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Analyze the Crisis of Students' Character Values and Innovative School Strategies in Overcoming the Challenge

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Abstract: The purpose of this research is to analyze the urgency of the need to implement character education, which is related to the deterioration of the character of the younger generation, including students. The qualitative descriptive method is used for this research. Based on the results of observations conducted in December 2023 with 26 teachers who teach in various high schools in the Bandung area, Indonesia, the data showed that 84% of teachers have unpleasant experiences dealing with students' lack of character values. Such as individualism, low sense of social care, lack of environmental care, and low honesty, to severe cases such as bullying, getting pregnant outside of marriage, joining motorcycle gangs, consuming drugs, smoking, and drinking alcohol. As many as 88.4% of teachers agree that the factors causing character changes in adolescents, including students, are currently heading in a negative direction, namely addiction to the use of gadgets and social media. Therefore, schools continuously strive for innovative programs that can build and strengthen character values in students. The innovative strategies include 73.1% implementing an integrated learning system of character values, and the rest of the teachers mentioned that the school seeks a special character subject program and a teacher training program in integrating character values into academic content. This strategy will continue to grow as the level of teacher creativity in processing character value-based learning develops, so a wise and uninterrupted successor to the nation will be realized with technological advances.

Keywords: Character education, Character values, Innovative programs, Character value-based learning

Introduction

Etymologically, the word "character" comes from the Latin "karakter," "kharassein," and "kharax," which describe the process of creating something with depth and clarity (Putry, 2019). Meanwhile, character value, in terminology, is a distinctive identity that can reflect a person's mindset and actions toward oneself and the environment, including family, community, nation and even state (Ambarwati, 2023). In other words, the character reflects the uniqueness and distinctiveness of each person in living their life. As a relevant concept in the study of human behavior and morality, the character reflects the complexity of intrinsic and extrinsic traits that make up a person's personality. Research and studies in ethics and psychology provide; a solid epistemological foundation for understanding character in a deeper context; involving analysis of the moral

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aspects; values, and decisions that shape individual behavior patterns (Rahmansyah, 2020). In fact, not everyone has the same perspective on character values, so many interpretations arise regarding their meaning. Character values can also be interpreted as a combination of every consistent human behavior that can be used as a characteristic that distinguishes one individual from another (Suardi, 2023).

Nowadays, the rapid development of technology has a significant impact on the pattern of human life in all aspects. Considering that daily life that was originally lived traditionally has now moved to an advanced and sophisticated civilization. This will certainly also change the mindset and the condition of the character values of each individual, especially the younger generation (Nudin, 2020). In overcoming these changing times, each individual is required to be able to adapt (Efendi et al., 2022) making education the primary foundation for instilling good character values in order to realize a wise successor to the nation in answering the problems of the times (Lange et al., 2023).

Education is not only about developing intellectual intelligence, but also about shaping character. The true essence of education is to train individuals to become individuals who have insight into character values (Suhifatullah et al., 2021) so that the younger generation is not easily intervened in the complex changes in an ever-evolving world (Kobandaha et al., 2021). Education that is oriented towards the insight of character value cultivation is regulated in Section 3 of the Republic of Indonesia Law No. 20 of 2003 stipulates the fundamental principles of education in Indonesia, which shows that the purpose of national education is not only to focus on academic improvement but also the development of education to further improve character so that the overall balance of learning competencies possessed by students can be realized (Ula & Suwarno, 2023).

In an effort to form solid character values in students, in accordance with Law No. 20 of 2003, which emphasizes the importance of forming students with integrity, some stages must be carried out by each school, namely (1) being able to determine the character that is owned with the character that must be improved and improved. Embedding a culture of character value education in schools, (2) understanding character values, (3) taking a character point of view, (4) reasoning character values, (5) taking character education, and (6) understanding self-character. After learners acquire knowledge of character values, it becomes crucial in encouraging them to have the desire to apply these character values in their daily lives. This desire arises from a sense of love for character values, which is an effective source of energy in helping a person maintain consistency between knowledge of character values and character educators (Dahliyana et al., 2020).

According to Lawrence Kohlberg, an expert on character value education, learners must pass through stages that reflect the understanding and internalization of character values. At first, they may not fully realize and associate themselves with the norms or character values. However, over time, they demonstrate compliance with the rules and character values. The next stage involves attention to the expectations of others, maintenance of moral order, and finally, an awareness of personal responsibility based on inner principles (Rahmansyah, 2020).

