IMPLEMENTATION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION THROUGH INDONESIAN LANGUAGE LEARNING IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Dede Kurniawan[1], Andina Halimsyah Rambe[2]
[12]Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara; Indonesia
Correspondence email; dede.kurniawan@uinsu.ac.id

Abstract	This research aims to describe how the implementation of character values through Indonesian language learning at SDN 104298 Simpang Empat. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method. Data collection techniques in this research are observation, interview, and documentation review. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction to summarize relevant information, data presentation in the form of tables or diagrams, and conclusion drawing and verification through a triangulation process. This stage was carried out interactively until the data reached saturation, allowing the identification of supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of character education and formulating relevant recommendations to improve learning at SDN 104298 Simpang Empat. From this research, the results obtained are five character values that must be applied at SDN 104298 Simpang Empat, namely religious character, honesty, independence, nationalism, and social care. There are several supporting factors in the application of character, namely (1) innate, (2) personality, and (3) family. In addition to supporting factors, there are also inhibiting factors in this application, namely (1) the limited time students spend at school. (2) parents who lack time for students at home due to the busy work of parents, (3) the community environment. To overcome the obstacles in implementing character education, teachers and principals need to follow the deepening of character education. Teachers must familiarize students with the existing school culture to students. Each teacher must be able to make an assessment record of the achievement of student character values by using methods that are considered easy to learn.
Keywords	Character Education; Elementary School, SDN 104298 Simpang Empat.

INTRODUCTION

Character education is an effort to instill noble values in students so that they develop good personalities in their behavior towards God, themselves, others, and the environment. This character-strengthening process should start from an early age and be maximized during elementary school so that students have good morals and ethics (Kezia, 2021). Character education in schools is very important for the success of character-building programs for children, where collaboration between schools and families plays a crucial role (Salminawati, 2021).

In the last decade, education in Indonesia has faced the problem of the weak character of the younger generation. Character education aims to improve the quality of education administration and outcomes, leading to the formation of character and noble morals of students in a holistic and balanced manner (Maf *et al.*, 2022). Character building through classroom learning and extracurricular activities becomes one of the solutions to this problem. Additionally, with the help of character education, students must be able to independently apply knowledge and noble moral values in their daily lives (Mardianto *et al.*, 2020).

The government introduced the Character Education Strengthening Program (PPK) as an effort to cultivate character education in schools. This program aims to promote quality and moral education throughout Indonesia, emphasizing values such as respect, responsibility, honesty, care, and fairness. The implementation of PPK must be adjusted to the conditions and needs of each school and requires close cooperation between teachers and students' families to shape the dignified character of the younger generation (Fahira, 2021; Mustadi, 2011). Teachers at SDN 104298 Simpang Empat understand the importance of character education in Indonesian language learning but face challenges such as a lack of specialized training, parental support, resources, and character evaluation. To address this, the school can conduct training for teachers, enhance cooperation with parents, utilize digital resources, and implement a comprehensive character evaluation system. The integration of character education aims to shape students who are not only academically intelligent but also morally upright.

Research by Sulistiyowati (2020) shows that character education in Indonesian language learning at MTs Masalikil Huda requires the understanding of teachers as curriculum implementers and facilitators for students. Revita *et al.*'s (2021) research at SMP Al-Irsyad Surakarta found that the implementation of character education can shape students' attitudes and social behavior through Indonesian language learning. At SMA Negeri 1 Takalar, Najir (2021) shows that the implementation

of character education in Indonesian language learning must be included in the lesson planning by teachers. Fahira & Ramadan (2021) state that the Character Education Strengthening Program (PPK) can enhance the quality of moral education through collaboration between teachers and parents. Mustadi (2021) shows that special training for teachers, parental support, and digital resources can enhance the effectiveness of character education implementation.

From the five studies, there is a significant gap, namely the lack of a systematic and comprehensive approach in addressing the practical challenges of character education implementation. The novelty of this research lies in the application of a more systematic approach by combining teacher training, collaboration with parents, the use of digital resources, and comprehensive character evaluation. This research is important for creating a more inclusive and effective learning environment, as well as providing a deeper understanding of the implementation of character education in Indonesian language learning at SDN 104298 Simpang Empat. Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that the instillation of character values should be applied as early as possible. This research discusses the implementation of character education and is conducted in the fourth grade because, at this age, character development begins to involve logical thinking. In addition, the students often actively participate in various competitions, and the fourth-grade homeroom teacher, Mrs. Kesumawati, is the student affairs coordinator who has attended various training sessions on character education. This research aims to describe the implementation of character values in Indonesian language learning at elementary schools and to describe the supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of character values at SDN 104298 Simpang Empat. Theoretically, this research contributes to the theory of character education in Indonesian language learning, while pragmatically, this research provides practical benefits for teachers and policymakers in developing effective character education strategies.

