Promoting character development in primary school: A moral education approach

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ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by indications of behavior that shows the low moral quality of students in Indonesia, so there is a need for moral education from an early age which must be applied to the importance of moral education with Pancasila values in forming the character of students in elementary schools. This research discusses moral education which has an important role in developing students' awareness of good values and shaping behavior that is in accordance with norms. Pancasila values consist of five principles that reflect the nation's personality. A gradual approach and understanding of goodness are important in forming students' character through moral education. This research is a type of literature review research with the collection of information used in the research obtained through previous research, citations, journals and books that are relevant to the research topic.

Introduction

Education is a very important process because, in life, problem-solving is required through education, which can be learned or obtained. Education helps to develop and nurture the potential or skills possessed by students. Another perspective explains that humans are beings who are always involved in the learning process (Sukardjo & Ukim: 2009). According to M.J. Langeveld, humans are educated beings or beings who require education in their lives. The condition of humanity in education is crucial for facilitators or educators (Jatmiko Wibisono, 2023) because from birth, a person is powerless and needs assistance to grow and develop through education (Nashihin, 2017).

As the national life progresses, marked by increasing competitiveness among nations, Indonesia has begun to enter the era of globalization with various educational fields oriented towards a more democratic social life (Pertiwi in Tambusai et al., 2021). In preschool education (Nashihin, 2019) the most important subjects taught are moral education and Pancasila, as they can enhance the general character values of students according to the principles and standards contained in Pancasila (Nurul Laila, 2015). With the current crisis or lack of moral development, which is often highlighted in various media through activities such as: inappropriate clothing at school, fights, violence, bullying, and on a larger scale (Nashihin, 2020), crimes such as murder, sexual harassment, drug use,

which are violations and forms of deviance, the various moral violations occurring in Indonesia can diminish the moral development of Indonesian children based on Pancasila values (Ibda, 2012).

Morality itself is a form of knowledge that prioritizes ethics or manners involving human personality and the ability to discern right from wrong behavior, which is a component of character control (Rahmawati in Revalina et al., 2023). Given the widespread moral crisis, we can foster moral education that prioritizes the future of the next generation by instilling morals based on Pancasila values (Nashihin, 2020). According to Zuchdi in Hasanah et al., (Hasanah, 2022), moral or value education can be achieved directly or indirectly. The direct method starts by defining behaviors considered good and disseminating various teachings. The existence of Pancasila as the ideology of the Indonesian nation is significantly affected today. This is understood broadly, where one can easily determine whether an environment has a positive or negative impact, especially on the most vulnerable generations.

The issue of moral education is of great concern to everyone today because there are many inappropriate actions happening that contradict human decency. Therefore, the goal of establishing moral education based on Pancasila values is to encourage students to have good character, fundamental ethics, and morality by developing efforts that reflect the character values of students in accordance with Pancasila values.

Method

The methodology discussed in this research encompasses the implementation of moral education formation as a means to enhance the character development of elementary school students, utilizing a literature review method (Syaiful Anam, 2023). The literature review is an effective way to gather various information or references related to a topic under discussion in a study, making it easier to understand (Habsy, 2017). The information collected in this research is obtained through previous studies, citations, journals, and books relevant to the research topic. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter by synthesizing existing knowledge and identifying gaps that need further exploration. By leveraging established sources, the research aims to build a solid foundation for understanding how moral education can influence the character development of young students, ultimately contributing to the improvement of educational strategies and outcomes.

Results and Discussion

Student Character

Character refers to a person's traits, behavior, and morals, influenced by personal experiences and the environment. Each individual has distinct characteristics and behaviors shaped by their surroundings. Therefore, it is crucial to establish character education so that students can develop and exhibit appropriate behavior (Syarifah Sdn et al., 2023).

The Ministry of Education and Culture outlines several stages of character development:

1. Moral Knowledge

At this stage, the learning process focuses on creating awareness from a concrete understanding and perspective of the values of Pancasila. The goal is for students to first classify the values of Pancasila and then develop a logical and rational understanding of their importance.

2. Moral Feeling

This stage aims to create and nurture a sense of love and the necessity for Pancasila values. It involves the emotions or feelings of the students. Teachers need to connect with the students' consciences, using care, engagement, and touching stories of moral value.

