

The Relationship Between Character Education in Schools and Social Awareness in Sustainable Development

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Abstract

Character education in schools is one of the key elements in shaping a generation that is not only academically intelligent but also possesses strong moral values. This education instills various positive values such as integrity, discipline, responsibility, empathy, and honesty, which are expected to shape students' personalities into moral individuals who contribute positively to society. This research aims to examine the extent to which character education in schools can influence students' social awareness, which they then implement in their lives as members of society. This study employs a literature review method with a qualitative approach, aimed at adding references related to community service. The data collection process was carried out by searching for scholarly articles published between 2014 and 2024, with Google Scholar as the primary source. The results of the study show that character education in schools plays a crucial role in shaping social awareness, which contributes to sustainable development. By instilling character values such as responsibility, empathy, and environmental concern, students are not only prepared to become academically successful individuals but also caring and responsible citizens. Programs such as "Sekolah Adiwiyata" and social initiatives in schools provide concrete evidence that character education can encourage students to actively participate in social and environmental activities, thereby strengthening social awareness within their communities. Thus, character education can be regarded as a foundation for a sustainable future.

Keywords: Character Education, Schools, Social Awareness, Community, Sustainable Development

Hubungan Antara Pendidikan Karakter di Sekolah dan Kesadaran Sosial Masyarakat dalam Pembangunan Berkelanjutan

Abstrak

Pendidikan karakter di sekolah merupakan salah satu elemen penting dalam membentuk generasi yang tidak hanya cerdas secara akademis, tetapi juga memiliki nilai-nilai moral yang kuat. Pendidikan ini mengajarkan berbagai nilai positif seperti integritas, disiplin, tanggung jawab, empati, dan kejujuran yang diharapkan mampu membentuk kepribadian siswa menjadi individu yang bermoral dan bermanfaat bagi masyarakat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji sejauh mana pendidikan karakter yang diberikan di sekolah dapat memengaruhi kesadaran sosial siswa yang kemudian diimplementasikan dalam kehidupan mereka sebagai anggota masyarakat. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode tinjauan pustaka dengan pendekatan kualitatif yang bertujuan untuk menambah referensi terkait pengabdian masyarakat. Proses pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui pencarian artikel ilmiah yang diterbitkan dalam rentang waktu 2014 hingga 2024, dengan sumber utama adalah Google Scholar. Hasil studi menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan karakter di sekolah memiliki peran yang sangat penting dalam membentuk kesadaran sosial masyarakat yang berkontribusi terhadap pembangunan berkelanjutan. Melalui penerapan nilai-nilai karakter seperti tanggung jawab, empati, dan kepedulian terhadap lingkungan, siswa tidak hanya dipersiapkan untuk menjadi individu yang sukses secara akademis tetapi juga sebagai warga negara yang peduli dan bertanggung jawab. Program-program seperti Sekolah Adiwiyata dan inisiatif sosial di sekolah menampilkan bukti konkret bahwa pendidikan karakter dapat mendorong siswa untuk berpartisipasi aktif dalam kegiatan sosial dan lingkungan, sehingga memperkuat kesadaran sosial di komunitas mereka. Dengan demikian, pendidikan karakter dapat dianggap sebagai fondasi bagi masa depan yang berkelanjutan.



Kata kunci: Pendidikan Karakter, Sekolah, Kesadaran Sosial, Masyarakat, Pembangunan Berkelanjutan

INTRODUCTION

Character education in schools is one of the key elements in shaping a generation that is not only academically intelligent but also possesses strong moral values. This education instills various positive values such as integrity, discipline, responsibility, empathy, and honesty, which are expected to shape students' personalities into moral individuals who contribute positively to society. In the context of sustainable development, these character values are crucial because sustainable development requires a high level of social awareness and responsibility from all levels of society. Character education in schools can serve as a foundation for students to understand their role as part of a larger community and foster awareness of the importance of balancing economic, social, and environmental needs (Furkan, 2014).

The role of character education in supporting sustainable development extends beyond the individual aspect, as it contributes to the formation of collective awareness in society. Sustainable development requires active participation from all members of society in maintaining the sustainability of natural and social resources (Mensah, 2019). Social awareness, built through character education, enables individuals to understand the impact of their actions on the environment and the broader community. Character education implemented early in schools can create a generation with a higher sense of social responsibility, which in turn will support future sustainable development efforts.

