

The Role of the Teacher as a Role Model in Shaping Honest and Disciplined Character at SDN Wonosari 01

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Article Info	Abstract
Keywords: Character Education, Discipline, Honesty, Role Model, Teacher	This study examines the role of teachers as role models in shaping students' honesty and discipline character at SDN Wonosari 01. This research uses a qualitative approach, relying on data from teacher interviews, classroom observations, and documentation. The results show that teacher exemplary, manifested through actions and words, has a significant influence on the internalization of honesty and discipline values in students. Teachers act as role models who consistently show positive behavior, provide direction, and create a classroom environment that supports character building. Teachers' actions encourage students to be honest when they forget to bring homework rather than making excuses. Nonetheless, the study also identified challenges such as the lack of support from the family environment and the need for more systematic habituation strategies. The study concludes that teacher example is an important foundation in character education, which requires comprehensive support from various parties for optimal impact.

INTRODUCTION

Character education is an integral part of the national education system aimed at shaping students to become individuals who possess faith, piety, noble morals, and strong personal integrity. The two most fundamental and essential values in the context of character education are honesty and discipline. At the elementary school level, children's developmental stage is in a highly decisive phase where they absorb values from their surrounding environment through the processes of observation and imitation. Therefore, teachers, as the central figures in school, hold a highly strategic role in instilling character values through exemplarity.

Teachers are tasked not only with teaching but also with becoming inspiring role models. A teacher is the primary exemplar in character building because their entire attitude and conduct are observed and emulated by students, both consciously and unconsciously (Sutisna et al., 2019). Teachers who are able to demonstrate honest and disciplined behavior in daily activities directly provide effective lessons in character values without requiring lengthy theoretical explanations.

This aligns with the exemplarity-based character education approach, where values are instilled through concrete examples demonstrated consistently.

The habituation of values such as honesty and discipline becomes more meaningful when implemented through concrete and repetitive activities. Examples include the honesty cooperative (*koperasi kejujuran*) and morning lining-up activities conducted independently by students. These activities not only train responsibility but also foster an ethical awareness that being honest and orderly is a part of good social behavior. Such habituation will only succeed if the teacher becomes the first to implement it and serves as a consistent role model. Teacher exemplarity emulated by students encompasses simple matters such as dressing neatly, arriving on time, and being trustworthy in tasks (Yusuf & Ahsan, 2023). Although seemingly trivial, these actions exert a major impact on students' habits and behavior. Students do not merely view the teacher as an educator, but also as a reliable and respected figure. This trust becomes the primary asset in the deep and long-lasting internalization process of character values.

According to Aini and Syamwil (2020), the elementary school age represents the golden period for character building. In this phase, students possess a highly powerful ability to remember and imitate, making the teacher's exemplarity easily absorbed and applied. Teachers who can maintain alignment between speech and actions will deliver a positive psychological impact, wherein students perceive character values as something real and worthy of emulation. The learning process thus becomes more meaningful as it integrates both cognitive and affective aspects simultaneously. Nevertheless, teacher exemplarity also faces challenges from the students' external environment, particularly the family. The success of character building at school is heavily influenced by the alignment of values implemented at home (Aviatin et al., 2023). If parents do not provide examples similar to those of the teacher, a value conflict will occur, confusing the students. Therefore, the success of character education through exemplarity requires collaboration among the school, family, and community. Without support from the environment outside the school, the teacher's exemplarity potentially falls short of yielding optimal impacts.

Students who are accustomed to following routines, such as turning in found items to the lost-and-found post and lining up orderly in the morning, gradually experience changes in attitude (Febriana, 2021). They become more responsive to social responsibilities and possess a higher moral awareness. This proves that exemplarity and habituation directly monitored by teachers play a crucial role in shaping the values of honesty and discipline sustainably. Prasetyo and Marzuki (2016) explain that teachers play a primary role in character building through exemplarity in speech, attitude, and appearance. When teachers demonstrate religious, disciplined, and caring behaviors, students respond by following these patterns in their daily lives. This also reflects that the success of character education stems not only from the formal curriculum but primarily from the direct experiences students gain through observing their teachers.

