

CHILD-FRIENDLY SCHOOL-BASED CHARACTER EDUCATION STRATEGY IN REALIZING THE WELL-BEING OF INCLUSIVE STUDENTS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore the strategy of character education based on Child-Friendly Schools (SRA) in realizing the well-being of inclusive students in elementary schools. This study used a qualitative approach with a case study design. The research location was at State Elementary School Giwangan, Yogyakarta City, which applies the principles of inclusivity and the values of child-friendly schools (SRA) in an integrated manner. This study used a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews, non-participatory observations, and documentation, involving the principal, class teachers, special assistant teachers (GPK), and inclusion students. The data was analyzed using data reduction analysis techniques, data presentation, and a conclusion drawn, accompanied by triangulation of sources to ensure the validity of the data. The results of the study showed five main strategies: (1) internalization of character values through daily activities and examples; (2) adaptive character learning by teachers and GPK with the help of visual media and personal mentoring; (3) collaborative planning between stakeholders to ensure inclusive character programs; (4) the active involvement of inclusion students in various character building activities in schools; and (5) the provision of a physical and social environment that supports the emotional and social well-being of students. This strategy has been shown to encourage inclusive participation, foster empathy, and strengthen students' sense of belonging to the school. This research contributed to the development of inclusive character education by emphasizing the practical and holistic application of child-friendly values in elementary schools. These findings offer a valuable framework for schools in building an educational culture that is humane, inclusive, and supports the growth and development of all students.

Keywords

Basic Education, Character Education, Child-friendly Schools, Inclusive Students, Student Welfare.



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INTRODUCTION

Basic education is an important foundation in shaping children's personality and character (Peterson, 2020; Lukman et al., 2021). At this level, students not only learn the academic aspect, but also moral, social, and emotional values that will affect their lives in the future (Fitriani & Qodariah, 2021); (HAJAROH et al., 2020). Along with the development of the inclusive education paradigm, schools in Indonesia are beginning to accommodate the diverse needs of students, including children with special needs (Anna, 2023; Pauji, 2024). This requires an educational approach that is not only structurally inclusive but also holistic in supporting the well-being of all students (Hermino & Arifin, 2020; Zulela et al., 2022; Lestari et al., 2021).

Character education is a crucial aspect in the context of inclusive schools (Harun et al., 2020); (Hidayati et al., 2020). Not only does it help build positive values such as empathy, tolerance, and responsibility, but character education also plays a role in creating a learning environment that is fair, safe, and supportive of all students, including inclusive students (Halimah et al., 2020). In this case, the concept of *Child-Friendly Schools* (SRA) is present as an important strategy that can unite character education with the principles of protection and fulfillment of children's rights.

Child-Friendly Schools is an initiative of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KPPPA), which aims to create a safe, clean, healthy, caring, and environmentally cultured school environment, as well as ensuring active participation of children. SRA also emphasizes the importance of the participation of all parties, both teachers, parents, the community, and the government, in supporting children's growth and development optimally. When implemented in a planned and sustainable manner, SRA-based character education strategies can contribute greatly to improving *the well-being* of inclusive students, both psychologically, socially, and academically (Qulyubi et al., 2023; Miftahudin et al., 2023).

Giwangan State Elementary School in Yogyakarta, or SDN Giwangan, is one of the schools that has implemented an inclusive approach in its educational process. Based on the results of initial observations, this school shows the diversity of students it has, including inclusive students. The field findings show that SDN Giwangan is a relevant example in examining how the Child-Friendly School-based character education strategy is implemented, as well as the extent to which the strategy has an impact on the welfare of inclusive students. Realizing the *well-being* of inclusive students requires not only an adaptive curriculum approach, but also a supportive learning environment, harmonious interpersonal relationships, and fair treatment of all components of the school.

The implementation of a Child-Friendly School (SRA)-based character education strategy in supporting the psychosocial needs of inclusion students is still a complex challenge in the elementary school environment, including at SDN Giwangan, Yogyakarta. Inclusion students have diverse needs both emotionally, socially, and cognitively that demand a personalized and empathetic approach to education. In this case, character education strategies not only focus on strengthening moral values in general, but must also be adapted to the psychosocial conditions of inclusion students so that they feel accepted, valued, and emotionally safe in the school environment. Therefore, it is important to trace how the principles of SRA are actually implemented in everyday classroom practice, including in terms of communication, fair treatment, and inclusive learning activities.

