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Implementation of early childhood character education through psychosocial development approach

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Abstract
Early childhood education is the nation's investment to form a nation of integrity and strong character. Early childhood is a period of growth and development that will determine development in the future. Early childhood is also a golden age for character building, so character education is very important to be implemented from an early age to form a generation of people who have a strong, tough, and intelligent mentality and compete in the global arena. This study aims to describe the implementation of early childhood character education through a psychosocial development approach. The research method used is a literature study. Data was collected through a literature study of relevant studies. The results of the study indicate that for this process to be successful, collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community is needed. Implementing character education at a young age through a psychosocial approach necessitates the involvement of: (1) family; (2) schools; and (3) communities. These three environments, being an integrated whole, help the success of character education in early childhood.

Keywords: Early childhood, character education, psychosocial development

1. Introduction

In the full span of human growth and development, early age is the most significant and fundamental stage (Suryana. 2021) [32]. Kindergarten grade children are between the ages of 4-6 years; this period is also known as the "golden age" (Suryana.2019) [29]. Early childhood education, according to Suryana (2021) [28], entails all efforts and actions taken by educators and parents in the process of caring for, nurturing, and educating children by creating an atmosphere and environment in which children can explore experiences that allow them to learn and understand. He learns from his surroundings through observing, imitating, and experimenting, which occurs on a regular basis and involves all of a child's potential and intelligence. Furthermore, early childhood education (PAUD) is essentially an education that is arranged with the goal of assisting the overall growth and development of children or stressing the development of specific characteristics of a child's personality (Muhammad & Abubakar, 2019) [16]. Children are the nation's future generation, and they require the best possible direction and development (Bahri, 2016) [3]. Early childhood education is a national investment; if the Indonesian nation is to be developed into one with strong nationalism, integrity, and character, it must begin at a young age.

Student brawls, drug cases, and other anarchist cultures have recently occurred in Indonesia's diverse regions. Bullying cases and students attempting suicide as a result of minor issues like as being mocked by friends, being unable to pay tuition fees, or failing to pass the National Examination are also prevalent in Indonesian education. Furthermore, there are occasions where students are less motivated to study hard, are less conscientious, give up easily, and even drop out of school as a result of incorrect associations. Schools have a hard time teaching their children how to be persistent, autonomous, and never-say-die learners (Suyanto, 2012) [35]. These problems occur as a result of a flawed procedure for communicating values to children, resulting in children who are cognitively weak and unable to adjust to an increasingly advanced and developing environment.

Character education is essential because education not only makes students clever, but also gives them character and manners, allowing them to make a significant contribution to society both for themselves and for others (Tyas, Sunarto, & Naiboha, 2020) [36]. Character education, which begins at a young age, is anticipated to help shape the next generation of Indonesians into strong citizens who reflect the nation's character. Cultivating character at a young age prepares students for higher education (Keumala, Yoestara, & Putri, 2019) [23], hence implementing character education at a young age is critical (Hadisi, 2015) [9].

The golden period of childhood has arrived. Human development, according to Erikson, refers to the stages of a person's life from birth to death that are formed by social influences and interactions and lead to physical and psychological maturity. Early childhood development is no exception. Childhood is one of the stages of a person's life that must be experienced by all (Erikson, Psychosocial Development Theory, 2010) [7]. As a result, early childhood character education employing a psychosocial approach is critical for developing a generation of people with a strong, tough, and intellectual mentality who can compete in the global arena.

2. Research Method

The method used is literature study. Literature studies are related to theoretical studies and several references that cannot be separated from scientific literature (Sugiono, 2012) [25]. Sources of data obtained by collecting relevant literature such as books, journals or scientific articles related to the topics: (1) character education; (2) psychosocial development; (3) character education in early childhood, and (4) implementation of character education. Data collection techniques by looking for data about things or variables in the form of notes, books, papers or articles, journals, etc. (Arikunto & Jabar, 2010). The tool employs a checklist to classify research materials based on the study's focus, writing scheme/map, and research note format. The content analysis technique is used in the analysis. Inter-library checks were conducted on the principles of simplicity and ease to combat disinformation.

3. Hasil Dan Pembahasan

3.1 Early Childhood Social Development

Social development is the process of honing self-awareness to social stimuli associated with societal demands in conformity with social norms, values, and expectations. We are all familiar with Vygotsky's theory of social interaction and learning, as well as Howard Gardner's tenri plural intelligence and the critical role of children in learning. Sara Smilansky is a writer. These are the beliefs that underpin creative learning in order to give children with a meaningful learning experience as they progress through their developmental phases (Suryana. 2014) [31].

Socialization is the process of developing self-awareness to social stimuli associated with social demands in conformity with societal norms, values, and expectations. Learning to behave in ways that are acceptable to society, learning to perform social roles that exist in the community, and forming social attitudes toward other individuals and social activities that occur in the community are all part of the social development process (Suryana. 2011) [33].

