

Teachers' and Principals' Efforts in Implementing Character Education for Elementary School Students

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ABSTRACT

The efforts of teachers and principals are very important in student character education because the teachers are role models for all students, and the principal is the management who is able to organize the smooth learning and teaching process. This research uses qualitative methods and descriptive approaches with observation, interview, and documentation tools. The data analysis used using the Miles and Huberman model includes data collection, data reduction, data display, verification, or drawing. The results showed that teachers strive to implement character students by giving instruction or advice that builds the student's character, developing strategies to implement character building in students, providing good role models for students, approaches to understanding the student's character and innovative approaches use learning methods and media and integrated character development. While principals strive to provide extracurricular and noncurricular programs for students integrated with character education, provide subjects integrated with character education, provide facilities and infrastructure to support character education, direct teachers to provide role models for students, with the community work or parents of students to support the character development of the students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a very important aspect of human resources. The success of an education is not only measured through material but also determined by the ability to create good character. Education is not only about the increase in knowledge gained by students, but must also be complemented by the formation of student character, so that the various knowledge gained from school can be useful for social life (Halim & Awaluddin, 2019). In the world of education, it is not only determined by academic intelligence but also by many things such as good ethical intelligence or politeness and respect for others. Therefore, education will be able to improve the character, morals and quality of the human self.

Character building is one of the things that is sought to shape the character of students. According to Rejeki and Willem (2019), one of the efforts to realize the National Policy on National Character Development (KN-PKB) is to emphasize the importance of character education to be implemented in every educational institute. When noble characters are embedded in students, noble morality is automatically reflected in the behavior of students in their daily. A school is a place where students' characters are easily affected because they spend most of their time there, and it can be from teachers, friends, and the school environment (Aghni et al., 2020). A person can be said to have a good character. They can absorb the character value and be used as a moral force in their life. As Suherman (2018) said character education is consistent with students' behaviors, especially their personal skills and students generally exhibit positive behavior as a result of studying characters.

However, sometimes, there are still many schools that are more concerned with academic aspects than aspects of character education. The lack of understanding teachers and principals have of the meaning of character education has resulted in problems with its application in or outside the classroom (Asdarina & Arwinda, 2020). In addition, there are still students who have not implemented the character values instilled by the school and design activities programmed by the school are still lacking (Saleh, 2022). Furthermore, according to Rahmah (2020), there are still schools that lack learning resources and support facilities, and infrastructure for character activities. This condition is the responsibility of schools, especially teachers and principals, to build the character of students through character education.

Efforts of teachers and principals are very important in student character education because the teacher is a figure who sets an example for all students and the principal is a person who plays an important role in formal institutions, namely as management who is able to organize the smooth learning and teaching process (Ajmain & Marzuki, 2019). Efforts by teachers and principals in character education will have an impact on the formation of competent student personalities, both academically and non-academically. According to (2021), teachers are expected to apply character values so that they can be used as role models by students and influence students who imitate these values. Principals must develop programs or activities integrated with character education (Pohan & Sirait, 2021). Character education in schools can be integrated with extracurricular, co-curricular, and intracurricular activities so that it will develop the attitudinal values and skills of students (Asdarina & Arwinda, 2020). Therefore, teachers and principals should be able to apply character education to elementary school students both in the learning process and in school activities.

