



BECOMING A GOOD CITIZEN CHARACTER BUILDING STRATEGIES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT NATIONALISM

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Abstract

This research aims to explore and identify strategies that can be used to shape the nationalist character of elementary school students, which is expected to produce good citizens. The formation of nationalist character in elementary school students is a gradual process that requires time and continuous effort. A comprehensive and structured strategy is needed so that the values of nationalism can be internalized in students. Through a character education approach and the application of nationalist values, students are taught to understand and appreciate national values and their role as part of the country. This study was conducted using a qualitative method to analyze the strategy of forming nationalist character in elementary school students. The data or sources used in this study were obtained from a literature review approach. This research uses a qualitative approach by collecting data from literature observations. Based on the research results, nationalist character education in elementary schools can be formed through various strategies involving integrated learning, extracurricular activities, and active participation from families and communities.

Keywords : Nationalism, character, character education, elementary school, citizen

Introduction

Nationalist character education is a main pillar in the Indonesian education system. The goal is to form a young generation that loves the homeland and is responsible for the nation. Being a good citizen means not only understanding the rights and obligations of a citizen, but also being able to apply national values in everyday life. In this context, the important role of elementary schools is to instill nationalist character in students. Elementary school age is a period of early development where moral and national values can be instilled effectively (Piaget, 1929). The formation of nationalist character in elementary school students is a gradual process that requires time and continuous effort. A comprehensive and structured strategy is needed so that the values of nationalism can be internalized in students. One method commonly used is through the Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) curriculum, which teaches the basics of the rights and obligations of citizens, the history of the nation's struggle, and the values of Pancasila as the state ideology (Winarno, 2008). Learning outside the classroom through extracurricular activities, such as flag ceremonies, commemorations of national holidays, and social activities can strengthen students' sense of nationalism. According to Lickona (1991), effective character education must involve three main aspects: moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions. In the context of nationalist character formation, moral knowledge means that students understand the basic concepts of nationalism and citizenship; moral feelings involve developing a sense of love for the homeland and pride in national identity; while moral actions include active participation in activities that support the unity and integrity of the country. These three aspects must be taught simultaneously so that students not only have a theoretical understanding but are also able to apply nationalist values in everyday life. The role of teachers is very important in shaping students' characters. As educators, teachers are not only obliged to deliver teaching materials, but must also exemplify attitudes and

behaviors that reflect nationalist values. According to Ki Hadjar Dewantara (2004), education must be able to educate all aspects of human life, including morals and character, so that individuals can live side by side in harmony with society and the nation.

This emphasizes that national character education must be integrated into the educational process in elementary schools. In addition to the role of teachers, families and the environment also have a significant influence on the formation of students' nationalist character. According to Tilaar (2009), effective education involves all components of society, such as family, school, and the surrounding environment. Parental involvement in educating children about national values at home is very important to support learning at school. Families that support a sense of love for the homeland through daily activities, such as introducing children to Indonesian culture and history, can strengthen students' nationalist character. Amidst the challenges of globalization, where the flow of information and foreign cultures is increasingly easily accessible, nationalist character education is becoming increasingly important. The unstoppable impact of globalization can affect students' national identity if they do not have a sense of pride and love for their own country. Therefore, schools need to have learning strategies that are in accordance with current global conditions but still strengthen the values of nationalism. According to Hasbullah (2001), national education must maintain a balance between modernization and the preservation of local values. This aims to ensure that the younger generation can maintain their identity as strong Indonesian citizens. Another strategy to shape students' nationalist character is to use a contextual approach that connects nationalist values with students' daily lives. For example, understanding local and national culture, lessons on the history of the nation's struggle, and appreciation for the values of democracy and unity in teaching and learning activities. This approach not only helps students understand the interests of nationalism, but also provides direct experience to help them integrate these values. Direct experience plays an important role in the formation of students' character because they more easily absorb values directly (Lickona, 1991). Through formal and informal strategies, it is expected that students' nationalist character can be formed optimally. The purpose of this study is to explore the strategies mentioned, with a focus on the effectiveness of the methods applied in elementary school environments. With a deeper understanding of nationalist character formation strategies, it is hoped that education in Indonesia can continue to develop in producing a generation that loves its homeland and has a strong commitment to national unity.

Research Methodology

This study was conducted using a qualitative method to analyze the strategy of forming nationalist character in elementary school students. The data or sources used in this study were obtained from a literature review approach. This study uses secondary data obtained from various sources such as scientific literature, books, journal articles, and official documents related to the strategy of forming nationalist character in elementary school environments.