So, in order to adapt properly, social development involves the development of how children interact with peers, adults, and the larger community.

3.2 The Relationship between Psychosocial Development and Character Education

Erik Erikson dikemukakan teori perkembangan psikososial (theory of psychosocial development), yang menekankan pada aspek-aspek perkembangan sosial, yaitu pengaruh lingkungan pada perkembangan kepribadian manusia. Erikson's psychological theory is divided into eight sections, as follows:

Table 1: Erikson's psychosocial theory stages

Stage	Stadium	Psychosocial Crisis	Good result
I	Infancy (0-1)	Trust vs distrust	Trust and optimism
II	Toddlerhood (2-3)	Autonomy vs doubt	Self-control and adequacy
III	Early Childhood (3-6)	Initiative vs guilt	Ability to initiate independent activities
IV	Middle & Late Childhood (7-12)	Industry vs inferiority	Competence in intellectual, social and physical abilities
V	Teenager (12-18)	Identitas vs kebingungan identitas	Citra diri yang terintegrasi sebagai pribadi unik
VI	Early adulthood(20-an)	Intimacy vs isolation	Ability to form a close relationship with career commitment
VII	Middle adult (20-50)	Generativity vs withdrawal	Attention to family, community and future generations
VIII	Late adult (>50)	Integrity vs despair	Satisfied with life and ready to face death

***Source*:** (Emiliza, 2019).

At each stage, Erikson argued, a person will face a conflict or crisis that will mark a turning point in their development. The development of psychological traits is at the heart of this battle. Early childhood psychosocial development is the process of a child's development toward the ability to solve problems based on their knowledge (Renatovna & Renatovna, 2021) [21]. Children require parental support and guidance in recognizing and rewarding adaptive behavior at this time so that they can develop their interaction skills.

Early childhood development stages include: (1) cognitive; (2) linguistic; (3) motor; and (4) psychosocial development (Wang & *et al*, 2009). The child's psychosocial development will go through a stage where he or she will alternate between initiative and guilt. Parents are one of the parties who have a significant impact on their children's psychosocial development. Furthermore, schools and communities play a vital role in streamlining the process of implementing character education.

Good character, according to Lickona, is defined as understanding what is good (moral knowing), wanting what is good (moral feeling), and doing good things (moral action) (Lickona, 1991) [15]. This character is a collection of ideals aimed at a system that underpins an individual's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Mu'in, 2011) [17]. Character education, which includes parts of knowledge (cognitive), feelings (feeling), and behavior (action), can be used to build character (Sudaryanti, 2012) [24].

Character education for early childhood, according to

Mulyasa (2012), has a deeper significance than moral education since it is concerned with how to embed habits (habits) about various positive actions in life so that children have awareness and dedication to apply virtue in daily life. Character education has been implanted in a child since childhood, and it is intended that as he grows older, the characters he acquires would become a habit for him. As a result, parents, educators, and the community must work together to teach character education ideals at every opportunity, particularly for young children both inside the family and in their environment (Dadan, *et al*. 2021) [32].

According to the Ministry of National Education, the goals of character education are to: (a) develop the potential of students' hearts/consciences/affectives as human beings and citizens with cultural values and national character; (b) develop commendable habits and behavior in accordance with universal values and religious cultural traditions; (c) instill the spirit of leadership and responsibility in students as the nation's successors; and (d) instill the spirit of responsibility in students as the nation's successors (Kemendiknas, 2010) [12].

Character education refers to a number of activities done by school employees, including those undertaken in collaboration with parents and community members, to assist students in developing a loving, opinionated, and responsible personality (Purwanti, 2017) [20]. As a result, character education aims to shape, inculcate, establish, and develop positive mindsets, attitudes, and behaviors in pupils in order for them to become superior and dignified individuals.

Children absorb everything around the age of four, which is the golden period of his brain, according to Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory and character education. Early childhood is a magical time in a person's life that only comes around once. The early stages of human life have an impact on the next stage of development (Gilmore, Knickmeyer, & Gao, 2018) [8]. If the youngster fails, it is likely that he or she will struggle to complete the next assignment. Early childhood is a time of physical and mental development; the formation of brain nerves begins in the womb and continues throughout infancy (Suyanto, 2005) [34]. As a result, character education must be done in early life in order to build a golden generation with a strong mentality, ready to compete in the globalization arena.