METHOD

This research is qualitative with a case study approach at SDN 104298 Simpang Empat. The researcher explains the implementation of character education through Indonesian language learning at SDN 104298 Simpang Empat. Research data consists of direct observation, interviews, and documentation. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. In the observation stage, the research began on [start date] and concluded on [end date]. Interviews were conducted with respondents, including all fourth-grade students, the

fourth-grade teacher, and the principal. Documentation includes documents such as syllabi, lesson plans (RPP), and student achievement records. Data analysis is conducted using data reduction techniques, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and verification. Data reduction is carried out to summarize information about the implementation of character education in Indonesian language learning at SDN 104298 Simpang Empat. Data can be presented in the form of tables, diagrams, or charts to illustrate research results. A critical analysis of research findings related to the implementation of character education is conducted to identify supporting and inhibiting factors and to formulate relevant recommendations.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The research results presented in the following table were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. This research aims to examine how character education is implemented in Indonesian language learning at SDN 104298 Simpang Empat. Data were collected through direct classroom observations, interviews with students, teachers, and the principal, as well as documentation from various school sources such as syllabi, lesson plans, and student achievement records.

Table 1. Implementation of Character Education Through Indonesian Language Learning at SDN 104298 Simpang Empat

Material BI	Character Values	Learning Method	Result
Folktale	Honesty, Responsibility	Workgroup, presentation	Students better understand the importance of honesty and responsibility in daily life.
Poem	Creativity, Discipline	Creative Writing, Poetry Reading	Students develop creativity.
Personal letter	Empathy, Compassion	Writing Exercise, Simulation	Students are more sensitive to the feelings of others and improve their writing skills.

The table above outlines the Indonesian language material being taught along with the character values to be instilled, the teaching methods used, and the expected outcomes. In the "Folktales" material, the character values taught are honesty and responsibility through group discussion and presentation learning methods. This aims for students to better understand the importance of honesty and responsibility in everyday life. Then, the "Poetry" material emphasizes the development of students' creativity and discipline through creative writing and poetry reading.

This learning method is expected to optimally develop students' creativity.

Next, the "Personal Letter" material aims to foster empathy and concern through writing exercises and simulations. This method helps students become more sensitive to the feelings of others and improves their writing skills. Overall, the combination of learning materials, character values, and appropriate methods is expected to produce students who are not only academically intelligent but also have good character. This approach demonstrates how character education can be effectively integrated into Indonesian language learning, allowing students to develop important values in their daily lives.

Discussion

Based on the results of interviews with teachers from SDN 104298 Simpang Empat conducted on March 20, 2024, character education is instilled by integrating character values into learning activities, which means combining, incorporating, and applying character values that can shape and develop students' personalities in accordance with their true identity. The character values expected to be implemented by the government are 18 characters, but from these 18 characters, there are five mandatory character values applied at SDN 104298 Simpang Empat, namely religious, honesty, social care, nationalism, and independence. According to Atik Maisaro, the PPK Program has five core character values, namely religion, integrity, mutual cooperation, independence, and nationalism. These values are implemented based on various components of values contained within them; religious character includes values such as appreciating differences, orderliness, perseverance, self-confidence, friendship, and love for the environment. The character of integrity includes values of reliability, exemplary performance, task fulfillment, and justice. The character of mutual cooperation includes values of collaboration, helping each other, volunteerism, anti-discrimination, and solidarity. The character of independence includes values of collaboration, creativity, and courage. The character of nationalism includes values such as willingness to sacrifice, struggle, and achieve, a sense of nationalism, adherence to the law, adherence to rules, and respect for the diversity of ethnicities, cultures, and religions (Maisaro *et al.*, 2018).

Religious character is a human character that always relies on religion for all aspects of life (Wiguna, 2014). Religious character includes respecting differences, orderliness, steadfastness, self-confidence, and friendship. The value of appreciating differences is very evident when reciting prayers before studying, especially according to each student's beliefs. Therefore, when there is a religious studies class, Muslim students study with the religious studies teacher in the classroom,

and non-Muslim students study religion in the library with the teacher.

