THE IMPORTANCE OF CHARACTER EDUCATION IN SHAPING THE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Character education in primary schools is an important element in the formation of a generation that behaves positively and responsibly. This education aims to instill moral and ethical values early on, so that students are able to distinguish between right and wrong and develop positive behaviors in everyday life. In addition, character education also serves to develop essential social skills, such as the ability to communicate, work together in teams, and resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner. These social skills are essential for building harmonious relationships and effective functioning of students in various social situations. By having a good moral, ethical and social skills foundation, students are able to adapt and contribute positively in their environment. In conclusion, character education in primary schools is an integral part of the curriculum that not only strengthens academic aspects but also shapes individuals with good character and morals. Therefore, it is important for educational institutions to ensure that character education is prioritized in the learning process in primary schools, in order to create the next generation with noble character and positive mentality.

Keywords: Character Education, Positive Student Behavior, Elementary School.

Introduction

Primary school education plays an important role in shaping the fundamentals of student character and behavior. It is at this age that children begin to build an understanding of moral, ethical and social values that will guide them throughout life. Therefore, character education is a crucial component in the education system.

Children and adolescents today live in a very different environment from previous generations, where access to information and digital social interactions are

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a big part of everyday life. (Lestari & Tirtoni, 2021). This poses new challenges in character building, given the many external influences that can have a negative impact such as cyberbullying, the spread of negative content, and promiscuity. Therefore, character education helps teach strong moral and ethical values, so that students can sort out information and make wise decisions amidst the swift flow of information. (Sung-joong, 2020).

In addition, character education is also key in shaping a generation that is competent and has integrity. Competition in the world of work is increasingly fierce and demands not only technical abilities, but also soft skills such as cooperation, honesty, responsibility, and adaptability. (Sitopu et al., 2024); (Guna et al., 2024). Educational institutions that instill character values such as integrity, empathy, and leadership will help students develop into individuals who are ready to face the challenges of the modern world with a professional and ethical attitude. This attitude not only provides personal benefits for students, but also contributes to the creation of a positive and productive work environment and society. (Hong & Nam, 2021).

Finally, character education plays an important role in building a harmonious and tolerant society. In the midst of globalization and pluralism, it is important for every individual to possess basic values such as respect, tolerance and justice. (Jamo, 2023). Character education helps students understand and appreciate the diversity of cultures, religions, and worldviews, and encourages them to play an active role in creating an inclusive and peaceful society. (Hani et al., 2020). Thus, character education serves not only for individual development but also as a foundation for sustainable and harmonious social development in the modern era.

However, the reality on the ground shows that negative behavior among elementary school students still occurs frequently. Cases such as bullying, lack of respect for teachers and peers, and undisciplined actions show how important it is to instill strong character values early on. (Tanjung, 2024). This raises the question, how can character education influence the positive behavior of elementary school students?

In essence, primary schools have a very crucial role in shaping students' positive behavior, given that this is the initial period in a child's life where character and habits begin to form. At this stage, primary schools function as the second environment after home, which has a major influence on the development of student attitudes and behavior (Elihami, 2021). Teachers in primary schools act not only as academic instructors, but also as models of good behavior. Through daily interactions, teachers can instill values such as honesty, responsibility, hard work, and respect in students. (Fitriani et al., 2024).; (Antika et al., 2024).

In addition to the role of teachers, primary school curricula and programs are also designed to support the formation of positive behaviors. Activities such as collaborative learning, educational games, and group projects encourage students to

work together, help each other, and value the contributions of their peers. (Imawan & Ismail, 2023). Extracurricular activities such as scouting, arts, and sports also provide opportunities for students to develop discipline, teamwork, and a healthy competitive spirit. Through these various activities, students learn important life values and how to apply them in everyday life. (Maryani et al., 2024)...

Primary schools also play an important role in establishing a safe and supportive environment that allows students to grow and develop optimally. Antibullying policies, guidance and counseling programs, and rewards for students who demonstrate positive behavior are some examples of initiatives that schools can implement. (Regina & Wijayaningputri, 2020). By creating a conducive and supportive environment, primary schools help students feel comfortable and accepted, so they can learn well and develop positive behaviors. The overall education and support provided by primary schools is an important foundation that will influence students' behavior into adulthood. (Park & Cho, 2024).

Thus, this study is to examine character education and its impact on student behavior.

