

CHARACTER TRANSFORMATION THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RADEC LEARNING MODEL AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL

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Abstract

This study aims to explore character transformation through the implementation of the RADEC (Read, Answer, Discuss, Explain, Create) learning model at the elementary school level. The research was conducted in Cluster III, Pagerageung District, Tasikmalaya Regency. A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed, involving 40 teachers as participants. The research data consisted of classroom observation results, in-depth interview transcripts with teachers, and lesson planning and evaluation documents related to the RADEC model. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. The data were analyzed thematically through stages of data reduction, data display, and inductive conclusion drawing to identify patterns in the implementation of the RADEC model and its impact on students' character development. The findings indicate that the RADEC model can be effectively applied in classrooms, although variations in implementation exist. This model has proven effective in enhancing student character, particularly in aspects of cooperation, discipline, responsibility, creativity, and self-confidence. However, its application faces challenges such as limited time and inadequate facilities. This study recommends further teacher training and the improvement of learning infrastructure to support the optimal implementation of the RADEC model.

Keywords

Implementation of Learning, RADEC Model, Elementary School, Character Transformation.



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INTRODUCTION

Character education has become a strategic issue in primary education, amidst growing concerns about the moral degradation of younger generations (Wuryandani et al., 2014); (Aji, 2025); (Mumpuni et al., 2025); (Nafasabilla et al., 2025). Elementary school (SD) is a critical phase for instilling core character values such as responsibility, cooperation, and honesty, as children are in a crucial stage of personality development (Kasmiati et al., 2023). In response to this need, the RADEC (Read–Answer–Discuss–Explain–Create) learning model (Ummu Khairiyah et al., 2023); (Pratama et al., 2019); (Suryana, Nana, Sopandi et al., 2024) emerges as an approach that integrates cognitive (Zam Zam Rasyidi, 2020) and affective activities within the learning process (Sari, 2017). However, academically, there is still limited in-depth research on the effectiveness of the RADEC model in shaping student character, particularly in local elementary school contexts in rural areas such as Cluster III, Pagerageung District, Tasikmalaya Regency. Contextual approaches are essential to assess how this model addresses character education challenges relevant to local needs.

This study focuses on exploring “Character Transformation through the Implementation of the RADEC Learning Model in Cluster III, Pagerageung District, Tasikmalaya Regency,” an area comprising seven public elementary schools with diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Character transformation refers to the positive behavioral changes in students, particularly in responsibility, cooperation, and honesty, which are observed consistently after teachers implement the RADEC model in thematic learning (Nurwahyudin & Supriyanto, 2021); (Naufal, 2023); (Ningsih, 2019). Preliminary observations show that this model enables students to actively read and ask questions (Read–Answer), engage in peer discussions (Discuss), explain the material (Explain), and create learning products (Create) that reflect character values. Teachers in Cluster III reported that students have become more independent in completing tasks, more helpful during discussions, and more honest in expressing opinions. However, no systematic academic studies have documented these changes in a measurable way.

Furthermore, this study also examines supporting factors such as the availability of relevant learning media (Setiawan et al., 2014), teacher training (Hermawan et al., 2023), and principal involvement (Setyorini et al., 2021), which significantly influence the successful implementation of the RADEC model. Meanwhile, challenges include uneven student literacy skills, limited instructional time, and a lack of comprehensive understanding among teachers regarding each stage of the RADEC model. Therefore, this study not only aims to explain the implementation of the

RADEC model in the context of character education but also to assess its effectiveness and provide concrete recommendations for improving instructional practices at the elementary level. The results of this research are expected to contribute academically to the development of a learning model that emphasizes not only cognitive outcomes but also contextual and sustainable character formation.

Several previous studies have examined the effectiveness of the RADEC learning model across various learning aspects. The study by (Apriansah et al., 2024) investigated the effect of RADEC-based learning on conceptual understanding and creativity among fourth-grade students in the topic of energy transformation. The findings indicate that RADEC significantly enhances conceptual understanding and fosters student creativity through critical and exploratory thinking stages. Another study by (Aurelia et al., 2024) demonstrated that the RADEC model significantly improves students' creative thinking abilities in the IPAS subject of fourth-grade elementary students, particularly through discussion activities and the creation of learning products.