There are several related studies on the efforts of teachers and principals in providing character education to their students, such as: Ningsih et al. (2015), Lubis & Nasution (2017), Akhmad (2020), Sinta et al. (2022), Prihatmojo et al., (2019) and, Suriansyah & Aslamiah, (2015) who say that the efforts of teachers and principals require the involvement of school residents, including parents or the community, in student character education. Like Suriansyah and Aslamiah who said that all teachers, principals and even parents together carry out student character development in accordance with their functions, authorities and duties. Meanwhile, Sinta said that principals need to involve parents in the formation of student character at home, so that the process of strengthening student character is carried out continuously. However, in the related research above, there was research in junior high schools, while this research was conducted in elementary schools. For elementary schools, this research was conducted in only one school, while this research was conducted in three elementary schools. The above research also conducted research on parents or the community who are directly involved in the character building of students at school, while this research only conducted research on teachers and principals for the involvement of parents and the community. The above study also did not conduct research on the facilities and infrastructure available at school. However, the above related study conducted a study in middle schools and for elementary schools only in one school, while this study was conducted in three elementary schools. The above study also conducted research on parents or the community directly involved in character formation of students in school, while this study only conducted research on teachers and principals for parent and community involvement. Meanwhile,

Sinta research only conducted research in low classes while this research was conducted in low and high classes. For Prihatmojo, Akhmad, and Lubis, research focused on educators and students only, Suriansyah's research focused on teachers, principals, students, and parents/community, then Sinta and Nigsih's research focused on teachers, principals, and students, while this research focused on teachers and principals.

Research on the efforts of teachers and principals in implementing character education in elementary school students has not been much found or very especially focusing on teachers and principals as well as. So, this research focuses on the efforts of teachers and principals in implementing character education in elementary school students. Such as the efforts and strategies of teachers and principals in implementing character education, building extracurricular and non-curricular activities integrated into character education, how the principals direct teachers, issues that are prioritized in character education, how the principals works with the Parents working together or the community, providing media and using methods integrated into character education, and barriers and solutions of teachers and school leaders in implementing character education in students.

Based on the problems mentioned above, it is necessary to study the efforts of teachers and principals more deeply in implementing character education in students. Theoretically, the benefits of this research are expected to produce an effective learning process or character education activity and increase knowledge in the field of character education. Then it can theoretically serve as a knowledge reference for further character-building researchers. In practice, this can be an important consideration in creating appropriate character education guidelines for students.

2. METHODS

This study used a qualitative method with a descriptive approach to describe the efforts of teachers and school leaders in implementing character education in elementary school students. The participants studied were teachers (4 women aged 30, 33, 36, 40, and 2 men aged 33) principals (1 woman aged 59 and 2 men aged 35 and 58), and students from 3 different schools (2 boys aged 9 and 13 girls aged 7-9 on average). Each school was selected based on a targeted sampling technique, including 1 principal, 2 teachers, and 5 students. The data collection techniques used structured interviews, observation, and documentation of teachers' and school principals' efforts in implementing character education in elementary school students.

Data analysis uses the Miles and Huberman model, namely data analysis that is performed interactively and continuously progresses to completion such that the data reaches a saturation point. The analysis sequence includes data collection, data reduction, data display, and verification/drawing, as per Figure 1. The data analysis technique used in this study is to use descriptive qualitative data analysis techniques (in the form of words, not numbers) and this data can be collected in a variety of ways, such as observing, interviewing, or recording digests, which are then processed by planning, inputting or rearranging in 4 steps (Rizal & Munip, 2017).

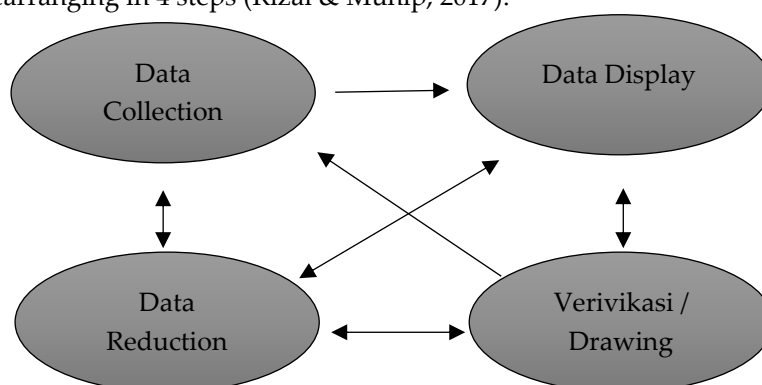


Figure 1. Miles and Huberman data analysis model

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Here, the efforts of teachers and principals T1 (Teacher 1), T2 (Teacher 2), and P1 (Principal 1) from ES1 (Elementary School 1), T3 (Teacher 3), T4 (Teacher 4), and P1 (Principal 2) from ES2 (Elementary School 2) and T5 (Teacher 5), T6 (Teacher 6) and P3 (Principal 3) from ES3 (Elementary School 3).

