

Comparison of Character Education for Elementary School Students in Indonesia and Japan

Yeni Agustin^{1,5}, Azwar Ananda², Nurhizrah Gistituati³, Rusdinal⁴

¹Doctoral student of Educational Sciences, Padang State University

^{2,3,4}Lecturer at Padang State University

⁵Science teacher at State Junior High School 6 Sawahlunto



Abstract: The purpose of this research is motivated by the widespread phenomenon of social deviation related to morals and character in the midst of Indonesian society today. Thus, the question arises whether the character education that is taught theoretically in schools can be properly understood and applied in everyday life. Character is an individual trait in the form of traits, personality, character and behavior that is expressed in everyday life. In everyday life, there are rules or norms that we must obey to maintain peace and harmony together. However, we often see that there are many people who act outside the existing norms and cause noise and harm to other parties. This phenomenon or social phenomenon that often occurs is considered a deviant behavior or what we know as social deviation. Where people who violate these norms are often aware of their actions but still do them because of an impulse. To get to a glorious nation requires good and consistent character from every citizen. The application of character education to elementary school children is one of the efforts to prevent the occurrence of unsustainable morals in the nation's next generation. Because education should not only educate students to become smart and knowledgeable generations, but also must have good character, morality and character. Elementary school children become objects in the initial effort to cultivate good character because at the age range of 7-11 years, they are in the cognitive development of concrete operations. At this stage, children rely on their logical rationality to make a decision. Therefore, this stage requires proper understanding. In addition to the efforts made by the government through the education system in the curriculum that requires character education, the role of family and community is also needed to maximize the results of character education in schools. This study uses a qualitative method with a literature study approach that is guided by the elementary school education curriculum in Japan and Indonesia. Although the two countries have different character crises, they both apply character education to their country's curriculum. Of course this shows how important good character is for the next generation which is expected to be a milestone towards a glorious nation.

Keywords: *Character Education; Primary school; Indonesia; Japan.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the current situation of the Covid-19 Pandemic, all countries in the world are facing almost the same problems. All activities are limited to prevent the spread of the Corona virus, including teaching and learning activities. In Indonesia, it has been more than a year that all teaching and learning activities, from elementary and secondary to tertiary levels, have been carried out online, without face-to-face.

Online learning immediately makes us aware of the extraordinary potential of the internet that has not been fully utilized in various fields, including education. However, behind every positive side of something, there must be a negative side, or at least the bad possibility that could happen. Although formally educational activities can still be carried out online, but because students and students have to study at home, character education during this pandemic, it feels a little neglected.

But previously, when educational activities were carried out in schools, character education was carried out with direct

supervision from teachers or lecturers. Activities that support character education can also be carried out directly, intensively and the level of success can be measured.

In current conditions, when educational activities are carried out online, where what happens is mostly the learning process, or the transfer of knowledge, nothing can guarantee that students or students get character education from their parents in accordance with the values that have been taught. by educational institutions.

For example, in some Islamic schools, which emphasize character education with worship activities such as sunnah and obligatory prayers in congregation, or recitation of the Koran, currently they cannot automatically carry out these activities, because students have to study at home. Indeed, it is possible that some schools have established a mechanism for reporting student worship activities at home, but the presence of teachers and educators as well as their direct interaction with students is required for the implementation of comprehensive character education.

The example of educators who are seen and felt directly by students and students is the main key to character education in educational institutions. Especially in the current situation, where many parents are very busy at work, especially when online learning is done. Of course, they cannot directly supervise what their children are doing.

Many teachers complain about student and student participation when online learning takes place. Teachers find it difficult to ascertain whether students and students take learning seriously. Because it often happens, in online learning, there are students or students who intentionally post a video that has been recorded, so that it seems as if they are following the learning process, but in fact they are doing something else.

What is worried is that if this pandemic lasts a long time, and online learning is carried out for a full year or maybe more, the young generation of this nation will get used to various facilities that do not educate and mature. They may lose a full year of character education whose value is very valuable as a provision to live life.