In the era of globalization, the influx of external values presents a serious challenge to character education (Fikriyah & Faiz, 2019). Teachers need to reinforce their role as guardians of values through concrete actions demonstrated repeatedly both inside and outside the classroom. Exemplarity in thinking, behaving, and acting positively and optimistically exerts a strong influence on students' readiness to face the digital era and the Industrial Revolution 4.0. This positions teachers not only as learning facilitators but also as agents of value transformation in society.

Teacher exemplarity is not merely a learning method for values but constitutes the primary strategy in elementary school character education. When teachers are able to perform their roles as exemplars consistently and are supported by a corresponding environment, values such as honesty and discipline can be firmly established and endure in the long run. Therefore, within the educational context at SDN Wonosari 01, teachers need to be encouraged to continually serve as concrete examples of the character values to be instilled, so that students can grow into responsible, honest, and disciplined individuals.

METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at understanding in depth the role of the teacher as a role model in shaping the honest and disciplined character of students at SDN Wonosari 01. Qualitative research is a method based on post-positivism or interpretative philosophy, used to investigate natural object conditions, where the researcher acts as the key instrument, data collection techniques are carried out through triangulation (a combination of observation, interview, and documentation), the obtained data tend to be qualitative, data analysis is inductive/qualitative, and the results of qualitative research can take the form of identifying potential and problems, object uniqueness, the meaning of an event, social processes and interactions, confirmation of data truth, phenomenon construction, or hypothetical findings (Sugiyono, 2020). This approach was selected due to its capability to comprehensively describe the dynamics of character building through teacher exemplarity within the real context of elementary school life.

The research location is SDN Wonosari 01, situated in Ngaliyan District, Semarang City, Central Java. The primary subject in this study is the second-grade teacher serving as the key informant, considering their direct involvement in the learning process and daily interactions with students. Additionally, the second-grade students were the focus of observation to obtain an overview of their behavior and responses toward the exemplarity demonstrated by the teacher. Data collection was carried out through two main techniques: interviews and observations. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the second-grade teacher to obtain information regarding the teacher's attitudes, behaviors, and strategies in instilling the values of honesty and discipline through exemplarity. Observations were performed on the second-grade students to directly witness their expressions and forms of behavior during learning activities and routine school routines related to the intended character values.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model by Miles and Huberman, which encompasses three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was performed by selecting and simplifying data relevant to the research focus. Subsequently, the data were displayed in narrative and thematic formats that illustrate the patterns of the teacher's role as a model. Conclusions were then drawn based on the patterns emerging from the analysis. The validity of the data in this study was maintained through source triangulation, namely by comparing data from the interview and observation results. To strengthen the validity of the findings, member checking was also conducted with the second-grade teacher to ensure that the data interpretation made by the researcher aligned with the intent and reality conveyed by the informant.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that the second-grade teacher at SDN Wonosari 01 plays a vital role as a role model in shaping the honest and disciplined character of students. This role is performed through the teacher's attitudes, speech, and actions in daily activities both inside and outside the classroom. Based on the data obtained from interviews and observations, there are four main findings. Instilling the value of honesty in learners can begin by understanding the meaning of "honest" as explained in the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language), which is an attitude reflecting sincerity, a lack of deceit, and trustworthiness. Meanwhile, truthfulness is the manifestation of an honest character that stems from a sincere heart. In the process of instilling this value in students, teachers need to pay attention to the varying conditions of the learning environment. Therefore, an effective internalization strategy is to build value awareness gradually through habituation and exemplarity methods. This approach enables students to understand and live out the value of honesty in their daily behavior. Instilling honesty within students encompasses several aspects, including: (a) the

process of understanding honesty itself, (b) providing means that can stimulate the growth of an honest attitude, (c) exemplarity, (d) openness, and (e) not overreacting (Musbikin, 2021b).