A study by (Fitriyah et al., 2024) highlighted the role of Islamic education teachers in addressing student egocentrism at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. Although not directly employing the RADEC model, this study is relevant as it emphasizes the importance of instructional approaches that focus on character transformation. Meanwhile, (Kurniawati & Matang, 2023) discussed the formation of national character based on local cultural values through integrative thematic learning. This study underlines the importance of integrating cultural and local values in character education, although it does not operationally describe the learning model used. Finally, (Suryana, Nana, Sopandi et al., 2024) examined the RADEC model from the perspective of character education and concluded that it has the potential to shape student character, particularly in the values of cooperation and responsibility.

These five studies contribute to the understanding of RADEC's effectiveness; however, none have specifically examined how the RADEC model is implemented in the context of direct character education in elementary schools in rural areas such as Cluster III, Pagerageung District. The research gap lies in the lack of empirical studies exploring how RADEC facilitates character transformation in elementary schools through a contextual case study approach. The novelty of this study lies in its in-depth exploration of RADEC's implementation in shaping the character values of responsibility, cooperation, and honesty in a local setting, along with a qualitative identification of supporting and inhibiting factors—an aspect not thoroughly explored in previous research.

The RADEC learning model (Read–Answer–Discuss–Explain–Create), developed by Pratama, is a literacy-based pedagogical innovation focused on strengthening student character through active and collaborative learning activities (Pratama et al., 2019). This model aligns with the character education strengthening (PPK) policy by the Ministry of Education and Culture, which positions character as the foundation of the educational process in Indonesia (Putri & Kurniawan, 2024). Within a constructivist approach, meaningful learning is formed when students engage in challenging thinking processes, reflective discussions, and create outputs that reflect values such as responsibility and honesty. Thus, RADEC not only supports academic achievement but also promotes character transformation through comprehensive student engagement in the learning process.

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the RADEC learning model in character development among students in Cluster III, Pagerageung District, Tasikmalaya Regency. The research focuses on the extent to which RADEC can transform key character values such as responsibility, cooperation, and honesty through learning activities, and to identify supporting and inhibiting factors in the elementary school environment. Theoretically, this study contributes to the strengthening of the conceptual framework of the RADEC model within the realm of contextual character education, particularly at the primary education level. Practically, the results are expected to serve as a reference for teachers, principals, and educational policymakers in developing effective and applicable instructional strategies for character formation that align with the local school context.

METHOD

This study is a qualitative research employing a field research approach with a descriptive-analytical design (Sugiyono, 2017); (Moleong, 2007); (Conny R. Semiawan, 2010). This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the RADEC learning model in shaping students' character at the elementary school level. The research location was focused on several elementary schools in Cluster III of Pagerageung District, Tasikmalaya Regency. This area was selected because it represents the characteristics of elementary schools in semi-urban and rural areas with varying levels of teacher resources, facilities, and students' social backgrounds.

The research was conducted from February 15 to March 20, 2025. The data in this study consisted of both primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews, direct classroom observations, and documents related to the implementation of the RADEC learning model. Secondary data included school profiles, lesson plans (RPP), students' learning evaluation results, and other written documentation relevant to the learning implementation. The main respondents in this study were 40 teachers from various elementary schools in Cluster III. Several teachers actively involved in in-depth interviews included Imas Mastny, Jiryan Rahmayati, Fitria Johana, Miri Novy Amelia, and Yadi Suryadi. They were selected based on their direct involvement in implementing the RADEC model and their teaching experience at the elementary level.

