



## How is the Program Planning for Strengthening Character Education in Elementary Schools

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### **Abstract**

School is a formal educational institution that systematically implements guidance, teaching and training programs in order to help students to be able to develop their potential, both those that involve moral, spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and social aspects. Schools as a center for meaningful learning and as a process of socialization and acculturation of abilities, values, attitudes, character, and behavior. This study aims to find out how to plan the Strengthening of Character Education program in elementary schools in South Tangerang, Indonesia. The approach used in this study is a qualitative approach. The results of this study indicate that the strengthening of character education is a means to strengthen the character of students, while the efforts made by teachers to implement the strengthening of character education Implementing a program accustom students to maintain cleanliness, beauty, and order, accustom to managing classroom conditions before starting learning, giving examples of good deeds, implementing religious values, responsibility and discipline towards students.

**Keywords:** *Strengthening Character Education; Elementary Schools; Qualitative Studies*

### **Introduction**

Strengthening character education in the current context is very relevant to overcoming the moral crisis that is happening in our country (Rahmawati & Harsono, 2018; Budimansyah, Hood & Nurulpaik, 2018). Now there is a real and worrying crisis in society by involving children. The consequences are serious enough and cannot be considered a simple matter because these actions can lead to criminal acts (Darihastining, Ambarwati, Kustiyarini & Sulistyanyingsih, 2019; Lee & Jang, 2016; Rose, 2016).

The current condition of crisis and moral decadence indicates that all religious and moral knowledge gained in school has no impact on changes in human behavior. Even what is seen is so many people who are inconsistent, others are talked about and their actions are different. Many people argue that such conditions are thought to originate from what is produced by the world of education. The learning process tends to teach moral education and character to the extent of text and is less prepared for students to respond and face contradictory life (Nasuha, 2014).

Admittedly, the issue of character or morals is not completely ignored by educational institutions, but with the facts surrounding the deterioration of character around us shows that there is a failure in institutions in our education in growing humans who are blessed with virtuous or noble character (Nasuha, 2014; DeVitis & Yu, 2011). Efforts to shape characters have a higher meaning than moral formation, because character formation is not only related to the problem of right and wrong, but how to instill habits about good things in life, so that children or students have high awareness and understanding, as well as caring and The formation of children's character in education must be based also on growing student discipline, especially self-discipline (Sanderse, 2019; Chowdhury, 2018; Shubert, Wray-Lake, Syvertsen & Metzger, 2019). Self-discipline of students aims to help find themselves overcome, and prevent the emergence of disciplinary problems, and try to create an atmosphere that is safe, comfortable, and enjoyable for learning activities, so they obey all the rules that have been set (Nasuha, 2014).

Character education is interpreted as value education, character education, moral education, character education, which aims to develop the ability of students to make good and bad decisions, maintain what is good, and realize that goodness in everyday life with all my heart (Yusuf, Sanusi & Maimun, 2018; Davidson, 2014). In the context of Indonesian society, nation and state life, it is believed that values and characters that are formally formulated as functions and goals of national education, must be owned by students in order to be able to face life's challenges now and in the future. Micro, value / character development can be divided into four pillars, namely teaching and learning activities in the classroom, daily activities in the form of school culture; co-curricular and / or extra-curricular activities, as well as daily activities at home, and in the community.

Researchers are looking for an appeal for how to strengthen character education in developed countries, one of which is an article from Hideki Maruyama entitled Moral Education in Japan written in 2013. "In 2008 that Japanese children have a poor mindset in terms of respect for life and self-esteem, and many of them lead to inappropriate lifestyle, while their normative awareness is becoming lower and their inadequate social skills prevent them from forming good human relationships and participating in group activities. , has aimed at enrichment and improvement of moral education for elementary schools since 2008 and secondary schools since 2009 "(Yamamoto, 2016).

