



ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE AND OBSTACLES OF TEACHERS IN BUILDING STUDENTS' INDEPENDENT CHARACTER

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role and obstacles faced by teachers in developing students' independent character, particularly at the elementary school level. Character education, including the value of independence, is an essential part of the learning process that must be instilled from an early age to shape a responsible and resilient generation. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study combined literature review and direct interviews with Mrs. Ipah Syaripah, the second-grade homeroom teacher at MI Al Khoeriyah 01, as the primary data source. The results indicate that teachers play a crucial role as educators, facilitators, and role models in developing students' independent character. Teachers guide students through daily classroom responsibilities, assign independent projects, and create a learning environment that encourages active participation. However, in practice, teachers also face several obstacles, such as a lack of motivation and self-confidence in students, differences in individual readiness levels, and limited learning time at school. To overcome these challenges, teachers strive to provide motivation, set realistic learning targets, and establish good cooperation with parents so that the value of independence can be developed sustainably.

Keywords: Character education, teacher's role, independence, obstacles

INTRODUCTION

Education is not a simple process; it encompasses various dimensions of life, from behavior and social values to norms and even scientific aspects. The primary goal of education is not solely academic achievement, but also the development of an individual's potential and abilities for the benefit of themselves and others. Furthermore, education plays a crucial role in shaping the character and personality of students (Cahyani & Dewi, 2021).

In a broader context, education plays a crucial role in shaping the whole person, not only as a place to develop knowledge and skills, but also as a primary foundation for character formation. Education is a crucial tool for developing quality human resources that are not only intellectually intelligent but also ethical and moral (Farid & Aziz, 2023). One crucial aspect of the educational process is character building, which aims to create a school environment that supports the growth of a generation that is independent, caring, and responsible, and upholds integrity in social life. Character education is inseparable from the process of developing students' identity at every level of education, from early childhood to higher education. Furthermore, character education is also a crucial tool for

instilling appropriate moral values that can be applied in everyday life.(Maharani et al., 2023).

Linguistically, the term "character" comes from the English word "character," which means a person's disposition, nature, or personality traits. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), character is defined as an inner aspect that influences how a person thinks, feels, and acts, and is closely related to morals and behavior. Therefore, character can be understood as a set of moral, mental, and ethical traits that distinguish one person from another (Rofi'ie, 2019).

A person's character develops through a combination of innate potential and the influence of the environment in which the individual grows and develops. This potential is often referred to as biological character. Ki Hajar Dewantara stated that human behavior is the result of a combination of innate traits and the influence of the social environment. Therefore, education is the most effective means of shaping and guiding this character. Through education, individuals can develop into people with noble character, clarity of thought, physical agility, and a sense of identity (Annur et al., 2021).

Character education is a systematic process carried out in educational settings, aimed at developing individual potential to develop noble personalities and morals. In its implementation, character education is also expected to produce a generation that makes positive contributions to the environment and society (Sagala et al., 2024). To support this, the government, through the Ministry of Education, has established 18 core values in character education that must be instilled in students. One of these core values is independence, which refers to a person's ability to complete tasks and make decisions independently without relying on assistance from others, demonstrating an attitude of self-responsibility (Dewi et al., 2021).

On the other hand, independence in the context of character education reflects a person's ability to make decisions and act independently, without relying on others (Sinaga et al., 2021). Independence reflects a sense of confidence in facing and solving various problems without requiring special assistance from others. In the independent learning process, students are seen as the primary managers and responsible for their own learning.

An independent attitude also reflects self-confidence in facing challenges and solving problems without having to rely directly on help from others. In learning activities that emphasize independence, students are seen as active subjects who take full responsibility for their own learning process. Implementing learning that focuses on developing independence is crucial from an early age. The goal is to help children become accustomed to carrying out activities independently as adults. Children who possess strong independence will be better prepared to face various challenges and navigate life with resilience and confidence (Indrianto & Sya'diyah, 2020).

The success of student character development, particularly independence, is inseparable from the roles of two key parties: teachers and parents. Teachers act as educators and role models, directly influencing students' behavior and mindsets, both through teaching and through concrete examples in everyday life. Teachers play a crucial role in instilling positive values in students from an early age (Shobihah & Walidah, 2021). Furthermore, parents, as the first educators at home, have an equally important influence, given that most interactions and time spent with children occur within the family environment.

However, despite various efforts, the process of developing independent character doesn't always run smoothly. Some of the obstacles often encountered include low student



motivation to learn independently, a lack of confidence in trying new things, and limited environmental support, such as inadequate learning facilities and minimal parental involvement in supporting children's learning.

Based on this background, this journal was written to examine in-depth the role of teachers in developing students' independent character and to identify obstacles that arise in the implementation process. This research focuses on second-grade students at MI Al Khoeriyah 01 as the object of study. This research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the dynamics of character education at the elementary school level and present effective strategies to strengthen the role of teachers in optimally fostering student independence.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, combining library research and interviews. The literature review was conducted through a review of various scientific literature sources obtained from Google Scholar, which discussed student independence and the role of teachers in character education. Meanwhile, interviews were conducted directly with Mrs. Ipah Syaripah, the homeroom teacher of grade 2 at MI Al-Khoeriyah 01, to obtain factual data and real-life experiences related to the implementation of learning and character building in the classroom.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. The Role of Teachers in Building CharacterIndependent Student

Teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' independent character, particularly in elementary school, where character development is significantly occurring (Labudasari & Rochmah, 2019). An interview with Mrs. Ipah Syaripah, a second-grade homeroom teacher, revealed that the role of teachers extends beyond delivering subject matter to serving as mentors and role models in everyday life within the school environment.