This nation no longer faces the threat of a shortage of smart people in today's internet era. Unlimited access to information makes it easy for everyone to learn anything. However, learning is different from education, let alone character education. This nation needs a young generation whose positive character is formed, and that can only be achieved by character education that prioritizes the example of teachers, which must be witnessed and imitated directly by students. Therefore, it is time for the Government and all elements of education in Indonesia to think about how to replace character education which during this pandemic period had to be neglected.

Do not let the loss of character education values also become part of the "new normal". So that later we will no longer feel strange seeing the younger generation who has lost positive characters because our education is finally dominated by online learning which only prioritizes the transfer of knowledge without inculcating noble moral values. That is what this nation really needs to improve its own situation which is being hit by many problems like today. It is fitting for Indonesia to adopt a character education system for students who have succeeded, as in Japan.

Japan is one of the countries that implements a character education system at an early age, because it considers that character is the main capital to build a quality society. The seriousness of the Japanese government to make its people have good character, is not easily obtained. This seriousness started early, namely in the elementary school (SD) phase. Elementary schools usually consist of children between the ages of 5-11 years, or Kindergarten (TK) to sixth grade (Harmon, Harmon, & Jones, 2005).

Apart from Japan, Indonesia has also implemented a character education policy in its education system. Character education is the main basis for building a superior nation. Character education in Indonesia contains values, morals, character, culture, or Pancasila values (Hasan, 2012:84). Law number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System reads, then cultural and national character education is defined as a process of internalization and appreciation of cultural values and national character that is carried out by students actively under the guidance of teachers, school principals and education staff and is realized in life in the classroom, school, and community. With many people who are aware of the importance of character education, it will be able to make the nation a superior nation. Character education at the elementary school level is contained in the 2013 curriculum. Character education in Indonesia is not only applied to one specific subject but is applied to every existing subject. The government is starting to pay attention to the importance of character education to form quality Human Resources (HR).

Therefore, elementary school students are used as research objects in analyzing character education in Japan and in

Indonesia, because character education for elementary school students is the first level of character building for quality Human Resources. So that in the future these resources can help improve the quality of a country towards a superior generation. Therefore, this research raises several problem formulations, namely:

1. Why is character education at the elementary school level so important?
2. What are the results achieved from character education in Indonesia at the elementary school level?
3. What are the results achieved from character education in Japan at the elementary school level?

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a literature study approach. The literature study research method is a research method with information and data collection techniques such as reference books, articles, notes, and journals that are relevant to the problems discussed (Sari & Asmendri, 2020). The literature study method was used to obtain data sources relevant to the problems discussed. Sources of data obtained include primary and secondary data. Guidelines for character education in the Indonesian and Japanese curricula as primary data and related journals as secondary data.

The literature study research method allows us to look for other research references from various reliable sources.

There are several methods that can be used to conduct a Literature Study, including:

A. Keyword search

Search for relevant keywords in catalogs, indexes, search engines, and full-text sources. This is useful both for narrowing the search to specific subject headings and for finding sources not captured under relevant subject headings. To search the database effectively, start with a Keyword search, find the relevant record, and then find the relevant Subject Title. In search engines, include lots of keywords to narrow the search and carefully evaluate what you find.

B. Subject search

The Subject Title (sometimes called the Descriptor) is a specific term or phrase used consistently by online or print indexes to describe a book or journal article. This applies to library catalogs as well as many other library databases.

C. Find the latest scientific books and articles

In catalogs and databases, sort by latest date and search for books from scientific magazines and articles from scientific journals. The more recent the source, the more recent references and citations.

D. Search for citations in scientific sources

Keep track of references, footnotes, endnotes, citations, etc. in relevant readings. Search for a specific book or journal in the library catalog. This technique helps you be a part of a scientific conversation about a particular topic.

E. Search through published bibliographies (including sets of footnotes in relevant subject documents)

Published bibliographies on specific subjects often include sources missed by other types of searches. Bibliography is the title of the subject in the Catalog, so a guided search with Bibliography as the subject and your topic as keywords will help you find it.

F. Search through people's sources (whether through verbal contact, email, etc.)

Not only through books and the internet, you can find sources of literature studies from other people. Such people are for example professors or librarians with relevant knowledge.

