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**REIMAGINING CHARACTER EDUCATION: INNOVATIONS IN
CULTIVATING VALUES AMIDST THE ADVANCEMENTS OF
CIVILIZATION**

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the integration of character values in the learning process at SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur and its contribution to the formation of student character. This study is based on the importance of character education as an effort to produce students who are not only academically superior but also have strong morality and integrity. Character education in this school focuses on values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and tolerance, which are integrated into the curriculum, extracurricular activities, and through the role models of teachers and school staff. The study used a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Data analysis techniques refer to the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which involves data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study indicate that the integration of character values is carried out through collaborative and participatory learning that encourages students to be active, work together, and support each other. Extracurricular activities such as scouts, sports, and arts also strengthen the formation of student character. In addition, teachers and staff act as role models who provide real examples of behavior that reflect these values. These findings are expected to be a reference for the development of character education programs in other schools with similar contexts.

Keyword: Integration of Character Values, Collaborative Learning, Learning Methods

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A. INTRODUCTION

Global society today is facing significant social changes amidst the rapid development of technology. Digitalization has penetrated various aspects of life, including education, which in turn changes the way individuals interact, learn, and work⁴. Technological advances bring great benefits such as fast access to information, online learning, and global connectivity⁵. However, behind these advances, various social challenges have emerged, especially those related to values and morality⁶. Phenomena such as cyberbullying, the spread of fake news, and dependence on social media have raised concerns about the impact of technology on the character of the younger generation⁷. Children who should be in the period of forming values are often exposed to content that is not educational

⁴ Syaifudin Zuhri and Rozaqul Arif, "Digital Literacy As A Media Guide Amid Digital Disruption (Study of The Importance of Digital Literacy in The Era of Globalization)," *Jurnal Indonesia Sosial Teknologi* 5, no. 01 (2024): 232–46; Zaheer Allam et al., "The Metaverse as a Virtual Form of Smart Cities: Opportunities and Challenges for Environmental, Economic, and Social Sustainability in Urban Futures," *Smart Cities* 5, no. 3 (2022): 771–801; M Aqil Fahmi Sanjani, Robitotul Islamiah, and Linda Maulidiah, "Building Strong Foundations, Educational Management's Contribution To Character Education And Graduate Quality Enhancement," *Ar-Rosikhun: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 3 (2024): 244–57.

⁵ Purna Prasad Arcot et al., "The Interplay of Ethics, Culture, and Society in the Age of Finance Digital Transformation," *Journal of Southwest Jiaotong University* 59, no. 2 (2024): 139–63; Zuhdi Zuhdi et al., "Enhancing Learning Quality through Management Support in Crafting Self-Assessment Questions at School," *Communautaire: Journal of Community Service* 3, no. 1 (2024): 1–12.

⁶ Cyd R Arias et al., "Challenges and Implementation of Inclusive Education in Selected Asian Countries: A Meta-Synthesis To Cite This Article: Challenges and Implementation of Inclusive Education in Selected Asian Countries: A Meta-Synthesis," *International Journal of Research in Education and Science* 9, no. 1 (2023): 512–34; Hasanul Faiz et al., "Transforming Organizational Quality Through Effective Administrative Training," *Communautaire: Journal of Community Service* 2, no. 2 (2023): 157–67.

⁷ Chantel Snyman, Chrizzanne Van Eeden, and Marita Heyns, "How Character Strengths of Autistic Learners Aid Primary School Educators in the Class: An Exploratory Study," *South African Journal of Childhood Education* 13, no. 1 (2023): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v13i1.1311>; Ragil Meita Alfathy et al., "Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals in Higher Education Modalities: Literature Review," *Journal of Turkish Science Education* 21, no. 1 (2024): 22–43, <https://doi.org/10.36681/tused.2024.002>; Muhammad Edi Kurnanto et al., "Building Religious Character through Suluk on Multiethnic Students of Thariqah Al-Mu'min Community in West Kalimantan," *Dinamika Ilmu: Journal of Education* 23, no. 1 (2023): 135–56.

and tends to damage morals. In this context, character education becomes increasingly relevant as an important foundation for building a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also has a strong, ethical, and responsible personality.

Character education values are fundamental elements in forming a strong, moral, and integrity-based individual personality. Character education seeks to internalize positive values, such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and respect for others, into the daily lives of students⁸. Character from an educational perspective is not only about moral knowledge, but also how students are able to apply these values in real actions⁹. Character education aims to build people who are not only academically competent, but also have a work ethic, empathy, and the ability to face life's challenges¹⁰. These values become more important amidst the currents of globalization and technological developments that often bring moral ambiguity. In the digital era, children are exposed to large amounts of information that does not always align with the values that are

⁸ Dana Ondrušková and Richard Pospíšil, "The Good Practices for Implementation of Cyber Security Education for School Children," *Contemporary Educational Technology* 15, no. 3 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.30935/cedtech/13253>; E I Maphie, "Implementation of Inclusive Education in Secondary Schools in Tanzania: A Breather for Students with Disabilities?," *International Journal of Whole Schooling* 19, no. 2 (2023): 37–65.

