



Curriculum Regulation Document Analysis on Strengthening Character Values through Physical Education

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Abstract

Character education has become a fundamental aspect of the national curriculum, aiming to develop students' moral integrity, responsibility, discipline, and cooperation. Physical education (PE), with its emphasis on physical activity, teamwork, and sportsmanship, serves as a strategic medium to internalize these character values. This study analyzes curriculum regulation documents to examine how character values are integrated into physical education in Indonesian schools. The research object consists of national curriculum policy documents, including the 2013 Curriculum, the Merdeka Curriculum, the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 22 of 2016, and the official guidelines for Physical Education learning. The primary objective of this study is to explore the extent to which these documents reflect a commitment to character development through PE. A qualitative research method with a document analysis approach was employed. Data were analyzed using content analysis techniques, focusing on the identification of explicit and implicit character values embedded within the learning objectives, core competencies, and learning outcomes related to PE. The findings indicate that curriculum regulations provide substantial normative support for character education, particularly in promoting values such as discipline, respect, honesty, cooperation, and responsibility. However, the degree of clarity and operational guidance in implementing these values varies across different documents. In conclusion, while regulatory documents recognize the importance of character development through physical education, there remains a gap between policy articulation and practical implementation. This study highlights the need for clearer pedagogical guidelines to optimize PE as a vehicle for character education in Indonesian schools.

How to Cite

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INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the issue of character education has gained increasing attention within the global education agenda. The 21st-century learning paradigm emphasizes not only cognitive competence but also the development of affective and moral dimensions in learners. UNESCO (2015) underlines the importance of education in nurturing values such as empathy, responsibility, integrity, and respect—competencies that are essential for shaping holistic individuals (Özel & Sümer, 2025). In the Indonesian context, character education has been formalized as a core component of the national curriculum, aligned with the vision of producing students with noble character, nationalism, and global competitiveness (Arnoltus, 2023).

One of the most strategic subjects for implementing character education is Physical Education (PE), as it combines physical activity, social interaction, and structured behavioral training. The Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia, through various curriculum reforms, has positioned PE not only as a medium to enhance physical fitness but also as a platform for instilling values like discipline, honesty, cooperation, and perseverance. However, questions remain about how these values are integrated and regulated within the official curriculum documents.

Data from the Ministry of Education and Culture (2022) show that only 45% of primary and secondary schools in Indonesia implement structured character education programs effectively through PE (Saharullah et al., 2023). This reflects a significant gap between the intended goals of the curriculum and its practical application. Moreover, many PE teachers report limited pedagogical guidance in translating character values into daily lesson plans and class management strategies.

Several previous studies have addressed the relationship between PE and character education. For instance, Yuwono et al. (2022) proposed the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model to integrate life skills and ethical behavior in PE classes. In the Indonesian setting, research by Marhani et al. (2023) found that character development through PE was more effective when supported by strong institutional policies and teacher training. However, little scholarly attention has been paid to the textual content of the curriculum regulation documents themselves.

This article aims to fill that gap by analyzing key policy documents such as the 2013 Cur-

riculum, the Merdeka Curriculum (2022), Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 22 of 2016, and other official guidelines for PE instruction. By examining the documents through a content analysis approach, this study explores how character values are explicitly and implicitly embedded in the objectives, competencies, and learning outcomes of PE across different levels of schooling.

From a conceptual standpoint, this study is grounded in the theory of character education as proposed by (Qomarrullah & Sokoy, 2024), which emphasizes moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. These components are highly compatible with the values promoted in PE, such as teamwork, leadership, and respect for rules. The study also refers to the framework of curriculum analysis to assess policy coherence and implementation feasibility.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on curriculum policy documents as a primary object of analysis, rather than classroom practices or student behavior. This allows for a deeper understanding of how the national vision for character education is translated into the legal and normative foundation of the school system, particularly through PE. Unlike other studies that measure outcomes or teacher perceptions, this research focuses on the root of pedagogical regulation.

The study contributes theoretically by offering a model for evaluating policy texts through a character education lens. Practically, it provides valuable insights for curriculum developers, policymakers, and educators to refine and strengthen the alignment between PE objectives and character education goals. It also identifies gaps and inconsistencies that may hinder effective implementation.

This research responds to the urgent need for coherent and actionable curriculum regulations that support the holistic development of students. As PE continues to evolve as a discipline, its potential to contribute to character formation must be reinforced by clear, consistent, and purposeful policy frameworks.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research approach using document analysis as the primary method. Document analysis is an appropriate method for examining policy texts, curriculum frameworks, and regulatory documents, particularly when the objective is to identify the underlying values, goals, and content structures that guide educational practice (Intentilia, 2022;

Musu et al., 2021).