G. Systematic browsing, especially of full-text sources organized into predictable subject groupings

Libraries organize books by subject, with similar books kept together. Browsing through the stacks is a good way to find similar books; however, in large libraries, some books are not in the main stack (for example, they might be checked out or in ReCAP), so use catalogs as well.

1. Literature Study Data Collection Techniques

In the process of collecting literature study data, 3 important processes are needed, namely:

- Editing: re-examination of the data obtained, especially in terms of completeness, clarity of meaning and harmony of meaning between one another;
- Organizing: organizing the data obtained with the required framework;
- Finding: conducting further analysis of the results of organizing data by using predetermined rules, theories and methods so that conclusions are found which are the results of answers to the formulation of the problem.

To obtain high credibility, researchers must be sure that the documents/manuscripts are authentic. Must meet at least the following requirements:

- Data collection can be done without disturbing the object or atmosphere of the research.
- Data collection needs to be supported also by documentation, including through: photos, videos, USB, etc. This documentation will be useful for checking the data that has been collected.
- Data collection should be done in stages and as many researchers as possible try to collect.

2. Literature Study Research

a. Types of research

Judging from the type of research, the type of research used in this study is library research, namely research carried out through collecting data or scientific writings aimed at the object of research or data collection that is library in nature, or studies carried out to solve a problem. problem which basically rests on a critical and in-depth study of the relevant library materials. Before conducting a review of library materials, researchers must first know for sure about the source from which the scientific information will be obtained. The sources used include; textbooks, scientific journals, statistical references, research results in the form of theses, theses, dissertations, and the internet, as well as other relevant sources.

b. Nature of research

Judging from its nature, this research includes descriptive research, descriptive research focuses on a systematic explanation of the facts obtained when the research was conducted

3. Data Analysis Techniques

After all the data has been collected, the next step is to analyze the data so that a conclusion can be drawn. To obtain correct and precise results in analyzing the data, the author uses content analysis techniques. Content analysis is research that is an in-depth discussion of the content of written or printed information in the mass media. Content analysis can be used to analyze all forms of communication, be it newspapers, radio news, television advertisements and all other documentation materials. While the connection with the discussion is as one of the author's efforts in facilitating understanding by analyzing the truth through the opinions of scholars who are then used as research references.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. *Character education in elementary school is very important*

Basically, character education for children in ancient times and now is very different. Character education in ancient times was indeed better than today. Quality characters at this time need to be formed and nurtured from an early age. If you pay attention to the current high level of crime, such as rampant drug use, violence is happening everywhere, and the worst thing is that respect for people is decreasing, it cannot be separated from the association and education that was instilled in him at an early age. And when elementary school (SD) age is a critical period for the formation of one's character, moral inculcation through character education as early as possible to children is the main key to building the nation and state. This happens because, the attitude of most children today is more stubborn or unruly and makes parents stroke their chests, for example elementary school children who dare to fight teachers and parents, fight with friends, smoke and there are still other bad behaviors. Character education is very important because it can improve the quality of the implementation and outcomes of education in

schools that lead to the achievement of the formation of character and noble character of elementary school children as a whole, integrated, and balanced. Joint steps are needed to make it happen, so that the Indonesian nation turns into a nation of high character. If character education has achieved success, it will create the next generation of a nation with character and there is no doubt that the future of the Indonesian nation will experience changes for the better.

The development of technology today cannot be prevented by anyone. However, there are efforts to minimize and strengthen supervision and provide character education to children in this millennial era. This is done so that children know the positive and negative impacts of using technology in the current era of globalization. Elementary school children are children who are still at an early age who are generally unstable at that time and tend to have a fairly large curiosity and are easily influenced by negative things.