Thus, character education is very important to be implemented sustainably. It aims to prepare students so that they do not fall into moral and character decline. As we know, there are still rampant cases of juvenile delinquency crises that have a negative impact on their lives and those around them. Moreover, the implementation of character education could run more effectively in schools, given the dichotomy or separation of teaching methods between academic content and character education (Sayuti & Rahiem, 2020). The strict separation between these two essential components of education implies that academic content and character values cannot be combined (Amri, 2017). In fact, there is often a perspective that the benchmark of student achievement is more about academic quality without having to pay attention to the urgency of character values (Mustaqimah & Dahlan, 2023). Therefore, based on the above background, a study was conducted related to the analysis of the character value crisis owned by students as well as practical and innovative efforts through the integration of character learning that can be applied by schools in order to overcome any existing character problems, with the ultimate goal of realizing the next generation of nations with character and not easily intervened by the times.

Method

This research method uses a descriptive qualitative approach by utilizing two data sources. Data collection in this study was conducted through observation and secondary analysis through literature review. The observation technique was obtained from the responses of 26 high school teachers in Bandung City to the crisis of character values of the younger generation and the urgency of the need and readiness in implementing character education in schools, as well as providing important insights for pedagogical development that can

integrate character value education in learning activities in schools. In addition the literature review analyzed was obtained from scientific publications indexed by Google Scholar in the range 2017-2023. The criteria for the articles analyzed were research journal articles and research on university repositories related to character value education. Searching and filtering articles was assisted by Publish or Perish (PoP) software with the following keywords: (1) 'Character education'; (2) 'Character value'; (3) 'Character value-based teaching'. The selected scientific publications were analyzed and produced findings in the form of an analysis of character values possessed by students and their relation to the urgency of building appropriate strategies for implementing character education in schools. The results of the analysis are synthesized and explained descriptively in accordance with the findings that have been reviewed.

Results and Discussion

The Urgency of Character Education in Schools

The urgency of implementing character education is related to the increasingly alarming deterioration of the character of the younger generation, especially students. Various viral cases that discuss juvenile delinquency and promiscuity plunge them into the use of drugs. The manifestation of deviant and disgraceful behavior experienced by students is a common and sad phenomenon in various parts of Indonesia. Parents with proper education feel concerned and anxious about students' character or moral shift (Apiyani, 2022). The challenge of low awareness of character values in learners in Indonesia is reflected through increased incidents of youth violence, use of abusive language, self-destructive behaviors, such as drug abuse, free sex, a culture of dishonesty, mutual suspicion, and the spread of hatred between individuals is increasingly widespread. Therefore, concrete efforts are needed from schools as agents of formal education to increase awareness of character values and form a generation that has better quality (Suhifatullah et al., 2021).

Case Analysis of the Low Character Values of Students

Based on the results of research related to the low character values of students conducted in December 2023 to 26 high school teachers who teach in Bandung Indonesia, data obtained that 84% of teachers have experiences related to dealing with the lack of character values possessed by students which are illustrated in mild to severe cases, including: (1) 50% of teachers complained about the lack of manners of students in communicating, both with fellow friends and with teachers or elders, (2) there are still many students who are individualistic, low sense of social care and lack of environmental care, (3) low honesty, (4) to severe cases such as bullying, free sex, joining motorcycle gangs, taking drugs, smoking, and consuming alcohol. The following are some examples of experiences from respondent teachers that fall into the category of serious cases related to student behavior that violates character values:

Respondent 2:

"I once found out when teaching in class that a student in class X A was crying because she was being bullied on social media. A male student took a picture of her and uploaded it without permission in the class WhatsApp and Facebook groups. Although there has been socialization related to bullying from MPLS, the perpetrator blamed the victim for not being able to keep her aura properly. We also held a meeting involving the homeroom teacher, BP teacher, and parents of the victim and the perpetrator. We provided an understanding of the impact of bullying and guidance to the perpetrator and victim. It was revealed that the perpetrator behaved this way because he was a child of a broken home divorce without support, indicating the need for better guidance and guidance."