3.1 Teacher Efforts in Implementing Character Education for Elementary School Students

Panggabean et al. (2022) stated that one of the moral values that teachers must instill in elementary school education is the cultivation of character values in students T2's efforts in his interview:

"This can be achieved by introducing a program of order, cleanliness and beauty in the classroom for students by providing good examples in each lesson".

So the effort is to implement an orderly program to behave and provide positive role models from teachers for students to emulate and this is the same as applying T4 from ES2. Efforts to establish an orderly program may take the form of duties as applied by T6 from ES3 to be independently disciplined and accountable for completing their duties on time. T4 from ES2 also gave tasks, but with the task of determining the classroom atmosphere according to their desires, so that innovation can stimulate students' creative thinking. Efforts made by the teacher to achieve student character by giving good work (Putra, 2020). Giving assignments is the same as giving instructions/exercises from the teacher to complete the assignment be on time and giving this instruction is also used by T2 of ES1 and T3 of ES2. Giving instructions is also like giving advice to students, and giving that advice is also an effort of T6 of ES3. For example, role models in the observation, T3 of ES2 and T6 of ES3 gave an example of how to sit in the right discipline and how to be imitated by students. To support teachers' efforts in implementing character education in the classroom, an appropriate strategy is needed as a guideline, the teacher's efforts to implement will run smoothly because the steps have been arranged. such as the use of lesson plans was done by T5 from ES3 in their interviews:

"We make RPPs where the settings to be reached are inserted. For example, in our learning, the attitude of autonomy, responsibility is already in the RPP, we write it there and we do it in learning activities".

It can be concluded that ES3's T5 uses the lesson plan as a learning strategy for character education since it was inserted with character stats. Solehat and Ramadan (2021), the lesson plan will explain the basic learning activities that incorporate character-building values. So the use of lesson plans as a teacher strategy is very helpful in shaping student character because character education will be included in the learning steps in class. Similarly, T4 from ES2 used a learning design that used methods and apperception as in the lesson plan, and T2 from ES1 also applied this apperception. The choice of methods also depends on the material to be taught and this agrees T1, T2, T3, T5 and T6. According to Nurjanah dkk., (2020), when teachers are able to apply the right learning methods for students, learning objectives can be achieved, one of the main objectives is the character building of students.

The observation results indicate that lower grades employ a greater proportion of interactive teaching methods, characterised by active engagement between teachers and students, enabling the teacher to gain insight into each student's individual traits. In contrast, higher grades rely more heavily on discussion methods, fostering the development of students' tolerance and their ability to respect differing opinions. The fosters pupils' religious character by the practice of reading prayers and engaging in singing or clapping, which in turn helps develop their creative character. Furthermore, ES1's T2 strategy is to observe students, observing every attitude and behavior of the students in the teaching and learning process, teachers sometimes also use media or props to support the learning process and through the use of appropriate media, character education in students can also be

implemented. Observations in ES1, ES2 and ES3 more often use printed theme books full of pictures or activities to play or sing to help shape students' creative character and curiosity. Observation in ES2 also shows that students often read the thematic book during recess, showing the students' interest in the contents of the thematic book. ES2 also uses other print media such as posters that have been installed on the wall are sometimes used by teachers when consistent with the material being taught. Meanwhile, ES3 also sometimes uses computer media and props as game media that have been made or prepared by the teacher to attract students' attention or enthusiasm. According to (2020), learning media is effectively used as a learning resource to improve students' character values.