⁹ (Fasinro, 2024; Maphie, 2023; Yusuf, 2023)

¹⁰ Middy Boty et al., "The Values of Struggle Character Education K.H. Ahmad Hanafiah and Its Implementation in Local History Learning," *Pegem Egitim ve Ogretim Dergisi* 13, no. 2 (2023): 62–71, <https://doi.org/10.47750/pegegog.13.02.08>; Fitra Youpika et al., "The Endangered Central Malay Folklore: A Medium for Internalizing Character Values in Indonesian Language and Literature," *International Journal of Language Education* 8, no. 1 (2024): 48–63, <https://doi.org/10.26858/ijole.v8i1.60908>; Sevia Diana Safitri, "Character Management in Crisis: Implementation of Five Day in Ma'had as a Social Care Solution in Elementary Madrasah," *JUMPA: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan* 5, no. 1 (2024): 57–68.

intended to be instilled through education¹¹. Therefore, character education in schools must be adaptive to the times, without losing the basic essence of its values. Character education values can help students sort out positive information and form habits that support self-development through the learning process.

Many studies have discussed the importance of character education as an integral part of the education system, especially amidst the challenges of the digital era. A study by¹² highlighted that character education not only builds a strong personality but also creates a conducive learning environment. Another study by¹³ revealed that a well-designed character education program can increase positive student behaviors, such as honesty, cooperation, and responsibility, while reducing negative behaviors such as aggression and lack of discipline. In the context of technological advancement, a study by¹⁴ emphasized the importance of digital literacy as part of character education to ensure that the younger generation can use technology ethically and responsibly. However, several studies also show limitations in the implementation of character education, especially in the context of elementary schools¹⁵. A study by¹⁶ emphasized that

¹¹ Ibnu Siswanto et al., "The Characteristics of Efficacious Leader in Higher Education: A Literature Review," *Journal of Education and Learning* 17, no. 1 (2023): 145–57, <https://doi.org/10.11591/edulearn.v17i1.20486>; Katherine Marie Caves and Maria Esther Oswald-Egg, "An Empirical Case of Education Policy Implementation in Serbian VET," *International Journal for Research in Vocational Education and Training* 10, no. 2 (2023): 191–219, <https://doi.org/10.13152/IJRVED.10.2.3>; Youpika et al., "The Endangered Central Malay Folklore: A Medium for Internalizing Character Values in Indonesian Language and Literature."

¹² Sodikin et al. (2022)

¹³ Yumnah (2021)

¹⁴ Zakso et al. (2021)

¹⁵ Viqhi Aswie and Reza Ruhbani Amarulloh, "Internalization of Sundanese Local Wisdom in Strengthening the Profile of Pancasila Students through the Literacy Movement in Madrasah," *JENTRE* 5, no. 1 (2024): 17–27; Sierra Leone Tony Patrick and Southern George, "Investigating the Challenges Facing Effective Implementation of Free Primary Education in Bo District, FIKRUNA: Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan dan Kemasyarakatan

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the success of character education is highly dependent on the consistency between the values taught in schools and the practices applied in students' daily lives. In Indonesia, research by ¹⁷ highlighted that character education is often hampered by the lack of effective integration between formal curriculum and relevant local values. This provides a basis for understanding the strategic role of character education in the modern era, but also highlights the need for a more innovative and contextual approach to address the specific challenges faced by students amidst technological advances.

This study aims to explore the implementation of religious-based character education values amidst the progress of the times, with a special focus on the context of religious education learning at SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur. The location of this study was chosen because of the social and cultural diversity of students that reflects the challenges faced by many elementary schools in Indonesia. The study seeks to identify strategies implemented by teachers in teaching character education values, evaluate their impact on student behavior, and formulate an adaptive approach to the challenges of the digital era. Through this concept, it is hoped that a way can be found to optimize the role of character education in forming a young generation who not only have academic abilities, but also have integrity, responsibility, and critical thinking skills in utilizing technology. The findings are then expected to provide practical contributions to the development of a character education curriculum that is relevant to local needs while being able to

Southern Sierra Leone.” *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies* 15, no. 2 (2023): 130–35, <https://doi.org/10.5897/IJEAPS2023.0767>.

¹⁶ Istiyono et al. (2021)

¹⁷ Mahmud (2023)

answer global challenges. On the other hand, the results of the study are also expected to be a reference for other schools in integrating contextual character education with technological advances.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type to explore more deeply the implementation of character education through religious education in elementary schools¹⁸. The qualitative approach was chosen because it can provide an in-depth understanding of the dynamics and contexts that exist, and allows researchers to explore the views, experiences, and perspectives of students, educators, and other related parties in the character education process. The case study type of research was chosen because the researcher wanted to understand the phenomenon of character education that focused on one location, namely SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur, which is considered representative in implementing character values based on religious education. The use of this subject is because the school has a strong character education implementation strategy and has integrated moral and ethical values in every teaching and learning activity. SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur is unique in the way it adapts and applies religious teachings as an integral part of the process of forming student character, which can provide a clearer picture of how religious education plays a role in shaping positive attitudes and behavior of students.

