

Character Education For Peace: An Effective Strategy To Reduce Violence In Schools

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Abstract. This study aims to identify and analyze the peaceful character profile of elementary school students in Cimanggung District, Sumedang Regency. Peaceful character is a crucial aspect in building a conducive educational environment, especially in reducing violent behavior in students. This research uses a qualitative method, with data collection techniques including interviews, observations, and document analysis. The results of the study show that the peaceful character of students in the region still needs to be strengthened, especially in the aspects of empathy, tolerance, and peaceful conflict resolution. Factors such as family environment, school, and peer influence play an important role in developing students' character to be better in accordance with the expectations they want to achieve. Therefore, this study recommends more structured educational interventions including teacher training and character education programs that focus on promoting peaceful attitudes. This finding is expected to be a reference for educational institutions in creating a safe and harmonious learning atmosphere in elementary schools

Keywords: Peace-love character, character education, elementary school

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INTRODUCTION

Violence in school environments is a global problem that continues to increase, including in Indonesia. Research shows that students' awareness of violent or bullying behavior in schools is still low, and if not addressed immediately, this has the potential to become a recurring habit (Karlioni, 2023). Students today face various social challenges, such as conflict, intolerance, and injustice, which require the development of critical thinking skills and empathy (Halik & Sabiq, 2024). This has implications for the moral decadence that is rampant not only among adults but also has an impact on the mentality of students in the present and future if it is not addressed immediately (Erviana, 2021). This condition is a challenge for many schools in creating a safe and conducive learning environment.

Strengthening character is an important step to overcome the moral degradation of children, especially in the context of violence in the school environment. Because character education is one of the fundamental aspects in the education system that aims to shape the personality, moral values and ethics of students (Saputra & Tunnafia, 2024). Character education has a crucial role, because education does not only focus on increasing the intelligence of students, but also on forming good morals and behavior (Adhiningsih, 2024). Thus, the character of loving peace in schools as a process of internalizing positive values in students is one of the things that must be done immediately so that students have an anti-violence and/or peaceful character that can later be manifested in life in society.

The development of a peace-love character should not be limited to certain subjects, but should be integrated into the entire learning process (Amarullah, 2024). This character not only supports the creation of a harmonious learning atmosphere, but can also reduce the level of violence in schools. By instilling the values of peace-loving from an early age, students are expected to have the soft skills needed to compete in the professional world, both individually and in groups (President, 2022). Therefore, the development of a peace-love character in elementary school students needs to be a top priority in the context of education in various regions. Because with peace-love character education, a child can have the ability to protect themselves from conflicts that can lead to violence and bullying, so that the individual can show an attitude of tolerance with the differences that exist in the surrounding environment (Dewantari, 2023).

Research on the profile of the peace-love character of elementary school students in Cimanggung District, Sumedang Regency, is relevant in understanding how this character is formed and the factors that influence it. Cimanggung District faces similar challenges to other areas related to aggressive student behavior and lack of awareness of the importance of peace in daily interactions at school (Giwangsa, 2023). Therefore, it is important to examine the peace-loving character profile of students in this region as a basis for developing more effective educational programs (Apriliani, 2024).

Peace-love character education in elementary schools plays a crucial role in forming students who are not only academically intelligent but also have high social sensitivity. Previous research shows that the formation of peace-love character at the elementary school level can reduce conflict between students and create a culture of mutual respect (Pratiwi, 2021). Thus, peace-loving character education intervention is an important strategy for creating schools that are free from violence and more harmonious.

The Pancasila Student Profile is the most effective way to shape the nation's character in accordance with the mandate of the 1945 Constitution (Muhammad, 2024). Amidst the challenges of the 21st century, a peaceful character is essential to strengthen unity and harmony in a diverse society. The Pancasila Student Profile not only encourages the younger generation to review the values of Pancasila, but also to live the principles of peace love in everyday life. This will help create a more stable and peace-love social environment, supporting the ideals of a just and humane nation. The diversity that is lived in Pancasila emphasizes the importance of togetherness that must be upheld by the Indonesian people in facing various moral problems faced by the nation.

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore deeper into the profile of the peace-love character of elementary school students in Cimanggung District. Data were collected through

interviews, observations, questionnaires, and analysis of related documents. The purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive picture of the actual condition of the peaceful character of students, as well as the factors that influence its development, both from the family environment, school, and peers.