3.3 Family

Children's first environment is that of their families. Parents have a role to play in the implementation of character education in this setting. Parents are the primary and primary instructors of their children, thus they must be cautious in their actions and words, as children will emulate whatever they hear and see from their parents (Khaironi, 2017) [14]. Parents' support for their children must be founded on sufficient knowledge so that they may apply parenting styles to their children in accordance with their psychological development stage. The knowledge of parents on early childhood psychosocial development aims to prevent mental illnesses in children. This is because, depending on the child's developmental stage, the knowledge that parents possess has a significant impact on the child's upbringing (Suprihatiningsih & Maryanti, 2019) [26]. (1) patience; (2) honesty; (3) nobility; (4) self-control; (5) attention; (6) get along well; (7) respect; (8) obedient; (9) generous; (10) avoid conflict; (11) tepo seliro; (12) empathy; (13) manners; (14) willing to sacrifice; (15) narima; (16) dedication; (17) always remember and be aware.

Character education in the home can be viewed as a step from parents to children in order for early childhood to develop and live moral principles in order to prepare for adulthood with the goal of building a noble character. Parents can help implement character education in early childhood by: (1) instilling good values in children; (2) utilizing a method that encourages youngsters to want to do good; and (3) developing a love of good actions (Widianto, 2015) [38].

The function of the family is to organize socialization, provide direction for education, fill a good soul and psychological guidance (Asnawan, 2012) [2]. The inheritance of human values aims to create people who love peace, develop social welfare, are able to maintain and implement just and civilized human rights, and are able to maintain environmental quality and morality.

3.4 School

Early childhood, according to Erik Erikson, occurs in stages 1-3 of psychological development, where children learn to perceive trust and optimism, self-control and sufficiency, and begin to initiate activities independently. The school is a suitable place in which early childhood will connect with teachers and peers to assist this stage of development. School is one of the most successful institutions for instilling character values in the learning process, which includes three steps: (1) preparation, (2) implementation, and (3) evaluation (Judiani, 2010) [11]. Each subject is involved in the process of establishing character values. Character values such as hard effort, honesty, tolerance, discipline, independence, national spirit, love for the motherland, and love of reading are introduced through classroom activities.

Character education in early infancy in schools is also heavily influenced by school culture (Chowdhury, 2018) [4]. The school environment is a location where students engage with one another as well as with teachers. Character values such as leadership, exemplary, friendliness, tolerance, hard effort, discipline, social care, environmental care, a sense of nationalism, and responsibility will be taught through this interaction process. When speaking with kids and using school facilities, school principals, teachers, counselors, and administrative staff all contribute to the creation of a culture of character education principles in the school (Pradana, 2019) [19]. Character education in schools can be blended into current curricula, local content, self-development, and school culture, according to the findings.

The following are the goals of character education in the school environment: (1) creating a positive school environment for students; (2) developing students with emotional and spiritual intelligence; (3) strengthening various positive behaviors that are displayed in teaching and learning activities in schools; and (4) motivating students to manifest various knowledge of goodness (knowing the good) and love of goodness (loving the good) into positive behavior in the school environment (Najib & *et al*, 2016) [18].

3.5 Public

Environmental influences, in addition to being at home, play a significant role in moulding children's character development. When children's minds have been influenced by harmful environmental factors, parents feel helpless. The rapid development of today's media contributes to the development of character education when it is not equipped with filters to filter out shows that do not need to be seen.

While a youngster is outside the home, he or she has many more friends and more space to go around than when the child is at home. The child's distinct conduct will be triggered by this striking difference. When children are around their peers, they get hyperactive and even emulate their peers' attitudes, without being able to discern between good and evil.

The communal environment, also known as the social environment, is the setting in which children live and interact with others in general. Children are members of a society that interacts with one another, and they can have an impact on the environment, but they can also be influenced by the communal environment (Ida Bagus, 2021) [10]. The neighborhood environment has an impact on children's personalities (Suadnyana & Ariyasa, 2020) [23]. Children will be able to have a social spirit if they grow up in a dynamic, harmonic, and enjoyable environment that shapes their character of politeness, adaptability, and empathy (Rolita, 2016) [22]. Human values can only be learnt and obtained by children in the framework of social life in society (Wiguna, 2020) [39].

4. Closing

4.1 Conclusion

Character development is a never-ending process. Each person requires character education in order to become a better person by preserving human ideals. Early childhood character education is crucial because it occurs during a critical phase in a child's development. According to Erik Erikson, they are in the following phases at this time: (1) Infancy 0-1 years; (2) Toddlerhood 2-3 years; and (3) Early Childhood 3-6 years, using a psychosocial perspective. Early childhood recognizes trust and optimism, self-control and adequacy at this period, and learns to initiate activities independently. As a result, Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory approach to character education in early childhood is critical. The family, school, and community institutions are all intertwined and play a significant role in the implementation of early childhood character education.

5. Suggestion

The following are some suggestions for strengthening the study of character education: (1) Character education in the family environment must be improved by maintaining consistency; (2) Parents must understand how to develop character education in their children in an interesting and fun way; (3) It is necessary to have discussions through parenting activities, discussions among parents, and consultations with early childhood education experts; (5) School institutions, families, and communities must all work together to improve character education in children. As a result, the three institutions are expected to collaborate and integrate to play an active role in early childhood character education.

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