Globally, sustainable development is an urgent agenda, especially in light of challenges such as climate change, social inequality, and natural resource scarcity. To address these challenges, society must have a solid understanding of the importance of balancing the needs of current and future generations. Social awareness regarding these issues is often shaped through the educational process, where character education plays a vital role in instilling ethical values, environmental awareness, and social justice. Character education in schools can be regarded as one of the key pillars in shaping a generation that is conscious of their responsibility in supporting sustainable development.

This research highlights the importance of the relationship between character education in schools and social awareness within the context of sustainable development. Many studies mention that character education has a positive impact on individuals' future behavior and leads to increased social consciousness on a larger scale (Zurqoni et al., 2018). Character education can influence how individuals view their role in society and how they can contribute positively to the environment and social life around them (Imawan & Ismail, 2023). Thus, exploring this relationship can provide deeper insights into how character education can support the achievement of sustainable development goals.

Schools, as formal educational institutions, play a strategic role in shaping students' character (Herman et al., 2022). In the context of sustainable development, schools have a responsibility not only to teach knowledge but also to shape students' character so they

become socially responsible individuals. The process of character education in schools includes teaching values such as social responsibility, justice, environmental care, and empathy for others. Schools can play a vital role in preparing students to become agents of change who support sustainable development by focusing character education on these values.

However, it is important to note that character education in schools does not occur in isolation. External factors such as societal culture, educational policies, and the social environment also play a role in shaping students' social awareness (Khairul Amali et al., 2023). Collaboration between schools, families, and communities is essential to creating an environment conducive to good character formation. Character education in schools can be more effective in cultivating deep social awareness among students with support from various parties, which will ultimately have a positive impact on sustainable development.

Moreover, in sustainable development, social awareness plays a crucial role in maintaining environmental and social sustainability. This awareness often stems from values taught in schools through character education. A society with high social awareness is more likely to participate in initiatives that support sustainable development, such as environmental conservation, reducing social inequality, and enhancing overall well-being (Adabanya et al., 2023). Thus, character education in schools influences individual behavior and contributes to the formation of a more socially responsible and caring society.

Through this research, it is expected that empirical evidence will be found to support the assumption that character education in schools has a significant relationship with social awareness in the context of sustainable development. This study aims to assess the extent to which character education provided in schools can influence students' social awareness, which they then implement in their lives as members of society. The findings of this research are expected to provide useful recommendations for policymakers in designing more effective character education curricula to support sustainable development goals.

Character Education

Character education is a learning process aimed at shaping and developing moral values, ethics, and positive behavior in individuals (Tiara Ramadhani et al., 2024). Through character education, students are taught various values such as integrity, responsibility, empathy, honesty, discipline, and care for others and the surrounding environment. This education seeks to create individuals who excel academically and possess a good, moral personality, capable of making positive contributions to society. In schools, character education is often implemented by integrating these values into learning activities, social interactions, and extracurricular activities, with the hope that students can apply these values in their daily lives.

School

A school is a formal educational institution that plays a vital role in the learning process and shaping the character of individuals from early childhood to adulthood (Fiberianti et al., 2023). At school, students acquire knowledge, skills, as well as the moral and social values needed to face life and contribute to society. As the primary place for children and adolescents to develop, schools focus on academic aspects such as mathematics, science, and language while providing room for emotional, social, and cultural learning. Students at school learn to adapt, collaborate, communicate, and understand their responsibilities as individuals in the broader community through teacher guidance, structured curricula, and peer interactions. Additionally, schools often serve as the starting point for shaping aspirations and talents, encouraging students to explore their interests and prepare for the future.

Social Awareness

Social awareness is an individual's understanding and sensitivity to the conditions, needs, and problems faced by the surrounding community (Matitaputty et al., 2018). It includes the ability to recognize social situations, feel empathy for others, and understand how the actions of individuals or groups can affect the community as a whole. Social awareness involves understanding issues such as injustice, poverty, discrimination, economic inequality, and environmental problems that affect collective well-being. People with high social awareness tend to be more active in social participation, such as helping others, supporting initiatives that benefit the community, and engaging in activities that promote general welfare. This awareness is essential in creating a fair and inclusive society, as it encourages individuals to act not only in their self-interest but also for the benefit of others and the surrounding environment.