Thus, the results of this study are expected to be a reference for schools, educators, and the government in designing effective educational policies and programs to form a peace-love character in elementary school students, so as to create a safe, peaceful, and conducive learning environment.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore the character profile of peace-loving elementary school students in Cimanggung District, Sumedang Regency. Qualitative research was chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Melenia, 2022), namely how the character of loving peace develops in the school environment.

Research Design

This study uses a case study as a research design. This case study allows for in-depth analysis of a group of students in a specific context, namely elementary schools in Cimanggung District. This design helps understand the character of peace-loving in real situations.

Data Collection Techniques

Data was collected through the following techniques:

1. In-depth interviews: Interviews were conducted with teachers, students, and parents to gain their views on the peaceful character of students. These interviews were semi-structured to allow for more flexible and in-depth discussions.
2. Observation: Researchers conduct direct observations in the classroom and school environment to see how students interact with each other, especially in situations that require cooperation and conflict resolution.
3. Questionnaire: Researchers gave a questionnaire to measure the peace-loving character of elementary school students.
4. Document analysis: Related documents, such as curriculum, lesson plans, and student behavior reports, were analyzed to see how peace-loving values were integrated into the learning process.

Research Participants

The research participants were selected by purposive sampling, namely selecting students and teachers who are involved in character education programs in elementary schools. This study involved 4 teachers from 2 elementary schools in Cimanggung District. In addition, this study also involved approximately 80 students from two elementary schools in Cimanggung District.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using thematic analysis method, where researchers identified key themes that emerged from interviews, observations, and documents. These themes include tolerance, empathy, and conflict resolution which are key indicators of a peaceful character.

This research method is expected to provide an in-depth picture of the peace-loving character profile of elementary school students and also find effective efforts to overcome violence in schools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The initial step taken by the researcher was to identify the factual conditions of the students' peace-loving character and the process of learning peace education in elementary schools, this was done to obtain initial data as information that could support the background of the research. This study began with survey activities, observations of social studies learning in elementary schools in several elementary schools in Cimanggung District and also open interview activities with 4 elementary school teachers conducted through FGD in the form of interviews/discussions with elementary school teachers. The observation and interview activities were carried out to find out and identify facts in the field related to problems in learning in elementary schools and the development of the peace-loving character of elementary school students.

The profile of students' peace-loving character can be described factually through the learning model applied in schools, based on the results of observations during the learning process at the elementary school level. Efforts to develop a peace-loving character have been carried out through various activities, both academic and non-academic. In an academic context, character development is carried out by integrating character values into relevant material learning. However, in practice, teachers do not fully understand the various character learning models, so that student character development has not achieved optimal results through a learning process centered on cognitive aspects. Students should not only be directed to learn knowledge, but also pay attention to aspects of attitude and skills. In addition, teachers tend to emphasize more on delivering material and examples related to the material, but only occasionally link the material to attitudes that are relevant in everyday life.

The reason is, in the RPP document, teachers have included the attitudes expected in learning. However, in the practice of learning, it is still not visible. A comfortable and pleasant learning atmosphere is still not felt because learning tends to be dominated by teachers or uses a Teacher Center approach. In addition, although the facilities and infrastructure in schools are quite adequate with the presence of projectors, this has not been maximized by teachers in displaying images or videos to enliven more active and participatory student interactions. The use of projectors as audio and visual media can be a means of discussion by students and teachers regarding the videos shown. With interesting displays, the effectiveness of learning material will be easily absorbed by students, attitudes and values that will be developed by educators can be integrated with the material in it until they leave an impression and become a good habituation of what is seen. The evaluation carried out can use teaching materials with how students carry out social actions or skills in implementation in their daily lives.

The relationship between students is still not optimal in respecting each other. This can be seen when a student answers a question incorrectly and other friends immediately boo, or when a student answers on the board but his writing is not clear enough to read, other students immediately mock him. Then bullying behavior often appears when students call their friends with bad names, and there is no awareness to apologize when making mistakes to friends. Teachers occasionally advise their children when the above problems arise but are still not optimal in developing a peace-love character for students. It is still apparent that teachers' efforts to instill a peaceful character are still spontaneous when problems occur in class. However, researchers found concern from teachers to reprimand students with good language to remind students so that it can be an example for their students.

