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THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN INSTILLING TOLERANCE CHARACTER VALUES IN THEMATIC LEARNING FOR FOURTH-GRADE STUDENTS

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi peran guru dalam menanamkan nilai-nilai karakter toleransi pada siswa melalui pembelajaran tematik dan menggali faktor-faktor yang menghambat proses tersebut di kelas IV SDN 11 Tanjung Sakti Pumi. Metodologi yang digunakan adalah pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, di mana sumber data diperoleh dan data primer serta skunder dikumpulkan secara langsung melalui permintaan, pertanyaan, wawancara, serta pengamatan langsung di lokasi penelitian dan dari berbagai referensi yang dimiliki peneliti untuk memperkuat hasil studi. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai-nilai karakter toleransi pada siswa merupakan hasil dari intervensi yang dilakukan oleh orang tua dan guru untuk membentuk karakter anak.

Kata Kunci: Nilai Karakter, Peran Guru, Toleransi Siswa

Abstract

This study aims to identify teachers' role in instilling tolerance in students through thematic learning and to explore the factors that hinder this process in the fourth grade of SDN 11 Tanjung Sakti Pumi. The methodology used is a qualitative descriptive approach, where data sources are obtained, and primary and secondary data are collected directly through requests, questions, interviews, and direct observations at the research site and from various references owned by the researcher to strengthen the study's results. The findings show that students' tolerance values are the result of interventions carried out by parents and teachers to shape the children's character.

Keywords: Character Values, Role of Teacher, Students Tolerance

INTRODUCTION

Scientific knowledge developed in education must be oriented towards Islamic character values, involving scientific and prophetic methodologies. This knowledge aims to discover and measure intellectual paradigms and premises that focus on character values and devotion to societal renewal and development. It also bases itself on truth, the source of all sources, including the foundation of tolerance character. Education plays a critical role in community life and the progress of a nation is also seen through the quality of its people's character; therefore, such quality can be shaped through education. Moreover, education serves as a crucial medium to create and realize citizens of high moral and character quality. Education is an inseparable part of human life, functioning as a necessity, enlightener, guide, and a means for growth that prepares and forms life disciplines, including tolerance (Hendi Kariyanto, 2023:13).

The statement implies that every individual or group requires education regardless of simplicity. Education is a human necessity, guiding conscious physical and spiritual development towards forming an exemplary personality. Education is viewed as a critical aspect in shaping such a primary personality. For educational philosophy, determining attitudes and views about differences is essential to develop a character of tolerance. Zaenuri and Siti Fatonah (2022:183) suggest that civic education is an instructive project that broadly covers at least three areas in personal development: conceptually through metro schooling in creating ideas and speculations, curricular training in fostering various instructive projects, and through its implementation model in preparing students to become mature, character-strong citizens

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academically and socially. In thematic learning, themes 7 and sub-theme 3 appear as discoveries rich in character values. Thus, teachers are tasked with building and developing students' characters, with tolerance values needing to be instilled from an early age. Elementary students are at an ideal age for absorbing, imitating, and remembering all inputs, including character values like tolerance, from family, teachers, and their surroundings.

This understanding indicates that thematic learning in theme 7, specifically sub-theme 3 on literacy material, is crucial in shaping student character, driven by teachers who instil positive character values, including tolerance, from an early age. Instilling tolerance values in elementary students is a critical and primary role for teachers and parents, with moral values, including tolerance, needing to be planted during the early years, known as the golden age. During this period, children have the best potential to develop their personalities fully, and it's also the perfect time to instil all good character values, including tolerance, which will later form the child's morals (Jimi Morgan and Sihombing, 2023:23).

From this, it can be concluded that teachers and parents are primary agents in instilling children's character values, especially tolerance. These character values must be embedded early to become positively established and realised in community life. At SD N 11 Tanjung Sakti Pumi, students need to recognise the school environment as the school building stands and where teachers and students conduct various learning activities. Interactions, complex as they may be between teachers and students, peers among themselves, and within the school environment, profoundly impact shaping students' personalities or characters. In the school environment, every action and word by teachers, staff, and students should apply all jointly established norms, including handling differences in belief or religion, thereby preventing intolerant attitudes or behaviours among students.

