

Strengthening the Character Education based on the Social Skills of Students in the Integrated Thematic Learning in Primary Schools

Novia Faiz Safitri^{1✉}, Dewi Liesnoor Setyowati², Muhammad Khafid²

¹. SDN Cengkalsewu 01 Sukolilo Pati

². Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

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Abstract

Strengthening character education is already widespread in primary schools, however, there are schools that have not optimized its implementation. The purpose of this study was to analyze the strengthening of character education based on social skills through the integrated thematic learning in Darussalam elementary school Semarang, consisting of planning, implementing and evaluating the strengthening of character education through the integrated thematic learning. The method used in this study was qualitative research with a phenomenological design. The data collection techniques was using in-depth interviews, observation and documentation. The data analysis techniques used were data collection, data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions. The results showed that the reinforcement of character education was carried out through three stages, namely planning which carried out by preparing and developing the characterized lesson plans, the second was implementation by linking the learning with monotheism and the stages of the five continuum, and finally the evaluation by using K13 attitude assessment and specific guidelines for monotheism assessment. The conclusion in this study was that the strengthening of character education is carried out through these three stages, each of which is implemented optimally by the school. The benefits of this study is that it is expected to increase the repertoire of knowledge and broaden insights about the social skills of elementary students in strengthening the character education through the learning activities.

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✉ Address correspondence:
Jl. Pati-Purwodadi Km.20 Sukolilo Pati
E-mail: noviasafitri946@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Education is a conscious effort taken by humans in order to obtain knowledge as a basis for attitude and behavior. Education can also be interpreted as a process to be able to humanize humans. The education process will produce attitudes and behaviors that will eventually become the character, personality, or character of human beings themselves (Ramayulis, 2008: 13).

According to Mertika *et al.*, (2017) character education is one of the main issues of education. Character education is expected to be able to shape the morals of the nation's children and become the main foundation to improve the nation's dignity. True character education is in the identity and behavior of each individual given by God.

The President's special direction through the Ministry of Education and Culture has a movement to maintain the character values of the Indonesian people so that they remain intact through the Strengthening Character Education (PPK) movement. The government also officially supports by issuing Perpres No. 87 of 2017 concerning Strengthening Character Education. In this Perpres it is stated, Strengthening Character Education, hereinafter abbreviated as PPK, is an educational movement under the responsibility of the education unit to strengthen the character of students through harmonization of though the heart (ethics and spiritual), if it tastes (aesthetic), though thought (literacy and numeracy), and sports (kinesthetic) with the involvement and cooperation of education units, families and communities as part of the National Movement for Mental Revolution (GNRM).

The four values that will be harmonized can be taken from the inculcation of character values, namely: 1) though thought (intelligent, creative, fond of reading, and curiosity, 2) if the heart (honest, responsible, religious, social care and environmental care), 3) sports/ kinesthetic (clean, and healthy), 4) if taste and intention (caring, cooperation/ mutual cooperation and

creative). To realize these values, it is necessary to implement character education that is developed through learning activities that are planned and programmed so that character values that have been embedded in the child can be done continuously and become things that are entrenched to always be done not only in space the scope of the family and school, but in a more complex scope, namely in the community. (Raharjo et al 2015)

Buchory, and Swadayani (2014) stated the importance of character education to be applied in every learning process in the classroom. Strengthened by Permendikbud No. 20 of 2016 concerning Competency Standards for Primary and Secondary Education Graduates, which explains that Graduates Competency Standards are the qualifications criteria for graduates' abilities that include attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

Competencies Graduates in the attitude dimension are obtained through the activities of receiving, running, appreciating, living, and practicing in everyday life. Attitude competencies are also developed in accordance with the development of children in the family, school, community, surrounding natural environment, nation and state.