One of the important roles played by Mrs. Ipah is providing clear direction regarding learning objectives from the very beginning of the learning process. She believes that second-grade students are still learning to manage their focus and begin to recognize responsibility, so clarity of objectives is essential for them to manage themselves in a gradual and focused manner.

As educators, teachers serve as role models who reflect positive values in the school environment. To fulfill this role optimally, teachers are required to possess strong character, including responsibility, independence, authority, and discipline in all their actions and words (Bhughe, 2022). Teachers play a role not only in imparting knowledge but also in shaping students' habits and attitudes through exemplary behavior.

In the learning process, the presence of teachers directly influences student development, including cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. If teachers simply provide instructions without clear explanations or concrete examples, students will struggle to understand the material. Therefore, teachers play a crucial role in creating an educational and meaningful learning environment. Teachers are also required to demonstrate their authority in directing, guiding, and controlling student behavior to ensure it remains on a positive path (Abbas et al., 2024).

Furthermore, teachers also play a role in instilling values of independence through routine classroom activities. In practice, Ibu Ipah accustoms students to carrying out simple responsibilities such as class duty, tidying up stationery, and leading small group

discussions. These activities aim to foster independence, a sense of responsibility, and foster an awareness of social roles within the school environment.

Instilling the value of independence can be done not only at home but also consistently in the classroom. Through simple habits like preparing study materials independently, completing individual assignments without relying on peer assistance, keeping their respective study areas clean, and managing their time for assignments, teachers help students gradually develop independent learning patterns.

This habit, although it seems simple, if carried out consistently will shape the character of students into individuals who are self-confident, independent, and responsible for their duties and obligations from an early age (Dwi Rita Nova & Widiastuti, 2019).

Furthermore, based on the interview results, Ms. Ipah also emphasized the importance of the teacher's role as a facilitator in a flexible learning process. She stated that she strives to create a learning environment that encourages active student participation, not just waiting for instructions. One effort she makes is providing small projects that can be worked on individually, such as writing a short story or presenting their drawings. Through these activities, students are accustomed to thinking and completing tasks independently.

Equally important, the role of teachers as role models was also highlighted. Ibu Ipah explained that teachers' behavior, whether consciously or unconsciously, is imitated by students. Therefore, she always strives to demonstrate discipline, independence, and consistency in carrying out her duties as an educator. This role model is believed to be a crucial foundation for shaping students' character, particularly in instilling the values of independence from an early age.

B. Teachers' Obstacles in Building Students' Independent Character

While teachers play a crucial role in fostering independent character in students, this process isn't always smooth sailing. An interview with Ms. Ipah Syaripah, the second-grade homeroom teacher, revealed several challenges she frequently faces in her classroom when trying to get students accustomed to independent learning.

One of the most common concerns is a lack of motivation within the students themselves. Many of them arrive at school just sitting passively, waiting for instructions, and not taking action unless asked. Mrs. Ipah believes this may be due to home habits that are overly directive or overly helpful, so the children aren't used to making decisions or completing assignments on their own.

Another issue is self-confidence. According to Mrs. Ipah, many students are reluctant to try or are embarrassed to speak in front of their peers for fear of making mistakes. Ultimately, they choose to remain silent or avoid speaking. This fear hinders their development and discourages them from learning independently.

There are also challenges arising from differences in student readiness. In a class, not all children are at the same level, whether in terms of understanding, emotions, or responsibility. This requires teachers to be agile in adapting their approach to each child, and of course, this requires extra effort and time.

On the other hand, learning time at school is also limited. Teachers must meet curriculum targets, conduct assessments, and complete various administrative tasks. As a result, the space for in-depth character development in children is often marginalized.

Despite this, Mrs. Ipah continues to strive for solutions. She frequently provides encouragement through praise and direct encouragement to encourage students to feel valued and willing to try. She also sets reasonable learning targets to avoid overwhelming



the children. Equally important, she strives to maintain good communication with parents so that this process of developing independence is also supported at home. This way, efforts at school can be maximized and sustained.

CONCLUSION

The research findings show that teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' independent character at the elementary school level. A teacher's role extends beyond delivering subject matter to serving as an educator, guide, facilitator, and role model in students' daily lives. Teachers can instill values of independence through daily classroom routines, individual assignments, and the creation of an active and enjoyable learning environment. However, the process of developing students' independent character is not without its challenges. Some of these challenges include low intrinsic motivation, lack of self-confidence, varying levels of readiness within a class, and limited school time. To overcome these challenges, teachers need to develop adaptive and communicative strategies, such as rewarding student effort, setting realistic learning targets, and fostering strong partnerships with parents.

This research provides a real picture of the importance of the role of teachers in character education, especially in forming students' independent attitudes from an early age.

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