Prophet Muhammad also taught the statement about understanding and respecting differences or the importance of tolerance. In social life, the Prophet taught his followers to interact with non-Muslims by prioritising humanity, kindness, and justice principles. This is exemplified by the interaction between Asma binti Abu Bakar and her mother, Qutailah. When Qutailah visited her daughter, bringing gifts, Asma initially refused them because her mother was a polytheist. However, the revelation of Surah al-Mumtahina: 8 instructed us to act kindly and justly towards non-believers who do not fight against Muslims (M. Fuad Al-amin, 2019: 284).

This story shows that Allah, through His Prophet, taught even non-believers, as Muslims, to act with complete tolerance, fairness, mutual understanding, assistance, and respect, but still within the norms and values of the religion, without violating Islamic teachings. Therefore, it is crucial to instil tolerance and character values in students from an early age, particularly in the school environment. In this setting, all actions and words by teachers, staff, and students should apply all established norms, closing gaps for any contrary speeches, actions, or morals, including tolerance values that teachers should exemplify to students, enabling them to mimic the tolerance character applied by the teacher.

Teachers are essential in instilling tolerance values in SD Negeri 11 Tanjung Sakti Pumi Kabupaten Lahat students. This is evident from the government's design of a tolerance curriculum, possessing optimal and proportional competencies, and having a strong commitment to providing children with examples of character values, including tolerance. Furthermore, the instillation of tolerance values is conducted through learning activities such as providing examples, giving directions, habituation, storytelling activities, games, and the use of media (Jimi Morgan, 2023:25).

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive type and approach. The sampling technique used is random sampling, where samples are randomly selected with a criterion of 10-15% or 20-25%, resulting in 26 students as the sample in the fourth grade. Data collection techniques include documentation, observation, and interviews.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of the Teacher's Role in Instilling Tolerance Character Values in Students at SD Negeri 11 Tanjung Sakti Pumi.

The process of instilling tolerance character values in students, particularly the role of subject teachers, is crucial in achieving success in developing students' tolerance character. Therefore, a teacher must perform their role excellently. The first step in instilling character values is for a teacher to understand the character of their students. The elementary school age is a golden period for students, during which teachers must maximise their role in shaping or instilling character values, especially tolerance. The quality of a student's character depends on this period. A teacher needs to know the character of each student to facilitate and strategise the instillation of tolerance character values.

According to interviews with a fourth-grade Religious Education teacher, students in fourth grade exhibit diverse characters. At the elementary school, students are very active and act without understanding the risks, sometimes unable to tolerate things they perceive as different or unusual. This aligns with the view that elementary school students are in the boyhood stage (Nopitasari, interview, April 19, 2024). This period is characterised by active behaviour and the "savage stage," often called "naughty." The boyhood phase, ages 7-14, involves active movement, jumping, and running freely without understanding the risks involved. This stage is consistent with the view that boyhood is a naughty (savage) stage, reflecting a wild evolutionary phase. Students move, jump, and run freely during this period to sharpen their senses. Yet, their cognitive abilities are insufficient to comprehend differences and unusual things, resulting in poor character, including intolerance (Sunandra, 2021:69).

The role of a teacher in instilling character values is crucial during this period, including tolerance, filtering out negative cultures entering the school and influencing students, and addressing differences such as cultural, linguistic, habitual, and religious differences. Character is generally associated with the temperament, morals, or manners that define a person's identity or personal characteristics that distinguish one person from another.

Teachers still play an essential role in teaching and learning, which machines still need to replace. Many human elements like attitudes, value systems, emotions, motivation, habits, and more cannot be replicated by any machine. Therefore, teachers' roles in educating and instilling tolerance character in elementary students should be capable of understanding and managing the character of the students they handle.

Teachers must have strategies to perform their roles excellently, such as role model, inspirer, motivator, dynamizer, and evaluator. Based on interviews and observations of fourth-grade subject teachers regarding the role of teachers as role models, they have performed this role excellently (Nopitasari, interview, April 19, 2024). In shaping student character, a teacher must be a good example. A teacher is a model and should possess exemplary morals, especially in the school environment, to serve as a good example and influence students positively. This includes teaching students to be tolerant towards peers with different beliefs, languages, and cultures.

Teachers are their students' role models, both in knowledge and personality. Therefore, teachers must be cautious in their speech and behaviour. Inappropriate speech and behaviour can negatively impact students' development as they may imitate them without considering their correctness. Teachers also need to use appropriate thematic learning themes to instil tolerance and character values in students, like the thematic learning theme chosen in this research.