The research focused on analyzing several key curriculum regulation documents issued by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, including:

- a. Kurikulum 2013 (Curriculum 2013),
- b. Kurikulum Merdeka (The Independent Curriculum) launched in 2022,
- c. Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 22 of 2016 on Standards for Primary and Secondary Education Process,
- d. The official Physical Education teacher guidelines and Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Profile of Pancasila Student) document.

These documents were selected based on their relevance to physical education (PE) and their explicit or implicit emphasis on character education.

The data were collected through purposive sampling of official regulatory documents available through the Ministry's website and government education portals. The content analysis technique was employed, focusing on:

- a. Learning objectives (CP-Capaian Pembelajaran),
- b. Core competencies (KI) and basic competencies (KD),
- c. Character-related values embedded in PE learning outcomes.

The data analysis process followed the content analysis framework proposed by Qomarrullah et al. (2023); Wulandari & Thoif (2024), consisting of:

- a. Data familiarization
Reading documents thoroughly.
- b. Coding
Identifying phrases, sentences, or sections that refer to character values (e.g., discipline, cooperation, honesty).
- c. Categorization
Grouping character values according to the dimensions of character education (moral knowing, moral feeling, moral action as per (Sawir et al., 2022)).
- d. Interpretation
Interpreting the relevance and consistency of those values in shaping the expected student behavior through PE.

Triangulation of findings was conducted by comparing the contents of multiple documents and consulting relevant secondary sources and prior research on curriculum analysis and character education in PE contexts.

This research design allows a comprehensive understanding of how national education

policies conceptualize and regulate character education in physical education, offering both descriptive and interpretive insights into curriculum intentions (Pakasi & Qomarrullah, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Integration of Character Values in Curriculum Documents

The analysis of key curriculum regulation documents—namely the 2013 Curriculum, the Merdeka Curriculum (2022), and the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 22 of 2016—reveals that character values are explicitly acknowledged as essential components of education. In the context of Physical Education (PE), these values are embedded within the core competencies (Kompetensi Inti/KI) and basic competencies (Kompetensi Dasar/KD). For example, in the 2013 Curriculum, discipline, sportsmanship, teamwork, and responsibility are repeatedly emphasized in the expected learning outcomes for students across different grade levels.

The Merdeka Curriculum further expands this focus through the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Pancasila Student Profile) framework, which promotes six key dimensions of character: faith and piety to God, global diversity, cooperation, independent thinking, critical reasoning, and creativity. These dimensions are integrated into PE learning objectives, aligning with the character-building potential of physical activities such as games, sports, and team-based exercises.

Character education has long been recognized as an integral aspect of national education goals in Indonesia, as emphasized in Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System. The law states that education must develop students' potential to become human beings who are faithful, noble, healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, and independent. Physical Education (PE), with its emphasis on physical, social, and emotional development, aligns directly with these goals by offering experiential learning opportunities to instill character values.

In the analyzed documents—the 2013 Curriculum, the Merdeka Curriculum (2022), and the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 22 of 2016—it is clear that character education is positioned as a central focus. Particularly in PE, activities such as sports, games, and cooperative exercises are considered ideal mediums to promote discipline, teamwork, sportsmanship, and respect. These findings reinforce the theory of Lickona (1991), which proposes

that effective character education must combine moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action (Roen et al., 2023).

Document Consistency and Clarity

Despite the presence of character values across policy documents, there is an observable inconsistency in how these values are operationalized. The Regulation No. 22/2016 provides general pedagogical guidelines but lacks concrete examples of how PE teachers can implement character education in classroom settings. Similarly, while the Merdeka Curriculum promotes learner autonomy and contextual learning, it delegates a large portion of implementation to schools and educators, leading to variations in the depth and quality of character education through PE.

This inconsistency aligns with the findings of Elfina (2022), who noted that regulatory documents often contain aspirational goals without providing sufficient technical support for practice. The lack of standardized modules, assessment tools, or training for PE teachers remains a significant barrier.

The document analysis revealed five dominant values explicitly or implicitly included in PE curricula: discipline, cooperation, honesty, responsibility, and respect. These values are introduced through learning objectives and teaching strategies embedded within PE units. For instance, group activities are used to foster cooperation and communication, while competitive sports are leveraged to teach fairness and emotional regulation.

However, the extent to which these values are clearly mapped within the curriculum varies. The 2013 Curriculum uses a more structured approach by specifying core and basic competencies related to behavior and social skills, whereas the Merdeka Curriculum relies more on project-based and contextual learning models that allow broader flexibility. While this flexibility can encourage teacher creativity, it can also result in inconsistent interpretations and applications at the school level.

