary moral philosophers is that they agree to take the traditional psychological and pedagogic spot that a child must be trained in certain habits until he is capable to 'contemplate about' moral issues. Peters (1963) stated that moral education is 'as much concerned with the promotion of good activities as it will be with the maintenance of rules for social conduct, with what ought to be as well as with what men ought to do'. In addition, Peters (1963) suggested that while cultivating 'good moral habits of behaviour', at the

same time it should not 'put off the development of rational code'. Therefore, according Frankena (1975), moral education is not only about 'handling on a knowledge of good and bad or knowing to act' however it is more to 'ensuring that childrens' conduct will conform to this knowledge'. Consequently, philosophers like Wilson (1972), Peters (1963) and Frankena (1975) argued that the basic of moral education lies not in 'autonomy by itself' nevertheless 'autonomy within the context of disciplined moral thinking'. For example, it is a mixture among habit, tradition and properly upbringing, and the growth of critical thought and choice. This is exactly what was said by Aristotle (1953) in discussing the role of reason and habit in moral education.

### **1.2.2 Moral Education (ME) in Malaysia**

Prior to the implementation of Moral Education (ME) in 1983 as a compulsory school subject for non-Muslim students, Muslim students were instructed to undertake Islamic Education. ME was instructed in a different formal and casual way. It was formally instructed under Pendidikan Islam (Ugama Islam) for Muslim students whereas the non-Muslim students had a choice of learning religious training, outside the ordinary educational timetable (Balakrishnan, 2010). In 1972, Civics studies was then presented as a compulsory school subject to all students from Standard Four (10 years of age) to Form Three (15 years of age), whereas the civics components were joined in the Local Studies course for Standard One (7 years of age) until Standard Three (9 years of age). The Civics syllabus, which depended on the *Rukun Negara* and the Federal Constitution, was meant for encouraging patriotism, and in addition to comprehending and tackling social issues. The *Rukun Negara* was presented in 1970,

is the National Ideology and it frames the establishment of Malaysia's national approaches, including instruction, until today.

Despite that, the audit of the national training framework, also known as the Cabinet Report (1979) found that the execution of Civics as a school subject was not satisfactory. As a non-exam subject, teachers and students perceived the subject to be less important, therefore, in many schools the time apportioned for Civics was replaced with the instructions of other subjects as the school examinations moved closer (Ministry of Education, 1979). In the mid-1970s, there was a developing worldwide concern on the social issues among the adolescents that drew the attention of educationists (Mukherjee, 1983). Thus, schools could be the responsible party to nurture good character of the students. In Malaysia, these worries were correspondingly transferred in the Parliament which indicated that there was a need to give some types of good direction that schools ought to manage (Mukherjee, 1983). Consequently, the Cabinet Report (1979) prescribed that, while the components of Civic ought to be coordinated in all subjects, ME ought to be presented as a subject for school examination. It stated;

In building a disciplined, cultured and united society, the Cabinet Report (1979) recommended that while Muslim students study Islamic Religious Knowledge, and this includes other pupils who choose to follow this subject, non-Muslim pupils should be taught Moral and Ethics education. All pupils who study this subject, Moral and Ethics Education, must take it in the examination. In both these subjects, respect for the individual and the freedom to embrace any religion in a multi-religious society must be cultivated. (Ministry of Education, 1979, p. 49)

In portraying the proposal in the Cabinet Report, the Ministry of Education (MOE) presented the New Primary School Curriculum (known as KBSR) in 1983 and