Respondent 7:

"As an educator, I feel concerned about the lack of empathy and sympathy characters in today's students. I once found a student who fell, but the other students were just silent; no one had the intention of helping."

Respondent 23:

"During my time as a teacher in one of the high schools in Bandung, we found cases of the low character of students, ranging from mild cases such as lack of manners to severe cases related to bullying, teenage pregnancy outside of marriage, motorcycle gangs, and consumes painkillers such as tramadol and cough medicine for dogs, to drunkenness."

Respondent 24:

“We found several cases where children engaged in bullying behavior, damaged school facilities, and were caught smoking on school premises.”

Respondent 25:

"Students who bully their friends without guilt and consider it normal."

Based on the confessions of the respondents above show that the crisis of character values possessed by students must be addressed more carefully and cannot be ignored. Every stakeholder in education must carefully observe the causes and consequences of the decline in character values in Indonesian students and find the right treatment to overcome this. Cases of juvenile delinquency, especially among students, have increased in recent years, both are mild to severe cases. This is due to the development of the times, which significantly affects changes in character and mindset in responding to problems in everyday life.

Factors Affecting the Low Character Value of Students in the Era of Globalization

From some of the teachers' confessions, it was found that the implementation of character value education in schools is not something that can be underestimated. On the contrary, character education must be continuously innovated and implemented. This is because various factors, both internal and external, can affect the development of student character in a negative direction if not guided wisely. According to Ambarwati (2023), there are several examples of internal and external factors that affect the character of students. The internal factors include: (1) instinct, (2) habit. (3) willpower, (4) inner voice, (5) and heredity. While external factors involve the following aspects, (1) education, (2) environment. In reality, all of these factors are inseparable from the influence of technological development. The data in the graph below explains the high percentage of teachers who agree that students' low level of character values is caused by technological developments, especially the unwise use of gadgets.

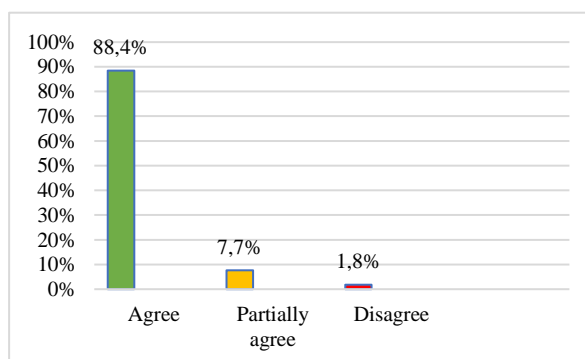


Figure 1. Factors affecting the low character value of students is caused by technological developments

Based on the graphic, total of 88.4% of teachers agreed that the cause that has a major influence on character building in adolescents, including current students, is addiction to the use of gadgets and social media. This phenomenon is a big concern in modern education, where the younger generation is constantly exposed to digital technology. The uncontrolled use of gadgets can hinder the development of character values. This is reinforced by research Nudin (2020) which explains that in the era of sophisticated technology, everyone easily obtains a variety of information content widely, which is often inappropriate to watch, especially for the younger generation; there are even several cases of juvenile crimes committed because they imitate the scenes they watch, such as pornographic content, violence, bullying, criminality, and other deviant behavior.

Building Character with Strengthening Character Education

Today's young generation is so vulnerable and easily influenced by various factors that cause them to fall into a life that violates norms if not immediately guided in a better direction. Therefore, character education is an effort to foster the younger generation to become wise individuals in responding to the changing times. Character education can also be interpreted as a conscious and planned human effort or an educator to educate and empower the potential of students to build their character so that they can become individuals who are beneficial to themselves and their environment (Adelia et al., 2023).

The provision of character education in Law No. 20 of 2003, which aims to form strong student characters with an emphasis on integrity, needs improvement and innovation in its implementation. Therefore, the push for character education in Indonesia needs to be implemented with the right methods. In response, schools in Indonesia have initiated an appropriate strategy in the form of a character education program known as Strengthening Character Education (PPK). Policymakers recognize the urgency of education as the key to addressing the existing challenges of character value deterioration, which is reflected in the Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 87/2017 on Strengthening Character Education (PPK). The underlying philosophy lies in the development of at least 18 character values, which are grouped into five aspects of the PPK concept, namely religiosity, integrity, nationalism, independence, and cooperation (Kurniasih & Utari, 2017).



