Integrating Character Education in Elementary School Social Studies Learning to Shape A Noble-Moral Generation

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ABSTRACT

Social Science Learning (IPAS) in elementary schools plays a crucial role in building students' social attitudes as an implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in social studies learning at the elementary school level aims to develop students with intelligent personalities and noble character. Character education is an important aspect for students, enabling them to apply good social attitudes in their daily life environments. This research methodology uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a literature review technique through observation and interviews at SD Negeri 2 Purwodadi, Adiluwih Sub-District, Pringsewu Regency. The research results demonstrate that integrating character education in Social Science (IPS) learning at the elementary school level successfully forms a generation with noble character. Students showed improvement in behaviors such as mutual respect among peers, maintaining harmony in the school environment, and showing politeness to teachers and staff. Through value-based learning approaches, students can internalize empathy, responsibility, and discipline. This positive impact creates a harmonious learning atmosphere and supports students' character development, thereby preparing them to face future life challenges with good moral character and high social awareness.
Keywords: Character Education, Noble Character, Elementary School

INTRODUCTION

Character education is a diverse skill that does not require students to be intelligent. However, this education strongly emphasizes the importance of character and integrity, especially for elementary school students, as during this age they are forming the moral foundations, attitudes, and values that will influence their behavior and decisions in the future. Based on this assertion, it is evident that implementing character education in learning is an essential need, as it not only helps students become intelligent but also equips them with positive character and habits, making their role as citizens meaningful, both for themselves and for the broader society. Moreover, a common issue related to this is the lack of attention to moral value cultivation in schools. Until now, moral training and reinforcement remain at a low level, while the application of these values in daily life, both at home and at school, is often neglected in everyday collaborative practices. Character education does not merely teach students what is right and wrong, but more importantly, it must be deeply ingrained in students until they understand and can apply it in their daily lives. Social Science learning, is developed as a vehicle to instill understanding, attitudes, and skills by proactively and interactively involving students in

the classroom and outside classroom learning processes, thereby providing meaningful experiences to shape students' characters.

Generalization, which is an expression of statement from two or more interconnected concepts, is used as a process to organize and give meaning to facts and ways of living in society. The learning objective of Social Science (instructional objective social) is the learning behavior expected to occur, be possessed, and mastered by students after participating in Social Science learning activities (Agung Subagyo 2021: 3). According to the Minister of National Education Regulation No. 22 of 2006 concerning Content Standards for Basic and Secondary Education Units, the Social Science subject aims to enable students to: Recognize concepts related to community life and their environment, Develop basic abilities for logical and critical thinking, curiosity, inquiry, problem-solving, and skills in social life, Possess commitment and awareness of social and humanitarian values, Develop the ability to communicate, cooperate, and compete in a pluralistic society at local, national, and global levels. The four objectives above demonstrate that Social Science is a subject designed to shape students into good citizens. Therefore, Social Science is actually a very important subject. In connection with this, this chapter will discuss several aspects related to the characteristics of Social Science; its basic or essential concepts; competency standards and basic competencies; and strategies for formulating themes in Social Science.

Effective Learning Approaches in Integrating Character Education into Social Studies Learning

Integrating character education into social studies (IPS) is crucial for cultivating moral values and responsible citizenship among students. Effective approaches include contextual learning, value internalization, and technology use. Contextual learning emphasizes teaching in real-life situations, making character values relevant to students' daily lives (Istiqomah & Ningsih, 2024) and encouraging the integration of values such as discipline, ethics, and social responsibility into the curriculum (Iyan et al., 2022). Value internalization focuses on instilling character traits through consistent school culture and classroom activities (Nadhiva & Azharotunnafi, 2022), by identifying key values like hard work, responsibility, and social care that can be reinforced through teacher-student interactions and community involvement (Nadhiva & Azharotunnafi, 2022). Meanwhile, technology integration leverages digital tools to engage students and effectively convey moral messages (Hukubun et al., 2024) and promotes digital literacy, which helps prepare students to face ethical challenges in the digital era (Hukubun et al., 2024). Although these methods are effective, challenges such as student engagement and external influences can hinder the successful integration of character education, making collaboration between educators, families, and the community essential for creating a supportive learning environment.

