

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN SCHOOLS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

This study reviews various character development strategies in schools based on existing literature. The main focus is on holistic approaches that integrate moral values into the curriculum and extracurricular activities, as well as the importance of the teacher's role as a role model in students' character development process. It was found that the direct integration of character values in subjects and the provision of practical platforms for students to apply these values are highly effective in shaping students' character. In addition, training and support for teachers in classroom management and character-based teaching contributed significantly to the success of the programme. Continuous evaluation and monitoring is an important process to ensure that the strategies implemented remain relevant and effective. In conclusion, collaboration between curriculum integration, teachers' roles, and continuous evaluation can create a school environment that supports comprehensive student character development.

Keywords: Strategy, Character Development, School, Literature Review.

Introduction

Character development in schools has become an important issue in the world of education, especially due to the increasing number of moral and ethical challenges faced by today's young generation, which can be seen from the impolite behavior and lack of social responsibility that often appear in everyday interactions, both in the real world and digitally (Brown, 2024). For example, the "cancel culture" that often appears on social media shows the tendency of society to judge and punish someone without giving an opportunity for clarification or improvement. In addition, issues such as the increase in bullying cases in schools, both in the form of physical and cyberbullying, reflect a lack of empathy and appreciation for differences between individuals. This phenomenon shows the serious challenges faced in maintaining and promoting values such as mutual respect, responsibility, and tolerance amidst rapid technological developments and social change (Faqih et al., 2024). Strong character is not only necessary for academic success, but also vital for personal and professional life. Character is a collection of traits, traits, attitudes, and values that are inherent in an individual and are reflected in the behavior and decisions he or she makes in various life

situations. Character includes moral aspects such as integrity, honesty, courage, and kindness, as well as mental aspects such as perseverance, discipline, and responsibility (Coulter, 2021). A person with character generally has a strong personality and is consistent in upholding ethical values and prevailing social norms. This character is formed through a long process involving education, life experience, environment, and personal willingness to continue to develop and adapt positively in facing various life challenges (Hanafi et al., 2020).

Various studies have shown that good character education can improve students' ability to make the right decisions, interact harmoniously with others, and contribute positively to society. However, the implementation of character development strategies in schools does not always run smoothly. Many schools still focus solely on academic achievement without paying sufficient attention to aspects of character development. Lack of training for teachers in educating students about moral and ethical values, as well as the lack of a curriculum that is integrated with character education, are some of the factors that cause this (Fatimah & Siswanto, 2024).

On the other hand, several schools have tried various strategies to integrate character development into their curriculum. This approach involves various methods, from teaching moral values explicitly in the classroom, to implementing extracurricular activities aimed at building students' character. The success of these strategies needs to be analyzed and evaluated in depth in order to understand best practices in character education (Rejeki, 2023). Therefore, a literature review on character development strategies in schools is important to do. This review aims to identify the strategies that have been used, evaluate the effectiveness of each strategy that can be adopted by other schools in their efforts to develop students' character. By conducting a comprehensive literature review, it is hoped that certain patterns can be found that can be a guide for schools and educators in developing effective and sustainable character development programs.

Research methods

The study in this research uses the literature method. The literature research method is an approach used to collect, analyze, and evaluate existing information from various written sources such as books, journal articles, research reports, and other academic materials. This research aims to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular topic by identifying trends, gaps, and consensus in the existing literature (Wekke, 2020); (Sanusi, 2015). This method is very useful for providing historical, theoretical, or conceptual context for new research and is often used as a basis for developing further hypotheses or research questions. This process involves systematic steps such as searching for relevant literature, selecting credible sources, critical analysis of content, and synthesizing the information obtained to present comprehensive conclusions (Helaluddin, 2019).

Results and Discussion

Character Development Strategies That Have Been Implemented in Schools

Character development strategies that have been implemented in schools involve a variety of approaches designed to instill moral and ethical values in students. One of the main strategies is through the integration of character values into the learning curriculum (Qulyubi et al., 2023). Schools teach subjects such as Civic Education and Religious Education that explicitly teach the importance of values such as honesty, responsibility, tolerance, and mutual cooperation. In addition, topics about character can also be inserted into other subjects, for example by highlighting historical figures who have made contributions or encouraging discussions about ethical dilemmas in science studies (Nucci, 2024). Another effective strategy is through extracurricular activities and special programs. Schools often provide various clubs and organizations that focus on character development, such as Scouts, Youth Red Cross, and volunteer groups. Through these activities, students not only learn about moral values but also practice them directly in various situations. Special programs such as the theme "Character Building Week" or "Character Education Month" are also often held to provide intensive focus on character development through seminars, workshops, and community activities (Alirahman et al., 2023).

In addition, the role of teachers as role models plays a very important role in character development strategies. Teachers are expected to not only teach learning materials but also demonstrate behavior that reflects the moral values they want to instill in students. Indirectly, teachers' daily attitudes and actions become real examples that can be imitated by students (Hayani et al., 2024); (Ikhlas et al., 2024); (Arnadi et al., 2024). Therefore, training for teachers in character education is also an important component of this strategy, including how to overcome various ethical issues that may arise in the classroom.

