



The Implementation of Character Education among Students at Rahayu Chandra Bethania

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Abstract: Character education is a strategic foundation of the Indonesian national education system, aiming to develop students who are not only academically competent but also possess integrity, ethical awareness, and social responsibility. Although character education has been conceptually integrated into educational policies and curricula, its implementation in schools continues to face various challenges. This study aims to describe and analyze the implementation of character education at Rahayu Chandra Bethania Elementary School, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and formulate effective and contextual strategies for character education implementation. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the study involved all 50 students of the school as research participants. Data were collected through classroom and school activity observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Data analysis was conducted inductively through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while data validity was ensured through methodological triangulation. The findings indicate that character education is systematically implemented through structured and routine activities, including daily morning prayers, literacy and numeracy programs conducted from Tuesday to Thursday, Bible study sessions every Friday, and weekly Talent and Career Day activities on Saturdays. These programs have proven effective in fostering students' religious values, discipline, responsibility, creativity, independence, and self-confidence. The consistency of program implementation, teachers' role modeling, and a supportive school culture emerged as key factors contributing to the success of character education. This study confirms that integrating character education into daily school activities is an effective and sustainable approach to fostering holistic character development among elementary school students.

Keywords: Character Education; School Culture; Elementary School; Habituation; Qualitative Research

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1. Introduction

Character education is a conscious and systematic effort to instill values so that they are internalized within students and manifested in positive attitudes and behaviors (Purwaningsih & Ridha, 2024; Sakban & Sundawa, 2023). Character education does not primarily lie in instructional content but rather in activities that are embedded in, accompany, and permeate the learning process, including the atmosphere that shapes and reflects the habituation of positive attitudes and behaviors. Thus, character education is activity-based rather than material-based (Istiyono et al., 2021; Tohri et al., 2022; Zulela et al., 2022).

Social realities in schools indicate that deviant behaviors among students—such as a lack of respect, honesty, and responsibility—remain prevalent (Revalina et al., 2023). In addition, the high incidence of negative behaviors such as bullying, plagiarism, physical altercations, and dishonesty reflects weak internalization of character values in daily learning practices (Nurasiah et al., 2022). Consistent with this view, (Ambarsari et al., 2025; Murniyetti et al., 2016) report that negative behaviors including bullying, indiscipline, and lack of responsibility are still widespread among students, signaling insufficient internalization of character values despite the existence of supportive educational regulations. Furthermore, external environmental influences, such as social media ex-

posure and unregulated peer interactions, pose additional challenges to student character development (Hasan & Juhannis, 2024; Limpad et al., 2025).

The phenomenon of moral degradation among students is further exacerbated by globalization and rapid technological advancement, which may generate both positive and negative impacts. Although character education has been promoted by the government as a primary solution, empirical realities reveal variations in the success of its implementation across schools, indicating the need for more effective and context-sensitive implementation strategies (Hidayati et al., 2020).

Moreover, disparities in understanding and practicing character education among teachers, school principals, and other educational stakeholders significantly affect the quality of character education outcomes in schools. This condition highlights an urgent need for in-depth research on how effective character education implementation can be realized and adapted to the socio-cultural contexts of students (Murniyetti et al., 2016).

The 18 Character Education Values for Students According to the Ministry of National Education (Kemendiknas). The Ministry of National Education (Kemendiknas) has formulated 18 character education values that need to be instilled in Indonesian society, particularly among students (Ginting et al., 2023): religious, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democratic values, curiosity, national spirit, love for the homeland, appreciation of achievement, friendliness / communicative, love of peace, love of reading, environmental awareness, social Awareness, responsibility.

Previous studies by (Elpayuni et al., 2024; Suryadi et al., 2024), as well as indicate that the effective implementation of character education requires synergy among school policies, teachers' roles, and students' participation within a supportive learning environment. However, these studies have not sufficiently highlighted the role of school culture as a primary supporting factor in the implementation of character education.

(Armini, 2024; Nurasiah et al., 2022; Shuai, 2023; Sri Ratna Dewi et al., 2024) examined the challenges faced by elementary schools in integrating character values into the curriculum and instructional practices. Their findings reveal that limited instructional time and insufficient teacher training constitute the major obstacles. Nevertheless, these studies have not explicitly explored strategies to overcome such barriers.

Meanwhile, (Ambarsari et al., 2025; Ariani et al., 2022; Hendrowibowo & Kristanto, 2023; Salisah et al., 2024) investigated the implementation of character education through the utilization of technology and parental involvement.

This study offers a novel contribution by focusing on students at Rahayu Chandra Bethania through a single-case study approach, which allows for an in-depth exploration of how character values are internalized within personal, family, and school contexts. The novelty of this research lies in its highly personalized approach, enabling a more nuanced identification of internal and external factors influencing the effectiveness of character education compared to previous studies that predominantly employed general or broad-based approaches. Utilizing a descriptive qualitative research method, this study provides a comprehensive and in-depth portrayal based on recent empirical data from schools in several regions of Indonesia.

