

DEVELOPING POSITIVE CHARACTER: PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGIES FOR PERSONAL GROWTH

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Abstract

Developing positive character is an important aspect in shaping an individual's personality and morals, which is effectively done through the application of holistic and sustainable psychological strategies. These strategies include instilling moral values, setting an example, providing positive reinforcement, and developing social and emotional skills in accordance with the child's stage of development. In addition, the environment and education system play a major role in supporting this process, where a conducive, safe, and appreciative atmosphere can strengthen the internalisation of positive values. In the context of education, the implementation of a character-based curriculum integrated with psychological approaches such as cooperative learning, value-based learning models, and reinforcement through digital media and technology, has proven effective in improving the positive attitudes and behaviour of students. Research findings show that this strategy not only improves moral and social aspects but also strengthens a sense of responsibility, honesty, and empathy. Therefore, synergy between a supportive environment and an innovative education system is key to producing a generation with strong character and high integrity, capable of facing social dynamics and the challenges of the times.

Keywords: psychological strategies, educational environment, positive character development, value instillation, value-based learning, personality formation, moral, social.

Introduction

Positive character development has become a central aspect in efforts to improve the quality of life of individuals and communities in various educational and daily life contexts. In the modern context, character building is not only about

developing moral and ethical aspects, but also a constructive process that involves the formation of traits and virtues that can lead individuals to personal and social success (R. Sari & Prasetyo, 2025) . Positive psychology, as a scientific branch of psychology, provides a strong theoretical foundation and strategies for developing positive character by emphasising human strengths and virtues rather than focusing on psychological disorders and problems. This approach developed as a reaction to traditional approaches that placed greater emphasis on improving mental problems and pathological human dynamics, and offers a new paradigm that is oriented towards human strengths and potential in an optimal way (Aminudin, 2024) .

The emergence of positive psychology is based on the need to understand and enhance positive aspects of human life, such as happiness, meaning of life, mental resilience, and empowerment. Martin Seligman, a leading figure in this field, emphasises that psychological studies should not only focus on reducing suffering but also on uncovering and strengthening the strengths that enable humans to achieve optimal states in their lives.(Aminudin, 2024)

Furthermore, the background to the emergence of the concept of positive character development is supported by the fact that humans have tremendous potential to develop and benefit not only themselves but also their social environment (Sutrisno, 1999) . This concept stems from the idea that to achieve well-being and happiness, individuals must be able to cultivate and optimise their strengths and virtues. This is in line with Seligman's view and consistent with other theories that emphasise that strengthening personal strengths and improving positive aspects of oneself are the main keys to achieving a meaningful and happy life (Yuliana, 1999) .

This paradigm also shows that the development of positive character must begin at an early age in order to have a long-term impact on the personality and behaviour of students. Positive psychology-based character education emphasises the importance of instilling virtues such as honesty, discipline, empathy, and gratitude from an early age, as well as instilling habits that support moral and social growth (Wulandari, 2024) . In this context, the role of teachers and the family environment is very strategic in providing the right stimulus to nurture these traits in children. Effective learning must integrate positive values through fun activities and build positive experiences (Guna et al., 2024) .

Furthermore, existing theories emphasise that character strengths developed consistently will serve as a bulwark in facing increasingly complex life challenges and social pressures. Strengths such as courage, fairness, perseverance, and hope are seen as the main foundations in building resilience and mental endurance (Aslan et al., 2019) . Those who are able to cultivate and maintain these strengths tend to be better able to deal with stress, failure, and social conflict constructively, thereby demonstrating stable and healthy personal growth. Psychologists suggest that character development

strategies should be carried out continuously through programmes that focus on human strengths rather than merely emphasising weaknesses (Wulandari, 2024).

Within the framework of positive character development, education and psychological intervention must be able to create an atmosphere that supports the growth of these positive traits. Interactive learning approaches, the use of supportive media, and the instilling of values through direct practice are important aspects in creating a responsive and enjoyable learning environment (Aslan, 2017a); (Aslan, 2017b). Character building can also be done through extracurricular activities, training, and daily habits that instil positive behaviours, such as greeting others warmly, helping others, and appreciating diversity. This shows that positive character development requires the active participation of all stakeholders, from formal education to the wider community (Iksal et al., 2024).

