



The Role of Teachers in Integrating Character Education in Social Sciences Learning in Elementary Schools

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ABSTRACT

Elementary school is a level of education that can be used as an initial foundation in character building efforts in children. This character building can be done effectively, one of which is by integrating these character values into social studies learning. This study aims to determine the role of teachers in integrating character education into social studies learning, especially in elementary schools. This research was conducted using a naturalistic qualitative method, with data analysis procedures developed by Miles & Huberman. The results show that teachers have a strategic role in integrating character values into social studies learning through various forms of role models, habits, and contextual learning. For character building in schools to be successful and sustainable, full support is needed from all related parties such as parents, teachers, and principals.

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ABSTRACT

Sekolah dasar merupakan jenjang pendidikan yang dapat dijadikan sebagai pondasi awal dalam upaya pembentukan karakter pada anak. Pembentukan karakter ini dapat dilakukan secara efektif, salah satunya dengan mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai karakter tersebut ke dalam pembelajaran IPS. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui peran guru dalam mengintegrasikan pendidikan karakter ke dalam pembelajaran IPS, khususnya di sekolah dasar. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif naturalistik, dengan prosedur analisis data yang dikembangkan oleh Miles & Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru memiliki peran strategis dalam mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai karakter ke dalam pembelajaran IPS melalui berbagai bentuk keteladanan, pembiasaan, dan pembelajaran kontekstual. Agar pendidikan karakter di sekolah dapat berhasil dan berkelanjutan, diperlukan dukungan penuh dari semua pihak terkait seperti orang tua, guru, dan kepala sekolah.

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INTRODUCTION

Elementary school is the first level of basic education, lasting six (6) years. Generally, students at this level are between 6 and 12 years old. Elementary school can be considered the starting point for character education (Setyowulandari et al., 2025). Character values such as discipline, courtesy, responsibility, and other values are more easily instilled in children at this level of education. Therefore, character education in elementary school plays a strategic role in shaping the moral foundation and personality of children before they enter higher education.

At the elementary school level, one of the subjects that can be used to implement character education is Social Studies (IPS). Through social studies, students are encouraged to learn about society, culture, and values relevant to character development (Nuraeni et al., 2022). Because social studies material is closely related to students' lives and environments, it presents a significant opportunity to instill important character values. This subject has an important role in preparing students to become good citizens and be responsible for their nation and country (Hermanto et al., 2019; Susanto, 2016).

The success of instilling character values in social studies learning is largely determined by the role of teachers as the primary implementers of character education. Teachers serve not only as instructors but also as character builders and providers of good guidance for their students (Napratilora et al., 2021). This role can be fulfilled through various efforts undertaken by teachers, including planning, implementation, and evaluation. Through these three stages, teachers have the opportunity to instill moral, social, and national values contextually, so that social studies learning is not only oriented toward knowledge but also holistically shapes students' personalities.

Through optimal teacher involvement, social studies learning can become a strategic vehicle for developing students' social, moral, and national personalities from an early age. However, in reality, optimizing the role of teachers in integrating character education into learning is challenging. Therefore, this article will delve deeply into the role of teachers in integrating character education into social studies learning, particularly in elementary schools, to obtain a systematic overview of the practice and effectiveness of its implementation.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research method with a naturalistic approach, conducted in the natural setting of the school (Sugiyono, 2019). The subjects were teachers from SDN 01 Sunter Jaya, a school located in Tanjung Priok, North Jakarta. Validation utilized triangulation of data techniques and sources, in which the researcher cross-checked research results derived from several research techniques and existing data sources. In triangulation of data collection techniques, the researcher cross-checked data obtained from observations and documents from interviews with the research subjects. This study followed the data analysis procedure developed by Miles & Huberman, which consists of three types of analysis activities that, together with data collection activities, form an interactive cycle



(Miles et al., 2014). These three types of data analysis activities include data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SDN 01 Sunter Jaya is located on Jl. Sunter Jaya IV A, RT. 4/RW. 3, Sunter Jaya, Tj. Priok District, North Jakarta, Special Capital Region of Jakarta. The school's vision is "To establish a quality, religious, child-friendly, and environmentally responsible school to foster the character of the Pancasila Student Profile." Through this vision, the school demonstrates its commitment to developing noble character traits, which are summarized in the Pancasila Student Profile. This vision is elaborated through several missions to achieve the school's goals. Thus, character education has become an integral part of the school's objectives, which are reflected not only in the profile but also in the following research findings table.