Research Methods

The study in this research uses the literature research method, which is an approach used to collect, analyze, and interpret information contained in various written sources. This method is usually used to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular topic, identify research gaps, and develop a theoretical basis for the research to be carried out. Sources that can be used in literature research include scientific journal articles, books, theses, dissertations, research reports, and other relevant documents. (Firman, 2018); (Suyitno, 2021); (Jelahut, 2022).

Results and Discussion

Definition and aspects of Character Education

Character education is a systematic and planned process to help individuals develop good moral, ethical, and social values. According to Thomas Lickona, an expert on character education, character education is a deliberate effort to help a person understand, feel, and carry out ethical values that underlie moral life. (Wati, 2023). Lickona emphasizes that character education is not only about moral knowledge, but also includes aspects of feelings and actions that are in line with the values espoused. (Indriani & Asfia, 2023)..

Character education includes various important aspects that help shape the whole person. The moral aspect is one of the main components in character education that leads individuals to understand the moral principles that underlie good and bad behavior. This aspect involves developing an awareness of what is considered right and wrong, as well as the drive to act in accordance with these

principles. (Devi, 2023). With a good moral understanding, individuals are expected to make the right decisions in situations that require ethical and moral considerations. (Alexsandro & Simamora, 2024)..

The ethical aspect of character education focuses on critical thinking and reflection on the values that shape one's behavior. Ethics involves considerations of rights and obligations, as well as questions of justice, goodness and responsibility. (Akhwani & Romdloni, 2021).. Through ethics education, individuals are invited to reflect on the foundations of their behavior and develop the ability to critically assess their actions and the actions of others. Ethics education also emphasizes the importance of integrity and consistency between espoused values and daily behavior. (Wandari & Rohana, 2023)...

The social aspect of character education highlights the importance of human relationships and the individual's contribution to society. This aspect includes the development of social skills, empathy, cooperation and a sense of social responsibility. Socially-focused character education helps individuals realize their role as members of the larger community and encourages them to contribute positively to the common good. Through social interaction and cooperation, individuals also learn values such as tolerance, fairness, and respect for differences. (Muhtar & Dallyono, 2020).

Overall, character education that brings together moral, ethical, and social aspects aims to produce individuals who have integrity, can think critically, and have a sense of responsibility for themselves and others. These three aspects are interrelated and complementary, making character education an important foundation in shaping individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also emotionally and socially mature. Thus, character education helps prepare individuals to face the challenges of life and make a positive contribution to society.

Impact of Character Education in Primary Schools

Character education in primary schools has a significant impact on student development in both academic and non-academic aspects. First, character education helps students develop a strong understanding of moral values. (Akbar, 2024). For example, through lessons that emphasize the importance of honesty, responsibility and respect, students learn to distinguish between good and bad behavior. This not only affects students' behavior within the school environment but also in their daily lives, encouraging them to become more responsible and ethical individuals. (Suardin et al., 2023)...

In addition, character education plays an important role in the development of students' social and emotional skills. Students who are equipped with good character education tend to show greater empathy, are able to cooperate better, and have the ability to manage emotions more effectively (Rambe et al., 2023). (Rambe

et al., 2023).. School environments that support character development are also often more conducive to learning, as students feel more valued and emotionally secure. This contributes to the creation of a positive school climate, where pro-social behaviors such as cooperation and mutual respect become the norm (Sugiri, 2023). (Sugiri, 2023).

Another positive impact is the increase in learning motivation and student engagement in the learning process. When students understand the importance of discipline and responsibility, they are more likely to take the initiative in learning and show a more proactive attitude. (Juniarti et al., 2024).. Character education that emphasizes the importance of determination and effort encourages students to overcome academic challenges with a more positive attitude. As a result, students who have strong character tend to have better academic performance and are able to set and achieve their learning goals. (Murod, 2022).

Overall, character education in elementary schools plays an important role in shaping individuals who are not only academically intelligent, but also emotionally and socially mature. Character education helps students develop positive attitudes and behaviors, which will be the foundation for their future success. By instilling moral values, ethics and social skills from an early age, schools contribute not only to academic achievement but also to holistic personal development, which is crucial in shaping a responsible and dignified future generation.