For religious activities, every day, students have a special time; for example, before classes, they are required to read the Quran and perform the Dhuha prayer in the congregation. The habit of performing Dhuha prayer before studying also has a positive impact on students, making them more mentally prepared individuals.

This makes it easier for teachers to transfer their knowledge and information to students, as there is a blessing from Allah SWT before the learning begins through the performance of the Dhuha prayer (Zaini, 2022). In all matters related to religion, each religion has its own contribution and respects the existing differences. The value of order is clearly seen when school rules/regulations are made by the school authorities, and the students are always urged to follow the existing school rules. Additionally, each homeroom teacher makes class rules to get the students accustomed to following the existing rules. The values of perseverance and self-confidence are interconnected, and these values can be emphasized in student learning. All classes should be student-centered, where students must be active and express themselves so that they can feel free to practice their skills. Students have the opportunity to ask questions, speak, and even come to the front of the class to provide answers according to their preferences. They use group learning, where the teacher believes that the group teaching system has many benefits, such as students being able to express their opinions and skills to their peers, students helping and cooperating with those in need, and the class feeling more active and creative, thereby instilling the value of friendship in the students.

Honest character is behavior based on the effort to make learners individuals whose words, actions, and deeds can always be trusted (Sulistyowati, 2012). Honest character includes values of reliability, exemplary performance, task fulfillment, and fairness. In learning, students are taught to be honest in completing tasks assigned by the teacher and to speak honestly to others.

Socially caring character includes values of cooperation, mutual assistance, volunteering, anti-discrimination, and solidarity. Social skills are tools that encompass the ability to interact, communicate verbally and nonverbally, demonstrate good behavior, and build good relationships with others (Syaifullah, 2021). The application of those characters through teaching activities inside and outside the classroom. One of the efforts to strengthen the character of social concern can be made through the revitalization of *gotong royong* activities as a manifestation of the original Pancasila spirit belonging to Indonesia. (Utomo, 2018). The implementation of the character value of mutual cooperation here is highly emphasized by training students' sense of empathy towards others as

well as towards the environment.

Nationalism is a manifestation of the integrity and loyalty of citizens by prioritizing national interests above individual and group interests to uphold national values (Bakar *et al.*, 2018). The character of nationalism includes values such as willingness to sacrifice, struggle, and achieve excellence, a sense of nationalism, adherence to the law, adherence to rules, and respect for the diversity of ethnicities, cultures, and religions. The application of those characteristics is through learning activities both inside and outside the classroom. The values of those characters are implemented in various ways, the first being the value of nationalism. It is important to instill a sense of nationalism in students from an early age so that they can appreciate the struggles of the heroes. There are many things that can be done to remind students of the struggles of the heroes. For in-class activities, students are accustomed to singing national anthems before starting lessons during the introductory and concluding activities. The aim is to introduce students to various types of national anthems. Then, for extracurricular activities, the school holds a regular ceremony every Monday morning and an imtak (spiritual and moral) activity every Friday, with students as the leaders. The school authorities have designed a special program for students in grades IV, V, and VI to take turns acting as leaders every week. In this way, students can enhance their understanding and practice their skills. The value of nationalism is also emphasized on major holidays, one of which is the celebration of Heroes' Day. Students are invited to hold a parade, where each student wears a hero costume of their choice that reflects the character of the hero. This parade activity is very important for training students' memory in recognizing and remembering the heroes. After the students understand the stories of the heroes, they gain a deeper understanding of the various differences that exist and the history of the Indonesian nation. Through these diverse activities, students are confronted with differences in ethnicity, religion, race, and culture. It is these differences that unite Indonesia, and gradually, the students are trained to respect each other. Students are also introduced to the applicable legal regulations, with a small practice where the school makes school rules, which students must adhere to, and minor sanctions are imposed for violations, supervised by local school police officers, gradually getting accustomed to this school. Students will understand the legal standards and limitations present in our country.

Understanding the values mentioned above fosters a sense of mutual respect and tolerance among students. For example, when studying in groups, the sense of unity among students becomes more apparent through mutual assistance and camaraderie, benefiting the students who possess it.

Above-average abilities can help his friends who have below-average abilities. The school also provides students with the opportunity to develop their skills by participating in olympiad activities. By participating in this activity, students will be able to develop their skills and achievements.