In order for students' characters to be truly formed, it is necessary to emphasize character education from teachers to students during the teaching and learning process. In an interview with T4 from ES2:

"I am looking more at the condition of the child, the conditions today are such that we cannot predict what the class will be like that day."

So, T4 from ES2 to emphasize character education in students, first observe the students' condition, because the students' condition cannot be predicted every day so it is necessary to adjust the conditions so that the character education applied can proceed. T1 from ES1 also applied this adjustment, but it was more directed to the conditions of the curriculum used because the use of the curriculum often changed.

The explanation above shows the emphasis on character values. T2 of ES1 and T3 of ES2 emphasize religious character education through reading prayers and discipline on time. The character is also emphasized by ES1's T2, but adds the value of tolerance from students who respect differences. The value of religious character is also emphasized by T5 from ES3 by emphasizing the morals of students like the morals of the Prophet Muhammad Saw.

3.2 Principal's Efforts in Implementing Character Education for Elementary School Students

Principal leadership is very important for the life of the school because the principal is the main driver of all educational processes that take place in schools (Kaso, Aswar, Firman, & Ilham, 2019). P1's attempt by ES1 in an interview:

"Character education the same teacher, we direct it before class "

So first, therefore, instruct the teacher to set an example for the students. The principal encourages all teachers and employees to model good character for all students (Widodo, 2018). So that the attitude character shown by the teacher can be imitated by students and applied to their lives. Directing P1 teacher by conducting monthly meetings. Directing teachers can be through deliberation or socialization with teachers as applied by P2 from ES2 and P3 from ES3. The direction of teachers is carried out by the principal, one form or example of cooperation between teachers and principals in shaping student character and is P1 strategy to implement character education followed by providing extracurricular programs outdoor for students. With this strategy, students can also shape their character outside the learning process while students are at school. Provision of programs are also sought P1 from ES2 with the formation Pancasila Student Profile provided by Kemdikbud. The program summarizes the six values of faith in God Almighty, unity in diversity, mutual cooperation, independence, and critical and creative reasoning. That are integrated character education through 3 processes and this includes the P2 strategy, namely intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. Implementing character education requires a school programs that involve collaboration between teachers and principals to implement in teaching and learning activities (Anisah & Sumarni, 2019). While ES1's P3 attempt said:

“Many things are done in school education to run there must be good management, organization in every education folder and each folder in question is the school community”.

So, effort P3 by having good management that organizes every education folder, namely school residents from teachers, students, and student guardians. According to Julistiati, (2018), character education in schools is also closely related to school management or management. So, in order for school activities to run smoothly, good management is needed from the principal who organizes the smooth running of school education. In carrying out this management, according to P3, innovation or creativity is needed to find new ways to present to students so that it can help shape student character. The innovation made by P3 from ES3 is in accordance with the strategy namely making a design or support system that can support students' talents and interests.

In implementing character education, in addition to academic activities, non-academic activities are also needed. Table 1 contains the total extracurricular and extracurricular activities from interviews, observations and documentation at elementary schools, showing that schools provide activities outside of the teaching and learning process to implement character education in students, in addition to teaching and learning activities.

Table 1. Extracurricular and Noncurricular Activities/Habituatation

Extracurricular	Character Values	Noncurricular/ Habituatation	Character values
Scouts	Discipline, cooperation and independence	Handwashing	Care for the Environmen
Drumband Hafidz	Discipline, cooperation and independence religion	Imtaq Ceremony	Religion Love for the country and discipline
Pencatsilat	Independent and hard work	Bringing lunch Picket Gymnastics Picking up trash Reading literacy	Caring for the environment Care for the Environment Disciplin Caring for the environment Love to read books

The program provided by the NTB Provincial Education and Culture Office is the cultural Saturday week activity. This program the school community wears traditional clothes and are also several activities such as eating together, gymnastics together and singing together. In addition to competitions from cultural sabdue activities, from the results of observations and documentation, the school also provides several competitions, such as competitions on national days and P2 also provides a Ramadan festival which contains many competitions with character for students.