Dominant Character Values Identified

Through content analysis, the study identifies five dominant character values consistently promoted in the curriculum documents:

- a. Discipline
Reinforced through rules in sports and structured physical training,
- b. Cooperation
Developed via team games and group

problem-solving activities,

- c. Honesty
Emphasized in fair play and self-assessment,
- d. Responsibility
Encouraged through leadership roles and personal fitness goals,
- e. Respect
Cultivated by observing others' contributions and following ethical conduct in games.

These findings support Lickona's (1991) model of character education, which includes moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action—all of which can be practiced effectively within PE settings (Fadillah & Sabella, 2022; Zainuddin et al., 2020).

Despite the normative strength of curriculum documents, one major challenge lies in their implementation. Many schools lack structured modules, best practice examples, and adequate teacher training. Teachers may have limited capacity to translate abstract character goals into measurable learning outcomes, particularly within time-constrained PE classes. This gap is consistent with findings by (Komaini et al., 2023), who concluded that without clear technical guidance, the realization of character education often remains superficial.

Furthermore, Ditre, (2017) theory of content interpretation emphasizes that documents do not operate in isolation—they gain meaning through use. In the case of PE curricula, the documents' effectiveness depends heavily on how educators interpret and apply them within specific school environments.

Discussion on Implementation Challenges

While policy documents provide a philosophical foundation for character education through PE, practical implementation often falls short. Studies by Qomarrullah & Sokoy (2024) found that many PE teachers struggle to integrate character education due to a lack of training and resources. Additionally, time constraints, class size, and assessment priorities often lead to a focus on physical performance rather than character formation.

This suggests a disconnect between policy intentions and classroom realities. As Qomarrullah (2015) emphasizes, policy analysis should go beyond text interpretation and consider how meaning is produced and utilized by practitioners. Therefore, this study recommends the development of teacher-friendly resources, contextual learning models, and mandatory training that

bridge the gap between curriculum ideals and school-level execution.

PE is uniquely positioned to advance character education goals because it emphasizes experiential learning—a pedagogical model where values are practiced through action, not just taught theoretically. As Hellison (2011) argued in his Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model, PE offers real-life scenarios where students can learn respect, perseverance, leadership, and cooperation through physical tasks.

This perspective was confirmed in the present analysis, which found that when implemented effectively, PE classes contribute not only to physical health but also to personal and moral development. Unlike academic subjects, PE's interactive and dynamic nature allows for immediate feedback and the development of habits, attitudes, and social responsibility.

The Role of PE in Character Development

Physical Education, if designed and delivered effectively, holds immense potential in shaping students' character. The unique nature of PE—combining physical, emotional, and social interaction—creates an environment where values are not just taught but experienced. For example, the competitive nature of games challenges students to practice self-control, resilience, and ethical decision-making in real-time, making PE an irreplaceable platform for moral learning.

The findings also support the framework proposed by Pratama & Wahyuni (2018), who argued that teaching responsibility through physical activity fosters both personal and social growth. By aligning curriculum regulations more clearly with these pedagogical strategies, Indonesia can strengthen its national vision for character education.

Indonesia's transition toward the Merdeka Curriculum represents a paradigm shift toward greater flexibility, student-centered learning, and integration of local wisdom and context. While this shift provides opportunities for innovation, it also requires stronger institutional support. Curriculum designers, teacher training institutes, and policymakers must collaborate to ensure PE teachers are equipped with the necessary tools and understanding to implement character-based education effectively.

There is also a need for assessment mechanisms that go beyond physical skills and include character indicators. Without this, character values will remain secondary in practice, despite their prominence in curriculum texts.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzed key curriculum regulation documents in Indonesia, focusing on how character values are integrated into Physical Education (PE) as a central component of student development. The findings indicate that while character values such as discipline, cooperation, honesty, responsibility, and respect are acknowledged and emphasized in the curriculum, there are significant gaps between the policy intentions and their actual implementation in schools.

The 2013 Curriculum, the Merdeka Curriculum (2022), and the Regulation No. 22 of 2016 establish a strong theoretical foundation for embedding character education in PE. However, these documents lack clear, actionable guidelines and sufficient teacher support, which limits the practical application of these values in classroom settings. As a result, the integration of character education through PE often depends on the individual approaches of teachers and the resources available at the school level.

Moreover, the study highlights the importance of PE as a valuable space for moral and character development. The interactive, dynamic nature of physical activities provides students with opportunities to practice and internalize values such as teamwork, leadership, and ethical behavior. However, the inconsistency in curriculum implementation underscores the need for further policy refinement and teacher training.

In conclusion, while Indonesia's curriculum regulations lay a strong foundation for character education through PE, achieving the intended outcomes requires clearer guidelines, standardized resources, and ongoing professional development for educators. Further research and policy adjustments are necessary to ensure that character values are consistently and effectively embedded in PE across all educational levels.

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