Researchers can conclude that teachers should act as examples, demonstrating good deeds to students. Good actions in speech and behaviour are necessary for a teacher, as they are the main actors in the school environment. The next role of a teacher is as an inspirer. Based on interviews and observations with fourth-grade Religious Education teachers regarding the role of teachers as inspirers, they have also performed this role well. In instilling tolerance and character values in students through thematic learning strategies using specific themes, the role of a teacher as an inspirer helps students discern good and evil (Nopitasari, interview, April 19, 2024).

Researchers can conclude that a teacher should inform students about the good or bad aspects of actions to create broad student knowledge, enabling students to guide themselves towards good and avoid evil. Thanks to the role of teachers as inspirers and through thematic learning with theme 7, sub-theme 1 on the diversity of ethnicities and religions in my country, students can understand their environment well, distinguishing between good and evil and behaving tolerantly towards differences among other students, including religious differences.

The next role of a teacher is as a motivator. Based on interviews and observations with fourth-grade subject teachers regarding the role of teachers as motivators, they have performed this role well by motivating and providing good advice inside and outside the classroom. The role of a teacher as a motivator should be to provide motivational words and advice to inspire students' enthusiasm for learning activities in and out of school (Nopitasari, interview, April 19, 2024).

This aligns with the statement that the success of the teaching and learning process is influenced by student motivation. Teachers as educators need to encourage students to learn towards achieving their goals. The function of motivation is crucial for students as the following statement suggests that the degree of a person's motivation significantly determines their activity level, including instilling good character in students, especially tolerance, which also requires motivation as an external push from a teacher towards students (Sunandra, 2021:73).

The next role of a teacher is as a dynamic. Based on interviews and observations with fourth-grade subject teachers at SD Negeri 11 Tanjung Sakti Pumi regarding this role, they have performed this role very well. They create strategies for each student's character and make thematic learning comfortable in theme 7, sub-theme 1 on my country's diversity of ethnicities and religions. A teacher, as a dynamic, should make the classroom and learning environment comfortable and engaging (Nopitasari, interview, April 19, 2024).

This is consistent with a statement from a fourth-grade student the researcher asked using simple language and a gentle approach, persuading the student to understand the question about the process by which subject teachers mobilise students in classroom learning as an effort to instil tolerance character values with thematic learning strategies on sub-theme 1 about the diversity of ethnicities and religions in my country can provide an attractive learning atmosphere and inspire learning enthusiasm, helping students understand the meaning and importance of being tolerant towards differences among peers, including religious differences. Thus, tolerance of character values gradually becomes ingrained in students (Harbiansyah, interview, April 19, 2024).

The next role of a teacher is as an evaluator. Based on interviews and observations with fourth-grade subject teachers regarding the role of teachers as evaluators, they have performed this role well. They evaluate students in terms of learning by observing their exam scores. In terms of character, observing their daily behaviours and activities at school, students also appear to exhibit good character and behaviour, including tolerance towards fellow students (Nopitasari, interview, April 19, 2024).

This aligns with the statement from the Principal that teachers tasked as evaluators assess students in academic fields and social behaviour, determining the success of students' achievements and character in learning activities. Teachers must constantly evaluate the learning methods used in character education. Besides, they must also be able to evaluate the attitudes and behaviours displayed by students, the paths and struggles outlined, and the planned agendas. Teachers must perform all these tasks in developing character education or correctly instilling tolerance and character values in students, especially elementary school children (Imron Suriadi, interview, April 19, 2024).

Researchers can understand that a teacher should evaluate their students objectively and clearly. Objectivity in evaluation includes affective, cognitive, and psychomotor aspects. To evaluate these aspects clearly to students, a teacher should consider these aspects for each of their students; besides, support from the entire school community, especially from the principal, is crucial in the process of instilling tolerance and character values in students, so that students can develop a good personality or character, thus achieving the goals of learning as expected.

Analysis of Tolerance Character in Fourth-Grade Students at SD Negeri 11 Tanjung Sakti Pumi

The character of fourth-grade students at SD Negeri 11 Tanjung Sakti Pumi varies widely. According to interviews with subject teachers, particularly regarding the tolerance character of the students, the fourth graders exhibit a range of characteristics. Some quickly form and instil their tolerance values due to good upbringing by their parents, resulting in these students displaying good tolerance towards their peers. Others may require extra effort to shape their character, yet they exhibit good tolerance (Nopitasari, interview, April 19, 2024).

This aligns with the assertion that character or temperament is a combination of all permanent human habits, thus serving as a unique sign to distinguish one person from another. An individual with good character can make decisions and is ready to be accountable for the consequences of those decisions. Education and learning are interactive processes between educators and students.