Teachers and education staff play an important role in realizing the *well-being* of inclusive students, but they often face various challenges in implementing a Child-Friendly School-based approach. One of the main challenges is the limited understanding and training of inclusive education and psychosocial approaches. Not all teachers have special educational backgrounds or skills in dealing with the emotional and social needs of students with learning barriers. In addition, administrative burden, time constraints, and high student ratios are also obstacles to providing optimal individual attention to inclusion students.

Another challenge that is no less important is the difference in perception among teachers, parents, and schools regarding the meaning and practice of Child-Friendly Schools in the context of inclusive education. Often, the approach is still symbolic or administrative, not touching on the relational and psychological aspects of students in depth. For example, there are still cases where inclusive students are treated differently, or even experience marginalization in learning and social activities at school. The lack of support facilities, support staff, and ongoing training programs also exacerbates this condition. Thus, this research is important to further understand how SRA strategies are implemented within the framework of character education that truly supports the well-being of inclusive students as a whole.

Previous research has highlighted that the integration of Firdausi (2022) *school well-being* in the Independent Curriculum is key in supporting students' mental health, but its implementation is still hampered by the low understanding of the concept at the school level. In addition, Khumaidah et al. (2025) showed that the child-friendly classroom strategy implemented at SDN 5 Bringin significantly increased students' sense of security, confidence, and quality of social interaction.

Research by Wardana (2025) also emphasizes the importance of teachers, peers, and inclusive environments in shaping the emotional well-being of children with special needs, emphasizing the role of collaboration between schools, families, and communities. Meanwhile, Maharani et al. (2025) showed that the approach of Child-Friendly Schools based on Islamic values is able to strengthen the fulfillment of children's rights as a whole in elementary schools, both in terms of protection and participation. On the other hand, it emphasizes the importance of the strategic role of teachers as facilitators and providers of emotional support in building *students' subjective well-being* through inclusive and relational learning.

Although these studies have underlined the importance of student *well-being*, child-friendly schools, and the role of teachers, there has not been a specific study of how Child-Friendly School-based character education strategies are operationally implemented to support the well-being of inclusive students in elementary schools. This gap can be seen in the lack of in-depth exploration of the interaction between strategies, the implementation of character in learning activities, and school culture, and its direct impact on the psychosocial conditions of inclusion students. Thus, the novelty of this study lies in its approach that combines character education strategies and the principles of Child-Friendly Schools operationally in supporting the psychosocial needs of inclusion students, as well as evaluating its impact on *the overall well-being* of students. This research will also reveal the challenges and supporting factors from the perspective of teachers and education personnel at SDN Giwangan Yogyakarta, so as to produce a contextual, applicative, and relevant understanding for the development of inclusive education that is humanist and equitable.

The inclusive education policy in Indonesia is formally contained in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 70 of 2009 concerning Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities and Has the Potential for Intelligence and/or Special Talents, which emphasizes that every child, including children with special needs, has the same right to obtain quality education in a supportive environment. *Ecological Systems Theory* explains that children's development is influenced by various systems that interact with each other, ranging from the family environment, schools, to public policies. This approach places schools as an important part of the Bronfenbrenner (1979) *A mesosystem* that can support or hinder the well-being and development of students, especially inclusion students. Therefore, the implementation of inclusive education policies and Child-Friendly Schools must pay attention to the social and cultural systems that surround students, as well as integrate character education values in a contextual and sustainable manner.

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze the Child-Friendly School-based character education strategy applied in SDN Giwangan, Yogyakarta, in supporting the psychosocial needs of inclusion students, as well as to identify the challenges and supporting factors faced by teachers and education staff in realizing the *well-being* of students who are included through this approach. Theoretically, this research is significant in enriching the treasures of education, especially in the development of character education models that are contextual, inclusion-based, and in favor of children's rights. This research also contributes to filling the literature gap related to the relationship between character education strategies and *student well-being* in the context of Child-Friendly Schools. Meanwhile, pragmatically, the results of this research are expected to be a practical reference for inclusion elementary schools, educators, and policymakers in designing and implementing character education strategies that are not only structurally inclusive, but also responsive to the psychosocial needs of students, in order to create a safe, equitable learning environment, and support the optimal development of each child.