It can be concluded that the school's extracurricular and noncurricular activities show an integrated character education. In accordance with the research by Marsakh et al. (2021) that the management of character education in schools in every school activity through three main channels, namely integrated through learning activities, extracurricular activities, and acculturation and habituation activities.

Conducting extracurricular or non-curricular activities also requires supporting facilities or infrastructure. According to Azmi et al. (2021), adequate learning facilities and resources will help facilitate the implementation of character education in schools. In the observation results at ES1 and ES2, mosque facilities are available to support to join dhuhr prayer activities and yasin for imtaq activities, while ES3 could not provide mosque facilities due to insufficient land area, but still jointly

conducts duha prayer activities on certain days. Whereas ES1, ES2, and ES3 provide handwashing stations and trash cans to keep the environment clean, libraries for literacy activities, classrooms for teachers to build student character in the teaching and learning process, and book infrastructure. P1 provides a place to sit and park students' bicycles for independent learning and a place for students to play to build friendships.

In addition to providing activities or programs that are integrated with character education, in co-curricular activities or the teaching and learning process, principals also arrange subjects that are a priority or that are integrated with character education. So that students are indirectly integrated by character education from the material taught by the teacher. For P1 from ES1 said:

"It depends on what the teacher wants to teach. For example, if he teaches this subject, he must have touched the character, all characters are good, so it depends on the teacher and learning".

So, P1 they did not prioritize subjects for character education because all lessons have integrated character education and everything returns to the teacher how to teach and the choice of themes to be taught and this agrees with P2. Likewise, P3 but prioritizes the subjects of Pkn and Religion because these subjects teach students' character and morals. In all SD/MI subjects, there are isactually materials that have character values, but substantively, there are at least two subjects, namely Islamic Religious Education and Civic Education (PKn), which are subjects that explicitly introduce values, and to some extent make students care and internalize values (Lubis & Nasution, 2017).

To support the principal's efforts in implementing character education, in addition to teachers, the principal also involve and cooperate with students' parents or the community. For P1, P2 and P3 parents are involved by participating in school activities e.g. B. by participating in fundraisers for those affected by natural disasters or by serving as a trainer for scout extracurricular activities. The observation also shows that the school principal provides activity the lunch together and this shows that the parents support the activity by providing lunch for the students. P2 also engages parents by accepting the help of their ideas and innovations support school activities. Therefore, various forms of collaboration and cooperation with the community and educational units outside the school are needed in strengthening the character education (Dewi & Alam, 2020).

From the explanation of the principal's efforts above, it can be seen that the principal always emphasizes character values in students. For P1, he emphasized the value of student discipline to match the school character Meanwhile, P2 focuses more on emphasizing healthy and caring characters in accordance with the school's vision and mission to achieve that vision and mission and P3 emphasizes the moral or religious values of students to form good habits of students

3.3 Teachers' Constraints and Solutions in Implementing Character Education for Primary School Students

The lack of morals or character of students must also have contributing factors so that factors are needed that can provide solutions to improve or shape student character. So, a solution must be sought to eliminate or hide these obstacles. . For the constraint factor according to T1 from ES1, namely:

"we are more about the child's innate character. For example, we give the character of responsibility, but because their habits at home are not like that.".

So the limiting factor is the different internal students and this is consistent with T6 of ES3. These differences make it difficult for teachers to implement character education in students. Meanwhile, T6's solution is to ask students to take part in activities outside the classroom such by the school and integrated through character building. According to Mustoip (2018), Character education is implemented through habituation that is adjusted in a sustainable school program to produce optimal changes. The constraining factors T4 from ES2, namely:

“Yes, that’s for sure, the children are sometimes indifferent and don’t care when advised.”