Table 1. Research Results on the Role of Teachers in Integrating Character Education

No	Aspects Studied	Research Findings	Analysis and Meaning of Research
1	Character education according to teachers	Teachers consider character education to be an essential foundation for shaping students' morals. Furthermore, elementary school age is considered a phase where basic moral values are still easily instilled in children.	This view shows teachers' awareness of the function of elementary school as an important phase in the formation of children's personalities.
2	Priority character values	Values considered important include manners, discipline, and respect for differences. These values are crucial amidst the growing negative impact of social media on children's behavior.	Teachers make basic social values a foundation in strengthening moral character in the challenges of today's digital culture.
3	Integration of character values in social studies learning	Character values are explicitly integrated into teaching modules, learning objectives, and learning activities.	Teachers integrate character values through a systematic approach from the planning stage, in line with the Pancasila Student Profile policy.
4	School programs that support character education	The school holds habituation activities such as morning assembly and anti-bullying programs.	Although not many programs have been implemented, routine school activities can be a means of forming character values collectively and sustainably.

Based on Table 1 above, teachers at SDN 01 Sunter Jaya have made efforts to integrate character education into social studies (IPS), which is currently part of the IPAS (Natural Sciences) subject. This effort aligns with the school's vision and mission, which explicitly promotes the development of the Pancasila Student Profile. Although it does not yet have a work program specifically addressing character education, several routine school activities can serve as a means of instilling character values. Character education at this school is largely integrated into classroom learning.



Teachers consider character education to be crucial and must be pursued, especially in the elementary school environment. Character formation is a crucial aspect that needs to be implemented in the school environment as an effort to instill and develop noble values in students (Jayanti & Wulandari, 2024). Teachers at SDN 01 Sunter Jaya recognize the importance of instilling character values, especially at the elementary school level. Students at this level are still in the early stages of moral development, making character formation easier. This character development will provide these students with valuable resources for subsequent levels of education.

In the context of social studies learning, teachers play a central role in character building efforts at SDN 01 Sunter Jaya. This effort is carried out by integrating character education into social studies learning, from the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes. Teachers' role is not only to deliver material but also to guide morality by instilling character values in students. Social studies learning that incorporates character can instill the values of honesty, responsibility, cooperation, tolerance, and social awareness (Salama, 2025). Therefore, teachers play a primary role in instilling character values through social studies learning.

Some of the methods teachers use include developing teaching modules and learning objectives that incorporate character aspects, then implementing these through strategies such as differentiated learning, social case studies, and contextual approaches relevant to students' lives. Through these strategies, students not only learn social concepts but also learn to understand moral values through direct experience in learning activities. It is important to construct students' knowledge through direct experience so that students not only possess conceptual knowledge but also become effective vehicles for instilling character values. In addition, teachers also carry out character assessments through behavioral observations and moral reflection, such as providing advice, reprimands, or positive reinforcement when students show changes in attitude.

Thus, these findings demonstrate that teachers have a holistic role. This holistic role enables teachers to create a conducive learning environment for the holistic development of students' morals (Aluna et al., 2025). The approach teachers employ to instill character in students aligns with the principles of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL), where character values are instilled through various real-life experiences relevant to students' social lives. Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) with character does not necessarily change the content of the discussion or material but rather relates it to students' real-life experiences (Nugroho, 2021).

Furthermore, the application of observation and habituation reflects a character education model based on role modeling and habit formation. This aligns with Albert Bandura's theory of social learning, which emphasizes that learning occurs through observation, imitation, and following the example of others in the environment (Ugo et al., 2020). In this context, teachers function as moral and social agents, balancing knowledge transfer and character formation through role modeling and daily classroom interactions.

However, teachers also face a number of challenges in implementing character education, particularly due to the influence of social media, which tends to foster individualistic, impolite, and low-empathy behavior. Children interact more through devices than directly with their peers, resulting in a decline in the values of mutual cooperation and social awareness (Anggarwati et al., 2024; Mediari et al., 2025). Nevertheless, teachers' efforts continue to receive support from various parties. The Independent Curriculum, with its Learning Outcomes (CP) and Learning Objectives (ATP), which incorporate the values of the



Pancasila Student Profile, provides an integrated framework for strengthening student character. Furthermore, schools play a significant role through character development programs held every Tuesday and Thursday, as well as through teacher learning communities (Kombel), which serve as a forum for sharing training and workshop results.

This combination of external challenges and internal support demonstrates that the success of character education depends not only on individual teachers but also on a collaborative educational ecosystem. Therefore, collaboration between teachers, schools, and parents is key to maintaining consistent character values instilled amidst the overwhelming influence of digital media. Teacher training programs and knowledge dissemination through learning communities reflect forms of ongoing professionalism that are essential to ensuring teachers not only understand the concept of character education, but are also able to implement it effectively in the classroom.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Thus, it can be concluded that teachers have a strategic role in integrating character values into social studies learning through role models, habituation, and contextual learning. The success of character education is largely determined by collaboration between teachers, schools, and parents, who work together to balance the influence of the digital environment with the instilling of social, moral, and humanitarian values in students' lives. Therefore, it is recommended that schools strengthen character-building programs through sustainable policies, providing supportive learning environments, and professional training for teachers to develop more creative and relevant social studies teaching methods. Furthermore, parents are expected to establish consistent communication with schools and actively participate in assisting their children in technology use. Future research could consider a more in-depth exploration of digital-based character value integration strategies and community engagement as partners in expanding an effective character education ecosystem.

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