The objectives of this study are to describe and analyze the implementation of character education among students, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and formulate effective strategies for the implementation of character education in schools.

This research is significant as it offers both practical and theoretical insights that can be utilized by teachers, school principals, and policymakers in designing and implementing character education programs that are more effective, adaptive, and sustainable, thereby fostering strong and high-quality student character.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the implementation of character education among students at Rahayu Chandra Bethania Elementary School. This approach was selected because of its capacity to describe social phenomena and student behavior in their natural contexts in a detailed

and comprehensive manner (Hidayati et al., 2020; Murniyetti et al., 2016; Retnawati et al., 2018).

The research subjects consisted of all 50 students enrolled at Rahayu Chandra Bethania Elementary School. Therefore, data collection was conducted comprehensively without sampling to obtain a holistic depiction of the implementation of character education at the school. The study was carried out over a three-month period, from June to August 2025.

Data collection techniques included direct observation of learning activities and student behaviors related to character education, semi-structured interviews with students to explore their understanding and experiences, and documentation analysis of school programs and policies related to character education implementation. Observations were conducted to examine interaction dynamics that reflect the internalization of character values, while in-depth interviews were used to uncover students' perceptions of the processes and impacts of character education (Retnawati et al., 2018).

The collected data were analyzed inductively through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was ensured through methodological triangulation by integrating findings from observations, interviews, and documentation. Peer debriefing and data auditing were also conducted to ensure the accuracy and objectivity of the research findings.

Through this research method, the study is expected to provide a valid and applicable operational overview of the implementation of character education among students at Rahayu Chandra Bethania Elementary School, including the supporting factors and challenges encountered.

3. Results and Discussion

The following findings are derived from interviews, observations, and document analysis concerning the forms of character education implemented at Rahayu Chandra Bethania Elementary School.

3.1 Daily Morning Prayer

The daily morning prayer activity is conducted routinely before the commencement of formal learning sessions. Interview data indicate that both teachers and students perceive morning prayer not only as a means of initiating the school day with spiritual reflection but also as a practice that fosters discipline, responsibility, and respect. Students are given opportunities to lead the prayer on a rotating basis, which contributes to the development of courage and self-confidence.

Observational data reveal that students gather in an orderly manner and participate solemnly in collective prayer sessions. Teachers closely supervise the activity to ensure a focused and undisturbed atmosphere. This routine serves as a crucial moment for helping students center their attention and emotional readiness for learning.

Documentation, including daily schedules and photographic records, demonstrates the consistency of morning prayer as an integral component of religious character formation within the school. Additionally, student punctuality is monitored to reinforce disciplinary values. Overall, the morning prayer activity has made a significant contribution to the development of students' religious character, discipline, and sense of responsibility, while fostering a harmonious and conducive school environment.

3.2 Literacy and Numeracy Programs (Tuesday–Thursday)

The literacy and numeracy programs are implemented three days per week to enhance students' reading and mathematical skills while simultaneously instilling character values such as patience, perseverance, and honesty. Teachers reported during interviews that these activities are designed to be interactive and engaging in order to maintain student motivation and reduce learning fatigue.

Observations show the use of diverse instructional strategies accompanied by intensive teacher support. Students actively engage in discussions and assist peers who encounter difficulties, indicating the reinforcement of cooperation and empathy. Documentation in the form of activity reports and learning evaluations confirms that the program is implemented in a systematic and structured manner and serves as an indicator of both academic improvement and character development.

Students expressed positive responses toward the program, noting that it not only enhances their academic abilities but also provides meaningful learning experiences that cultivate patience and self-confidence in task completion.

3.3 Weekly Bible Study (Friday)

Weekly Bible study sessions are conducted every Friday as an integral component of religious character education aimed at instilling Christian moral and ethical values among students. According to supervising teachers, the primary objective of this activity is to internalize moral values and ethical principles through scriptural study and group discussions.

Observational findings indicate that students participate seriously and actively in discussions, demonstrating reflective thinking and the application of religious values in daily life. The activity also promotes tolerance and mutual respect among students. Documentation, including weekly notes and discussion summaries, illustrates the integration of religious content with the practical application of character values such as patience, honesty, and respect.

Students reported that Bible study activities help them better understand and practice moral values, contributing to the development of responsible and ethical personal conduct.

3.4 Weekly Talent and Career Day (Saturday)

Talent and Career Day is a weekly program that invites professionals—such as doctors, managers, lawyers, lecturers, entrepreneurs, and police officers—to share their experiences and inspire students. Interviews with teachers revealed that the program aims to foster creativity, self-confidence, and career awareness among students.

Observations indicate high levels of student enthusiasm and active participation as they engage directly with professionals. Through these interactions, students learn the values of hard work, discipline, and the importance of pursuing personal interests in career development. Documentation, including event reports and photographic evidence, confirms the program's consistent and well-organized implementation, as well as its positive impact on students' motivation and character development.

