

Teachers' Strategies in Instilling Character Education in Elementary Schools

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Abstract: This study aims to find out the teacher's strategy in instilling character education in students through learning process activities. This research is a qualitative research using interviews, observation and documentation as research instruments. The results showed that the strategy of instilling character education in elementary school students needs to be done through several learning activities. The learning activities in question are planning, implementation and evaluation activities. The planning of the learning process includes action planning integrated in the planning of the syllabus or lesson plan (RPP), integrating the planning of character values that will be instilled in students through several routine activities that will become an act of habituation. Implementation activities are carried out to realise the action plan for instilling character values that have been planned previously. Meanwhile, evaluation activities are carried out to determine the extent to which the character cultivation plan is achieved. Thus, efforts to achieve character education through learning strategies are carried out in a planned and systematic manner.

Keywords: Strategy, Character Education

I. Introduction

Character education is now a central issue that is often discussed at the education level. The Ministry of Education (2011) states that character education is placed as the foundation for the vision of national development, such as realising a noble society, having great morality, ethical, cultured, and civilised based on Pancasila. This is done as an effort to shape the positive character of learners. Character is the possession of 'good things'. Parents and educators have the duty to educate children with character content through the subject matter taught (Lickona, 2013). Zubaedi (2011) argues that character education basically includes the development of substance, process, atmosphere, or environment that inspires, encourages, and facilitates a person to develop good habits in daily life. Thus, character is one of the important pillars and is a manifestation of the implementation of the educational process at every level of education.

Character building efforts are very important to manage the personalities of learners in a positive direction. Character education is education that teaches students' morals and personality (Fadillah&Khorida, 2013; Sumarsih&Zakaria, 2020). Furthermore, Gunawan (2012) argues that character education aims to shape the character of the Indonesian nation in accordance with the values contained in Pancasila. Character education must be taught from an early age because it is one of the important keys to realising the ideals of the Indonesian nation (Khaironi, 2017: 21). Rohendi in Mustoip (2018) states that character education should start from elementary school, because it is difficult to change one's character if it is not formed early. In achieving the goals of character education, it is necessary to make efforts and hard work from all school components. To run an effective character education, it requires adequate and consistent understanding from all education staff, ranging from principals, supervisors, teachers and employees. All parties must have the same understanding of character education for students.

In relation to the learning process at the education level, character education is a conscious effort by educators to instil good values in students. This is in line with Rony's (2021) opinion that character education is a system of instilling character values which includes knowledge, awareness or willingness and action to implement these values. Character education is defined as a deliberate (conscious) effort to realise virtue, which is objectively good human quality, not only good for individual individuals, but also good for society as a whole (Zubaedi, 2011). Therefore, educators must understand the basic characteristics of character education in internalising it into children in order to provide a good educational and socialisation environment for children.

Currently, character education and national culture are experiencing various problems. The reality in the field shows that awareness of the nation's cultural values is declining. Among them are the disorientation and un-lived values of Pancasila, the shift in life values, the fading of the nation's cultural values and the weakening of the nation's culture. All of this is reflected in the many cases that are currently surfacing in the mass media. As stated by Licona in Zubaedi (2011), the lack of attention to character education in the field of school education has led to the emergence of various social diseases in society. Schools should not only strive to improve academic achievement, but also be responsible for the development of student character. Based on this, to implement character education, it is considered important to have an agreement of all school members about the character values that will be developed in their school (Anita Lie, 2010b). Lie explained that character education is integrated in the curriculum and implemented in the subjects that students learn every day. Thus, the teacher has an important role in the learning process, has a sense of professional responsibility, as a facilitator and motivator, so as to create effective and efficient learning and become a role model for students (Roqib&Nurfauadi, 2020. (2020)).

One of the efforts to implement character education in schools is through character education strategies in schools. Character education strategy is one of the effective media in character education in schools. Character education strategy is an effort to guide students and all related parties to be able to internalise good values. Character education strategy is a planned effort to shape students so that students can recognise, care about and be able to live character values (Nurhayati, 2022). The strategy applied in character education is participatory, democratic, elaborative and explorative so that all parties feel significant progress (Character Education Team of the Ministry of National Education, Character Education Development in Junior High Schools, Ministry of National Education, 2017).

To achieve the goals of character education in elementary schools, the right strategy is needed and must be implemented systematically starting from the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. According to Terry in Herujito (2001), Strategy is a different process consisting of planning, organising, actuating and controlling stages carried out by humans and other resources to achieve the desired target. Yestiani&Zahwa (2020) mentioned several roles of teachers in learning activities, namely teachers as educators, teachers as teachers, teachers as learning resources, teachers as facilitators, teachers as mentors, teachers as demonstrators, teachers as managers, teachers as advisors, teachers as innovators, teachers as motivators, teachers as trainers, and teachers as evaluators.

