Character Education for Elementary School Students: Creative, Ecological Conscious, and Communicative

Icha Olvi Wandari, Rohana

Abstract

Character education is a potential answer to the current moral problem. Character education is a mandatory requirement and one of the teacher’s responsibilities since teachers are the school’s parents and, together with parents and the community, are the most influential influences in shaping a child’s character. This study aims to analyze character education for elementary school students in terms of their creative, ecological conscious, and friendly/communicative traits. This research employed qualitative method and a descriptive approach. The sampling technique used the Slovin formula 150 respondents and key informants for grade 5 teachers. The instruments employed for research were questionnaires and interviews. Data analysis include data reduction, data analysis, and conclusion drafting. In the example of the application of creative characters in the adequate category with a percentage of 44.53 percent, it has been demonstrated that students’ creative characters are able to ask questions when there are learning challenges through the use of declarative sentences. If there is content that they do not understand, they will always ask the instructor until they do, as this is an extra value that teachers provide to students who frequently ask questions. In addition, students’ behavior in forming environmental care behavior in this category is adequate with a percentage (75.99%) indicating that trash is disposed of properly, and for friendly/communicative characteristics, it indicates that elementary school students (44.53%) speak politely. According to teacher interviews, teachers constantly watch students, particularly in terms of communication.

Keywords: Creative Character, Ecological Conscious, Friendly/Communicative

1. INTRODUCTION

Education not only teaches or educates kids to become knowledgeable people, but it also shapes their personalities so that they have noble character. This is consistent with the definition of education in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2013, which defines education as a conscious and planned effort to create an environment and learning process for students to actively develop their potential in religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills required by society, nation, and country (Khunaifi & Matlani, 2019). However, it is now believed that education in
Indonesia is less effective in developing the personality or character of its students so that they have noble character (Annisa et al., 2020; Badawi, 2019; Santika, 2020). Whether you admit it or not, our prized owners, the students, are embroiled in a grave social crisis. Education is essentially a business that aims to increase the potential of human resources to develop moral character and live freely (Andayani et al., 2020; Baharun, 2017; Fitriyani et al., 2021). Nearly all schools in our nation are encountering difficulties in dealing with the behavior of their students, who are increasingly not demonstrating progress and changes in their morals, and whose morale is deteriorating daily. There are a number of schools where students are supposed to be able to serve as role models for human beings with character, but instead exhibit behavior inconsistent with human character (Fitzsimons, 2015; Mazid et al., 2021; Prasarti & Prakoso, 2020).

Character education is a potential answer to the current moral problem. Character education is a mandatory requirement and one of the teacher's responsibilities since teachers are the school's parents and, together with parents and the community, are the most influential influences in shaping a child's character (Chan et al., 2020; Widodo, 2019). Character education is defined not just by the teacher, but also by parents and society. Parents should instil character-building principles in their students as early as possible, as they are their students’ first home and it is therefore very simple to do so (Annisa et al., 2020; Ramdan & Fauziah, 2019).

Education is described as the process of imparting information, whereas character consists of a person's traits, habits, and attitudes. Character education is moral education imparted to students in the form of values inseparable from daily life as part of the learning process. In this instance, previous study state without character education, people will do anything, even if it is harmful to others (Wanabuliandari & Ardiyantti, 2018). The character of a kid has a significant impact on the destiny of a nation or state. From an early age, the government has implemented a character-based education program that aims to build a society that is intelligent in thinking and behaving. This is stated in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 58 of 2009 concerning Standards for Early Childhood Education which prioritizes the quality of character education. The principle of character-based curriculum education is based on the recognition that character education must be taught at all levels of school without exception (Hantika & Rohana, 2022; Ndeot, 2019; Supeni et al., 2019).

Character education aims to and is anticipated to be able to increase the quality of management and lead to the success of students with excellent character and integrity, in accordance with applicable competency criteria. In addition to having a goal, character education serves the purpose described in previous study namely cultivating the basic potential of students so that their thoughts, hearts and behavior are good, molding and strengthening the nation's multiculturalism, and advancing the overall civilization of the nation (Rahmawati & Muhroji, 2022).

