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## Impact of Character Education on Student Social Behavior

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### ABSTRACT

Character education not only focuses on instilling values but also aims to create an educational environment where individuals can exercise their freedom responsibly, laying the foundation for moral maturity. Although there is evidence that character education can improve students' social behavior, it is still unclear how character education affects relationships between students. Thus, this study aims to examine the impact of character education on students' social behavior at school. This research is qualitative research with a Literature review approach. In a literature review, researchers collect, evaluate, and present information from various literature sources such as scientific journals, books, and articles to understand the development of existing knowledge, identify knowledge gaps, and develop a strong theoretical foundation for the research to be conducted. The findings of this study are that character education serves as a foundational element in shaping student

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relationships within the school community, fostering values, attitudes and behaviors that promote a positive and supportive learning environment. The importance of character education in shaping students' character, values and social competence ultimately contributes to their overall development and well-being. Character education has a significant role in reducing negative behaviors such as bullying in schools. Through learning moral values, developing empathy and reinforcing positive attitudes, character education can help create a safe, inclusive and supportive school environment for all students.

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## **1. Introduction**

Character education not only focuses on instilling values, but also aims to create an educational environment where individuals can exercise their freedom responsibly, laying the foundation for moral maturity (Afandi, 2018). The involvement of parents, teachers, and school leaders is crucial in supporting the implementation of character education, especially in online learning environments (Havi et al., 2022). Ultimately, character education equips students with the moral compass needed to navigate the complexities of real-world society (Agustini, 2021). In Indonesia, character education is strengthened through programs such as Strengthening Character Education (PPK) to emphasize the importance of moral development in students (Hardini & Wening, 2020). Strengthening Character Education (PPK) in public schools is aligned with government regulations and incorporates Islamic teachings to promote positive character among students (Susilo et al., 2022). Schools are considered character communities that play an important role in character-building through learning processes, habituation, extracurricular activities, and collaboration with families and communities (Saputra & Budimansyah, 2022).

Research has also highlighted the role of classroom relationships in promoting student character change. A positive classroom environment, characterized by supportive teacher-student relationships and a focus on character development, can contribute to the cultivation of desirable social behaviors among students (Thomas et al., 2022). Moreover, the implementation of comprehensive character education programs has been linked to improvements in school climate, student behavior, and curriculum delivery (White & Warfa, 2011). In addition, character education has been recognized as a preventive measure against negative behaviors such as corruption. By integrating character education that emphasizes values such as integrity, honesty, and ethical behavior, schools can help prevent corrupt behavior among students (Pratama et al., 2021). This underscores the importance of character education not only in fostering positive social behavior but also in instilling a strong moral compass in students.

While there is evidence that character education can improve students' social behavior, it is still unclear how character education affects relationships between students. Thus, this study aims to examine the impact of character education on students' social behavior at school. Thus, it is hoped that the results of this study can make a real contribution to the development of better character education programs in the future, as well as assist educators in shaping a generation with high integrity and morality.

## **2. Literature Review**

Character education in schools is a deliberate and systematic effort to foster positive character in students, preparing them to become responsible and ethical members of society. The implementation of character education involves key factors such as role modeling from teachers, character-oriented activities, and support from education stakeholders (Zurqoni et al., 2018). Educational institutions aim to instill core moral values such as understanding, integrity, justice, duty, self-respect, and respect for others to students (Alwadai & Alhaj, 2023). Teachers' understanding of character education significantly influences the learning process, including syllabus design, implementation, and the use of methods and media to effectively integrate character education into schools (Syah, 2017). Teachers' involvement as facilitators in character education and training students to embody values such as Pancasila and concern for the environment are important aspects of character education in schools (Astuti et al., 2023). In addition, the commitment and integrity of educational units, especially primary schools, are crucial

in strengthening students' character through integrated character education (Tuhuteru et al., 2023).

Character education in schools has a significant impact on students' social behavior. Schools that focus on character education not only aim to improve academic achievement, but also strive to foster positive character traits in students. Research shows that character education programs can lead to improved student social behavior, including prosocial behavior, self-regulation, social responsibility, and teamwork (Benninga et al., 2006). These programs are designed to instill values such as honesty, responsibility, empathy and cooperation, which are essential for positive social interactions in the school environment. In addition, character education strategies, such as edutainment approaches, have been shown to play an important role in shaping students' characters and positively influencing their social behavior (Ningsih et al., 2021). By incorporating engaging and interactive methods into character education, schools can effectively promote the development of students' social skills and ethical values.

### **3. Research Method**

This research is qualitative research with a Literature review approach. The data sources used came from a collection of literature. Researchers identified and collected studies that examined character education and student social behavior from databases such as PubMed, ERIC, and Google Scholar. Data credibility was carried out by evaluating the quality of literature sources such as checking authors and affiliations, journals, or publishers. A literature review is a research approach that aims to compile, analyze, and synthesize literature relevant to a particular research topic.

In a literature review, researchers collect, evaluate, and present information from various literature sources such as scientific journals, books, and articles to understand the development of existing knowledge, identify knowledge gaps, and develop a strong theoretical foundation for the research to be conducted. The literature review process involves systematic steps, starting from the formulation of the research problem, a comprehensive literature search, selection of relevant literature, analysis and synthesis of information, to the preparation of a structured report. The flow of this research can be seen in Figure 1.