Character education is the first step in the formation of character in the individual. Education should not only give birth to individuals who excel in the fields of science and technology, but education should also be able to give birth to people of superior character and knowledge (Putri, nd). Education is expected to give birth to a new generation with intelligence in knowledge and wisdom in behavior. Individuals with good character in the future will become human resources who can support a country to become a nation that excels in morals and character. A character can be formed through repeated routines or habits so that it sticks into a character. As stated by Sudrajat (2011) education has two goals, namely: making humans intelligent and directing humans to be good individuals in morals and character. Directing humans to be good persons is not an easy matter. Therefore, problems related to morals and character become problems themselves that must be found a solution. One of them is prevention through the education system. Character education in elementary schools aims to shape and prepare children early as the next generation of the nation with morals and character. The character of a nation is an important point considering that every citizen is obliged to maintain and uphold the dignity of the nation and state. Therefore, problems related to morals and character become problems themselves that must be found a solution. One of them is prevention through the education system. Character education in elementary schools aims to form and prepare children early as the next generation of the nation with morals and character. The character of a nation is an important point considering that every citizen is obliged to maintain and uphold the dignity of the nation and state. Therefore, problems related to morals and character become problems themselves that must be found a solution. One of them is prevention through the education system. Character education in elementary schools aims to form and prepare children early as the next generation of the nation with morals and character. The character of a nation is an important point considering that every citizen is obliged to maintain and uphold the dignity of the nation and state. Character education in elementary schools aims to form and prepare children early as the next generation of the nation with morals and character. The character of a nation is an important point considering that every citizen is obliged to maintain and uphold the dignity of the nation and state.

Children at the elementary school level are the right start to implementing character education. Based on the theory put forward by Piaget (1952) children in the age range of 7-11 years have the beginning of a rational mindset, which means that children put forward things that can be digested logically by their minds to solve a problem. If there is a difference between thought and perception, between theory and practice, then in situations like this children will use their logic to make a decision. This theory is called the theory of cognitive development of children in concrete operational stages. This is supported by Lickona (2004) who suggests seven basic reasons why character education in elementary schools is very important to implement, namely:

- 1) Character education in schools, ensures children get a good start to shape their personality
- 2) Additional efforts to improve academic achievement
- 3) Some kids can't form too strong a character for themselves anywhere else
- 4) Preparing children to be ready in the life of a pluralistic society
- 5) As an initial solution to moral-social problems and prevention so that the next generation becomes a better generation.
- 6) Preparing children to be ready to compete to meet the country's goal of becoming a superior nation

7) Maintaining cultural values that become the nation's personality

With the above opinion, of course, it becomes increasingly clear why character education is important to implement. Instilling character in schools can achieve success if it is supported by the family and the environment. Indeed, the formation of the first character in children is through wisdom and compassion in the pattern of parenting and how to apply habits in the family. Meanwhile, the environment acts as an additional supplement that becomes the main example for children to practice character in society. In this social life later the maturity of a character will be tested. Judging from the phenomena that occur in a pluralistic society, the wisdom of an individual in behaving also becomes a mirror of the success of the character that is instilled in him.

2. *Character Education in Indonesia*

Character education from an early age is important in the field of moral education, especially in the digital era like today. What makes many children or students prefer to be alone and more concerned with their smart phones, making a lack of sense to socialize with other people. There are many countries out there that have taught character education and have had good outputs. Likewise with Indonesia, which has implemented character education at the elementary school level through the 2013 curriculum, which hopes to have good character later. This government policy is of course very much supported by many parties, because it has a very good purpose. As students are required to be smart, active and also do not forget to have a good character. If someone does not have a good character, it can have a negative impact that we don't want. In order for character education to be implemented properly, apart from being regulated in the 2013 curriculum, the government carried out the PPK (Strengthening Character Education) movement.

In the 2013 curriculum itself, it aims to change or improve the attitudes of students so that they have good moral values. Teaching that attitudes, knowledge and skills are one way for learners, especially elementary school students, so that from a young age they are trained to behave in accordance with existing values (Haryati, 2017).

The success of character education also depends on the family, teachers at the school and the child's environment. The family is the closest person, then at school there are teachers who will teach character education beyond what is taught by the family. In schools, the role of being a parent is the teacher. Therefore, teachers also need to be trained first in character education. In order to be able to teach and provide examples to elementary school students. If you aim to want the next generation to have

good character, must have qualified teachers too. In lessons in schools, especially elementary school students, character education is also taught in civics education lessons (PKn). In Civics lessons, it is taught so that students can become someone who has a sense of nationalism, manners and when in class they can be active. It's just that the implementation is still lacking. However, since the 2013 curriculum was created and implemented, the government has implemented thematic learning in several lessons in elementary schools. In this thematic learning, it teaches students to be actively involved in the classroom. Because being active itself is one of the goals of the 2013 curriculum to make students dare to try and this is one of character building.

