

THE IMPORTANCE OF MORAL EDUCATION IN THE FORMATION OF CHILDREN'S CHARACTER

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the central role of moral education in the process of forming children's character. This research method uses a qualitative approach with a literature review type. Data collection techniques using documentation. Primary data sources come from several books, journals, websites related to research. This data analysis uses content analysis content. The results of this research show that moral education does not only include moral norms, but also builds ethical values, empathy and social responsibility. This research also highlights the link between moral education, individual moral development, and their contribution to society more broadly. It is hoped that the results of this research can provide a strong theoretical basis for further understanding the importance of moral education in shaping children's character.

Keywords: *Moral Education; Formation Children's Character*

A. Introduction

Moral education plays an important role in shaping the character of children along with changes in social and cultural dynamics. According to Lickona, moral education not only instills moral norms, but also creates a foundation of ethical values that become a foundation in decision making. In the midst of increasingly complex information flows and interactions, children need to be equipped with a strong moral foundation in order to face various situations and challenges of life (Lickona, 2009). The importance of moral education in the formation of children's character becomes even deeper when looking at changes in social behavior and moral crises that occur in various walks of life. As Berkowitz points out, "Moral education is not only about teaching the difference between right and wrong, but also guiding children to understand and internalize moral values in everyday actions" (Berkowitz, 2012).

Moral education is becoming a major focus in building children's character, especially as we witness shifts in evolving social and cultural dynamics. Amid global information flows and changing societal values, children are at risk of moral uncertainty that can affect their character development. Moral education has a crucial role to provide a solid foundation of ethical values, help children

understand and accept differences, and guide them in facing complex moral challenges (Hutagaluh et al., 2020).

According to Kohlberg, character formation is the result of continuous moral development, which is influenced by interaction with the environment and understanding of social norms (Kohlberg, 1971). However, with the dynamics of social change so rapidly, the role of moral education is increasingly becoming central in ensuring children have a solid moral foundation. In Piaget's view, moral education not only includes the provision of rules and punishments, but also involves understanding and internalizing moral values (Piaget, 1932).

The moral crisis that has occurred in recent decades highlights the urgency of the need for more systematic and integrated moral education in the educational curriculum. According to Fullan, effective moral education must involve collaboration between families, schools, and communities to create an educational environment that supports children's character development (Fullan, n.d.).

By looking at the complexity of moral challenges faced by children, this literature review is directed to investigate basic concepts in moral education and analyze their positive impact on children's character building. Thus, this research seeks to make conceptual and practical contributions in supporting the development of an education system that is able to shape children's character holistically and sustainably (Buseri, 2017).

An in-depth review of the literature on moral education can provide a clearer picture of the basic concepts and their positive impact on children's character formation. Therefore, this study aims to explore an in-depth understanding of the central role of moral education in shaping children's character, with the hope of making conceptual and practical contributions in the context of children's education and development.

B. Method

This research will use a literature study approach as a methodological framework. The literature study approach allows researchers to investigate, collect, and compile literature related to the role of moral education in the formation of children's character. The research steps include. Literature Source Identification: Researchers will conduct a careful and systematic search through academic databases, scientific journals, and related books. The focus of the search will be directed to literature that discusses the basic concepts of moral education and its impact on children's character. Literature Selection and Collection: After identifying potential sources, researchers will make selections based on relevance to the research topic. The selected literature will be collected and analyzed in depth to gain a holistic understanding of the child's moral education and character. Literature Analysis: Researchers will conduct a critical analysis of the literature that has

been collected. The focus of the analysis will include the basic concepts of moral education, the underlying theories, and their positive impact on children's character building. Concept Synergy: Researchers will seek to synergize concepts found from various literatures to form a strong conceptual foundation. This understanding will help strengthen the argument regarding the importance of moral education in the formation of children's character. Using a literature study approach, this study aims to present a deep understanding of the relationship between moral education and children's character building, as well as provide a conceptual basis for the development of a more holistic education system.

All research steps will be directed towards obtaining a comprehensive and detailed picture of the role of moral education in shaping children's character, detailing relevant findings and implications.

C. Finding and Discussion

1. Finding

Moral education has a very important role in the formation of children's character. Moral education becomes the basic basis for shaping children's values and standards of behavior. According to the data we collected, children who get moral education tend to show better behavior and have more noble values (C et al., 2021; Siti Rukhani, 2021). They are more respectful of others, more honest, and have a strong commitment to justice. Moral education functions by conveying and teaching various values and principles to children. This can involve direct teaching about what is considered good and bad, right and wrong (Subianto, 2013). In addition, moral education also serves to foster empathy and justice, instill a sense of responsibility, and help children make ethical decisions. That's not to say moral education has to be dogmatic or authoritarian. In contrast, the best moral education usually involves discussion, reflection, and criticism of ethical issues. This helps children learn to think morally, not just obey the rules given to them.