Equally important, the development of positive character must also be supported by in-depth research and the sustainability of intervention programmes based on empirical evidence. By strictly applying scientific methodologies, the psychological strategies developed can be continuously optimised in line with scientific developments and community needs. Based on various studies, regular measurement and evaluation of individual strengths and virtues are essential to optimise character development programmes and adapt them to local social and cultural contexts (Wulandari, 2024).

Overall, the development of positive character within the framework of positive psychology is a process that must be carried out systematically and continuously. The application of these strength-based psychological strategies is expected to create individuals who are not only academically intelligent but also emotionally and socially mature. Thus, positive character is no longer merely a part of moral values but becomes an integral part of shaping well-rounded and highly competitive individuals in this challenging era of globalisation.

Research Method

The research method used in this study is a qualitative approach with literature review as the main technique for collecting and analysing data. This study utilises relevant theoretical and empirical sources from various journals, books, and scientific articles discussing positive character development and psychological strategies that support self-growth (Elijah & Aslan, 2025). Data was systematically collected through a literature search related to positive psychology, character education, and psychological interventions, then analysed in depth to identify important themes and strategic models that have been proven effective. This qualitative approach enables a comprehensive understanding of the concepts and implementation of psychological strategies in the context of holistic and sustainable character development, and

provides a strong foundation for making practical recommendations in the development of positive character in various areas of life (Green et al., 2006).

Results and Discussion

Psychological Strategies for Positive Character Development

Positive character development is a fundamental aspect in shaping an individual's personality that is not only academically superior, but also emotionally and socially mature. Psychology makes a significant contribution by offering various psychological strategies that focus on human strengths and potential to form a strong and resilient character (Linda & Kusuma, 2025). One of the main strategies is identifying personal values and beliefs that form the basis of character development. Through self-reflection, individuals can understand which values are most important to them, making it easier to make decisions with integrity and consistency in various life situations (K).

The development of empathy and social skills is another important psychological strategy that influences the formation of positive character. The ability to understand and feel what others feel builds healthy and harmonious interpersonal relationships. Psychology emphasises the importance of empathy in strengthening social relationships, increasing awareness, and fostering openness and tolerance in daily interactions. Learning strategies through simulations, group discussions, and direct social experiences can significantly enhance this empathy skill (Fauzi, 1999).

Resilience or mental endurance is a crucial aspect studied in positive psychology to strengthen character. Individuals who are able to recover quickly from failure or pressure have a strong mentality and higher fighting spirit. Effective psychological strategies for building resilience include problem-solving training, stress management, and strong social support. Resilience is an important foundation for individuals to continue to develop and maintain their positive character despite facing various challenges in life (Hartono, 2025).

Consistency and a sense of responsibility are also key pillars in character development. Psychology facilitates the development of self-awareness and self-control, which help individuals act in accordance with their values and goals. This strategy involves strengthening commitment through habitual responsible behaviour and continuous self-evaluation. Thus, consistency in behaviour and responsibility become ingrained habits that strengthen personal integrity (Rahman, 2023).

Emotional management is a fundamental part of psychological character development strategies. Individuals who are able to recognise, regulate, and express their emotions in a healthy manner tend to have better psychological well-being. Techniques such as meditation, mindfulness, and self-reflection are used to improve emotional regulation. Learning emotional regulation supports individuals to not be easily influenced by negative impulses and to be able to interact wisely in their social environment (Waruwu & Sibarani, 2024).

Positive character education also requires the creation of a positive and inclusive learning environment. Individuals, especially children and adolescents, need to feel safe, valued, and supported so that positive values can grow optimally. This psychological strategy involves the wise use of technology as a learning tool rather than mere entertainment, as well as the application of reflective learning that emphasises learning from experience and self-introspection (Putra et al., 2020) . A supportive environment helps build self-confidence and optimism that underpin character development. Role modelling or moral modelling is an effective strategy in social psychology for shaping positive character. Individuals learn through observation and imitation of the behaviour of role models such as teachers, parents, and community leaders. These role models provide a concrete picture of expected behaviour and provide internal motivation to follow positive examples. Therefore, character building strategies that include role models are very important in the context of education and self-development (P .

The systematic habit formation of positive values also contributes significantly to character building. Psychology states that repetition and positive reinforcement help strengthen desired behaviour patterns so that they become habits. This habit formation process can be carried out through various routine activities, such as giving rewards when positive behaviour occurs, and involving a social environment that reinforces these values. Ultimately, good habits will form a strong character that is resistant to negative external influences (Harahap, 2023) .