METHOD

This research was a qualitative research with a case study approach that focused on Child-Friendly School-based character education strategies in realizing the well-being of inclusive students at SDN Giwangan, Yogyakarta. The research data were in the form of the implementation of character education strategies based on Child-Friendly Schools and the psychosocial conditions of inclusion students. Data sources included school principals, classroom teachers, special assistant teachers (GPK), child-friendly school managers, and inclusion students in the lower and upper classes.

Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews, non-participatory observations, and documentation.

1. Observations were carried out from February to April 2025 in the Giwangan State Elementary School in Yogyakarta, focusing on learning activities, student interaction, and the implementation of character values.
2. Interviews were conducted with six main informants: the principal (S1), the special assistant teacher (S2), the teacher who manages the child-friendly school (S3), the classroom teacher (S4), and two inclusion students (S5 and S6).
3. Documentation includes child-friendly school program documents, lesson implementation plans

(RPP), teacher journals, photos of character habituation activities, and the work of inclusion students related to character values.

Data analysis is carried out through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification.

1. Data reduction was done by filtering out important information from interviews, observations, and documentation relevant to the focus of the research.
2. The presentation of data was carried out in the form of a descriptive narrative that described the practice of implementing character education strategies and their impact on inclusion students.
3. Data analysis was conducted critically to interpret the relationship between Child-Friendly School-based character strategies and the well-being of inclusive students, using Bronfenbrenner's theory and references from previous research. Researchers also juxtapose field findings with relevant studies to ensure consistency and validity of results.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

To gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the Child-Friendly School-based character education strategy in realizing *well-being* inclusion of students, researchers conducted data mining through interviews, observations, and documentation at SDN Giwangan, Yogyakarta. The main focus of this study is how character values are internalized in school activities, how program planning is carried out in an inclusive manner, and how the role of classroom teachers and special assistant teachers contributes to the creation of a friendly, equitable, and supportive psychosocial welfare of inclusive students. The findings are presented in the following table to provide a systematic and focused overview.

Table 1. Child-Friendly School-Based Character Education Strategy in Realizing the Well-Being of Inclusive Students at Giwangan State Elementary School, Jogyaakarta

Value Internalization Strategy	Inclusive Character Planning	The Role of the Teacher
Internalization of character values	Morning prayer habits, greetings, pickets, literacy activities, expression stickers, character corners	Teachers are exemplary in being polite, empathetic, and respectful of diversity; instilling character values through habituation and symbolic reinforcement.
Character learning	Simple instructions, use of	Classroom teachers and GPK collaborate to

adaptations	visual media, verbal reinforcement, and role simulation	simplify the material, use contextual media, and provide verbal and visual reinforcement so that it is easy for inclusion students to understand.
Inclusive character collaborative planning	SRA team meeting, preparation of an inclusive character program together	Teachers are actively involved in cross-role teams; they develop learning activities and character projects that all students, including inclusion students, can participate in by providing input according to the needs of students.
Student involvement in character activities	Inclusion students are involved in group assignments, child ambassadors, cleanliness competitions, and joint prayers.	Teachers ensure the active involvement of inclusion students in every activity, provide emotional and technical support, and foster confidence through direct involvement and recognition of their contributions.
Creation of a friendly and fun environment	Ramps, quiet rooms, buddy programs, circle time, sharing classes, playground	Teachers create an inclusive and comfortable classroom atmosphere, arrange seating for inclusion students to interact socially, and facilitate reflective programs and interactive activities that build a sense of security and social connectedness.

Based on the findings in this study, presented in Table 1, the explanation for each finding in detail is as follows.

Internalizing Character Values in Child-Friendly Schools

The findings of the interview results by the Headmaster indicate that the internalization of character values in child-friendly schools to realize the well-being of inclusive students is carried out through daily, contextual, and direct examples. The strategy of internalizing character values at SDN Giwangan is carried out through habituation of daily activities with nuances of moral values. This activity includes a joint prayer before learning starts, warm greetings and greetings, class picket schedules, and morning literacy activities. In addition, there is a character corner and the use of symbolic media such as expression stickers or value posters to strengthen students' understanding of values such as responsibility, empathy, and cooperation. The role of teachers in this strategy is crucial, where they become direct role models for students in being polite, empathetic, and inclusive. Teachers consistently instill these values through symbolic reinforcement, direct action, and habituating positive behaviors as part of a child-friendly school culture.

It was confirmed that the results of the interview were observed before the learning began, that students and teachers prayed together, and were led by the students on duty. Before entering class, students together do semutlis activities (ten minutes for the school environment), namely

picking up garbage, paper, plastic around the front pot of each class, cleaning all garbage in the desk drawer or under the table, tidying up the teacher's desk, watering potted plants and ensuring that garbage is placed according to its type.