Data collection techniques were carried out through three main approaches: in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation. The in-depth interviews employed semi-structured interview guides and open-ended questionnaires, aiming to explore the teachers' experiences, perspectives, and assessments of the effectiveness of the RADEC model in learning and character development. Observations were conducted participatively, recording each stage of the RADEC learning process from the Read to the Create stage. These observations also included teacher-student interactions, student engagement, and classroom dynamics during the learning sessions. Documentation involved gathering various written records related to RADEC implementation, such as teachers' notes, student portfolios, activity documentation, and students' learning products.

In analyzing the data, this study used thematic analysis techniques referring to the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Endah Marendah Ratnaningtyas et al., 2023). During the data reduction stage, the researcher selected data relevant to the research focus and categorized information based on themes emerging from interviews, observations, and documentation. Data reduction was conducted continuously during data collection to ensure the collected information remained focused on the research objectives. The data display was presented in narrative descriptions summarizing the findings from each instrument, such as teachers' responses to each RADEC stage, indicators of students' character development, as well as the successes and challenges faced during the implementation process.

Subsequently, in the conclusion drawing stage, the researcher critically analyzed the emerging patterns, compared empirical findings with relevant theories in the literature, and aligned them with previous research results. This process was crucial to ensure that data interpretation was conducted objectively and not solely based on the researcher's subjectivity. An inductive approach was employed in drawing conclusions, allowing field findings to evolve into new concepts or reinforce existing theories. In addition, the researcher conducted source and methodological triangulation to enhance data validity and engaged in peer discussions to obtain second opinions during the analysis process.

Through this methodological approach, the study is expected to generate a comprehensive and in-depth description of how the RADEC model is implemented by elementary school teachers in the local context of Tasikmalaya and the extent to which this model contributes to the development of students' character. The data obtained not only empirically represent the phenomenon but are also analyzed conceptually to illustrate the relationship between learning strategies and the character values intended to be cultivated through transformative basic education.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

In this study, the primary objective was to explore how the RADEC learning model is implemented in elementary schools and how its application influences students' character development. Based on data obtained through observations, interviews, and document analysis, several important findings emerged related to the implementation of the RADEC model, its influence on student character, and the challenges faced by teachers in applying the model.

Table 1. Character Transformation Through the Implementation of the RADEC Learning Model in Cluster III, Pagerageung District, Tasikmalaya Regency

No	Aspect	Description of RADEC Implementation	Impact on Student Character	Challenges
1	Read	Teachers facilitate reading activities using texts, visual, and digital media. Activities are conducted interactively and collaboratively.	Enhances curiosity, initial engagement in learning, and cultivates discipline in following structured activities.	Not all students show high reading interest; some teachers face difficulties in digital literacy due to infrastructure limitations.
2	Answer	Teachers stimulate students with open-ended questions. Students respond both	Develops critical thinking, reflection, and a sense of responsibility for one's answers.	Limited time hinders optimal exploration of student responses; passive students require

		individually and in groups.		differentiated approaches.
3	Discuss	Teachers organize students into discussion groups and guide the exchange of ideas.	Improves communication, collaboration, tolerance, and social skills.	Uneven participation among students; dominant students overshadow others, while shy students are less engaged.
4	Explain	Students present discussion outcomes, while teachers provide constructive feedback.	Increases confidence, academic responsibility, and the courage to articulate ideas in public.	Shy students feel awkward speaking; teachers need differentiated presentation strategies.
5	Create	Teachers provide space for students to create products (posters, writings, projects) related to the topic. Creativity is the main focus.	Encourages innovation, self-expression, and pride in one's work.	Limited facilities and time; varying quality of products due to differences in students' backgrounds.