3. Moral Behavior

This is the highest stage of learning, involving knowledge and love of moral awareness. Students should understand how to apply Pancasila values in their daily lives, starting with following household rules, getting along with siblings, being disciplined, and showing mutual respect (Trias Alwasi et al., 2022).

The structure of character education encompasses understanding the desire to do good in daily habits, which will be observed in the behavioral changes of students. Character formation through expression and innovation plays a crucial role in building a harmonious personality or attitude. Integrating character education into learning focuses on the developmental needs of students to achieve emotional intelligence, social skills, courage, and discipline, ensuring they act correctly and meet their needs. Character is developed through imitation—seeing, hearing, and doing—so it should be taught gradually. Consequently, a student's character, whether good or bad, depends on their learning sources (Yunarti et al., 2014).

Pancasila Values

The values of Pancasila are derived from the character of Indonesian society. Each principle of Pancasila embodies hidden meanings representing different aspects, societal groups, and cultural traditions of the nation. Therefore, in shaping character, Pancasila should be viewed as a guide and a source of national development, warranting serious attention. As a reflection of the nation, Pancasila values should be integrated into daily life and habits, primarily through education (Hafidz et al., 2022).

Pancasila consists of five principles, each containing values that reflect the personality of the Indonesian nation.

Table 1. Values of Pancasila

No	Pancasila	Contained Values
1	Belief in One Supreme God	The value contained in the first principle is that in the administration of the state, from laws to daily life, everything must be imbued with the values of Belief in One Supreme God.
2	Just and Civilized Humanity	The value contained in the second principle is that to be a good citizen, one must have moral awareness and behavior that uphold dignity and respect.
3	The Unity of Indonesia	The value contained in the third principle is that in forming a unity under the motto Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity), Indonesia, as a nation consisting of many different ethnic groups, faces numerous challenges due to its diversity in class, religion, and race.
4	Democracy Guided by the Inner Wisdom of Deliberations Among Representatives	The value contained in the fourth principle includes the right to freedom accompanied by responsibility towards society and national morality, promoting honor, and strengthening solidarity and unity in communal life.
5	Social Justice for All the People of Indonesia	The value contained in the fifth principle reflects the character of the Indonesian nation, where every member of the nation is obligated to absorb religious values, social values, cultural values, rational considerations, and values of justice.

Therefore, it can be seen that Pancasila serves as the highest foundation of the Indonesian nation. Pancasila, as an ideology, functions as a guide in societal life by applying the values contained in each of its principles. Pancasila has evolved and faced various challenges due to the advancement of science and technology in the era of globalization. This progress impacts every aspect of life, especially in the realms of economy, culture, politics, customs, and education (Revalina et al., 2023).

Character formation embodies the mission of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. Additionally, character education aligns with Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system, which clearly states the functions and goals of national education: "National education functions to develop and shape the character and civilization of the nation," and aims to develop the potential of students to become people who are faithful, pious, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and responsible democratic citizens (Dwiputri et al., 2021).

The Role of Moral Education in Student Character

Moral education is a conscious effort to teach good values, including good manners, conformity with norms, and appropriate attitudes and behaviors in life, both as individuals and social beings in their relationship with society. Moral education is crucial for the development of students' character (Ramlafatma et al., 2021).

In character formation, moral education must be instilled in students through gradual daily habits, which transform into behaviors that improve their quality of life. The importance of moral education lies in its ability to help children protect themselves by avoiding negative influences. The essence of moral education is the process of fostering or instilling moral values in students, enabling them to independently classify positive and negative values. Consequently, students are expected to solve problems positively, even without external help (Tambusai et al., 2021).

Conclusion

The implementation of moral education is crucial for enhancing character development in elementary school students. This research emphasizes the importance of moral education in fostering students' potential growth and addressing various moral crises occurring in Indonesia. Teaching the values of Pancasila, the highest guiding principle of the Indonesian nation, can instill awareness in students about the importance of good character values and encourage behavior that aligns with societal norms. Developing students' character through moral education requires a gradual approach and a deep understanding of what constitutes good behavior.

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