Then there is the PPK (Strengthening Character Education) movement, which is expected to strengthen the character education system in Indonesia. There are five priority main character values. Such as religious, nationalist, independent, mutual cooperation and integrity. Indonesia is a religious country, so religious values are the first values that must really be implemented. Because it shows or reflects faith in God Almighty and loves peace and can tolerate. Nationalist values are a way of behaving and thinking to put the interests of the nation above personal interests. Then there is independence, namely the attitude so as not to depend on others. Don't forget that we have to work together. Gotong royong is an act that values cooperation and communication in groups. When we are faced with a problem, we must have a sense of mutual cooperation so that the problem can be resolved. And lastly there is integrity, this is the value of how you can be trusted by others. In words, actions and work.

3. *Character Education in Japan*

Japan is known as a country that prioritizes education. Education in Japan does not only lead to academic and non-academic, but also moral education. Since April 2018, Japan has implemented character education in elementary school as a subject called *doutoku-kyouiku*. In these subjects there are 4 perspectives that must be taught, namely:

1. Self-awareness skills

- ♦ Can distinguish good and bad deeds
- ♦ Don't lie or cheat
- ♦ Can take care of your own health and safety
- ♦ Not selfish
- ♦ Study hard

2. Skills in socializing with other people

- ♦ Can behave well with others
- ♦ Thanks to those who have done good
- ♦ Can say with kind words to others
- ♦ Can help friends who are in trouble

3. Expertise in respecting life, nature and His creation

- ♦ Can understand the beauty of life and appreciate life
- ♦ Can know and treat the natural surroundings well
- ♦ Can treat animals and plants well

4. Social skills in groups and society

- ♦ Can keep promises and rules
- ♦ Can appreciate the work of others
- ♦ Can respect elders
- ♦ Can respect teachers and administrators at school
- ♦ Have an interest in local culture and customs
- ♦ Getting used to other people from different cultures

The purpose of this special moral subject is to cultivate good morality as the basis of a better life. Students are expected to be able to behave in accordance with the morals taught. That way, student morality will increase, thereby minimizing deviant behavior by students (Pearce, 2021).

Moral special subjects are guided by textbooks published by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology. The book is entitled (*watashitachi no doutoku*) which means our morality. The book is divided into 2 chapters, namely the reading chapter and the writing chapter. The reading chapter contains stories and sayings of great people. Meanwhile, the writing chapter contains instructions and a question related to the students' personal feelings and desires. By writing students can get to know themselves and become an opportunity for teachers to know how to think, feel, and can guide them individually. In addition to the manual, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology also published a complementary book entitled (*kokoro no nooto*) which will be used by the students to write how they feel.

In special moral lessons the teaching methods that are more often used are discussion and role playing or drama. According to the survey results of Gakukei University Tokyo, the percentage of using discussion teaching methods is 76.7% and role-playing methods are 71%. By discussing groups, students discuss ideas effectively by sharing, summarizing, and comparing ideas in discussion groups (ISHIDA, 2018).

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted, it can be concluded that character education is an effort to instill good character so that it can be practiced in everyday life as a habit. Moral values, manners and morals are the main points in character building. Education should not only give birth to intelligent people, but also give birth to people of good character. Plus, there are currently many social phenomena that show a character crisis in society which makes us aware that character education is important and must be pursued for its success. Children as the nation's generation are the initial stage in the seriousness of planting good character. In the age range of 7-11 years, children are in the stage of cognitive development of concrete operations. At this stage children consider a decision through their logical rationality. The success of this character education is a shared responsibility, not only the government. However, families and communities also play a role as additional supplements in efforts to instill character in children.