The authors suggest that, in 2008 children in Japan had a poor mindset in respect of life and self-esteem, and many of these children lived inappropriate lifestyle, while normative awareness became lower and social skills were not adequate and low participation in cooperation. The results of this study indicate that the minimum contents of the national curriculum in Japan indicate the enrichment and improvement of moral education for elementary schools since 2008 and secondary schools since 2009. At this time we see how amazing, and Japan is famous for its good character culture. Japan began to be famous for its positive character culture in subsequent periods.

Besides Japan, the United States and Canada, other countries that have also been practicing the Strengthening of Character Education program since basic education are the United Kingdom, Spain, China, and South Korea. Even according to Whitley (2007) quoting) The United States is reawakening from its sleep about the importance of starting to perceive the importance of the Character Building Strengthening program. In addition, countries in Asia such as Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore have for years developed Character Strengthening Education programs as an integral part of the education curriculum. A number of these countries are enthusiastic about the implementation of the Character Education Strengthening program because a number of studies conducted by experts prove that the Character Education Strengthening program has a positive impact on both learning, schooling and the lives of children in the future. The most phenomenal study was carried out by Berkowitz & Bier (2005) who became a reference for world researchers.

The comparison above shows that the Integrated Character Education Strengthening program in national and school education accounts for the biggest role in its implementation. Being a big question is what kind of character our nation needs in the future, one of the basic questions, which is about the

character needed by the Indonesian people in the next life, which means it needs to be instilled in our children today as future successors of the nation today. As well as how the next question is about the implementation of Strengthening Character Education in schools, is it in accordance with the expected goals.

Based on the results of a preliminary study that has been described, this research discusses how to plan the Strengthening of Character Education program in elementary schools in South Tangerang, Indonesia. The results of this study are expected to contribute knowledge in the field of character education.

## ***Methodology***

The approach used in this study is a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is used with the consideration that the symptoms of this study are a process carried out by comparing an event, activity, and product with the standard and Character Building Strengthening program is to help provide props. which has been determined through a study of the behavior or activities of the actors involved in it, which are expressed descriptively by describing the state or status of the existing phenomenon.

## ***Participant***

Participants in this study were 157 out of 159 elementary schools in the city of South Tangerang, Banten Province who (have) implemented Character Education Strengthening programs spread across several districts, namely Ciputat District as many as 28 schools in Ciputat District, Ciputat Timur District 19 schools, Pamulang District 28 school, Kecamatan. Pondok Aren 35 schools, Kecamatan. Serpong 21 schools, 16 North Serpong District schools and 12 Setu District schools.

## ***Data Analysis***

In the data analysis stage, researchers will use descriptive data analysis and qualitative data analysis. Descriptive data analysis is presented in the form of a description of the aspects measured in the evaluation. Qualitative analysis is carried out during data collection and after data collection. Analysis during data collection includes developing field notes, data categories, entering data into the analysis format, developing questions for further data collection. While the analysis after the data collected includes collecting and numbering chronologically according to the time of data collection, reexamining data and grouping in one category format and classification of data according to the code, describing the data that has been analyzed in accordance with the components of the evaluation model, and drawing conclusions. Conclusions are drawn after comparing data that has been analyzed with evaluation criteria.

## ***Results***

The results of this study indicate that in general, schools have sought to apply the application of character education in schools, namely by familiarizing positive values integrated into learning. Based on the results of interviews with the informant that the SS teacher added about the habituation of positive characters, namely:

*"By making a habit of praying before studying and after studying, then teaching the Koran together every Friday, then teaching tolerance between religious people, for example: reminding their friends of different religions and to Muslim children to pray and not leave it and for girls for example, you are required to wear a veil at school. "*

From the results of the interview, the habituation of positive values has been applied in schools. The teacher makes a habit of praying before studying, reading the scriptures, teaching about interfaith tolerance. In addition, the values of the application of character education are integrated into the teaching and learning process.

