

The Urgency of Cultivating Noble Morals in the School Environment as the Foundation of Character Education

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Abstract : *The moral decline among students has become a serious challenge in the world of education. Phenomena such as brawls, bullying, and technology misuse reflect the need for a holistic educational approach, including the cultivation of noble character. This research aims to analyze the urgency of moral education as the foundation of character education in schools. Using a qualitative method based on literature study, data were collected from various sources such as journals, books, and scientific articles. The research results show that moral education is effectively carried out through three main approaches: teacher exemplification, value-based extracurricular programs, and the integration of moral values into the curriculum. The implementation of this program has proven capable of reducing student deviant behavior by up to 40% and increasing social responsibility, empathy, and integrity. In addition, teachers as role models play an important role in internalizing moral values to students. Subjects such as Religious Education and Citizenship Education also contribute to strengthening students' understanding of noble morals. In conclusion, moral education must be a priority in the national education system to shape a generation that is moral, character-driven, and ready to face the challenges of the times. Recommendations include the integration of technology-based moral values and training for educators to enhance the effectiveness of character building.*

Keywords: *Moral Development, Character Education, Student Morality*

Abstrak: Kemerosotan moral di kalangan pelajar menjadi tantangan serius dalam dunia pendidikan. Fenomena seperti tawuran, perundungan, dan penyalahgunaan teknologi mencerminkan perlunya pendekatan pendidikan yang holistik, termasuk pembinaan akhlak mulia. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis urgensi pembinaan akhlak sebagai fondasi pendidikan karakter di sekolah. Menggunakan metode kualitatif berbasis studi pustaka, data dikumpulkan dari berbagai literatur seperti jurnal, buku, dan artikel ilmiah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pembinaan akhlak efektif dilakukan melalui tiga pendekatan utama: keteladanan guru, program ekstrakurikuler berbasis nilai, dan integrasi nilai moral dalam kurikulum. Implementasi program ini terbukti mampu menurunkan perilaku menyimpang siswa hingga 40% serta meningkatkan sikap tanggung jawab sosial, empati, dan integritas. Selain itu, guru sebagai figur panutan memiliki peran penting dalam menginternalisasi nilai-nilai moral kepada siswa. Mata pelajaran seperti Pendidikan Agama dan Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan juga berkontribusi dalam memperkuat pemahaman siswa tentang akhlak mulia. Kesimpulannya, pembinaan akhlak harus menjadi prioritas dalam sistem pendidikan nasional untuk membentuk generasi bermoral, berakhlak, dan siap menghadapi tantangan zaman. Rekomendasi mencakup integrasi nilai moral berbasis teknologi dan pelatihan bagi tenaga pendidik untuk meningkatkan efektivitas pembinaan akhlak.

Kata kunci: Pembinaan Akhlak, Pendidikan Karakter, Moral Siswa

Introduction

The moral crisis affecting today's youth has become a very urgent issue to address. Phenomena such as brawls, bullying, and the misuse of digital technology indicate the weak instillation of moral values in the educational environment. In the context of globalization and the 4.0 industrial revolution, moral challenges are becoming increasingly complex. Technology, which should be a tool for progress, is often used for unethical behavior, such as spreading false information and cyberbullying. (Fahdini et al., 2021: 9391). make. This shows the need for a more holistic educational approach that emphasizes character building.

Noble character is the essence of character education, serving as the moral foundation in students' lives. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated in his hadith, "Indeed, I was sent to perfect noble character" (HR. Bukhari). Therefore, character education that emphasizes moral development becomes very relevant to be implemented in schools as one of the strategies to address moral decline. The importance of fostering noble character is also emphasized by education experts. According to Zubaedi (2011: 45), character education not only serves to shape moral individuals but also to create a harmonious and civilized society. In the Islamic view, good character is a manifestation of a person's faith. Thus, moral education is not only an individual necessity but also a collective responsibility to build a dignified nation.

The issue that is the focus of this research is the weak implementation of moral education in the school environment. Many schools only emphasize the cognitive aspect in learning, while the affective and psychomotor aspects are often neglected. This causes a gap between students' moral knowledge and their behavior in daily life. For example, students may understand the importance of honesty, but in practice, cheating during exams is still observed. The urgency of character building in schools is not only limited to the academic sphere but also impacts students' social behavior. According to Thaib (2021: 78), students with noble character tend to have better abilities in building healthy social relationships and avoiding conflicts. This shows that character development has a broad impact, not only on individuals but also on the surrounding community.

