
Strategy for Strengthening Character Education in Elementary School Children: Building a Generation with Noble Morals Qualitative Study at SD Negeri Planjan 01 Kesugihan

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify and analyze strategies for strengthening character education at SD Negeri Planjan 01 Kesugihan that are relevant to be applied to elementary school children in an effort to build a generation with noble character. Character education at the elementary school level has a fundamental role in laying the foundation for moral and ethical values for the further development of students. This study uses a qualitative approach through a literature review of various studies and related concepts. The data collection instruments in this study used questionnaires, observations and documentation and were then analyzed. The analysis includes the integration of character values in the curriculum, positive behavioral habits, utilization of learning media, the role of role models, and the potential for implementing innovative character education concepts. The subjects in this study included students, teachers and parents of students at SD Negeri Planjan 01 Kesugihan. Based on the results of initial observations conducted, there are still many students who show bad behavior, such as lack of manners in speaking with friends and teachers, and frequent disharmony during class hours. In the context of character education, the role of teachers is very important as idolized figures, as well as being a source of inspiration and motivation. The teacher's attitude and behavior will be very memorable for a student, so that the character, speech, and personality of the teacher become a reflection of the student. Teachers who are worthy of being role models, character education will be easy to build in an educational institution or school. Development in character formation requires exemplary behavior that is transmitted, intervention through the learning process, training, continuous habituation in the long term that is carried out continuously and reinforcement, and must be balanced with noble values.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a right for all Indonesian citizens. Education has a very important role in creating quality and characterful human resources. This is in line with Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, in article 3 which states that national education functions to develop abilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to educate the life of the nation, aiming to develop the potential of students so that humans who believe and fear God Almighty, have noble morals, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens.

Elementary education, especially Elementary School (SD), plays a crucial role as the initial foundation for further educational development. Effective education and character building at this stage are very important, because the character or morals embedded in students may not be optimal if not done properly. Therefore, character development in students must be the main focus, because strong character and personality have a major impact on the future of the nation. Elementary school is a critical period in character formation, where failure to instill and foster character in children can lead to serious personality problems as adults.

The role of teachers is very important in ensuring that the knowledge taught can be well received by their students. However, the role of teachers is not limited to teaching knowledge alone. In the learning process, teachers have various important roles, including as educators, teachers, learning resources, facilitators, guides, demonstrators, advisors, and innovators (Dwi Saputra & Tunnafia, 2024). The problem that is currently in the spotlight of society is the character of the nation's successors. Nowadays, crimes and bad deeds are increasingly clearly committed by students.

Problems in the implementation of character education that can be empirically known through various mass media such as newspapers and television. For example, violence in the world of education by fellow students, students against teachers, brawls between students (Mahmudah et al., 2024). Character is a habit that includes a way of thinking and behaving that directs a person's actions in behaving in certain conditions. A person's character determines how an individual acts when the individual thinks that he or she is invisible to others (Dole, 2021).

Character Education is a basic concept that is applied to a person's thinking to make physical, spiritual and moral morals more meaningful than before so that it can reduce the moral crisis that has hit this country (Triana, 2022). Character education is an important aspect in the education system that functions to shape the personality, morals, and ethics of students (Dwi Saputra & Tunnafia, 2024). Character education is a system that instills character values in students, which contains components of knowledge, individual awareness, determination, and the will and action to carry out values, both towards God, oneself, fellow human beings, the environment, and the nation which will ultimately create a perfect human being. (Rofi'ie, 2019).

Character education in elementary schools is important to combine knowledge and personality, with the aim of instilling ancestral values that are in line with the identity of the Indonesian nation. Character education in elementary schools has a major impact on students' daily lives and learning processes (Norlita et al., 2023). Through character education, students are expected to be independent in improving and using their knowledge, considering and internalizing noble character values and morals so that they are reflected in everyday behavior (Lisia Miranda, 2024).

