CHARACTER EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S MORAL DEVELOPMENT: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Marzuki
Universitas Kapuas, Indonesia
denmaszuki@gmail.com

Al-Amin
Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya, Indonesia
al.amin-2024@feb.unair.ac.id

Abstract
This research reviews the literature related to character education and moral development in children, with the aim of understanding how moral values can be effectively transferred through formal and informal education. The study identified effective methods in character education, such as the use of moral stories, interactive discussions, and real-life examples from adults. Findings from various studies show that character education that is consistently implemented in the school curriculum has a significant positive impact on children's moral development, as seen in their daily behaviour and their ability to make ethical decisions. This study recommends closer collaboration between schools and families and the establishment of policies that support the integration of character education in the formal education system. Thus, character education can contribute to the formation of a generation that upholds moral and ethical values.
Keywords: Character Education, Children's Moral Development, Literature Review.

Introduction

Character education is a planned and systematic effort to help individuals develop positive values and behaviours, such as honesty, respect, responsibility, caring and fairness. This education not only focuses on cognitive aspects, but also includes emotional and social aspects, which aim to form individuals who have integrity and good morals (Aslan et al., 2019) ; (Hutagaluh & Aslan, 2019) . Character education is often implemented through the school curriculum, extracurricular activities, as well as through daily examples and interactions provided by educators, parents, and the surrounding environment (Aslan, 2017a) .

Character education is essential to shape a young generation that is not only academically intelligent but also has strong morals and good ethics. In the era of globalisation that is full of challenges and complex dynamics, character education helps individuals to be resilient, empathetic, and able to make wise decisions (Aslan, 2017b) ; (Iksal et al., 2024) ; (Putra et al., 2020) . The values instilled through character education can build a solid foundation for children to become responsible citizens and positive contributors to society. Therefore, the inclusion of character education in the education

system is a long-term investment that is very valuable for the achievement of social progress and sustainable nation building (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005) .

Character education has become an increasingly important topic in the global education discourse. In many countries, including Indonesia, there is a growing awareness regarding the importance of not only providing academic education to children, but also shaping their character and morals. Character education aims to develop the positive values, attitudes and behaviours needed to be a good and responsible individual (White, 2020) .

Various studies have shown that character education plays an important role in children's moral formation. For example, the moral development theories of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg emphasise that children's moral development passes through several stages, each of which has different characteristics and educational needs (Helwig, 1994) . Schools and other educational environments have a significant role in supporting this process by providing appropriate learning experiences and effective educational interventions (Reynolds & Fisher, 2021) .

However, in practice, the implementation of character education often encounters various challenges. There are still different views on the most effective methods and strategies to educate children's character. In addition, different influences from family context, culture and social environment also affect children's moral development (Chang & Lin, 2020) . Therefore, a comprehensive literature review is needed to identify various approaches and techniques in character education and evaluate their effectiveness.

This research is motivated by the desire to provide a deeper understanding of character education and children's moral development. By reviewing existing literature, this research is expected to provide clear guidance for educators and policy makers in designing and implementing effective character education programmes. In addition, the findings of this study are expected to raise awareness about the importance of character education in building a better society in the future.

Research Methods

The study in this research uses the literature method. The literature research method is a technique used to collect and analyse information sourced from various existing literature or documents, such as books, journal articles, theses, dissertations, research reports, and other reliable sources (Alaslan ;, 2022) (Syafril & Erlina, 2018) . This research focuses on reviewing, critically appraising, and synthesising previously published information to understand theories, concepts, and findings relevant to the research topic being studied. This method allows researchers to recognise and formulate conceptual frameworks and identify gaps or shortcomings in previous research that can be used as a basis for further research (Wekke ., 2020)

Results and Discussion
Effective Character Education Methods and Strategies

One of the most effective methods in character education is to make teaching moral and ethical values a core part of the formal education curriculum. By integrating character education into various subjects, such as language, history, and social science, students can learn about important values in a contextualised manner. This enables them to understand and internalise these values in their daily lives (Narvaez, 2006) . A curriculum that prioritises character education can encourage discussions on the importance of honesty, respect, responsibility and cooperation, which are directly useful in shaping students' character (Putra & Aslan, 2019) ; (Liliana et al., 2021) .