Character education can be referred to as character, which aims to form good morals towards students. There are 18 character values, namely; religious; honest; discipline; tolerance; hard work; creative; independent; democratic; curiosity; spirit of nationality; love for the motherland; reward achievements; friendly/communicative; love peace; like to read; environmental care (Annisa et al., 2020; Permatasari & Murdiono, 2022). Base on 18 character values above, the researcher will analyze creative character education, care for the environment, and friendly/communicative character found in elementary schools in the Na. IX-X district, North Labuhanbatu Regency.
2. METHODS

This research employed a qualitative research method with a descriptive strategy. Qualitative research involves the examination of natural items. Natural items are those that evolve as they are, without any manipulation by scientists. The data analysis is inductive in nature and is based on field-based evidence (Dingess et al., 2018). The location of this research was conducted at all elementary school students in Na. IX-X district, North Labuhanbatu Regency, North Sumatra. The number of respondents was 150 out of a total of 7,044 students. To simplify the research, the research respondents used in this study were 150 elementary school students and grade 5 teachers as key informants from several elementary schools in the Na.IX-X District of North Labuhanbatu Regency. Respondents are sources of information that can provide information related to the research problem being studied (Adhimah, 2020). The primary sources of information in qualitative research are words and acts, with papers and other activities serving as secondary sources. This study collects descriptive data in order to examine Creative Character Education, Care for the Environment, and Friendly/Communicative Character.

In this study, the data were in the form of interviews with class teachers, results of questionnaires distributed to students during the research process. These instruments include; questionnaires, interview guides, observations and so on, but their function is only limited to supporting the task of the researcher as a key instrument. Data analysis is qualitative data analysis namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles et al., 2014). Thus, in this qualitative research the presence of the researcher is absolute, because the researcher must interact with the environment, for example humans, who are the key in research. The existence of researchers in the field must be explained, whether their presence is known or not known by the object of research.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of this study were obtained through observation, questionnaires and in-depth interviews. This study examines the analysis of Creative Character Education, Care for the Environment, and Friendly/Communicative Character for all elementary school students in the Na.IX-X District, North Labuhanbatu Regency. Based on the results of the questionnaire obtained in the analysis of creative character education in all elementary school level students in the Na.IX-X district as much as 44.53% agreed with the statement regarding If there is material that they do not understand, students always ask the teacher until they understand correctly 5.19 % said they were unsure and 19.73% said they did not agree. According to the findings of interviews with the teacher, the teacher did, in fact, provide instructions to students prior to the start of the session. If, while the teacher was teaching the material, students had trouble comprehending it, they were expected to ask questions due to the fact that asking questions is the source of student creativity in learning, leading to the emergence of creative and active personalities; thus, it is also a good additional value supplied by the teacher to often asking students. Students' attention and curiosity can be stimulated by questioning since questioning abilities can enhance creativity. It is because a question will come from a cognitive conflict between the learned notion and the experience one has had, together with the student's prior knowledge and conviction in the concept.

Based on the results of the questionnaire obtained from the analysis of the behaviour of care for the environment in all elementary school students in the Na.IX-X District, 75.99% agreed with the statement that students disposed of trash in its place, 10.52% said they were unsure and 30.93% said they disagreed. According to the findings of interviews with teachers, teachers are never bored while communicating the See Garbage Take (LISA) motto
to all students. Maintaining the cleanliness of the school itself can serve as a starting point for teaching pupils environmental stewardship. This attitude encourages pupils to care more about the environment as a result of their practice of preserving the cleanliness of the school environment.

Based on the results of the questionnaire obtained from the analysis of friendly/communicative character in all elementary school level students in the Na.IX-X District, 44.53% of the subjects agreed with students' statements to communicate in polite language, 3.19% said they were unsure and 11.73% disagree. Based on the results of interviews with teachers stated that technological developments that cannot be stopped as we are experiencing now make the students of students also stutter about technology. At the primary school level, it is usual for pupils to have mobile phones and other digital equipment. This has a significant impact on the development of kids, particularly in terms of communication. The filthy language or slang that kids frequently encounter on social media is carried over into their daily lives and even into the classroom. They consider it cool, thus they do not hesitate to use slang with their teacher. Even though students have been taught the etiquette of using polite words from elementary school. The teacher always reprimands students when they use unpleasant language; nonetheless, this cannot be divorced from the teacher’s supervision and remains a particular concern for students.

**Discussion**

Base on the result asking students a question will encourage them to engage in critical thought. It is supported by the results of prior study, which indicate that creative character may be fostered in students by integrating learning and learning activities in each topic during the planning, implementation, and evaluation/assessment stages (Furi Dewi et al., 2020; Sancaya & Arofah, 2022). Creativity is the capacity of a student that encompasses composition, the creation of products and the emergence of new, creative concepts. To prevent the learning process from becoming tedious and boring, an educator must possess a high level of creativity. The creativity of a teacher has a substantial impact on student accomplishment because creative educators encourage practices that foster creativity (Sari et al., 2020; Vera & Astuti, 2019).

