

# Cultivating Character Education through Social Studies: A Meta Analysis of Elementary Student Model

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*Abstract— The aim of this research is to investigate to what extent the impact of character education through social studies to elementary students. This study used a meta-analysis and library research method with interpretative analysis. The data gathered from 355 articles pertaining to character education using social studies as a key lesson in school. The results showed that when it comes to character education, and the way it is implemented, there some serious parts that need to be understood and taken into considerations namely: the basic concept of the character, the nature of social studies within the school, the character education within the school curriculum context, and the learning strategies in school. Therefore, with regard to those parts, the researcher within this study as well as for further studies has made some recommendations and suggestions.*

**Keywords— Character Education, Social Studies, Learning Strategies in Schools.**

## INTRODUCTION

Character education has been widely discussed in various literatures. It is not surprising that the definitions and basic concepts of character education are very diverse. Character education comes from the root word of character. Character according to the Indonesia Language Center of the Ministry of National Education is "innate, heart, soul, personality, character, behavior, personality, nature, character, temperament, character" [1]. Terminologically, the word character comes from the Greek, namely "to mark" which means to mark and focuses on how to apply the value of goodness

in actions or behavior. [2] states that character is a trait possessed by an object or individual. This trait is pure, rooted in the individuality of an object or individual, and is the driving force that drives how individuals act, speak, and react to things.

[3] defines that character as a compatible mixture of all the virtues identified by religious traditions, literary stories, sages, and groups of common sense individuals in history. According to him not everyone has these virtues, and everyone has all the weaknesses. Character is also interpreted as the way of thinking and acting that characterizes each individual to live and work together, both in the family, community, nation and state [4]. In the context of education, character education essentially has the same meaning as moral education. The goal is to create the personality of the child (students) to become a good person and good citizen [5]

Character in education means that everything that is carried out by teachers and can affect the character of students. The character of students is formed and assisted by the teacher. This includes the exemplary nature of the teacher, how the teacher speaks or conveys the material, the way the teacher is tolerant, and others [6]. In addition, [7] states that character education is a direct process for moral education by teaching students basic moral knowledge to prevent them from behaving

immorally or threatening their safety or that of others. Character education is a deliberate effort to help people understand, pay attention, and practice basic ethical values [8].

In the recent years, the character education has been becoming a huge issue to be discussed. Some believe that character education can be surely cultivated through social studies, especially for the elementary students. [9] believed that people at the early age can be shaped to be a good manner through the proper education one of which is through a social study. Therefore, the quality of characters need to be formed and developed starting from basic education since basic education is an important period to shape the character of students. In line with this, [10] stated that that the inability to deal with students' personalities will form problematic individuals in adulthood.

As it turns out, character education these days is pivotal as it becomes a shield for children or students in the midst of modernization attacks and public information disclosure. Therefore, it is very important for parents to keep in mind that teaching their children about character education through a social study lesson is a worthwhile choice [11].

From the perspective of social behavior, the character aspect also plays an important role. Children who have high emotional and social intelligence are often easy to manage and control their feelings as well as dealing with various problems faced [12]. Through character education in social study, it guides students to care about their surroundings, increase the sense of empathy, moral ethics, and social welfare which can generate a school community to be more compassionate and respectful [13]. As [14] believes that students who are actively involved in social work from an early age have more empathy and sympathy to others as it leads to be a responsible citizens.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted by searching in the Google Scholar databases with search strings were “cultivating character through social studies” AND “The impact of character education through social studies” OR “Factors that contribute to character education in elementary schools” OR “The role of social studies to form a character education in school”

OR “how the social studies plays the important role toward character education”. To figure out the data, the time is limited from February 20 to August 21 2021 so there are no similar studies. To guarantee the novelty of this research, we made some differences with studies conducted by [15] and [16]. The keywords of “cultivating moral values through character education” had 465 articles. Meanwhile, the keywords of “impact of social studies toward character education in elementary schools” had 45 articles. The keywords of “factors that contribute to character education” had 31 articles, the keywords of “The role of social studies to form a character education in school” had 209 articles. The keywords of “how the social studies plays the important role toward character education” had 221 articles. In general, the total articles examined were 1161 sources.