The data collection technique in this study involved three main methods: in-depth interviews, documentation, and observation. In-depth interviews were

¹⁸ Heath Williams, "The Meaning of 'Phenomenology': Qualitative and Philosophical Phenomenological Research Methods," *The Qualitative Report* 26, no. 2 (2021): 366–85.

conducted with 14 informants consisting of the principal, vice principal for student affairs, homeroom teachers, and religious education teachers at SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur like in the Tabel 1. The interviews aimed to explore their views and experiences related to the implementation of character education through religious education in schools. Documentation was used to collect data related to the religious education curriculum, learning modules, and records of extracurricular activities that focus on character development, such as religious and social activities at school. Direct observations were conducted in class and during religious activities at school to directly observe the interactions between teachers and students, as well as the application of religious values in the context of learning.

The study adapted the data analysis model developed by Miles and Huberman to analyze the data obtained by involving three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. In the first stage, data reduction, the researcher filters and organizes the raw data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. This process involves sorting out information that is relevant and important for the focus of the study, namely character education through religious education ¹⁹.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Integration of Character Values in Learning

The integration of character values in learning is very important because it forms a strong moral and ethical foundation for students. This integration helps

¹⁹ Tine Köhler, "Multilevel Qualitative Research: Insights from Practice," *European Management Journal*, no. March 2023 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2024.03.011>.

students not only achieve academic achievements, but also develop into ethical and moral individuals. Through the integration of character values, students are taught to develop positive attitudes and behaviors that are beneficial in daily life. This includes discipline, hard work, and respect for others. Another concept of instilling character values integrated in learning serves as a deterrent against negative behaviors such as bullying, cheating, and other unethical behaviors. By instilling moral values from an early age, students tend to avoid behaviors that are detrimental to themselves and others. So as to help students understand the importance of contributing positively to society. Ssiwa learned about good citizenship, social responsibility, and how to be an ethical leader.

The integration of character values in the curriculum in the process of teaching and learning activities, ensures that character education takes place consistently in schools. Teachers at SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur are trained to implement teaching methods that support character development, such as group discussions, collaborative projects, and real-life situation simulations that challenge students to apply the values they have learned. This approach at least allows students not only to gain academic knowledge but also to learn to apply values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and tolerance in daily life. So that it can help create a learning environment that supports the formation of students' character as a whole. This is in accordance with the results of an interview with the principal who revealed that the integration of character education into the curriculum is the main point of the school. The principal said, "We prioritize the formation of students' character. We have integrated values

such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and tolerance into the learning curriculum. Each subject is designed to insert these values into teaching and learning materials and activities." The formation of students' character is a top priority in our curriculum, where values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and tolerance are integrated in each subject.

This also provides feed on the student's attitude of discipline. As the results of an interview with a class teacher conveyed, "responsibility and discipline are taught through various ways. For example, in religious lessons, students are asked to make a daily schedule for reading the Qur'an at their own homes and they must be responsible for adhering to the schedule. Discipline is applied in the form of class rules that must be followed, such as arriving on time and completing assignments on time." Responsibility and discipline are taught through a variety of ways in our school. In religious lessons, students are required to make a daily Qur'an reading schedule at their respective homes and are responsible for adhering to the schedule. Discipline is applied through class rules that must be followed, such as arriving on time and completing assignments according to predetermined deadlines. With this approach, students are expected to develop an attitude of responsibility and discipline that will be useful in their daily lives and future.

In other versions for example in scouting extracurriculars, students learn about leadership, cooperation, and responsibility. "We have various extracurricular activities such as scouting, sports, and art. In scouting, for example, students learn about leadership, cooperation, and responsibility. These

activities teach discipline and teamwork, while art activities such as drama or music help students develop tolerance and appreciation for differences." Through scouting activities, students are taught leadership, cooperation, and responsibility. This is important because good leadership and the ability to work in a team are skills that are in high demand in the real world. Sporting activities, in addition to providing health benefits, also teach discipline and teamwork, two crucial elements for success in both education and future careers. Art activities, such as drama or music, play a role in developing tolerance and appreciation for differences. It helps students understand and appreciate diversity, which is an important foundation in building a harmonious and inclusive society. Thus, these various extracurricular activities not only complement academic learning, but also play a vital role in shaping students into individuals with strong character and ready to face future challenges.

Table 1. Character Value Imprehracing

Learning Aspects	Character Values	Implementation Method	Impact for Students
Subject	Honesty, Responsibility	- Insert honesty scores in evaluations, such as exams or assignments. - Make a daily schedule of activities.	- Students learn to value honesty even if the results are not perfect. - Increase a sense of responsibility.
Group Discussion	Cooperation, Tolerance	Hold group discussions on subjects such as Citizenship Education.	- Develop the ability to cooperate and respect differences of opinion.
Collaborative Projects	Discipline, Cooperation	Involve students in group projects that require joint planning and execution.	- Improve discipline in completing tasks on time. - Fostering a spirit of cooperation.
Real-Life Situation Simulation	Honesty, Responsibility	Using real-life scenarios in learning to test the application of moral values.	- Students understand the application of character values in daily life.

Religious Studies	Discipline, Responsibility	Make a daily Qur'an reading schedule at home and adhere to the schedule.	- Increase discipline and personal responsibility.
Scout Extracurricular	Leadership, Cooperation	Train students in scouting activities that emphasize leadership and teamwork.	- Develop good leadership and teamwork skills.
Art Extracurricular	Tolerance, Appreciation for Differences	Holding art activities such as drama and music.	- Students learn to respect differences and develop tolerance.
Sport	Discipline, Cooperation	Holding sports activities that emphasize the importance of discipline and teamwork.	- Teaching the importance of discipline and cooperation to achieve common goals.