Permendikbud No. 22 of 2016 concerning Basic and Secondary Education Process Standards confirms that the learning process in primary schools uses integrated thematic learning that integrates the three domains, namely the realm of attitude, knowledge and skills. Attitude competencies in the 2013 curriculum are indeed being developed and implemented to produce graduates that are aligned in the three graduate competencies, namely the realm of attitude, cognitive and psychomotor. Attitude competencies in learning activities can be seen if the teacher implements character education in each learning process. Therefore, the implementation of character education is very important to be implemented in every learning activity optimally and thoroughly (Adullah, 2014).

This is supported by research conducted by Yulianti *et al.*, (2016) with the research title

"Character Education of Cooperation in Elementary School Student Learning in the 2013 Curriculum" with the results of research into the inculcation of character education values through subjects in terms of several aspects can improve interaction skills and student confidence. The study focused more on the value or character of cooperation in implementing character education.

According to Gusnilawati (2014) integrated thematic learning is applied to achieve the specified learning goals, students are expected to: (1) increase understanding of concepts learned more meaningfully, (2) develop skills in finding, processing and utilizing information, (3) fostering positive attitudes, good habits, and noble values needed in life, (4) fostering social skills such as cooperation. With the implementation of thematic learning is expected to help students develop the ability to think holistically which means they can understand a phenomenon or phenomenon related to the material from all sides, so that students are able to associate concepts with their real life everyday. In terms of planning learning models should use the right model so that learning is more meaningful and in accordance with learning objectives.

The implementation of character education has certainly been rife implemented by various public and private school institutions. One of the schools that has implemented character education is SD Darussalam. SD Darussalam is an Islamic school located in Kembangarum sub-district, West Semarang District, Semarang City. The school has sought to minimize uncharacteristic behavior that is integrated in its learning activities. The implementation of character education is included in the education curriculum used (Nurdin, 2002).

SD Darussalam Semarang has a vision and mission of organizing education that combines aspects of Islamic understanding, knowledge, attitudes, and skills for each student (based on monotheism, realizing a generation of virtuous character, noble character and high achievement and memorizing juz 30). In

addition, SD Darussalam Semarang also has objectives to achieve in organizing education, including: (a) realizing schools based on monotheism; (b) carry out active, innovative, creative, effective and enjoyable learning; (c) creating a comfortable and pleasant environment; (d) realizing skilled students using simple technology; and (e) having a good relationship with the community around the school.

Seeing the vision and mission and objectives of education in Semarang Darussalam Elementary School, it turns out that problems are still found relating to their implementation in learning activities. Based on the results of previous studies it turns out there are still some obstacles encountered, namely the teacher sometimes still has difficulty cultivating the characters that have been implanted.

Researchers focus on indicators of the success of character education in the classroom in accordance with the field of research studies only on 4 character values only. Namely: (1) care for the environment, (2) care for the social, (3) love for peace, (4) responsibility. These indicators will be used as a reference as a source of making research instruments to be able to collect data regarding the social skills of students in strengthening character education in integrated thematic learning in class IV SD Darussalam Semarang.

Limitation of the four characters that include the characters care about the environment, care about social, peace and responsibility refers to the application of the aspects of social skills analyzed. The character values will be better instilled early on to students because it will relate to students' social interactions in daily life (Susanto, 2014: 41). The internalization of the four characters will create good student social interaction. Good social interaction of students will make it easier for students to be able to adapt, solve their own problems, act, and behave with themselves, God, others, and the surrounding environment.

This refers to the opinion of Cartledge & Milburn in Susanto (2014: 42) asserting that social skills have four sub aspects in the

development of individual social behavior. Through all four aspects (environmental behavior, interpersonal behavior, self-related behavior, and task-related behavior) this behavior becomes an indicator of the level of social skills of children.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the strengthening of character education based on social skills through the integrated thematic learning in Darussalam elementary school, Semarang consisting of planning, implementing and evaluating the strengthening of character education in integrated thematic learning.

The benefits of this research are expected to increase the repertoire of knowledge and broaden insights about the social skills of elementary students in strengthening character education through learning activities.

METHODS

This study applied a qualitative research methods with the design of phenomenological research. The data source of the study was derived from the Principal of Darussalam Elementary School, Semarang, the classroom teacher and the thematic teacher.