Character education has been established in various countries and has a good output. Indonesia and Japan are one of the countries that implement character education. In Indonesia itself, character education has been regulated in the 2013 curriculum and the government has also implemented PPK (Strengthening Character Education). In the 2013 curriculum, it is expected that students, including elementary school students (SD) to be smart, active and have good character. Then to strengthen character education taught in schools, the government itself carried out the PPK movement. It is hoped that through this movement, the characters that will be built from an early age will survive and can develop the quality or potential of children.

In Japan, character education is used as a special subject, namely (*doutoku-kyouiku*) which teaches students to get to know themselves, society and nature better. In fact, the government made a manual entitled (*watashitachi no doutoku*) in which there are two learning cores, namely writing and reading. By writing, students are expected to be able to know and understand themselves so that teachers can know how students think. Meanwhile, on the topic of reading, students are presented with stories and sayings of great people. In addition, the government also published a companion book entitled (*kokoro no noto*) which will be used by students to write personal feelings.

REFERENCE

- [1]. Agustin, Y., & Jamna, J. (2021). Philosophy of Humanism Education in the Perspective of Science Learning for Students at the Junior High School Level. *International Journal of Progressive Sciences and Technologies*, 29(2), 448-453.
- [2]. Agustin, Y., Jamna, J., & Sofelma, S. (2021). Human Nature in Education. *International Journal of Progressive Sciences and Technologies*, 29(2), 439-447.
- [3]. Agustin, Y., Abdulah, A., Gistituati, N., & Bentri, A. (2021). Optimization of Science Learning Blended Learning Method with Google Classroom for Increasing Learning Activities of Students During the Covid-19 Pandemic Class VIII. *International Journal of Progressive Sciences and Technologies*, 29(1), 461-475
- [4]. Agustin, Y., Ambyar, A., & Aziz, I. (2021). Application of Alternative Assessment in Efforts to Improve Education Quality. *International Journal of Progressive Sciences and Technologies*, 29(1), 476-483.
- [5]. Agustin, Y., Oktavia, B., & Rahadian, Z. (2020). Critical Thinking Ability and Student Learning Outcomes Through the STEM-5E (Bybee) Approach in Chemistry Learning About Molecular Shapes. *International Journal of Progressive Sciences and Technologies*, 20(2), 265-272.
- [6]. Cipta, H. (2017). Penerapan Pendidikan Karakter Pada Anak di Indonesia dan Jepang. *NOURA: Jurnal Kajian Gender*, 1(1), 82-98.
- [7]. Harmon, D. A., Harmon, D., & Jones, T. S. (2005). *Elementary education: A reference handbook*. ABC-CLIO.
- [8]. Haryati, S. (2017). Pendidikan Karakter dalam Kurikulum 2013. *Tersedia Secara Online Di: Http://Lib. Untidar. Ac. Id/Wp-Content/Uploads [Diakses Di Bandung, Indonesia: 17 Maret 2017]*.
- [9]. ISHIDA, M. (2018). How Coaching Influences Teachers' Beliefs and Students' Self-Regulated Learning in High School English Classes. Mie University.

- [10]. Lickona, T. (2004). *Character matters: How to help our children develop good judgment, integrity, and other essential virtues*. Simon and Schuster.
- [11]. Mulyadi, B. (2019). Model Pendidikan Karakter Anak Usia Dini Dan Anak Usia Sekolah Dasar Di Jepang. *KIRYOKU*, 3(3), 141-149.
- [12]. Pearce, D. R. (2021). Homogenous representations, diverse realities: Assistant language teachers at elementary schools. *The Language Teacher*.
- [13]. Piaget, J. (1952). Jean Piaget.
- [14]. Putri, D. P. (n.d.). Pendidikan karakter pada anak sekolah dasar di era digital. Google Scholar
- [15]. Sari, M., & Asmendri, A. (2020). Penelitian Kepustakaan (Library Research) dalam Penelitian Pendidikan IPA. *Natural Science: Jurnal Penelitian Bidang IPA Dan Pendidikan IPA*, 6(1), 41–53.
- [16]. Sudrajat, A. (2011). Mengapa pendidikan karakter? *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*, 1(1).
- [17]. Widisuseno, I. (2018). Pola budaya pembentukan karakter dalam sistem pendidikan di Jepang. *Kiryoku*, 2(4), 221-230.