This phenomenon shows that the development of the peaceful character of elementary school students in schools in Cimanggung District, Sumedang Regency is still low. This is also reinforced by the results of an interview with teacher AN who said that "Students still like to tease other students, which often ends in disputes." (Source: Interview with teacher AN in FGD on August 20, 2023). Furthermore, teacher HN added that "sad students are sometimes still reluctant to apologize to their friends" (Source: Interview with teacher HN in FGD on August 20, 2023).

Efforts to develop a peaceful character have also been carried out through non-academic activities, such as through habituation and role models. Habituation carried out at school includes flag ceremonies, congregational dhuha prayers, and doing 3S (Smile, Greet and Greeting) as well as extracurricular activities such as scouts and taekwondo. Other non-academic activities include using posters in schools about anti-violence.

The main factor causing the students' undeveloped peaceful character is due to the absence of a clear concept model or strategy that is understood in practice. Teachers still tend to be fixated on developing knowledge, instead of maximizing the development of good character. This can be seen when observing teachers in providing learning material without being accompanied by reinforcement of the character values that students need to develop. Teachers have not yet sparked questions that can hone students in exchanging views critically and participatively because only one to two students dare to respond, so it can be seen that the interactions that are established are not fully communicative. In addition, the learning resources used are limited to teacher and student books so that there is no opportunity to analyze a problem because learning is done directly through lectures from the teacher. Efforts made by schools in developing character have not yet involved collaboration between teachers and parents, even though it is very important in aligning perceptions as a step to optimize children's character development.

Based on the results of a survey of students' peace-loving character, the following profile of students' peace-loving character was obtained.

Table 1.1. Student Peace-Loving Character Profile

Indicator	Percentage		Average	Category
	SD 1	SD 2		
Respecting Friends	25%	31%	28%	Not Yet Developed
Caring for Others	28%	34%	31%	Not Yet Developed
Show empathy	31%	25%	31%	Not Yet Developed
Responsible	22%	21%	21%	Not Yet Developed
Communicate in polite language	34%	27%	30.5%	Not Yet Developed
Controlling yourself	22%	37%	27 %	Not Yet Developed
Resolving conflict	20%	21%	20%	Not yet developed

Table 1.2 Peace-Loving Character Criteria

Presentation	Category
< 40%	Not yet developed
41 -59%	Starting to grow
60 – 79 %	Growing as Expected
80 – 100%	Very Developed

(Cuga, 2019)

Based on Table 1.1, it is identified that each indicator shows that the peaceful character of students is included in the category of not yet developed (<30%). The results show that the peaceful character of elementary school students is still low. With data showing low results on the peaceful character of students, efforts are needed to develop this character through learning. If this is allowed to continue, it will have a negative impact on the social environment of students, such as frequent disputes which will certainly disrupt the conduciveness of the

learning process, will hinder cooperation and collaboration skills among students, reduced empathy in students, aggressive behavior and will further affect student learning outcomes (Aswasulasikin, 2022).

Based on the results of interviews with teachers at one of the schools in Cimanggung District, Sumedang Regency, violence often occurs in schools as expressed by Teacher AN who stated that "the violence that occurs here is usually like teasing each other (verbal), fighting, even hitting each other between students" (Source: Interview with teacher AN in FGD 20 August 2023). This is in line with the results of the research conducted by (Ahkam & Fakhri, 2017) in Indonesia shows that one form of violent behavior of adolescents, namely bullying in schools, is quite high and occurs almost every day. Data from the Indonesian Ministry of Health Data Center Survey (2018), 9844 adolescents aged 13-24 years in Indonesia showed that 3 out of 4 adolescents who had experienced violence, reported that the perpetrators of violence were peers or people they knew.

Violent behavior among adolescents not only affects the individuals involved but also affects the wider social structure, such as disrupting security, justice, and social relations in society. In dealing with this problem, it is very important to build a safe and supportive environment for all individuals by encouraging positive character growth among the younger generation. Even in the context of education in schools, violence still often occurs between students themselves and between teachers and students (Buchori, 2021). Cases of violence and crime will increase if children are not given a peace-love character education (Ramadan, 2022). In this case, it is possible that a child will like to fight, disturb other people, have a grudge against other people, and be unable to control his emotions when the child experiences something that the child does not expect (Agustin, 2018). These problems have an impact that is a consequence of child abuse, increasing the risk of moral reasoning disorders and lack of empathy, having low self-esteem, greater violence such as bullying and attacking other children and abusing their friends. High crime can damage the child's mentality, both as a victim and a perpetrator (Lombardo & Polonko, 2015).

