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THE INFLUENCE OF PEER INTERACTION AMONG STUDENTS ON THE FORMATION OF PRAISEWORTHY CHARACTER

Abstrak

Interaksi antar peserta didik memiliki pengaruh signifikan dalam membentuk karakter mulia di lingkungan sekolah. Kajian ini diarahkan untuk mengeksplorasi korelasi antara interaksi tersebut dengan pengembangan karakter mulia melalui metode kuantitatif. Penelitian melibatkan 45 anggota OSIS dari SMP Negeri 1 Pagar Alam sebagai sampel. Pengumpulan data dilaksanakan dengan kuesioner yang menilai level interaksi sosial serta karakter mulia para peserta didik. Penganalisisan data menggunakan teknik statistik deskriptif dan analisis regresi. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan hubungan positif antara interaksi sesama peserta didik dengan pembentukan karakter mulia, menegaskan pentingnya lingkungan sosial dalam pembentukan karakter pelajar.

Kata Kunci: Akhlak Terpuji, Interaksi Sosial, Pergaulan Sesama Peserta Didik

Abstract

Interactions among students significantly influence the formation of noble character in the school environment. This study aims to explore the correlation between such interactions and the development of noble character through quantitative methods. The research involved 45 student council members from SMP Negeri 1 Pagar Alam as the sample. Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire that assessed the level of social interaction and the noble character of the students. Data analysis utilised descriptive statistical techniques and regression analysis. The findings indicate a positive relationship between peer interactions and the formation of noble character, underscoring the importance of the social environment in shaping student character.

Keywords: Praiseworthy Character, Peer Interaction Among Students, Social Interaction

INTRODUCTION

A character holds a vital position in human life, serving as the gem distinguishing humans from other Earth creatures. Essentially, a person devoid of good character loses their human dignity. The character should be prioritised over physical appearance; a person with good morals is inherently beautiful, regardless of their standard looks. Conversely, no matter how attractive someone is, it serves no purpose if they lack good character. Character education is crucial in the educational world, as it helps determine whether a person will act responsibly and respect others' rights. It fosters essential moral values such as honesty, integrity, responsibility, and empathy. Social interaction extends the relationships formed within one's social environment. The strength of these interactions influences the closeness of these relationships. A child who consistently meets and interacts with others over a significant period will develop deeper social connections.

Praiseworthy character, also known as noble character, involves attitudes and behaviours that are honourable and commendable towards God Almighty, fellow humans, and the environment. Such character also encompasses good behavior, both in speech and action, aligning with the teachings of Islam and prevailing norms. Through the National Education System Act of 2003 (Act No. 20 of 2003), the Indonesian government articulates the functions and goals of national education, which are used to develop educational efforts in Indonesia. According to Article 3 of this act, national education aims to build capabilities and form the character and civilization of a dignified nation to enlighten the people. It intends for every individual to become pious and

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virtuous, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and a responsible democratic citizen (Sara Indah Elisabet Tambun et al., 2020:2).

Peer interactions among students significantly influence the formation of such character. Positive social circles can benefit character development, while negative ones can harm students' morals. Many students' primary environment for interaction, learning, and skill development is within their peer group. The role of parents is also crucial in shaping a child's character, as children spend much of their time at home. Parents need to closely monitor and guide their children's behavior to ensure they develop good morals in interactions with their peers and elders. The influence of peers is also significant within the classroom, where students often form specific groups. Typically, students will perform tasks if their peers do the same. However, it is observed that many students pay more attention to their peers than the teacher during class, which can hinder their learning outcomes (Masykur Ihsan, 2016: 108). The 2013 curriculum has been transitioned to the "Merdeka Curriculum." Yet, many teachers have not fully mastered the previous curriculum, voicing concerns that the current system seems imposing. It is not uncommon for educators to question why the curriculum is frequently changing instead of addressing the professional development of teachers. The government focuses on changing the curriculum but neglects critical aspects like teachers' salaries and the overall quality and standards of education.

METHOD

A trial is conducted to ensure that the questionnaire data meets the standards of a good survey before using it to measure the influence of peer interaction among students on the formation of praiseworthy character. This trial aims to determine the validity and reliability of the questionnaire used to measure the influence of peer interactions on the formation of praiseworthy character.

To perform validity and reliability tests regarding the influence of peer interactions among students on the formation of praiseworthy character at SMP Negeri 1 Pagar Alam, the researcher collects data through a questionnaire provided to the respondents, who are all members of the student council for the 2024/2025 academic year at SMP Negeri 1 Pagar Alam. Suppose the data used in the research does not meet the validity requirements. In that case, the research data can be considered irrelevant in determining accurate data or having a low level of validity. The validity test can use the Product Moment formula, and the r-table is obtained from $N=20$. Hence, the r-table value for 20 respondents is 0.444 with a 5% error rate.