The second-grade teacher consistently instills the value of honesty through concrete actions and reflective dialogues with students. One form of exemplarity practiced is encouraging students to speak truthfully when they forget to bring their assignments, as well as providing a direct example by admitting personal mistakes in front of the class. The teacher conveyed that she openly corrects herself if an error occurs in grading or explanation, as an effort to foster a culture of honesty without fear. This is reinforced through learning strategies that integrate moral values, such as storytelling or sharing tales about honest figures, and subsequently inviting students to discuss the meaning of the story in their lives. This strategy demonstrates that the teacher acts not only as an educator but also as a value facilitator by connecting honesty to the students' social reality. The teacher also emphasized the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment so that students are not afraid to admit mistakes or convey the truth without pressure or immediate punishment.

Most students are not afraid to admit minor mistakes, such as forgetting to bring a book or not yet completing an assignment. This reflects the presence of trust between the teacher and students, as well as the emergence of an awareness that speaking truthfully is more appreciated than making excuses. The teacher provides positive reinforcement to students who are honest, both verbally and in the form of small rewards, which ultimately strengthens the students' motivation to be open. Exemplarity repeated within a real context provides students with direct experience regarding the value of honesty as a beneficial and valuable attitude. The implementation of discipline is an essential matter that must be realized in every elementary education unit, both in schools and madrasahs. Although the formation of discipline can be carried out through the learning process, its execution frequently faces challenges due to differences in students' family backgrounds and characters. The term discipline originates from the word *disciple*, which means someone who voluntarily follows and learns from a leader. In this case, teachers and parents act as leaders who guide children toward a directed, useful, and happy life. Discipline holds a strategic role in supporting student success in learning and life. The importance of discipline for students can be detailed as follows: (a) discipline born from self-awareness will help students achieve success in their learning activities, (b) a disciplined attitude creates an orderly and conducive classroom atmosphere, allowing the learning process to take place effectively, (c) through the habituation of discipline, students can grow into organized, responsible individuals who respect rules, and (d) discipline is an essential asset that is not only useful for academic success but also serves as a foundation in the professional world and social life in the future (Musbikin, 2021a).

In the aspect of discipline, the second-grade teacher applies a consistent approach through habituation and classroom regulations created together with the students. The teacher builds daily routines such as morning greetings, joint prayers, and timely assignment submission as part of the value system embedded in learning activities. The teacher consciously sets an example by always arriving on time, starting lessons according to schedule, and demonstrating orderliness in classroom management. Discipline is instilled not only through instructions but also through student involvement in creating classroom agreements at the beginning of the academic year. The teacher stated that this agreement was jointly formulated, written, and posted on the classroom wall as a reminder, and then evaluated periodically. This strategy fosters responsibility and a sense of ownership among students toward the rules they created themselves, thereby nurturing internal discipline rather than compliance driven by coercion.

There is a fairly good level of orderliness among the second-grade students in following the class schedule, submitting assignments, and maintaining silence while the teacher is explaining. When infractions occur, the teacher utilizes a persuasive approach first by offering personal advice and engaging the student in a discussion about the importance of discipline. In some cases, if

students persist in violating the rules, the teacher enforces educational sanctions and involves communication with parents to encourage a change in attitude. The teacher also provides motivation and rewards to students who consistently exhibit disciplined behavior. This reinforcement is vital for building positive habits, as emphasized by Yusuf and Ahsan (2023) that praise and recognition for students who demonstrate discipline constitute a highly effective form of value reinforcement in the internalization process. Therefore, teacher exemplarity becomes the most direct and natural method for shaping disciplined habits among students.