The title of the article and citation reviewed were limited to the first 7 pages of search results or the first 100 articles so that from this process, 304 articles were filtered. The title of the article with certain keywords and it was explored by different ways. If the article was not relevant then it was excluded. With this process, 93 articles were successfully filtered out of 304. We did research for the full text of the articles. Around 65% of the relevant articles in the first filter have full text that can be reviewed. Then, those studies were looked at the details pertaining to the items that discussed about cultivating moral values through social studies education in elementary school level.

## DISCUSSIONS

From the aforementioned method above regarding cultivating moral value through social studies in elementary education, this study will break the result and discussion to some parts as followed below:

### *A. Cultivating Character Education through Social Studies*

Character education is a doctrine that helps to sharpen your familiarity with goodness [15]. Learners want to understand, feel, and do good things. Character building can be defined as a conscious effort to cultivate virtues [16,17,18]. Virtues are objectively good human qualities, good for individual development and well-being, and good for human society as a whole. Virtues

transcend time and culture because they are excellent in nature. Justice, honesty, and kindness have been and will continue to be virtues.

Character education is in elementary school early childhood education (example for social studies) because learners of this age need moral education that can translate the abstract principles of good and wrong to prevent overcoming attitude and behavioral problems in the field of education, especially urgent [19,20]. Personality formation in elementary school requires more attention to form the noble moral foundation of strong learners [21]. This is done to help learners recognize the importance of good values and promise to do good things in their next training and daily life. The original goal of character education is to give students excellent character characteristics. Many studies have found positive results from the use of character education programs in schools. This includes improving academic performance, reducing school suspension and dropouts, and reducing the risk of student behavior.

There is an interaction between character education and civic education discovered through social studies. Therefore, social studies teachers must adopt character education activities during classroom education in order to raise students into righteous citizens and carry out character education activities that are part of their mission and responsibility [22]. Social studies must be part of the elementary school curriculum because it aims to train people to become citizens with the essential knowledge, skills and values they need today.

#### *B. The Impact of Character Education through Social Studies*

Character education program through social studies had a positive impact on both values and academic performance. Character education can effectively promote character development. Most scientific achievement programs have had a significant impact on student personality development [23]. Personality formation affects many aspects of personality development [24]. More programs that assess academic performance have shown significant academic performance. Character education is usually a set of implementation strategies. There is strong evidence that it has a significant impact on

reducing social moral cognition, prosocial behavior and attitudes, problem-solving skills, and risk [25].

Moreover, character education programs positively and significantly influence students in statistical ways to gain scientific benefits, values of justice, and values of peace.

#### *C. Factors that Contribute to Character Education in Elementary Schools*

The integration of character education into social studies is achieved through various factors of schools inside and outside [24]. The internal support comes from students, teachers and principals, and external support comes from parents to form the student's social science personality.

The role of teachers has become an important aspect of the formation of personality in the social sciences [26]. An aspect of supporting personality development in social studies is that teachers become student targets (row models) during the learning process and provide examples of good behaviors that students can emulate. The side of the principal can be an important aspect of character education because the evaluation of learning plans and practices prepared by teachers to always include character education. In short, a student factor that is an important aspect in the formation of character education in the social sciences is as a peer tutor by giving other students examples of good behavior [27]. Schools are expected to increase the commitment and cooperation of all school members to further maximize the development of student personality values so that character education can be maintained and improved again. Especially in developing a student's character with respect to the values of religion, honesty, diligence, discipline and compassion or responsibility.

Parent factors that are becoming an important aspect in supporting and forming character in the social studies. Parents who support character formation in a family or community environment, i.e., the commandments or recommendations and prohibitions or rules set by the parent, are not written down in the form of family social norms, which are references of all families [28]. It will be an orientation, especially children do good.