Students acknowledged that this activity broadens their understanding of various professions and inspires them to aspire toward future goals with determination, thereby playing a significant role in fostering independence and future-oriented character development.

Interview data further reveal that the program effectively supports students in identifying their interests and talents while strengthening self-confidence and positive future orientations, which are essential components of holistic character formation.

Overall, these character education activities are implemented consistently and constitute an integral part of daily school life at Rahayu Chandra Bethania Elementary School. Collectively, they contribute to the development of students with strong character dispositions who are well-prepared to face future challenges grounded in positive values.

3.5 Discussion

a. Daily Morning Prayer

The finding that daily morning prayer creates a calm atmosphere, enhances students' spiritual awareness, and fosters discipline is consistent with previous studies on similar morning habituation practices. (NUR, 2023) reports that the GEMARI program (recitation, prayer, and morning dhuha prayer) is effective in developing elementary students' discipline, responsibility, perseverance, and independence. These findings indicate that morning religious activities function as an effective medium for strengthening religious character as well as students' cognitive and social development.

Further analysis underscores the essential role of morning prayer as a form of values education embedded in routine school activities, reinforcing the notion that religious and moral values can be effectively stimulated through daily habituation practices.

b. Literacy and Numeracy Activities (Tuesday–Thursday)

Daily literacy and numeracy activities have been shown to foster reading interest, numeracy skills, and character traits such as creativity and critical thinking. (Karlina, 2025), in their case study on the Gelidang program (Digital and Manual Literacy and Numeracy Movement), conclude that these activities significantly enhance students' interest in reading, writing, and numeracy.

In addition, (Ulfah, 2020) demonstrate that structured school literacy movements effectively cultivate a reading habit, which remains a critical challenge in the digital era. These findings reinforce the view that the integration of literacy and numeracy extends beyond academic skill development and contributes to the formation of consistent, future-oriented learning dispositions.

c. Weekly Bible Study (Friday)

Bible study activities facilitate moral and religious reflection within small-group settings, fostering contextualized understanding of religious values. Although there is limited research specifically addressing daily Bible study practices, similar approaches

have been extensively examined in the context of madrasahs and Islamic schools. (Hamli, 2023) found that morning Qur'an learning activities effectively promote students' religious character and discipline at Islamic elementary schools. This suggests that routine religious practices—regardless of religious context—play a significant and consistent role in shaping students' religious values and moral development.

d. Weekly Talent and Career Day (Saturday)

Talent or Career Day activities contribute to the development of students' creativity, self-confidence, responsibility, and integrity. Although direct empirical studies on this specific program remain limited, comparable approaches—such as extracurricular activities and practical project-based learning—have been shown to be effective in 21st-century character education, particularly in strengthening soft skills such as creativity and initiative.

Experiential literacy and numeracy-based programs, such as Market Day activities in East Flores that integrate literacy, numeracy, and student entrepreneurship practices, have been reported to enhance creativity, innovation, and responsibility. These findings resonate with the objectives of Talent Day activities, which facilitate direct talent expression and career exploration while fostering essential soft skills required for contemporary life.

e. Integration of Findings with Previous Studies and Theoretical Perspectives

Overall, the findings validate that the integration of religious habituation practices (morning prayer and Bible study), academic activities (literacy and numeracy), and personal development programs (Talent Day) contributes to a holistic spectrum of character development, encompassing religiosity, discipline, creativity, higher-order thinking skills, and proactive engagement.

From a values education perspective, the consistent integration of moral values into daily school activities is essential for embedding these values as part of students' identities. Meanwhile, the 21st-century skills framework positions character as a core domain, encompassing creativity, ethics, initiative, and responsibility, which are developed through everyday practices and authentic learning experiences.

4. Conclusions

The implementation of character education at Rahayu Chandra Bethania Elementary School is carried out through various routine and structured activities, including daily morning prayers, literacy and numeracy programs conducted on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, weekly Bible study sessions every Friday, and Talent/Career Day activities held every Saturday. These programs consistently foster students' religious character, discipline, responsibility, creativity, and self-confidence. This indicates that character education can be effectively and sustainably integrated into daily school activities.

The approach employed in implementing character education aligns with contemporary character education theories that emphasize the importance of habituating positive values, internalizing values through religious reflection, and developing students' personal potential as integral components of a holistic character formation process. These

findings are also consistent with previous studies demonstrating that the integration of character values into instructional practices and extracurricular activities enhances students' overall personality development.

Overall, character education at Rahayu Chandra Bethania Elementary School has been implemented effectively and has yielded positive impacts on students' attitudes and behaviors. Active teacher involvement, the participation of the entire school community, and consistent program implementation emerge as key factors contributing to its success. Therefore, efforts to strengthen character education through existing programs should be sustained and further developed to foster a generation of students with integrity who are well-prepared to face future challenges.

With the active involvement of parents and support from the community, character education does not stop at school but continues consistently at home and in the social environment. Synergy among schools, families, and the community is the key to the successful internalization of character values, both comprehensively and sustainably.

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