Figure 1. Semutlis activities

The class teacher greeted all the students with a smile and used polite language. Special Assistant Teachers (GPK) are seen helping inclusion students prepare books patiently and providing positive emotional support. In literacy activities, teachers tell honest figures and invite students to discuss good attitudes. It can also be seen on the wall of the classroom, depending on the posters of values such as honesty, responsibility, care, and tolerance. There is also a rotating daily picket schedule, including inclusive students.

Based on the findings from interviews and observations, it can be concluded that the school actively accustoms students to activities with nuances of character (prayers, greetings, pickets). Teachers and Special Assistant Teachers (GPK) are role models in being patient, empathetic, and appreciative of diversity. Character-driven learning is contextually integrated, not verbalistic. Visual supports such as posters, picket schedules, and character symbols reinforce the understanding of values.

Character Learning Adaptation

The findings of the interview with the classroom teacher and special assistant teacher indicate that the character learning adaptation strategy is applied to accommodate the unique needs of inclusion students in the process of internalizing values. Implementation is carried out through simplification of instructions, the use of visual media such as pictures and props, explicit verbal reinforcement, and learning activities such as role simulations and illustrated stories. This adaptation allows inclusive students to understand the meaning of character values in a concrete way. The role of teachers is central in ensuring that learning materials and methods are accessible to all students. Classroom teachers and Special Assistant Teachers (GPKs) work together to develop a

flexible and responsive approach to the cognitive and emotional abilities of inclusive students, so that the learning process becomes more meaningful, less intimidating, and builds confidence.

It was confirmed from the results of the interview that the adaptation of character learning was seen by teachers when teaching to apply process differentiated learning using picture stories and role-playing simulations. When explaining the value of "empathy," the teacher gave an illustration using pictures of children helping their fallen friends. It can also be seen that the Special Assistant Teacher (GPK) sits next to the inclusion students. During the group task, the teacher regulates the division of roles, and GPK ensures that inclusive students understand the instructions.

Based on the findings from interviews and observations, it can be concluded that the classroom teacher and GPK show active collaboration in the implementation of character learning. Adaptation is carried out through simplification of instructions, the use of visual media, and verbal reinforcement. GPK plays an important role in bridging students' understanding of inclusion to the character values being studied. Learning is flexible, responsive to the needs of children, and not uniform.

Inclusive Character Planning

The results of the interview by the Child-Friendly School Management Teacher indicate that the inclusive character planning strategy is realized through collaborative planning between educators in the implementation team of Child-Friendly Schools, involving school principals, classroom teachers, GPK, and SRA program managers. This team developed an inclusive character learning program, which is an activity that can be participated in by all students without discrimination, including students with special needs. Planning is carried out regularly through coordination meetings and periodic reflections. Teachers in this context play an active role in providing input based on their experience in the classroom, identifying learning challenges, and proposing modifications of activities to suit the capacity of all students. The involvement of teachers in this planning becomes a form of professional responsibility to ensure that no student is left behind in character formation.

The results of the above interview were confirmed in the observation activity; it was seen that classroom teachers, GPK, child-friendly school management teachers, and school principals held regular coordination meetings in the morning every week. It was also seen that the principal during the coordination meeting strengthened the team about the importance of cross-role collaboration for character education. Thus, it can be concluded that collaboration between teams is

active and structured, and each party has a clear role. The position of the principal as a facilitator is not a director.

Student involvement in character-building activities

The findings of the interview results by the headmaster were obtained with information that this strategy was carried out by ensuring that inclusive students were actively involved in all school programs related to character building, such as group assignments, child ambassadors, cleanliness competitions, joint prayers, and routine classroom activities. There is no differentiation between regular students and inclusion students, as the principle held by the school is that character learning must take place in an integrated social context. The role of teachers is to facilitate the involvement of inclusion students according to their abilities, as well as provide emotional and technical support to ensure they are able to live up to their given roles. Teachers also encourage inclusive students to perform and contribute independently, as well as provide fair recognition of their participation, which ultimately reinforces confidence and self-esteem.

Based on the findings above, it can be understood that the involvement of inclusion students is actively carried out in character formation through daily activities and school programs. Classroom teachers and GPK have pedagogical sensitivity in sharing roles according to the capacity of inclusive students. Character education is carried out through habituation and direct experience. The school creates a conducive, safe, and comfortable learning environment and encourages active inclusion of students so that they are free from discrimination.