Previous study stated that creativity includes the fluidity and adaptability to generate an invention, but its development is dependent on the inherent potential inside a person, particularly the students themselves (Mahfud, 2017). Therefore, any creative growth can be accomplished independently or through education. This is intended to develop students’ creative and autonomous character so that they may solve their own difficulties. Creativity is considered essential to learning since there are several ways to handle different challenges (Nada et al., 2018; Stuchlikova, 2016). This development process is supported by experience, interaction with teachers, friends and the environment around them. The ability to enhance creativity can be developed through an educational process in which students are involved and participate actively. Progress in learning carried out by an educator can be estimated from the learning outcomes of students who take part in the learning exercise. This is influenced by several factors including: teachers, environment, learning models and methods, as well as learning materials (Fitriyani et al., 2021; Nuryati & Yuniawati, 2019). Developing creativity in the classroom, in this case, in learning will later produce creative students. Creative students generally have higher abilities and are more reliable than less creative students.

Several elements can impact the quality of the learning process, including the selection of a learning model that supports the learning process and is consistent with the features or characters of students, as well as the availability of supporting infrastructure in schools. Teachers must be able to establish a learning environment that inculcates character
values while being enjoyable. It accords with view state teaching is no longer just about delivering knowledge to students; rather, it is about creating an atmosphere that teaches students so that teaching objectives may be met effectively (Anggraini & Sukartono, 2022). One method is to implement a paradigm of creative learning. Creative learning is achieved because the learning process encourages creative skills in students, allowing them to acquire a variety of talents (Norahmi, 2017; Wijayanti & Pratomo, 2019).

It is possible to maintain a clean school environment in a variety of ways, such as by disposing of trash, cleaning the classroom daily, segregating dry and wet waste in different locations, and much more (Suryawati et al., 2020; Zaenuri & Muqowim, 2021). If students are unable to keep their school clean, the school atmosphere becomes unsanitary, which can disrupt teaching and learning. A clean school environment makes life healthier, the air feels cool, studying is made more pleasant, and the classrooms are free of any diseases. The results of this investigation are corroborated by prior studies revealed that caring for the environment is an attitude that must be instilled in all students from an early age (Ismail, 2021). The formation of the character of caring for the environment can be done through learning that is environmentally sound, for example by programming a love for the environment. Environmentally conscious learning aims to arouse students' interest in nature and the environment. Because the good habits that students do later will produce a clean and healthy culture for the students themselves (Efendi et al., 2020; Kartikasari & Nuryasana, 2022). It should be encouraged to develop environmental care as early as possible, because this is one of the efforts to prevent environmental damage that causes losses (Fernández-Batanero et al., 2021; Furi Dewi et al., 2020).

The character of caring for the environment is a character that must be applied to schools at all levels of education. All school members are expected to have a caring attitude towards the environment by improving the quality of the environment and increasing the awareness of school members about the importance of caring for the environment and having initiatives to prevent environmental damage which will result in harm to humans themselves (Handayani et al., 2021; Spínola, 2015). Environmental care character education should be instilled in students from an early age so that later they can wisely manage the natural resources around them, as well as to foster a sense of responsibility for the interests of future generations. When the character of caring for the environment has grown and become embedded into a strong mindset, it becomes the basis of daily behavior. Previous study said that environmental care character education can be a measure of students' concern and sensitivity towards the surrounding environment (Purwanti, 2017). Forming the character of caring for the environment for students, understanding or understanding of the environment is felt to be lacking, but it must also be accompanied by the formation of habits or behavior (Kim et al., 2018; Sitorus & Lasso, 2021).

This statement is supported by previous research stated the unstoppable flow of digital information that can penetrate thick walls, even fortified buildings and fortresses can be entered without hindrance by television and android (Badawi, 2019). All of that is very easy to influence individual attitudes and behavior, both positively and negatively. Previous study revealed that friendly/communicative character can be built through the application of the concept of cooperation and self-regulation in conducting learning (Hariandi, 2017). In learning and collaboration students are taught how to communicate with others and respect different opinions, so that it will foster a friendly character in students. Students who have friendly/communicative characters tend to be more liked by other students.

Friendly character is closely related to developmental tasks, namely developing relational skills and learning how to get along with peers or other people, both individually and in groups. Kindness is a natural human attribute that appears in conduct connected to emotional interactions carried out by two or more individuals to satisfy the needs and mutual
satisfaction of those who encounter it. It is obvious that people can quickly perceive your emotions (Ahmad et al., 2015; Pranata & Barus, 2019).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been carried out by this study, it can be concluded that creative character education, care for the environment and friendly/communicative character have been implemented in all elementary school students in Na.IX-X district of North Labuhanbatu Regency. They have been implemented in accordance with the vision and mission that has been made by all elementary school students in Na.IX-X district of North Labuhanbatu Regency, reinforced by the results of observations and interviews at each elementary school in the Na.IX-X F District. The role of the teacher is one of the most crucial in fostering creative character education, care for the environment, and friendly/communicative character.

5. REFERENCES


a Foreign Language, 7(1), 77. https://doi.org/10.23971/jefl.v7i1.538.


