

CHARACTER EDUCATION IN THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM: LITERATURE ANALYSIS AND IMPLEMENTATION

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Abstract

Character education is an important aspect of the national curriculum that aims to shape young people who not only excel academically, but also have strong moral and ethical values. This study analyses various literatures as well as the implementation of character education in schools, identifying the challenges and opportunities that exist. The results of the analysis show that although character education has the support of government policy, its implementation still faces various obstacles such as a lack of understanding and competence of teachers, limited facilities and infrastructure, and a less conducive educational environment. However, opportunities to optimise character education remain large through the use of educational technology, supportive policies, and cooperation with various stakeholders. In conclusion, with commitment and good cooperation, character education can be implemented effectively so as to contribute to the formation of a generation with strong and positive character.

Keywords: Character Education, National Curriculum, Literature Analysis and Implementation

Introduction

Character education has become the main focus in the development of education systems in various countries, including Indonesia. Character education is the process of forming and developing moral values, ethics, and positive attitudes that are carried out systematically and planned through teaching and learning activities in an educational environment. The character in question includes various aspects of personality such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, empathy, and co-operation (Andrian et al., 2024); (Shintia et al., 2024); (Triyuni et al., 2024). Character education aims to form individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have good morals and ethics, so that they are able to play an active role as responsible members of society and contribute positively to their social environment (Youn & Im, 2023).

In the increasingly complex era of globalisation, where social and technological changes continue to take place rapidly, the challenges faced by the younger generation are increasingly diverse. Social problems such as drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, and declining morality and ethics are some examples of challenges that require serious handling (Lee, 2020).

The importance of character education lies in its fundamental role in the formation of a quality generation. In this era of globalisation, the challenges faced by the younger generation are increasingly complex, including social problems such as

drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, and moral decadence. Character education equips students with essential life skills to face these challenges, while supporting their social and emotional development (Baek & Park, 2024). Through character education, it is expected to create individuals who are not only academically smart, but also have integrity, responsibility, and high empathy, so that they can make a positive contribution to society and the nation. Character education is believed to be able to equip students with moral values, ethics, and virtues that are important to face these challenges (Ford & Knutson, 2025).

In Indonesia, the urgency of character education is increasingly recognised along with the vision of national development that includes moral and ethical aspects. The government has integrated character education in the National Curriculum through various educational policies and programmes. This effort aims to facilitate the formation of student characters who are not only intellectually intelligent but also highly moral, noble, and have good social attitudes (Trevathan, 2021).

However, the implementation of character education often faces various obstacles. Challenges such as the lack of understanding and skills of educators in applying character education, limited resources, and resistance from the school and community environment are real obstacles in its implementation. In addition, cultural differences and local values also affect the effectiveness of character education in various regions in Indonesia (TEMİZ, 2020).

Therefore, there is a need for an in-depth analysis of the existing literature and field evaluation of the implementation of character education in the national curriculum. This research aims to examine the various approaches and strategies used in character education, evaluate their success and identify challenges and opportunities. Thus, the results of this study are expected to provide comprehensive recommendations for curriculum developers, educators and policy makers to improve the quality and effectiveness of character education in Indonesia.

Research Methods

The study in this research uses the literature method. The literature research method is a research approach whose main focus is to synthesise and analyse various written sources such as books, journal articles, research reports, and other documents relevant to the study topic. The steps in this method include identifying research problems, collecting literature from credible sources, evaluating the quality and relevance of the literature, and organising and analysing the information found to formulate conclusions or recommendations (Helaluddin, 2019); (Sanusi, 2015). Literature research is very useful in providing a strong theoretical foundation, identifying gaps in previous research, and informing the development of better hypotheses or conceptual frameworks for future studies (Wekke, 2020).

Results and Discussion

Implementation of Character Education in the National Curriculum

The implementation of character education in the national curriculum is an attempt to integrate moral and ethical values into the formal education process. The main objective of this initiative is to mould individuals who are not only academically intelligent but also excel in terms of morality and social leadership. In Indonesia, the integration of character education in the curriculum is done by incorporating character values such as religiosity, nationalism, integrity, mutual cooperation, and independence into various subjects and learning activities (Suprianto et al., 2020).

One way of implementing character education is through an integrative approach, which is by linking character values with existing learning materials. For example, in history lessons, students are taught about figures who have high integrity and persistent struggle, thus triggering reflection and application of similar values in everyday life. In language lessons, students can be invited to analyse stories or texts that contain certain moral or ethical lessons (Puspitasari & Aslan, 2024); (Judijanto et al., 2024).

Character education is also implemented through extracurricular activities and school culture. Extracurricular activities such as Scouts, social activities, and debate clubs can be a platform to instil and practice values such as responsibility, co-operation, and leadership. School culture, which operates through rules, habits and a conducive environment, can strengthen the implementation of character education. For example, by implementing rules that support respect for honesty and discipline and providing good role models from teachers and school staff (Lee, 2020).