Source: Interview Data

The RADEC model was implemented quite effectively by teachers in Cluster III, Pagerageung District. The learning process began with the Read stage, where students were not only engaged in reading texts but also encouraged to explore materials through visual and digital media. Teachers played an active role in making the reading process dialogic and participatory, rather than passive. During the Answer stage, students were encouraged to respond to thought-provoking questions. This activity was carried out both individually and in small groups, with the teacher acting as a cognitive stimulator. The Discuss stage provided space for idea exchange. Teachers guided the discussions to keep them focused and productive. Although student engagement in group work was enthusiastic, not all students participated equally. In the Explain stage, students were given opportunities to present their group discussions in front of the class. These presentations not only trained in public speaking but also fostered responsibility for the learning content. The final stage, Create, required students to express their understanding through concrete products. Teachers granted autonomy and appreciation for the students' outputs. Overall, the implementation of RADEC fostered an active, collaborative, and creative learning trajectory, reflecting 21st-century learning principles. Nonetheless, challenges related to learning style differentiation and infrastructural support remained prevalent.

The RADEC model had a positive impact on student character development. The Discuss and Create stages enhanced values of cooperation, as students worked in groups, listened to one another, and respected differing opinions. Group discussions nurtured tolerance and social

empathy. The Read and Answer stages contributed to developing discipline and responsibility, as students were required to follow systematic learning steps, read materials attentively, and answer questions based on personal understanding. The Answer stage also stimulated critical and reflective thinking, training students in logic and encouraging them to express their views. Meanwhile, the Explain stage offered students the opportunity to build self-confidence and take responsibility for their ideas. The improvement in public speaking skills was a notable indicator of growing self-confidence. Finally, the Create stage played a significant role in fostering student creativity. Students were given the freedom to express their understanding through various outputs—written work, posters, or simple projects. This process not only trained innovation but also instilled a sense of pride and personal achievement. Based on classroom observations, students appeared more motivated and engaged, demonstrating a transformation toward becoming more active, responsible, and positively driven learners as a direct outcome of the RADEC-based learning process.

Despite its many benefits, the implementation of the RADEC model also faced significant challenges. One of the main obstacles was limited time, particularly in classrooms with large numbers of students. Each stage of RADEC requires sufficient duration to engage students in deep learning processes; however, in practice, teachers are often pressed to complete curriculum targets, resulting in the Answer and Create stages being rushed. Furthermore, infrastructural constraints, such as the lack of digital tools, creative learning media, and proper presentation spaces, affected the quality of the Create and Explain stages. Not all schools had adequate infrastructure to support project-based learning or the integration of technology. Another challenge was student heterogeneity. Not all students could navigate all stages smoothly. Introverted students struggled during discussions and presentations, while kinesthetic learners felt less accommodated during reading or answering tasks. Teachers needed to develop differentiated learning strategies to ensure inclusive participation. Additionally, some teachers were still in the process of adapting to the RADEC model, which led to less-than-optimal implementation. Continuous training and school policy support are necessary to enable this model to function optimally and produce comprehensive character transformation in students.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of the RADEC (Read, Answer, Discuss, Explain, Create) learning model contributes significantly to the transformation of students' character at the elementary school level. This finding aligns with the view that character education

is not only instilled through lectures or habituation but also through an active, participatory, and reflective learning design. The RADEC model, which is based on literacy-oriented and critical thinking-based learning, has proven effective in integrating character values into an enjoyable and meaningful learning process (Titin et al., 2023); (Suranto, 2016); (Nugraheni & Firmansyah, 2021); (Simanjuntak, 2015); (Nurhabibi et al., 2025).

At the Read stage, students are actively engaged in understanding the material through interactive reading activities. This approach not only improves basic literacy skills but also fosters students' curiosity. In the context of character education, curiosity is a crucial foundation for building a lifelong learning spirit (Hasan, 2013); (Zulfitria & Arif, 2019); (Alawiyah, 2017). When students are encouraged to read and discover information independently, they learn to become self-directed individuals responsible for their own learning process. This is supported by constructivist theory, which posits that knowledge is actively constructed by learners through their experiences and interactions with the learning environment (Hamdani & Islam, 2019); (Arifin, 2019).

The Answer stage places students in situations where they must think critically and provide responses to teacher-generated questions. This activity not only promotes higher-order thinking skills but also trains students to take responsibility for the ideas they express. It supports the development of responsibility and independence as character traits, as emphasized by Lickona (1991), who argues that strong character is formed through habitual ethical and reflective thinking and action (Setyorini et al., 2021); (Alfath, 2020); (Suranto, 2016).