Integration of character education values in learning has been proven effective in shaping positive student behavior. Studies conducted by ²⁰ show that character education integrated with the curriculum can improve students' honesty, responsibility, and cooperation. The results of this study are in line with the findings at SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur, where values such as honesty and discipline are taught through contextual approaches, such as group discussions and collaborative projects. Research by ²¹ also highlights the importance of consistency between the values taught in schools and daily practices, which are relevant to the implementation in this school through extracurricular activities such as scouts and arts. Thus, the results of previous studies strengthen that the approach applied at SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur by integrating character values in every subject and activity to contribute significantly to forming students who not only excel

²⁰ Arif et al. (2023)

²¹ Kurnanto et al. (2023)

academically, but also have strong and resilient characters in facing the challenges of the modern era.

2. Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities at SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur include various extracurricular activities held to develop students' potential and character. Activities such as scouting, sports, and the arts are an integral part of the curriculum. Students learn about leadership, cooperation, and responsibility through scouting activities. While sports teach discipline and teamwork. In addition, art activities such as drama and music help students develop tolerance and appreciation for differences. With these various choices of activities, SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur seeks to form students who are not only excellent in academics, but also have strong character and good social skills.

The school provides a variety of extracurricular activities designed to support the development of students' character. Scouting activities teach students about leadership, cooperation, and social responsibility by giving them hands-on experience in leading groups and completing tasks together. Sports activities contribute to the development of discipline and teamwork skills, which are crucial in social interaction and the achievement of common goals. Meanwhile, art activities such as drama and music allow students to express themselves, collaborate with others, and understand and appreciate differences. Social activities as an environmental or community service program, help students realize their social responsibilities and contribute to their communities. These activities not only complement academic learning but also play a key role in

shaping students into individuals with character and ready to face various challenges in the future. "Here there are various extracurricular activities designed to support the development of students' character. Some of them are scouting, sports, art, and social activities. Each of these activities has a different focus on helping students learn about cooperation, leadership, and social responsibility." The argument of the interview results is in line with Waka's submission. The curriculum states that extracurricular activities are organized for students to grow their attitudes and character as a provision for the future, as well as equip students to socialize.

So, extracurricular programs can provide benefits for students. "In scouting activities, students are trained to work together in teams through various activities such as camps, group games, and community service projects. They learn about leadership by taking on the role of squad or patrol leader. In addition, scouting activities also teach responsibility through tasks that must be completed independently or in groups." In scouting activities, students are trained to work together in teams through a variety of activities designed to improve their social and leadership skills. Activities such as camps, group games, and community service projects provide opportunities for students to collaborate and complete assignments together. During camps and group games, students learn how to function effectively in teams, solve problems together, and support each other. Through roles as squad or patrol leaders, students gain hands-on experience in leadership, leading their groups, and making decisions that impact group activities. Additionally, scouts teach responsibility by giving students tasks that

they must complete independently or in groups, which helps them develop time management and task completion skills.

With this approach, scouting activities not only build cooperation and leadership skills, but also strengthen the sense of responsibility among students. "We also hold various social activities, such as visits to orphanages and environmental hygiene programs. Through this activity, students learn about social responsibility and concern for others. They are invited to actively participate in activities that benefit the surrounding community, which helps them develop a sense of empathy and social responsibility." The school also carries out various social activities, such as visits to orphanages and environmental hygiene programs, to teach students about social responsibility and caring for others. Through active participation in these activities, students not only get the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the surrounding community, but also develop a sense of empathy and social responsibility. Visits to orphanages allow students to interact directly with underprivileged children, while environmental hygiene programs teach them about the importance of caring for and preserving the environment. By engaging in activities that benefit the community, students learn to better understand the needs of others and feel the positive impact of their contributions, which reinforces their social values and caring.

The concept of extracurricular activities applied in this school, such as scouting, sports, arts, and social activities, demonstrates systematic efforts to support the development of students' character through a holistic approach. The

argument was conveyed by the Waka Curriculum, which stated that extracurricular activities are designed to foster students' attitudes and character as future provisions, in line with the practices carried out. In scouting, for example, students are trained to work together in teams, lead, and take responsibility, which hones social and leadership skills. Social activities, such as visits to orphanages and environmental hygiene programs, introduce students to social responsibility and concern for the community. This combination of activities not only equips students with practical skills, but also internalizes the values of empathy, responsibility, and social care that are essential for their future lives. In this way, extracurricular programs serve as an important tool in shaping individuals who are not only academically accomplished, but also have a strong character and are ready to contribute positively to society.

The results of the study at SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur showed that extracurricular activities such as scouting, sports, arts, and social activities significantly contributed to the formation of students' character through a holistic approach. Previous research by²² also supports this finding, where scouting activities were proven effective in fostering leadership and teamwork skills in students. In addition, another study²³ confirmed that involvement in arts activities such as drama and music can increase tolerance and appreciation of differences. Social activities, such as visits to orphanages, which were implemented at SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur, are in line with research by²⁴, which concluded that

²² Yumnah (2021)

²³ Snyman et al. (2023)

²⁴ Kurnanto et al. (2023)

participation in social activities can strengthen students' sense of empathy and social responsibility. Thus, the integration of various extracurricular activities not only enriches students' learning experiences but also becomes an effective means of instilling essential character values in community life.