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that character is an attribute found in individuals that marks their unique personality, differing from others regarding attitudes, thoughts, and actions. These traits benefit living and cooperating within the family, community, and national levels. The character or personality of fourth-grade students at SD Negeri 11 Tanjung Sakti Pumi, including their tolerance, is commendable. This is evident in the behaviour and attitudes of the fourth graders, who accept and behave well towards the differences among students inside and outside the classroom.

Analysis of Inhibiting and Supporting Factors in the Process of Instilling Tolerance Character in Fourth-Grade Students at SD Negeri 11 Tanjung Sakti Pumi

Inhibiting and supporting factors in instilling tolerance and character values in students emerge both within and outside the school. According to interviews with subject teachers about the factors that hinder and support the instillation of tolerance and character values in students, cooperation with parents plays a critical role. It becomes a challenge when classroom teachers, school staff, and parents need to collaborate effectively.

The hindering and supporting factors for teachers in instilling student character values, especially tolerance, include challenges in devising learning strategies and selecting themes for thematic learning that facilitate understanding and instilling character values due to a lack of knowledge about students' character development at home. Conversely, the supporting factor in instilling character values of tolerance is practical cooperation with parents, which makes it easier for teachers to devise strategies by knowing the character development process of the students both at school and home (Nopitasari, interview, April 19, 2024).

Several factors need to be considered in forming or instilling student character values, such as habitual polite behaviour, awareness of differences between students and the environment, and discipline, as well as habits of honesty, disciplined behaviour, and mutual respect. Selecting an appropriate and engaging theme for thematic learning is also crucial. These factors indicate that the instillation of tolerance character values is influenced by parents and teachers, who shape student character through exemplary behaviour, communication styles, tolerance, and related aspects.

The primary supporting factor is internal, including teachers as educators and textbooks. The next factor is the environment, such as support from parents. Even though efforts are made at school to educate students effectively, parental support is necessary for these efforts to be fully realised. Thus, cooperation between teachers and parents is essential. Apart from school factors, parents can also be a hindering factor in instilling tolerance and character values, as students also need attention from parents, not just school education but also religious values to foster good character (Imron Suriadi, interview, April 19, 2024).

This is consistent with the view that the environment influences a person's behaviour. The environment includes the household environment, where parents' morals at home influence their children's behaviour. It also includes the school environment, such as the morals of peers and the education provided by teachers (Sunandra, 2021: 81).

The thematic learning of theme 7, sub-theme 1 about the diversity of ethnicities and religions chosen by the subject teacher in the research is an effective strategy in the role of teachers instilling tolerance and character values. This is evident from the attitudes, behaviours, and actions of fourth-grade students at SD Negeri 11 Tanjung Sakti Pumi, Kabupaten Lahat, who have understood that the diversity of cultures, languages, habits, and religions among students is beautiful, worthy of respect, and should be approached peacefully, not as a subject for mockery or a trigger for division or conflict among students. The fourth graders behaved and acted appropriately toward the differences between students and their environment, showing tolerance towards each other.

The research findings emphasise that teachers' role in instilling tolerance character values through thematic learning in the fourth grade at SD Negeri 11 Tanjung Sakti Pumi, Kabupaten Lahat is appropriate, has been maximally implemented, and has been successful, aligning with

the expected learning objectives. This also aligns with the teacher's roles as a role model, motivator, inspirer, dynamizer, and evaluator.

Researchers understand that inhibiting and supporting factors may be the same thing. Therefore, teachers and parents must play their roles effectively at school and at home. Acting well as a teacher or parent can be achieved by enhancing cooperation between them for the benefit and well-being of the students themselves.

SUMMARY

The process of instilling tolerance and character values in students during thematic learning in fourth grade at SD N 11 Tanjung Sakti Pumi can be effectively conducted through the careful selection of materials and themes, alongside the roles played by teachers as role models, inspirers, motivators, dynamizers, and evaluators. The tolerance character values of fourth-grade students at SD N 11 Tanjung Sakti Pumi have shown notable improvements, as evidenced by their attitudes of understanding and tolerating differences they observe and feel and being environmentally conscious, responsible, and independent.

However, several factors hinder students' ability to instill tolerance and character values. These include the surrounding environment, which sometimes does not reflect a tolerant attitude among peer students, families who provide insufficient examples and support in instilling tolerance character values, and students who have yet to fully understand every difference they perceive or feel within themselves. These obstacles require targeted strategies to mitigate their impact and enhance the effectiveness of character education programs.

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