From the results tested above, it was found that out of 20 questions, six questions are invalid, and 14 questions are declared valid and meet the validity requirements. Therefore, the instrument used in this research on the formation of praiseworthy character consists of 14 valid questions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Reliability Test

After the questionnaire was declared valid, the next step was to test its reliability. This reliability test is used to determine the extent to which the data obtained through the research is reliable enough for repeated testing. The test is performed using Cronbach's Alpha with the help of SPSS version 18.0 software, and a statement is considered trustworthy if Cronbach's Alpha is greater than 0.60. The calculated results show that the alpha coefficient is as follows.

Table.1 Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Description
Student Interaction	0,648	Reliable
Formation of Praiseworthy Character	0,659	Reliable

Based on the results above, the variable 'Student Interaction' has a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.648, greater than 0.60. Thus, it can be said that the data is reliable. Similarly, the variable 'Formation of Praiseworthy Character' has a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.659, also greater than 0.60, indicating that this data is reliable.

Normality Test

The normality test aims to determine whether the sample data comes from a normally distributed population. Suitable data for this research is data that is normally distributed. In this study, the researcher uses the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality. The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. Normality Test

Sig.2-tailed
0,865

Based on the normality test results using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method, with a significance value of 0.865, which is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the residual values are normally distributed, as per the basic decision-making criteria mentioned above.

Determination Coefficient Test

The determination test is conducted to show the extent to which variations in another can explain variations in one variable. The results of the determination test in this study can be seen in the table below:

Table 3. Determination Coefficient Test

R ²
0,390

Based on the table above, an R Square value of 0.390, or 39%, was obtained. This value indicates that the independent variable in this study contributes 39% to the formation of praiseworthy character, while the remaining 61% is influenced by other factors not included in this study.

Hypotheses Test

This testing is carried out using the t-test to indicate the significance of the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable in detail. The t-value obtained is compared with the t-table value to determine this significance. In this case, data analysis is conducted using the t-test formula with the help of SPSS version 18.0 for Windows software to perform hypothesis testing. This hypothesis test is conducted to understand the impact of peer interaction among students on the formation of praiseworthy character at SMP Negeri 1 Pagar Alam.

Table 4. Hypotheses Test

Sig.
0,03

In the hypothesis testing using simple linear regression, decision-making can be carried out as follows: if the significance value is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that variable X has a positive and significant effect on variable Y. Based on the table above, a significance result of $0.003 < 0.05$ was obtained. Therefore, it can be concluded that the interaction among students positively and significantly influences the formation of praiseworthy character at SMP Negeri 1 Pagar Bulan. Consequently, it can be concluded that the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted, and the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected.

This research discussion examines the influence of peer interaction among students on the formation of praiseworthy character at SMP Negeri 1 Pagar Alam. Every individual's social interactions result from their interactions within a given environment. In everyday interactions, social interactions between individuals or groups invariably influence each other.

Peer interactions play a crucial role at school because, through positive interactions, students can befriend peers of their age or older, exchange ideas, engage in discussions, and encourage each other towards good deeds. Essentially, social interaction is a network of relationships between individuals that develops and lasts relatively long, allowing mutual influences to occur.

The formation of praiseworthy character is a process where an individual consistently and continuously develops moral values, ethics, and good behaviors daily. Prioritizing noble or praiseworthy character is also crucial in the educational process. Educational institutions are

required to prioritize students' character, as it is essential for their development. Peer interactions among students are a significant factor influencing this character formation. Good interactions can positively impact character and moral development, while negative interactions can harm students' morals. Students' interactions often create the primary environment where they engage, learn, and develop their skills.

To determine the extent of the influence of peer interactions among students on the formation of praiseworthy character at SMP Negeri 1 Pagar Alam, the results of the determination coefficient test can be referenced, where an R Square value of 0.390 or 39% indicates that the independent variable of peer interaction influences the formation of praiseworthy character by 39%. From these results, it can be concluded that the independent variable significantly affects the dependent variable, meaning that the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted, and the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected.

SUMMARY

Based on the research, the author concludes that peer interactions among students influence the formation of praiseworthy character at SMP Negeri 1 Pagar Bulan for the academic year 2023-2024. The researcher used a trial calculation of survey data by comparing the calculated r-value with the r-table in the validity test, where the r-value was greater than the r-table. In the reliability test, all data were found to be reliable, with the reliability test result for peer interactions among students (Variable X) being $0.648 > 0.60$ and the reliability test result for the formation of praiseworthy character (Variable Y) being $0.659 > 0.60$. Also, in the hypothesis testing, the significance value was $0.003 < 0.05$, indicating a positive and significant influence of peer interactions among students on the formation of praiseworthy character at SMP Negeri 1 Pagar Alam.

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