3. Special Program for Character Education

Character education as a special program in schools is designed to develop positive values and attitudes that support the formation of morally and socially superior students' personalities. These programs often include a variety of activities and approaches that are integrated into the curriculum, aiming to form strong character and good ethics among students. The school implements activities that directly instill values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and empathy. Activities such as group discussions, case simulations, community service projects, and extracurricular activities such as scouting, sports, and the arts serve to provide a practical and reflective experience. Through social activities for example, students learn about social responsibility and caring for others, while in scouting they are taught about leadership and teamwork.

The integrated approach as implemented by SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur not only educates students in terms of academics, but also facilitates their personal growth. Character education in this school aims to shape students into individuals with integrity, have good social skills, and are ready to contribute positively to society. The program, thus, plays a crucial role in ensuring that students are not only academically but also morally and socially prepared to face life's challenges in the future. The results of the interview with the principal said, "The school has

a special program that we call character day. The program is held weekly as well as monthly, focusing on one specific character value each time. The program involves a variety of activities such as inspirational stories, dramas, and group discussions to help students understand and apply these values in their daily lives." The program is designed to focus on one specific character value at any given time. Through various activities such as inspirational stories, dramas, and group discussions, students are encouraged to understand and apply these values in their daily lives. Inspirational story activities provide a real example of how values such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy can be applied in different situations. Drama allows students to take on roles in scenarios that reflect the character's values, helping them experience and understand the consequences of such behavior.

As in line with the results of the interview with Waka. The curriculum suggests that group discussions provide students with a space to share their views and experiences, as well as reflect on how those values influence their actions. "Students enjoy varied and interactive activities. Many students show improvements in their daily behavior, such as being more honest in admitting mistakes or more disciplined in carrying out their duties. The program also provides opportunities for students to speak and share experiences, which helps them better understand the character values being taught."

The results of the interviews showed that students really enjoyed the activities in the Character Day program, which offers a variety of varied and interactive activities. This activity not only attracts students' interest but also has a

positive impact on their daily behavior. Many students show improvements in their attitudes, such as being more honest in admitting mistakes and more disciplined in completing their assignments. The program also provides opportunities for students to speak and share experiences, which deepens their understanding of the character values being taught.

By engaging in experiential discussions and activities, students are better able to internalize and apply these values in their daily lives. "The assessment of the effectiveness of this program is through various ways. One of them is by observing changes in student behavior over a certain period of time. In addition, we also collect feedback from teachers and parents. From the data we collected, we see that this program has succeeded in increasing awareness and application of character values among students." The results of the interviews revealed that the assessment of the effectiveness of the Character Day program was carried out through various methods to ensure its success. One way of assessment is to observe changes in students' behavior over a period of time, which allows for a direct evaluation of the program's impact on their attitudes and actions. In addition, feedback from teachers and parents was also collected to gain additional perspectives on student progress and the impact of the program. From the data collected, it can be seen that this program has succeeded in increasing awareness and application of character values among students. The observed positive behavior changes and supportive responses from teachers and parents show that the program is effective in reinforcing character values and promoting students' personal development.

The concept of character education at SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur shows an effective integration between the academic curriculum and student character development through special programs such as Character Day. The program, which is conducted weekly and monthly with a focus on specific character values, incorporates a variety of activities such as inspirational stories, dramas, and group discussions to help students understand and apply those values in everyday life. The results of the interviews revealed that students showed significant improvements in behaviors, such as honesty and discipline, thanks to their involvement in interactive and varied activities. The assessment of the effectiveness of the program, which was carried out through observation of changes in student behavior and feedback from teachers and parents, showed that the program succeeded in increasing awareness and application of character values. The program not only strengthens moral values among students but also equips them with social and ethical skills that are essential for future life. With a comprehensive and integrated approach, SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur has succeeded in developing students who are not only academically intelligent but also have integrity and are ready to contribute positively to society.

The results of research at SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur which showed the effectiveness of character education programs, especially through Character Day activities, are in line with previous research by²⁵ which stated that value-based programs, such as storytelling and group discussions, are able to increase students'

²⁵ Snyman et al. (2023)

moral awareness. In addition, research by²⁶ found that activities that incorporate reflective activities, such as drama and case simulation, are effective in instilling values such as honesty, discipline, and empathy. Feedback from teachers and parents used to evaluate the program is also supported by²⁷, which emphasizes the importance of parental involvement in strengthening the implementation of character education in schools. Thus, SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur's integrated approach of interactive and collaborative activities, as well as behavior change-based evaluation, emphasizes the relevance and effectiveness of this program in shaping students' character.