The importance of character education is also reflected in the development of a character-based curriculum that emphasises hands-on learning experiences. This approach emphasises active learning methods that engage students in discussions, role plays and group activities, all designed to help internalise character values. In addition, evaluation in character education is also not only based on academic results, but also on changes in student behaviour and their ability to apply character values in real situations (Suyahman, 2021).

Finally, the successful implementation of character education in the national curriculum relies heavily on the active involvement and commitment of all stakeholders, including teachers, parents and communities. Teachers act as facilitators and role models, while parents and communities must support and reinforce the character values taught in schools. Through this collaboration, it is hoped that students can develop into individuals with strong character who are ready to face the challenges of the modern world (Munasib, 2023).

Therefore, the implementation of character education in the national curriculum is a strategic step to form individuals who not only have academic intelligence but also

good morality and social leadership. Through an integrative approach, character values can be linked to various subjects, while extracurricular activities and school culture strengthen the application and internalisation of these values. Hands-on learning experiences in a character-based curriculum help students to actively understand and apply the values they have learnt. The success of this programme relies heavily on the commitment and cooperation between teachers, parents and the community, who together support the character education process. Thus, students are expected to grow into individuals who have good character qualities and are able to face future challenges effectively and morally.

Challenges and opportunities in implementing character education in schools

The implementation of character education in schools is often faced with various challenges. One of them is the lack of understanding and competence of teachers about character education itself. Many teachers focus more on delivering academic material rather than developing students' character. This can be exacerbated by high administrative burdens and demands to achieve academic curriculum targets, which leaves little time and energy to effectively integrate character education (Kilag, 2024).

Another challenging factor is the limited facilities and infrastructure in many schools, especially in remote areas. Inadequate facilities can hinder the implementation of extracurricular activities and programmes that support character education. In addition, socio-economic disparities among students can also affect the effectiveness of character education as differences in family background and social environment have a significant impact on students' character development (Maguate, 2024).

A non-conducive school environment is also an obstacle. A school culture that does not reflect the character values to be achieved, such as bullying behaviour or lack of discipline, can undermine character education efforts. Therefore, it is important to build a positive school culture that supports the implementation of character education well (Kang & Shin, 2020).

On the other hand, there are many opportunities to optimise character education in schools. One of the biggest opportunities is the government policy that increasingly supports the importance of character education in the national curriculum. This policy can guide and encourage schools to be more serious in developing a structured and sustainable character education programme (Hastuti & Marsigit, 2020).

Technological developments and innovations in education also provide new opportunities in the implementation of character education. For example, the use of digital technology and social media as a means to promote character values and increase student participation in interactive and fun teaching and learning activities. Training and professional development programmes for teachers can also be conducted online, thus improving the accessibility and quality of character education (Muslim, 2020).

In addition, collaboration with various parties such as parents, communities and non-governmental organisations can strengthen the implementation of character education. Involving various stakeholders in the character education process can create a supportive environment that is in line with the values taught in schools. Active participation from parents and communities can provide real examples and direct experiences for students in practising character values in daily life (Norma et al., 2023).

Overall, although there are various challenges in implementing character education, the opportunities that exist if properly utilised can bring positive and significant changes. With the commitment and cooperation of all relevant parties, character education in schools can run more effectively and produce a generation that is not only academically smart but also moral and virtuous (Rudiyanto, 2024).

Thus, the implementation of character education in schools is indeed faced with significant challenges such as a lack of understanding and competence of teachers, limited facilities and infrastructure, and a non-conducive school environment. However, there are also many opportunities that can be utilised to overcome these challenges. Supportive government policies, technological developments and innovations in education, and collaboration with various stakeholders such as parents and communities are some examples of opportunities that can be optimised. With commitment and good co-operation from all parties involved, character education can be implemented more effectively, thus contributing to the formation of a generation that not only excels academically but also has a strong and positive character.

Conclusion

Character education in the national curriculum is seen as one of the most important priorities. Various literatures emphasise the importance of moral and ethical values integrated in the education process, with the aim of forming a young generation that is not only academically intelligent, but also has good character. Character education is expected to answer various social problems such as low national insight, declining social ethics, and increasing immoral behaviour among students.

The implementation of character education in the national curriculum faces various challenges. Literature studies and implementation analyses show that there is a lack of understanding and skills among educators in teaching character values effectively. In addition, limited facilities and resources, as well as an unfavourable social environment, are often obstacles to embedding character education thoroughly. These challenges require serious attention from various relevant parties to be overcome with appropriate strategies.

Nevertheless, opportunities to optimise character education remain wide open. Support from government policies, advances in educational technology, and collaboration with various stakeholders such as parents, communities, and non-governmental organisations can be the key to success in implementing character

education. With a joint commitment from all parties involved, character education can be run more effectively, have a significant positive impact on student character building, and ultimately create a generation that not only excels in academics but also has a strong and positive character.

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