The rise in violence in schools shows the need to develop a peaceful character for elementary school students through a peace education program designed to present learning that teaches skills and values related to peace-love behavior, encourages everyone including children to think constructively about social or emotional problems, and develop positive attitudes towards living side by side in differences, and solving problems that can arise in society using peace-love means (Mushaiqri, 2021). However, this has not been seen in the schools that researchers observed because the results showed that learning still focuses on the knowledge aspect of students so that it has not optimized the skills and attitudes aspects. To instill this

peace-love character education, of course, a strategy is needed by all school stakeholders, namely the principal, teachers, staff and parents of students.

To instill a peaceful character education, a strategy is needed from all school stakeholders, including principals, teachers, staff, and cooperation with parents of students.

Based on interviews with EY teachers, efforts that have been made to instill a peace-love character include, habituating school order in the form of maximizing students to obey school rules, providing real examples, in the form of educating and providing good role models for students, calling parents to school if violence occurs at school (incidental), dealing with students who have the potential to disrupt the concentration of other students is by providing an understanding to the student that the actions taken will harm others who are studying, teaching students to be respectful, and creating clean, comfortable classroom conditions, adequate facilities, not noisy, with a large school area (Source: Interview with EY teachers in FGD August 20, 2023).

Teachers have a very important and effective role in making the integration of peace education into the learning process at school a success (Giwangsa, 2024). Teachers are role models and examples in educating behavior that demonstrates the values of peace. This is in line with research conducted by (Mishra, 2015), that teaching peace must be proactive. Peace requires concrete action. Teachers who are able to demonstrate peaceful behavior will certainly produce more authentic learning in resolving conflicts and building cooperation in the classroom. Of course, every child has a different character. Therefore, forming a child's character, whether or not it is successful, is indeed influenced by the family, school and community environment (Edwin & Pramana, 2021). In addition to being a role model, the efforts made by schools to develop a peace-love character are through the development of academic and non-academic activities that integrate the values of peace in the process, while non-academic activities are through habits such as rules of smiling, greeting, greeting to extracurricular activities such as scouts. However, these efforts have not been effective because violent behavior is still often carried out by students at school.

Based on the results of observations on students' peace-loving character, a picture of students' peace-loving character is obtained which is still low. Indicators of peace-loving character which are still relatively low occur in the aspect of overcoming conflict, this shows that most students have not been able to overcome conflicts with their friends. Then most students still do actions that disturb their friends when the learning process is taking place. However, some students have begun to show attitudes of respecting friends, caring for others, and showing empathy. In addition, students who are able to communicate using good language are not greater than some students who communicate using poor language,

especially in the use of regional languages (Sundanese). This is in line with the opinion of (Aini, 2020) who says that character development can be achieved through social interactions between students.

This shows that developing a peaceful character is still a major challenge in schools. Peace education in formal schools should be able to create students who are tolerant of religious differences, able to demonstrate polite and courteous behavior and respect others. (Brooks and Hajir 2020) state that peace education can develop individuals into someone who has social, emotional and interpersonal skills; able to feel empathy and solidarity towards different social groups; and able to analyze the sources of violence problems and find resolutions based on strengthening the values of peace.

Peace values are concepts that are at the core of the main objectives of education. This supports the creation of a harmonious educational environment free from violence. Participation of the school's role in peace education covers various aspects, such as the school environment, all school residents (students, teachers, and staff), and the community outside the school so that cooperation is established in developing children's character. Peace education covers various aspects, including the learning process, teaching methods, student activities, curriculum, school facilities, and interpersonal relationships that exist between all parties involved in the school (Sumantri, et al., 2018; Aini & Syamwil, 2020; Aswasulasikin, et al., 2022). Peace-loving schools play a role in fostering moral understanding (moral knowing) about diversity as knowledge that must be possessed by all school residents. Through the application of peace-loving values, moral feelings (moral feeling) such as a sense of comfort and peace together can develop, creating a harmonious school climate, far from disputes or conflicts. The principles of peace-loving schools are in line with three important components, namely moral influence, moral feelings, and moral behavior (Thomas Lickona, 2015: 11).