4. Exemplary Teachers and Staff

The role of teachers and school staff as role models is a very crucial aspect in the concept of character education. This status not only functions as a teacher and supervisor, but also as a model of behavior for students. When teachers and staff demonstrate expected attitudes and values, such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy, they create an environment that supports character learning effectively. Teachers and staff as exemplary models are expected to consistently apply character values in their daily interactions with students, colleagues, and parents. This means that they must show a positive attitude, maintain professional ethics, and handle conflicts in a constructive way. By being a good example, they teach students through their own actions, not just through words. For example, if a teacher consistently demonstrates punctuality, responsibility in completing assignments, and politeness in communication, students will be more likely to

²⁶ Sodikin et al. (2022)

²⁷ Arif et al. (2023)

imitate such behavior. In addition, teachers who demonstrate empathy and support skills to students create a positive learning atmosphere and reinforce the character values taught in the classroom.

The role of teachers and staff at SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur as role models not only supports the development of students' character but also builds a positive and respectful school culture. It strengthens the effectiveness of character education programs and ensures that those values are internalized and applied in students' daily lives. By modeling expected behaviors, teachers and staff at SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur create a learning environment that supports and inspires students to adopt character values in their lives. When students see positive examples from their educators, they are more motivated to apply the same attitude in their daily interactions. It also strengthens the relationship between teachers and students, as students feel more connected and valued in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The principal stated, "we believe that teachers and school staff have an important role to play as role models for students. We demonstrate behaviors that reflect the character values we want to inculcate, such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and tolerance. By seeing real examples, students can more easily understand and emulate these behaviors in their daily lives." The results of the interview revealed that the school strongly emphasizes the important role of teachers and staff as role models in the character education process. They believe that by demonstrating behaviors that reflect desired character values, such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and tolerance, they set a real

example for students. These behaviors include daily actions and consistent attitudes that demonstrate those values.

By showing real examples through their own actions, teachers and staff make it easier for students to understand and adopt these values in their daily lives. When students see the positive behaviors expected of their educators, they are more likely to imitate and apply them in their own interactions. This helps to reinforce the character lessons taught in the classroom and creates an environment that supports students' overall personal development. As a result, students not only learn about character values theoretically but also see how they are applied in real practice, which deepens their understanding and application in daily life which is in line with the following interview results. "We always be honest in every interaction with students. If we make a mistake, we don't hesitate to admit it and show how to fix it. When it comes to responsibility, we are always on time and prepare lessons well, so students can see the importance of responsibility in their work."

The results of the interviews show that at this school, teachers and staff prioritize honesty and responsibility as part of their daily practice. They actively apply these values in their interactions with students, by providing concrete examples of how they are applied. Notably, they are always honest in every interaction with students. If something goes wrong, they not only admit it but also show them how to fix it, demonstrating their commitment to honesty and integrity. This action provides a clear model for students on how to deal with mistakes in a constructive and responsible way.

Teachers and staff show this attitude by always being on time and preparing lessons well in terms of responsibility. By doing this, they emphasize the importance of responsibility in their work and provide a real example of how planning and commitment to tasks can influence positive outcomes. This approach not only helps students understand the character values being taught but also strengthens the application of those values in their daily lives. By looking at first-hand examples from teachers and staff, students can more easily imitate and integrate those values in their own behavior. "Students are generally very positive. They are more receptive and understand character values when they see real examples in everyday life. Many students imitate the behavior of teachers and staff, such as being disciplined in doing assignments and being honest in every situation. This shows that our role as role models has a great influence on the development of their characters."

The results of the interviews show that students at this school generally respond positively to the character education efforts implemented by teachers and staff. They are more receptive and understand character values when they see real examples of everyday behaviors applied by their educators. Students tend to imitate the behavior of teachers and staff, such as discipline in doing assignments and honesty in every situation. This indicates that the actions and attitudes of educators play an important role in shaping and strengthening character values among students. By looking at first-hand examples from teachers and staff, students gain a clearer understanding of how to apply those values in their own lives. The fact that many students imitate this positive behavior shows that the

role of teachers and staff as role models is very influential on their character development. It emphasizes the importance of consistency and integrity in educators' actions, as their attitudes serve as a strong model for students in developing desired attitudes and behaviors.

Table 2. Exemplary Aspects of Educators and Education Personnel

Aspects	Explanation	Application Examples	Impact on Students
Roles of Teachers and Staff	Teachers and staff serve as models of expected behavior in character education. They demonstrate attitudes and values such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy in daily interactions.	- Always be on time in activities.- Prepare lessons well.- Admit mistakes and correct them.	Students tend to imitate disciplined, responsible, and honest behavior.
Values Taught	Honesty, responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and tolerance are taught through real examples.	- Admit mistakes in front of students.- Take responsibility for teaching duties.- Be polite in communication.	Students understand the importance of these values and it is easier to internalize them.
Value Planting Method	Teachers and staff set a real example through daily actions and maintain professional ethics in interactions with students, colleagues, and parents.	- Showing empathy when students face difficulties.- Showing a constructive attitude in resolving conflicts.	Students feel valued and supported so that they are motivated to imitate this positive attitude.
Student Response	Students more easily understand and accept character values through concrete examples from teachers and staff.	- Imitate disciplined behavior in doing tasks.- Be honest in every situation.	Students show positive changes in their behavior and social interactions.
Impact on School	Creating a positive, harmonious, and inclusive	- Teachers and staff support	A conducive and harmonious

Culture	school culture, where social norms that support cooperation, appreciation, and empathy are reinforced.	each other and resolve conflicts peacefully.	learning environment, supporting the development of students' character as a whole.
Principal's View	The principal emphasized the importance of the role of teachers and staff as role models to instill character values in students.	- "We always demonstrate behavior that reflects character values such as honesty, responsibility, and tolerance."	Increase the effectiveness of character education programs in schools.
Contribution to Development	The role of teachers and staff as role models strengthens the character education process by providing direct examples, which help students understand the application of values in daily life.	- Teachers and staff always show consistency in their desired attitudes and behaviors.	Forming a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also has integrity and empathy.