The data collection techniques for strengthening the character education through the integrated thematic learning was done by conducting in-depth interviews, observation and documentation regarding the planning, implementation and evaluation of character education strengthening.

The data validity technique was using data triangulation. Triangulation is a tool to test data creativity by checking the same data with different tools. Data analysis techniques by collecting data, reducing data, presenting data and drawing conclusions/ verification.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The program of strengthening character education is a government program that is one of the national movements of the mental revolution. The beginning of SD Darussalam

schools implemented it in 2017 since the program was socialized. Strengthening character education is carried out through three stages, namely planning, implementation and evaluation.

The Planning of the Strengthening Character Education

The character education implemented in SD Darussalam has certainly been arranged so that it can be applied well in the learning process. Therefore we need a plan for strengthening character education in order to facilitate teachers in implementing it in learning.

The planning to strengthen the character education is carried out through the preparation and development of character-based lesson plans. Preparation and development of character lesson plans in the implementation of character education when learning is carried out planting character values that are tailored to the material and conditions of the students themselves. Before carrying out the learning activities, the teacher prepares and develops a lesson plan which includes teaching material and guidelines during the learning activities.

Aisyah *et al.*, (2015) revealed that character education planning is carefully arranged as outlined in an integrated learning tool in every subject and extracurricular in school. Kurniawan et al (2019) stated that the development of the value of cultural education and national character was integrated in every subject and contained in the syllabus and lesson plans. Madrasah Ibtida'iyah Banyumas integrates religious values into the learning process by linking learning themes directly and systematically.

The strengthening character education divine here is the character of environmental care, social care, peace, and responsibility. This character is contained in the thematic lesson plan that has been developed, namely the theme of the beauty of togetherness. The character is obtained from the aspects of students' social skills that are adapted to the shape of characters that can be achieved by students in the integrated thematic learning.

The Implementation of the Strengthening Character Education

The implementation of character education reinforcement always refers to the syllabus and learning plans that have been prepared previously that are tailored to the needs and conditions of the students themselves.

Then, it is supported by research Edy et al (2018) which states that the implementation of good character education must go through a process of planning, implementation, and evaluation. The process of implementing character education implementation is contained in the plan of implementing character learning and supported by other routine activities and habituation that is carried out in schools and the student environment.

It is in line with the research by Yulianti (2016) on character education which results in the implementation of character education through integration in the learning process, school culture development such as routine activities, spontaneous activities, modeling, conditioning, and extracurricular activities. The characters developed in this study are religious, disciplined, polite, national spirit, love the motherland, love peace, care for the environment, care for health, care for the social, and respect for culture.

Those, instead of carrying out character education in the lesson plan, SD Darussalam also implements character education through tauhid-based activities, and teachers also apply activities and habits that have been determined to optimize the strengthening of character education. Banu *et al.*, (2016) suggested one technique that was quite effective in changing one's behavior, which was through habituation, modeling and rewarding techniques for children.

Moreover, instead of conducting a learning process based on monotheism which is reflected in various activities and habits, SD Darussalam also has special stages in implementing character education in the learning process. The implementation of character education in SD Darussalam uses

special stages that are not applied in other schools. The special stage in the implementation of character education is called the "Five Continuum". The five stages of the continuum consist of the first giving signals such as the teacher seeing or smiling, the second giving an indirect statement or satire to the child, the third asking the child, the fourth giving a direct statement to the child or giving orders, and the last using bodily movements.

Through these stages, it is expected that the implementation of character education in SD Darussalam can run well and optimally. If students are accustomed or have embedded themselves in the values of character, students will apply it in their daily activities as a generation of noble character. The "Five Continuum" stage was adopted by SD Darussalam from TK/ SD Batutis Al-Ilmi. Batutis Al-Ilmi Kindergarten/ Elementary School is one of the foundations in Jakarta in collaboration with foundations that support SD Darussalam. That is, this school has a special step in implementing character education to students.