A conducive school environment is also a vital element in character development strategies. Schools strive to create a safe, friendly, and diverse atmosphere, where every student feels valued and supported. This can include implementing clear and fair school rules, as well as strong anti-bullying policies. Collaboration between schools, families, and communities is also key to ensuring that character values taught in schools are supported and reinforced in the home and community environment (Utomo & Thaibah, 2021).

Finally, evaluation and assessment of character development are also part of this strategy. Schools conduct various assessments to measure students' character development, either through direct observation, student self-reflection, or feedback from parents and teachers. The results of this evaluation are used to continuously refine character development strategies. With a structured and comprehensive approach, it is

hoped that students can internalize good moral values and apply them in their daily lives, both at school and outside of school (Nyangaresi et al., 2024).

Thus, character development in schools involves a comprehensive and integrated approach, which includes integrating moral values into the curriculum, extracurricular activities and special programs, as well as the role of teachers as role models. A conducive school environment and supportive policies also contribute significantly to instilling character values. In addition, continuous evaluation of student character development ensures that the strategies implemented are continuously improved and adjusted to needs. With this approach, it is hoped that students can internalize good moral values and apply them in their daily lives, thus forming a generation with strong character and able to make a positive contribution to society.

Effectiveness of Character Development Strategies in Schools

Character development in schools is one of the main focuses in modern education, due to the importance of forming individuals who are not only academically intelligent, but also have integrity, empathy, and social responsibility. The effectiveness of character development strategies in schools depends largely on how well these moral and ethical values are integrated into the curriculum and students' daily lives. To achieve this, a variety of creative and comprehensive approaches are needed that include direct teaching of values as well as real-life applications in everyday life scenarios (Larsen & Math  , 2023).

One strategy that is widely applied is the integration of character values in each subject. For example, in history lessons, teachers can highlight figures with high integrity, while in language lessons, students can be encouraged to create projects that support cooperation and responsibility. In this way, students not only learn about moral values theoretically, but also see how these values are applied in various contexts. This approach has been shown to be effective in helping students internalize and understand the importance of good character in their lives (Surtini & Muhtar, 2024).

Extracurricular activities also play a crucial role in developing students' character. Through sports, arts, or student organizations, students get the opportunity to develop social skills such as cooperation, leadership, and discipline. These activities not only enrich students' experiences but also provide space for them to apply character values in real situations. That way, students can feel the benefits of having a strong character, both in achievement and in social interactions (Kwabena, 2022).

In addition, coaching and real examples from teachers and school staff are important components in character development strategies. Teachers who display exemplary attitudes such as honesty, fairness, and empathy can be role models that have a big impact on students. A supportive, fair, and empathetic school environment creates an atmosphere that is conducive to character development. So, it is important

for schools to provide training for educators on how to implement character education effectively and consistently (Susanto, 2022).

Finally, ongoing evaluation and reflection are important to ensure that the character development strategies implemented remain relevant and effective. Through surveys, observations, and feedback from students and parents, schools can assess the impact of their character development programs. This information is then used to make improvements and adjustments to existing programs. By conducting regular evaluations, schools can ensure that their efforts to develop student character are running optimally and producing the desired results (Msiba et al., 2021). Thus, the effectiveness of character development strategies in schools is highly dependent on the integration of moral values into the curriculum, extracurricular activities that hone social skills, and coaching provided by teachers. A comprehensive approach that involves direct teaching and application of values in everyday life shows that students can internalize and understand the importance of good character in their lives. In addition, real examples from teachers and a supportive school environment play a crucial role in shaping students' character. Finally, continuous evaluation and reflection on these programs ensure that the strategies implemented remain effective and relevant. Thus, consistent and comprehensive efforts from all elements of the school will bring positive results in developing student character.

Conclusion

Character development strategies in schools require a holistic approach that combines direct integration of moral values into the formal education curriculum and extracurricular activities. Instilling values such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy should be an integral part of every subject, and supported by programs that allow students to practice these values in a variety of real-life situations. Extracurricular activities such as social clubs, sports, and community service also provide important platforms for students to develop their social and emotional skills in a broader context.

The importance of the role of teachers in developing student character is also highly emphasized in the literature. Teachers not only function as educators, but also as role models who can influence students' daily attitudes and behaviors. Through real examples given by teachers, students can see the application of moral values in real action. In addition, teacher training in classroom management and character-based learning techniques is also an important factor in creating a learning environment that supports character development.

Finally, ongoing evaluation and monitoring of character development programs are needed to ensure their effectiveness. Evaluation involves assessing various aspects, including changes in student behavior, their involvement in social activities, and feedback from various stakeholders, including students, teachers, and parents. Periodic reflection and adjustment of these character development strategies ensure that the

program remains relevant and can respond to existing challenges and needs. Thus, the combination of a comprehensive approach, active teacher involvement, and ongoing evaluation, schools can effectively develop and strengthen students' characters.

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