The positive school culture built by teachers and staff also contributes to the creation of a harmonious and inclusive community. Through consistent behavior and demonstrated values, teachers and staff reinforce social norms that support cooperation, appreciation, and empathy among students. This, in turn, reduces conflicts and promotes a conducive learning atmosphere. The application of character values applied by teachers and staff not only has an impact on the personal development of students but also affects the school community as a whole. By making character values an integral part of school life, SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur has succeeded in creating an environment that supports students'

learning and growth, as well as building a strong moral and social foundation for their future.

The role of teacher and staff role models in character education as implemented in SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur is in line with research conducted by²⁸, which emphasized that teacher role models are a key factor in the success of character education. Research by²⁹ also found that teachers who consistently demonstrate values such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility are able to significantly influence student behavior. In addition, that the formation of a positive school culture, in which teachers and staff play an active role as behavioral models, strengthens the internalization of character values among students³⁰. Teacher role models not only provide moral guidance but also create a harmonious and inclusive learning environment, which encourages students to adopt positive attitudes and values in their daily lives. Through this approach, teachers not only teach character theory but also demonstrate its practical application, strengthening the effectiveness of character education programs in schools.

Collaborative and Participatory Learning Approaches

The Collaborative and Participatory Learning Approach is a method that emphasizes the active involvement of students in the learning process through cooperation and active participation. Students not only play the role of recipients

²⁸ Yumnah (2021)

²⁹ Boty et al. (2023)

³⁰ Youpika et al., "The Endangered Central Malay Folklore: A Medium for Internalizing Character Values in Indonesian Language and Literature"; Kurnanto et al., "Building Religious Character through Suluk on Multiethnic Students of Thariqah Al-Mu'min Community in West Kalimantan."

of information but also as part of the process of developing knowledge and skills. Collaborative learning involves working together in small groups where students discuss with each other, solve problems together, and share knowledge and experiences. Meanwhile, participatory learning encourages active student involvement in every stage of learning, from planning to evaluation. With these concepts, students learn not only from the subject matter but also from interactions with their classmates, which increases the understanding and application of the concepts taught. This approach supports the development of social skills such as communication, cooperation, and leadership, as well as promotes a sense of responsibility and active participation in learning. Thus, a collaborative and participatory learning environment also strengthens students' motivation by making them feel more involved and contribute to the teaching-learning process.

The learning method at SD Negeri 2 Jatipungur applies an approach that emphasizes the active participation of students and cooperation with their friends. This approach not only facilitates academic understanding but also contributes to the development of social skills and empathy among students. By encouraging students to be directly involved in the learning process through group activities, discussions, and collaborative projects, the school creates a dynamic and interactive learning environment. Students learn to share ideas, solve problems together, and appreciate the different views of their classmates. The process not only deepens their understanding of the subject matter but also strengthens social skills such as communication, cooperation, and leadership. Thus, by working in

groups, students learn to show empathy and support for each other, which helps build a sense of mutual respect and build positive relationships in the classroom. The concept not only prepares students for academic success but also equips them with interpersonal skills that are essential for their daily lives and futures. The principal said, "The school uses a variety of learning methods designed to encourage students to actively participate and cooperate with their peers. This method not only aids in academic comprehension, but also teaches social skills and empathy. Some of the methods we use include project-based learning, group discussions, and educational games."

The results of the interviews showed that the school implemented various learning methods designed to encourage active student participation and cooperation in groups. This method is designed not only to deepen students' academic understanding but also to develop their social and empathy skills. Some of the methods used in schools include project-based learning, group discussions, and educational games. Project-based learning allows students to work together on complex tasks or projects, encouraging them to collaborate, solve problems together, and apply knowledge in a practical way.

Group discussions provide opportunities for students to share ideas, listen to classmates' perspectives, and practice effective communication. Educational games combine elements of learning with interactive and fun elements, which can increase student motivation and engagement in the learning process. Using these methods, schools not only focus on academic achievement but also on the development of essential social skills, such as cooperation, empathy, and

communication. This method helps students learn more thoroughly, both academically and socially, as shown in the following interviews, as well as preparing them to function effectively in a variety of social and academic situations in the future. "In project-based learning, we give students the task to create a group project related to the subject matter. This project can be a science experiment, modeling, or presentation. During this process, students learn to work together, share assignments, and appreciate the contributions of each group member." The results of the interviews revealed that in project-based learning in school, students are given the task of completing a group project related to the subject matter.