Character education essentially aims to foster individuals who have integrity, empathy, a sense of responsibility towards themselves and society, and a commitment to upholding truth and justice (Sakti et al., 2024). Character education in elementary schools is carried out through a number of activities to provide a comprehensive experience. Successful implementation occurs both in the realm of learning in the classroom and outside the classroom. In this statement, it can be realized through adaptation program activities, extracurricular activities, and the like.

Thus, character education is not only carried out directly but also integrated with various activities in the school environment. Thus, character education is not only carried out directly but also integrated into various processes in the elementary school environment. The implementation method must raise students' awareness of the importance of moral values such as truth, compassion, honesty, kindness, and values that are relevant to life in the 21st century. Character education must be multi-channel and holistic-integrative, because it is impossible to only be implemented in schools, but must involve various parties and take place naturally (Ardiyanti & Khairiah, 2021).

Based on the results of initial observations conducted on March 20, 2023, researchers found that there were still many students who showed bad behavior, such as lack of manners in speaking with friends and teachers, frequent disharmony during class hours, a tendency to disturb friends, and so on. This of course can be a trigger for a decline in the character or moral values of students, especially in SDN Planjan 01. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini berfokus pada analisis peran guru dalam pembentukan karakter of fifth grade students at SDN Planjan 01, with the aim of identifying the role of teachers as educators, demonstrators, class managers, motivators, and evaluators, as well as supporting and inhibiting factors in the formation of student character.

By having good character, students are expected to be able to contribute positively to society, live side by side with tolerance and respect for differences, and obey social rules. This will create a more harmonious community environment (Rasyid et al., 2024). From the description above, the researcher is interested in studying and describing the process of developing religious character through a collaborative approach and control system for students at SDN Planjan 01 Cilacap.

2. METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

The type of research used in this study is qualitative with a descriptive approach. (Arifin et al., 2024) from the perspective of the participants. The choice of a qualitative approach in this study is based on the problems to be studied in the study (Agustin et al., 2020). A qualitative approach allows researchers to understand the phenomenon of character education in depth and contextually, as well as explore the perspectives of various parties involved in character education, such as teachers, students, parents, and principals (Dwi Saputra & Tunnafia, 2024).

This study intends to describe a situation, and describe the results of the Role of Teachers in Character Education of grade V students of SDN Planjan 01 Kesugihan. Data collection techniques were carried out through several techniques, namely in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted with principals, teachers, and parents to gain a deeper understanding of their perceptions, attitudes, and experiences in implementing character education in elementary schools. These interviews focused on the strategies used to integrate character values in learning, the challenges faced, and the support provided by schools and parents.

Participatory observation was conducted to directly observe the implementation of character education activities in the classroom and school environment. This observation was conducted to see how character values are internalized in daily activities at school, such as flag ceremonies, extracurricular activities, and interactions between students. Meanwhile, for data analysis, the researcher used descriptive analysis techniques. Based on the source, research data is grouped into two data, namely primary data and secondary data.

Primary data is data obtained directly from research subjects using direct data collection tools on the subjects as a source of information sought and is also called first-hand data. Meanwhile, secondary data is data obtained from other parties or through intermediaries. The sources of secondary data in this study are school data such as: school profiles and documentation such as: photos and videos (Arifin et al., 2024). This study is expected to provide practical recommendations for educators, policy makers, and other stakeholders in improving the quality of character education in Indonesia.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Character education is a system that teaches character values to students which include elements of knowledge, awareness, and will, as well as means to practice these values towards God Almighty. Oneself, others, the environment, nationality, and becoming a human being. To form students who have strong character values, strong support is needed from the school which has a central role in child development, the following are strategies implemented at SD Negeri Planjan 01 Kesugihan in strengthening student character education: Role Teachers play a key role in the character education process in elementary schools.