So, sometimes students are ignorant of the advice from the teacher and don't care as if they don't listen to anything and this is also an obstacle for T2 from ES1. The different natures and characteristics of students are an obstacle to fostering good awareness and students also sometimes ignore the words of the teacher (Zendrato Tri Lilin Natalia, 2022). For solution to T2 is to approach students to understand how students' characters are and provide what students need. The solution of T4 is to remind students how to behave well according to their position as students and reminder can be give assertiveness to students that students' attitudes need to be changed Furthermore, the constraints of T3 from ES2 are:

“There are obstacles, more to the innate character of children. For example, we give the character of responsibility but because their habituation at home is not like that, it’s a bit difficult.”

So the obstacle concerns the innate character of students from home that does not match the character of the school and this is also an obstacle T5 from ES3 but it is more directed to the innate character because of the family background T2 from ES1. Innate character is the character of student habituation that comes from the environment outside the school or home environment. Basically, the character is inherent and has existed since birth in a person's personality which is manifested through behavior in his daily life and is characterized by cognitive abilities and innate traits that have existed since early childhood (Parameswara, 2021). Meanwhile, T3's solution is the same as T4, namely to remind students more. The solution carried out by that T5 give the advice to change that can build the character of students' attitudes correctly and be instilled by students.

3.4 Principals’ Constraints and Solutions in Implementing Character Education for Elementary School Students

The role of the principal, not only as a visionary leader, but also the principal's ability to overcome problems and obstacles in the education (Arief, 2019). For P1 constraints from ES1 herself in the interview said:

“For our inhibiting factors, sometimes the influence of his home does not combine with the attitude of our character”.

So, the obstacle is a habit that students have gotten used to from home and bring to school so that teachers have difficulty changing these habits according to the habits that students must have in school. According to Hariandi et al. (2020) One of the obstacles for students is bad habits at home that students bring to school and this is a challenge for teachers. The solution to P1 is to emphasize students and also the involvement of parents to change students' habits at home. Therefore, parents' cooperation is needed to change students' habits. Meanwhile, solution P3 is to provide exemplary guidance to teachers to be modeled by students. Students can imitate or model the teacher's personality and can build student character through the teacher's personality competence (Aurellia et al., 2021). In addition, there is a P2 obstacle from ES2 as above, but it is more about school habits that are not brought home and modelled. In the formation of student character it can be created through practice and habituation, and when something has been familiarized through habituation, it becomes a habit for those who do it, then become addictive,, and finally become a tradition that is difficult to leave (Aprilia et al., 2021). While the solution is to involve parents, P2 creates a Whatsapp group to establish regular communication with parents about student regarding student activities at school so that parents can help it at home as well.

4. CONCLUSION

According to this study, teachers are needed to implement education: Teachers use techniques, methodologies, learning material, and objects to teach character. While implementing character education, the principal's efforts and strategy include building extracurricular and noncurricular habits, providing facilities and infrastructure, directing teachers, integrating character education into all subjects, emphasising character values, and involving parents or the community. Internal student factors, student nature or ignorance when receiving advice from teachers, an innate character from home that is difficult to change, student backgrounds, and an understanding of characters that teachers must explore more are obstacles to character education. The remedy is to advise, emphasise character, approach, and remind students. The main difficulties are home or outside school influences and school habits that pupils can't apply at home. Communicating with parents and giving teachers model provisions so students can emulate and apply them in their daily lives is the solution.

The implication of the results of this study shows that the efforts of teachers and principals have a major impact on student character education, since everything that is put out by the school leads to student character. The weaknesses of this study are still the lack of time to collect more complete data due to the busy nature of the respondents and the number of teachers surveyed, mostly from high grade teachers. Given this limitation, it is suggested that future researchers, or more researchers, should further investigate the efforts of teachers and principals in implementing character education in elementary school students both in other elementary schools and from the perspective of higher schools such as middle and high schools.

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