Another effective method in character education is to use role-playing and simulation. Through this method, students can be placed in certain situations where they have to demonstrate understanding and integrity to moral values. For example, they can play the role of a leader, a group member, or an individual who has to make ethical and responsible decisions. These role-playing activities not only evoke critical thinking but also allow students to experience and appreciate the consequences of their behaviour in a safe and controlled environment (Edwards & Young, 2021) .

Character education can also be enhanced through project-based and collaborative learning approaches. In this method, students are invited to work in teams on a project that requires not only academic ability but also social and emotional skills. Group work, shared responsibility and effective communication are some of the character values taught through these collaborative projects. In addition, students learn to respect differences of opinion, resolve conflicts in a constructive way, and achieve goals together (Roberts, 2023) .

One of the most powerful strategies in character education is through role modelling by educators and parents. Children tend to imitate the behaviour of adults around them. Therefore, it is important for teachers and parents to demonstrate good moral values in their daily lives, such as showing respect, honesty, caring and integrity. This exemplification will provide real examples for students on how character values can be applied in real life (Wang & Chen, 2022) .

In addition to classroom activities, extracurricular programmes and social activities also play an important role in character education. Activities such as sports clubs, art, music, student organisations and community service activities can develop different aspects of students' character. For example, sports teach about teamwork, discipline and sportsmanship, while community service activities can develop empathy and concern for others. Through active participation in these programmes, students learn about important values in a broader and practical context (Krathwohl et al., 1964) .

Self-reflection and group discussion are other effective strategies in character education. Students are invited to reflect on their personal experiences, evaluate their

own actions, and discuss in groups to understand different perspectives and values. Through self-reflection, students can recognise and correct deficiencies in their character. Group discussions help students develop critical thinking skills and empathy by listening to and understanding the views of others. This process encourages students to become more self-aware and responsible for their own actions (Lickona & Davidson, 2005).

The Effect of Character Education on Children's Moral Development

Character education is an important aspect in the formation of children's personality and morals. In this modern era, many education experts recognise the importance of integrating character education in the school curriculum. This is done to ensure that children not only develop academically, but also have strong moral values (KKNI, 2017).

Character education helps children understand values such as honesty, responsibility, respect and empathy. By understanding and applying these values, children can learn about the importance of acting with integrity in everyday life. This character education is instrumental in shaping children's moral identity and helping them make the right decisions (Gunawan, 2018).

A variety of methods can be used in character education, including through stories, group discussions, and interactive activities that include role-playing. Teachers and parents play an important role in modelling moral values and setting a good example for children. Through consistent guidance, children learn to internalise these values and apply them in their lives (Fauzan, 2019).

Character education has a direct impact on children's moral development. Children who receive consistent character education tend to have better social skills, including the ability to empathise and cooperate with others. They are also better able to deal with conflict in constructive ways and exhibit more ethical behaviour in a variety of situations (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006).

However, implementing character education is not always easy. One of the main challenges is ensuring that the values taught at school are in line with the values espoused at home. Consistency between home and school is essential so that children receive clear and not conflicting messages (Harris, 2023).

The benefits of character education are not only felt in the short term, but also influence into adulthood. Children who have a strong moral foundation tend to grow up to be trustworthy, responsible individuals and have healthy interpersonal relationships. This is useful in various aspects of life, including career, family, and society (Patel, 2023).

Overall, character education has a significant influence on children's moral development. With the right and consistent approach from parents and educators, children can develop strong moral values that will help them in living life with integrity

and responsibility. Character education is not just about teaching values, but also preparing children to be good and responsible citizens in the future.

Conclusion

Character education and children's moral development show that character education has a very important role in children's moral formation. Existing literature indicates that character education helps children understand and apply values such as honesty, responsibility and empathy in their daily lives. These values are crucial in helping children make informed decisions and behave ethically.

The research analysed in this review shows that character education systematically integrated in the school curriculum can result in positive moral development in children. Effective methods in character education include moral stories, group discussions, role plays, and real examples from teachers and parents. In addition, consistency between the values taught at school and at home is essential to strengthen the impact of character education on children.

Based on the findings from this literature review, it is recommended that schools and families work more closely together in teaching and upholding moral values. This can be done through cooperation programmes and good communication between educators and parents. In addition, there needs to be a policy that supports character education in the school curriculum to ensure that every child gets adequate moral education. Thus, children can grow up to be responsible, empathetic, and have strong integrity, which is useful for their future lives.

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