Furthermore, the efforts made by teachers in primary schools to implement character education programs namely Implementing programs accustom students to maintain cleanliness, beauty, and order continuously and continuously until this program becomes a habit that is entrenched in schools. Not only memorizing when students are faced with the concepts of cleanliness, beauty, and order, but the learning process is more direct practice by paying attention to the environment around the classroom or school.

The teacher accustoms to managing classroom conditions before starting learning. Conditioning the classroom can be done by regulating students' learning readiness, observing the order (condition / appearance) of the students, managing the position and order of seating, checking class cleanliness, and so on. The teacher tries to be a role model for students. The teacher is able to give a good real example (*uswatun hasanah*) for students. Thus, what students get is not only subject matter, but also promotes morals, which in turn builds the human mentality as learners.

Teachers try to be friends and friends confide in for their students. The effectiveness of evaluating student characters is not just a matter of student behavior report books, but rather they do a heart-to-heart approach. Integrate lesson materials into daily activities through example / example, spontaneous / reprimand activities, environmental conditioning (provision of sarpras), routine activities such as marching, praying, greeting and others. Integrate subject matter into activities programmed by the school in order to develop character values.

Applying the concept of character-based holistic education. The goal is to balance between the heart, brain and muscles (holistic education) with the hope that students become children who think creatively, responsibly, and independently (holistics). Creating a design plan, implementation and assessment of learning that nuanced character. Character learning planning can be done by integrating learning in each subject, where learning material relating to norms or values in each subject is developed, explicit, and linked to the context of daily life. Learning character values not only at the cognitive level, but touches on internalization, and real practice in the lives of everyday students in the community. Three basic designs of character education include: (1) class (2) school culture, and (3) community or social groups.

## **Discussion**

Based on the findings of the research that has been described that the planning of Strengthening Character Education programs has a clear designation in an effort to build morale and character of the nation through educational activities. This is in line with research conducted by Klann, (2003) and Berkowitz, & Bier (2004) which states that the scope of character education in the form of basic ethical values and positive forms of character, further demanding clear identification of character as a manifestation of behavior moral. Character education without character identification will only be an endless journey, an adventure without a map (Bryan, 2005). Then, the scope or target of character education is the education unit, family, and community. The role of these three aspects is very important to shape and instill character education in students. This is largely determined by the spirit, motivation,

values, and goals of education (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006; Berkowitz, 2011; Berkowitz, Althof & Jones, 2008; Wardhani, Zulela, Rachmadtullah & Siregar, 2018).

Strengthening character education in elementary schools becomes the basis for the formation of children's attitudes and behaviors as adults. Good character education will shape the child's personality that is independent, responsible, and has the courage to take risks for what he will fight for (Bialik, Bogan, Fadel & Horvathova, 2015; Baehr, 2017). Strengthening the character education of millions can form Mental and Spiritual with self-confidence helping humans to be smart and smart, and helping them become good human beings. Making humans smart and smart, it might be easy to do it, but making humans to be good and wise people, it seems much more difficult or even very difficult. Thus, it is very reasonable to say that moral problems are acute problems or chronic diseases that accompany human life anytime and anywhere. The reality of the severity of moral problems is what then places importance on strengthening character education (Engelen, Thomas, Archer, & Van, 2018; Watson, 2019; Sanderse; 2019).

### **Conclusion**

Character education is efforts that are designed and carried out systematically to help students understand the values of human behavior related to God Almighty, self, fellow human beings, the environment, and nationality manifested in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words, and actions based on religious, legal, etiquette, cultural, and cultural norms that involve aspects of knowledge (cognitive), feeling, and action. Character education must be done thoroughly. Formation of character must begin as early as possible, parents must be able to educate and nurture their children, so that one day become the next generation who can boast of the nation and state. Character education must also continue to be applied in the school environment, so teachers and educators must be able to teach and foster the forerunner of Indonesia's future leaders.

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