Regarding character education at the school level, several previous studies including Marsono (2019), Nugraha and Hasanah (2021), Muntazam (2022) explained that the success of character education in schools can only be achieved if it is able to instil character values in these students. Furthermore, they explained that character education not only aims to drive the process of forming positive behaviour in children but also improve their cognitive quality, because in realising the success of character education, schools work together with various internal and external factors, internal factors include four pillars, namely the learning process in the classroom, school culture, habituation activities, co-curricular activities and extra-curricular activities. While external factors include activities carried out through family and society, so education must make students a reference point.

In line with the results of previous research, in this study the researcher wants to know how the teacher's strategy in instilling character education through learning activities at SDK SitaKaca so that later it can find out and pay special attention to various strategies for implementing character education in schools. This research aims to identify character education strategies through learning at SDK SitaKaca.

II. Methods

The approach used in this research is a descriptive qualitative approach. The teacher's strategy in character education through learning at school becomes a single variable in this study, based on the 3 stages of character education strategies, namely planning, implementation and evaluation. The object of this research is SitaKaca Catholic Elementary School (SDK). The data collection techniques used are interview, participatory observation and documentation. The source of data came from the principal and teachers at SDK SitaKaca. Data analysis used in this research is using milles and huberman data analysis which consists of data reduction, data collection and conclusion drawing.

III. Results and Discussion

1. Character Education Planning by Homeroom Teachers

Character education planning through learning activities in the classroom is a very important aspect in the effort to build students' character. The character education planning carried out by homeroom teachers at SDK SitaKaca in the learning process begins with developing teaching modules and lesson plans that include the development of character education values.

The following is an extract of the results of interviews with resource persons

'In planning the cultivation of character education values in the classroom, what needs to be planned is to develop a syllabus by including activities to develop character education values in it, especially for classes that use the independent curriculum and prepare teaching materials that are in accordance with the character development of students'. Meanwhile, for classes that still use the K-13 curriculum, they prepare character lesson plans by including activities to develop character education values in them and prepare teaching materials that are in accordance with the character development of students'.

The planning of character education through classroom learning activities at SDK Pagal II is also adjusted to the character and culture of the students in the class, so that learning can run effectively and efficiently as expected in the learning process.

2. Implementation of Character Education by Classroom Teachers

Implementation is the stage taken to realise a plan into real action in achieving goals effectively and efficiently, so that it can have value. In an effort to instil student character education at SDK SitaKaca, it is taken seriously and has been thoroughly integrated in the curriculum, and practised through daily activities at school. The implementation of character education in primary schools is inseparable from the role of teachers as the main agent in shaping student character. Based on the results of interviews with several teachers at SDK SitaKaca related to the cultivation of character education, especially in the learning process, they already have their own strategies in cultivating character education.

'The implementation of character education through learning activities in the classroom must be in line with the planning that has been prepared previously. In this case, the character values that have been compiled in the Teaching Module and RPP must be poured into the learning process. The implementation of character education through routine classroom activities such as greeting students, praying together, this aims to increase religious values in students. Furthermore, in the learning process using a variety of teaching methods, so that students can actively participate in class such as collaborating with friends through group work, and creating students who think critically.' Furthermore, there is also a class culture, namely implementing a school literacy movement or reading

habit for 15 minutes before starting the learning process this aims to build student knowledge and student intelligence, besides that, we also have a clean culture 5 minutes before entering class in the morning and 5 minutes before going home. I try to foster an attitude of environmental care, hard work and build a clean and healthy life in them'.

The data from the researcher's observations show that in the learning process, they always carry out the routine activities referred to. besides that, they also provide opportunities for students to ask questions, discussions, ask students to be honest and fair to others, help each other in doing exercises and lend stationery to students in need, throw garbage in its place and always tidy up their books and stationery after learning. This can improve the positive character of students.

3. Evaluation by Classroom Teachers

To see the success of the character education programme through learning activities in the classroom can be carried out through three assessments, namely affective, cognitive and psychomotor assessments. this can be seen in the following interview extracts

'Evaluation of character education through learning activities in the classroom is carried out through three forms of assessment such as attitude assessment (affective), assessment of students' knowledge (cognitive) and psychomotor assessment. a) Cognitive assessment form, which is an assessment carried out to determine student achievement in learning that illustrates the efforts and hard work of students in achieving something. b) Affective domain assessment. This assessment can be done by making observations, namely through student observation sheets. c) Assessment of the psychomotor domain, which is an assessment carried out to see the development of students in the form of their work such as whether students carry out prayers, clean the school environment, and other activities without having to be ordered by the teacher. This assessment can be done using student performance'.

IV. Discussion

The planning of character education through learning activities in the classroom is well planned. Character education planning at SDK SitaKaca is carried out systematically starting from reviewing SK/KD, developing syllabus/RPP with character, identifying core values that will be instilled in students, then these values must be integrated into the curriculum and selecting teaching methods that suit the needs of students. this is in line with Rosyad (2019) stating that there are four steps in integrating character education in the learning process, namely: analysis of Competency Standards/Basic Competencies so that character values can be carried out in learning, developing syllabus/RPP with character by adding character components. Preparation of teaching materials by making adaptations by adding learning activities that can also develop character.