#### *D. The Role of Social Studies to Form a Character Education in School*

Social studies is an educational program that includes materials from various disciplines of the Social Sciences and Humanities (Education and History). Social studies is an integrated lesson in various disciplines of social sciences and humanities, including sociology, history, geography, economics, political science, law, and culture [29,30]. The social studies are based on social reality and the phenomena that have created interdisciplinary approaches to various aspects and disciplines of the social studies. Social studies as an educational program not only conveys the concept of knowledge, but also trains students, the most important part, to know their rights and obligations, and to have a wide range of responsibilities and collective well-being [31,32]. The purpose of the social studies class is to improve the skills of student to increase the sensitivity of society to social problems, to be positive about imbalanced events, to influence oneself and to happen to society. It is about being able to deal with everyday problems.

Social studies classes are related to character education [31]. Character education focused on student identity development to have intellectual and character students must be carried out through informal and formal education. Since the purpose of social studies is not only cognitive (intellectual skills) but also emotional (personal skills), this can be done through formal education at school, especially social studies classes. In other words, social studies are generally taught through attitudes, values and morals [33]. Therefore, social studies teachers need to be able to creatively plan and conduct lessons.

#### *E. How the Social Studies Plays the Important Role toward Character Education*

Fundamentally, the purpose of social science learning is to develop the potential of students to adapt to the environment, be sensitive to problems that arise in the community, and overcome both the burdens themselves [34]. They are willing to influence the community and correct inequality when it arises. Consequently, social studies play an important role in student social interaction. To shape a character and develop the potential to benefit the character, society and country. Therefore, social studies that are in direct contact with the student's social life must be designed to form a personality that is characterized by a sustainable social

experience in order to develop their potential.

In addition, social studies also aim to achieve common goals in the formation of relationships regarding social attitudes and skills. By conditioned on sound social studies, students are directly involved in learning to develop knowledge, values, attitudes, morals, and social skills. To approach the era of globalization as a millennial, students can participate in the dynamic life of modern society. After all, we can see the important role of social science in educating good citizens. Therefore, learning in the social sciences needs to not only be designed and implemented, but also to identify a number of factors that support and impede systematic character formation from the lower classes to the upper classes in order to achieve these goals. Therefore, social studies that are in direct contact with the student's social life must be creatively designed [35]. Since elementary schools have the characteristic of becoming self-reliant, it is very important to support and hinder the factors that build the school's personality, especially the higher social science education. There is already a sense of personal responsibility and external evaluation. The world has become visible not only to oneself but to others, interested in life, concrete, very realistic, curious, critical and rational to want to learn. Shows a good attitude. Towards the end of this period, when special talents emerged, they were interested in special things and learning. Children up to the age of 11 need a teacher or other adult to complete the task and fulfill their wishes. After this age, children usually leave themselves to their work and try to get it done. During this time, the child considers grades (certificates) to be an appropriate measure of academic performance. Moreover, they like to form a group of his peers to play with. In the game, they are not bound by traditional (existing) rules, they create their own rules. This makes it possible to evaluate personality education at a high level and the results will begin to appear.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that social studies have discovered that there is an interaction between character education and civic

education. Therefore, social studies teachers must adopt character education activities during classroom education in order to raise students into righteous citizens and carry out character education activities that are part of their mission and responsibility. Character education program through social studies had a positive impact on both values and academic performance. The integration of character education into social studies is achieved through various factors of schools inside and outside. The internal support comes from students, teachers and principals, and external support comes from parents to form the student's social science personality.

Social studies classes are related to character education. The purpose of social science learning is to develop the potential of students to adapt to the environment, be sensitive to problems that arise in the community, and overcome both the burdens themselves. Therefore, social studies that are in direct contact with the student's social life must be designed so that they develop supportive and restraining personality traits.

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