Result & Discussion

Research on the formation of nationalist character in elementary school students found several important things related to the strategy, implementation, and effectiveness of methods used in various schools. This study states that nationalist character education can not only be done in the classroom, but also requires various practical and contextual approaches and active participation of students in activities that promote national values. The main strategy to form a nationalist character is through Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn). This subject introduces students to the rights and obligations of citizens, the history of the nation's struggle, and the importance of unity. Most of the students who were the subjects of the study showed a good understanding of the basic values of nationalism, such as love for the homeland, respect for differences, and the importance of maintaining the integrity of the country. However, this study also found that students' theoretical understanding of nationalist values has not always been followed by strong implementation in everyday life. For example, although students understand the importance of tolerance and respect for differences, not all students demonstrate behavior that reflects these values in their social interactions at school. The formation of nationalist character requires more than just providing teaching materials. Direct experience and active involvement of students in activities that strengthen the sense of nationality are also needed. Another important finding is the role of extracurricular activities in shaping students' nationalist character. Activities such as flag ceremonies every Monday, commemoration of national holidays, and community activities such as mutual cooperation and social service have proven effective in strengthening students' sense of nationalism. Through these activities, students can experience for themselves how nationalist values are implemented in everyday life. According to Thomas Lickona (1991), effective character education must include three main aspects: moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions. Extracurricular

activities play an important role in developing students' moral feelings and actions, so that nationalist values are not only understood theoretically but also internalized through real experiences. The results of the study indicate that the formation of students' nationalist character requires a holistic approach involving formal learning, extracurricular activities, and support from family and social environment. According to Ki Hadjar Dewantara (2004), ideal education is education that involves all aspects of a child's life, including the family and community environment.

This finding is in line with Dewantara's view that the formation of students' character does not only depend on education at school, but also requires the active participation of parents and the surrounding environment. One of the challenges in developing nationalist character is the diversity of students' backgrounds. The elementary school where the research was conducted has students from various ethnicities, religions, and cultures. This heterogeneity, although a strength in fostering the spirit of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, is also a challenge in ensuring that all students can internalize nationalist values evenly. According to Tilaar (2009), nationalist education must be able to embrace diversity and emphasize unity over differences. Therefore, an inclusive approach based on respect for cultural diversity is key to the formation of nationalist character. In addition, parental involvement in the formation of student character is also an important finding of this study. Students who receive support from parents in the form of introduction to local culture, national history, and participation in activities that support national values tend to have a stronger nationalist character. As mentioned by Hasbullah (2001), home education has an important role in shaping children's basic values, such as love for the homeland and pride in national identity. Parents who are active in introducing national values at home can strengthen students' learning at school. This study also shows that contextual learning methods that link nationalist values to students' daily lives are effective in shaping nationalist character. Teachers who can relate teaching materials to students' real experiences, such as appreciating differences in the social environment or maintaining the cleanliness of the school environment as a form of love for the homeland, succeed in making it easier for students to understand and internalize nationalist values. This approach is supported by Lickona's opinion (1991), which emphasizes the importance of moral action in character education. Direct experiences that are relevant to students' lives can strengthen their understanding of nationalist values. Overall, the results of this study indicate that the formation of nationalist character in elementary school students requires an integrated strategy, involving formal learning, extracurricular activities, and support from family and community. A holistic and inclusive strategy, which values diversity and provides real experiences to students, has proven effective in instilling nationalist values from an early age.

Conclusion

National character education in elementary schools involves various aspects of formal and informal education, is a complex and multidimensional process. Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, several important conclusions can be drawn regarding strategies in forming students' nationalist character, as well as the challenges and opportunities that exist. Nationalist character formation strategy first, an effective nationalist character building strategy must include a combination of formal education through the Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) curriculum and extracurricular activities. PPKn provides a basis for understanding the rights and obligations of citizens. Extracurricular activities such as flag ceremonies, national holiday commemorations, and social activities, strengthen nationalist values through direct experience. According to Lickona (1991), the integration of knowledge, feelings, and moral actions in character education is very important to build students' awareness of their responsibilities as citizens. Therefore, educators need to design activities that not only educate but also inspire students to behave in accordance with nationalist values. Second, the involvement of parents and the community is very important in the formation of students' nationalist character. Research shows that students who are supported by parents in introducing local culture and national history show a better understanding of nationalist values. According to Ki Hadjar Dewantara (2004), education must involve all aspects of a child's life, including family and community environment. Therefore, collaboration between schools, parents, and the community needs to be strengthened so that nationalist values can be internalized comprehensively. Third, this study identified several challenges in the process of forming nationalist character. One of the main challenges is the diversity of students' backgrounds, which can affect their understanding and appreciation of national values. Schools need to implement an inclusive approach so that all students can feel involved and have a strong national identity, regardless of their background. Tilaar (2009) highlighted the importance of national education that embraces diversity and promotes unity over differences. Schools need to create an environment that supports students to respect each other's differences.

In addition, in the midst of the era of globalization that continues to grow, another challenge faced is the influence of foreign cultures that can endanger students' national identity. In this context, it is very important for schools to teach national values in a relevant and contextual manner. This can be done by integrating national values with students' daily life situations. According to Hasbullah (2001), good education must maintain a balance between modernization and preservation of local values. This approach is expected to strengthen students' love for their homeland and national identity. In an effort to strengthen the formation of national character, schools can use technology and social media as a means to support character education. With broad access to information, teachers can introduce interesting and relevant content to students to increase their interest and understanding of the nation's history and culture. Online platforms can also be used to hold discussions and forums that encourage students to share views and experiences related to national values. Recommendations for Educational Practice as a suggestion, training and professional development are needed for teachers in implementing nationalist character education. Teachers need to have effective strategies and methods in teaching national values to students. In addition, it is also important to involve students in designing programs that support character education, so that they feel they have a role and responsibility in the learning process. Thus, the formation of nationalist character in elementary school students is a process that requires cooperation from various parties, such as schools, families, and communities. A holistic and inclusive approach, as well as contextual and relevant learning methods, are expected to form a young generation that is academically intelligent and has a strong character and loves its homeland.

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