The project can be of different types of activities such as science experiments, modeling, or presentations. Students are expected to work together in groups during the project work process, which involves the division of tasks and collaboration to achieve a common goal. In this context, students learn to share responsibilities with each other, appreciate the contributions of each group member, and communicate effectively. This project-based learning not only focuses on the final outcome of the project but also on the process of cooperation that occurs among group members. Through this experience, students develop important social skills such as cooperation, negotiation, and appreciation for the ideas and efforts of others. This approach helps students understand how to work in teams that function effectively and support each other, while delving into the subject matter in a practical and thorough manner. "This school also uses educational games that involve the whole class. For example, in math lessons, we

hold quizzes or quick counting games that get students excited and actively participating. The game not only improves academic comprehension, but also teaches students to work together in teams and support each other." The results of the interviews showed that the school utilizes educational games as part of the learning method, which involves the whole class in fun and interactive activities.

These educational games serve a dual function: first, they improve students' academic understanding by presenting the subject matter in an engaging and interactive format, making it easier for students to understand the concepts being taught. Second, the game teaches students important social skills, such as teamwork and support. During the game, students learn to work together in groups, support each other, and collaborate to achieve a common goal. By engaging students in fun activities, educational games also increase their motivation and engagement in the learning process. This helps create a positive learning atmosphere and supports the development of social skills while deepening students' academic understanding. The learning approach at SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur, which involves project-based learning methods, group discussions, and educational games, effectively supports the development of academic understanding as well as students' social skills and empathy. Through project-based learning, students not only learn the subject matter but also develop essential skills such as cooperation, communication, and responsibility, as they must collaborate in completing complex tasks. Group discussions provide a platform for students to share ideas and listen to classmates' views by Figure 1,

strengthening their social skills and promoting a deeper understanding of the material.

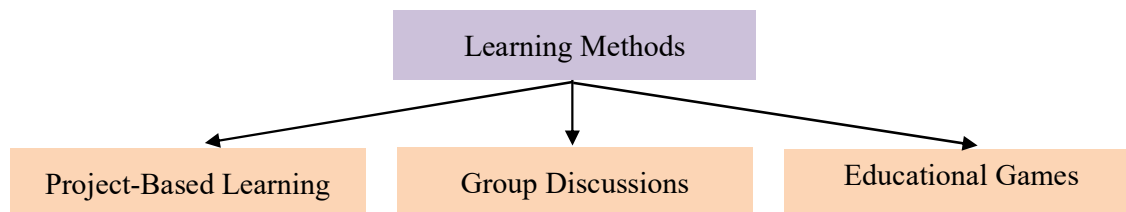


Figure 1. Learning Method in School

Educational games bring together aspects of learning and entertainment, encourage students to actively participate and work together, and increase their motivation. By blending these methods, schools create a learning environment that not only enriches students' academic knowledge but also strengthens the social skills necessary for success in everyday life³¹. The integration of these methods in the curriculum illustrates the school's commitment to preparing students holistically, equipping them with relevant and applicable skills for their future.

The findings of the study are expected to contribute to strengthening the understanding that the integration of character values in learning, extracurricular activities, and collaborative-participatory approaches can create a comprehensive

³¹ Yu-Long Chao, "General Education Courses Integrated With Character Development Activities: Effectiveness on the Character Development of University Students," *Problems of Education in the 21st Century* 81, no. 5 (2023): 586–97, <https://doi.org/10.33225/pec/23.81.586>; Lepisa Saharani, M Aqil Fahmi Sanjani, and Sevia Diana, "OPTIMIZATION OF ISLAMIC VALUES-BASED PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGY IN INCREASING NEW STUDENT ADMISSIONS," *Managere: Indonesian Journal of Educational Management* 6, no. 2 (2024): 194–206; Mahmud, "The Strategy of School Principal to Promote Multicultural Education in Islamic High Schools in Samarinda."

and inclusive educational environment. Through the application of character values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and tolerance in every aspect of education at SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur, students are not only equipped with academic knowledge, but also essential social and moral skills. The findings also show the importance of the role of teachers and staff as role models in shaping a positive school culture, as well as how collaborative learning methods can improve students' social skills, such as communication, leadership, and empathy.

D. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the integration of character values in learning at SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur not only supports academic achievement but also encourages the formation of strong student character. Through the application of collaborative and participatory learning methods, students are trained to work together, communicate, and respect each other. Activities such as project-based learning, group discussions, and educational games provide a comprehensive learning experience and support the development of social skills such as empathy, leadership, and responsibility. The character education program integrated into the curriculum and the role of teachers as role models also strengthen the internalization of positive values, which help students become individuals with integrity and ethics in everyday life. Extracurricular activities such as scouts, sports, and arts provide opportunities for students to develop their potential while strengthening the values of cooperation and social responsibility.

With various approaches applied, the school has succeeded in creating a dynamic and inclusive learning environment, which not only emphasizes cognitive aspects but also builds students' moral and social foundations. The results of this study emphasize the importance of comprehensive character education in creating a generation that excels academically as well as has a strong and competitive character. This study certainly has several limitations that need to be considered. First, the scope of the study only focuses on one school, namely SD Negeri 2 Jatipunggur, so the generalization of the results of this study may not be fully applicable to the context of other schools with different characteristics. Second, the data obtained are mostly sourced from interviews and observations, which have the potential to produce subjective bias. For further research, it is recommended to use broader quantitative methods, involve more participants, and compare results across schools to obtain a more comprehensive picture.

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