Character education is a process aimed at forming good attitudes and behaviors in individuals, expected to serve as a foundation for community life (Takiling, 2023). This education plays a crucial role in addressing educational inequalities, as it not only emphasizes cognitive aspects but also focuses on building solid moral and ethical foundations. Thus, character education becomes the cornerstone for future generations in creating a more just and dignified society (Halimatusadiyah, 2024). The main components of character education include moral values, cultural and religious dimensions, and curriculum integration. Character education promotes values such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy, which are essential for ethical behavior in society (Hukubun et al., 2024). Additionally, character education integrates cultural and religious teachings, as seen in the values embraced by figures like Imam Al-Ghazali, who

emphasized virtues such as patience, gratitude, and sincerity (Nurhikmah, 2024). In Indonesia, character education is mandatory at all educational levels, ensuring that moral development is embedded in the curriculum (Takiling, 2023).

Character education in the Social Science curriculum emphasizes values such as discipline, ethics, and social responsibility (Istiqomah & Ningsih, 2024). Teachers play a crucial role in modeling these values by adapting daily activities to support students' character development (Melpi et al., 2024). Diverse teaching methods, including community engagement, are implemented to encourage students to develop traits like teamwork and nationalism (Subur et al., 2024). Collaboration between teachers and parents is also key to strengthening character education, both in school environments and within the community (Azzahra & Taqwani, 2024).

METHODS

This research method uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a literature review method through observation and interview techniques at SD NEGERI 2 Purwodadi, Adiluwih District, Pringsewu Regency. The research title is "Integrating Character Education in Elementary School Social Studies Learning to Form a Generation with Noble Character." The research location is SD Negeri 2 Purwodadi. This research was conducted on October 31, 2024, using qualitative research methods. The data collection technique used is a literature review through observation and interview techniques with several students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social Studies (IPS) is a set of facts, events, concepts, and generalizations related to human behavior and actions to build oneself, society, nation, and environment based on past experiences that can be interpreted for the present and anticipated for the future. Events, facts, concepts, and generalizations related to social issues are some of the areas of study in Social Studies. The sequence of study shows a progression from the most concrete form, starting from events moving towards more abstract levels, such as the role of events and facts in building concepts and generalizations. In line with this, according to Sapriya, Social Studies knowledge should encompass facts, concepts, and generalizations. The facts used occur in students' lives, are appropriate to students' age, and align with their stage of thinking. The basic concepts of Social Studies are primarily derived from social science disciplines, related to social issues and themes taken from a multidisciplinary approach. Examples of concepts include multiculturalism, environment, urbanization, peace, and globalization

The implementation of character education through Social Studies (IPS) learning is an approach that encompasses various aspects of integrating moral and ethical values into the educational process. This approach is designed not only to enrich students' academic understanding of Social Studies material but also to shape their attitudes, behaviors, and morals in everyday life. In Social Studies learning, students are guided to understand various social, cultural, and historical concepts, which are then connected with values such as honesty, responsibility, tolerance, and empathy. Through this value-based learning, students can develop a higher social awareness and build strong character. This process involves various strategies, such as group discussions, case studies, and community-based projects, which allow students to apply the values they learn in real-world contexts. However, this implementation is not without challenges. Teachers are often faced with difficulties in effectively integrating values into a dense curriculum and addressing the different cultural backgrounds and values of students. Therefore, a flexible and continuous approach is needed to ensure that character education can be effectively

integrated into Social Studies learning, thereby creating a generation that is not only academically intelligent but also possesses strong character and good moral values.

Several research findings that can be explained include: 1) the process of integrating character education into student behavior during Social Studies learning, 2) factors supporting the integration of character education in student behavior in Grade IV at SD Negeri 2 Purwodadi, and 3) factors hindering the process of character education integration in student behavior in Grade IV at SD Negeri 2 Purwodadi. First, the process of character education integration is visible in the teaching module, which includes cooperation, responsibility, discipline, and mutual respect. These are subsequently established in the classroom learning process. The learning activities in the teaching module have already integrated character education, as they encompass various activities capable of developing character traits such as nationalism, integrity, religiosity, and the spirit of mutual cooperation. Additionally, the assessment techniques in the teaching module demonstrate the application of authentic assessment integrated with character education. This assessment is not only focused on learning outcomes but also on students' learning process. The techniques used include oral tests, written tests, performance tasks, product assessments, performance evaluations, and behavior observations. Although attitude assessment instruments were not yet included in the teaching module, teachers have attempted to develop such instruments to complement the assessment process.