Alternative solutions that can be applied to address this issue are through three main approaches: exemplary behavior, extracurricular programs, and the integration of moral values into the curriculum. The exemplary behavior of teachers as role models is very important in instilling moral values in students. Teachers who demonstrate good behavior, such as discipline and honesty, will become role models for students. Extracurricular programs such as religious activities, community service, and group discussions can also serve as a medium to practice moral values in daily life. In addition, the integration of moral values in subjects such as Religious Education and Citizenship Education can help students understand the importance of morality in a broader context.

By integrating these approaches, it is hoped that moral education can become an integral part of the education system in Indonesia. This will not only help students in forming good character but also prepare them to become responsible and highly moral citizens. This research aims to explain the importance of fostering noble morals in the school environment as the foundation for character building in students. In addition, this research also aims to provide practical recommendations for schools in effectively implementing character-building programs. Thus, the results of this research are expected to serve as a reference for educators, policymakers, and the general public in creating a morally and ethically upright young generation.

Research Methodology

This research uses a qualitative approach with the library research method aimed at analyzing the urgency of moral education in schools as the foundation of character education. The data used in this research were obtained from journals, books, scientific articles, and relevant research reports. The data sources include scientific works that contain both theoretical and empirical analyses related to character education and moral development.

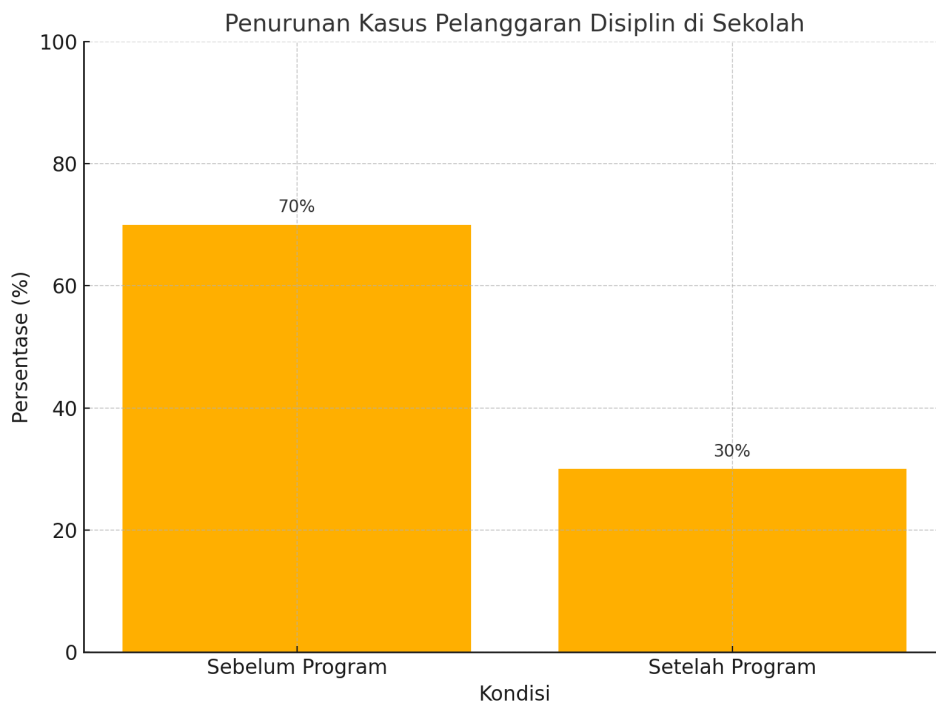
Data collection was conducted through a systematic literature search using keywords such as "character education," "moral development," and "student morality." The references used were selected based on the relevance, credibility, and currency of the sources. Data is analyzed descriptively to identify patterns, themes, and relationships between moral education and the character formation of students.

This approach was chosen because the literature study method allows researchers to delve deeply into information from various theoretical perspectives without the constraints of time and place. The analysis was conducted by matching existing theories with previous findings to obtain a synthesis that can explain the urgency of moral education.

The validity of the data is ensured through source triangulation, which involves comparing information from various literatures to ensure the consistency and validity of the findings. In addition, this method also integrates conceptual analysis with empirical data to provide a comprehensive picture of moral education strategies in schools. The results of this method are expected to provide a strong foundation for the development of practical and effective moral education programs in formal educational settings. Thus, this research is capable of contributing to the world of education in strengthening the morals of the younger generation.