The value of independent character is emphasized to students in several ways, training them to think critically, express themselves, and not hesitate to collaborate with their peers in exchanging ideas. In the classroom, the school uses a system of independent and group learning. When learning independently, students must have an adventurous spirit and be able to develop their skills, such as completing tasks in a short time and practicing after the teacher has finished explaining the material. When learning in groups, students are taught to communicate well with each other and to discuss matters thoroughly, and they are also given group assignments. The students' courage is then trained by involving them in various activities at school, such as serving as ceremony officers, participating in religious activities, joining competitions, leading in front of the class, and participating in unity activities. These activities are conducted to develop the student's creativity so that they receive not only intramural education but also extracurricular activities.

The method used by teachers to instill character values in the classroom is by providing good examples to students, delivering moral messages in every class, and instilling these moral values. It will develop character values in students and prepare them to face life more realistically in the future, think positively, and strive to solve emerging problems. In addition, teachers can teach students manners, such as greeting and shaking hands when meeting the teacher, as well as enforcing rules and regulations at school. The method used by teachers begins with setting a good example in front of the students, such as when the teacher meets a colleague, they greet each other when the teacher enters the classroom, they greet the students, and so on. Lastly, students must be able to independently apply, analyze, assimilate, and personalize moral principles and character values so that they can be reflected in daily actions. (Lailatun *at al.*, 2023)

Some specific strategies for teachers in implementing character education are to incorporate it into all school subjects, instill positive behavior habits within the school community, conduct continuous supervision, and always reward students who exhibit good character. Then, students who do not apply those characteristics in their daily lives will receive a warning. This is in line with Arifin's opinion. First, the plan for instilling character education values in students involves a plan for instilling character education values in students. Teachers analyze the curriculum and learning

objectives in accordance with the content and values to be instilled, then adjust the weekly learning schedule both inside and outside the classroom. Second, in the implementation of character education values, students are introduced to various habits, ranging from activities inside the classroom to activities outside the classroom. Third, an evaluation of the supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of character education values in students. (Arifin, 2016).

The obstacle faced by teachers in the implementation is that they have difficulty explaining the core competencies, making it challenging to modify learning activities to align with the character values to be implemented. Each student has different skills and characteristics, so different methods and approaches are needed to achieve optimal learning outcomes. (Rora, 2022). Students' habits at home also spread to the school environment, such as bad language. The students' confidence levels are low, and they are passive in participating in the learning process. The efforts made by teachers are to instill character values from an early age, especially within the family environment. Therefore, cooperation between schools and parents is necessary.

In the implementation of character education, there are obstacles, such as a poor family environment and students' habits from the community that will be brought into the school environment. Therefore, it is a challenge for teachers to invite cooperation from all student environments, namely the home, school, and community so that there is an equal and harmonious perspective in instilling character in students from an early age. In line with the opinions of Syafira and Ramadan, cooperation between the principal, teachers, and parents/guardians of students to implement this program through teaching activities inside and outside the classroom supported by various school activities in accordance with applicable regulations. The implementation of this PPK program emphasizes the classroom teacher as the one who instills the five main character values in the classroom, introducing students to their surrounding environment. Also, parents/guardians of students who assist in the implementation of the five core character values in the students' social environment (Syafira, 2021).

Many supporting factors in character implementation are (1) Its nature is marked by tendencies that have existed in the students since they were still in the womb, (2) Personality is the development of an individual's self that can be shaped by all the environments and life experiences a person has gone through, (3) Family is one of the factors that greatly influence a child's character. In addition to supporting factors, there are also inhibiting factors in the implementation of this, namely (1) the limited time students have at school. It can be seen that out of the 24 hours available,

the time spent at school is only around 6-8 hours per day. This means that students spend 16 hours in the home and community environment, (2) The lack of time for students at home is due to their parents' busy work schedules, and (3) the community environment. Other inhibiting factors include (a) lack of communication between the school and parents, (b) lack of student awareness, and (c) differing understandings of character education among school staff. (Munir *at al*., 2018).

CONCLUSION

The five characters values should be implemented well, starting from elementary school. Therefore, it will have a significant impact on the formation of a child's character. There needs to be cooperation between parents/guardians, schools, and the community in its implementation. If these character values are not implemented well, the student's character will have a negative impact on their lives, such as students becoming dishonest in their lives, students becoming dependent on others in the sense of not being independent, and students not appreciating differences or the hard work of others. To overcome the obstacles in the implementation of character education, teachers and school principals need to study character education in depth. Teachers should familiarize students with the existing school culture. Every teacher must be able to record the evaluation of students' character value demonstrations using methods that are considered easy to learn. Schools must also maintain good relationships with parents and instill character education in students both at home and in the community.

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