2. Discussion

The results of this study provide a deep picture of the importance of moral education in shaping children's character. Through a literature study approach, this study analyzes the basic concepts of moral education and its positive impact on the formation of children's character. In this study, we try to dig deeper into the impact of moral education on children's character formation. (Berkowitz, 2012) argue that moral education has a significant impact in shaping the character of individuals, especially children. Children who are given moral education from an early age tend to form more positive character and behavior. According to a study conducted by Hergenbahn & Olson (2007), moral education helps children understand and appreciate ethical values that are beneficial in their lives. Moral education triggers a process of internalization of these values, reinforcing good behavior and acts of integrity in the long run.

According to Leger (2007), along with the formation of children's character, moral education also serves as a bridge of knowledge between what is 'right' and 'wrong'. Moral

education assists the child in making responsible choices with correct knowledge and understanding of the consequences. This is in line with Kohn's (1997) research, which found a positive relationship between moral education and child well-being. Child well-being is not only a matter of physical and emotional health, but also includes character building and quality of social interaction. Berkowitz & Bier (2007) also point out that there is a positive relationship between moral education and children's emotional well-being, such as self-control and empathy. Moral education not only revolves around teaching moral norms, but also involves the construction of ethical values. As expressed by Lickona (2009), moral education is not just about establishing what is right and wrong, but rather about forming the foundations of values that underlie decision making.

Further analysis revealed that moral education has a significant positive impact on the formation of children's character. States that the continuous process of moral development is influenced by moral education, which plays an important role in shaping the moral consciousness of the individual. The results of this study provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between moral education and children's character building, and underscore the importance of the integration of moral education in the educational curriculum in response to the moral crisis faced by modern society. A study presented by Aina Kamila in 2023 states that moral education plays a role in helping children understand the difference between right and wrong, as well as develop positive attitudes and empathy towards fellow humans and the environment.

Based on Sudaryanti's assessment in 2012, moral education for children in the early stages of their development requires the participation of all elements of human life, not just cognitive aspects. Moral education should be synchronized with the growth of the child's psyche, with the aim of developing all dimensions of human life, including intellectual, personality, aesthetic, and physical. In the process of transforming character, educational approaches and methods that are in line with the level of development of child psychology can be applied. This is an important point, because character comes from various components such as competence, motivation, habit, and moral action – moral action, which is formulated from other characters.

Based on Ayunda Zahroh Harahap's (2021) research, character education can contribute to helping individuals to live and interact within the scope of family, society, and as citizens. In addition, character education has the potential to give birth to improved student academic achievement outcomes. Some efficient character education methods include education through example, habituation (repetition), and narrative or storytelling methods. Character education can be integrated through narrative or storytelling activities, involving both parents and educators in educational institutions for early childhood. Therefore, character education plays a role in forming positive habits in children in the early age phase, which will then support them in the development of morality and good behavior (Tanfidiyah, 2017).

Erlinda Risa Nur (Rohidin et al., 2015) emphasized that character education, which includes moral education, is a crucial process in the formation of student characteristics. Educators and educational institutions are responsible for forming and applying character values in the psyche of students, either through educational methods, example, reinforcement, or habituation.

Emphasized that character education plays a crucial role in shaping student morality in the digital era. He believes that repetitive activities can shape individual character, and this character education should be applied from an early age to instill good morality in the younger generation (Arrasyid, 2021). In addition, the role of parents and educators is very significant in the process of improving the character of adolescents, until they move to adulthood. Character education has also proven its function in shaping the character of students to transform into individuals who have good morals, noble morals, tolerance, and good behavior (Zuriah, 2007).

In the long run, moral education has great potential to influence a child's behavior and character. Those who get a good moral education are more likely to be responsible, caring, and fair adolescents and adults (Najmuddin & Aprilianty, 2020). Children who receive moral education are also better able to face ethical dilemmas and challenges. In addition, they tend to feel more fulfilled and happy in their lives, which can be attributed to the alignment between their values and actions.

E. Conclusion

In this study, the importance of moral education in shaping children's character has been analyzed using a literature study approach. The findings show that moral education is not simply the teaching of moral norms, but involves building ethical values that are the foundation of children's decision-making. In the context of the moral crisis that occurs, the role of moral education as the main pillar in overcoming children's moral uncertainty is increasingly apparent. The conclusions of this study provide a deep understanding of the complex relationship between moral education and children's character building. These findings provide a conceptual basis for the development of a more holistic education system, which focuses not only on cognitive aspects, but also on character building and ethical values. Thus, this research makes an important contribution in dealing with the moral challenges faced by modern society, by affirming the crucial role of moral education as the main foundation of children's character formation.

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