Society

Society is a group of individuals who live together in a particular area or community, sharing values, norms, customs, and common social goals (Hossain & Ali, 2014). Society is formed through social interactions between individuals, creating structures, rules, and patterns of relationships that govern collective life. Members of a society are usually bound by social relationships, such as family, friendships, or professional connections, and they work together to meet shared needs such as security, education, economics, and culture. Society consists of individuals interacting with each other and includes systems and institutions, such as government, schools, and religious organizations, that help organize social life. In society, there are various norms and values that regulate members' behavior, and violations of these norms can affect social balance. A society can be highly diverse, in terms of ethnicity, religion, language, or culture, but remains united through a mutual agreement to live together and support one another.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a concept of development aimed at meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

(Darvishi et al., 2023). This development emphasizes a balance between three main pillars: economic, social, and environmental. Economically, sustainable development seeks to create inclusive and equitable growth, improving well-being without causing large disparities. In the social aspect, it focuses on equal access to resources, education, health, and job opportunities, as well as efforts to reduce poverty and injustice. In terms of the environment, sustainable development emphasizes the importance of preserving natural resources, reducing pollution, and addressing the impacts of climate change through the use of renewable energy and wise resource management.

METHOD

This research uses a literature review method with a qualitative approach aimed at adding references related to community service. A literature review was chosen because this study focuses on analyzing relevant literature to explore concepts, theories, and empirical findings that have been published, providing deeper insights into the topic discussed. A qualitative approach was used because this research seeks to understand phenomena in-depth through interpretation, meaning, and critical analysis of the reviewed literature. Data collection was conducted by searching for scholarly articles published between 2014 and 2024, with Google Scholar as the primary source. In the initial stage, 30 relevant articles were found through keywords related to community service and appropriate sub-themes. However, after a rigorous selection process, only 17 articles were chosen for further analysis. The selection was based on the relevance of the articles to the research objectives, source credibility, and the articles' scientific contributions in the context of community service. Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive analysis method, in which each selected article was analyzed in detail to identify patterns, trends, and conclusions that support the research objectives. Data from the literature was then qualitatively interpreted to understand the underlying concepts of community service and provide a comprehensive overview of how these literatures can contribute to developing references for similar future research.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Character education in schools plays a crucial role in shaping social awareness within society, particularly in the context of sustainable development. It teaches values such as responsibility, empathy, honesty, and collaboration, which form the foundation for healthy relationships in society. Students are prepared to achieve academic success while also becoming citizens who care about others and the environment through this teaching. Sustainable development demands economic growth, social welfare, and environmental protection. Therefore, it is important for schools to educate young generations to have strong social awareness in support of achieving sustainable development goals.

Social awareness is a key element that supports the achievement of sustainable development (Fallah Shayan et al., 2022). In this context, a society that is conscious of the importance of environmental preservation, social welfare, and economic growth will actively participate in development initiatives. Character education that instills social

values from an early age allows the formation of individuals who are ready to contribute to solving social problems such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation. Character-focused education in schools directly contributes to this social awareness, with students being taught to understand the impact of their actions on others and their surroundings.

One important aspect of sustainable development is environmental conservation (Ziaul & Shuwei, 2023). Character education that teaches environmental responsibility can raise students' social awareness about the importance of preserving nature. For example, the Adiwiyata School Program in Indonesia is an implementation of environment-based character education. This program teaches students to care for cleanliness, biodiversity, and responsible waste management. Schools involved in this program integrate environmental values into their curricula, and the results can be seen in the increased awareness of students and the surrounding community regarding the importance of environmental preservation.

SDN 01 Jakarta is one school that has adopted the Adiwiyata Program, involving students in various environmentally friendly activities, such as managing waste banks, tree planting, and energy-saving campaigns. Students are taught to separate waste and recycle items that can be reused. Students learn values such as responsibility and care for the environment through these activities, which they practice in their daily lives. Additionally, the program engages the surrounding community, ensuring that contributions to sustainable environmental development are made not only by students but also by the entire community.

In addition to the environment, character education contributes to the development of social awareness (Mertika et al., 2018). Values such as empathy, cooperation, and collaboration are essential in building a harmonious and caring society. Character education in schools teaches students to care for others, especially those less fortunate or in need of help. This fosters a deep sense of social awareness among students, which they can then apply in their community life. Programs such as community service, fundraising for disaster relief, and social visits to orphanages or nursing homes are some examples of how schools integrate character education with social awareness.