Although teacher exemplarity exerts a powerful positive influence, this study also identified several challenges in the character-building process, particularly from external factors. One of these is the influence of the environment outside the school, such as the family and the media, which does not necessarily support the values taught at school. The teacher revealed that some students feel that honesty is not advantageous because they are accustomed to seeing negative examples outside of school. Furthermore, several students feel afraid to be honest because they assume they will receive punishment. Therefore, the teacher endeavors to create a safe and open classroom atmosphere so that students feel comfortable being honest and taking responsibility for their actions. Another challenge is the inconsistency in reinforcing character values. The teacher realizes that character habituation requires systematic support from both the school administration and parents. When there is a lack of continuity between the values instilled at school and the practices at home, the character-building process becomes less effective.

Confronting various challenges in shaping students' honest and disciplined character, the second-grade teacher at SDN Wonosari 01 developed several solutive strategies that are practical and contextual. The teacher realizes that instilling character values cannot be done instantly and without the right approach. Therefore, the steps taken are more systematic, flexible, and focused on habituation as well as intensive communication with students. First, the teacher consistently provides positive verbal reinforcement to students who exhibit honest and disciplined behavior. Expressions of appreciation such as "Thank you for speaking truthfully" or "Great, you are very disciplined today" have become the teacher's habit in building students' intrinsic motivation. This strategy aims to foster the awareness that honesty and discipline are valuable and appreciated attitudes.

Second, the teacher also implements personal and reflective approach models. When a student commits an infraction or lies, the teacher does not immediately issue a punishment, but instead invites the student to speak privately to understand the underlying reason behind the behavior. Through this approach, the teacher establishes an emotional closeness with the student, which ultimately facilitates character guidance. The teacher conveyed that students are easier to direct when they feel valued and not judged. Third, to overcome the influence of the family environment that is not always supportive, the teacher communicates with parents, both informally and through homeroom teacher meetings. In these meetings, the teacher invites parents to provide good examples at home, such as being honest when facing problems or demonstrating discipline in daily routines. The teacher realizes that character education will only be effective if there is an alignment of values between home and school.

Fourth, the teacher builds a classroom culture that supports character formation by creating classroom agreements together with the students, which include the values of honesty and discipline. These agreements are written and displayed in the classroom, becoming a shared reminder that is not only normative but also participatory. The teacher mentioned that when students participate in drafting the rules, they feel more responsible for obeying them. Fifth, the teacher utilizes thematic learning to insert character values into the lesson material. For instance, when teaching themes about social life or the environment, the teacher incorporates stories or discussions emphasizing the importance of being honest and disciplined in daily life. This ensures that character education does not stand alone but is integrated into the learning process. From the various solutions implemented, it is evident that the teacher performs a dual role: as an

academic educator and a moral guide. These strategies demonstrate that the teacher does not merely rely on lecturing methods but prefers approaches based on empathy, positive reinforcement, and collaboration with the students' environment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that teacher exemplarity plays a central role in shaping the honest and disciplined character of students at SDN Wonosari 01. The second-grade teacher consistently demonstrates positive behaviors in both actions and speech, serving as a concrete example for students in their daily school lives. Through approaches involving habituation, positive reinforcement, and reflective communication, the teacher has successfully instilled the value of honesty gradually in students. The students' courage to admit mistakes without the fear of punishment indicates that the value of honesty has begun to be well internalized. In terms of discipline, the teacher is able to create an organized and orderly learning environment through mutual agreements, structured routines, and firmness accompanied by empathy. The discipline established is not authoritative in nature; rather, it grows from the students' own awareness as a result of continuous habituation. The teacher serves not only as an educator but also as a role model in every aspect of behavior. Nevertheless, challenges persist, particularly from the influence of the family environment and inconsistencies in external support. Consequently, the teacher has developed various strategies to overcome these obstacles, including collaborating with parents, cultivating a positive classroom culture, and integrating character values into thematic learning. Overall, teacher exemplarity has proven effective as a strategic approach to character education. This success undoubtedly needs to be reinforced by support from both the school environment and the family, ensuring that the instilled values do not only persist at school but are also internalized within the students' lives outside the learning environment.

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