Character Education Model

The character education model is a systematic approach designed to develop moral values, ethics and social skills in students. One of the widely adopted character education models is the integrative model. This model integrates character values into the curriculum and daily activities at school. (Nur et al., 2021). For example, subjects such as Bahasa Indonesia or Mathematics not only teach academic skills, but also discuss important values such as cooperation, honesty, and responsibility through various activities and discussions conducted. (Rosyida & Saputri, 2022).. Thus, character values become an integral part of the learning process.

In addition, there are explicit models that emphasize character education through special programs and activities explicitly designed to teach moral and ethical values. Activities such as rewarding students who demonstrate good behavior, community service projects, and mentoring programs are concrete examples of this model. For example, a "Model Student" program that rewards students based on their positive attitudes and behaviors can encourage other students to follow in the same footsteps. (Sulisstyowati & Machful, 2023)...

Equally important is the school culture-based model, which focuses on creating a school environment that supports character development. In this model, all elements of the school-from the principal, teachers, to administrative staff-work

together to create a culture that supports the moral and ethical values to be developed. (Yulianti et al., 2022).. This is implemented through clear school norms and rules, as well as through the examples and behaviors shown by everyone in the school environment. This model emphasizes that character learning does not only occur in the classroom but also in daily interactions throughout the school environment. (Dvali, 2024).

Finally, the collaborative model emphasizes the importance of cooperation between schools, families and communities in educating students' character. Schools cannot work alone in shaping students' character; families and communities also play a crucial role in this process. By working with parents and the community, schools can strengthen and expand the character education taught in the classroom. (Hairiyanto et al., 2024); (Fiteriadi et al., 2024). Programs such as parenting seminars for parents, social activities in the community, and parent participation in school activities are examples of implementation of this collaborative model. Thus, students receive a consistent message about the importance of good character from various aspects of their lives. (Yoon, 2021).

The Role of Character Education in Shaping Positive Behavior

Character education plays a vital role in shaping positive behavior in students. Through character education, students are taught to recognize and understand fundamental moral and ethical values, such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy. (Hardiyat et al., 2023).. This process does not only occur theoretically but also through practical experience in daily activities. By understanding and applying these values, students learn to make good and responsible decisions in various situations, both at school and outside the school environment. (Ervitasari & Iriani, 2022)..

In addition, character education helps in developing important social skills. Skills such as cooperation, effective communication and the ability to resolve conflicts peacefully are indispensable in everyday life. Group activities and collaborative projects at school provide opportunities for students to practice these skills. (Fauzah et al., 2023). For example, in group work activities, students learn to respect the opinions of others, divide tasks fairly, and work towards a common goal. (Amalia & Wachidah, 2023).. Thus, character education equips students with the tools they need to interact positively with others.

Character education also plays a role in improving students' self-confidence and self-esteem. When students feel valued and recognized for their positive behavior, this can boost their confidence and encourage them to continue behaving well. (Wati, 2023). Rewards and recognition from teachers, peers, and even parents can strengthen students' beliefs that they can contribute positively in their environment. Programs such as "exemplary students" or awards for good behavior

can provide additional motivation to maintain and develop positive behaviors. (Diharja & Hadiwinarto, 2021).

Finally, character education forms a strong foundation for responsible adult life. Positive values and habits instilled early on through character education have a significant long-term impact. Students who grow up with a strong understanding of moral and ethical values are likely to be responsible, have integrity, and are reliable in society. (Dewi & Rezania, 2023). They are not only able to make wise decisions, but also have a sense of social responsibility to contribute to the common good. In the long run, effective character education can produce a better generation, who behave positively and have a strong commitment to noble moral values (Azzahra & Taqahra, 2023). (Azzahra & Taqwani, 2024)..

Conclusion

Character education in primary schools is an important foundation for building a generation that behaves positively and responsibly. Through character education, students are taught moral and ethical values early on, which helps them understand the difference between right and wrong. This teaching forms a strong foundation for the positive behaviors needed in everyday life, both in the school environment and in the wider community.

In addition to providing a moral and ethical foundation, character education also develops essential social skills. Students learn to communicate well, cooperate in teams, and resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner. These skills are essential for building harmonious relationships with others and for functioning effectively in various social situations. By having good social skills, students are more adaptable and contribute positively in their environment.

In conclusion, character education in primary schools plays a crucial role in shaping responsible, ethical and positively behaved individuals. It not only strengthens moral and ethical aspects but also develops social and emotional skills that are essential for students' future success. Therefore, character education should be an integral part of the primary school curriculum to ensure that students not only excel academically but also grow into individuals of good character and morals.

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