The Discuss stage is the core of collaborative learning. Student interaction within group discussions creates space for developing tolerance, mutual respect, as well as communication and cooperation skills. Through discussions, students learn that while their opinions matter, they must also listen to others. Characters such as empathy, courtesy, and openness to differences are naturally nurtured through this process. These findings are consistent with previous research by Prasetyo (2020), which found that discussion-based learning effectively fosters students' social character (Prasetyo & Rosy, 2020).

In the Explain stage, students are required to present the results of their discussions in front of the class. This activity reinforces student confidence and trains their courage to express opinions. It is in this stage that the transformation from passive to more active and vocal learners becomes evident. Moreover, this activity supports the development of public speaking skills, which is one of the essential life skills in the 21st century (Zulfikar, 2022). Based on observations, students

demonstrated a significant increase in confidence, which is a positive indicator in the development of resilient character.

The Create stage provides students with the opportunity to express their creativity through tangible projects. Creativity is part of an innovative character, and the RADEC model allows students to experience a learning process that is not only cognitive but also affective and psychomotor. In this stage, students learn to synthesize ideas, make decisions, and take pride in their own work. This type of learning model is highly appropriate for character-based education as it positions students as active agents in the formation of values and attitudes (Nurazizah et al., 2021); (Kurniawati & Matang, 2023); (Nurhasanah, 2021).

Nevertheless, several challenges emerged in the implementation of the RADEC model. Time constraints were the primary obstacle for teachers in managing each learning stage. This indicates that although the RADEC model is theoretically ideal, its practical implementation requires adjustments to the real conditions of schools, especially in terms of time management and curriculum load. Teachers are required to be more creative and efficient in designing learning scenarios to ensure each RADEC stage is executed optimally (Apriansah et al., 2024); (Tulljanah & Amini, 2021).

In addition, challenges related to facilities and infrastructure also hinder the implementation of the Create stage, which demands media or learning aids. Schools that have not fully adopted educational technology may struggle to provide varied and modern learning experiences. Therefore, support from schools and educational policymakers is essential to provide adequate learning facilities.

Student difficulties in completing all RADEC stages, especially those with visual or kinesthetic learning styles, demonstrate the importance of differentiated instruction in applying this model. Teachers must accommodate the diversity of learning styles and student characteristics by offering flexibility and appropriate guidance. This aligns with the principles of inclusive education, which emphasize equity and fairness in the learning process (Widyarti et al., 2024); (Ummu Khairiyah et al., 2023); (Aurelia et al., 2024).

The implementation of the RADEC model at the elementary level is not only effective in improving learning quality but also demonstrably contributes to shaping and transforming students' character. This model harmoniously integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects and provides room for the contextual and enjoyable development of character values. To

achieve optimal results, teacher training and mentoring are necessary, along with systemic support from the school environment and educational policy.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the implementation of the RADEC learning model (Read, Answer, Discuss, Explain, Create) in Cluster III of Pagerageung Subdistrict, Tasikmalaya Regency, significantly contributes to the transformation of student character. Each stage of this model has been proven to foster various character aspects, such as curiosity, critical thinking, collaboration, responsibility, confidence, and creativity. Teachers have managed to implement these stages effectively, although variations in execution were observed, influenced by teachers' understanding and creativity. Students actively engaged in each stage, positively impacting their behavior and attitudes throughout the learning process. However, the RADEC model also faces several challenges, including time constraints, a lack of supporting facilities, and diverse student abilities in completing each stage. Despite these issues, the RADEC model generally proves capable of holistically and contextually shaping student character. This study affirms that integrating systematic and activity-based learning approaches can serve as an effective strategy for strengthening character education at the elementary level. Based on these findings, it is recommended to develop the RADEC model further in various educational contexts and levels to enhance its effectiveness in sustainable character development.

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