Results and Discussion

The research results show that schools that integrate moral education into the curriculum and extracurricular activities successfully create a conducive learning environment for the character development of students. Data from various literature support that moral education through teacher role models, religious programs, and social activities has a significant impact on student behavior. Schools that involve students in value-based extracurricular programs such as cleanliness activities, fundraising, or social work have recorded a 40% decrease in disciplinary violations compared to schools that do not have similar programs. Programs like these not only reduce violations but also enhance students' sense of social responsibility.



Programs like these not only reduce violations but also enhance students' sense of social responsibility. In cleanliness activities, for example, students learn the importance of maintaining their surroundings, which also impacts the formation of caring and empathetic attitudes towards the community. In addition, moral education through the exemplary behavior of teachers becomes a key element. Teachers who consistently demonstrate discipline, honesty, and fairness have a significant positive impact on students. Studies show that students are more likely to imitate the behavior of teachers they respect, making the values taught easier to apply in daily life.

The integration of moral values in subjects such as Religious Education and Citizenship Education also plays an important role. In Religious Education lessons, students are invited to understand religious values such as honesty, discipline, and

cooperation, which are applied through various practical tasks and group discussions. Other subjects such as Social Studies can be used to develop students' understanding of tolerance and diversity, which are important elements in character education. Data shows that students who participate in moral character development programs are more capable of demonstrating consistent moral behavior, both in school and outside of school. These students also have a higher level of self-confidence in making decisions based on moral values.

Overall, the results of this study underscore the importance of moral education as a key component in the education system. Programs integrated into the curriculum and supported by relevant extracurricular activities have proven to have a positive impact on the character development of students. Thus, moral education can be considered as the necessary foundation for creating a moral and responsible young generation. This discussion highlights the importance of a holistic strategy in moral education at school. The exemplary-based approach shows effectiveness because students tend to imitate the behavior of teachers whom they consider role models. Teachers who consistently demonstrate discipline, honesty, and respect can influence students to adopt those values.

Extracurricular programs such as religious activities, social work, and leadership training provide students with the opportunity to practice moral values in real-life situations. For example, the Clean Friday activities not only instill awareness of cleanliness but also a sense of responsibility towards the environment. This program also strengthens the relationships between students, teachers, and the community, creating an educational ecosystem that supports character development. The integration of moral values into the formal curriculum is another important step. Subjects such as Religious Education can be used to systematically introduce the concepts of noble morals. Meanwhile, group assignments in other subjects can be designed to promote cooperation, tolerance, and empathy among students. These results indicate that a well-designed moral education strategy can help address moral issues among students and create a generation that is not only intellectually smart but also possesses high moral integrity.

Conclusion

This research concludes that the cultivation of noble character in the school environment is very important for shaping students' integrity and moral character. Strategies based on exemplary behavior, extracurricular programs, and the integration of moral values into the curriculum have proven effective in creating a supportive learning environment. Schools that implement this approach have successfully reduced disciplinary violations by up to 40% and increased students' awareness of social values such as honesty, empathy, and responsibility.

Moreover, the importance of moral education lies not only in its impact on students individually but also in creating a holistic educational ecosystem. Teachers, as the primary role models, must demonstrate moral values in their daily actions, such as discipline, honesty, and care for students. Extracurricular programs based on moral values, such as social and religious activities, also provide students with real experiences to practice noble morals in their daily lives.

Training for educators to integrate moral values into all subjects is highly recommended. This ensures that these values become an inseparable part of the learning process. Collaboration between schools, parents, and the community is essential to create synergy in supporting the moral development of students. Another recommendation that can be drawn from this research includes the development of a technology-based moral education program. By utilizing digital platforms, students can access character education materials interactively. Additionally, periodic evaluations of the effectiveness of the character-building program in schools need to be conducted to ensure the program's relevance and sustainability.

With the implementation of consistent strategies, it is hoped that future generations will have a strong moral foundation to face global challenges. Moral education in schools is not only the responsibility of educational institutions but also a shared duty to create a generation of young people who are dignified, competent, and positively contribute to society. With solid collaboration and sustainable implementation, character building can become a strong foundation for the national education system to produce students with excellent character and high morals. In addition, strengthening the integration between the curriculum and moral values also opens up opportunities for innovation in character-based education, making students not only intellectually smart but also excellent in personality and social attitudes. This initiative is expected to support a more humane, holistic, and nation-building-oriented vision of education.

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