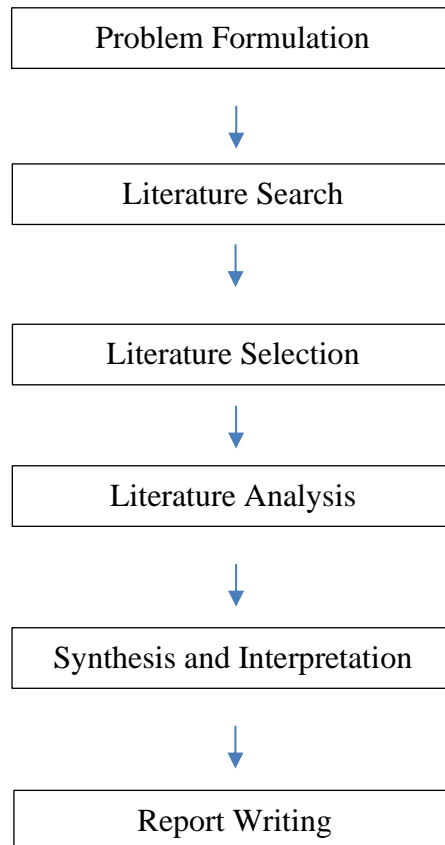


Figure 1. Research Flow

#### 4. Result & Discussion

The results section presents a description of the research data. Writing source literature uses body notes in the format of the American Psychological Association (APA) Style.

##### 4.1 How does character education affect student relationships?

Character education plays an important role in shaping relationships between students in the school environment. The implementation of character education programs has been shown to have a positive impact on students' character values, including religiosity, personality, social attitudes and competitive attitudes Zurqoni et al. (2018). These programs often prioritize communication and interaction between teachers and students, fostering a supportive and nurturing environment for character building (Suardin et al., 2023). In addition, character education that focuses on values such as kindness and responsibility can improve teacher-student relationships, contributing to a positive learning atmosphere (Yudin et al., 2021).

Various factors influence relationships between students, including the contribution of principals' interpersonal communication and teacher performance to students' character education (Hanafiah, 2022). Integrating teaching materials based on local values with character education through innovative models such as PBL can improve students' higher-order thinking skills and have a positive impact on their character development (Hadi et al., 2019). In addition, character education has been shown to influence students' work readiness and help them develop positive character traits that are essential for success in their future careers (Wiguna, 2023).

Implementing character education in schools not only improves student behavior, but also contributes to behavioral improvement and socio-cultural change in the school environment (Hassine, 2022). In addition, character education also plays an important role in promoting acceptance and inclusiveness, especially for children with special needs in inclusive school settings (Mubarak & Syamsi, 2019). As schools navigate the era of digitalization, character education remains crucial in fostering positive relationships among students and adapting to socio-cultural changes (Borolla1 & Marini, 2022). In conclusion, character education serves as a foundational element in shaping student relationships within the school community, fostering values, attitudes and behaviors that promote a positive and supportive learning environment.

#### 4.2 Is there an improvement in students' social skills after the implementation of character education?

The impact of character education on students' social skills is well supported by existing research. Various studies have shown that character education can improve students' social interactions, behavior, and ethical decision-making. For example, character education programs have been shown to improve students' social skills and interactions, increase self-discipline, resilience, and wise priorities, and positively influence behavioral improvement (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006; Hughes et al., 2011; Jeynes, 2017; Hassine, 2022; Rais & Aryani, 2017). These findings underscore the importance of character education in shaping students' character, values and social competencies, which ultimately contribute to their overall development and well-being.

#### 4.3 What is the role of character education in reducing negative behaviors such as bullying?

Character education plays an important role in reducing negative behaviors such as bullying in the school environment. Various studies have shown that character education is effective in reducing cases of bullying and promoting a safe and inclusive school environment (Ramdani et al., 2021; Tamaki et al., 2021; Ramdani et al., 2023). (2021); Tamaki et al., 2021; Ramdani et al., 2023). Character education programs can help raise students' awareness about the negative impact of bullying behavior, as well as provide strategies to prevent and cope with bullying cases in schools (Ramdani et al., 2023). In addition, character education can also strengthen positive values such as empathy, cooperation, and respect for differences, which can help reduce the incidence of bullying among students (Tamaki et al., 2021).

Character education also plays a role in influencing the role of witnesses in bullying cases. Research shows that character education can increase the involvement of witnesses to provide support to victims of bullying and be involved in preventing bullying behavior in the school environment (Salmivalli et al., 2011). Thus, character education focuses not only on the individuals involved in bullying cases, but also on the role of the entire school community in creating an environment of support and respect for one another. Overall, character education has a significant role in reducing negative behaviors such as bullying in schools. Through learning moral values, developing empathy and reinforcing positive attitudes, character education can help create a safe, inclusive and supportive school environment for all students.

## **5. Conclusion**

The conclusion of this study is that character education serves as a foundational element in shaping student relationships within the school community, fostering values, attitudes and behaviors that promote a positive and supportive learning environment. The importance of character education in shaping students' character, values and social competence ultimately contributes to their overall development and well-being. Character education has a significant role in reducing negative behaviors such as bullying in schools. Through learning moral values, developing empathy and reinforcing positive attitudes, character education can help create a safe, inclusive and supportive school environment for all students.

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