The development of intrinsic motivation by educational psychology is an important strategy to encourage individuals to perform positive actions not only because of external rewards, but also because of internal awareness and desire. Learning that encourages reflection, active involvement, and personal meaning towards the values taught can increase this motivation. Educational psychology recommends learning methods that involve discussion, simulation, and relevant real-life experiences to strengthen the internalisation of these positive character traits (Mahmudi, 2024) .

The use of psychological counselling approaches is also relevant in supporting character development. Counselling that integrates personal and spiritual values can help individuals deal with internal conflicts and social pressures that hinder positive character development. This approach includes individual, group, and collaborative counselling involving teachers, counsellors, and parents to create a strong and holistic support network (Lestari, 1999) . In addition, the intelligent management and utilisation of technology is a strategy that must be considered in the digital age for positive character development. Technology can be an effective learning medium if used appropriately and wisely, but on the other hand, it also has the potential to bring negative influences such as addiction and cyberbullying. Educational psychology recommends the development of digital literacy and self-control in the use of

technology so that technology functions as a tool to support positive character building (Tubagus et al., 2023); (Hifza et al., 2020).

Psychological strategies also include the development of effective social skills. Social skills such as communication, cooperation, and conflict resolution play an important role in the formation of good social character. Social skills can be learned through direct practice in group activities, role-playing training, and discussions that enable individuals to master how to interact healthily and responsibly in social environments (Mariska & Aslan, 2024); (Tubagus et al., 2023).

Character development cannot be separated from the social and cultural context that influences the values held. Therefore, psychological strategies for character development must also consider this context, integrating cultural values and social norms in a positive manner. This will make the developed character more relevant and easily accepted by the individual and their social environment (Lestari, 1999).

Finally, the success of psychological strategies for positive character development is highly dependent on consistent implementation and multi-party involvement, including individuals, families, schools, and the wider community. Consistent and sustainable implementation of strategies will create strong and adaptive character in the face of life's dynamics. Psychology teaches that character formation is a long process that requires environmental support, practical application, and continuous evaluation and reinforcement.

The Role of Environment and Education in Shaping Positive Character

The environment plays a very important role in the process of shaping a person's positive character, because the environment serves as a place where individuals learn, develop, and express their moral and social values. In this context, the environment is not limited to the physical geographical environment, but also includes the social, cultural, and institutional environments that support the formation of positive character. A conducive and supportive environment can motivate individuals to instil and internalise positive values more effectively (Santika, 2023).

Within the family, as the closest and first environment encountered by children, the role of parents and other family members is crucial in shaping positive character. Parents, as the primary role models, must be able to instil the values of honesty, responsibility, and respect through consistent and loving daily behaviour. Character learning through role modelling, effective communication, and reinforcement of positive behaviour are the main strategies that can strengthen this process (Ningsih & Santoso, 2023). Apart from the family, the school environment also plays a key role in shaping the positive character of students. Schools not only function as places to acquire knowledge, but also as places to instil moral and social values through the curriculum, extracurricular activities, and social interactions that take place within them. Schools that have a safe, inclusive, and appreciative environment are able to create a

learning atmosphere that supports the development of positive character traits, such as discipline, honesty, and empathy (Ambarwati, 2024).

Teachers and educational staff play a central role in creating a learning environment that supports character development. Through a pedagogical approach based on moral values, teachers can serve as role models and guides for students in instilling positive character traits. This approach includes the application of discipline based on positive reinforcement, effective communication skills, and the instilling of values of tolerance and cooperation in the classroom (Erwan et al., 2023); (Astuti et al., 2023).

The social environment outside of school, such as the community and public places, also contributes to shaping positive character. Social interactions in the community should instil values of togetherness, mutual assistance, and mutual respect. This context is particularly important in building a community culture that supports the development of individuals with positive character who are able to play an active role in social life (Ambarwati, 2024). In addition, the culture and norms that exist in the social environment influence the formation of an individual's character. The norms of politeness, ethics, and customs that apply become guidelines that direct individual behaviour to be in harmony with the positive values upheld by society. Therefore, character development must pay attention to the sustainability and consistency of the prevailing social norms so that the character formed is truly ingrained and relevant (Nugroho, 2013).