Creating an educational environment free from violence can be integrated through the implementation of a peace education model based on the among system. The among system-based education model invites educators to become companions who guide students with love, not just as teachers. In this approach, students are taught to develop a sense of caring and respecting differences from an early age, so that a peace-loving and harmonious learning environment is created. These noble values are important in developing the character of students who are able to live in diversity with tolerance and mutual respect. Thus, this approach not only supports security and comfort in the school environment, but also forms a generation that values peace and togetherness.

The basic philosophy of human beings emphasizes the inseparable unity of body and soul. The human soul has three main aspects, namely creation, feeling, and will. According to Ki

Hajar Dewantara, the human soul consists of two traits: traits that can be changed through education, such as stupidity that can be overcome to become smart, and biological traits that are innate, such as fear, stinginess, greed, or anger, which cannot be eliminated but can only be suppressed so that they do not appear. Ki Hajar Dewantara likened humans to paper that already has writing, but is still faint. Education plays a role in thickening good writing and fading bad writing (Syaripudin, 2015). In other words, humans are born with complete natural powers but are not yet completely perfect, so education plays a role in perfecting them to become complete humans (Syaripudin, 2015).

According to Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy, as explained by (Syaripudin 2015, pp. 35-36), there are important assumptions about the role of education for humans. Ki Hajar Dewantara emphasized that humans have innate traits or natural nature, and although they are born with complete natural powers, they are not yet completely perfect. Humans also have various talents and potentials, such as a sense of faith and the trisakti aspects of the soul (creativity, feeling, intention), as well as other potentials. Therefore, education is needed to help humans achieve perfection or become ideal humans.

Ki Hajar Dewantara's concept of the among system emphasizes a family-oriented approach and is based on two main principles, namely:

1. Nature's will: As a basis for achieving progress in the fastest and best way.
2. Independence: As a condition for developing and mobilizing children's physical and mental strength, so that they have a strong personality and are able to think and act independently (Syaripudin, 2015).

In the Among System, every tutor or leader in the education process is expected to behave as follows:

1. *I wish to be the one who guides*: This principle means that educators, as figures who have more knowledge and experience, should be good examples and can be used as "central figures" for students.
2. *In the middle, the will is created*: This principle emphasizes that tutors or educators must be able to foster the interest, passion, and willingness of students to be creative and productive, so that they can devote themselves to noble and ideal ideals.
3. Tutwuri Handayani: Tutwuri means accompanying from behind with full attention and responsibility, based on love and affection that is free from selflessness and far from authoritarian attitudes, controlling, protecting, or freeing carelessly. Meanwhile, Handayani means giving freedom and opportunity with attention and guidance, allowing

students to develop based on their own initiative and experience, so that they can grow according to their personal nature.

Ki Hajar Dewantara's slogan is in line with the Tri-Nga philosophy (Understand, Understand, Understand). This is in accordance with the knowledge gained at the Elementary School level and above (Hutagalung, 2024). This teaching reminds us that in achieving the teachings of life or ideals, understanding, awareness, and sincerity in its implementation are needed. Knowing and understanding alone are not enough without awareness and implementation, all of that becomes meaningless.

Tri-Nga is an application for someone who has mastered knowledge. When someone has understood (ngerti) something, they should also have the motivation to do things that are in accordance with that knowledge. This does not only stop at desire (ngroso), but must also be followed by real action (nglakoni) based on the knowledge they have. Thus, in implementing character education, it is important to instill understanding, feel what is learned, and then apply it in everyday behavior.

CONCLUSION

From the results of research and discussion on the peaceful character of elementary school students in Cimanggung District, it can be concluded that there is an urgent need to strengthen the peaceful character, especially in the aspects of tolerance, empathy, and conflict management. Although there are efforts from teachers to integrate these values into the learning process, their implementation still needs to be arranged more systematically and structured.

One of the efforts to overcome the violence is through the use of a peace education model based on the among system in learning, which is based on the philosophy of tri nga ngarti, ngrasa, nglakoni Ki Hadjar Dewantara, showing in improving students' attitudes towards cooperation, emotional control, and peaceful conflict resolution. The application of this model has succeeded in reducing incidents of violence in schools and encouraging students to express their feelings in a more constructive way.

However, challenges remain in involving all stakeholders to support the sustainable implementation of the model. Therefore, further training for teachers and more in-depth evaluation are needed to measure the long-term impact of this model on the development of students' peace-loving character. With consistent efforts, it is hoped that students' peace-loving character can be formed and the school environment will become safer and more conducive.

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