Creating a Friendly and Fun Environment

The findings of the interview revealed that a friendly and fun school environment is built through two approaches: physical and social environment. School facilities are designed to be inclusive and accessible, such as ramps, quiet spaces for breaks, and playgrounds. On the social side, the school runs programs such as (Classroom Teacher, 2025) *circle time*, *buddy programs*, and sharing classes that strengthen relationships between students and build an atmosphere of mutual respect. Teachers have a vital role in creating this environment by arranging inclusive classrooms, arranging student sitting positions so that inclusive students can interact with their peers, and supervising and guiding social interactions to be free from discrimination. Teachers also ensure students feel safe and accepted both emotionally and socially, which is an important foundation in realizing *the well-being* of inclusive students.



Figure 2. Performance Board

Discussion

The strategy of internalizing character values at SDN Giwangan is carried out through daily activities that are integrated into the school culture. Activities such as joint prayer before learning begins, warm greetings and greetings, class picket schedules, and morning literacy are part of a routine that instills values such as responsibility, care, and empathy. Teachers play a central role as direct role models displaying polite, inclusive, and patient behavior. This approach is in line with Fauzan's (2024) findings that emphasize that teachers' role models in daily interactions have a major influence on the internalization of moral values, especially in inclusive elementary education.

The internalization of values is also strengthened through visual media such as character posters, expression stickers, and value corners placed in the classroom. These symbols serve as a constant reminder of expected positive behavior and make it easier for students, including those with learning disabilities, to understand the concept of value in a concrete way. According to (Sriwidiastuty et al., 2025), the use of visual media in value learning can increase students' emotional engagement and strengthen associations between symbols and internalized behaviors. Thus, this symbolic approach is not just decorative, but educational and profound in the process of character formation.

In addition to example and visual support, the social context in the implementation of character activities is also the key to the success of internalizing values. Teachers don't just convey character material verbally, but bring it to life through real interactions, such as when students help a friend clean the classroom or calm a friend who is struggling. (Suryani & Affandi, 2025) stated that real-life experiences in collaborative activities improve students' understanding of social values such as tolerance and empathy. This makes the internalization process not one-way, but dialogical and experienced directly by students in daily interactions, which is very important for inclusion students in forming a positive social identity in the school environment.

Another research by (Andayani, 2023) emphasizing the importance of contextual approaches in strengthening character values through routine and collaborative school activities. Models such as peer tutoring also reinforce the process of internalizing character, as they allow students to learn through direct interaction with peers in a supportive and empathetic atmosphere (Manubey et al., 2021). Santoso & Rudiwati (2019) emphasized that the peer tutor model is very helpful for inclusion students in understanding character values because of personal interactions and moral strengthening that occur in real situations.

Classroom teachers and Special Assistant Teachers (GPK) play an important role in bridging students' understanding of inclusion to the character values being studied. Learning that is flexible based on students' emotions and abilities, responsive to children's needs, and non-uniform is a significant finding in inclusive education (Manubey et al., 2021). This is in line with the statement that this approach strengthens students' social intelligence and forms moral sensitivity through the active role of the accompanying teacher in learning activities. These findings are also supported by the findings of Riasani et al. (2025), who conclude that teachers play an important role in the implementation of child-friendly schools. Other research by (Akhyar, 2024) dan (Surtini & Herawati, 2024) stated that teacher training is one of the stages in the implementation of child-friendly school programs in order to achieve the goal of providing a positive, safe, and constructive experience for students, so that they can develop optimally in physical, emotional, social, and academic aspects.

On the other hand, collaboration between parties in character learning planning is an important foundation for the successful implementation of an inclusion-friendly character strategy. The active involvement of school principals, classroom teachers, GPK, and SRA managers in compiling and harmonizing character programs strengthens the effectiveness of the program. These findings are in line with (Garcia-Melgar et al., 2022) showed that cross-role consultation of teachers in inclusive education contributes to more targeted differentiation of learning and character support.

This collaboration is not only administrative, but reflective and participatory, where each stakeholder provides input based on hands-on classroom experience and interaction with students. This is in line with (Saputri & Lestari, 2024) The findings indicate that a collaborative approach in character education planning is able to create continuity between learning objectives and classroom practice. In addition, (Sari et al., 2025) emphasized that cross-role meetings are a strategic medium to unite visions, build commitments, and develop character learning innovations that are inclusive and adaptive to the school's social context.