The teaching module has reflected meaningful learning with character education integration. In the core activities, there are relevant tasks, active interactions, contextual application, and the development of specific character traits. Moreover, the designed learning activities are in line with the scientific approach. Several activities in this approach involve verbs such as observing, noting, exploring, questioning, discussing, and practicing. The activities in the introduction and closing sections also support the development of religious character. Throughout the learning process, teachers strive to integrate character education in Social Studies learning. This is evident in the entire thematic learning process, from initial to final activities. Teachers do not merely teach these values but integrate them into every learning activity. This can be seen in the following Table 1:

Tabel 1. Implementasi pendidikan karakter

Character education	
School	Home
The school, along with its community, instills basic ethical values and behaviors that are considered to reflect good character.	Religious, hardworking, responsible
The school defines character comprehensively, encompassing mindset, attitude, and behavior.	Respectful to both parents
The school implements a comprehensive, in-depth, and proactive approach to building students' character.	Honest
The school creates a caring and supportive environment among its community.	
The school provides opportunities for students to express moral values in various	

activities.

The school develops a meaningful and challenging curriculum, values all individuals, fosters moral values, and supports student success.

The school helps students develop intrinsic motivation.

School staff become a community of ethical learning that can serve as role models and examples for students.

The school encourages collective leadership and supports various character education programs.

The school involves parents and the community as partners in the process of developing students' character.

The school regularly assesses the culture and climate of the school as well as the performance of the staff in supporting good character education.

Overall, based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation, it can be seen that in the developed integrated social studies learning, there are four main character values, namely mutual cooperation, responsibility, discipline, and mutual respect. Other efforts in the implementation of character education also include: 1) habituating the 5S, namely smile, greeting, salutation, politeness, and courtesy among teachers and students to create harmonious relationships, 2) providing adequate facilities and learning resources so that the designed curriculum can be optimally implemented, and 3) organizing activities such as congregational dhuha prayers, collective dhikr, tausiyah, and the commemoration of Islamic holidays. Furthermore, the factors supporting the integration of character education into the behavior of students at SD Negeri 2 Purwodadi include: 1) the role of parents at home as the first learning place before children enter school, and 2) the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure to support the learning process and character formation of students, 3) the school provides sufficient learning resources, with the presence of a library as a facility for students to deepen their knowledge, 4) the active role of teachers in utilizing various learning resources, such as the social environment and electronic and print media, to develop students' character, 5) the organization of extracurricular and intramural activities aimed at instilling positive character values in all students.

Furthermore, the factors that hinder the integration of character education into the behavior of students at SD Negeri 2 Purwodadi include the lack of available facilities and infrastructure, particularly learning media.Another factor that influences is the limitation of media and teaching methods. This is in line with the results of the observations conducted by the researcher during ten observations of thematic learning in the fourth grade. The teacher does not use learning media to explain the material, but rather relies solely on student books, as each student has that book as a learning guide. Furthermore, the teacher acknowledges that he still needs to enhance his creativity in applying various teaching methods. This is also reflected in the researcher's observations, where the methods frequently applied are lectures, question-and-answer sessions, discussions, and assignments. Another constraint faced by teachers is the limited time to monitor students

as a whole, because teachers must pay attention to students' attitudes over a certain period. Another obstacle in the implementation of character values in the classroom is the influence of students' behavior, which is affected by their social interactions, both in school and outside of school. Challenges that arise from the students themselves, such as not listening to the teacher's explanations, will be more difficult to overcome if there is no intention to change from within the students. In addition, external influences, such as friends with poor social circles and mass media like the internet, television, and magazines, also affect the students. This is further exacerbated by the lack of supervision from parents.

CONCLUSION

Character education plays a crucial role in shaping good attitudes and behaviors in individuals, which form the foundation of community life. Through the integration of character education in Social Sciences (IPS) learning, students are not only taught social facts and concepts but are also guided to develop moral and ethical values, such as honesty, responsibility, and tolerance. This process requires various learning strategies, including group discussions and community-based projects, which help students apply these values in real contexts.

However, the challenges in implementing character education arise from the limitations in integrating values into a packed curriculum, as well as the differences in students' cultural backgrounds.To address this, a flexible and collaborative approach between teachers, parents, and the community is needed.Research shows that there are supporting factors, such as the role of parents and the availability of learning resources, as well as hindering factors like the lack of learning media and the negative influence of the social environment. Overall, the implementation of character education through social studies can shape a generation that is not only academically intelligent but also possesses strong character and good morals, supporting the formation of a more just and dignified society.

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