Figure 2. The implementation of PPK system within the ministry of education and culture

The figure above shows that PPK divides character values into four main aspects to create a whole human being, including heart processing, literacy, aesthetic processing, and physical activity. These four aspects become the foundation for the formation of civilized humans who are healthy, intelligent, respectful, and have high integrity (Hayati et al., 2020). Based on the figure explained that The character values targeted in Indonesia come from various sources such as religion, Pancasila, cultural wealth, and national education goals is regulated in the Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 87/2017. These character values include being religious, truthful, tolerant, disciplined, hardworking, creative, independent, democratic, curious, nationalist, homeland love, respect for achievement, communication skills, being peaceful, being literate, environmental awareness, social care, and responsibility (Hidayati et al., 2020). The 5 PPK values scheme is described in more detail in Figure 3 below.



Figure 3. Five main values of strengthening character education (PPK)

The scheme in the figure above explains that Strengthening Character Education is a program that can be implemented in schools that aims to shape student character through the development of positive values and good behavior. Theoretically, these five aspects provide customized solutions to address social problems related to the character value crisis without ignoring the problem of low learning achievement (Kurniasih & Utari, 2017).

Implementing Character Education

The implementation of character education through the PPK program in schools still needs to be improved, and there are few innovations in the application of strategies to internalize character on an ongoing basis. The development of students' character values will take time but through a complex and consistent process. Character education that is implemented consistently and innovatively will be able to create high-quality generations and achieve complete maturity (Ambarwati, 2023). The following graph is related to the teachers' responses regarding the frequency of implementation of character education that has been implemented at school.

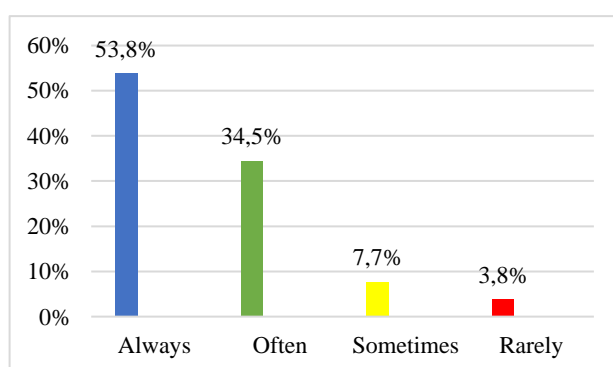


Figure 4. Frequency of implementation of character education that has been implemented at school

The graph above explains that most teachers have implemented character education at school, but still with monotonous methods, and they recognize that innovation is needed so that the implementation of character value education can be carried out effectively and on target so that the overall balance of national education goals is well achieved.

In fact, there are various techniques for implementing character value education that can be applied in schools. According to Ambarwati (2023), there are three techniques that schools can apply to internalize character values, including the following:

Character Value Fostering with School Management

In an effort to foster character values through school management, various strategies can be applied to internalize these values in daily life in the educational environment. Schools can integrate character values into school codes of conduct and regulations that reflect integrity, respect and responsibility. The teaching team acts as models and mentors in instilling character values through discussions of teaching strategies in staff meetings. School facilities are utilized to reinforce character learning by displaying student projects that demonstrate creativity and perseverance. Budget management supports character programs by allocating funds for teacher training and extracurricular activities that also have the potential to improve learners' character for the better.

Internalization of Character Education through Extracurricular Activities

Students can deepen their character values through various extracurricular activities, such as sports, religious communities, local cultural arts, flag-raising troops (Paskibra), scouting, and health. In sports, they learn cooperation and responsibility. In religious communities, they strengthen gratitude, mutual tolerance and respect. Through local cultural arts, students express creativity, love for the country and respect for tradition. In Paskibra and scouting, they hone leadership and discipline. At the same time, in health activities, they gain an understanding of the importance of self-care and enhance their sense of social and environmental care. Plus,

participation in these activities helps students develop responsible, empathetic characters and contribute positively to society.