As educators who are on the front lines, teachers are not only responsible for teaching knowledge, but also for internalizing character values in students. Role models have a very large contribution in educating character. The role models of teachers in their various activities will be a mirror for their students. Therefore, a teacher figure that can be emulated by students is very important. Teachers who like and are accustomed to reading and researching, are disciplined, friendly, and have good morals will be good role models for students.

Exemplary behavior emphasizes behavioral aspects in the form of real actions rather than just talking without action. A person can be a role model if they have words, attitudes, and behaviors that are worthy of being emulated. So that words, attitudes and behaviors can be used as a mirror for themselves and others. Teachers as role models must also have moral integrity, namely the similarity between words and actions. The essence of moral integrity lies in the quality of their *istiqomah*.

3.1 Integration of Character Values in the Curriculum and School Activities

Character education in elementary schools plays a very important role in shaping children's personality and morals from an early age. This is in line with the goals of national education which emphasize the formation of student character as one of the core competencies that must be achieved (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019). The implementation of character education through character-based learning strategies aims to integrate character values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and cooperation in learning activities and daily life at school (Wibowo, 2020).

The integration of character values in the elementary school curriculum is carried out by combining character learning into various subjects. The 2013 Curriculum, for example, emphasizes the importance of character education through a thematic and contextual approach, where character values are integrated into science, mathematics, Indonesian, and other subjects.

3.2 Collaboration between Schools, Parents, and Communities in Supporting Children's Character Education in Elementary Schools

Collaborating with parents and communities in the community is one strategy in strengthening character education. Establishing cooperation by conveying strategies, the objectives of character education through socialization, seminars and discussions is one of the right media in strengthening students' character education. Supervision of children outside school hours is maintained because there is collaboration with parents and communities in the community.

Character education for elementary school children is an important foundation for the formation of strong personality and morality. Character education is not only the responsibility of the school alone, but requires close collaboration between schools, parents, and communities to create a conducive environment for the development of children's character. This collaboration plays an important role in strengthening the values taught in schools, expanding children's learning experiences, and ensuring consistency in character education both in and outside of school.

Table 1. Strategies for Strengthening Character Education at SD Negeri Planjan 01 Kesugihan

Strategy	Description
Integration of Character Values in the Curriculum	Character values are integrated into various subjects, using thematic and contextual approaches.
The Role of Teachers as Role Models	Teachers act as role models by demonstrating positive character traits, including discipline, friendliness, and moral integrity.
Collaboration with Parents and the Community	Cooperation with parents and the community to supervise children and reinforce character values outside of school hours through socialization, seminars, and discussions.
Integration into Planned Activities	Integrating character education into programmed or planned activities.
Building Cooperative Communication	Establishing strong communication between schools and parents to ensure consistency in character education.

Table 2. The Role of Teachers in Character Education

Teacher's Role	Description
As an Educator	Encourages the formation of disciplined character in students.
As a Demonstrator	Teaches the values of honesty.
Classroom Management	Cooperation with parents and the community to supervise children and reinforce character values outside of school hours through socialization, seminars, and discussions.
Integration into Planned Activities	Encourages independent character.
Motivator	Influences religious and social care character.
Role Model	Teachers are the first role models that students imitate.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results and the discussion above, we can conclude that character education plays a very important role in the world of education. Teachers also have an important role in shaping students' character. Teachers as educators encourage the formation of disciplined character, while teachers as demonstrators teach honest values. Classroom management by teachers encourages independent character, while teacher motivation influences religious and socially caring character. The role of teachers in implementing character education in schools is very necessary because teachers are the first role models imitated by students. To produce students with superior character, not only the role of teachers is needed, but the role of parents is also needed. Parents can monitor their children at home through daily activity records from school.

This study obtained several main conclusions regarding the strategy of strengthening character education in elementary schools, which can be explained as follows: First, integrating the content of character education that has been formulated into all subjects. Second, integrating character education into daily activities at school. Third,

integrating character education into programmed or planned activities. Fourth, building cooperative communication between schools and parents of students.

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