Furthermore, students are always reminded and repeated the value of the embedded character. Organized and cultivated continuously and in practice always touches the hearts of students with good things. Character education can be expressed as an activity deliberately created to form a generation of superior characters not only print high cognitive abilities students, but also have characters that are able to realize success through positive student behavior (Supanji in Yulianti et al, 2016).

The Evaluation of Strengthening the Character Education

The evaluation of character education in schools uses assessment guidelines that have been prepared in the curriculum with a certain value scale. Students are declared complete and eligible if they get a grade of at least good. In addition, the teacher also evaluates by developing certain assessment instruments that

are adapted to the conditions and circumstances of students.

There are special report cards that report the progress of students in monotheism-based activities that also have certain assessment standards. The assessment of the implementation of character education is carried out continuously and continuously through continuous habituation of students to live well in society (learning to live together). Bali *et al.*, (2016) suggested one technique that is quite effective in changing one's behavior is through habituation, modeling and rewarding techniques for children.

The evaluation of character education in the form of social and spiritual attitude assessment of students academically using attitude assessment guidelines that have been set in the provisions of attitude assessment curriculum 2013. The 2013 curriculum divides attitude competencies into two, namely spiritual attitudes associated with the formation of faithful and devoted students, and attitudes social activities related to the formation of students who have noble, independent, democratic, and responsible character. The teacher can add these attitudes into an expanded range of attitude assessment. Expansion of the scope of attitude assessment is based on the characteristics of basic competencies in KI-1 and KI-2 of each subject.

Iasha (2014) states that the attitude assessment reference is an indicator, because the indicator is a sign of achieving a competency, the indicator must be measured. In the context of attitude assessment, indicators are signs that are raised by students, which can be observed or observed by the teacher as a representation of the attitude being assessed.

The grading scale determines the position of the attitude or behavior of students in a range of attitudes. Guidelines for observation generally contain statements of observed attitudes or behaviors and observations of attitudes or behaviors in accordance with reality. The statement contains positive or negative attitudes or behaviors according to the indicators of the attitude description in core competencies and

basic competencies and scores at least good (Permendikbud No.23 of 2016 concerning Assessment Standards).

Besides, it is by using evaluations sourced from the 2013 curriculum attitude assessment guidelines, SD Darussalam also uses specific guidelines to assess monotheism-based activities carried out at school. The assessment is different for each class. Classification of monotheism-based activities conducted in the form of tahfidz and muroja'ah activities with the competence of being able to memorize the Qur'an Juz 30. The results of the evaluation will be reported in the form of special report cards.

After being implemented in the learning activities, the implementation of character education is also assessed to see the achievements in implementing it. Evaluation of character education is adjusted to specific criteria or prerequisites that have been set in accordance with Graduates' Competency Standards and character education assessments that are carried out continuously. In line with research Muslich (2011) revealed that the success of character education can be known through the achievement of indicators by students as stated in the Graduates Competency Standards.

Supported by Buchory's research (2014) which states that the evaluation of character education is more focused on the success of the acceptance of values in the attitudes and behaviors of students carried out both individually and in groups.

Character assessment is carried out continuously and continuously to measure student achievement in a valid manner. Darmayanti and Wibowo (2014) also revealed several factors that influence the success of character education that comes from outside oneself. Assessment can be done by the teacher or in collaboration with parents at home to measure the implementation of character education in daily life carried out continuously.

The novelty of this study is to analyze the strengthened educational character that is applied only based on students' social skills through the integrated thematic learning. The

benefits of this study is that this study is expected to increase the repertoire of knowledge and broaden insights about the social skills of elementary school students in strengthening the implementation of character education in learning activities.

CONCLUSION

The strengthening character education was carried out through three stages, namely planning carried out by preparing and developing characterized lesson plans. The second was the implementation by linking learning with monotheism and the stages of the five continuum, which gives signs such as the teacher seeing or smiling, giving indirect statements or innuendo to the child, the third asking the child, giving a direct statement to the child or giving orders, and using bodily movements. Then, finally the evaluation uses the K13 attitude assessment and specific guidelines for monotheism assessment.

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