In the context of formal education, the implementation of a character-based curriculum is an important strategy that emphasises the role of the educational environment in shaping positive character. Such a curriculum not only teaches cognitive aspects, but also involves the development of affective and psychomotor aspects oriented towards values and morals. Through various programmes, students are taught to internalise and apply positive values in their daily lives (Sitopu et al., 2024); (Irwan et al., 2024); (Aslan, 2019).

Education through extracurricular activities and character development based on the environment is highly effective in building positive character. These activities instil values such as discipline, cooperation, responsibility, and exemplary behaviour through direct experiences that reinforce theoretical learning in the classroom. In fact, these after-school activities are a very effective medium for instilling moral and social values in a more authentic and meaningful way (Dewi, 2024).

An educational environment that instils positive values must also be able to create an atmosphere free from violence, intimidation, and discrimination. Safety and comfort will give students the confidence to express themselves positively without fear or feeling threatened, which ultimately supports the process of internalising positive character optimally (H). Because character is formed through a continuous process, the cultivation and learning of positive values must be carried out consistently and

continuously. This strategy includes the implementation of character-building programmes, training, and regular coaching conducted in schools and social communities. This continuity is important to ensure that the values that have been instilled are able to stick and become part of an individual's personality (R .

The roles of the environment and education must be mutually supportive and synergistic, thereby creating an ecosystem conducive to the development of positive character. Collaboration between schools, families, communities, and the wider society needs to be carried out continuously so that the positive character that is built is not only temporary but becomes a permanent part of the students' identity.

Character building through the environment must also be in line with the local cultural and traditional context so that it is relevant and well accepted by the community. The influence of local culture can strengthen the internalisation of positive values while reinforcing the sustainability of the character building process in the long term. Therefore, a contextual and culturally sensitive approach is essential in building positive character (Aminudin, 2024) . In addition to personal internal aspects, a positive environment must also be able to encourage individuals to actively contribute to social life. Individuals who are supported by an environment that provides opportunities and rewards for positive actions will feel valued and motivated to continue strengthening their established character. Conversely, a bad or unsupportive environment can actually be an obstacle in the process of forming positive character (Sutrisno, 1999) .

It is also important for the environment and education to utilise technology as a tool in the character learning process. The use of digital media, educational games, and social platforms that support the learning of moral values can expand the reach and effectiveness of positive character building. Technology is able to reach the younger generation in a more intimate and attractive way, while instilling positive values in an interactive and enjoyable manner (Yuliana, 1999) . Awareness of the importance of the role of the environment and education in shaping positive character must continue to be developed through training and seminars for educators, parents, and community leaders. This is important to ensure that all parties understand and are able to apply the right strategies in the process of positive character building. Effective character education is the result of collaboration between all supporting elements (Wulandari, 2024) .

Ultimately, success in building positive character does not depend solely on the efforts of one party, but requires a long-term commitment from all elements of society. This commitment must be realised in the form of policies, educational programmes, and a culture that supports the growth and development of individuals with strong character, integrity, and the ability to adapt well to the various challenges of the times.

Conclusion

The development of positive character is a complex and ongoing process that requires an appropriate psychological approach to maximise individual potential. Psychological strategies such as developing empathy, resilience, emotional management, and instilling positive values have been proven to strengthen the foundations of constructive character. This approach not only emphasises the formation of moral behaviour, but also empowers psychological aspects such as self-awareness, social skills, and intrinsic motivation, which play an important role in holistic personal growth.

The role of the environment and education are decisive factors in the success of positive character development. The family, school, and community environments must be able to create a conducive, supportive, and inclusive atmosphere so that positive values can be internalised optimally. Character education that is integrated into the curriculum and accompanied by consistent role models and habits can produce strong, resilient characters that are adaptable to the challenges of the times. Collaboration between various parties, including educators, parents, and the community, is essential so that character building does not stop at the formal level but becomes part of the culture of life.

Thus, the development of positive character through psychological strategies supported by a conducive environment and education not only improves the quality of individuals personally but also has a broad impact on social sustainability and national progress. These efforts must be pursued continuously and systematically using an approach that is adaptive to the context and needs of individuals. The integration of positive psychology into various aspects of life is a strategic solution in shaping a generation that is not only intellectually competent but also has strong character and integrity.

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