At the stage of implementing character education through learning activities in the classroom is a structured activity in accordance with a carefully planned learning plan. Ma'rufah (2022) states that the implementation of learning refers to the planning that has been made. The implementation of learning consists of three stages of activity, namely introduction, core and closing. In the introduction, the integration of character education can be done in several ways, including starting the meeting on time (an example of the value instilled is discipline), greeting students kindly when starting the meeting (an example of the value instilled is polite, caring), praying before opening the lesson (an example of the value instilled is religious), checking the attendance of students (an example of the value instilled is discipline, diligence), praying for students who are absent due to illness or other obstacles (an example of the value instilled is religious, caring), linking the material/competencies to be learned to the benefits that can be obtained in life. Likewise, in the implementation of core and closing activities, teachers always internalise character education in every learning activity. The strategy for implementing character education in education units is an integral part of the school-based quality improvement strategy programme that is implemented in the implementation in the education unit Yulianto (2021;.,Sobirin, M. &Susapti, P. (2018). The strategy is realised in Learning Activities

Evaluation of character education through learning activities in the classroom does not only use one form of assessment but is carried out through three forms of assessment, namely assessment in the cognitive domain, which is to assess the ability of students to understand the character values that are instilled, affective assessment, which is an assessment of the attitudes shown by students, and psychomotor assessment, which is an assessment of the skills of students in using the character values that have been instilled in daily life. Evaluation or assessment is a very important part of the education process. In character education, assessment must be done properly and correctly. Assessment not only includes the cognitive achievement of students, but also their affective and psychomotor achievements. In order for the results of the assessment carried out by the teacher to be correct and objective, the teacher must understand the principles of correct assessment in accordance with the assessment standards set by the assessment experts. Permendiknas RI Number 20 of 2007 concerning Educational Assessment Standards. In this standard many techniques and forms of assessment are offered, including character assessment. In character assessment, teachers need to make assessment instruments equipped with assessment rubrics to avoid subjective assessments, both in the form of observation assessment instruments (observation sheets) and attitude scale assessment instruments.

Learning activities within the framework of developing the character of students can use a contextual approach as a learning and teaching concept that helps teachers and students link the material learned with real world life so that students are able to make connections between the material they learn and their daily lives. thus, through contextual learning students have more comprehensive results not only at the cognitive level (olahpikir), but also at the affective level (olahhati, rasa, dankarsa), and psychomotor (olahraga). In addition, there are development activities that can be carried out through self-development activities, namely: 1) Routine activities. Routine activities are activities that are carried out continuously and consistently at all times by students. For example, always attending the Flag ceremony every Monday, lining up before entering the classroom, praying before and after lessons, saying greetings when meeting teachers, friends and education personnel; 2) Spontaneous activities. Activities that students do simultaneously at that time. For example, collecting funds to help friends who are affected by a disaster; 3) Exemplary. The behaviour and attitudes of teachers and education personnel as well as students in setting a good example in the school and community environment. For example: neatness, coming on time, discipline, politeness, honesty, and hard work; 4) Conditioning. Creating conditions that support the implementation of character education. For example: clean toilets, rubbish bins, green courtyards and trees, posters of wise words posted on trees and in the classroom; 5) Extracurricular activities. Extracurricular activities that support character education include scouting activities, art activities and sports activities.

The integration of character education in the development of school culture can also be done through three stages Solihin, et al. (2019) namely: (1) Modelling: the school must realise that the cultivation of values, norms, and habits that shape the character of students if sourced from real examples of attitudes and lives of all school elements, especially principals, teachers and employees. School principals, teachers and staff must organise their speech, attitudes and relationship patterns in accordance with the values that underlie the school culture. Thus, the attitudes and patterns of relations will become models or examples that can be followed by students; (2) Teaching: the school must pay serious attention to the importance of learning values, norms, and character habits for students. All activities must be organised appropriately in accordance with the character that is being cultivated. The curriculum applied at school in realising a school culture with character includes subjects, various curricular activities and social projects. In this case, teachers actively teach students about the importance of values, norms, and praiseworthy character habits that are prioritised by the school by integrating them into subjects; (3) Reinforcing: in order for this character culture to develop and run effectively, it must be supported by consistent reinforcement. This consistent reinforcement, among others, is done by continuous communication related to values, norms, habits that have been prioritised by always providing opportunities for students to apply these values. Reinforcement of character culture can also be in the form of visualisation or installation of pamphlets containing character values, norms, and habits, wall magazines, and giving awards to certain teachers, students, or classes that show achievements related to priority character values.

V. Conclusion

Character is one of the important pillars and is used as a manifestation of the implementation of the education process at every level of education. This is done because character is a person's ownership of good or positive things. In relation to the learning process in schools, character education is a conscious effort by educators to instill good values in students. The process of instilling good character is formulated by educators in the planning process, the implementation process and the learning evaluation process to foster positive characters from students. The three processes are a strategy that is deliberately carried out in order to plant and develop good character education in students.

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