Furthermore, the involvement of inclusion students in various character-based activities such as mural projects, joint prayers, art performances, and cleaning competitions encourages the formation of confidence, responsibility, and empathy. Active involvement through peer tutoring strategies and collaborative social activities forms a natural support system that greatly helps the character development of inclusive students. This shows that the participation of inclusive students in school activities is not only symbolic but strategic in encouraging character growth and overall well-being (Shanmugam, 2021).

This active participation also creates a meaningful learning experience because inclusion students are engaged in a tangible social context, allowing them to feel an equal role, responsibility, and recognition with other students. This kind of engagement strengthens social connections between inclusion students and peers, reduces stigma, and builds mutual respect within the school community. The direct involvement of students with special needs in collaborative activities increases their confidence and intrinsic motivation. (Wahyuningsih et al., 2024) found that recognition of the contribution of inclusion students in school activities reinforces feelings of social acceptance and increases positive perceptions of self. Thus, active involvement in character activities not only provides a space for inclusion but also serves as an important means in the development of students' identity and psychosocial well-being.

Finally, the creation of an inclusive physical and social environment strengthens character education strategies in inclusive schools. Access to ramps, reflection rooms, parks, and social programs such as buddy programs and circle time form an educational ecosystem that supports students' active and emotional engagement. Thomas et al. In the (Michael et al., 2023) *Journal of School Health* shows that friendly classroom design contributes significantly to students' social-emotional well-being. Similarly, (Vella-Brodrick & Gilowska (2022) emphasized the benefits of green spaces in reducing stress and strengthening student concentration, including those who are inclusive. The implementation of a combination of a child-friendly and inclusive physical and social environment at SDN Giwangan shows how strong the school ecosystem is in shaping character collectively and sustainably.

The findings in this study clearly reinforce the relevance of the *Ecological Systems* theory from Bronfenbrenner (1979), which places schools as part of the *mesosystem* that has a strong influence on the psychosocial development of children, including inclusive students. In this context, the Child-Friendly School (SRA)-based character education strategy at SDN Giwangan proves that a

physically and socially supportive school environment can be the main support system that encourages the growth of student well-being. Positive interactions between students, teachers, GPK, principals, and collaborative character program structures reflect that the dynamics of micro systems (classrooms), mesosystems (teacher-parent-school relations), and even ecosystems (inclusive school policies) run in harmony to meet the needs of inclusive students. Research by Jayanti (2023) also found that the application of SRA principles that are integrated with Islamic values as a whole is able to strengthen the role of the school environment as a forum for character formation and protection of children (Jayanti, 2023)

Furthermore, this approach is also in line with the principle of *multilevel intervention* in inclusive education, which emphasizes the importance of systemic action from the individual to the institutional level. Strategies such as internalizing values through daily activities, adapting character learning, collaborating in planning, and creating a physically and socially friendly environment are not only symbolic but touch on the dimensions of relationships, values, and interlocking structures. The successful implementation of the strategy shows that the integration between personal roles (teachers and GPK as relational figures) and structural roles (SRA programs as school policies and culture) is the key to success in realizing an inclusive character. This is reinforced by (Rahmawati et al., 2025) which shows that collaboratively designed child-friendly classrooms not only improve the comfort of inclusion students, but also create a learning atmosphere that supports social-emotional development significantly.

Thus, this study not only confirms the theoretical principles but also provides empirical evidence that the success of character education in the context of inclusion is largely determined by the functioning of the school ecosystem holistically. The main contribution of this research lies in the affirmation that character education strategies are inseparable from efforts to build a learning environment that is equitable, reflective, and adaptive to student diversity. These findings broaden the understanding of how SRA-based character education practices can address real challenges on the ground, and at the same time provide an operational framework that other inclusive primary schools can adopt.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the character education strategy based on Child-Friendly Schools at SDN Giwangan, Yogyakarta, has succeeded in supporting *the well-being* of psychosocially

inclusive students. These strategies include internalizing values through daily activities, adapting character learning, planning inclusive programs, active involvement of inclusive students in school activities, and creating a supportive physical and social environment. Teachers and GPKs play an important role as facilitators, companions, and role models in instilling character values that are responsive to the needs of students. This approach has been proven to build confidence, safety, and acceptance for inclusion students in an inclusive and child-friendly learning ecosystem.

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