Integration of Character Education in Learning Content (Character Value-Based Learning)

Unlike the previous two discussions of character education implementation techniques, the cultivation of character values by integrating character values in all subjects can be an innovative source that can always be renewed. Based on the questionnaire, results obtained from the various efforts applied in schools include 73.1% having begun to encourage teachers to integrate character values in every lesson, 19.2% implementing the curriculum by providing special character subjects and 7.7% not having a special program for character values. This shows that teachers generally prefer the strategy of integrating character values in every lesson. Integrating character value education into academic content requires structured learning procedures that can motivate students to balance their intelligence with their character values. Through the technique of integrating values in learning, education will create a generation that is broad-minded, characterized, civilized, and noble (Apiyani, 2022).

Innovative School Strategies in Integrating Character Education Facing the Challenges of its Implementation in Learning

The integration of character education into learning can be an innovative solution for school profiles that separate the urgency of academic intelligence from strengthening character values. In essence, each field of study has characteristic norms that can be developed and then linked to the context of everyday life. The essential of character education integration is to guide learners consciously and deliberately to shape their character through the adoption of positive values to be imitated and exemplified (Ambarwati, 2023). In integrating character values in learning, it is important to ensure that the approach used meets three main principles: relevance, consistency and adequacy. First, learning materials should be relevant to the competency standards and basic competencies set so that students can relate character values to their academic learning concretely. Second, consistency is needed to ensure that every aspect of the basic competencies that students must master is reflected in the learning materials so that character values can be integrated evenly and comprehensively. Finally, the principle of adequacy emphasizes that the material taught should be sufficient and in-depth enough to help students understand and apply the character values in their daily lives so that learning does not only focus on academic aspects but also on holistic personal development. By paying attention to these three principles, teaching can be more effective and innovative in creating a learning environment that supports students' overall character growth (Santika, 2020).

Many learning pedagogy techniques can be applied by teachers in integrating character values into classroom learning. Ambarwati (2023) presents several studies of innovations in the implementation of character values integrated learning, including the following: (1) consideration model that guides students in considering every problem related to learning can form a focus on empathy and caring, (2) cognitive-based affective learning model that aims to build students' morality, (3) value clarification technique that aims to guide students in forming character values that they consider good, which will ultimately affect how they act in social life. Among the three learning models, the Values Clarification Technique (VCT) learning model has been re-innovated by educational researchers because this model can train students to be directed to find, choose, analyze, decide, and take an attitude toward life values that want to be interpreted and applied in everyday life. (Fetra et al., 2020).

Thus, the innovation of school character education is important to be improved. It is the school that is one of the agents that has high potential in successfully helping students to shape their character towards a better direction, considering that at school children spend most of their time, so they will absorb more and remember what is taught, which will gradually affect their character. In addition, through the method of integrating character values into the content of learning materials that are implemented effectively and consistently, the challenges of implementing character education related to the perception of dichotomy or separation of teaching methods between academic content and character education can be resolved properly. It can be concluded that the purpose of this integration is not only to guide students to master the subject matter taught but also to accompany the cultivation of character values that are useful for improving their personalities in the future. However, the highlight of the success of character education, schools must work with others. The point is that teachers only need to create a learning environment that supports the learning process, starting from planning and implementation to evaluation activities. The internal and external factors of all aspects that affect the

character of students must always be considered, such as the involvement of families and communities who also have a big share in instilling character values in students.

Conclusion

Based on the results of observations conducted in December 2023 involving teachers who teach in various secondary schools in the Bandung area, Indonesia, the data shows that most teachers have unpleasant experiences dealing with students' lack of character values. Therefore, schools continue to strive to develop innovative programs that can build and strengthen students' character values. Such innovative strategies include implementing a character value-integrated learning system, and other teachers mentioned that schools are looking into special character subject programs and teacher training programs to integrate character values into academic content. These strategies will continue to evolve as the level of teacher creativity in cultivating character value-based learning develops so that the nation's wise successors who are connected to technological advances can be realized.

Recommendations

Implementing character-value education for students in schools requires hard work. It also requires innovation to implement value education, specifically through integration with learning. Teachers must consider many things as agents of character building. The crucial things that need to be understood before internalizing character values are that teachers need to improve their understanding of the concept of character education as a whole; teachers' pedagogical skills in choosing character values that are in accordance with the subjects they teach must always be developed; Teachers' competence to integrate character values in the subjects they teach; And Teachers must be able to become role models for the character values they choose.

Scientific Ethics Declaration

The authors declare that the scientific ethical and legal responsibility of this article published in EPESS journal belongs to the authors.

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