SMAN 2 Surabaya runs a Social Care Character Program, which involves students in various social activities in their community. One such activity was a fundraising campaign to help natural disaster victims in Sidoarjo. Students learn the importance of sharing and caring for others, becoming agents of change in their communities. Their active involvement in social activities increases their awareness of the challenges faced by society and the importance of participation in solving social issues. Additionally, these activities inspire the surrounding community to also participate, ultimately strengthening social awareness in the area.

Character education also contributes to sustainable economic development (Kuning, 2018). In this regard, character education emphasizes the importance of ethics, responsibility, and integrity in economic activities. Schools that teach the values of honesty, hard work, and innovation to students prepare them to become socially and

environmentally responsible entrepreneurs or workers. Students with strong social awareness tend to be more concerned about the economic impact they have on society and the environment. They can play a role in creating businesses or economic initiatives that support sustainable development, such as community-based enterprises or social ventures aimed at promoting societal welfare.

SMK Wirausaha in Bandung has a social entrepreneurship program that teaches students to develop profit-oriented businesses with a social impact. One project involves processing plastic waste into marketable products, where students are involved in the entire production process, from collecting raw materials to marketing the products. This project educates students about the importance of entrepreneurship and innovation while teaching them about social and environmental responsibility. The impact of this program is the creation of awareness among students and the surrounding community about the importance of environmentally friendly sustainable economies.

Teachers play a crucial role in implementing character education in schools. Teachers can instill character values that foster students' social awareness through a holistic approach and good role models. Teachers not only teach theories about character but also provide real-life examples in their daily behavior. Teachers who demonstrate care for students, the environment, and society create a learning atmosphere that encourages students to emulate and apply these values. Furthermore, teachers can develop curricula relevant to ongoing social and environmental issues, making students more sensitive to the challenges their communities face.

Character education in schools is a long-term investment in a sustainable future (Pertiwi et al., 2024). Students taught to care for the environment, society, and the economy from an early age will grow into individuals ready to contribute to sustainable development. They will act as socially responsible individuals and change agents who can lead society toward a better future. Therefore, character education must remain a central focus in Indonesia's educational system, especially in supporting the achievement of sustainable development goals.

From the above discussion, it is clear that character education in schools plays a crucial role in shaping social awareness within society. Students learn to be good individuals personally and responsible citizens in relation to society and the environment through character education programs. Students can significantly contribute to achieving sustainable development goals with strong character education, whether in environmental, social, or economic fields. The case studies discussed demonstrate that effective character education in schools can bring positive changes not only for students but also for the surrounding community.

CONCLUSION

Character education in schools plays a crucial role in shaping social awareness that contributes to sustainable development. By instilling values such as responsibility, empathy, and environmental care, students are not only prepared to become academically successful individuals but also responsible and conscientious citizens. Programs like

Sekolah Adiwiyata and various social initiatives within schools provide tangible evidence that character education encourages students to actively participate in social and environmental activities, thereby strengthening social awareness in their communities. Thus, character education can be seen as a foundation for a sustainable future.

The implications of this study suggest that Indonesia's educational policies should prioritize character education as an integral part of the curriculum. Integrating character values across subjects can help foster greater social awareness among students. Additionally, collaboration between schools, government, and the community is necessary to develop programs that support character education and social consciousness. This would not only improve the quality of education but also contribute to broader sustainable development efforts. Active community involvement in supporting educational initiatives can further strengthen the synergy between schools and their surrounding environments.

To enhance the effectiveness of character education in building social awareness, several recommendations can be considered: first, schools should provide training for teachers to effectively implement character education in daily learning. Second, the development of innovative programs involving students in social and environmental projects should be increased to give students the opportunity to apply character values in real-world situations. Third, regular evaluations of character education programs are necessary to assess their impact on students' and communities' social awareness. Lastly, collaboration between schools in sharing best practices can accelerate the spread of character values across different communities.

This research has several limitations. First, the method used was a literature review, so the data obtained were limited to selected articles from Google Scholar within a specific time frame. Although strict selection criteria were applied, it is possible that not all relevant articles were included or covered all aspects discussed. Second, this study did not involve the collection of primary data, such as interviews or surveys, which could provide deeper insights into students' and teachers' perspectives on character education and social awareness. Third, the focus on specific schools in the case studies may not represent the overall educational context in Indonesia. Therefore, further research using quantitative or mixed methods is needed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between character education, social awareness, and sustainable development.

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